

Labor Must Demand: Recognize Black Unions!

Imperialist Chief Carter Scolds South African Ally

The hard-line posture of South Africa's white supremacist regime is unsettling Western capitals. With Pretoria rapping at the door of the atomic powers' club, its rulers pugnaciously denouncing foreign (especially U.S.) "meddling," and the country hurtling toward greater chaos and bloodshed, the major imperialist powers are nervously searching for measures to dissociate themselves from their increasingly embarrassing ally. Hence, the world's most dangerous warmongers have made a partial concession to long-standing "Third World" demands that South Africa be declared a "threat to international peace," empowering the United Nations Security Council, under the terms of the UN Charter, to impose international sanctions.

This is the significance of the resolution initiated by the major imperialist powers to ban all sales of weapons to South Africa. Such an embargo would not, in fact, prevent Pretoria from covertly obtaining arms (particularly from its close ally Israel) unless it were accompanied by a full-scale military blockade. Nevertheless, the arms-embargo motion represents an attempt by the imperialists to pose as the champions of "democracy" in South Africa and to rap the knuckles of the murderous regime which they have long protected.

Unfortunately for Carter and his European cohorts, however, their arms ban resolution was upstaged at the UN yesterday by an African-sponsored resolution for economic sanctions against South Africa. While an economic quarantine of the Vorster regime would not really aid the victims of apartheid—it would either be ineffective moral posturing or a stage in the escalation of inter-imperialist conflict—the African resolution effectively stole the imperialists' thunder. With its militant rhetoric and its demand that the "multinational" giants and the governments which serve them relinquish South African superprofits, the resolution forced the U.S., Britain and France to exercise their Security Council veto right.

But the very willingness of the Western powers to brand South Africa's acquisition of arms as a "threat to international peace" is an indication of the shift in imperialist strategy in sub-Saharan Africa. Two years ago the U.S., France and Britain vetoed a mandatory arms embargo; today it is their proposal. Why the change? It is obviously not the noxious apartheid system itself. The imperialists have long shed crocodile tears and passed paper resolutions against apartheid while arming South Africa to the teeth and garnering superprofits from the savagely exploited black workers.

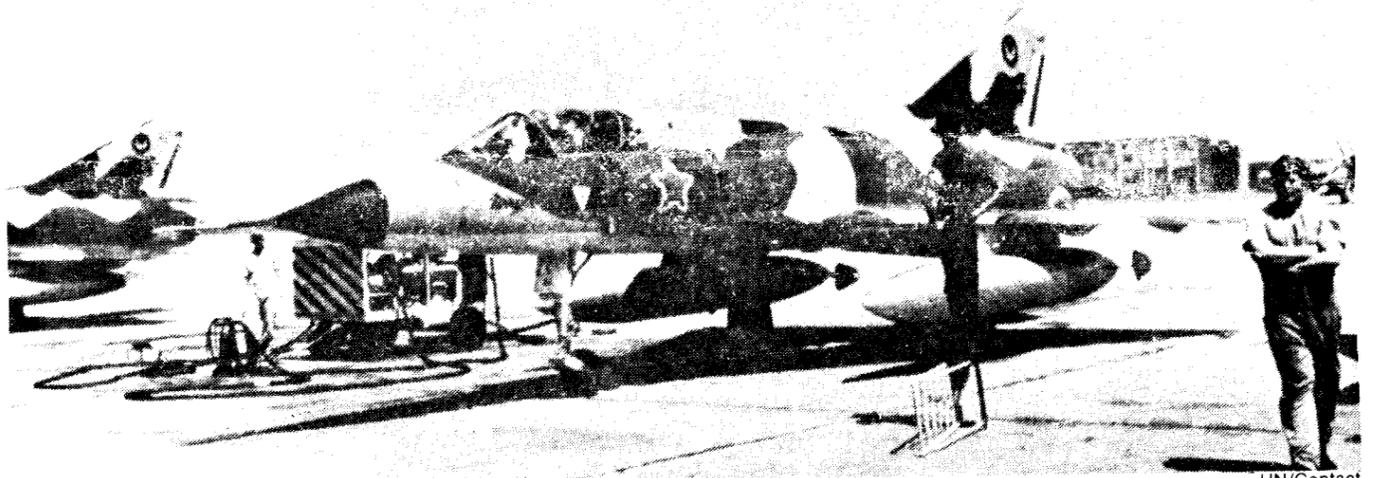


Der Spiegel



Sahm Doherty

Moralizing Carter (left) threatens empty "sanctions" over crackdown by South African premier Vorster (right).



UN/Contact

South Africa buys Western armaments despite UN embargo imposed in 1963.

Nor is it "democratic" imperialism's disdain for bonapartist police-state measures. South African "Justice" Minister Kruger responded to the recent Western criticisms with a remark that however self-serving or overstated, struck effectively at the major powers' incredible hypocrisy: "We're in exactly the same position as the British are with the I.R.A. and the Germans are with the Baader-Meinhof case" (*New York Times*, 22 October).

Pretoria was certainly not less of a threat to its black neighbors two years ago. Indeed, in October 1975 it threw its European and American weapons (obtained despite a voluntary arms ban dating from 1963) into a full-scale invasion of Angola and decisively interna-

tionalized the civil war among rival black nationalist groups. Nor was the murder of perhaps a thousand black and Coloured youths in the six months following the Soweto massacre deemed sufficient grounds for invoking the UN Charter powers.

Announcing his decision to back "strong sanctions against the sale of weapons to South Africa," Carter was

quite specific about the timing of the move:

"The crisis was engendered last week [!] when South Africa took away the rights of free press and eliminated many of the organizations themselves who had been working toward improved equality for the citizens of South Africa."

—*New York Times*, 28 October

Now, it will come as news to the black masses of South Africa that "the rights

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**Cambodia: Peasant
Stalinism Run Amok...6**

Bakke Decision

San Francisco
October 21, 1977

To the Editor:

While I agree completely with the *WV* position on the Bakke decision (No. 178, 14 October), I thought I might expand somewhat on one aspect.

On page 4 you say: "The failure of the liberal civil rights movement followed from its strategy of linking the struggle for black equality to the capitalist state rather than to the struggle of the working class against capitalism.... It is nearly 10 years since a clique of liberals, black nationalists and 'socialists' succeeded in mobilizing the 'black community' against the 1968 New York teachers' strike, helping to cement the racist labor bureaucrats' hold over backward white workers...."

The role of the Socialist Workers Party in the 1968 strike was, unfortunately, something more than "mobilizing the 'black community' against the... strike."

