



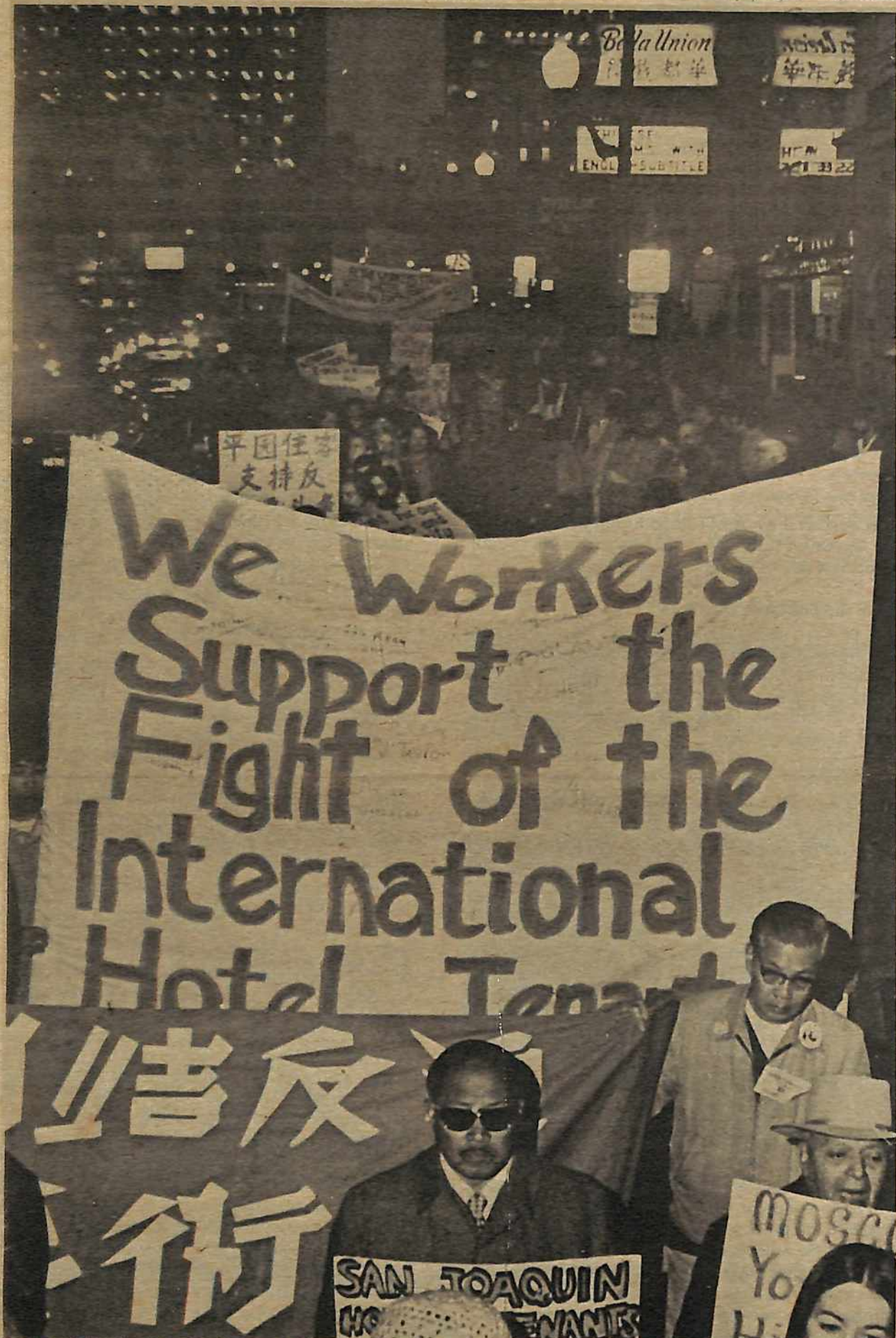
REVOLUTION

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San Francisco, January 12—2500 massed in support of the I-Hotel. A few days later 5000 demonstrated.

Thousands Roll Back I-Hotel Eviction Attempt

A dramatic victory has been won in the ongoing struggle against evictions at the International Hotel in San Francisco. In the face of demonstrations that mobilized 2500 and 5000 people within five days of each other and a tremendous outpouring of popular support for the I-Hotel tenants and community centers, the judge who had ordered the eviction was forced to back down at the eleventh hour.

Time and again over the last eight years tenants have fought off attempts by a series of landlords to throw them into the streets and demolish the building to make way for more profitable investments. The tenants have repeatedly gone into the streets alright, not in humble submission to the orders and property rights of the owners, but united with and surrounded by hundreds and thousands of supporters, defiantly telling the capitalists "to hell with your profits, stop the evictions, we won't move!" After this latest round of struggle, the main thoroughfare of San Francisco's Chinatown-Manilatown is still spanned by a banner (itself the subject of repeated struggle between the city and the people) proclaiming: "Workers Unite to Fight Evictions! Fight for the International Hotel and Victory Building!"

Large-Scale Battle

The fight to defend the I-Hotel and for low cost housing has become a focus of sharp class struggle in the Bay Area. For months it has been the big news in the area, sometimes covered nightly on the TV and radio as the tenants and supporters hit back every time the landlords, the courts, the police or the city officials made a move against them.

The Workers Committee to Fight for the I-Hotel and Victory Building (a nearby hotel also threatened with evictions) has mounted a broad campaign to develop mass support for the hotel residents. Composed of some of the residential tenants in the I-Hotel and other Chinatown hotels and housing projects, workers from Chinatown and the rest of the Bay Area, including representatives of the May First Workers Organization and people from the Asian Community Center, the Committee has taken out the struggle of the I-Hotel to union meetings for resolutions of support, plant gate rallies, numerous marches and rallies, demonstrations at city offices and Board of Supervisors meetings.

The tremendous controversy and publicity generated by the struggle and the success of the Workers Committee and other supporters in getting out the demand for low cost housing and community centers has forced city officials to take a public stance of "support" for the tenants. The fierce battle over the I-Hotel has shaken up the workings of the courts, public agencies and city government as they scramble for a way to respond to the mass movement. The Mayor offered a phony plan to have the city buy the building and then sell it back to the tenants for over a million dollars. The Workers Committee denounced his plan, saying "The Mayor's plan is an eviction plan."

The Sheriff was forced into a bizarre and comical farce with the courts that landed him in a week long trial for contempt of court and a five day jail sentence when he failed to carry out the first eviction order because "it was too difficult and dangerous." The bourgeoisie gave him a clear reminder that his job was to enforce its commands, not complain about how hard it was to do so, or try to slip out of the noose of being the

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Unemployment Campaign Launched Fight Benefit Cutoff!

The struggle of the unemployed for jobs or income is taking shape in the fight against the cutoff of two federal unemployment benefit extensions which are due to expire at the end of March. This cutoff, which would lower the number of weeks an unemployed worker can collect benefits from 65 to 39, is a very sharp attack the bourgeoisie is seeking to launch on the unemployed—driving a section of people into even lower paying jobs, onto the welfare rolls, or out into the streets entirely.

As far as the people who run this country are concerned, unemployment insurance is a luxury they cannot afford. If they have their way, hundreds of thousands of unemployed all over the country for whom there is no work and no prospect of work in this deepening economic crisis will be left to destitution.

Their aim is to let the deadline slip by quietly, but where word has been spread the cuts have given rise to a rage unseen in years among the unemployed and a fierce determination to see that they don't get

ized Committee (UWOC) has launched a nationwide battle against these cuts that has begun to tap this rage and has already sparked broad resistance among the unemployed. UWOC called demonstrations in cities across the country during the opening week of Congress to organize and make clear the determination of the unemployed to resist this attack. Many people who have never before participated in organized struggle around unemployment turned out to join the picket lines and delegations sent to Congressmen's offices and Federal Buildings. In Philadelphia two dozen people fought and argued with the cops for three hours when they tried to prevent them from getting upstairs to the Congressmen's offices. In New York City 50 workers, employed and unemployed, picketed the Federal Building.

A delegation from UWOC chapters on the East Coast brought the struggle against the benefit cuts right into the "sacred" halls of the U.S. Senate itself on January 6. They went up in the Senate gallery to demand jobs and



Worsening conditions in the mills have been a factor giving rise to the growing movement of steel workers. The Sadlowski campaign presents one opportunity to advance this movement.

Election Draws Near

Rank & File Advances In Steel Fight

The struggle in the steel workers union is coming to a head. As the campaign for the union presidency grows very hot with the approach of the February 8 elections, it is becoming clearer than ever that this contest between the union machine candidate Lloyd McBride and Ed Sadlowski is a good opportunity to advance the steel workers' struggle. As communists and other active steel workers have pushed hard to build the Sadlowski campaign through some heavy battles, it is also even clearer just how important it is that the rank and file look to its own interests and not be used as a pawn in this race.

The way this election battle is shaping up has already had an effect on other workers and brought powerful class forces into the field. After all, if the rank and file can dump the Abel machine, there's a lot of other comfort-loving company-serving top union bureaucrats who'd have to fear for their good thing too. AFL-CIO head George Meany has issued blast after blast against Sadlowski, calling his campaign "a danger" to "the free labor movement." Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union head Murry Finley "requested" his executive board members and other union staffers to make personal campaign contributions to McBride. The notorious reactionary sellout Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers took out a whole newspaper ad against Sadlowski, full of hysterical warnings about the "threat to unionism" if Sadlowski wins.

In the nomination elections in United Steel Workers locals across the country in December, Sadlowski won nominations from 521 locals and McBride from 2901. Sadlowski swept the mills and larger locals, winning enough locals to get on the ballot. This in itself is an important victory. The machine headed by USWA President I. W. Abel tried to stop Sadlowski by hook (redbaiting him, trying to tell workers in nonbasic steel that Sadlowski is only interested in basic, etc.) and by crook (goon work and stealing elections, such as the Wyman-Gordon local near Chicago where the local president suddenly adjourned the nomination meeting before the vote was taken). Later he called people on the phone and on the basis of his own personal poll announced that McBride had won.

McBride is running as Abel's handpicked successor and heir to Abel's machine, and Abel's name is a dirty word on the shop floor. He promotes the line that what's good for the companies is good for the workers ("labor-management cooperation"). In fact, he's helped out the companies in all the attacks they've heaped on the steel workers, and every struggle the steel workers have taken up—against layoffs, harassment, job combinations, for the right to strike and against the so-called anti-discrimination consent decree which allows the companies to continue discriminating while attacking seniority—in all of these battles the rank and file has had to take on Abel and his pro-company dictatorship within the union.

McBride has the backing of the steel bosses, not just in thinly disguised words but more importantly, in practice. The companies have joined the Abel machine in harassing pro-Sadlowski forces, trying to keep them from leafletting and putting up signs, and trying to stop workers from wearing Sadlowski stickers but leaving men wearing McBride stickers alone. In at least one case, the steel bosses called the cops and had pro-Sadlowski leafletters arrested for "trespassing." All the while the companies are stepping up their propaganda about

how wonderful the Abel-backed Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA, which forbids strikes until 1980) is and how layoffs would be worse without it.

Rank and File Chart Own Path

Why has this campaign developed such significance? Certainly not because of what Sadlowski himself represents. Like other union reformers before him, he has gotten political and financial backing from some liberal types in the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeois opportunists of various stripes, especially the revisionist Communist Party. But the rank and file has begun to stand up against the steel companies and their agents within the union, and Sadlowski has to a certain degree spoken to this movement. For steel workers, fighting to elect Sadlowski is a way to break up the Abel machine and build organization of the rank and file united around their real demands and interests.

While Sadlowski's desire to be union president and the rank and file's desire to be free of Abel coincide at this point, steel workers are increasingly charting their own course, building their organization to deal with the attacks such as the layoffs and all the rest no matter what happens in the elections or afterward. If the rank and file didn't approach the Sadlowski campaign with this point of view, it would be impossible to win, let alone advance in the future.

Even though Sadlowski did succeed in winning nomination, his campaign has run up against obstacles, including some of his own making. In his own home District 31 (Chicago-Gary), some mills which had elected pro-Sadlowski union officials last Spring failed to nominate him this time. In many places, many of the active rank and file workers began to get more than a little cynical about whether a Sadlowski victory would change anything after all. After making a relatively strong start by coming on strong on some important issues like the ENA and talking militant in the early fall, Sadlowski had picked up some momentum. But after that he apparently figured that he had the most active workers sewed up and he began to vacillate more, trying to appear more "middle of the road." This created a situation where many active workers don't readily see why they should do the kind of day-to-day mobilizing of forces necessary to win greater numbers of steel workers to take up the campaign actively so it can win.

McBride, for his part, is coming on hot and heavy against Sadlowski, redbaiting, lying, striking a thoroughly phony militant pose and taking advantage of all Sadlowski's weaknesses. For instance, when Sadlowski and his candidate to succeed him as District 31 Director got together with Inland Steel and signed a local so-called consent decree against discrimination that neither does anything about discrimination nor has the consent of the workers, McBride came to the plant gates to stage a show of strength by denouncing this dirty deal. Awhile later, McBride made a big splash in the papers by denouncing Sadlowski for taking money from "employers," citing \$1500 Sadlowski had gotten from some rich liberal capitalists.

Of course coming from McBride this is pure hypocrisy. The Abel-McBride machine doesn't need open campaign contributions from the capitalists because they've got the membership's dues money in their pockets—dues they've increased heavily to pay for their fancy living. Lots of their business associates in the In-

ternational and lower level hacks kicked in a few hundred or a thousand dollars to buy job security. And of course it was Abel who signed the national consent decree in the first place and tried to sell it to steel workers as a big advance.

The situation is that while there is a lot of pro-Sadlowski sentiment from among the workers and especially the more advanced, at the same time in the minds of many there is the question of what, if anything, the rank and file can accomplish through this election. This comes from the real experience of workers who've seen reformers and just plain hucksters come and go.

Where the greatest advances in the Sadlowski campaign have been made is where communists and other workers have summed up the real picture, especially the ongoing struggles of steel workers, pointing to the need and real opportunities the campaign presents to build struggle against the companies and the Abel machine that fronts for them, to build organization and unity, presenting the fight to elect Sadlowski as one important part now of furthering this.

When attempts have been made to win people to fighting for Sadlowski on the basis of Sadlowski's stand pure and simple, by saying "This is where McBride stands and this is where Ed stands," the campaign has been narrow in participation and lukewarm in action and effect. The campaign has been strongest when it has been taken up fundamentally based on building the struggles steel workers are waging and their hatred for the class collaborationist Abel dictatorship that holds them back, and presenting the Sadlowski campaign as a tactic to organize and advance these struggles.

In the course of fighting against the Abel machine, there have been efforts from time to time in the Sadlowski campaign to limit the participation of the rank and file. The effect of this would be to paralyze the mobilization of the forces necessary to win this election (and to try to make sure it isn't stolen). For this reason, as well as to advance the more basic interests of steel workers to the maximum, this point of view has been opposed from the rank and file, including people around the *Steelworker* national newspaper and members of already existing organizations in the industry.

Local Nomination Battle

For instance, in Milwaukee members of the steel section of the Milwaukee United Workers Organization and others initiated the local Sadlowski Fight Back Committee, which waged the nomination battle local by local through leafletting, bringing banners to gates, fighting it through in union meetings, etc. The Milwaukee committee had to go through a big struggle with the Sadlowski people headquartered in Chicago before they got agreement that they could put out their own leaflets as well as the national Sadlowski leaflets. The local leaflets not only spoke to local conditions and questions, but also most importantly they put the importance of electing Sadlowski in the context of dumping the Abel machine and building the organization of the rank and file united around their own program and interests.

When Sadlowski came to speak in Milwaukee, his people insisted that an out-of-town bureaucrat come in to introduce him instead of a local committee speaker. Again, this was beat back so that the rank and file could have its say. The importance of this stand became clear when Sadlowski, not wanting to commit himself, hedged on some sharp questions workers raised about job combinations in the can industry and dues increases. The only way to deal with this situation and keep people's feelings from giving way to dead-end cynicism was by presenting the campaign in its correct light, its importance as part of building the overall struggle.

In the Chicago-Gary area the organization Breakout at U.S. Steel in Chicago called together a District 31 Organizing Committee to take up the Sadlowski campaign and the basic steel contract that follows the elections, and build the struggle in steel. In November, McBride came to town for a fundraising dinner which the machine took great pains to hide from the 135,000 steel workers in the area. Nevertheless somebody found out about it and steel workers from the Chicago-Gary area and Milwaukee showed up to picket outside chanting, "I. W. Abel, Lloyd McBride, We Know You're On the Bosses' Side" and "No Right to Strike—Can't Even Vote—Get Your Damn Hands Off Our Throats" (referring to the fact that now USWA members don't even vote on national contracts). While the local Sadlowski people had declined to back this kind of action, the picket helped lay out the truth and stir things up in a good way.

In the Cleveland-northeast Ohio area, people around the *Steelworker* played an important role in the Sadlowski Fight Back Committee, helping to organize a rally of 350 workers from different shops, one of the biggest at which Sadlowski spoke around the country. The song "No Strike Blues" hitting on the ENA stirred lot of spirit at the rally and copies of the *Steelworker* with an article about the rank and file demonstration around Local 3059 in Pittsburgh (see *Revolution*, December 1976) went over well. But the Sadlowski people put all further mass action on hold and had the distribution of the *Steelworker* banned at Sadlowski events. Nevertheless, because most of the rank and file workers active in the campaign locally see the *Steelwork-*

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Free Puerto Rico Right Now!

Statehood Ploy Can't Hide Colonialism

Trying to make the most of his last few minutes in the spotlight, Ford has proposed that Congress make Puerto Rico the 51st state. This led to quite an uproar, since it's pretty well-known that most Puerto Ricans don't want to see their already imprisoned country swallowed up entirely. Carter, trying to get himself into the act and smooth things over, responded by calling for an election on the issue in Puerto Rico so that it wouldn't look like the U.S. is just snatching the island. But either way it boils down to the same thing: Puerto Rico's position as a colony of the U.S. (disguised as a "commonwealth") has made conditions miserable for the people there, and now they are being falsely promised a way out of this misery if only they'd agree to colonization of their country as a permanent fact of life.

Why did Ford step out on this question, especially since he caught so much flack on his stand? Some commentators have put it all down to just some last minute grandstanding, but there's more to it than that. It's unlikely that the U.S. will make an immediate push to make Puerto Rico a state. But Ford had little to lose by his statement, and it served to get the ball rolling for a propaganda campaign to try to create public opinion in Puerto Rico and the U.S. for a move, should they find it necessary, that would hold this colony in even tighter chains.

Ford had another reason as well, which he tried to use to justify his action. A widely quoted but unidentified "White House source" said that the idea was "to send a message to Cuba's Fidel Castro that we value Puerto Rico and won't allow any tampering there." A few months ago, Ford and Carter were carrying on about how the U.S. stood for the "self-determination" of Poland and other countries now dominated by the Soviet Union. With the Soviets and their flunkies in Cuba, for their part, making a big fuss about how they support "self-determination" for Puerto Rico, the rulers of the U.S. are getting indignant. But this is very revealing, because it shows exactly how the U.S. ruling class looks at Puerto Rico—as their "property" which they won't give up to anybody.

"Self-Determination" Imperialist Style

It's just a sick joke for the rulers of this country to talk about "letting the Puerto Rican people exercise their freedom to decide," because American capitalists already own and control Puerto Rico from one end of the island to the other. The supermarkets and big stores are all American and the neon signs are for Burger King and Kentucky Fried. From T-shirts to tuna, almost everything in the stores is imported from the U.S.

Even the oranges are from Florida and the pineapples from Hawaii, although these fruits once flourished in Puerto Rico. Rice, once home-grown, now comes from

California. Now that American companies have ruined Puerto Rico's agriculture, the American capitalists say that Puerto Rico can't be independent because the island can't feed itself.

The majority of the TV stations and daily newspapers are owned in the U.S. English is mandatory in the schools and is the language of the courts, run by the U.S. federal government. The FBI and other federal agencies work to enforce the law—American law, backed by American military bases and the Puerto Rican National Guard. What "freedom" does Carter think Puerto Ricans are exercising? Not only have the huge American-owned tourist hotels gobbled up much of the most beautiful areas, but in many places such as San Juan ordinary Puerto Ricans are banned from the best beaches so that foreigners can enjoy them undisturbed. What else can you call this but colonialism?

"Puerto Rico: Profit Island"

A few figures show how tight this grip on Puerto Rico really is. U.S. companies control 85% of manufacturing, 85% of retail trade and 100% of major air and sea transport. They even control two thirds of all housing construction. Of all employed Puerto Ricans, 80% work directly for U.S. firms. To the U.S. capitalists, Puerto Rico is their fifth largest foreign market and one of their most profitable places for investment. An



Independence march in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1972.

Cutbacks, National Oppression at Root

Dozens Perish In Chicago Fires

On Christmas Eve family and friends gathered in Pilsen, a predominantly Mexican neighborhood in Chicago to celebrate a birthday. Suddenly a barbecue fire burst into flames turning the celebration into a tragedy. The fire department arrived with two trucks and only six firemen. Undermanned, they could not rescue the people trapped inside. The snorkel unit which is sent to big fires took 40 minutes to arrive at the scene from a warehouse fire in which no people were trapped. Ten little children and two mothers died in the Pilsen fire.

Since Christmas Eve 34 people have died in fires in Chicago, all occurring in the neighborhoods of oppressed nationalities and workers. Those dead were murdered, victims of the city's financial squeeze, of the decay capitalism, and of the national oppression of minorities. But the people of Chicago and, in particular, the residents of Pilsen did not take this lying down and have taken up the struggle for decent fire protection for their

community and the city of Chicago. The callous disregard of the capitalist system for the safety and lives of people was exposed in these fires and by the struggle of the Pilsen community. Because of this, the city authorities were forced to make a few halfway concessions hoping these would cool people's anger and struggle. But at the same time they tried to get themselves off the hook by placing the blame for the deaths on the people themselves and by trying to whip up resentment against the concessions they were forced to make in an effort to set people of different nationalities against one another.

Chicago rank and file firemen themselves blamed the deaths in these fires on the desperate need for more men. Because of a hiring freeze imposed by Mayor Daley in 1973, the size of the fire department has shrunk from some 4600 men to around 4000. Where in the past six men were assigned to a truck, there are now on-

ad in *Business Week* is headlined: "Puerto Rico: Profit Island." As the ad says, low wages and the fact that American companies don't have to pay any taxes at all for two decades or more is what makes Puerto Rico so profitable.

The low wages aren't because living is cheap—it costs more to live than in most parts of the U.S. because of the high cost of imported American goods. The lack of taxes isn't because the government doesn't spend—it spends like crazy to build whatever business needs. These economic conditions exist for one reason alone: the American ruling class' political and military control of Puerto Rico.

Yet even with this almost total control, there is another side to the coin. U.S. domination has not done away with the fact that Puerto Rico is a separate nation, with its own language and culture, its own particular history, and its own distinct territory and economic life. Instead of doing away with the Puerto Rican nation and its people's aspirations to see their nation free, colonialism has given rise to the movement for the independence and national liberation of Puerto Rico, and this movement is being fueled daily through constant outrages and injustices. Far from becoming willing to accept their oppression, more and more the Puerto Rican people are in revolt.