I was at that time a member of the Minneapolis branch of the SWP. When the news of the party's position reached us, I took the floor and opened an attack on the leadership for supporting the scabs.

While virtually alone in my opposition, the leadership launched a sustained counterattack against me. I was told that not only did the leadership give full political support to the strikebreakers in this "racist strike," but that leading members of the NYC branch, including presidential candidate Fred Halstead, had actually participated in crossing the picket lines and opening the school buildings for the scab "community teachers"....

Comradely,
Ernest Everhard

Who Really Killed Cock Robin?

Cleveland, Ohio
July 21, 1977

To the Editor:

As a regular reader of the *WV* I have been spoiled by your consistent delivery of lucid and sophisticated analysis of political events. However, I was recently puzzled, to say the least, at the seemingly synchronic reasoning and the resultant conclusion of the King assassination article in the 17 June *WV*. The conclusion calling for the "full facts to be revealed" in the King assassination and the deaths of Malcolm X and other black militants was glaringly truncated by not extending it to call for the reinvestigation of all assassinations in which the CIA and FBI have been implicated.

While your aversion to the tendency of left-liberals and reformists to find the source of capitalist-created problems in government conspiracies is certainly justified it seems that you neglect your duty as Marxists to seek and tell the truth simply to avoid the liberal stigma of "conspiracy psychosis." More importantly, however, it would seem that if such reinvestigations were to prove CIA and/or FBI involvement it could only further serve the socialist cause by demonstrating to the world the great lengths to which the fetid capitalist class and its conspiratorial agencies will go to maintain and preserve their choke-hold on the proletariat. The exposure of such conspiracies would not necessarily have to serve as fodder for the liberal "rogue elephant" explanation and apology for the bourgeois rule we live under and certainly the SL's record would prevent

it from being tainted with the liberal litany of conspiracy apologia. Marxists must make use of every opportunity handed them to reveal the nefarious and frenetic machinations of capitalist rule if they are to hasten the hour of socialist victory.

In the same article you also speak of the myriad of conspiracy theories concerning the Kennedy assassinations but nowhere have I seen you give these theories the same attention you have given the ones surrounding King's murder. Granted, we do not mourn the Kennedy deaths or place them on equal footing with the murder of a black dissident such as King but that is not really the crux of the matter. Rather, it would seem that the nexus of the assassination/conspiracy question is posed by asking: would a reinvestigation into the Kennedy assassinations reveal indicting data of the capitalist system (e.g., paranoid divisions within the bourgeoisie, Mafia ties, etc.)? If the answer to this question is yes then it would behoove all Marxists to demand it!

Of the questions surrounding the Nix and Zapruder films, the "magic bullet" theory (and accompanying ballistic tests), the possibility of the Oswald double, JFK's missing brain and the E. Howard Hunt connection, none have been adequately answered to the satisfaction of millions of lay people and experts. And thus, fourteen years hence, enough suspicion and pressure prevail to have forced the creation of a House Select Committee on Assassinations (in which, of course, we should place not an ounce of faith). Suffice it to say, a slew of unanswered questions remain all pointing to a conspiracy within this country to kill the Kennedys and given the longtime cozy relationship of the CIA and the Mafia there exists both the motivation and the means to carry out this otherwise outlandish plot.

I believe it was Marx who once said in regard to religious agnostics that there is really no such position because in practice they usually act one way or the other (i.e., as theists or atheists). Although your article does not rule out such reinvestigation of the Kennedy assassinations it is evident that the "aggressive agnosticism" you profess in this matter is clearly an unwarranted atheism and obfuscation of duty. While I join you in your religious atheism I cannot concur with you in the atheism you evince on this matter. Expose the bourgeoisie to hasten their defeat!

Fraternally,
A.B.

WV replies: A.B. is a careful reader of *WV*. He has correctly noticed that we are more interested in exposing the truth of the assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King than we are in dipping into the mysteries of the Kennedy assassinations. Our attitude is shaped by our class perspective on the capitalist state.

Of course we are for the full exposure of all of U.S. imperialism's secret assassination machinery, including any possible connection to the Kennedy assassination. But we are most interested when they try to poison Castro, when they slaughter Fred Hampton in his bed and routinely open our mail. We are most interested in exposing the class function of the bourgeois secret police, its regular MO: surveillance, persecution and (when deemed appropriate) murder of members of the left, black and labor movements. When we demand that the full facts be revealed in the murders of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, we are seeking to focus attention on the murderous class nature of the capitalist

state, its reason for existence as an instrument of oppressive class rule.

But what about the Kennedy assassination? Does not exposure of that also focus attention on the bourgeois state, asks A.B. The "nexus," he says, lies in the question, "Would a reinvestigation into the Kennedy assassinations reveal indicting data of the capitalist system?" Our answer: probably not. Even if there were a conspiracy by one wing of the bourgeoisie against another, while important in terms of evaluating the political climate, this would not necessarily expose the class nature of the state. Suppose it were revealed that the Kennedy assassinations were the result of a right-wing plot: since there was no class-conscious workers movement to speak of, what this would show is not "the great lengths to which the fetid capitalist class and its conspiratorial agencies will go to maintain and preserve their choke-hold on the proletariat," but rather the extent to which one wing or element of the bourgeoisie would go to impose its will on the other sectors of its class. There was such an investigation recently, namely the Watergate exposures, and while it temporarily weakened capitalist repressive forces, in the absence of a combative working-class opposition its net result was to strengthen the Democrats.

For our part, we do not know if there was a conspiracy to assassinate the Kennedys. Unlike the attitude of religious agnosticism, in our case it is not a question of lack of faith but of the absence of facts. Without facts we refuse to fire off speculative shots in the dark. Rather than a dereliction of duty, this is our elementary responsibility to the working-class movement. And since a CIA/FBI/Mafia plot against the Kennedys would not be business-as-usual for the capitalist state but rather an unusual occurrence, there is not the same basis for suspicions as in the case of black leaders who were being obviously harassed by the FBI and local police.

A Congressional investigation is hardly likely to expose anything, and there is no such thing as an "independent" investigation in such matters since the capitalist state controls whatever decisive evidence exists. While we would not oppose a Congressional inquiry, it makes no sense from a working-class perspective to demand it. We denounce the Kennedy assassination cover-up, the locked files and secret documents. But we do not call on the bourgeoisie to investigate itself, just as we do not call on the state to investigate its cops through police review boards or for Congressional "oversight" of the secret police. We want the truth, not cover-ups. If such secrets do exist that are worthy of 14 years of relentless suspicion, they may well be kept under wraps a while longer. The tsar had secrets too, and they were not discovered until *after* the revolution.