Puerto Rico was already a country when the U.S. army seized it from Spain in 1898 in the name of bringing "freedom" from Spain. But the truth was the bitter opposite—American generals and then American governors appointed by the U.S. President ran the island. In 1917, the U.S. Congress made all Puerto Ricans U.S. citizens whether they liked it or not, not so that they could have any rights (the only right this gave them at that time was the right to migrate to the U.S. looking for work), but so that they could be drafted and used as cannon fodder in World War 1. The island's sugar cane, its most important product then, soon fell into the hands of four main companies, owned in America.

Especially through the 1920s and '30s, the island was full of political ferment against the occupiers. The strongest resistance came from the sugar cane workers,

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ly three or four, and saving lives has become nearly impossible. But under this system, a warehouse devoid of people is more important than the lives of people. The warehouse fire which occurred nearby Pilsen an hour and a half before, drew men and equipment from all over the city, including three of the five city snorkel units. And with the financial crunch Chicago and other cities are in, the capitalists would like to get over with more cutbacks in fire protection and other social services if they could.

The Pilsen Neighborhood

But the reason for tragic incidents like the Pilsen fire goes deeper than cutbacks in already inadequate fire protection. The reason why many small fires spread so quickly and end up in such tragedy is because of the rotten housing poor and working people, especially immigrants and national minorities, are forced to live in. The Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago is one of the oldest in the city with many of the houses over 100 years old. The majority of the people are immigrants from Mexico brought to this country to labor for the capitalists in meatpacking, steel and other industries. The houses are wooden firetraps dried out over decades of heating, with antiquated electrical wiring and heating. Many of the houses are wired through only one fuse for the whole house and in order to run a major appliance like a washing machine, they have to unplug something else. With the cold of winter, the needed use of space heaters and ancient wiring, it is no mystery why there are a lot of fires.

The fire chief claimed there was nothing that could

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One China! U.S. Out of Taiwan!

On February 28, it will be five years since Richard Nixon, then U.S. President, and Premier Chou En-lai of the Peoples' Republic of China signed the Shanghai Communiqué. In it the U.S. government agreed that "normalization of relations between China and the U.S. is in the interests of all countries," that there is only one China and that Taiwan is a part of it, and that the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan was "the ultimate objective."

The communiqué was a great victory for the Chinese people and people everywhere for it represented the failure of the U.S. government's 20 year long effort to "contain" China and to keep her isolated from the rest of the world. But still after five years little progress has been made toward normalization.

Some 2000 U.S. troops, including a military advisory group, are still on Taiwan. Military support of the Chiang and the Chiang Jr. regimes has increased, totaling some \$1.1 billion in military equipment and ma-

terials since 1972. The U.S. Export-Import Bank has financed sales to Taiwan of \$1.24 billion and U.S. business investments keep going up, resulting in increased misery for the people of Taiwan.

During this time, many thousands of Americans, through the efforts of the U.S. China People's Friendship Association and other organizations, have become enthusiastic about the great achievements of People's China and are increasingly demanding that the U.S. government stop interfering in China's internal affairs.

The next step is up to the U.S. government—implement the Shanghai Communiqué; terminate the defense treaty with Taiwan; remove all military installations and troops; and sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

On or around February 28, thousands will be taking up these demands in programs, picket lines and demonstrations on this occasion. We urge everyone to support these activities and unite around the slogan: One China, U.S. out of Taiwan.

R&F Resists, Builds Organization

Ailing AMC Hands Workers Ultimatum

In the first week of January, American Motors made its contract offer to the 10,000 auto workers in its Milwaukee and Kenosha, Wisconsin and Brampton, Ontario plants. It was the most outrageous attack of the '76 auto contract struggles: a one year freeze on wages and benefits—a freeze that actually means a cut.

For AMC workers it was the latest in a long line of attacks, including massive layoffs, intense speedup and the shut down of the 900 job Gremlin line in Milwaukee. American Motors, the smallest U.S. car maker, is desperately trying to jack up the rate of exploitation of the workers to keep from being driven out of the competition for passenger car sales.

AMC in Trouble

American Motors lost \$24 million in 1975 and another \$46 million in 1976. A field on the outskirts of Kenosha is filled with some of the 70,000 models that have gone unsold. AMC gambled everything on the small car boom—just as the market for them began to shrink. Without massive amounts of capital, the company cannot innovate, retool, automate and modernize to keep up with the Big Three's monopoly of the new car market.

AMC workers have their backs against the wall. The company is saying that the choice is either take the pay cut or the company will go under. The UAW leadership is telling the membership that they will have to take less than the Ford sellout package. But the thousands of men and women whose hard work has made AMC the country's 90th largest corporation have already had more than their fill of sacrificing for the company's profits. Fourteen one-week shutdowns in 1976 have cut deeply into the workers' earnings. Forty-five hundred are on layoff and the SUB fund (Supplemental Unemployment Benefits) has run dry.

But in the midst of AMC's constant reports of failing finances, the company announced 16% raises for the company's top executive officers and a \$78,000 bonus for the president of AM General, the corporation's bus and jeep manufacturing division which accounts for half of AMC's business and is doing 40% of the available full size bus manufacturing in the country. AMC chairman Roy Chapin will get a raise from \$225,000 to \$245,000 and President William Luneburg's paycheck went from \$190,000 to \$215,000 annually. In addition pensions guaranteeing the top officers three quarters of their present salaries for five years after retirement were approved.

Workers' Anger Grows

The proposal to freeze the old contract and the announcement of executive pay increases came in the same week and sparked a new wave of outrage among the workers. Newspaper articles about both were clipped and posted side by side in the plants. For many who had been willing to listen to the company's calls for belt-tightening, this was too much. All the talk in the shops was about the arrogance of the executive raises at a time when the workers are being told to carry an even heavier load. Many began to see the si-

tuation in clearer class terms than ever before.

The workers' feelings of anger picked up. "Our rent and fuel bills aren't frozen. They sure aren't freezing the price of coffee. We've got to live. We can't accept a freeze."

But with the possibility of AMC going under and shackled by their union officials, workers are unclear about how to fight, about what is the road forward. The auto section of the Milwaukee area United Workers Organization has united with the rank and file's feelings of anger and put out a fighting call "Vote NO on any attack on wages! No takeaways! To hell with their profits. We can't be driven down any more. We've got to get organized and fight for ourselves."

In meetings and discussions and in *Fighting Times*, their newsletter, UWO auto workers have fought to explain that it is not workers' demands that drive a company out of business, but the anarchy and competition of the capitalist system. And that the capitalists also compete to drive down the workers. "As workers we have no common interest with these bandits. They called for speedup to keep up with competition and it's killing us. They made record profits off us in '73 and '74 and then used it to automate our jobs and build a non-union plant in Richmond, Indiana. They said they'd eliminate 10% of the jobs through time study in the early '60s and now employment is cut in half. At Studebaker in the '50s, first the workers took a pay cut of a dollar an hour and then the plant closed down anyway. If they're going to go under we'd rather be making \$7 an hour than \$4. There is no guarantee they won't close. But there is a guarantee that if we don't fight, they'll push us down even further."

The cold fact is that to give an inch to the capitalists will only weaken the workers' strength and make it harder to fight the further attacks that are certain. It is necessary to battle now to be in a better position to battle later.

Role of Union Bureaucracy

One of the ways AMC and the whole bourgeoisie has tried to control the workers has been to buy out the local and International leadership. In the AMC locals they have created an elaborate bureaucracy of full time paid-by-the-company union officials. They never work, receive 75 cents more an hour and come in for all the overtime they want because they have super-seniority. They act more concerned with the company's profits than the stockholders. In fact the reason they delayed negotiations so long after the Big 3 settled last year was to wait until the company found out how many of their bank loans could be renewed. Their line on how workers can protect their jobs is "don't rock the boat." They constantly try to kill any idea that it is the workers' own struggle and unity that is key to protecting the interests of the rank and file.

But in the long experience of American Motors workers there is a strong basis to grasp the fact that this is the only way workers' interests can be protected and any gains can be won. AMC workers, particularly in Milwaukee, have a very militant history: sitdown

strikes in the 1930s, a sympathy strike in support of the one year long Allis Chalmers strike after World War 2, and job actions and wildcats that continued strong up through the sixties. Their uncompromising stand has won several important concessions (some of which have not yet been won throughout the auto industry), including the right to strike over grievances, a 1 to 35 steward ratio, and voluntary overtime. These are gains threatened by the current AMC offensive.

United Workers Organization

In the face of no information or leadership coming from the union officials and forecasts of doom coming from the company, the auto section of the United Workers Organization has taken up the task of leading auto workers to fight the attack. The whole UWO, which is composed of workers from many different industries throughout the Milwaukee area, has taken this struggle out as a battle of the whole class.

The battle shaping up now at AMC has been developing over a period of years. The company has been stepping up its attacks and efforts to demoralize and confuse the rank and file. But the resistance of the workers has become more organized, particularly as auto workers around *Fighting Times* and in the United Workers Organization have gained experience and begun to provide leadership in the workers' struggle.

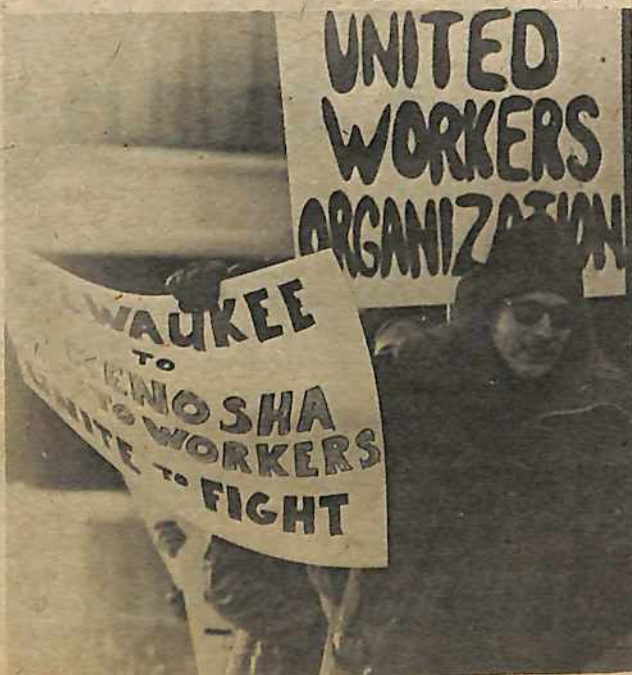
For the past year *Fighting Times*, which became the auto section of the Milwaukee area UWO, has united with the workers' spontaneous resistance to AMC's full-scale offensive. At first the fights were small and isolated, but the UWO linked up with them and worked to spark the key ones into issues in the whole plant. The organization grew as it built these battles, consolidating a core of active fighters and expanding its influence at the Milwaukee body plant.

When AMC announced it was phasing out the carpet department and contracting for carpets to J.P. Stevens, the notorious non-union outfit in the South, most workers at first felt little could be done. But as the UWO began a three month campaign agitating against the job loss and calling for a strike vote, the *Fighting Times* headline "Save the Carpet Department" became a rallying call and a focus for the thousands of individual abuses the men and women were catching on the assembly lines. The Milwaukee UAW leadership was hard put to hold back the movement that was developing. In a move to jump to the head of the fight and derail it, they put a strike vote over grievances on the local's agenda. They never really explained what the vote was for, claiming that it couldn't be around the carpet department because supposedly there's no right to strike over subcontracting. But the workers voted overwhelmingly for strike and the heat was clearly on both the union hacks and the company.

While the UAW leaders were waiting for the anger to die down, and with workers off for a month on their July 4th shutdown, AMC made a surprise announcement that 900 more jobs at the Milwaukee body plant would be eliminated because they were moving the Gremlin line to Kenosha. Anyone with less than 18 years seniority was to be phased out. Men who had started at AMC in 1959 didn't know if they'd be able to follow their jobs or if they'd ever be called back in Milwaukee. The shutdown of the Milwaukee Gremlin line looked to many like the first big move to phase out the whole plant.

As they moved to take up this struggle, the UWO developed a line which cut through the defeatism fed by the mass layoffs and placed the blame squarely on the system. The company claimed that putting the Gremlin line at the Kenosha assembly plant was to save the \$35 per car it cost to truck the bodies from Milwaukee. This, the company said, was a hard economic fact. It's a fact coming directly out of the criminal nature of the capitalist system. The line of the UWO was

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Resistance to AMC's attacks has been led by Milwaukee United Workers Organization.

OL Bloodies Own Nose With Its "Main Blow"

Over the past year the October League has repeatedly displayed the depth of its commitment to policies of social chauvinism and collaboration with the U.S. ruling class. Its early formulations, like "it is only by aiming the main blow against the revisionists and their Soviet social-imperialist masters that the fight to overthrow U.S. imperialism can be brought to successful conclusion," drew sharp criticism for their blatant betrayal of the task of making revolution in this country.

Rather than ditch this logically nonsensical and politically poisonous approach, the OL has chosen to make a veritable fetish of the concept of "the main blow." Having dipped briefly into Stalin's writings to bolster their own theoretical efforts, the October League now not only insists that the American working class (like the proletariat worldwide) must direct its main blow "internationally" at the USSR, but has adopted the "main blow" theory as the "fundamental concept" governing their recipe for the class struggle in the U.S.

The OL's initial use of the main blow formulation had nothing to do with Stalin's use of the term. Instead it made its appearance as one of a group of phrases—also including "main danger," "main source of war" and so on—which the OL uses to sabotage the Marxist-Leninist understanding that on a world scale the people face two main enemies today, U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism. All the OL's "main" this and "main" that is an attempt to peddle the view that the *real main enemy* is the USSR.

OL leader M. Klonsky summed up their crude early position in an "interview" in the *Call* on May 31 of last year (now reprinted in a pamphlet in which he says—attributing his views to the Chinese—that it is necessary to "direct the main blow against the Soviet Union because it is the most dangerous [superpower] and the main source of a new war." He explains that it is the most dangerous because 1) it is on the rise and more aggressive, 2) it has more guns, and 3) it has a socialist cover.

What this main blow meant in practice was dire warnings about and superficial potshots at the New Czars cluttering the pages of the *Call*, while time and again the U.S. imperialists were let off the hook. One of the best examples appeared in the April 1976 *Call*, whose title, "Soviet Guns Killed 150,000 Angolans," aptly summed up its content. If the article is to be believed, all the arms the U.S. supplied must have lacked firing pins and all the mercenaries and South African troops it financed must have been very poor shots, because only the Soviet Union is blamed for all the deaths in the civil war!

While this position was pretty clear, it was also pretty clear that it was wrong and, as pointed out in *Revolution* more than once, a social-chauvinist effort to prettify U.S. imperialism by directing everything against its Soviet rival. Quickly switching the terms of the struggle, the OL's chefs created a new improved version in a "theoretical" article in the Nov. 22 *Call*, by stirring in a dash of Stalin in an attempt to come up with a more palatable sauce for the rotten meat they are serving.

All this provides an unusual opportunity to further expose the OL's ragged line, and at the same time to learn some things about revolutionary strategy from these pitiful but pompous teachers by negative example. However, it is helpful before attempting to penetrate their confused formulations, multiple definitions and *a priori* dogmatism, to first investigate the background of the concept "main blow."

Stalin's Formulation

The most significant use of "main blow," in the sense the OL has tried to adopt it, appears in two articles written in 1924 by Joseph Stalin, the great leader of the international proletariat. In both these pieces, "Foundations of Leninism" and "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists" (both in *Collected Works*, Volume 6), Stalin was summing up the practice of the Bolshevik Party in making the Russian revolution. In both he laid great stress on the importance of isolating certain political parties along with the classes they represent because they had a following among the masses and *compromised* first with Czarism and after its fall in February 1917 with the bourgeoisie. He describes the Bolsheviks as having aimed their main blow in the period from the Russo-Japanese war to the February 1917 revolution at the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, represented by the Cadet Party, and in the period from February through October of 1917 at the petty-bourgeois democrats of the Socialist Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties.

The special danger posed by these compromising parties, Stalin wrote, was their hold on the masses of peas-

antry, the main ally of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle. The whole thing is summed up in a passage in "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists," in which Stalin asks the question, "What is the fundamental strategic rule of Leninism?" and answers it:

"It is the recognition of the following:

"1) The *compromising* parties are the most dangerous social support of the enemies of the revolution in the period of the approaching revolutionary outbreak;

"2) It is impossible to overthrow the enemy (tsarism or the bourgeoisie) unless these parties are isolated;

"3) The main weapons in the period of preparation for the revolution must therefore be directed towards isolating these parties, towards winning the broad masses of the working people away from them." (pp. 401-2)

In its one "theoretical" article to date on this subject, "The Direction of the Main Blow" (*Call*, Nov. 22, 1976), the October Leaguers quote this and associate themselves as closely as possible with Stalin's arguments. The article denounces "opportunists" like the RCP who either "misunderstand" or "blur over" this "fundamental concept."

The RCP cannot plead guilty to either of these charges. In fact, the RCP does not agree with the formulation in these articles by Stalin, let alone the mindless dogma that groups like the OL are attempting to create from it. Nor does the RCP feel that it is the basis of Lenin's line on revolutionary strategy or central to Stalin's great contributions. The RCP has put forward its views on revolutionary strategy many times, most recently in last month's *Revolution*:

"The correct stand of Marxist-Leninists is to unite all who can be united against the main enemy—which in this country can only be the U.S. bourgeoisie and which is the two superpowers internationally—to win over as much of the middle forces as possible and to isolate and expose enemy agents in the course of aiming the main blow at the main enemy." (p. 14)

Before the OL or anyone else leaps upon a soapbox to flail at the RCP for its heresy, its purposeful failure to embrace "the fundamental strategic rule of Leninism" itself, permit us to interject a few notes of caution. First, a minor one on the dangers of adhering too closely to the two words "main blow." For instance, Stalin himself in an article, "Concerning the Question of the Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists" (written one year earlier, in 1923) writes "The Bolshevik strategy...planned the revolution's *main blow* at *tsarism* along the line of a coalition between the proletariat and the peasantry, while the liberal bourgeoisie was to be neutralized." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 178, italics ours)

The question of the main blow, however, is not merely a semantic one. The question is whether or not the workers and revolutionaries of every country direct their fire against the main enemies they face and unite, all possible social forces, even wavering ones, against that enemy. A study of history has important lessons to offer.

International Experience

In summing up the history of the Chinese revolution, Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Communist Party do not uphold Stalin's "main blow" theory, which was in fact implemented in the early 1930s when the Party was in the hands of Wang Ming. One aspect of Wang Ming's "ultra-left" line at this time was to reject the middle forces in society and even condemn them as "the most dangerous enemy" of the revolution. This had the effect not of isolating them but of isolating the Communist Party instead! Wang Ming was defeated in inner-Party struggle in 1935, ending the implementation of the main blow theory of Stalin.

The Chinese summed up that Stalin's "main blow" formulation, especially as it was dogmatically applied, came down to a policy of isolating the middle-of-the-road social and political forces in any given revolutionary period. To this is counterposed the practice of the Chinese revolution—directing the main blow at the chief enemy to isolate it, while the middle forces, a policy is recommended of both uniting with them and struggling against them so they are at least neutralized and a basis provided for efforts to win them from neutrality to alliance with the revolutionary forces.

China was not the only place the "main blow" line was implemented. In the advanced capitalist countries around the same time as Wang Ming's domination of the Chinese Communist Party it took the form of the theory of "social fascism." This declared that the Social Democratic parties of Europe and North America were the main danger to the proletariat, not only serv-

ing as a cover for fascism but themselves being in essence fascist parties. It was certainly true that in several European nations the Social Democratic leadership was the main "social prop" for the rule of capital and in some cases even governed on behalf of their bourgeois masters. Such a situation did indeed call for particular effort to be spent exposing the Social Democratic leaders and winning the masses away from them.

Unfortunately, this task was too frequently taken up in the same subjective and dogmatic way that the OL has seized onto the "main blow." In Germany the results were disastrous. By the early 1930s the bourgeoisie in Germany had clearly decided that the Social Democrats were not adequate to grind-down the masses and defend the rule of capital, and had as a result chosen Hitler and the Nazi Party to do away with the democratic form of bourgeois dictatorship and replace it with fascism. Blinded by its dogmatic efforts to strike its main blow at the admittedly "compromising" Social Democrats, the Communist Party of Germany did not grasp the situation and even after Hitler's accession as Chancellor in January of 1933 attempted to follow a Comintern directive which said that the "task of the Communist Party remains, as before—to direct the chief blow, at the present stage, against Social Democracy."

What was tragic in Germany was farcical in the United States. For instance, in summing up the CP's participation in the 1928 elections Party leaders self-criticized that the Party "had failed to direct our chief struggle against the most dangerous enemy of the workers, Norman Thomas and the Socialist Party." This of an organization in such rapid decline it could only pull one quarter of the vote it had won only eight years earlier! In a long-established bourgeois "democracy" like the U.S. the bourgeoisie has a wide variety of social props and supports and the Socialist Party was at best marginally more key to the continued existence of bourgeois rule at that time than the revisionist CPUSA is today.

Fight Against Opportunism

In grasping the flaws in Stalin's theory of the main blow, it is important not to heave the baby out with the bath water. His call for resolute struggle against forces which are working to tie the masses to the ruling class delineates a most important task for communists. As Lenin put it, "the fight against imperialism is a sham and a humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism" (*Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, FLP, Peking, p. 153)

Without grasping this the proletariat will in fact be unable to split middle forces away from misleaders and the enemy camp, unable to strengthen the iron unity of the class and unable to develop Marxism in the struggle with opportunists. In seeking to neutralize or win over middle forces to the united front against imperialism, the proletariat's strategy for making revolution in the U.S., it will be necessary to unite at various times with many who compromise with the bourgeoisie. After all, only the working class has no interests whatsoever in common with the ruling class and only those armed with the science of Marxism-Leninism are capable of guiding its struggle through the twists and turns revolution takes.

In this process the proletariat combines unity and struggle, always attempting to win over or at least neutralize vacillating classes, groupings, etc., while exposing enemy agents, many of whom will be found leading or trying to lead the middle forces and even sections of the proletariat.

The whole question of neutralizing and winning over middle forces as well as of exposing and isolating enemy agents requires summing up and making clear to the broad masses and particularly to the workers the *class nature* and origins of the vacillation or treachery they face. The main way all this is done is in the course

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Revolution

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Main Blow...

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of the overall class struggle and in particular battles where correct Marxist tactics can help the workers to direct their fire against the main enemy and to understand and influence the responses and motion of other forces in society.

In addition, communists have the particular task of waging polemics and carrying out propaganda and agitation specifically aimed at revealing the social role of the middle forces and exposing enemy agents even in times when it is not a major question in the battles the class is waging at that point. This arms the workers to understand who it is possible to unite with strategically, who it is not, and why.

OL Makes a Mess of Stalin

Thus, a little study reveals some of the flaws and dangers that characterize the "main blow" formulation. Could it be that the leaders of the October League have grasped, rectified and guarded against these? Alas, this is hardly the case. In fact, even if Stalin's arguments are accepted in their entirety, the OL has made a sorry hash of his line. A combination of venal opportunism and mindless dogmatism has left the OL buried in paradoxes and uprooted from the real world. Worse still, once the confusion is dispelled, beneath it will be found the same old social-chauvinism and class collaboration, the same old lack of faith in the masses and attempt to misdirect their struggle. In this shift of gears, Klonsky's earlier explanation of why the main blow must be aimed at the Soviet Union has had to be revised. The OL's think tank has replaced it with a formulation too weird to summarize, so it is quoted verbatim:

"While opposing both superpowers as the main enemies, the main blow internationally must be directed at the Soviet social-imperialists. Soviet social-imperialism today is the greatest danger because in addition to being one of the main enemies it is also the main prop of imperialism. As long as the Soviet revisionists are able to portray the USSR as a 'socialist' country and the 'natural ally' of the world's people, the defeat of imperialism is impossible.

"In the case of the USSR, the ideological danger posed by modern revisionism has been augmented greatly by the fact that the social-imperialists are the more aggressive of the two superpowers." (*Call*, Nov. 22, p. 6)

Now, Soviet aggressiveness is only a secondary factor and what earns the USSR the main blow is the fact that, by virtue of its socialist cover, it is the "main prop of imperialism." This is just double-talk disguised as Marxist analysis and if it is squeezed a little to extract whatever actual meaning it may contain, it turns out to be worse than their earlier formulation.

What can it mean that Soviet social-imperialism is the "main prop of imperialism?" Let's consider the idea, using the key points in Stalin's definition.

Is it that the Soviet Union is "compromising" with U.S. imperialism? This was in fact its major aspect for a time in the 1960s, but now as a fully consolidated imperialist power cut out of the previous division of the world, the USSR is driven by the laws of capitalism itself to challenge ever more fiercely the U.S. ruling class

OL Evades Debate

Readers of *Revolution* will remember that in the January issue we reported that the RCP had accepted OL's challenge to a debate on the International Situation, only to be met by hemming and hawing by the October League. We regret to say that since then OL has continued to maintain a conspicuous silence on this question. We can only conclude that their challenge to the RCP (which was supposed to be "afraid" to debate OL) was pure bluster and that the October League is itself cowering in fear, lest their thoroughly opportunist line be exposed even more.

But while an embarrassed October League has been trying to pretend that they never made such a hoop-de-doo about debating the RCP, and has carefully avoided dealing with the substance of the line questions the RCP has raised, they have continued their campaign of lies, distortions, and vilification of the RCP. Naturally, the RCP can't be responsible for sorting out every misquote and distortion from the October League, for their ability to churn them out is boundless. We can only regret that they have so little confidence in the power of their own argument that they prefer to continue a course of lies and slander instead of debating the substantive issues straight up. But all that notwithstanding, we are still anxious to debate the OL and the offer to debate still stands.

for its empire. In fact, this is the very drive which led the OL to award the Soviets their "main blow" in the first place! Come, gentlemen, you cannot have it both ways—what is the essential feature of U.S.-Soviet relations? Is it compromise or contention?

Or is the Soviet Union not itself imperialist but only "compromising" with imperialism? The unfortunate OL has indirectly indicated this may be what it means. In an article in the December 13 *Call* denouncing their former central committee member Martin Nicolaus, they say he put forward the line that the main blow should be directed at bourgeois liberals, a line the OL says is wrong because "the liberals are not part of the mass movement against the ruling class—they are a part of the ruling class itself." (p. 6) If the liberals can't be the main prop in the U.S. because they are part of the bourgeoisie, then logically, the Soviet Union can't be the main prop internationally because it is part of the world-system of imperialism. But the OL insists that it is! Here is another cake you cannot both have and eat, gentlemen.

Is it the case that U.S. imperialism—or other imperialist countries—is "impossible to overthrow" unless the USSR is "isolated?" This is just their old argument again, in even cruder form—set aside the struggle against the U.S. bourgeoisie and concentrate on the New Czars, and somehow that is supposed to make revolution in the U.S.

Does the OL wish to admit that the ruling classes in individual imperialist countries can be overthrown without the complete "isolation" of the USSR, and argue instead that it is only the international system of imperialism that is "impossible to overthrow" without it? This is nothing but hot air. The international system of imperialism is not an abstract concept existing only in the minds of Marxists. There is a real imperialist system in the real world and it is made up of real imperialist countries. If it is granted that the U.S. ruling class—and those of its allies like Japan and West Germany—can be overthrown without the USSR being completely "isolated," what is left? The USSR. So Soviet social-imperialism is the main prop of Soviet social-imperialism? A masterful contribution to Marxist thought!

The Airy World of Idealism

Moreover, the OL, by insisting that *as long as* the Soviets can still pose as socialists "the defeat of imperialism is impossible," assigns that defeat to the realm of the unattainable. To try and make this kind of com-

plete exposure a precondition is sheer idealism.

Exposing the class nature of the New Czars is a very important task at the present time and will remain such right up to and even after their overthrow. The more that people in the USSR and worldwide grasp the true nature of the Soviet Union, the more resolutely they will struggle against it and the sooner it will be overthrown; but more and more people will be drawn into struggle against the Soviet rulers even before they grasp its capitalist and imperialist character and even at the point of its overthrow there will still be people who don't have a scientific understanding of social-imperialism. The same is true of U.S. imperialism. What the OL has done is to embrace idealism completely and place the struggle primarily in the realm of ideas.

Thus the OL's adoption and "creative" application of Stalin's line on the main blow has not provided the hoped-for protection for their line but sent them tumbling pell-mell into a realm of fantasy and gibberish. The only defense of the OL's opportunism this formulation provides is a thin mist of confusion.

Even this is absent in much of their other commentary on the main blow, where no pseudo-Marxist puffery is offered to cover what's going on. Take one of the OL's several attempts to hit at the successful conference in November 1976 on the international situation. With their usual disregard for facts—not to mention willingness to concoct them—the article asserts that it was "the RCP's line that the international movement should direct its main blow at the U.S. rather than at the Soviet social-imperialists." (*Call*, Dec. 20, 1976, p. 7)

First of all the OL knows perfectly well that the RCP says no such thing, but that on a world scale there are *two* main enemies and, since revolution is made country by country, in the U.S. our main blow should be struck at our own imperialists. Second, the OL's own formulation here is very revealing. They seem unable to comprehend that the international communist movement is actually not limited to working to direct its main blow at *one* superpower, and its theoretical tasks are not limited to choosing which one should be the target. Rather, the international communist movement has the responsibility of combatting and exposing *both* the main enemies of the proletariat and peoples of the world, while working to make revolution in each country, which can even involve communists directing their blows at the overthrow of other enemies than the rulers of the two superpowers!

New Formula, Same Old Social-Chauvinism

The new version of the "main blow" theory has not resulted in any real changes in the OL's practice around the international situation. This continues to consist in the main of endless superficial tirades against the evil Soviets, while the U.S. imperialists receive a slap on the wrist, if that. The OL's propaganda on the USSR, formerly limited to a thoroughly revisionist "analysis" of the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, has, since Nicolaus' departure, been nonexistent. And, of course, the fact that its new verbiage has not altered the OL's social-chauvinist position is made clear by its frequent fretting about U.S. imperialism's inability to stand up to the Soviet Union. In Klonsky's interview, he says that for American communists, the main blow means more than just exposing the USSR and the CPUSA: "It also means we must firmly oppose those in the U.S. who appease or conciliate to Soviet social-imperialism and who thereby bring on the war that much sooner."

It seems the OL shares the analysis of the revisionist CPUSA that the U.S. ruling class is split into pro-detente and anti-detente wings. They merely disagree on which imperialists are wearing the white hats and which are "especially dangerous." (*Call*, Nov. 1, 1976) The OL has embraced the gangster logic of imperialism itself and is in mortal danger of following it all the way to its logical conclusion—calling for increased U.S. armaments and national unity behind a strong anti-Soviet government as a way to "postpone war." In fact they have already taken some big steps in this direction such as refusing to condemn U.S. arms shipments to such anti-Soviet fighters as the Shah of Iran.

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Publications

- **War and Revolution.** Seven articles from *Revolution*. 50¢.
- **The Mass Line.** Three articles from *Revolution*. 25¢.
- **Elections '76: Capitalists' Desperate Deceit vs. Workers' Growing Struggle.** 15¢.
- **Auto and the Workers Movement.** 75¢.
- **200 Years is Long Enough!** 50¢.
- **CUBA: The Evaporation of a Myth.** Reprinted from *Revolution*. In English and Spanish with footnotes in English. 50¢.
- **Our Class Will Free Itself and All Mankind.** Speech by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the RCP, USA on the occasion of the founding of the Party. 75¢.
- **Programme and Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.** \$1.

Bulk rates available on request. Please prepay all orders to RCP Publications, PO Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654.

The pamphlets **How Socialism Wipes Out Exploitation** and **The Party—Invincible Proletarian Vanguard** are no longer in print. The pamphlets **200 Years is Long Enough!**, **Classes and Class Struggle** and **Correct Line Achieved Through Study, Struggle, Criticism** are in very short supply and soon will be out of print. Supplies of these pamphlets should be ordered accordingly.

(The following publications were originally published by the Revolutionary Union and adopted by the Party)

- **How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union and What This Means for the World Struggle.** \$2.50.
- **The Chicano Struggle and the Struggle for Socialism.** \$1.

The following reprints are in both English and Spanish:

- **Revolution: Only Road to Women's Liberation.** 25¢.
- **Proletarian Dictatorship vs. Bourgeois "Democracy."** 10¢.
- **Classes and Class Struggle.** 10¢.
- **Correct Line Achieved Through Study, Struggle, Criticism.** 10¢.

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Ashby Leach is now on tour, speaking on his case.

Leach Campaign Focuses Anger of Veterans

The struggle to free Ashby Leach is picking up steam. A major campaign by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) has been launched around the case. The Ashby Leach Defense Committee (ALDC), composed of Ashby Leach's family, friends, supporters and VVAW is coordinating a defense effort nationwide. Ashby Leach, released on bond at Thanksgiving when his bail was reduced from \$500,000 to \$100,000, is adding even more fuel to the fire.

A key part of building the campaign to Free Ashby Leach is a nationwide speaking tour for Ashby sponsored by the VVAW and the ALDC and co-sponsored by the Revolutionary Student Brigade on a number of college campuses. In addition to building support for the nationwide campaign, the tour will also be pointing towards a national demonstration to be held in Cleveland at the beginning of the trial (which at this point might be in early April). As early installments of the tour Ashby Leach made appearances in Cleveland, Milwaukee and Beckley, West Virginia in December.

The speaking tour and building a broad campaign to free Ashby Leach have a lot of importance. Leach's case is a clear and concrete exposure of the system and the way it abuses veterans. Ashby Leach, who served in Vietnam and won a Purple Heart, took over the Chessie headquarters (the country's third largest private railroad company) after a five year battle to get his GI benefits from the company. He demanded that Chessie extend all benefits of the GI Bill to its veterans and that past employees who have been cheated of these benefits be reimbursed. (For more information see *Revolution* for October 15, 1976 and December 1976.)

This takeover plus Ashby Leach's continued outspoken defense of his action represent a concentration of the anger felt by millions of vets around the country—guys who themselves have been forced to fight for imperialism's gains and then brutalized by the same system at home. Anger runs high at the system which uses veterans once and then throws them away. It is this anger which Ashby Leach brought out in a recent speech, saying, "They told me I didn't understand big business. But I understand that while I was picking up bodies in Vietnam they were picking up profits from a war-inflated economy."

For this reason the basis exists to make the struggle to free Ashby Leach a broad social question. It is a potential rallying point around which veterans and others can come together around a case that concentrates commonly felt injustices and outrage to deliver still sharper blows against the imperialist system.

The potential of the force that can be unleashed by this case came out the day that Ashby Leach took over the Chessie headquarters when over one thousand people, without any prior organizing, gathered outside. Some raised clenched fists and cheered.

Support Expressed

This same kind of mass support for Ashby Leach has come out on many other occasions. The Leach family and ALDC have received scores of phone calls of support and encouragement, as well as visits, that show just how deeply people feel about what Leach did. In Huntington, a Chessie telephone operator with nearly 20 years, and soon to be laid off with other operators, came after the midnight shift to ALDC's first demonstration. "They just want to fill their own bags," she said about Chessie, "they don't care if we starve." At the Chessie

Yards in Huntington, West Virginia, workers lined up to sign the petition when Leach's wife, Linda, and another ALDC member went there at shift change.

One of the most moving examples is that of a widow and sister of a recently deceased Vietnam veteran who came by the house to donate \$35 to the ALDC. They said that he would have wanted Leach to have the money.

It is exactly this broad latent support for Ashby Leach that the bourgeoisie fears and which has determined their tactics so far. Ever since the takeover they have been spreading lies and slanders in an attempt to isolate Leach and make him someone who "had a point to make...but he chose a stupid way" to get attention. (Cleveland Plain Dealer)

The most vicious part of this campaign has been the attempt by Chessie and the state of Ohio to declare Ashby "incompetent" or "insane" to prevent his case from ever coming up to trial. One alternative they presented to him sounds like a take off from *Catch 22*. As Ashby Leach relates it, "I was examined by 15 psychiatrists and one shrink...Do you know what the shrink told me? He said I could only be sane if I'd plead guilty by reason of insanity."

But what these tactics reveal more than anything else is the fear the bourgeoisie has that Ashby Leach's support will mushroom out with his action and the movement to free him, giving focus to the anger and frustration of millions of veterans and others. Unfortunately for them the speaking tour has already begun to take Ashby Leach's example out much more broadly to the American people.

On December 17, Ashby spoke to an enthusiastic group of veterans, students and miners at Antioch College in Beckley, West Virginia. Following the speech there was lots of discussion continuing until the janitor came to close up the building. On everyone's mind was the question of what they could do to help and as a first step the group decided to form a chapter of ALDC, the second in West Virginia.

The speech in Milwaukee on December 19 was preceded the day before by a car convoy through the city. Stopping briefly at the Navy Station, a VVAW member gave a short rap about support for Ashby Leach and how we won't fight another rich man's war—it generated struggle in the Navy crowd, with the career Navy men putting down the action and the enlisted men greeting the action with clenched fists of support. On the following day, Ashby spoke to a crowd of 75 workers, veterans and their families.

Tour Schedule

A tentative schedule has been worked out for the rest

of the speaking tour, although it depends in part on the scheduling of pretrial hearings:

January 17-22: New York City

January 24-30: Ohio (Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, Cleveland)

January 31-February 5: West Virginia, Cleveland

February 6-19: East Coast (Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk)

February 21-28: West Coast

March 1-6: Cleveland, West Virginia, Detroit

March 7-13: Milwaukee, Twin Cities, Madison

March 14-19: Cleveland, West Virginia

March 20-25: St. Louis, Chicago

In addition to this other plans for the campaign are beginning to take shape. Pickets are being planned at Chessie facilities around the country. A national petition is being circulated demanding Free Ashby Leach, that Chessie honor the G.I. Bill for all its veterans, and extend and expand the G.I. Bill. A letter writing campaign for these demands is getting off the ground. Letters can be addressed to the Office of the Prosecutor, Cuyahoga County Court, 1200 Ontario, Cleveland, OH 44113 and to Cyrus Eaton, Chairman of the Board Emeritus, Chessie System, Room 1319 Terminal Tower Building, Cleveland, OH 44101. Be sure to send the ALDC a copy. Contributions can also be sent to the Ashby Leach Defense Committee at its Cleveland address. There is also the national demonstration being called by the ALDC and the VVAW in Cleveland on the first day of the trial.

For more information or literature about the campaign, get in touch with ALDC or VVAW. In Cleveland write ALDC and VVAW, PO Box 09100, Cleveland, OH 44109 or call (216) 741-3796. In Huntington write ALDC, PO Box 2403, Huntington, West Virginia 25709 or call (304) 522-1309. The VVAW National Office address is PO Box 20184, Chicago, IL 60620; phone (312) 651-1583. ■



Milwaukee car caravan builds national campaign to free Ashby Leach.

Outrageous 2nd Carter-Artis Frameup

After weeks of publicity and pages of testimony, the retrial of Rubin Hurricane Carter and John Artis is over. And for the second time, they have been found guilty of crimes they did not commit.

The trial played like a Perry Mason drama. It seemed like every day some government witnesses would testify that they had lied three times before, but this time they were "really" telling the truth—cross their heart and hope to die. The New Jersey government spared no expense to put on a show, saying that this trial would finally get at the facts.

Hurricane Carter was a well known and respected boxer back in the early 1960s. And he won even more respect from Blacks for standing up and speaking out for the right of Blacks to fight back against their oppression. He and John Artis were first framed up for a triple murder in 1966. It was a time of heroic struggles by Blacks all over America against discrimination, a struggle for liberation which shook the rulers of this country down to their socks.

In pinning the murders on Carter in the first trial, the state found a way to "solve" a brutal crime. More than finding a scapegoat, they used the trial to fill the air with slanders and distortions about the struggles of Black people. They painted the righteous aspirations of Black people for freedom "racist" and said that whites are the target. They said that the murders were a racial revenge for the earlier killing of a Black in New Jersey. They raised the vision of Blacks with guns run-

ning around killing innocent whites, and said that by convicting Carter, the community was saved.

Years later, some of the truth started to come out. The witnesses for the prosecution had lied. They were cheap crooks who were promised a light deal if they got Carter. And the judge was in on the fix. The nature of justice in this country was being exposed before the eyes of all.

Even with this, the state kept Carter and Artis locked up. It took demonstrations of thousands, marches and rallies, a giant movement that swept the area with a built up anger at years of oppression and being railroaded in the courts, to force the government to let Carter and Artis out of jail.

And even then, they used it to say that bourgeois justice can work, that if a mistake was made, it can be corrected. Not a word about nine years out of the lives of two innocent men and their families. And the state would not free Carter and Artis. They instead set up a new trial, to reinforce the lie that justice was being done.

The second trial was like the first. More hysterical lies like the first. More hysterical lies about race war and murder for revenge. More witnesses lying. More judges siding with the prosecution. It was a snowjob and a frameup. And the state got its guilty verdict again.

One indication of the strength of the mass movement to free Carter and Artis was the number of superstars and petty bourgeois forces who flocked to lend their names in the struggle, helping to publicize the frameup of the first trial. Unfortunately, as soon as Carter and Artis were released, their defense committee dissolved and no calls were made for people to continue to demonstrate and fight. With the momentum lost, militant mass action died down, and the superstars left the scene.

The main thrust of the defense now centered around the legal defense instead of mobilizing popular support for Carter and Artis. This resulted in the two being put on the tender mercies and "fairness" of the capitalists' courts instead of being based in the organized support of the masses. This made the job of the prosecution all the easier.

Both trials were nothing more than the owning class' justice being used against Blacks, just like it always has been. The railroading of Carter and Artis is another crime of the imperialists. The mass movement that grew and forced the bourgeoisie to go through the farce of a retrial is another indication that the people will settle accounts with these criminals. ■

Oil Tanker Wrecks Expose Criminal Profit Drive

Within a three week period in December at least eight oil tankers were involved in accidents in or near U.S. waters. Dozens of seamen were killed and injured. Most attention was focused on the grounding and breakup of the Liberian registered oil tanker *Argo Merchant* a few days before Christmas.

This wreck caused no deaths, but spilled 7.5 million gallons of thick crude oil into the Atlantic Ocean 27 miles off Cape Cod and is now said to be the biggest oil spill disaster near the American coast in history. Even though much of the oil eventually drifted out to sea, scientists agree that the long-term effects of the spill are unknown and dangerous.

At the very least the fishing industry in New England will be damaged. The Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Coalition has filed a \$60 million damage suit against the owner of the *Argo Merchant* and its captain. A vast quantity of fish larvae that hatch in the area, one of the most productive fishing grounds in the world, will be smothered by floating oil. A substantial part of the future cod, haddock, flounder and halibut populations will be wiped out.

Two days after the *Argo Merchant* ran aground another Liberian oil tanker, the *San Sinena*, exploded and burned in the Los Angeles harbor, killing six seamen, with two others still missing, almost surely dead. This accident highlighted the dangers involved in unloading oil tankers. The *San Sinena* had just unloaded and was starting to refill when a spark ignited the left-over fumes in the oil tanks. There have been 104 similar explosions, making this the number one cause of death for seamen. Even though pumping inert gas into the empty oil tanks has been found to greatly decrease the chances of such explosions the shipping companies try to avoid this safety procedure to cut costs.

The Los Angeles harbor may be the scene of more such accidents in the future. The Standard Oil Company has been trying to ride over all objections to build a tanker terminal there that could unload up to 700,000 barrels of Alaskan crude oil a day beginning in 1978. Less than half the proposed Alaska oil fleet is even equipped with inert gas systems.

In addition to these accidents the Panamanian tanker, the *Grand Zenith*, sank off the New England coast with no sign of her Taiwanese crew being found. The Liberian ship the *Mary Ann* had an explosion on board on January 7 while cleaning her empty cargo tanks about 300 miles off the Virginia coast. Several crewmen were injured. Another Liberian registered oil tanker, the *Olympic Games*, ran aground in the Delaware River, spilling 138,000 gallons of oil which endangered thousands of ducks, geese, and other waterfowl wintering in the Delaware estuary.

1976—Most Accidents Ever

Accidents involving oil tankers are rapidly becoming a way of life on the oceans. Only some particularly spectacular wrecks like that of the *Argo Merchant* reach the headlines but in fact groundings, explosions, death and injury at sea are common occurrences and they are on the increase in recent years. Without even counting the wreck of the *Argo Merchant* and other recent accidents, the first nine months of 1976 set a record for both oil tanker losses and the amount of oil spilled into the ocean. These accidents are the result of a system which puts profit in command of everything from drilling oil, shipping it to refining it.

The whole oil supertanker business is an especially vivid view of the workings of capitalism. The capitalists are always looking for places to invest their money where it will turn in the maximum profit. Ten years ago some of the biggest banks and financiers around the world were all smiles because of what they saw in the business of shipping oil. The Mideast war had closed the Suez Canal and worldwide oil consumption was rising rapidly. Big profits were being made and there was a big demand for more oil tankers. Chase Manhattan, the First National City Bank and other finance capitalists invested billions upon billions of dollars building hundreds of oil "supertankers." Since it was superprofitable everybody built supertankers.

But something happened. The capitalists faced an

archy on the market in competition with other capitalists. Each capitalist raced for a big killing in the market and the result was the production of a glut of oil tankers. Demand levelled off. As a result what was once an area of high profits has turned into its opposite. One third of the world's oil tanker capacity is now surplus. Those ships that sail do so at much lower rates. Some of the world's biggest shippers are on the verge of bankruptcy and some of the banks holding \$35 billion in tanker mortgages are in trouble.

To keep their rates of profit up and survive in the face of cutthroat competition on the high seas the capitalists are going all-out to slash costs. They are trying to shortcut all kinds of safety procedures, break maritime unions and lower the wages of seamen. Huge oil tankers are being put out to sea with crucial navigational instruments not functioning. Many of the biggest tankers experience complete power failures because they are built as cheaply as possible with only one steam boiler, one propeller and one rudder. The shipping capitalists are willing to sacrifice both the lives of their seamen and vast pollution of the environment in their mad scramble for profits.

Despite the fact that many of the recent accidents have involved ships registered in other countries, U.S. flagships are not immune, and recently one U.S. flagship cracked up. More oil is spilled annually in U.S. waters from U.S. ships than from foreign flagships. And the shipping of Alaskan oil in the near future is to be done with a fleet that is downright dangerous.

"Flags of Convenience"

But neither is it a coincidence that many of the recent accidents have involved ships flying foreign flags, particularly the Liberian flag. For the capitalist shippers, shipping by "flags of convenience" is a fine way to turn in a profit. U.S. oil companies, for example, which own about one third of the tankers, sail seven eighths of their ships under foreign flags.