We know there are conspiracies, but Marxists reject the liberal notion of a conspiratorial basis of the capitalist state. The Kennedy assassination conspiracy suggested in A.B.'s letter would be an inter-bourgeois drama of enormous scope. About this we do not know. We remain "aggressively agnostic," pointing out that the obsessive yearning to speculate in this case really hides desires to pin the crimes of the capitalist system on a few right-wing plotters. Our propaganda is thus directed in large part at debunking the liberal Kennedy conspiracy industry; exploding the Camelot aura around the man who ordered the Bay of Pigs invasion; and exposing the *normal* function of the capitalist secret police, which is not to assassinate Democratic presidents but to hound the left, labor and black movement.

We do know this: Watergate is the exception—targeting Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X is the rule. There was a state conspiracy to disrupt the civil rights movement and any organized expression of black militancy: exposing this constant conspiracy by the armed bodies of men who are the heart of capitalist state power is a central task of Marxist propaganda.

Prostitution

Oakland
8 July 1977

Dear Comrades,

In *WV* No. 164 [1 July 1977] in the introduction to "The Lumpen Vanguard Myth," *WV* refers to "anti-social parasites (e.g., prostitutes)." While prostitution as an *institution* is certainly parasitic, prostitutes, as individuals, are both socially parasitic and victimized, but not necessarily anti-social. This is a distinction that the SL and the revolutionary Marxist movement has generally made. *Women and Revolution* No. 9, Summer 1975, in an article entitled "French Prostitutes Protest Police Harassment," writes:

"Prostitution is criminal, but the prostitutes are not criminals; they are the victims...."

"They are mercilessly exploited by pimps and madams—disgusting social parasites whose prosecution Marxists welcome. As in past revolutions, they [pimps and madams] can expect to meet with summary justice when the workers take power...."

Prostitution—where "sexual services" become a commodity exploited by pimps and madams—is perhaps the most extreme form of capitalism's exploitation and degradation of women.

The distinction between anti-social parasites, criminals and the rest of the lumpenproletariat was drawn in blood in 1949 when the People's Liberation Army captured China's major cities. As Jean Pasqualini writes in *Prisoner of Mao*:

"There was some rapid house-cleaning when the Communists took over. The first victims were the obvious criminal elements and exploiters of the people.... The city's numerous corps of prostitutes was rounded up and witnessed the execution of their pimps and madams, by firing squad at the outer walls...."

While the Chinese revolution was qualitatively deformed, this act of revolutionary terror was not one of its deformations. The soviet dictatorship of the proletariat will quickly eliminate the parasitic institution of organized prostitution. And with the gradual replacement of the nuclear family, its accompaniment—sex as a commodity—will disappear forever.

Comradely,
M.A.P.

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Editorial Notes

"Far-Left Unity" Hullabaloo in Britain

LONDON—The current "far-left unity" manoeuvre of the International Marxist Group (IMG, British section of the United Secretariat [USec]) seems to be causing some difficulties for the Sean Matgamna grouping, presently organised as the International-Communist League (I-CL). The IMG call—formally directed at the dozen-odd centrist and reformist organisations to the left of the Labour Party—is primarily aimed at "uniting" the IMG with the far larger "third camp" economists of Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (née International Socialist [IS]). Although the IMG is not particularly interested in the small I-CL, the Pabloists' grand "unity" offensive has certainly had repercussions inside the I-CL.

The I-CL deemed it incumbent to respond to the IMG unity-mongering by expressing concern for "complete clarity" and by voicing anxiety at the "confusion" and "false pretenses" of the proposed merger. But the protestation of the need for principle in undertaking regroupments is rendered transparent by the Matgamna grouping's long history of successive entries into numerous organisations, in particular its 1968 enthusiasm for a similarly unprincipled "unity" appeal emanating from the Cliffites.

Evidently the Matgamnaites felt compelled to publicly explain why the IMG "unity" tactic is confusionist whereas the 1968 Cliffite scheme was principled, and a recent article in *Workers Action* (a newspaper which reflects the viewpoint of the I-CL) took the plunge and attempted to explain how. They would have done better to leave bad enough alone and hope nobody would remember.

Thus, the article attacks the diluted ("non-sectarian") nature of the IMG's proposed five-point "unity" programme. But the basis of the 1968 fusion between the IS and the Matgamnaite Workers Fight group was an even more minimal four-point programme: "against racism, against imperialism, against incomes policy, and for workers control" (quoted in *Workers Action* No. 65). The I-CL political contortionists assert that the 1968 fusion "would have massively enlarged the entire left" and that "it would have been a pole of attraction for almost all serious revolutionaries." In a letter to the editor one perplexed *Workers Action* reader neatly captured the essence of the I-CL's method: "It's okay to create political confusion so long as larger rather than smaller numbers of people are won to revolutionary politics."

A similarly absurd position results when the I-CL seeks to use "newness" as a criterion to invest the 1968 lash-up with an aura of purity: thus, while the Cliffite scheme was a product of "the immaturity and experience of a genuinely new vanguard," the current IMG campaign "represents the manoeuvres of experienced politicians." IMG honcho Tariq Ali must indeed be an impressively effective manoeuvrer to strike such awe in the hearts of the I-CL, which has come out for the relative political innocence of Tony Cliff—who broke from Trotskyism to state capitalism at the time of the Korean war some 27 years ago!

Of course, the Matgamnaites have a long record of unprincipled "fusions" and casual programmatic shifts in pursuit of their selected entrust targets. The I-CL itself was formed by a fusion between the formally Soviet-defencist Workers Fight and a smaller state-capitalist grouping called Workers Power. In order to consummate what was to be an extremely short-lived fusion (duration: one year), Matgamna & Co. were happy to label the nature of the Soviet state a "tenth rate question."

The most recent expression of the Matgamnaites' appetite for unprincipled "fusions" was the late unlamented "Necessary International Initiative" (NII), which comprised the I-CL and two centrist organisations formed by splits from the USec in Germany and Italy. The NII's formation and evident collapse is of significance not only as a graphic demonstration of the futility of rotten-bloc "internationalism," but also because it mimics the unhappy fate of its largest national component, the German Spartacusbund.

(Some seven years ago, a left-oppositional current departed from the German USec with the intention of outlining an "independent" centrist course quantitatively to the USec's left, without coming to grips with authentic Trotskyism as represented by the international Spartacist tendency [iSt]. The perpetually fragmenting "critical Pabloist" current never escaped the political orbit of the USec, which now stands in a good position to pick up one or another of its decomposition products. A large proportion of the individuals involved in this process have left revolutionary politics altogether, though over the years several leftward-

moving groupings emerging from this milieu managed to find their way to the iSt.)