The profitability of this was graphically illustrated by the *Argo Merchant*. This ship made up the entire assets of a dummy corporation, which of course is bankrupt now that the ship crashed—making it immune from damage suits. With the complex of legal entanglements made possible through Liberian registry it is almost impossible to find out who actually owned the ship.

For the U.S. capitalists there are many reasons to fly foreign flags on their ships. By doing this they can get around an American law which says American flag vessels must be built in American shipyards, and in this way they have their ships built wherever the wages and costs are the lowest. In addition under this arrangement shippers get around the U.S. maritime unions, hiring foreign seamen for about one sixth the wages of an American seaman. American ships under a foreign flag pay only minimal taxes. They also sail into ports where "American" ships may be excluded—such as Arab ports during the boycott. It is estimated to cost 60% more for a shipper to fly an American flag.

Liberia is one country with particularly profitable shipping arrangements for the capitalists. It has long been a stronghold for U.S. imperialist interests on the African continent. For a long time Liberia had almost no marine safety regulations, which of course meant extra profits for the shippers by cutting down on equipment and repairs. Maybe that is because American "aid" helped write Liberian corporate laws or that the powerful Liberian Shipping Council includes as its members Exxon and other U.S. oil companies. In fact, American funds built the Liberian port of Monrovia (named for U.S. President James Monroe) after World War 2. Today Liberia has the world's largest merchant fleet—35 to 40% of its tonnage is American owned and another 10% is American financed.

With safety conditions deteriorating, wages being held down, and other attacks escalating there is a real need for American seamen to intensify their struggle against the shipping companies. And this needs to take place with an eye towards linking up with the struggle of seamen of all nationalities around such burning issues as safety and union wages.

But the Maritime Union leadership takes a different stand in trying to lead this struggle. Following the explosion of the *San Sinena* members of the National

Maritime Union, the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union, and the Los Angeles AFL-CIO demonstrated at the site for tougher safety standards. It would certainly not be a bad thing to fight for a uniform set of marine safety standards worldwide or even to require ships coming into U.S. ports to live up to U.S. safety standards. But the leaders of the Maritime Union put fighting for better safety in the context of their constant campaign to "ship on American ships."

Pointing to the fact that the "flag of convenience" arrangement has lowered ship safety standards and increased widespread unemployment for American seamen, they call for union members to concentrate on legislation that would require a fixed percentage of American cargo to be shipped in American ships. In 1974, after pouring untold amounts of union funds into lobbying for it, the leaders of the Maritime Union helped push such a bill through Congress, but President Ford vetoed it.

Any program that implies a unity of interests between American seamen and American shippers against foreign shipping is downright treachery. "Foreign" shipping isn't responsible for the recent rash of accidents—especially not when such a high percentage of "foreign" shipping is actually financed by American capital. When criticized for their regulations, a Liberian official recently pleaded that if his country greatly increased its marine and safety regulations all that would happen is "flag of convenience" ships would register in another country. And, because of dog eat dog capitalism, he is right. A few years ago the Panamanian flag was the most common in the world of maritime shipping but many shippers registered in Liberia when conditions more favorable to their profits opened up there.

What the whole "flag of convenience" arrangement shows is precisely how absurd the whole approach of the top labor officials is. Capital always seeks the maximum profit with no regard for national boundaries and still less regard for the workers anywhere—the "home" country included. Attempts to legislate against the export of capital becomes all the more ludicrous in the shipping industry which by its nature is international and capitalists can change the "nationality" of their ships by mere bookkeeping arrangements.

What also stands out sharply in the shipping industry is that while capital is international, so is the working class, and herein lies the ability of the workers to wage successful struggles against the shipowners. While only the overthrow of capitalism can fundamentally alter the picture in the shipping industry and all of society, there are concrete steps that can be taken to win some victories against the modern pirates of the seas and the misery and death they bring to the men who move the ships.

Maritime workers have a long tradition of international solidarity, and among the sailors and longshoremen the world over are many of the most class conscious workers. This great strength must be mobilized and brought to bear against the capitalists and not divided or led chasing a mirage as the leaders of the maritime unions are intent on doing.

These recent wrecks and oil spills, which are sure to continue, are the inevitable product of a system of international piracy and plunder, and point sharply to the need and opportunity to unite many people in struggle against the capitalists. ■



The breakup of the *Argo Merchant* (top) led to the biggest oil spill ever off U.S. coasts. The explosion of the *San Sinena* in San Pedro, California resulted in eight deaths.

Saudia Arabia Breaks Ranks

OPEC Price Hike Hits Imperialism

The thirteen member nations of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) met in mid-December to set new price increases for their oil. This has brought a new round of dire predictions from U.S. newspapers and business that inflation is going to get yet another boost. The image of "greedy" Arab countries about to stick their hands deeper into the pocket-books of the average American citizen is painted in vivid colors. Politicians raise new cries of economic blackmail and the OPEC nations are accused of robbing working people in the U.S. and around the world of jobs and buying power. Meanwhile U.S. capitalists piously point out that it is the "underdeveloped countries of the third world that are the hardest hit by the OPEC moves."

This concern for the third world is an obvious sham and an attempt to break the support that OPEC has received from such countries because of their success in uniting to deal from a position of greater strength. In fact OPEC has sparked the formation of similar organizations of underdeveloped countries to achieve greater control over their natural resources and hit at the stranglehold of the imperialist powers over their economies. And OPEC members last year set up an \$800 million special fund to help offset the effects of the higher oil prices to the underdeveloped countries. At the December meeting in Qatar another \$800 million was contributed to this fund, an amount the OPEC oil ministers claimed was equal to their increased prices from the latest hikes.

Trouble for Imperialists

There is no question however that the actions of OPEC have had a serious effect on the imperialists, particularly in Western Europe and Japan, which have little or no oil resources of their own (although Britain is placing great hopes in their new North Sea fields). But for the imperialists to blame Kuwait, Libya, Algeria, Venezuela, Gabon, Nigeria, Indonesia, Ecuador, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar for the unemployment and economic crisis caused by the capitalist system is like a thief running away with your wallet yelling "Thief!" to confuse people and ease his getaway. The oil companies in particular have used OPEC as a scapegoat to cover their own enormous increases in prices and profits.

All their moaning and doomsday predictions are a far cry from the swift and heavy-handedness with which the U.S. once moved to put down any challenge to its unbridled control of the oil of the Middle East. When a nationalist government moved to take over U.S. and British oil holdings in Iran in the early 1950s it was overthrown by a CIA coup and an editorial in the *New York Times* supporting this action arrogantly warned that "underdeveloped countries with rich resources now have an object lesson in the heavy cost that must be paid by one of their number which goes berserk with fanatical nationalism."

But the world situation has changed dramatically in the last 20 years and, although the U.S. imperialists are using every maneuver they can to maintain their domination and have hardly put down their weapons, these changes are clearly reflected in the Middle East. U.S. oil company holdings have been nationalized in almost every member country of OPEC and the oil producing countries have more than quintupled the price of a barrel of oil in the last seven years. It is very clear why the capitalists would like nothing more than to see it completely destroyed.

For decades the seven major oil companies in the world (five of which are U.S. owned) had almost unlimited access to the oil fields of the Middle East. They were able to force oil concessions from weak and reactionary Middle East rulers for only pennies a barrel. Up until 1950, for example, Saudi Arabia got 21 cents a barrel royalty on oil taken from its soil while the oil companies made more than \$1.10 profit per barrel. Countries had no control over the rate at which the companies pumped out their oil resources.

And even when the governments of producer countries demanded a greater share of the oil profits, the companies quickly found a way to do this without cutting their own profits. The U.S. government gave the oil companies a foreign tax credit which allowed tax payments to foreign governments to be deducted from income tax payments to the U.S. So when Aramco, the consortium of Standard Oil of New Jersey, Texaco, Mobil and Standard Oil of California that directly controlled Saudi Arabian oil production, agreed to the

royal family's demand for a 50-50% share of oil revenues, what had previously been called royalty payments were now called taxes and written off by the companies. Oil company payments to Saudi Arabia jumped from \$39.2 million in 1949 to \$111.7 million in 1950, but their tax payments to the U.S. treasury declined by the same amount.

Profit Bonanza for Oil Companies

Middle East Oil was a profit bonanza for the oil companies. Between 1948 and 1960 alone they extracted almost \$13 billion in profits from their Middle East oil investments. The U.S. oil giants, which also control the lion's share of domestic production, derived over half their profits from their foreign income. The reason was not hard to see. A Chase Manhattan Bank study of the early 1960s estimated that the cost of producing a barrel of Middle East Oil at 16 cents as compared with \$1.73 a barrel for U.S. oil. This explains why the big oil companies actually discouraged and even cut back on U.S. oil production for more than 20 years. In the 1950s and 1960s the major oil companies capped over 20,000 flowing wells in California alone, with an estimated capacity of 5 billion barrels. And for a long time they actively opposed the development of alternate energy sources, although this has changed a bit since the oil companies now control most other energy sources, such as coal.

The oil producing countries, like other natural resource rich underdeveloped and former colonial countries, have been caught in a scissors that was literally cutting off any possibility of their growth and development. They were forced to sell their oil to the companies at below value and to buy manufactured goods from the industrialized countries at inflated prices. As a result they were being drained of their natural resources and getting next to nothing in return.

The immediate impetus that gave rise to OPEC is itself a blatant example of how the oil companies exploited the producer countries. In 1959 and 1960 the oil companies arbitrarily cut the official "posted price" of oil on which their payments to the oil producing countries were based. This was done to save the companies from losses due to a drop in the actual market price of oil caused by oversupply. But for the first time the oil producing countries were able to take effective concerted action to force the companies to reinstate the original price.

Development of OPEC

Throughout the '60s, OPEC members demanded higher prices for their oil, control over production levels and a greater share of ownership of the extracting and refining facilities. But it was really in the last six years that member nations have been able to exert significant political as well as economic power in their dealing with the oil companies and the imperialist countries. In 1973 the Arab oil producers slapped an embargo on all oil shipments to the U.S. and other Western countries, demanding an immediate end to military resupply of Israel during the October War and some move by the U.S. to force Israel to return occupied Arab lands.

The Arab boycott and the subsequent quadrupling of oil prices by OPEC in December of 1973 and early '74 brought a quick response from Japan and the Western European imperialists. There was a chorus of criticism of Israel and professions of support for the return of occupied Arab territory and recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people. Even the U.S. oil company spokesmen called on the U.S. government to take a more "evenhanded" approach in the Middle East. Individual Western countries quickly broke rank against a U.S.-inspired attempt to force a counter, buyers boycott.

In spite of the growing economic and political clout of OPEC, capped by the embargo and the 1973-74 price hike, the major oil companies have worked fairly successfully to turn a bad situation for themselves into a short term advantage, although at the expense of the American people and even the rest of the U.S. capitalist class who have had to foot the bill for the increased cost of energy. They have geared their strategy to making up for OPEC enforced losses at the production end of the oil industry with tremendous increases at the refining and marketing end. The Arab oil boycott was not particularly successful in actually turning off the

oil spigot in the U.S. (in 1973 Arab oil only accounted for 13% of the oil imported from abroad). There was some actual shortage of particular types of oil, but oil imports for the last three months of 1973 were 32% higher than for the same three months of 1972. Yet the oil companies mounted an hysterical campaign about energy shortages and blamed the Arabs and OPEC for driving oil prices through the ceiling.

Phony Energy Crisis

This energy shortage was a fraud and a phony, but there was a crisis in the sense that oil company profits had been eroded to such an extent that, under the laws of capitalism, they could not and would not make oil available at the previous prices. This was not caused by, but it was certainly intensified by the strength of the oil producing countries.

Oil is an extremely capital intensive industry, and although the companies were making tremendous amounts of money, their actual rate of profit had been declining markedly because of the capital investment required. Several years before the Arab oil boycott the oil companies, driven by this necessity, had been talking up an "energy shortage" and planning to cut back on production in order to jack up their prices. These plans coincided with the oil embargo, which the companies were quick to use for this purpose.

In fact there was not an "energy" crisis at all, but a profit-crisis. OPEC had restricted the profitability of oil production in the Middle East to a degree and the existing prices for domestic oil did not make it profitable enough for the oil companies to increase U.S. production. While OPEC's united action was ominous for the oil companies' longer term interests, they were also able to use the Arab oil boycott to cover for a huge price increase that resulted in a 51% profit rise for the oil companies in 1973 over 1972.

The U.S. produces 60% of its oil requirements domestically. But when OPEC raised their oil taxes 17 cents a gallon in 1973-74, the gasoline prices at tanks in the U.S. rose almost 30 cents a gallon—not just for gasoline made from imported oil, but for domestically produced gas as well. Natural gas and coal, controlled by these same oil companies and entirely produced domestically have increased almost as rapidly in price.

This is exactly what the oil companies are trying to do again around the current OPEC oil price increases. The price rise coming out of the December OPEC meeting in Qatar would amount to about 6/10 of a cent on a gallon of gas produced from the OPEC countries. But the oil companies have already announced that gasoline prices will jump one to two cents per gallon—on all gasoline. And the increase on heating fuel will be even greater. Who pockets the difference? The big oil companies.

Capitalist Class Hurt

The capitalist class as a whole is by no means happy to see its energy costs skyrocket so that the oil companies can increase their profits. And the continued import of increasing quantities of OPEC oil has had a negative effect on the U.S. balance of payments. This has created some sharp contradictions between the oil companies and other sections of capitalist industry and probably accounts for the continuation of price controls on oil products (with the exception of heating fuel). But the oil companies have made it clear that they are not going to increase domestic production unless price controls are removed and they can jack up their profits. The U.S. capitalist class as a whole is in a tough position, and are fuming about OPEC.

Continued on Page 18



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Liberation forces in Zimbabwe have not put down the gun while fighting on the diplomatic front.

Armed Struggle Continues

Zimbabwe Battles On Many Fronts

In the last year, great advances have been won by the people of Zimbabwe in their struggle to liberate their country from the clutches of the white settler Rhodesian regime headed by Ian Smith. Recently, attention has been focused on Geneva where negotiations have gone on between representatives of the liberation struggle and Smith. The negotiations were adjourned in December and in January, due to the obstinate position of Smith, they were indefinitely postponed. Smith has declared that he will not negotiate with Robert Mugabe, head of the Zimbabwe African National Union, and Joshua Nkomo, head of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) which has negotiated jointly with ZANU at the Geneva talks. But the real story is being written on the battlefields of Zimbabwe, where the torrent of revolution has swelled.

Last September there was a great hoopla when Smith announced his agreement with majority rule "in principle," and Kissinger declared that, due to his brilliant diplomatic moves, the "Rhodesian conflict" was on the way to settlement. The opening of negotiations was clear evidence of the strength of the armed struggle of the people and the increasing international isolation of the white settler government. But it has been obvious from the beginning that neither Smith, nor the British and U.S. imperialists who back him, have changed their nature or are reconciled to leaving Zimbabwe to the four million black Africans who make up 95% of the population there.

The much heralded "settlement" was no settlement at all, but a ploy by the reactionaries aimed at preserving their interests. The immediate aim of the negotiations, and the essence of the "five points" worked out by Kissinger and Smith, was to stop the armed struggle and lessen the international isolation of the Smith regime. On Smith's part, this was all he hoped to see come about—simply a breathing space that would have allowed him to strengthen his military, economic and political position from which to fight again to preserve his cherished white rule.

The "five points" (which Smith claims are the only basis for a "settlement") as well as his whole conduct in Geneva, indicate what a sham his acceptance of majority rule was. In addition to hinging everything on an immediate cessation of the armed struggle, the plan calls for an interim government which would keep the ministries of the police and internal security—the armed forces of the state—in the hands of the white settler regime. This whole plan was immediately rejected by the liberation forces and by the front line African states. The liberation forces have held consistently that the only thing to be negotiated is the method of transfer of power from the Smith regime to the representatives of the Zimbabwean people.

For Britain and the United States, the situation is somewhat more complicated. While the Smith regime has faithfully protected their sources of pillage and plunder, and the imperialists find it most convenient to maintain him in power—as long as they can get away

with it—still, the principle interests of the imperialists are not in preserving "Rhodesia" as a living relic of the 19th century British Empire or Smith's role as "bwana." But having based their whole imperialist operation on the foundation of white supremacy, maintaining their grip while the superstructure of white supremacy is being shattered is a difficult proposition.

As the armed struggle in Zimbabwe has grown stronger, together with the collapse of Portuguese colonialism in southern Africa and the upsurges in the bastion of white supremacist rule, South Africa, the U.S. and Britain have been increasingly desperate to find some sort of settlement short of complete liberation for the Zimbabwean people. For some time now Britain, especially, has wanted to engineer a settlement between Smith and what they call "moderate" black leaders—the imperialist code words for those they hope to turn into a comprador bourgeoisie, dependent on Britain and the U.S.

Imperialist Maneuvering

With this goal in mind, Britain (which still maintains that it is the lawful owner of Rhodesia and is leading the Geneva conference) and Smith have made sure that, in addition to the liberation forces, others have been represented at Geneva who are not connected with the armed struggle and whose role has been questionable to say the least. But these plans have also largely run aground due to the consistent stand of the liberation forces.

During the Geneva talks the joint front formed between ZANU and Nkomo dealt a serious blow to the hopes of the imperialists who hoped to use Nkomo in opposition to the armed forces largely under ZANU's leadership. And Smith's latest proposal, that negotiations resume in Salisbury and be between his regime and Rev. Sithole and Rev. Muzawere without Mugabe and Nkomo, is so clearly an absurdity that it has been unanimously rejected. Reports abound in the British press bemoaning the fact that their hope of heading off complete liberation for Zimbabwe by a negotiated settlement is being shattered.

The plans and schemes of the imperialists and the Smith regime have not gone unheeded by the representatives of the Zimbabwe people. It has been the armed struggle that brought about the Geneva Conference in the first place, and the revolutionary forces are not about to give up at the negotiating table what they have won on the battlefield. Instead the negotiations have been used to further expose and attack the Smith regime and its backers, while pursuing their most important weapon—the armed struggle.

In the last year, the number of men under arms operating within Rhodesia (now under the joint command of the Zimbabwe People's Army [ZIPA], of which ZANU is the principle component) has increased tenfold. The zones which the fighters are more or less free to operate in have increased four fold in area. White settlers are leaving at the rate of 500 per week. During

the negotiations the liberation forces, guns in hand, continued to deal blows to the Smith regime.

Despite its feeble pretensions of seeking a peaceful settlement, the settler government has launched more vicious attacks on the people of Zimbabwe. A civilian refugee camp along the Mozambique border was attacked, killing 600 civilian men, women and children. And if the attack on the UN operated refugee camp is reminiscent of the methods of the Israeli Zionists, the Rhodesian authorities are also borrowing from the list of crimes in Vietnam, coming up with a version of the "strategic hamlet" program into which they are trying to herd the masses of people.

Like all reactionaries, the Smith regime uses dual tactics, combining out and out terror with other measures. One example of this, no doubt greatly encouraged by the U.S. and Britain, has been recent efforts to bring more blacks into civil service jobs and the army, hoping to create a social base of support for a policy of compromise among the Zimbabwean masses. But even among the very forces the Smith regime is concentrating on trying to buy off, while there are some illusions about the possibility of a peaceful settlement, the most important trend is the growing support for the liberation forces.

The delaying maneuvers of the Smith regime, their bloody attacks and their despicable tricks aimed at dividing the Zimbabwean people, all of these things are further evidence that the way forward to liberation is through the armed struggle, relying on and mobilizing the masses of people. This is the course that sent the imperialists into a panic in the first place, resulting in the Geneva conference. Not only is it the only sure way of toppling the Smith regime (as his own actions make clear), but just as importantly it is the only way to insure that the end of the Smith regime will bring real independence and not some sort of neo-colonial setup.

Popular Armed Struggle

Through the armed struggle the revolutionary forces are mobilizing the Zimbabwean people to take their destiny into their own hands, not being passive spectators waiting for independence to be handed them by the imperialist powers. In the course of the armed struggle their strength and unity is being forged and the relics of generations of colonial and imperialist plunder is being shattered. This is why the U.S. and Britain are, above all, concerned with stopping the armed struggle, knowing full well that if white minority rule is going to be shattered violently by the mass struggle of the four million Zimbabweans that it will be impossible for their revolutionary aspirations to be extinguished and they will settle for nothing other than genuine liberation.

The Soviet Union, for its part, is not about to sit quietly without trying various ways to try to advance their own imperialist interests in this complex situation. In the past the USSR had denounced ZANU, the main force behind the armed struggle, declaring that it was not a "legitimate" liberation organization. Now, as the victory of the Zimbabwe people draws near, the USSR is talking like they supported the armed struggle from the beginning and have given some arms to the liberation forces, with ulterior motives.

By their courageous armed struggle, by remaining firm in principle and flexible in tactics during this complex period of fighting while talking, the Zimbabwean people have shown that they can break through the schemes of the reactionaries and fight on till complete victory. ■



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Brass Busts Black GIs, KKK Goes Free

One Black marine corporal was sentenced to three months hard labor in January and 12 other Black GIs face court-martials shortly for an attack they carried out on what they thought was a meeting of the Ku Klux Klan at Camp Pendleton, California. Meanwhile, as the newspapers and TV in the San Diego and Los Angeles areas are carrying on as if Camp Pendleton were in a state of a race war, the Klan is still going about its filthy business unhindered by the military brass.

The 13 Black marines and another man who was given immunity in return for testifying forced their way into a barracks room on the base November 13, and fought with four white GIs and two Chicanos. Later it turned out that they had burst into the wrong room—the Klan was meeting next door, armed with .357 magnums and knives. After 10 days of hushed interrogation, 12 of the Blacks were charged with conspiracy to commit murder. The military court that will try them has already declared that it will not allow the question of Klan activities at Pendleton and their attacks against Black soldiers become an issue in the trial—the issue is the accusation against the Black marines and nothing more. This shows where the military stands on the matter.

There are probably only 10 or 15 Klan members among the men stationed at Pendleton, although from what you see on TV in southern California you'd think that every white GI there had it in for the Blacks. The KKK does reportedly have 60 members in all in the surrounding communities, which have a very high percentage of retired military brass and small businessmen pushed to the point of bankruptcy by the recent wave of big stores and banks blossoming in the area. The KKK found its main base here among small owners, who have been concentrating efforts on stirring

things up among white GIs stationed at Pendleton.

This also reflects what's going on in the armed services these days. The desertion rate is higher today than it was during the Vietnam war. On the outside, life for young people is increasingly turning sour, with few jobs and little to look forward to. So the armed forces have been able to attract people with their phony "Call your Uncle about a job" campaign and their recruiters in the high schools and around the unemployment offices. But once inside, what was sold as heavy training and the chance of a lifetime turns out to be a dead-end hitch full of harassment.

That's why the military brass tolerates and even encourages the comeback of the KKK to mislead and misdirect the anger of the young white recruits who know that somebody's screwing them. This is also in line with the way the bourgeoisie is promoting the Klan on a larger scale. The Klan leaders in Southern California and the national KKK "Grand Dragon" get the prominence and publicity in the newspapers and TV usually reserved for movie stars and bigshot politicians. The "Grand Dragon" has been portrayed as a "reasonable man," even nonviolent and a "level-headed advocate of the rights of white people." This is, of course, in sharp contrast to the abuse heaped against the Black marines who tried to wipe out these scummy activities.