A 15 October position paper on the I-CL distributed by the London Spartacist Group described the spectacular failure of the I-CL's ten-month NII manoeuvre:

"When challenged from the left the NII posed as a simple 'discussion group'; at other times, particularly when posturing in front of local USec groups, it posed as at the very least an instrument to build an International. Hence its own internal life and its ephemeral 'coordinating committee'.

"The members of the NII—besides the I-CL, the Italian Frazione Marxista Rivoluzionaria (FMR), and the Spartacusbund of Germany—did share a distaste for the worst idiosyncrasies of the relatively unsuccessful local representatives of Pabloism, while retaining an affinity for the fundamental political revisionism of the USec. On its own national territory each organisation found it desirable to make some pretense at international connections, to compete with the USec affiliate and to ward off attacks from the iSt. Thus was the NII consummated.

"Today the I-CL is circulating a half-page statement (dated 15 July 1977) in which it renounces its short-lived involvement in the NII. In the first lines of the statement the following three assertions appear:

"The NII no longer exists in the form in which we declared our intention to participate in it.... The NII—if the title continues to exist—is now nothing more than a front for the FMR....

"In fact the NII has never really existed."

"In case that is confusing the I-CL goes on to say

"The NII was a project of a structured framework predicated on pretences disproportionate to the reality of the participating organisations and to its inadequate and insubstantial platform (to which the I-CL produced 'neutralising' amendments before affiliating)." (sic!)

"So the I-CL has just left an international bloc which had an 'inadequate and insubstantial' (although fortunately 'neutralised') programme and which never really existed.

"The reason for the I-CL's departure from the NII seems to be sour grapes about what's left of the Spartacusbund carrying out 'an auto-conversion to the entire platform of the FMR [which] has rendered discussion impossible....' The NII remains unprincipled as before...."

Internationalism does not consist in undertaking "initiatives" which must later be admitted to be not merely not "necessary" but presumably downright dangerous!

Fusions are an indispensable part of the struggle to assemble the cadres of a Leninist vanguard party. But the successful fusions which have led to the growth and international extension of the iSt are the result of principled struggle for the Trotskyist programme. The fragmentation of the revisionist rotten blocs and their petty imitators like the NII is a confirmation in the negative of the tactic of revolutionary regroupment.

Marcy and Mengistu

At times it seems that the only purpose in life for the Workers World Party/Youth Against War and Fascism (WWP/YAWF), Sam Marcy's Stalinoid personality cult, is cheerleading for sundry "Third World struggles." There is hardly a guerrilla comandante or "anti-imperialist" colonel on three continents whose praises they have not sung. And in upholding the Marxist-Leninist pretensions of tinpot despots from Maputo to Mogadishu, WWP/YAWF have regularly resorted to gangster tactics against the Spartacist League's exposure of the crimes of bourgeois nationalism and Stalinism.

Recently, however, YAWF's desire for popularity among petty-bourgeois radical circles in the U.S. has run afoul of the methodology of "Global Class War"—Marcy's grand theory of capitulation to the Stalinist ruling bureaucracies. It is easy enough to tout so-called "socialist construction" in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. Neto, Machel and Cabral have not yet lost their media appeal, and the Kremlin pretends that these tawdry nationalist regimes are "non-capitalist." Thus YAWF could rubber-stamp the line of the currently most militant-posturing Stalinist regime while maintaining a radical image on campus.

However, the "Global Class War" has now come to the Horn of Africa and consternated Marcyites are faced with two warring "scientific socialist" military dictatorships, Ethiopia and Somalia, presently backed by Russia and China respectively. In the past, YAWF has sided with Peking against Moscow (both ideologically and in the Sino-Soviet border dispute); but since Mao lined up with the U.S. and apartheid South Africa in last year's Angolan war, the USSR and its Cuban front men have gotten top billing in the pages of *Workers World*. So with the same facility with which Brezhnev switched horses from Somalia's Major Siad Barre to Ethiopia's Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, Marcy has suddenly discovered the "Ethiopian Revolution."

Ever since the back-to-back barnstorming tours of

Africa by Fidel Castro and then Soviet president Podgorny last spring, Moscow has courted the military junta (Derg) in Ethiopia. During a stay in Addis Ababa, Castro hailed Mengistu as a "great revolutionary." He was silent, however, about the Derg's systematic assassination and execution of leftist opponents at home and its sordid war of national oppression against independence fighters in Eritrea. Taking his cue from Cuba's "jefe máximo," Marcy, too, has concluded: "The working class, the national liberation movements and progressive people as a whole ought to give full, unstinted, and unambiguous support to the Ethiopian Revolution" (*Workers World*, 19 August).

YAWF's bootlicking support to yet another Soviet-backed "revolutionary" regime would not be noteworthy except for the particularly grisly character of the Derg's bloody rule and the Marcyites' earlier support to the Eritrean guerrillas. Two and a half years ago they excoriated the USSR and China for failure to "come to the aid of the Eritreans" and noted:

"...the principle of self-determination of oppressed nations has been trampled in the rush to form an alliance with the new Ethiopian generals. The fact that they may be progressive to a degree in the struggle against imperialism (and this is really yet to be seen) makes no difference as far as their colonial policy is concerned. A national bourgeois regime is characterized by its need to resist imperialism in order to better exploit the workers and oppressed." [emphasis in original]

—*Workers World*,
28 February 1975

But today, after several waves of purge by assassination, the Derg has switched arms suppliers from the U.S. to the Soviet Union and, lo and behold, it is YAWF that tramples on the Eritreans' right of self-determination:

"...support for the Eritrean struggle for self-determination must be conditional on their renouncing any part in imperialism's schemes to use their national struggle against the Ethiopian Revolution; in other words, it is conditional on their support for the Ethiopian Revolution and their rejection of the reactionary Arab regimes who are acting on behalf of imperialist interests."

—*Workers World*, 19 August

What has really changed in Ethiopia? Mengistu has gotten the upper hand in the internecine clique infighting within the Derg, emerging from the piles of corpses as the most ruthless exponent of modernizing military bonapartism. He has targeted as enemies of the revolution not only the feudalists, but also the militant socialist-oriented trade unionists and left-wing students, who have been "liquidated" by the thousands. As bourgeois nationalists, the junta as a whole and Mengistu in particular are committed to defending the glory of a Greater Ethiopia forged by the conquests of Coptic Christian emperors beginning with Menelik I in the mid-1800's. Thus the military Derg has continued without let-up the same dirty war which it fought for years on behalf of Haile Selassie against Somali and Eritrean secessionists seeking to escape decades of brutal Amharic domination.