Klan Operates Openly

The Klan operated at Pendleton for five months before the incident without any trouble at all from the brass. In one area they put up stickers all over which said "White Man Awake." For days on end a van would drive around and park near the mess hall with a sign calling on white marines to join the Klan. Then, in October, things really began to sharpen up when a Black officer's car was sabotaged and the Klan openly bragged about it. Black GIs coming back to the base on a bus were yelled at and threatened by some KKK members.

Some Klansmen took to wearing Klan patches and white power jackets when in civilian clothes. In early November, after a group of Klansmen gathered in the mess hall to talk openly about what to do to "the niggers," one of the Klansmen dropped a ten-inch knife which he told a Black marine was his "nigger sticker."

After the incident brought the Klan into the open generally and the Marine Corps had to do something publicly, some of the Klansmen at the base were transferred to other bases—which they cheerfully pointed out would allow them to work to spread their organization. But as for the Blacks accused of planning to attack them—the Marine Corps wants to make an example out of them, while trying to use the fact that some innocent guys ended up getting hurt by mistake in order to promote the "tense racial situation" that the brass itself is responsible for. While the cases of the 12 re-

maining defendants have been severed from each other to prevent a joint defense and it's been made virtually impossible to reach the defendants, open Klan members at the base and elsewhere appear on the TV and in newspaper interviews all the time. Books and magazines of the KKK like "The Crusader" and "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan" were allowed to remain outside the courtroom where Klan members push their poison.

But because of where its interests lie the bourgeoisie is working both sides of the street in this matter. A lot of baloney has been promoted which lets the bourgeoisie and military off the hook entirely, singling out the "individual racism" of white marines as the source of the problem. The Urban League has condemned "all extremists" in the incident (that is, both the Klansmen and the accused marines) equally, as if it were wrong to stand up to reactionary organizations like the Klan. And some groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, have even come out in defense of the Klan members' "rights" to be in the Klan in the name of "free speech!"

The whole approach of the bourgeoisie is aimed at trying to get whites and Blacks to blame each other for the conditions they face. Blacks are forced by economic necessity into the armed forces at even greater rates than the overall population and, in addition to the treatment given all GIs, Blacks face all sorts of discrimination and racist harassment dished out and encouraged by the top brass. The KKK garbage is definitely the last straw.

At the same time the bourgeoisie is playing a dangerous game. They need to maintain discipline in the armed forces, and at least a surface level of "unity" among the troops, especially now when the threat of world war is growing. With the memory of Vietnam GIs' rebellions still fresh in their minds, the brass is very uptight about GI revolts and organization. With this in mind, the top brass has played yet a third angle in dealing with the Klan incident—trying to make themselves come off as the voice of calm authority—of moderation and reason compared with the Klan. The need to maintain discipline in the ranks also explains why they are so intent on making an example of the Black GIs who took matters into their own hands in trying to deal with the reactionary KKK.

The Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) has taken up the fight to free the defendants, and defend their righteous intention to deal with the Klan. They are pointing out that even though some white and Chicano GIs were wrongly injured in the attack, this problem should and can be settled among the GIs themselves, who face a common enemy. The real problems are the KKK and the policies of the brass. The attempts of Black GIs to deal with the Klan are completely justified. At the same time VVAW is working to turn these attempts by the ruling class to divide and confuse people into a battle which can unite them and make it clearer who the real enemy is. ■

Cutbacks and Taxes Increase

School Closings Blamed on Taxpayers

People in this country work damn hard hoping their kids can get a decent education and maybe have a better life than they did. But across the land public schools are closing or cutting back programs. Taxes which pay for these deteriorating schools are skyrocketing, and the capitalists are trying to blame the whole mess on the people.

One of the areas where the school crisis has reached a sharp climax is Toledo, Ohio where after a tax increase had been rejected in three different votes the city's schools were forced to close on December 3, sending more than 56,000 students home. Elsewhere in Ohio five smaller school districts were closed as early as November 3, shutting out more than 12,000 other children. Some were out of the classroom for two months before the schools reopened on January 3 on borrowed money. School officials are now saying that unless taxes are raised or more programs cut, some Ohio schools may not be able to open next fall at all.

In Oregon so far this school year four small town districts, with 10,000 students, have locked the doors to their schools for five to seven weeks. The closures were brought on when taxpayers, fed up with constantly rising taxes, turned down at least five school funding increases. During the time that the schools were closed parents were forced to open their own "garage schools," hire private tutors and in many cases send their kids to live with relatives and attend schools in other areas.

In Detroit attacks on schools have also been linked to rejections of a tax increase. Last summer the recreation program and then summer school were cut off in

some schools. When the fall session began ten grade schools simply didn't open, after-school sports and school crossing guards were cut way back. When one child was hit by a car at a street where there was no crossing guard, angry parents were told by police "we took a survey and the gaps between cars are big enough for your children to get through. You don't need a crossing guard." Right now the Detroit School Board is threatening a new round of cutbacks after people rejected, for the second time, a tax increase for schools.

Following rejections of tax increases schools shut down in early December in parts of Connecticut and in Rockford, Illinois, such courses as remedial reading, speech therapy and music, in addition to school sports, have been either greatly reduced or eliminated.

The Either, Or Squeeze

Each of these outrages has a common link—in each the capitalists have posed people with an alternative: either accept a new tax (usually increased property taxes) or the school programs and staff will have to be cut back drastically. In this way they have posed a situation where they hope to channel people's anger against each other. The fault of the rotten conditions in the schools should be blamed on the taxpayer. The problem of skyrocketing property taxes should be blamed on teachers and school programs.

But even at the perceptual level many people realize something is rotten in the alternatives the bourgeoisie holds out. What kind of choice is it when new taxes

are passed and the schools *continue* to deteriorate? Where will the squeeze stop for the working family that buys a house only to be hit by one tax increase after another? Where is all the money going that is already paid in taxes and why would increases help? Many people see that, the way things are going, the future holds the worst of both worlds: worse schools and higher taxes.

In many areas struggle has broken out broadly on two fronts—as a tax revolt and as a struggle against school cutbacks. The wide struggle that has broken out against school cutbacks is focused especially against the local school boards. This struggle is mainly composed of parents, students and teachers. In Detroit, for example, hundreds of angry parents and students packed one school board meeting to protest cuts in the sports programs, forcing some of the programs to be continued. The city also said all the school crossing guards had to go, but when 125 people showed up at a court hearing to demand all the guards be put back, and after several demonstrations at different schools demanding crossing guards for busy streets, many of the guards were put back on the job.

The "Tax Payers Revolt"

The revolt of the taxpayer, as it's been called, is mainly a revolt of small property owners, both workers who own maybe a small house and are faced with impossibly high taxes and petty bourgeois people who might own a small store and be struggling to maintain it against rising costs and competition from big stores. Behind people's anger is a local property tax that averages \$236 per person per year, up from \$163 in 1970. In some places of the country people making \$10,000 a year are paying as much as \$2500 in property taxes every year.

In many places—New York and Boston among them—angry taxpayers have set fire to their property tax bills. Homeowners in many parts of the country are protesting *en masse* at the local assessment offices after receiving notices of sharply higher valuations on their houses for tax purposes.

And, of course, part of this struggle has been reflected in the stubborn refusal of taxpayers in many parts of the country to pass new property taxes for schools.

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Workers, students and other supporters massed to help defend the valley in what Hawaii papers called "The War of Waiahole."

Hundreds Occupy Valley in Hawaii

Big Victory In Land and Housing Fight

On Sunday, January 9, over 700 people united in Waiahole Valley in Hawaii to celebrate an important victory. The victory rally capped a week long occupation of Waiahole Valley which involved hundreds of people defending the valley against evictions. The week long defense, which included a blockade of the highways east and south, was a decisive advance in a two and a half year struggle of workers and farmers of Waiahole and Waikane Valleys to save their farms and homes. This struggle forced a 52 day extension of the evictions, backing down the landlord who was hell-bent on getting the tenants out, the police, the courts and the Governor. In this struggle valuable lessons have been gained, spreading to larger sections of people the truth that workers can unite and can mobilize broad sections of the people in the struggle and that this unity and strength is their only weapon in the face of increasing attacks on all fronts. Efforts to build on the victory, consolidate gains in understanding, and prepare for the enemy's counterattacks are continuing.

Waiahole and Waikane are two valleys on the windward side of Oahu, a rural area about a half hour drive from downtown Honolulu. The community is primarily composed of workers and farmers. All the homes and farms, in fact anything of value added to the land, is a direct result of the labor of the workers and farmers. One landowner, Mrs. Elizabeth Marks, controls nearly 2898 acres in both valleys. About 600 acres are good for farming and living. This 600 acres is being leased to just over 100 leasees. In 1974 Mrs. Marks and millionaire land developer Joe Pao petitioned the State Land-Use Commission to rezone over 1000 acres of the land from agricultural to urban use. This would have paved the way for the development of 7000 high priced homes and the immediate eviction of the present tenants.

To deal with this residents formed the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association. With over 100 people at their first meeting they prepared for the State Land-Use Commission hearing in October of 1974. Within a month and a half they gathered over 25,000 signatures on a petition against the rezoning. Over 700 people showed up at the commission hearings forcing the commission to deny the rezoning request.

This was the first major victory in the struggle. But, as with every victory won from the capitalists, they were already setting the basis for a new attack. In mid-1975 Mrs. Marks retaliated with higher rents and evictions. But the people refused to go along with this and went on a rent strike. The landlord then moved to evict because of nonpayment of rent and the tenants were dragged into court.

After months of legal moves this fall the tenants were finally to be evicted. The second the judge made his ruling the courthouse full of residents and supporters burst out with a tremendous chant: "Hell no, we ain't moving!" The chant was immediately picked on by cue by 200 supporters marching just outside the courtroom windows. The judge was so furious he pounded his gavel so hard the head flew off. The tables had been turned and the judge was forced to leave the courtroom with his tail between his legs, the sanctity of the courtroom in shreds.

Showdown in Waiahole Valley

Since the middle of September the Waiahole-Waikane struggle has faced each new attack by mobilizing broad support, exposing the many faces of the enemy

and forcing him to retreat at every twist and turn. After two and a half years of holding off evictions, last September the circuit court said October 1 was the eviction date for Waiahole Valley residents. The question facing the struggle was this: to put all the efforts of people into preparing for the defense of the valley and possible confrontations with the police and National Guard, or to politically isolate the enemy and broaden the support even more by waging a tit for tat struggle on all fronts while still making preparations for the mass defense of the valley.

The situation was that the landowner and developer wanted to get people out to make room for more profitable development of the land. But the workers and farmers after years of working on the land, building their farms and homes, were saying, "We ain't moving!" Marks and Pao couldn't move the people by themselves. They and the sheriffs had already been chased off the land several times. That meant that they would have to rely on the courts, the sheriff, the police and possibly the National Guard to move the people out. The laws were on their side. And the politicians were saying "We support you, but the law is the law and you'll have to move."

The struggle in Waiahole-Waikane has become a key struggle looked to by tens of thousands of people all over Hawaii. In the course of the struggle many of these people have supported it in some way and had pledged to support the residents if it came to a showdown in the valleys. This massive support had forced both the Mayor and the Governor to make a show of publicly stating support for the residents. The residents had fought in the Land-Use Commission hearings and courts—had experienced the frustrations of the legal means to fight the evictions.

If violence came it would be because the landowner and developer had initiated it and because the city and the state had authorized their police or Guard to evict the people. The residents made it clear that they were not out for violence. But they also made it clear that they were not going to be peacefully evicted. They were prepared to defend their homes and farms if it came to that.

Looking at this situation the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association saw that the Mayor and the Governor were in a weak position because of the struggle of the tenants. They had said that they supported the struggle but now they were in positions where they would be held responsible for any evictions and confrontations. And it was clear to many that the only reason that the evictions were coming down was because of the developer's need for profits. But the Mayor and the Governor, to openly take the side of landowners, would arouse tens of thousands and would expose more their role in serving the interests of the capitalists against the people.

The active residents of the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association, through their struggle, had seen the role of these politicians in clearly serving the interests of the capitalists but they had also learned that by standing strong and mobilizing broadly they could force these enemy forces to back down.

Broad Mobilization Key to Victory

Summing up all of this the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association began to mount a counteroffensive. By going on the offensive politically and not just restricting themselves to preparing the defense of the valley,

they put their enemies on the defensive, forcing them to try to justify their actions to the broad masses.

The key to this new offensive was mobilizing the broadest numbers of people to take action against the enemy's forces. At every twist and turn it was crucial for the active fighters to discuss and widely explain the situation—why the enemy was making certain moves, the role of the politicians, the police, the courts—and to mobilize broadly to stop the evictions.

An important advance in this mobilization was the formation of the Workers United to Defend Waiahole-Waikane, initiated and organized by workers organizations in different industries, individual workers and the Revolutionary Communist Party. This committee was formed because the Waiahole struggle had become a key battlefield in Hawaii. Tens of thousands of workers looked to this struggle as an example of how to fight, and a victory here after two and a half years of battle would be an important advance, especially as it had been the biggest and most militant of the land and housing struggles. Workers United to Defend Waiahole-Waikane was active in going out to mobilize the strength and unity of workers as an organized force to stand solidly behind the Waiahole-Waikane struggle.

Along with carrying the struggle to their fellow workers, Workers United to Defend Waiahole-Waikane united with the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association to call mass meetings to unite the broadest sections of people including youth, students, Hawaiian organizations and community groups, lawyers, doctors and other people.

From the very beginning the valley struggle won broad support from the masses of people. Over 50,000 people signed petitions opposing the rezoning of Waiahole-Waikane from agriculture to urban and the evictions of workers and farmers. Demonstrations and rallies have involved on an average anywhere from 200 to 700 people. At the beginning of last year a demonstration of 1500 people marched through downtown Honolulu demanding the evictions be stopped. Thousands more have made donations, written letters and made phone calls in support of the struggle. During the occupation contingents of supporters from the neighbor islands flew in to take a stand with the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association.

For too many years small farmers had been forced off their land by multimillionaire land developers. Thousands of acres of good agricultural land had been bulldozed over only to have homes built there that working people couldn't afford. Thousands of workers have been evicted and forced to live in crowded public housing. The capitalists' drive for profits has forced the masses of people to draw the line and take a stand. In the past, resistance to evictions was spontaneous and unorganized. When faced with evictions people complained but moved out. Today, resistance to evictions is more conscious and organized. In the Waiahole-Waikane struggle residents have marched on a landlord's yard, chased the sheriffs out of the valleys, burned their eviction orders, exposed the role of the police, courts and politicians and so far have successfully defended the valleys. In this way thousands have come to see the true face of the enemy in the course of forcing them through hard struggle to back off.

Offensive Launched

To launch this new offensive the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association called for a mass solidarity rally in the valleys on September 25. Over 400 people turned out to pledge their solidarity with the struggle and took part in a practice defense drill. This action was followed two days later with the demonstration at the courthouse and the Mayor's office.

These actions had two goals. One was to expose the role of the courts in carrying out the evictions for the



Waiahole Valley residents show eviction writs, then show

landlords and show how the laws are written to benefit the rich and also to put the finger on the Mayor for being responsible for calling the police into the valleys. The other goal was to let the enemy know that the workers and farmers are not going to back down and had broad support to continue the struggle. These actions were successful in putting off the eviction date for another month giving the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association more time to build support.

In the meantime, to get more time to build support the residents filed an appeal at the State Supreme Court, trying to get a stay of the evictions until the appeal decision came down. But the circuit court judge ordered that the residents put up a bond of \$72,000—the back rent that was unpaid—plus \$7500 a month. The tenants' position was that they would not pay one red cent to Mrs. Marks until a settlement was reached. The bond ruling made it even clearer how the courts work in favor of the capitalists by ordering the residents to pay for their appeal and in this way help Mrs. Marks get her back rent.

When the Association made it clear that they weren't giving up a dime without a fight, Mrs. Marks got her attorneys to freeze the bank accounts of the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association where she thought the back money was kept. But the Association had beaten her to the punch and removed all the money. Furious at this move her lawyers searched all the banks trying to chase the money down, but it was nowhere to be found. The judge then froze the personal bank accounts of each resident, but this met with such outrage from people everywhere that he was forced to take back that order within a couple of days.

With the evictions temporarily off, the aim of the struggle then became focused squarely on Marks and Pao, with calls on them to stop the eviction process and begin negotiations. On October 30 over 300 residents and supporters pulled a surprise demonstration at the homes of Marks and Pao. With superior force they were able to walk right by the police guards and march right onto the enemy's lawns and driveways chanting slogans, letting the landowner and developer know that they were not afraid and if necessary that people would take the struggle right to their doorstep.

By hitting the enemy directly the Association was successful in forcing Marks and Pao to publicly try and justify why the tenants should be evicted. And when they could get no support for that position they were forced to come forward with compromise proposals. The demands of the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association are: 1) to stop all evictions; 2) stop Marks' and Pao's plan to destroy the valleys' homes and farms; 3) long-term leases; and 4) reasonable rents. Included in these demands is the preservation of the residents' agricultural lands and no housing developments which do not meet the needs of the working people.

But Pao's proposal could not meet these demands. His goals were a profitable development. To make his profit there is no way he could give up the farmland needed, let the tenants stay where they were, or build housing working people could afford. In the course of two negotiating sessions attended by hundreds, in which the landlord, developer and state representatives were forced to sit and forced to negotiate publicly with the residents, it became clear that the basic struggle was between, on the one hand, the workers' and farmers' need to live and earn a livelihood for their families and, on

the other, the need for Joe Pao and Mrs. Marks to make their profits.

In the middle of December while negotiations were taking place landlord Marks gave the tenants until January 3 to settle or face eviction. This move was clearly designed to intimidate the residents and force them to accept the lousy proposals.

With this eviction gun at their head the tenants continued negotiations, while also beginning to mobilize attacks against the Mayor and Governor, forcing statements from both of them that they were against the proposed developments in the valleys and a half-baked pledge from the Governor not to send in the National Guard.

Occupation of Waiahole Valley

The January 3 eviction date for Waiahole Valley drew near. To gear for the defense, on December 29 over 450 people marched through downtown Honolulu hitting the Circuit Court, the offices of the lawyers representing Marks and Pao, the Sheriff's office, the State Capitol and ending with a rally at the City Hall, demanding the Mayor not send the cops into Waiahole Valley. At this demonstration representatives from over 35 organizations were present to let the enemy know that the struggle in Waiahole-Waikane had broad support. Several speakers from these organizations made it clear that they were prepared to fight in the valley with the residents.

This offensive continued in the weekend before January 3. Massive call-ins to the newspapers, the Governor, the Mayor, police department and Sheriff's office were organized. These calls were to let the enemy know that the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association had strong support and that the people held them responsible for any confrontations in the valley. The calls to the newspapers were to combat the recent coverage which had only given the enemy's side of the story.

On Sunday, January 2, the defense of the valley was organized. A headquarters was set up in the valley with a central meeting and communication area and a collective kitchen. Up a mile in the valley a campsite was established, with an outside-the-valley setup and coordinated activities. The responsibility for organizing this latter camp was taken mainly by Workers United to Defend Waiahole-Waikane which was able to unite with many groups and individuals in helping the valley residents to build a strong defense. Security was set up at key entrances to the valley and within the valley, with 24 hour rotating shifts always on the alert. An extensive network of CB radios was organized by CBers who supported the struggle. This network operated 24 hours a day and was key to the valley's alert system, always on the lookout for police movements anywhere on the island. The whole thing was organized so that in a matter of minutes hundreds of supporters could be notified for immediate mobilization.

At midday Monday, January 3, word came that the writs of eviction would be delivered by the Sheriff's Office. By that time support in the valley had built to about 500 people. Led by the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association steering committee all 500 marched a quarter of a mile from the defense headquarters to the entrance of the valley. With cars blocking the entrance a massive human chain was formed to stop any surprise appearance by the police.

As the Sheriff arrived and handed the writs over to the residents, supporters kept up a steady chant of "We ain't moving" and "The people united will never be defeated." After taking the 79 writs from the Sheriff the residents then built a big bonfire, burning the writs right in the middle of the street. The burning of the writs and the 500 militant supporters were given front page headlines and were strong statements to the enemy that the workers and farmers were not bluffing. The valleys would be defended and the enemy would have a fight on their hands if they tried to enforce the writs.

Eviction Fighters Blockade Road

On Tuesday night, the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association and the Workers United to Defend Waiahole-Waikane put on a program-rally to unite all forces more strongly and to sum up the situation. Late that night the CB network reported a sighting of large police activity moving towards Waiahole Valley. Within five minutes of the siren warnings given within the valley, 700 people in scores of cars were transported to the valley and mobilized at the valley entrance. Roadblocks were set up to block traffic coming in from two directions. In effect this tied up all traffic traveling around the windward side of the island. The backed up cars made it very difficult for a police mobilization to penetrate through to the valley. Traffic was backed up well over a mile for more than an hour as hundreds stood defiant at the mouth of Waiahole Valley, while Waiahole-Waikane Community Association steering committee members negotiated with police at the roadblocks.

After a high level commitment from the police that no evictions would take place that night and a clearance from the CB networks, the blockade was called off. As traffic passed by the valley, hundreds of eviction fighters lined the highways chanting and singing. And as people in trucks and cars passed by waving clenched fists and honking their horns, it was clear that most of them caught up in the blockade supported the action.



When word came the cops were coming, residents and supporters, some from other islands, quickly set up a blockade of the only roads into the valley.

Defense Won Broad Support

Along with these decisive actions of defense, Workers United to Defend Waiahole-Waikane was organizing teams to distribute leaflets throughout the island to job-sites, schools and communities. The leaflets, put out by a joint Waiahole-Waikane Community Association, Workers United to Defend Waiahole-Waikane propaganda team, summed up the latest twists and turns and called on those outside the valley to support the struggle in various ways. Along with the leafletting, teams were also organized to hold banners and leaflet along major highways.

These tactics were important in keeping the defense fighters within the valley in constant contact with broad sections of people outside the valley. It made it impossible for the enemy to isolate residents and supporters in the valley and gave the mobilization a presence throughout the island. People kept up the calls to the Governor and Mayor and delegations from various groups continually put pressure on them. The United Public Workers Union, 8000 strong in Oahu, passed a resolution in support of the struggle.

Though the landlord kept up the pressure to evict the tenants, the police and Governor began to back down from enforcing the writs. The Governor was in constant emergency meetings with the landlord and developer. Even within the ranks of the police there were those who did not want to go in. They realized that the situation was explosive. Some even had relatives in the valley. There were many cases of sick-in calls during the week of the occupation.

The occupation was characterized by the fact that many workers actively supported the struggle and played an active and leading role. Workers took vacation time, called in sick or came into the valley on off-days or off-time. Some workers would stand guard from 12 midnight to 4 AM and go to work after that. And even though many people who came early in the week had to leave as the week wore on because they had jobs, the support was building so steadily that the forces in the valley continued to get bigger. During the day, school classes and community groups would come in and get tours and orientation on the struggle. Food and money was continuously being donated. The phones at the Mayor's office and the Governor's office and homes rang around the clock and stacks of letters began piling up on their desks—more people were uniting with the occupation.

And even though for many of the forces in the valley this was the first time they were working together, the organization and discipline of the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association and the Workers United to Defend Waiahole-Waikane stood as an example to all and the whole defense was characterized by these strengths. It was this organization that enabled many to come near the struggle and immediately become involved in some way. Daily and nightly meetings were held to sum up the situation and discuss new questions the struggle was raising. In this way collective unity was built around the policy and need for each action among representatives at the campsites, workers from many industries, as well as all parts of the island.

Seeing this massive support, organization and militance the enemy was forced to back down. By Friday the Governor announced an extension of the eviction until March 1. A real victory had been won.

Before the occupation had begun many people had asked how were they going to defend the valley, how could they stop the landlord, who owned the land and has the law on her side, from evicting the people. The five day occupation now stands as a strong and concrete lesson that determined strength and unity of workers uniting with broad sections of the people can in fact turn back some of their attacks.

The Waiahole-Waikane Community Association called for a victory celebration on Sunday, January 9, to sum up the victory and plan the road ahead. Seven hundred strong came to the valley to celebrate the victory and let the enemy know they are still on guard and until the evictions are called off for good and the people's demands met the struggle in Waiahole-Waikane will continue. ■



at they think of the government's pieces of paper.

Advances In Struggle Of Wisconsin Indians

The continuing struggle of the Menominee Indians in northern Wisconsin has recently scored two important victories. In an election on the reservation "Paddo" Fish, the hated sheriff for the past two years, was thrown out of office. Soon afterwards Ada Deer, chairman of the Menominee Restoration Committee, the governing tribal body, was forced to resign rather than face the tribal election in February. These victories deal blows to the bureaucratic tribal governing structure which the monopoly capitalists have tried to manipulate over the years in order to stifle the struggle of the Menominee tribe and rip off their land and run roughshod over the culture and people.

Two years ago the struggle of the Menominee people against oppression reached a high point when members of the Warriors Society, a militant group of young Indian fighters, seized an abandoned Catholic monastery, demanding it be used for much-needed Indian health and educational facilities. The one month takeover, which was defended by guns against the police and National Guard, successfully forced the Alexian Brothers to turn the unused mansion over to the tribe and rallied many Menominee and thousands of others to their cause.

With this struggle fresh in their minds and fearing another Wounded Knee the capitalists asked Ada Deer to come up with someone for sheriff of the reservation who would crack down on the Warrior Society. Her pick was "Paddo" Fish, a known bar room brawler on the reservation. The Governor appointed him sheriff.

"Paddo" Fish's Goon Squad

Fish immediately started beefing up the police force—from 6 to 70 deputies in two years. At the same time the tribal leadership diverted federal funds from job training programs to pay the salaries. The deputies were handpicked for the job. At least three were convicted murderers. The new "goon squad" as it came to be known among the 3000 Menominee living on the reservation, made it a practice to arrest and beat any young Indian they considered to be a member of the Warrior Society.

Every week there were new cases of police brutality. Sixteen year old Leslie Grignon, brother of one of the five main defendants from the monastery takeover, was beaten into a coma on the night of April 10, 1975. Tommy Tourtillot's car was forced off the road

Steel...

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as their own and see the need for building the organization of the rank and file, many have worked for a mid-January conference of steel workers in the area to discuss the Sadlowski campaign, the contract and the no-strike deal, and how to move forward.

The question that the Sadlowski campaign gives rise to—the question the advanced workers ask—is how this campaign is going to change things. This goes to the heart of the matter. Steel workers hate and want to destroy the Abel machine because of what it stands for—total capitulation—and how it's helped the companies tie them in chains. In the next few weeks of the campaign it's vital that the forces fighting for Sadlowski wage a blow for blow battle against the attacks of the company and Abel, against their slander and harassment and strong-arm tactics. The attacks that have been unleashed to defend McBride have to be turned into an exposure of the two-headed monster of the company and its union henchmen and used as sparks to help ignite the struggle against them.

Fighting to elect Sadlowski as a way to bust up the Abel machine and build organization of the rank and file, steel workers can make the maximum gains in this election battle and continue to advance afterwards come hell or high water. ■

by a deputy's. Now he is paralyzed. "Peeko" Askenette, lost four teeth when punched by a deputy. Dale Kakkak had his jaw broken. The list goes on and on.

The most glaring crime of "Paddo" Fish was the murder of John Waubanasum and Arlin Pamanet. The holes in Fish's story about how he "fired in self defense," fit right in with his history of threats and beatings against the Warriors. The Menominee people were outraged at the reign of terror.

With his own election coming up "Paddo" Fish relied heavily on the tribal bureaucracy headed by Ada Deer to get him elected. People with management jobs at the tribal sawmill, working as deputies, or in the courthouse were a base of support for the Deer-backed "Paddo" Fish ticket. This was the only thing that made the election close.

But the Menominee youth had suffered too much under the policies of harassment and repression. Visiting house to house, driving elderly people to the polls, they led the way in this struggle. With this, Fish's fate in the election was sealed.

Along with a growing anger at the police repression more and more Menominee have come to see how Ada Deer and her governing committee were willing to sell out to different corporate and banking interests, trading off the wealth of the tribe for their own personal enrichment and political gain.

Capitalists After Menominee Land

The monopoly capitalists have long desired to sink their teeth into the valuable Menominee land. In 1954 the federal government began a policy called "termination," and in 1961 the Menominee (along with a few other tribes) were "terminated" as a tribe—meaning the loss of any special government programs and the loss of their school and hospital. In addition, their reservation became a tax-paying county. Every Menominee was given 100 shares—valued at \$1 a piece—in a setup called Menominee Enterprises, Inc. (MEI). Then, the First Wisconsin Bank was made trustee for all Menominee minors, giving the bank control of 40% of MEI, later rising to over 50%.

"Termination" quickly drove the Menominee tribe deep into debt, the reservation's sawmill operation being unable to pay all the newly levied taxes on Menominee land. The bank used its control in MEI to begin selling off Menominee land for summer cottages, and a resort was planned on nearly 9000 acres sold to a developer who built a dam and created Legend Lake.

The situation soon led to a struggle by the tribe to take control of MEI away from the First Wisconsin Bank. In 1971, Determination Rights and Unity of Menominee Stockholders (DRUMS) finally succeeded in gaining control. In the course of this struggle, the demand for restoration of tribal status emerged, and in 1971 the federal government passed a Restoration Act.

While this act has restored the Menominee's status as a tribe and stopped the land sales, the Menominee still face severe oppression and debts. The capitalists have shifted tactics and worked to turn the Restoration Council, headed by Ada Deer and controlled by what's left of the DRUMS leadership, into a servile committee loyal only to their financial gains. Much of the mass struggle on the reservation is directed against these bureaucratic lackeys who control the sawmill operation, the tribal governing structure and the allocation of federal funds.

Role of Tribal Bureaucracy

In 1974 there was a strike by the sawmill workers asking for a \$1 an hour raise over their wages which

were then \$2.50 an hour. Ada Deer and the Restoration Council came out staunchly against the strike, saying that the tribe had too many debts and couldn't afford to pay such a big raise, even though they themselves receive very comfortable salaries.

Ada Deer further exposed herself during the takeover of the monastery two years ago, which was seen by many Menominees as a continuation of the struggle to secure full tribal status, including recognition of the tribe's historical treaty rights. She and the other "official" tribal leadership publicly attacked the Warrior Society, which led the struggle, as "misfits," a "splinter group," and "outside of tribal life," and then unleashed a wave of repression against these militant fighters through the office of "Paddo" Fish.

As if this wasn't enough Ada Deer has become increasingly exposed for selling out the interests of the tribe to corporate and banking interests, while at the same time taking what she could for herself. Under Ada Deer's leadership the Restoration Committee took out high interest loans, burdening the tribe with financial and political debts to the federal government and banks.

To bring in more money the Menominee forests have been opened up to highly automated tree harvesters, endangering the valuable timberland by clear cutting all the trees. Yet despite timber that's free for the cutting, the tribal sawmill reported a loss of \$200,000 this past year. Recently a huge scandal has been uncovered involving the misappropriation of \$215,000 in federal funds by Ada Deer's Restoration Committee. At the same time the lumber and pulp interests and the real estate and resort developers continue to wait impatiently in the wings for the banks to again claim control of big sections of the reservation as they did back in the '60s.

Hated by the great majority of the Menominee people, Ada Deer had no choice but to step down, rather than face open defeat in the tribal election this February. This combined with Fish's earlier defeat really shook up the tribe's governing structure.

Of course the capitalists are not satisfied with these results nor sitting still after their defeats. So despite Fish's defeat they have maneuvered to have him continue to maintain much of his power. The FBI, Bureau of Indian Affairs, together with the Shawano County District Attorney, are cooperating to set Fish up as a federal officer, splitting the reservation's police force into those under a newly created "tribal sheriff," who would be Fish, making the recently elected county sheriff a figurehead position.

But the struggle continues. Recently Quill Chevalier, one of the five defendants from the Warrior Society takeover of the Alexian Brothers abbey, has been caught after nine months as a fugitive. A political campaign is starting to make his defense a popularization of the cause of the monastery takeover and the injustice he faces a focus of struggle for the Indian people and others.

What is happening to the Menominee people—the ripping off of their tribal lands, the extreme poverty conditions, the ruling class' use of the tribal bureaucracy to maintain the oppression of the masses—all of these things are typical of the brutal conditions facing Native Americans across the country. In the last several years the masses of Indians rose up and waged fierce struggles against their oppression. While these struggles have subsided somewhat since the high tide brought about by the seizure of Wounded Knee, the battle being waged by the Menominees is sure indication that Native Americans will continue to hit back at the source of their misery. The defeat of both Sheriff Fish and Ada Deer are signs of the potential strength of this struggle. ■



The long Menominee struggle for justice has won many victories, including over traitors in tribal leadership.

Fires...

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be done to prevent fires in these old districts, but this is far from the truth. While there are some slumlords in the Pilsen area, a significant number of the residents are homeowners who would like to improve their homes and wiring. But because of redlining by the banks, home improvement loans are hard to get. The city and the banks don't want to allow more money to improve the area because more profit can be made by redeveloping it. Close to the downtown business district of Chicago, Pilsen is one of three prime targets in Chicago for redevelopment. The city, banks and real estate companies want the area to completely deteriorate and the land value to hit bottom, when they will step in, throw the rest of the people out, and rebuild with office buildings and housing for upper income people.

Another example of the way this "redevelopment" is carried out is in East Humboldt Park, another prime site for redevelopment. Over the last several years this working class neighborhood of Blacks, Latinos and whites has been ravaged by a wave of arson fires. 400 fires hit the community in one year alone, and one in July 1976 killed seven people.

These fires serve the capitalists' profit schemes for redevelopment and they have done little to stop or prevent them. Not only do the fires serve to drive people out, they also drive the property value down, creating favorable conditions for the real estate companies to step in and buy up the property dirt cheap. Trapped by the downward spiral of the property values, some landlords set fire to their own buildings to collect on the insurance rather than take a loss by selling. Many burned out and abandoned buildings in East Humboldt Park and Pilsen have been snatched up by secret land trusts waiting to sell dear after the destruction of the communities is completed and redevelopment begins.

Who's Responsible?

The city officials of Chicago bemoaned the deaths and destruction from the fires but it is they and the capitalists whom they serve who are directly to blame for them. It is not that people want to live in fire hazards and rundown housing, but that this is the only housing that is available that people can afford. The housing industry, along with the rest of the economy, is in the worse crisis since the '30s, and the cost of housing has skyrocketed with little new low-cost housing being built. This forces millions of workers of all nationalities to compete for the little decent, less expensive housing available, driving rents up. Compounding this, 140,000 housing units were destroyed in Chicago between 1960 and 1970 to make way for expressways, office buildings, high-priced apartments and redevelopment.

While this hits all workers and nationalities, it is the national minorities who are most exposed and consumed by flames of this form of the capitalist profit drive. It is the national minorities who are forced into the worst communities and housing, prime for the arsonist's torch, land speculation and redevelopment. Faced with higher unemployment and lower wages generally, they are more apt to be unable to afford decent housing, and even if they are, they are more apt to find it unavailable due to discrimination promoted by the banks and real estate companies. Some of the Mexicans in Pilsen have already been relocated once after having their homes "renewed"—with a bulldozer—to make room for the University of Illinois Circle Campus near the Chicago "Loop" downtown.

But growing out of this national oppression, the residents of Pilsen have a long history of struggle. They have been active in their community and fighting back against cutbacks and discrimination. After the wake and funerals of the first five victims, over 250 Pilsen residents decided in a community meeting to take up the fight for fire protection. To begin, they organized a demonstration at City Hall demanding an investigation of the fire, bilingual fire prevention programs, and more equipment and the hiring of more Latino paramedics and firemen.

Discrimination in hiring firemen in Chicago is a fact. There are presently 12 Spanish surname firemen, not all of whom speak Spanish, and this is in a city of hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Chicanos. In 1973, the city was sued by the federal government to force the use of a quota system in hiring more minorities. But the suit only said that if the city hired it had to hire a certain percentage of minorities. This fit right in with what Mayor Daley needed to do because of the city's financial crisis, which was cut back on fire protection. Rather than hiring more minorities and more firemen, the mayor put a freeze on the hiring of any firemen at all and took the suit to court under the pretext of fighting the quota system and "reverse discrimination."

Faced with the anger of the demonstration at City Hall, the city authorities tried to placate the residents of Pilsen by making concessions to the demands for an



Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood organized to fight the city officials, demanding fire protection.

investigation of the fire and bilingual fire prevention programs. But they refused to hire more Latino paramedics and firemen. Instead they began Spanish lessons for firemen and tried to get by with reassigning one snorkel unit and giving the handful of already employed Latino paramedics and firemen the "option" of transferring. The effect of this would have been that other neighborhoods would have been cut back. At the same time, through the aid of the media, they raised a stink about special privileges for a few, and blamed the people themselves for the deaths because they couldn't speak English. Joel Daly, a TV commentator, foamed, "These people are quick to learn the English words for rights and discrimination. Why can't they learn the word fire!"

Fight Continues

The residents of Pilsen weren't taken in by the sham concessions they were offered, and made it clear that they were not just after a reassignment of firemen and

equipment for their own community. The demand to hire more firemen spoke to the needs of the whole city, and Pilsen residents were determined to see their fight through to the end. They again mobilized people for the hearings which were going on around the discrimination suit and went back demanding the hiring of more firemen and more Spanish speaking firemen.

At the hearing the city authorities saw that their divide and conquer scheme wasn't getting over and was forced to settle the suit with the federal government agreeing to hire more minority firemen. But by keeping the hearings closed to the public, and by only agreeing to hire 274 new firemen instead of the more than 600 which have been lost since 1971, the city authorities are still hoping to stifle the struggle for the fire protection the city needs with a bare bone. The residents of Pilsen left the hearing more determined than ever to build the fight for the quality fire protection the city needs. They are determined that the people not end up paying for the capitalists' crisis with more dead and injured. ■

Puerto Rico...

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who fought hard to build unions and political organizations and were the bedrock of the independence movement. The response of the imperialists and their representatives was summed up in this piece of advice by the then-police chief of Puerto Rico, a Colonel Riggs: "When dealing with the nationalists, shoot to kill." The colonial police did just that at several mass demonstrations for independence. A leader of the sugar cane workers union, Pedro Albizu Campos, who also headed the Nationalist Party and led the fight for independence, was repeatedly jailed for long stretches and spent most of his life in U.S. prisons. In 1950, an attempt by the authorities to smash the Nationalist Party was met with armed uprisings in several cities. Reversing cause and effect, the government used a subsequent attempt to assassinate President Truman as an excuse to completely outlaw the independence movement and all other "subversion." The trade unions were broken and dismantled in these years of severe repression.

But beyond open repression there were other economic and political factors which held back the growth of the independence movement. Sugar production proved more profitable in Cuba and the Dominican Republic than Puerto Rico. The U.S. capitalists who owned the plantations got paid for *not* producing in Puerto Rico under federal price support programs, but the sugar workers got nothing, and many left the fields looking for work. Because of the fierce competition from mainland growers or other exporting countries, other Puerto Rican agricultural products also became unprofitable and agriculture in general began to go bankrupt. Unemployment spread like the plague.

This economic disaster for Puerto Rico's people became the source of a big bonanza for U.S. imperialism, because it created a huge number of workers desperate for employment. The U.S. manufacturers eyed the situation like vultures. A new political party arose—the Popular Democrats, who promised "Land, Housing and Bread" and claimed that "independence is just around the corner." In reality, although some concessions were made to the demands raised by the people's struggle, the government spending programs this party embarked on once elected mainly became welfare for the island's rich whom Puerto Rico's agricultural crisis had put in difficult circumstances. Looking to the frantic expansion of U.S. capital after World War 2, they put their country up for sale and offered their services as junior partners and administrators.

This was the birth of Puerto Rico's infamous tax exemptions for business, along with vast government spending to provide roads, water, electricity and other things

business needed. To the people, this "Operation Bootstrap," as it was called, was presented as a way for Puerto Ricans to pull themselves up by their own work, but they soon ended up working for foreign capitalists who enslaved them even further, as U.S. owned plants sprung up all over the island.

In 1952, during the height of the repression against the independence movement, the U.S. Congress changed Puerto Rico from a possession to a "Free Associated State"—sometimes called a "Commonwealth." Just what this is supposed to mean has long been debated, because Puerto Rico is not free, it's not "associated"—it's dominated—and is not a state of any kind. The island now has its own elected legislature and governor who can front himself off as a representative of the people in a way that an appointed American governor could never do. U.S. interests work overtime to dominate these elections. Laws passed by the U.S. Congress still apply and the American courts still have the final say.

A few years ago the imperialists and the Popular Democrats in Puerto Rico were pointing to the results of "Operation Bootstrap" as a "miracle," because of the almost unbelievably fast industrialization of the island. But the huge flood of all sorts of light industry and other investment from the U.S. drove agriculture even further down and ruined other businesses which couldn't compete with the industries of the Americans whose products captured the market. More unemployment was the result. The flood of American capital into the island produced a flood of immigrants—over 800,000 in all—forced to come to the U.S. to find work in the factories and fields.

But being tied to American capital, Puerto Rico today is tied to American capital's crisis like a rope around its neck. The sweatshop work at starvation wages in the factories of cities like New York and Chicago once absorbed many of Puerto Rico's unemployed. But in recent years with unemployment swelling in the U.S., the island's true economic conditions stand naked and unemployment has broken out worse than ever. Because of the increasing competition between the world's capitalists and because of even cheaper wage rates elsewhere, runaway industries from the U.S. which the colonial government had hailed as the island's salvation are now running even further away. Even the tourist industry which made Puerto Ricans unwelcome in their own country is now a source of unemployment, not jobs. Official figures say 20% are out of work. Probably the truth is more like 30%. Over half the population is forced to try to survive on food stamps—the great "privilege" granted to them for being made American citizens. Whole towns are almost totally out of work.

The widespread disgust at the dead end that the lies of the Popular Democratic Party had brought about set the stage for the election of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (NPP) candidate for governor in November. But even the NPP didn't dare make statehood an issue in its campaign—in fact the new governor

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UWOC...

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the extension of the benefits, while Mondale, Kennedy and the rest were pondering their masters' business below. The delegation started chanting and won the support of the visitors in the gallery who started clapping in support. At that point the police dragged the workers out of the gallery and arrested them for demanding what they need to live. They were charged with "disrupting Congress" and later released, although the charges are still being held against them.

What they had wanted to do around these proposed cuts was to keep the news locked up tight, keep their plans and what they will mean to millions of workers from getting much publicity. But coverage of the UWOC actions went out coast to coast over the bourgeois media and was spread at unemployment centers in state after state by members of UWOC and others. Arresting the UWOC members was like closing the barn door after the horse had escaped.

Despite their attempts to hide and cover over their planned attack, hundreds of unemployed workers have been drawn into this struggle. Thousands have already signed petitions demanding no cutoff and many are actively looking for ways to inform their friends and neighbors, unemployed and employed, about the situation and the need to fight these cuts in an organized way, on a national scale. And for thousands more the cutoff of these benefits is raising big questions about what kind of system it is that can't even insure a basic existence to those whose labor has made this country rich.

The Extensions

The legislation which created the present extensions was passed during the big jump in unemployment in the winter of 1974-75 when "official" unemployment went from 5.9% in September '74 to 8.9% by May '75. These extensions were created, "as a cushion for workers who had been thrown out of work temporarily"—that is, as a concession to the tremendous discontent and anger of workers the bourgeoisie feared as the crisis hit levels unseen since the Great Depression of the '30s. The last thing they wanted was an uprising from the usually employed section of the working class, from people they couldn't label as "the disadvantaged" or "society's outcasts." When hundreds of million of people saw unemployment hit the guy next door, the capitalists couldn't label as "lazy" the millions for whom there was no work.

Two years later they can't afford this concession. When an amendment to extend the extensions beyond March was amended to a bill last October it was defeated in the Senate 53-27. Both the National Commission on Manpower Policy, a federal advisory commission, and Carter's advisors (including a meeting of several cabinet members) have recommended that the extensions be allowed to expire.

Official unemployment statistics still continue to hover around 8%. Even by their own figures, unemployment among basic production and service workers is close to 14% and reaches up to 20% and more in some of the hard hit industrial centers of the northeastern part of the country. The number of workers out of work for 27 weeks or longer has almost doubled from 740,000 to 1,400,000 in the last three months, and again even their own statistics admit that the number of "discouraged workers" (workers who have exhausted all their unemployment benefits and have found no work but are no longer counted in the unemployment statistics) increased to over a million in the last three months of 1976.

Impoverishment Growing

The general impoverishment of the working class is growing, as more and more people are forced to try to find some means to get by. People have been forced into criminally low paying jobs, or into various hustles—legal and illegal. In some areas adult enrollment in community colleges is at an all time high. Families are consolidating as aunts and cousins gather around the one wage earner in the family who still has a job. Others are split apart as the men leave for some other part of the country where there might be the possibility of work.

Unemployment insurance, won and paid for with the blood of thousands who demonstrated, fought and died for it in the 1930s, stands as a bulwark against the impoverishment of the working class. Inadequate as it is, both in terms of money and the period of time it covers, it stands between thousands of workers and the degradation of welfare or worse. It is a weapon that can be used against lowering the standard of living of the whole class. It stands against the increasing pauperization of that section of the class faced with the prospect of long term unemployment and a life of misery and degradation as they are thrown into the constantly expanding reserve army of the unemployed. And it stands against the abil-

ity of the bourgeoisie to use this expanded reserve army against the class as a whole—as a club over the heads of the employed and a weapon to lower the general wage standard by mobilizing the unemployed to choose between minimum wage jobs and starvation.

This concession, wrung from the bourgeoisie through bitter struggle, now stands in their way as the vicious scramble for profits heats up among capitalists in this country and internationally. With the economic crisis dragging on, vast funds are needed to prop up falling industries and banks. The federal unemployment extensions alone cost the bourgeoisie \$3.3 billion in fiscal year 1976. They certainly aren't going to willingly hand over money for so little a thing to them as the lives of millions of unemployed. The way they see it, they'll save money by cutting unemployment benefits, then jack up profits by forcing some to slave in their factories for the minimum wages.

The Capitalist Offensive

The federal extensions are a big obstacle to their plans. Politically they can't get away with cutting off unemployment insurance entirely. Unemployment in general has been too hot an issue. But with some fast talk and fancy footwork they hope to make a big inroad for themselves economically by chopping off these benefit extensions.

The bourgeoisie and their representatives have gone all out to create public opinion for cutting off the federal extensions—and in fact for their whole economic package—by turning reality upside down. The real problem they say, and this is a key part of Carter's economic proposals, is not unemployment. The problem is with people who are unemployable—the youth and especially the minority youth—people who just haven't been trained for jobs that do exist. To back this up they have been running a campaign through the press emphasizing that most workers are only out of work for 15 weeks or so, using this as a wedge against those who are threatened with long term unemployment.