While withdrawing support for the independence struggle of the Eritreans (or, rather, making it conditional on their supporting their oppressors), YAWF also trumpets Mengistu's "peasant and worker militias," the rag-tag army intended to crush the independence movement in an orgy of religious bloodletting. And it applauds the "revolutionary reorganizing at the mass level" of the *kabeles* (*Workers World*, 16 September). Ironically, the prime function of these urban vigilante groups set up by the army is to smash the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), a militant leftist group that so starkly resembles the WWP/YAWF with its eclectic Guevarist/"Third World" nationalist politics.

Internationally, the elimination of pro-U.S. army officers in Addis Ababa led to a cooling of relations with Washington and ultimately a cut-off of arms supplies by the Carter administration, alleging abuses of human rights by the Derg. (Of course, the Pentagon continues to lavish military aid on the equally murderous right-wing Mobutu dictatorship in Zaire.) Moscow thereupon stepped into the breach, trying to create an "anti-imperialist confederation" in the geopolitically strategic Horn of Africa essentially by bribing the several weapons-starved army regimes. But a change of arms suppliers does not determine the *class character* of a regime, and in any case the Ethiopian junta continues to be supported by Israel. (The Zionists set up an elite terror squad, known as the Nebelbal or "flame," which has acted as Mengistu's personal army and carried out systematic repression against the EPRP.)

It was obvious from the beginning that the Kremlin's illusions of an "anti-imperialist" alliance in East Africa would be shattered on the nationalism of the rival strongmen. As Brezhnev has tilted toward Ethiopia,

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Mandel's Unwanted Children

"You must understand that there is a very real danger of total disintegration..." These are the terms in which American supporters of the United Secretariat (USec) majority described their situation a year and a half ago. In a 22 June 1976 letter to the USec's International Majority Tendency (IMT), Milt Zaslow and his group of Los Angeles-based IMT loyalists desperately appealed to their international mentors to desist from upholding the IMT's uneasy political bloc with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) against their closest political supporters in this country. Their plea that Ernest Mandel & Co. should break from a deliberate policy "which compels the IMT leadership, again and again, to aid and abet the [pro-SWP] LTF in its drive to destroy our tendency" has at last been met with an apparently definitive response.

The bitterly faction-ridden USec, which has teetered on the brink of split since 1969, seems to have pasted itself back together. For the U.S. IMT supporters—permanently enjoined from publicly criticizing or competing with the SWP, and instructed to apply for membership in an SWP which had no intention of accepting the vast majority of them—the dissolution of the USec's two major factions puts off for the foreseeable future any hope of emerging from the deep freeze with the USec's American "franchise."

Of course the alliance between the reformist SWP and the centrist IMT is inherently unstable. No matter what under-the-table deals have been made to protect the cease-fire, it must shatter under the impact of any sharp upturn in the class struggle which would pose conflicting opportunist appetites for the bloc partners. But the American IMT supporters cannot afford to wait. Suspended in political limbo, on the IMT's instructions, since the July 1974 purge of the pro-IMT Internationalist Tendency (IT) from the SWP, the U.S. IMT has hemorrhaged its cadres until there are very few of them left to wait, even if they had something to wait for.

So we were not overly impressed this summer when Zaslow and some of his fellow cast-offs proclaimed the imminent formation of "a bold new revolutionary tendency" called the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP). The "Crispies" were evidently expecting to "regroup" most of the dispersed IMT loyalists outside the SWP (expelled ITers and also local groupings, like Zaslow's Socialist Union, which because of their pro-IMT sympathies were never admitted to membership by the SWP) as well as pull in some new elements. Already they are finding the going rough. Somehow, despite the initiators' years of "non-sectarian" efforts to soft-pedal their ostensible "Trotskyism" and downplay their programmatic heterogeneity, the "bold new" lash-up seems to hold little attraction for those unimpressed with the IMT and its occasional whispered words of comfort. Meanwhile, the IMT leadership's years of cynical maneuvers with the bureaucratic SWP have squandered the cadres of the former IT; some have liquidated into other organizations, while most are simply too demoralized to reenter active political struggle.

Expendable

The fate of the IT was sealed years ago by the IMT's categorical refusal to break with its American bloc partner,

the SWP. The Barnes regime could suppress the IT, even expel more than 100 people with the arrogant claim that in effect they had already split, but Mandel continued to play the numbers game and conciliate the far larger forces of the SWP. Lauding the SWP's capitulation to the antiwar bourgeoisie, fulsomely praising the SWP's anti-proletarian accommodation to black nationalism, Mandel had little use for the empiricist but would-be leftist IT. Once the left oppositionists in the SWP had decisively thrown in their lot with the IMT, their self-destruction as subjective revolutionists was logical and inexorable.

At the time of the mass purge of the IT from the SWP we warned, "The IT Is Expendable":

"... In its desperate thrashing about, the IT has tried to persuade itself that the Pabloism of the United Secretariat is only a shibboleth, an empty political epithet. They are finding out differently. The organizational consequence of the USec's objectivist, tailist line is disinterest and contempt toward the painstaking building of communist cadres. What are 112 ITers in the United States to the Pabloist mind?—after all, the automatic unfolding processes of the New Mass Vanguard or some successor gimmick will certainly bring thousands; surely one speech by Ernest Mandel in a suitable mass meeting could win far more, so why worry about small change like the political death of the IT, which is merely the major part of three years of left oppositional activity in the SWP? Thus it is not subjective evil or ill will that causes the USec tops... to look upon the IT not as comrades but as pawns: this willful destructiveness is only the necessary corollary of their impressionistic politics."

—"SWP Stages Mass Purge,"
WV No. 49, 19 July 1974

The sequel to this warning was the agonized fragmentation of the IT. In the 22 June 1976 letter, Zaslow et al. describe far more eloquently than we could the results of the IT's loyalty to its international "leadership":

"In September of 1974, two months after the purge, the IT held a conference to assess its situation and plan its strategy. The conference voted unanimously to appeal the expulsion to higher bodies... [and] to make preparations to 'go public' on the assumption that the SWP would not readmit the tendency as a whole, and certainly not with tendency rights... It was estimated that, with the recruitment of the SU, BMG [Baltimore Marxist Group] and RMC [Revolutionary Marxist Collective], the group would number about 150, with organized branches in 8 or so major cities... We also understood that the period of marking time had to be very brief or we would surely suffer demoralization and disintegration."

"This perspective was torpedoed by the IMT leadership. Overriding the opinions of the entire tendency, this leadership intervened with a heavy hand to impose a completely different line. That line was to renounce all independent political activity and place ourselves at the disposal of the SWP—whose aim, of course, was to crush us."