For example, in Washington state, which has been a testing ground for various unemployment bills, there is currently before the state legislature a bill similar to the proposal made last year by Federal Reserve Board Chairman Arthur Burns to cut unemployment compensation down to 10-15 weeks and to make people work for their checks after that. But some members of the ruling class in Washington state have been complaining that "There's no way we can pass this bill without getting a cut in these federal extensions."

In Massachusetts, the state government is planning a similar type plan. It would force all who have been unemployed for six months to accept state jobs at "about halfway between minimum wage and prevailing wage levels." Massachusetts officials admit that one purpose of the plan is to cut 10% or more off unemployment rolls.

Unemployment among Youth

Under this "employment averages only 10-15 weeks" business and the signboard of "unemployment isn't unemployment, it's only a problem among the youth," Carter's economic advisors are planning to deal with that explosive section of the population by trying to beef up various job programs and job training programs for the youth and younger workers. Even the plans there are minimal however: straighten out the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) to provide some more public works jobs, double the 20,000 Job Corps jobs for urban youth, expand the summer only Youth Conservation Corp for rural youth into a year-round 50,000 job operation and expand WIP, the Work Incentive Program (which they euphemistically call WIN), whereby welfare recipients work in return for their meagre welfare checks. In New York, during the recent presidential campaign, Mondale said they wanted to create jobs for youth to revitalize the cities—meaning the jobs of laid off and frozen out city workers. It is this threat turning into reality.

But Carter's main emphasis is not in the area of public works jobs. The problem, he says, has to be solved through private industry. And so he is proposing to put the youth openly at the disposal of private industry for "training" at the minimum wage of \$2.30, or less—their labor to be paid for in part by the companies and in part subsidized by the federal government. It is literally a situation where they are looking to mobilize the sons to work the jobs of their laid off fathers. It's nothing more than a slick attempt to use the youth and especially minority youth as a wedge to attack the working class as a whole.

Everywhere the working class has had experience with this type of program, one group of youth after another is "trained" and then fired to make way for the next group, at minimum wage. It has proved to be nothing but an unending source of cheap labor for the capitalists and a weapon to break the resistance of the employed workers.

They call this the solution to unemployment, trying to turn the progressive sentiments of the masses—people's desire to be productive and their deep concern for the future of the country's youth—against the masses themselves.

The fact is that jobs for youth is a crying need. Un-

employment among Black youth is officially almost 40% and runs as high as 60% in some areas. Half the 7.8 million officially unemployed are under 24 years old. All this is testimony to the inability of capitalism to absorb into the labor force the new generation of laborers. The proposed programs are insult enough—training youth for jobs that don't exist or jobs to replace older, better paid workers. At the same time they dismiss unemployment among other sections of the workforce—"only 10 to 15 weeks!" and use this to justify cutting back unemployment benefits.

Unemployed under Attack

Of course they are doing all they can to dress all this up very slickly in order to slip it over. The National Commission on Manpower Policy has recommended that the federal extensions be continued beyond March for six months until other programs get set up—programs that are an attempt to paper over the situation of thousands who have no other means of subsistence other than their unemployment checks. Meanwhile, the government will probably continue to cut off the extensions state by state in order to isolate the struggle and make the ending of the extensions nationally appear as just a formal cap on an already existing policy. (The legislation which extended the benefits to 65 weeks since 1976 gets "triggered" by the level of unemployment in any particular state. So while Connecticut is still collecting 65 weeks, Ohio got cut down to 39 weeks because supposedly unemployment in Ohio fell below 5%. Not only do they juggle with the figures, but there is a built-in catch-22. Once an extension is cut, the number of people collecting benefits drops and so does the overall official unemployment rate, which is based in part on the number of people collecting.)

The bourgeoisie is enforcing the general impoverishment of the working class in a number of ways. In N.J. they are trying to pass a proposal (the Hoffman Bill) that stipulates that any worker who fails to take a job at up to a one third cut in pay is immediately thrown off benefits. It is a vicious attack on employed and unemployed alike, an extremely important part of the attempt by the bourgeoisie to create a low-wage area out of that part of the country, to attract industry and keep industry from having to move to more profitable operations overseas or in the largely nonunion South. It has been accompanied by a concerted union-busting effort in the electrical/electronics industry which makes up a large portion of industry in that state. This measure and similar proposals in almost every state in the Northeast, as well as elsewhere, represents a specific attempt on the part of the capitalists to raise their profits by lowering the general wage level and increase productivity. These are big blows, attacks on the working class—employed as well as unemployed—and they are beginning to be fought everywhere by workers.

The federal extensions cut is more specifically directed right at the unemployed. And while the cuts will have the result of worsening the general condition of the working class, it is more directly the result of the fiscal policies the bourgeoisie has to pursue in this period and their necessary attempts to deal with unemployment in the way most profitable to them, economically and politically.

One way the capitalists are pursuing at present is making small stabs at investing in youth, not for any high purpose, but as a cash deal, an investment in future variable capital—and a political investment as well in the youth who are at present a constant source of trouble to them so long as they are unemployed. And as for those who will go without work after 39 weeks, or 49 or 50—especially those who are 40 years old or more, those who have poured their lives' blood into one plant or another for 10 or 15 years—they are to be left to starve, as capital can no longer make use of their labor. This abuse, this outrage is giving rise to growing struggle among the unemployed.

The Struggle Gathers Steam

The next big step in the campaign against the extension cutoffs is going to be a caravan to Washington, DC on Inauguration night and a rally and march past the site of the Inaugural Ball. UWOC chapters on the East Coast, including a new group of people from Pittsburgh and drawing on people from Cleveland in the Midwest, are going all out to mobilize unemployed workers and as many employed workers and youth as possible for a torchlight parade past the hall where the rich will be celebrating Carter's inauguration. The United Workers Organizations in New York/New Jersey and Milwaukee are organizing to carry this fight into the shops as part of the struggle of the whole working class around unemployment.

In the face of continued high unemployment and attacks on benefits, organization and common struggle is growing among unemployed workers. In the Battle of the Bicentennial when unemployed workers gathered 300 strong on the steps of the Capitol in Washington to demand "Jobs or Income!" in the small skirmishes that take place daily in a hundred cities and towns, in the nationwide struggle that has begun to develop against the cuts in extensions—unemployed workers are beginning in small but significant ways to get organized

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AMC...

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"Why should the workers pay for the twisted workings of that system?"

The Struggle Against Layoffs

Up against such a major layoff, the workers did not have the same leverage as they would if their labor was in demand. Yet the UWO took it up as a fight of the working class in Milwaukee. This was not only a direct assault on auto workers, but also would affect the workers, employed and unemployed, throughout Milwaukee. They organized a plant gate rally and marches to the Milwaukee AMC headquarters and UAW offices. UWO members took a petition campaign city-wide and posters against the shutdown appeared around the city. The whole UWO, along with the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee, threw up a picket line at the Milwaukee Common Council demanding action to save the jobs.

In response to the general anger of the workers which the UWO was helping to give focus to, the company announced that 350 of the laid off Milwaukee employees would be allowed to transfer to Kenosha. But the concession was accompanied by a campaign of divide and conquer propaganda. The company and the news media claimed that the Milwaukee workers were "job thieves," coming down to steal the jobs of the Kenosha employees. At this time 600 Kenosha auto workers were laid off and encouraged to focus their bitterness on the transferees from Milwaukee. Here, again, the UWO put out the call for unity and struggle. They took a petition to the unemployment office to unite all workers against the divisions and job overloads the company was trying to accomplish with the Gremlin line transfer.

Throughout this time the UWO consciously took up the task of building the broader political struggles of the working class. By building both the economic and political struggles and showing the links between the two as much as possible, the UWO has developed the political understanding of the people around it and developed its strength as a fighting organization on all fronts.

Around the "Rich Off Our Backs" campaign they called a noontime rally across the street from the Milwaukee body plant. The leaflets emphasized how the bourgeoisie's Bicentennial propaganda is a political attack. They also gave the cry "Get the Rich Off Our Backs" special meaning for AMC workers. The leaflet and rally made an example of the money AMC spent painting the halls in the plant red, white and blue while at the same time saying more fans for the workers

on the line, a demand sparked by a heat wave the week before, would cost too much. The July 4th leaflets and sound truck created so much controversy that the lines were jumping with shouting matches and discussion. Workers near the windows made reports and comments on how many cops were cruising around the plant. Two hundred workers stopped at lunch to check out the speeches and literature. And many times that number watched out the windows of the five story plant.

Building UWO

By diving into the struggle and showing how to fight the ruling class and their profit system, the UWO has become a center of leadership of the struggle of auto workers in the Milwaukee area. Whether it is a contract, getting screwed out of benefit funds, or a firing, many workers have looked to and linked up with the UWO, which is open to all who want to build the fight. Around the Gremlin line shutdown the area-wide UWO meetings grew in size as a number of auto workers came to fight the shutdown.

As the UWO has taken up broad political campaigns like May Day and July 4th and in the discussions around what battles to take up and how to fight them, members have developed politically. It is the politically advanced workers who are the core of the organization. Party members have stressed the need for a class-wide organization, based in the shops, actively taking up the day-to-day struggle, while, as its overall role, taking up all the key battles of the working class and other sections of the people and building them as campaigns of the working class. The UWO is an organization based on actually fighting all oppression, neither a dual union or a discussion committee only for the most advanced.

In building the UWO in the shops and city-wide the Party has paid consistent attention to actually building the organization, through political discussion, regular meetings, a division of labor and responsibility, helping the members to apply the mass line, going out to organize as a group, visiting workers in their homes, taking the leaflets to the plant gates and into work, going together to the city-wide UWO meetings, and marching under the auto workers' banner. All this has been essential to developing the UWO and its line as a social force in the industry and area.

Through these developments workers at other auto and related plants joined the UWO, particularly as the '76 auto contract struggle heated up.

The Contract Battle

Beginning last summer, the UWO auto section (then called Fighting Times) affiliated with Auto Workers United to Fight in '76 (a broad national organization formed to unite around the '76 contract battle) to take up the industry-wide battle in the Milwaukee

area. The mass layoffs, sabotage of the union officials, and constant propaganda about AMC's profit problems had broken the momentum that had developed around the struggle to save the carpet department. By widely distributing the AWUF contract bulletins around the Ford strike, the Chrysler wildcat and the GM developments, the UWO was able to show that the contract fight was part of a major class battle. By regularly printing the most up-to-date information and pointing the way forward, the UWO became a center of leadership, projected a sense of national organization, unfolded the lessons of the struggles, and actually built the contract fight. But the sparks of struggle around the time of the contract expiration and the Ford strike had died down in the months of the extension. The UWO had to find ways to rebuild the momentum and unite workers in struggle against the contract attack that was surely coming. Right after Thanksgiving the organization sponsored a car caravan with starting points at the Milwaukee and Kenosha AMC plants. The two caravans joined at Allis Chalmers where a strike vote had just been taken. It then drove to the UAW regional headquarters. The UWO had challenged the regional director, Ray Majeras, to a debate but of course he never showed.

The expiration of the AMC, the Allis Chalmers, and the GM AC Sparkplug contracts—all major employers and all at the same time—was a big social question in the area. The press picked up on this and the fighting stand of the UWO got front page treatment in the Kenosha News and made the TV news shows. The numbers in the caravan were small compared to the tens of thousands of auto workers in southeastern Wisconsin, but those thousands were encouraged that auto workers were taking a stand.

The process of turning the fighting line of the UWO into a material force, of winning the thousands to see that there is a way forward, is a hard one. As AMC released statistics of disastrous fourth quarter losses, the UWO began to emphasize more and more that it's an anarchistic system that AMC is part of, that it is a class of rich capitalists that is threatening the livelihood and futures of the 10,000 AMC workers. And as workers, members of a class antagonistic to those capitalists, the men and women at AMC had to unite their own ranks reaching out to other auto workers and all workers.

On the assembly lines, in the bars after work and in the UWO meetings they're saying, "Hey we made all their wealth. Look at this town of Kenosha. Almost every family in it has put out for AMC's profit. Is it all so they can run us like crazy, cause heart attacks and accidents on the assembly lines, freeze our pay, maybe shut down, leaving us with nothing? Is it all so the big bosses we made rich can stay on top and treat us like so many statistics in the profits and losses columns? We've got to vote no, reject any attack, and organize to fight them." This is the road ahead. ■

Schools...

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On the average less than one half of all school assessment votes have passed the last few years.

The bourgeoisie has bent every effort to pit these two mass movements against each other, to make them struggles of taxpayers vs. parents, or homeowners vs. school children. They especially try to use the fact that the taxpayers' revolt is generally in the form of a struggle of property owners to misdirect it against those demanding better schools and social services and down the avenue of various legislative dead ends.

In this they are aided by certain politicians and opportunists who they promote at the head of most of these movements. For example, state legislator and notorious reactionary Anthony Imperiale, from New Jersey, where demonstrations against tax increases earlier this year drew thousands of people, has tried to put himself at the front of the movement. Claiming to speak for the sentiments of ordinary working people in their hatred for rising property taxes Imperiale tries to direct this anger against Blacks and minorities, blaming them for the problem and openly calling for cuts in social services going to these communities.

But in fact the masses of people do not have to accept the alternative held out by the bourgeoisie and its agents. The mass movements against cutbacks in schools and increasing taxes do not have to be pitted against each other. The reality is that both abuses find their origin in the same rotten system—capitalism.

Financial Crisis

The crisis of the schools is a general phenomenon. It cannot be separated from the general crisis hitting the economy, especially from the two interrelated problems of inflation and the capital shortage.

Inflation has doubled the average cost of educating a public school student from 1965 to 1973 and has continued upwards since then. The cause of this inflation lies not with teachers' wages, which have de-

clined on a real basis over the last few years, but mainly with the maintenance of the imperialist empire (export of capital, troops and bases overseas, etc.) and by the government's artificial stimulation of the economy.

At the same time the prices of everything are going up, government policies on the federal, state and local levels, have increasingly moved in a clear direction—tax cuts for corporations, especially in regard to investment in new plants and equipment, combined with big slashes in government spending for schools, health, wages and benefits of government workers, etc. The main reason for these policies is the growing capital shortage, the capitalists' inability to generate the funds for investment in new plants and machinery. Behind this lies the problem of the general falling rate of profit. Under these conditions government spending (and borrowing) competes with and stands in the way of the accumulation of private capital. The government's twin onslaughts of cutbacks and tax increases on the masses of people are a response to this contradiction.

The forces behind the present deluge of cutbacks in social services are described by Marx: "So long as things go well, competition effects an operating fraternity of the capitalist class...so that each shares in the common loot in proportion to the size of its respective investment. But as soon as it no longer is a question of sharing profits, but of sharing losses, everyone tries to reduce his own share to a minimum and to shove it off upon another." (*Capital*, Vol. 3, p. 253) When U.S. imperialism was in its heyday the capitalist class as a whole was willing to help pay for public education as a "long term investment," using the system to both train future technicians, managers and others and to indoctrinate the students with bourgeois ideology. But as capitalism has sunk into crisis, as the contradiction between the capitalists intensifies and each fights to grab what he can to beat out the other, they are less willing to support this kind of educational system, which cannot be realized in any immediate cash profits for any but a few of them.

One way this has come out is in federal cutbacks to education. Since 1970, for example, the federal government has been cutting the percentage of its budget going to public elementary and secondary schools, resulting in the cutback of many federal programs, like the supplemental food program.

But even more significant have been the cuts at the local and state levels since only 8% of the fund to U.S. public elementary and secondary schools comes from the federal government, while 41% comes from the states and 51% comes from local sources (almost all through property taxes). Here cutbacks in schools and other social services are also combined with tax breaks, easy credit for big corporations, etc. In Michigan, for example, the state passed Public Act 198 which gives huge tax breaks to the corporations for industrial expansion. In Boston where property taxes were jacked up 30% this past fall, more than 60% of all property is tax exempt. In New Jersey lower business taxes, low interest loans to businesses opening new operations in the state, plans for lowering environmental regulations and "reforming" the unemployment insurance laws to force the unemployed to work at low wages—these, along with cutbacks in schools and other social services and higher taxes, are the fruits of the capitalists' efforts to deal with the capital shortage and the falling rate of profit.

Sometimes the "operating fraternity" among the capitalists breaks down to such a degree that individual capitalists resort to flagrant rip-offs, working out special deals with local and state officials. Some of these are really blatant exposures of their rotten system. In Cincinnati, where school crossing guards have been cut back and other budget slashing has hit the schools, the city has recently concluded a deal with the Central Bancorporation for redevelopment of the Greyhound Terminal block. As part of this deal, the City purchased a portion of the block from Central Trust (a subsidiary of Central Bancorporation) for \$2.2 million and is selling it back to the corporation for \$1.1 million! One of the city papers described this as "an urban development write-down of 50%."

The struggles around cutbacks in education and increasing taxes are two broad mass struggles that are sure to grow as the crisis intensifies. To weaken these struggles and take the heat off itself, the bourgeoisie is trying to direct them against each other. But their system is the cause of both educational cutbacks and tax increases. By bringing this out in the course of building these struggles, they can be more closely united and can deliver still more powerful blows to the real enemy. ■

Puerto Rico...

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promised not to try to make Puerto Rico a state but only to spend his term trying to convince the people that they should accept it. This is the situation Ford referred to as "proof" that Puerto Ricans want to become a state.

Statehood No Answer

There are some people who favor statehood because it seems that nothing could be worse and any change would have to be for the better. Some people favor it, not because they really want to see Puerto Rico even more tightly bound to the U.S., but because they think it's the only "realistic" hope for Puerto Rico's economy. Some Puerto Rican capitalists have their own reasons for supporting it. They hope that such a legal assurance that American capital would always be safe in Puerto Rico would bring new investments for them to get the crumbs from. U.S. capitalists have recently had their interest stirred by new discoveries of oil off Puerto Rico. This is some of what lay behind Ford's proposal of statehood.

But the real direction of things is just the opposite. After a lull in the 1950s, the independence movement has gathered steam. The example that Vietnam gave, of how even a small country can break free of U.S. imperialism, provided a powerful inspiration. Large and militant student demonstrations broke out against the drafting of Puerto Ricans for the Vietnam war. The student movement has continued. Last fall hundreds of uniformed police occupied the campus of the University of Puerto Rico to try to stop a student strike.

Increasingly the independence movement has become a force within the working class, developing side by side with the workers' struggle against the conditions imposed on them by American colonialism in the plants and other workplaces. The workers have had to face the courts, police and NLRB (all of which are used even more openly against the workers' struggle than in the U.S.), as well as the National Guard (called out against strikes three times in the last few years) and the hacks from the U.S. "international" unions who have gobbled up the dues of many Puerto Rican workers without regard to their interests. Standing up to all this, the workers movement has grown, become more organized and won some important victories in struggles over contracts and recognition of their unions. During 1973, more than one out of every ten Puerto Rican workers went out on strike. Since then, government repression has led to many demonstrations by workers in various industries against the government. At the same time, many thousands have taken part in demonstrations and other mass actions for independence, such as the annual mass rally in the town of Lares on the twenty-third of September to commemorate Puerto Rico's first independence movement a hundred years ago.

Free Choice?

Carter's statement about "letting the people of Puerto Rico decide" is both an admission of weakness (for he knows that the statehood scheme could never be pulled off without a big fight) and a further attempt to hide Puerto Rico's real colonial situation. Maybe he means an election like the one held in 1952, when voters were asked to approve the Commonwealth constitution with a yes or a no and independence wasn't even allowed to appear as a choice. Or maybe he means another 1967 "plebescite" in Puerto Rico which the U.S. staged to shut up the growing international clamor about the island and stop the growing independence movement. A boycott was organized and fewer than half of those eligible showed up at the polls to vote at all.

That election was held on the heels of the U.S. invasion of the neighboring Dominican Republic and during the Vietnam war, both of which would hardly inspire confidence in U.S. imperialism's respect for the will of the people. And as if to make perfectly clear what a farce the "plebescite" was, the U.S. Congress declared that only it could decide Puerto Rico's future.

With U.S. imperialism occupying Puerto Rico, dominating its politics and economics, including control of the media and other command posts for preparing public opinion, a referendum conducted by the colonial government can in no way determine the real sentiments of the masses for independence. What support there is for the statehood proposal itself is a result of imperialist blackmail—first they ruin the economy, make the island completely subservient to U.S. capital and then declare that it can't stand alone. "Letting the Puerto Rican people decide" is meaningless with the U.S. running the island lock, stock and gunbarrel.

Being "full citizens" is certainly no solution for the people of Puerto Rico, as can be seen by conditions faced by the huge numbers of Puerto Ricans who live



Demonstration in front of the Mayor's office in Newark, N.J. in the summer of 1974 to protest a wave of police repression against Puerto Ricans in that city.

in the U.S. where all the legal provisions that would apply to Puerto Rico are already in force. Full citizens or not, unemployment among Puerto Ricans in the U.S. is still extremely high. Being able to vote for President hasn't helped at all. In fact, in areas like New York and particularly the Bronx where Puerto Ricans are concentrated and have so-called political representatives in the government at all levels, including Congress, that's where things are worst. Although Puerto Ricans have all the democratic rights of other Americans—on paper at least—discrimination runs rampant in jobs, housing and education. In other words, even within the U.S. itself Puerto Ricans continue to face oppression as a national minority. The capitalists of this country profit from that oppression and they will never give it up as long as they rule. In the U.S., Puerto Rican workers have become part of the single multinational U.S. working class and their struggle here is side by side with workers of all other nationalities against these conditions and the capitalists here, while they remain closely linked to the people—and the struggle—on the island.

Statehood cannot solve the problems of Puerto Rico, it would remain, in fact, a colony oppressed and exploited by U.S. imperialism.

Probably the chief reason Ford made his proposal was the way the U.S. imperialists see the Puerto Rican independence movement in the context of the overall difficulties they are having in keeping the Caribbean under their thumb and the advances the Soviets are making in taking advantage of this situation. Long ago the Soviet Union converted Cuba, a former U.S. colony, into a neo-colony of its own, taking over the complete domination of the island's economy.

Lately the governments of Jamaica and Guyana (as well as Panama on the mainland) have been standing up to the U.S. somewhat, and the Soviets have tried to move in closer to these countries through Cuba, which has sent advisors and technicians, and made other trade contacts. In the denunciations of U.S. imperialism's colonization of Puerto Rico, which have

been a big problem for the U.S. in the United Nations and in several international conferences, the USSR and Cuba have done their best to pose in the role of the "big brother" of the Puerto Rican independence movement, just as the U.S. did when Puerto Rico was struggling to be free of Spain. As the rivalry between the superpowers leads toward world war between them, each side is trying more and more to take advantage of the struggles going on within the other's "sphere of influence." The U.S. has done this to the extent it could with Eastern Europe, and the USSR is doing it in Latin America.

But for Puerto Rico the choice is not slavery to one or to the other. The U.S. imperialists have wreaked havoc with the island in their drive to wring the maximum profits from the island, and it won't be easy nor quick to rebuild it according to the needs of the people. The recent discovery of oil and minerals which the imperialists see as a reason to tighten their grip over the island is just further evidence that the island can make it on its own. Puerto Rico has been a major agricultural exporter before, and its land and fishing are potentially very rich. Most importantly, it is rich in what its working people can do. Only with the complete political and economic independence of the island from U.S. and all imperialist rule can the island's working people begin to transform its conditions and rebuild the country from top to bottom. Only then can there be an end to the unemployment, poverty, slums, the degradation of the country's culture and the robbery of its people.