"Naturally, this directive threw the previously united tendency into a bitter struggle and split the IT down the middle. At the conclusion of our conference of April 1975, 50 comrades supporting the line of the IMT leadership split from the tendency and regrouped themselves as the 'New Faction' on your line of reintegration at all costs and on any basis."

"The initial demand for collective reintegration on the basis of 'non-negotiable Leninist norms of party democracy', and the right to defend the line on the International in public, ended with a pathetic scramble for admission, one by one, with no conditions whatever."

"Some of the New Faction (NF) comrades could not swallow the bitter pill and left. A few joined RMOC [Revolutionary Marxist Organizing Committee], others were lost to our move-



Freedom Socialist

From left, Clara Fraser, Murry Weiss and Myra Tanner Weiss.



Milt Zaslow

WV Photo

ment entirely. The rest strove pathetically to prove themselves worthy of reintegration....

"And what was the upshot? The SWP kept them dangling on a string, month after month, eventually admitting one here, two there, until finally, a grand total of 17 or so comrades were admitted, scattered across the country."

"So, it is time to ask, what has happened to the 150 supporters of the IMT in the US? The 17 (more or less) are buried in the SWP where they will vegetate, as they cannot possibly make the slightest impact on the SWP monolith. All that can be expected is demoralization and adaptation. About 19 members of the NF, in spite of their self-imposed abstinence from all work on behalf of the FI, etc., are suspended in mid air with absolutely no perspective except to hope that someday, or some year, the SWP will relent and readmit them. A half-dozen or so (including 2 of the 5 members of the IT Political Committee), have joined Sam Marcy's cult, (Workers World Party), which happens to be hostile to the FI. A few joined a local centrist formation. The rest have drifted out of political activity entirely, at least for the time being, many demoralized and embittered."

"What a tragic waste of cadres. What remains, in an organized way, out of the

debacle, are some 50 comrades who refused to be expended, or sacrificed or immobilized....

"Cde. C. declared in Chicago, in April of 1975, that if only 30 comrades made it into the SWP, that would constitute a victory! (Incidentally, is 17, or 20, also a victory?) And what about the rest—the large majority? They were apparently expendable...."

—letter of 22 June 1976, published in SWP *International Information Bulletin*, No. 2 in 1977, July 1977

A bitter postscript to this already sobering tale is the treatment afforded the token ITers who were "reintegrated" into the SWP where, mistrusted and held in contempt, they enjoy the dubious pleasure of watching the recently fused state-capitalist former Revolutionary Marxist Committee being gladdened on all sides. At the SWP National Convention held last August, where the state-caps were given a lengthy standing ovation and flattered with congratulatory speeches, the delegates snickered as IT spokesman John Barzman was nominated for the National Committee:

"Comrade Barzman is a member of a major international faction with members in the party, and we felt his membership would strengthen the committee, even though the level of his party activity since he was elected to the National Committee last year has not been defensible for an elected leader...."

—"Nominations Commission Report," [SWP] *Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 8 in 1977, October 1977

Belated Break

As we survey the wreckage of the IT, it seems almost excessively cruel to insist that the destruction of the IT in the IMT's hands was predictable. But the IT leaders share the responsibility for the debacle. In August 1974, following the purge, two members of the Houston IT branch leadership submitted to their tendency a document in preparation for the October IT plenum. The document characterized the SWP as reformist and argued that "a complete political break is both politically justified and necessary." In the service of its international mentors' machinations, the IT leadership suppressed the document. When the comrades arrived in Chicago for the October IT plenum, whose purpose was to debate the IT's perspectives toward the SWP, they found that the very first

agenda point was their expulsion. Their counter-motion, "The SWP is finished as a revolutionary force," was voted down and they were shown the door. The IT then proceeded to reaffirm the "revolutionary" character of the SWP and adopt the IMT's ultimatum that they seek "reintegration."

The 22 June 1976 letter by Zaslow et al. is the eloquent balance sheet of the "reintegration" perspective. The Houston comrades' position—once such anathema to the IT leadership that it triggered a political expulsion—is now a truism for the bruised remnants of the American IMT. And so the "bold new" CRSP proclaims in its Statement of Purpose: "We are forced to conclude that the regeneration of revolutionary Marxism in the U.S. must proceed outside of and apart from the SWP."

At last! Years after the point where it might have made some difference, the U.S. IMT spokesmen are ready to declare that the SWP is not revolutionary (the CRSP calls it "centrist"). But it is not clear that anybody is still listening.

The reason for this new-found wisdom is not hard to find. If the last few years' experiences were not enough, the dissolution of factions in the USec provides the crowning insult. A new era of sweetness and light has been declared in the USec; after the SWP had urged the faction which follows its lead to "unilaterally" dissolve, it would be the basest ingratitude for the IMT to utter even a whimper of protest when Jack Barnes gloats that "In the United States, for the first time in several years, every single person in this country who would be a member of the Fourth International if it were not for reactionary legislation is today a member of the Socialist Workers Party" [SWP] *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. XIV, No. 8, September 1977). In other words, the IMT leadership at last agrees that Zaslow and his fellow "Crispies" are indeed non-persons.

Who Are the "Crispies"?

In their last-ditch effort to pull together some kind of pro-IMT organization in this country, Zaslow & Co. have been joined by a few small clumps of Pabloist undergrowth, some of it fairly exotic. While their general political trajectories—characterized by polyvanguardist impressionism—are certainly similar, each tends to have its own hobbyhorse; in the attempt to arrive at a lowest-common-denominator "program," the CRSP has simply aggregated the various components' eccentricities. The effort to derive a "program" out of the lumping together of everybody's pet enthusiasm leads to some rather hilarious results. Thus the CRSP's Statement of Purpose jumps straight from its opening four points on "Race, Sex and Sexuality"—intended to placate the kooky Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) of Washington state, known for its advocacy of "socialist feminism"—to the call for "A Party of Workers and Scholars," obviously a plug for Murry and Myra Weiss of the Marxist Education Collective (MEC) in New York.

The FSP is the creature of Clara Fraser, who along with her then-collaborator Richard Fraser left the SWP some ten years ago over several oppositional positions: left criticisms of the SWP's pacifist antiwar line and capitulation to black nationalism; a pronounced Maoist bent; the reasonable observation that the women's movement would certainly be a big deal and radicals looking for something to tail should get with it right away. The tendency (formerly the Seattle SWP branch virtually in its totality) subsequently split between the Clara Fraserites and the Dick Fraserites, with the former solidarizing around feminism and the latter around Maoism. Clara Fraser is to our knowledge the only ostensible Trotskyist who considered the disputed questions of her divorce to be political; her group has actually is-

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Expropriate the Mines!

Mass Layoffs Threaten Canadian Nickel Miners

—Reprinted from Spartacist Canada No. 21, November 1977

SUDBURY, Ontario, October 23—More than 1,000 angry miners and other Sudbury residents rallied here this afternoon to protest the impending mass layoffs in area nickel mines. The Inco and Falconbridge mine bosses are seeking to rationalize the collapsing Canadian nickel industry at the expense of the workers, and the jobs and livelihoods of thousands are at stake—as well as the future of this historically powerful and militant sector of the Canadian union movement.

Already 375 Inco employees in Port Colborne, Ontario (some with as much as 14 years seniority) have been axed; now the company has announced that early next year 2,800 workers in Sudbury and another 650 in Thompson, Manitoba, will lose their jobs *permanently*. Falconbridge has announced similar massive cuts in the Sudbury-area workforce, and local union leaders warned the protesting miners that still more layoffs are likely on the agenda.

Cramming the union hall of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 6500, the miners came hoping to find a strategy to defeat the company's attacks. But all they got was three hours of speeches from politicians and union bureaucrats, containing nothing but rhetoric, vague promises and various reformist gimmicks aimed at cajoling the companies and the governments in Ottawa and Toronto into doing something about the layoffs.

The mood of the miners at the meeting was militant. When a local Liberal MP [member of parliament] tried to defend the "private enterprise system," he was virtually hooted off the stage—and would have been, had Sudbury and District Labour Council President Elmer McVey not appealed to the audience to avoid "cheap shots." Jack Gignac, President of Mine-Mill Local 491 (Falconbridge production workers) thundered that "any politician against nationalization [of Inco and Falconbridge] without compensation does not represent the working class," and received a prolonged standing ovation. But neither Gignac, nor any other speaker presented a strategy to stop the layoffs and win demands like expropriation of the mining companies.



Miners at Sudbury rally, October 23.

Spartacist Canada

Among the worst was Dave Patterson, the supposedly "militant" USWA 6500 (Inco employees) president, who won the leadership of this 14,000-member local two years ago as a self-styled "insurgent" rank-and-file candidate. He was a vocal supporter of "rebel" bureaucrat Ed Sadlowski in this year's USWA International elections. Patterson announced that the local executive had a five-point program which it was trying to discuss with the company. This program consisted of nothing more than appeals for pensions to those leaving the industry, no overtime and no contracting out, a better vacation schedule and building more "liaison with the community." Asked by a *Spartacist Canada* reporter whether he supported the demand for the nationalization of Inco, Patterson actually said no. Instead he supported a scheme whereby the government would receive five percent interest in Inco each time it granted

the company tax concessions!

Seeking to curry favor with the militant miners, even some Sudbury-area New Democratic Party MP's and MPP's [member of provincial parliament] came off to the left of Patterson. NDP MPP Eli Martel cried that Inco must be taken over by the government, and that the only compensation it deserves is \$2.95 for a bus ticket out of town. But federal MP John Rodriguez could come up with nothing better than a scheme for pressuring the government into stockpiling nickel to save jobs.

Even provincial [NDP] leader Stephen Lewis was forced to concede that "public ownership," which he admitted was in general anathema to him, *might* have to be considered. But he preferred the strategy of a legislative inquiry into Inco's business practices if the government failed to step in to prevent layoffs. Later, free from the pressures of the militant rally, Lewis told reporters that the NDP really had no intention of calling for the nationalization of the nickel industry—even *with* compensation.

Lewis' federal counterpart Ed Broadbent echoed his remarks and also took up a nationalist theme, which had been begun by Patterson and continued by several other speakers. For Broadbent, the problem with Inco is that it is "anti-Canadian" because it is laying off workers in Canada while at the same time creating new jobs at its mines in Guatemala and Indonesia. Broadbent demanded that the federal government step in to stop Inco investment in other countries—i.e., lay off workers in Guatemala and Indonesia to save jobs in Sudbury.

Inco and Falconbridge are seeking to drastically cut back their Sudbury operations because they are no longer profitable enough. The companies face increased international competition, particularly from an American corporation, Amax Inc., which is selling nickel at significantly lower prices in order to destroy Inco's historical dominance in the industry. In the face of this competi-

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INCO plant near Sudbury.

Spartacist Canada

Cambodia: Peasant Stalinism Run Amok

When Pol Pot of Democratic Kampuchea—formerly known as Sath Sar of the Royal Government of Nation Union—surfaced several weeks ago in Peking, it was revealed to the world (and to his countrymen) that he was not only prime minister of Cambodia but also secretary of the central committee of the Khmer Communist Party. The laconic Chinese announcement of his visit was, moreover, the first official admission of the existence of the Cambodian CP, which was said to be in the midst of celebrating its 17th anniversary (the previous 16 having slipped by unnoticed).

It was revealed in Peking that the shadowy Cambodian leader had paid a previous visit to China (kept secret at the time) in 1975, and movies of his meeting then with Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung were shown on Chinese television. Pol Pot made a series of speeches, stating that the "general situation of the revolution is excellent" in Cambodia and claiming that "security in the whole of our country is perfectly assured" (*New York Times*, 30 September). At a banquet in his honor he warned that the "Kampuchean Revolutionary Army... will not tolerate any aggression, provocation, interference, subversion or espionage activities by anyone."

The world bourgeois press promptly seized on this rare public appearance to speculate on rumored power struggles behind the scenes and tried to fit some new pieces into the "Cambodian puzzle." After the country had been pounded for five years by massive U.S. bombing, the 1975 liberation of the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh from the venal Lon Nol clique provided a shocking spectacle as the victorious Khmer Rouge troops drove out the entire population of 3 million at gunpoint. Even war criminal Henry Kissinger, the architect of the 1970 American-South Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and of the murderous 1974 Christmas bombing of Hanoi, felt he could get away with condemning the Communists' "inhumanity."

For the past two years the situation in Cambodia has been the subject of countless horror stories in the imperialist media. The most vehement anti-communist diatribes paint the country as a blood-drenched chamber of horrors, to which knee-jerk New Left radicals (e.g., the *Guardian*) respond by dismissing everything as "CIA lies." Now, while taking into account the tendentiousness of the "evidence" presented on both sides, the Cambodian experience clearly shows extremes of Stalinist brutality and bureaucratic rule. While it may not be quite the "1984"-style death camp dreamed up by the more fevered reactionary ideologues, the information that is available and believable indicates that life in Cambodia is indeed quite grim, harsh and terrifying.