Because it is a part of the worldwide struggle against the imperialists and their rule, and especially because it is aimed at the same class of leeches who rule in our own country, the national liberation struggle of the people of Puerto Rico is a great ally of the U.S. working class in its own struggle for revolution. For that reason we raise the slogan "Free Puerto Rico Right Now!" and intend to fight alongside the people of Puerto Rico for it until it is won. ■

OPEC...

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At present the contention between the two superpowers and the worldwide struggles against the U.S. imperialists temporarily limit an attempt for a military solution to their oil price problem as they would have quickly employed in days gone by. But the U.S. ruling class has been working hard to undermine OPEC in every way possible.

The members of OPEC are by no means a homogeneous group. Most of these countries are run by oppressive semi-feudal and capitalist classes that ruthlessly exploit their own people and cooperate to varying degrees with the imperialists. While they can never really achieve economic and political independence from imperialism until the masses of people rise up against the imperialists and overthrow these exploiting classes, these regimes can play a progressive role on a world scale to the extent their own class interests drive them to take actions that weaken the power of the imperialists.

On the other hand, the U.S. and Soviet imperialists are quick to try to take advantage of the character of these ruling regimes as exploiting classes and to use them to maintain their domination in the area. The U.S. has put a lot of its hope in Saudi Arabia, which is the largest oil producer in the world, next to the Soviet Union, and accounts for one third of the OPEC oil production.

The royal family of Saud which rules Saudi Arabia has seen its interests lie in close cooperation with the United States bourgeoisie and Saudi Arabia has continually played the role—trying to limit OPEC demands and price increases although it was obviously also in its interests to go along with the general development of OPEC both to increase its oil revenues and to ward off

nationalist and revolutionary forces inside Saudi Arabia. In recent months Saudi Arabia has made decisive moves, using its vast oil wealth, to increase its power and influence in the Middle East, taking the lead in the final settlement of the Lebanon crisis and now to put the other OPEC countries under its thumb.

The U.S. ruling class has been gloating over the fact that OPEC members split over the current price hikes. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates refused to raise prices more than 10%, 5% as of January 1st. They are also increasing their oil production, contrary to OPEC agreements, thereby causing severe problems for other oil producing states. The other countries demanded a 15% hike, 10.3% as of the first of the year. But it is unlikely that this means a decisive crack in OPEC, as the U.S. capitalists would love to see.

Saudi Arabia has been able to take the step it has inside OPEC because its oil reserves are so much greater than those of any other member country. Countries like Libya, Algeria or Venezuela cannot afford to let the oil companies pump out their precious natural resources at such low prices. Their hope is to make oil pay for the capitalist development of their countries before the reserves run dry. The 15% increase they demanded was necessary to keep abreast of the inflation in the price of goods from the industrial countries.

The Saudis' restraint is, as their diplomats openly admit, a concession made to the U.S. with the expectation that in return the U.S. will bolster their position in world affairs, particularly in the Middle East. The Saudi Oil Minister added a PR touch to this move by cautioning the oil companies that they had better pass this cut-rate price onto the American consumer.

But notwithstanding their appreciation of the Saudi maneuver, the U.S. capitalists are not lessening their efforts to blame the OPEC countries for unemployment and inflation. They are flailing at a scapegoat to take the heat off themselves and to demand that the American working class make greater sacrifices for the sake of their profits. In this and in all their reactionary schemes they must be opposed. ■

Main Blow...

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Along with the OL's turn to Stalin's "main blow" to justify their treacherous line on the international situation has come its adoption as the "fundamental concept" guiding their approach to the trade union struggle and the class struggle in the U.S. (for the OL the two are synonymous).

It is less than a year since the October League jettisoned its old trade union line, which it tried to popularize under the slogan of "moving the trade unions to the left." What this amounted to was shameless tailing of any union official or candidate for union office who talked militant about union democracy, getting more from the bosses, ending discrimination or the need for social change. These were supposedly "left" or "liberal" union leaders as opposed to the "fascist labor front" of the old-line AFL-CIO hacks.

Those the OL presented to the workers as saviours above reproach ranged from established officials like Cesar Chavez of the farmworkers through candidates for union office like Arnold Miller in the United Mine-workers (UMW), all the way down to leading figures in various plant level caucuses. Sadly for the October League, not only did these "heroes" prove uninterested in moving their unions to the left, but they failed to reward the OL for its loyal work on their behalf with significant union posts or even public recognition.

Bitter and disgruntled, the OL now shuns as lepers the very people they embraced so passionately not long ago. In fact, it is "the revisionist and reformist trade union leaders who are actually the target of the main blow in our struggle." (*Call*, Dec. 13, 1976, p. 6) "They are the main props of imperialism, advocating compromise with the system rather than all-out struggle against it. The reformists are those forces who say they are fighting for the workers, but whose aim is limited to reforming the system in order to preserve it." (*Call*, Nov. 22, 1976, p. 6)

Now, the OL plays a little shell game on just who these trade union reformists are. In some articles they blandly assert that "the trade union leadership as a whole, including Meany as well as Sadlowski, are reformists." ("Communist View of Trade Unions," *Call*, August 2, 1976, p. 7) In practice, however, the main blow seems to fall most heavily on what the OL calls "new-style reformists" like Ed Sadlowski in the United Steelworkers (USWA), presumably because they pay homage to the actual struggles of the rank and file and are thus better able to compromise with the bourgeoisie.

As the alternative to these mortal enemies the OL offers another set of heroes—themselves. Only genuine communist leaders, leaders like them, it seems, can wrest the trade unions from the hands of the hacks and make them into revolutionary organizations, or, to put it in the OL's old terms, move them *all the way* to the left.

This shows how much the OL's old and new lines have in common. Both make the key question in the class struggle in the U.S. who runs the trade unions. Both ignore the real key—building the struggle, class consciousness and revolutionary unity of the working class and developing its leadership of a broad united front against the U.S. imperialists. The trade unions are both a vehicle for and an arena of class struggle—and will continue to be at least until capitalism is overthrown—but the interests of the workers are not limited to or confined by the trade unions and the struggle to control them.

Like their old approach of holding halos over the heads of militant-talking officials, the OL's new "left" tactics, combined with their essentially rightist attempt to restrict the working class struggle to the battle for control of the unions, could do nothing but set the proletariat up for defeat. What they are peddling is a version of the simpleminded view of revolution that Lenin ridicules—"So one army lines up and says, 'We are for socialism,' and another, somewhere else, says, 'We are for imperialism,' and that will be a social revolution!" Lenin calls this "a ridiculously pedantic view." ("The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," Vol. 22, pp. 355-56)

In OL's version of this "ridiculously pedantic view" the struggle in the trade unions is seen as those for revolution versus the reformists. This shows how isolated the OL really is from the class struggle if they have not yet understood that opportunists can and increasingly will claim to be for revolution if they think it will advance their careers. At the same time, many of even the best fighters in the workers' ranks, and many men and women who hold lower level union office and can be won to stand with the rank and file, do not presently espouse the idea of revolution and have plenty of illusions about the possibility and desirability of reforming the system.

The OL's path can breed nothing but demoralization among whatever workers they succeed in dragging onto it. For one thing, it says in essence that no

real advances in the proletariat's struggle are possible until at least some top labor traitors have been replaced by communists. Anyone waiting for OLeers to successfully storm the top levels of the big union international obviously faces endless years of disappointment.

Furthermore, the main blow strategy not only lets the main enemy off the hook by concentrating the fire elsewhere, but it won't even damage its target. All but the stupidest of opportunists, reformists and revisionists will be able to duck the OL's mighty "main blow" and even turn it back against it. They will be aided in their efforts to act as if they are the ones leading the fight against the main enemy and to challenge the would-be deliverers of the main blow in front of the masses, "How come you spend all your time firing on us, who are fighting the bosses (or the sellouts, or the rich or whatever), instead of our real common enemy? Who's paying you guys, anyhow?"

Communist Tactics

True communist tactics must be aimed first and foremost at uniting with the workers around the main questions that confront them and assisting them to wage these battles more effectively and in a more class conscious way. In the course of such battles communists must seek to accomplish three things—win real victories and concessions while weakening the enemy, develop the unity, class consciousness and sense of organization of the workers and win the advanced to communism and train them as revolutionary leaders.

In the course of repeated battles, undertaken under various conditions, the workers will be won to see the truth that communism reveals about reformism, and in particular in the form of trade unionism. Trade unionism, which argues that the workers can continually better their situation by restricting their fight to trying to better their pay and working conditions, will be exposed as chaining the workers to the capitalists' treadmill and preventing them from moving to wipe out the system that exploits and oppresses them.

Various tactics will be necessary at different points in the class struggle and can be determined only by making a concrete analysis of concrete conditions. In the course of developing and applying these tactics the workers must be involved and trained to understand from a class conscious point of view how and why different tactics are used in their struggle.

A look at some practice around the question of union elections is helpful to understanding not only the difference between correct tactics and dogma, but also the essential unity of the OL's old and new lines commented on earlier.

Miller and Sadlowski Campaigns

When Arnold Miller was running for UMW president in 1972 (and for a long time after his victory), the October League not only backed him 100%, but attacked the Revolutionary Union, the organization that initiated the formation of the RCP, USA, for its critical support of Miller, claiming that "the RU line of 'critical support' meant *No Support At All!*" (*The Call*, Aug., 1973, p. 12, italics, capitals and exclamation point in original)

The RU backed the Miller campaign because it had to some extent arisen from and in some respects reflected the great upsurge of struggle that was taking place in the coalfields—for union democracy against the stranglehold of the Tony Boyle machine, for Black lung compensation and decent pensions and for better and safer working conditions, pay and job security. The campaign provided an opportunity to break the stranglehold of the Boyle machine and maximize the

freedom and initiative of the rank and file. Because the RU presented the issues this way in its literature and in mass organizations where it had a presence and warned that Arnold Miller was no saviour and might betray the workers' interests, it came as no surprise to genuine communists or workers who had been influenced by the RU's line that Arnold Miller did take the side of the coal bosses and the whole bourgeoisie.

To the OL, however, it came as an ugly shock indeed. Today they scold themselves (the term self-criticism implies a certain amount of political understanding and probing for the roots of errors: both are entirely absent from the OL's efforts) for ever having backed Miller in the first place. In fact, they say, Miller's victory was a big setback for the miners: "When the exposed leadership of Boyle was replaced by a more 'liberal' reformist like Miller, the hold of the reformist labor aristocracy as a whole over the union and the workers was strengthened." ("Present Tasks in the Unions," *Call*, July 19, 1976, p. 7) Here is a *priorism* run amuck! So firmly does OL clutch its dogma that it has dragged them out of the real world entirely into some fantasy world where the titanic strike struggles of the miners against the operators, their pets in union office and the bourgeois state evidently didn't even take place!

Likewise the OL has now, like various Trotskyite outfits, issued a forlorn call for a boycott of the election in the USWA, where the campaign of Ed Sadlowski, once another of M. Klonsky's fair haired boys,

provides a similar opportunity to develop the struggle of the steel workers and the whole class (See article, p. 2). By the same token the RCP is not supporting Arnold Miller's bid for reelection or the campaigns of his opponents this year because in the present situation they do not offer this kind of opportunity to the miners.

Like support for his campaign four years ago and Sadlowski's now, non-support for Miller is not a question of "aiming the main blow" or any other dogmatically applied "principle." It is a tactical question of taking those steps that best enable the workers to develop their struggle, organization and consciousness and of treating the question of union elections as one possible tactic in this process. The OL failed to do this in the mines by fawning on Miller and now they are failing to do it in the mills from the opposite direction, by failing to utilize, for the benefit of the rank and file, the opportunity that the Sadlowski campaign offers.

A brief point should also be made on the question of the CPUSA, identified by the OL as the "more dangerous" of the "twin enemies" of reformism and revisionism. Here is another dogmatically inspired flight of fancy. The OL can't even decide what role the CP plays—Klonsky in his interview calls them "nothing but a reactionary 'fifth column' of the Soviet Union" while several subsequent articles deal with them primarily in their role as servants of U.S. imperialism. While the CP is indeed a force the working class and its Party must expose and smash, to attribute to them, as the OL does, a good 50% of the role of main prop of U.S. imperialism is such a gross exaggeration as to indicate a less than adequate grasp of the real world.

A Sorry Example

Perhaps the most pathetic testimony to the bankruptcy of the OL's new line appears in a letter written by an OL sympathizer organizing in a shop in the state of Washington and published in the December 13, 1976 *Call* without comment. This sorry note begins by enthusing over the "theoretical" article on the main blow. Before reading the article, it continues, "we always aimed the main blow at the company in our leaflets. This tactic let the trade union bureaucrats off the hook or we made the error of attacking them in isolation from the capitalists and not as conscious agents for the ruling class." Presumably because of the influence of the OL's old line, they were never clear before, they report, what "role the trade union bureaucrats play in defending the capitalists."

Alas, the "cure" may prove worse than the disease. An OLeer in the shop was fired and the "main blow" in the battle to get him rehired is, of course, being aimed at the local hacks, who have been red-baiting. "In all of this the factory owners have been able to maintain a 'liberal, fair and reasonable' face." We do not know the particulars of this struggle, and there are sometimes cases when the workers have to direct their struggle primarily against the traitors in their unions, but the letter writer makes this a question of principle, not particulars. In fact, it seems more than likely that the bosses, who are after all the ones who fired the person and the ones who can be forced to rehire him or her, are able to play "liberal, fair and reasonable" without meeting the workers' demands precisely because the "main blow" is being directed away from them, at their servants in union office.

This naive letter demonstrates in microcosm the dangerous and futile course of action the OL would force the entire working class onto, were it in any position to do so.

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I-Hotel ...

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bad guy.

Showdown Appeared Imminent

But as the new year began the final showdown seemed imminent. The local capitalists had decided that things had gone way too far and were determined to see that the eviction order was implemented.

The Sheriff, despite the fact that the press made him out to be the "savior of the I-Hotel" announced that he would carry out the new eviction order. The Mayor suddenly became quite silent on his famous "plan." He virtually dropped from public view and finally ducked out of town altogether as the date for the threatened eviction approached, hopping a plane days early for Carter's inauguration.

On Friday, January 7th, 20 deputy sheriffs converged on the Hotel at 9:45 in the morning to post the eviction notices. Since the tenants had forced the Sheriff to agree last July that he would notify them before sending deputies to post the notices, they were met by 300 demonstrators mobilized by the Workers Committee and the I-Hotel Tenants Association, the organization of the 80 residential tenants in the Hotel. The militancy and discipline of the demonstrators, who formed a tight double picket in front of the Hotel, prevented the sheriffs from posting the eviction on the door of the Hotel itself, although they were finally able to get them up on the community centers and stores on the street level of the building. They were quickly ripped down and most of them burned in front of the sheriffs, cops and TV cameras. Then the Workers Committee sent a delegation to the Sheriff's Office. They threw the rest of the eviction notices on his desk and said that no scrap of paper was going to make them move. Over the weekend, sheriffs hesitated to try to return to post the rest of the evictions, but on Monday night, the 10th of January, they managed to nail them to the front door of the Hotel.

Massive Outpouring of Support

On Wednesday evening, the day the community centers and stores were supposed to be out, the Workers Committee, joined by the Tenants Association and another support group, mounted a massive demonstration of defiance of the eviction order. 2500 people jammed the streets in front of the Hotel in a massive picket line. Then while part of the demonstration stayed in front of the Hotel, the Workers Committee took a contingent of 500 workers, students, members of Youth in Action and community residents on a march through Chinatown. The sidewalks throughout the area were so packed with people from the community who had come out to show their support and tourists trying to see what was happening that the marchers had to take over one lane of the street. Carrying lanterns and led by drums, they chanted the slogans: "NO EVICTIONS! WE WON'T MOVE! FIGHT FOR OUR HOMES AND COMMUNITY CENTERS!" Contingents of workers from all over the Bay Area joined the march and mass rally, many carrying banners signed by scores of workers in their plants. One local of the Postal Workers Union in the East Bay was adjourned when they heard about the demonstration and sent a delegation to show their support.

The wave of support continued to swell after the demonstration. It became clear that the mobilization of public support was what stood between the tenants and the bourgeoisie's determination to throw them into the streets. That support was resoundingly there. The bourgeoisie didn't know what the hell to do.

On Sunday afternoon, January 16th—the day the tenants upstairs were supposed to be out—an even more massive outpouring responded to a call by the Tenants Association and others. 5000 people filled the streets and shook the walls of the financial center of the city that lies adjacent to the Chinatown-Manilatown area.

All during the week the Workers Committee mobilized hundreds of people to jam the switch boards of the Sheriff, the Mayor and the Public Housing Authority with calls denouncing the eviction. Over 12,000 people signed petitions supporting the tenants' struggle.

In addition, every part of the Hotel was barricaded and scores of volunteers stayed in the stores and community centers every night. Both the Workers Committee and the Tenants Association had extensive phone trees set up to turn out people if any move was made to carry out the eviction.

Bourgeoisie Backed Down

On Monday the press announced that the sheriffs and police were going to move with the force necessary to throw the tenants out on Tuesday morning. A local news radio station even began warning people not to park in the area because the cops were going to cordon it off in preparation for the attack.



When sheriffs tried to post evictions Jan. 7, 300 formed a picket 4 deep and a block long in front of the Hotel.

But the bourgeoisie was looking for a way out of the corner they had been forced into by the tremendous support that had been mobilized and would clearly be there to meet any eviction attempt. At 5:30 on Monday night the 17th, the judge ordered a one month stay of the eviction order. The judge declared that he was basing his decision on a report from the Chief of Police that the tenants had gunmen on the roofs armed with automatic rifles and that they were preparing molotov cocktails, so there would obviously be too much danger of violence.

When the police chief repeated the charge the next day, the Workers Committee called a press conference. They denounced this flimsy attempt to concoct a diversion to cover the real fact that the bourgeoisie had been forced to back down by the massive support of the people. They made it clear that this was a political

Main Blow ...

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National Struggles

Even though there hasn't been the fanfare there was on the international and trade union fronts, the effects of the "main blow" line are showing up around the national question as well. Back in the days of "moving the trade unions to the left" the OL also called for a "Black United Front" to be composed in large part of leaders of various non-proletarian strata in the Black community. Today, however, the Black United Front has disappeared from the pages of the *Call*. Could it be that Hosea Williams, Julian Bond, Ron Dellums and others with whom the OL has tried to play patty cake in the past have been discovered to be "reformists," interested not in revolution but only in reforms that will increase the life span of the capitalist system? Chances are good.

Perhaps we will be treated to the sight of the OL repeating their trade union flip-flop on this front by becoming the best and only true revolutionary nationalists. This tendency, like the Black United Front before it, would represent nothing more than an opportunist attempt to merge, two into one, Marxism and nationalism. The earlier line amounted to pulling the Black masses away from the multinational proletariat into "their own" united front, which was supposed to be one component of a grand coalition, a united front against imperialism made up of other united fronts, rather than a strategic realignment of class forces.

If the OL now goes the route of substituting themselves for the discarded "reformists" as the *real* nationalist heroes, they will still be in the position of diluting Marxism with nationalism and undercutting the alliance of the working class with the movements of the oppressed nationalities which makes up the core of the real united front against imperialism. Not only does it push nationalism instead of proletarian ideology, but part and parcel of such an approach is sectarianism, the refusal to unite in struggle with actual nationalists and middle forces.

A real Marxist-Leninist approach to the national question in the United States must be based on mobilizing both the oppressed nationalities and the working class as a whole against national oppression, bringing forward the proletarian stand of fighting exploitation and all oppression, and forging a revolutionary alliance of the national movements with the multinational working class movement as the solid core of the strategic united front against imperialism that aims its blows at the monopoly capitalist class and will enable the working class to lead the masses of people in finally overthrowing bourgeois rule and establishing the dic-

battle, that they had taken the landlords and the rest of the capitalists on every step of the way and fought them back because they had mobilized thousands of people and had the full support of tens of thousands more. But as one elderly resident of the Hotel said, "We didn't have any guns, but if we did, we have a right to defend our homes."

The tenants of the Hotel are for the most part elderly Chinese and Filipino workers, many of them in their 70s and 80s. They have labored long years producing wealth for the capitalists. As a reward they were expected to bow quietly, leave their home in the face of the landlords' sacred property rights and try to find somewhere else to live on as little as \$260 a month. But they refused to go, and their resistance turned what the capitalists thought should be a simple step into a major battle.

The Hotel also houses Everybody's Bookstore, an important outlet for books and other publications on the struggles of Asian-Americans, literature imported from China, and a place where people in the area can get the *Worker* newspaper for the Bay Area. They were expected to quietly clear off their shelves and disappear in the face of the majesty of the court order. In addition there are several commercial businesses, a community art center and gallery, and the Asian Community Center (ACC). ACC has been a hub of resistance to the most recent eviction threats. Long a place where elderly Chinese workers have gathered during the day, it also serves as a meeting place and organizing center for many of the struggles in Chinatown and for workers organizations. Hotel residents and tenants have a great deal to defend in the Hotel and they are determined to do so.

The victories won through mass struggle have been a great inspiration to many people. When members of the Workers Committee visited elderly residents of another hotel who had just had their rents raised \$30 a month in an effort to force them out, they met a woman who had carefully saved every leaflet the Committee had passed out in Chinatown and pinned them on her wall. She told them that the I-Hotel struggle had given her the courage and the hope to fight. She spoke for the working people in San Francisco and elsewhere who see this battle as their own. ■

tatorship of the proletariat.

Going from Bad to Worse

The adoption of the "main blow" line by the October League was based on opportunism, the need to find a theoretical cover for reactionary lines they had no intention of giving up. They seized on an incorrect theory and in "enriching" and applying it have only gone from bad to worse. At best, they have managed to weave a faint mist of confusion around their social-chauvinism, but the treacherous nature of their practice is too glaring to remain hidden long from even the dullest gaze.

In some instances, their dogmatism has forced them to deny reality flat out lest their *a priori* picture of the world be shattered. In general, they have steered themselves down a dead-end street, where their "main blows" will leave the principal enemy of the American people, the U.S. ruling class, unscathed and simultaneously drive away many with whom unity is possible. To top it off, far from crushing opportunists, revisionists and other enemy agents, this line in actuality lets these vermin off the hook by assisting their efforts to pose as the flag bearers in the struggle against the main enemy.

In striving to unite with all possible allies, the working class must take care not to concede leadership in the struggle to forces that will conciliate with the enemy. To move the struggle ahead will in fact involve political and ideological combat with such forces and the exposure of their class interests to the masses, but if they are made the main target of struggle through rigid adherence to some dogmatic formulation, it will result in nothing but setbacks for the cause of the working class. ■

UWOC ...

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and build their struggle against their common oppression. With each attack, each cut in benefits, each job posting that draws 1000 workers for every job available, each eviction of a family who for lack of work can't pay their rent, "the criminal absurdity of the capitalist system stands out all the more starkly—the very class that produces the profit on which the system is based finds millions of its members out of work because they cannot be employed profitably!" (*Programme of the RCP, USA*)

But the working class will not sit idly by and be ground into the dirt for the profits of the capitalist class. Workers are going to fight for a decent life and, specifically, employed and unemployed workers throughout the country are taking up the fight against this latest attack, the cutoff of the unemployment benefit extensions. ■