This in no way vitiates, but on the contrary verifies, the perspective of proletarian socialist revolution. Unlike the liberals, who now claim they were "duped," and the Stalinists, who simply deny reality, Trotskyists have no need to despair or resort to lies. The Spartacist League hailed the overthrow of capitalist rule in Indochina as a historic conquest, but placed absolutely no confidence in the Stalinist bureaucracies who came to power in the wake of the peasant-guerrilla struggle. The un-

doubted atrocities perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge, as well as the enforced national isolation and irrational economic destruction they have decreed, underline the need for a proletarian political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers states to overthrow the Stalinist ruling castes and establish the democratic rule of soviet power.

"Self-Reliance," Khmer-Style

Since coming to power the Khmer Rouge have managed to almost completely cut off Cambodia from the outside world. Wrapping themselves in a hysterical xenophobia directed not only against its capitalist neighbor Thailand, but also against Laos and Vietnam, the rare public statements by the new rulers in Phnom Penh have emphasized the sanctity of Cambodia's borders and glorified ancient Khmer traditions. There are constant references in the program of the Stalinist-led National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK) to the greatness of the thirteenth-century empire based at Angkor Wat, whose temples form the centerpiece of the new revolutionary flag (e.g., the "light of Angkor civilization shining throughout Southeast Asia for many centuries").

Like the Albanians, North Koreans and other Stalinist regimes in small, poor countries, the Cambodian CP has made a fetish out of economic "self-reliance." However, in this case it is based on massive forced population transfers and the uprooting of traditional peasant communities. The Cambodian people, using the most primitive tools or even their bare hands, are being forced to build a new society literally from the ground up. As foreign minister Ieng Sary told *Der Spiegel* (9 May 1977) in a rare interview, "There is no precedent for the revolutionary experiment of the Khmers. We want to realize something that has never yet been seen in history. Therefore there is no model, neither the Chinese nor the Vietnamese model, which can apply to us."

The "new Cambodia" does in fact represent a rather unique social reality, for the wracking contradictions which characterize all the deformed workers states are revealed in extreme form there. It is impossible to understand the total secretiveness, the virtually impenetrable national isolation and the deliberate dismantling of the country's economy without an understanding of these contradictions. The brutal repression and extreme regimentation of "Democratic Kampuchea" are not the products of the demented ravings of demonic red monsters but a quintessential expression of the impossibility of peasant Stalinist regimes to establish a socialist society.

The grotesque statements of the Khmer Stalinists naturally do little to shed light on the actual situation. Pol Pot's justification for the total evacuation of Phnom Penh, for example, is ludicrous on the face of it. The policy was decided upon, he said, "because we knew that before the smashing of all sorts of enemy spy organizations, our strength was not strong enough to defend the revolutionary regime" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 October). In the first place, U.S. imperialism was on the run in 1975. Moreover, the perfidious CIA frequently turns out to have feet of clay. Recently, for example, the bourgeois press was so in the dark that it

could only assert, the day after it began, that the 11th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was "apparently" in session judging from such tell-tale signs as the number of cars parked before the Great Hall of the People, preparations for fireworks displays, etc.

The Cambodian Stalinists' real fear was that with their small military force they would be unable to control a large urban population. At the time of their victory the Khmer Rouge were estimated to have only 70,000 soldiers and a cadre of roughly 1,000 (according to William Shawcross, writing in the 4 March 1976 *New York Review of Books*). Refugees have reported that villages of 750 people are controlled by only a dozen or so soldiers. In addition, the Khmer Rouge army, formed through years of guerrilla fighting in the countryside, was a peasant army whose



Der Spiegel
Cambodian Stalinists forced hundreds of thousands of urban dwellers into countryside.

attitude toward the cities was one of hostility and suspicion. The combination of a successful peasant revolt and an extremely narrow Stalinist layer at the top accounts for the unusually brutal consolidation of the Cambodian deformed workers state.

The Obliteration of Phnom Penh

The unexpected action of the victorious Khmer Rouge in forcibly depopulating the Cambodian capital had a tremendous impact on bourgeois public opinion. But the gunpoint evacuation of Phnom Penh came as an even more traumatic shock to the exhausted and starving population of the beleaguered city. The toll in human lives was enormous. While Ieng Sary admitted to *Der Spiegel* that "2,000 to 3,000 people died during the evacuation of the city, and several thousand died in the rice fields" during the first month, the actual total is undoubtedly far higher.

As recounted in the powerful eyewitness reports of Sydney Shanberg of the *New York Times*, the people of Phnom Penh were herded into the streets as the vast tide of humanity slowly moving out of the bloated city choked the thoroughfares. Even the critically ill and wounded in the hospitals were forced out, limping on crutches or lying in hospital beds pushed by relatives, some still hooked up to bottles of serum. Deeply suspicious of every aspect of city culture, young Khmer peasant soldiers broke into the banks, throwing thousands of now-worthless



Pol Pot

Asiaweek

bank notes into the Mekong or burning them in huge bonfires, along with books from the library. (Cambodia today still has no money.)

When it was all over, Phnom Penh was a ghost town, with only a few abandoned cars standing on the deserted streets, their tires and bodies often riddled with bullets by the frustrated soldiers unable to make them function. Meanwhile, in the countryside, those who survived the exhausting trek often found themselves clearing forests, without food, clean water or medicine. Malaria and dysentery were rampant, and many of the former urban dwellers,

totally unfamiliar with agricultural practices, were unable to survive the harsh conditions.

Now, in fact, a good part of the misery and suffering of the Cambodian people immediately following the April 1975 victory of the Khmer Rouge cannot be laid at the Stalinists' doorstep. They inherited a devastated country on which the U.S. imperialists had rained more than half a million tons of bombs, reducing most of the towns to rubble and slaughtering an estimated 600,000 people (out of a total population of 7 million). Phnom Penh had been swollen to five times its pre-war size, and even the American government admitted that the population of the capital could not be maintained without a continuous airlift.

But while denouncing the imperialist butchery, the Spartacist League did not excuse the Stalinist bureaucratic atrocities. We wrote at the time:

"The contradictory character of Stalin-



Ieng Sary

Asiaweek

ism was nowhere more graphically revealed than in the actions of the victorious Cambodian peasant army marching into Phnom Penh not to liberate the poor and working people but rather to impose an immediate and total depopulation of the city....

"In Cambodia some urban depopulation was indeed called for. The towns had become unmanageably swollen with refugees from the countryside, most driven there by U.S. saturation bombing. But Phnom Penh, which had already discharged its thin layer of capitalists, also contained a stratum of workers and petty bourgeoisie constituting the only developed basis of Cambodia's urban economy. For Marxists it is crucial to preserve this economic infrastructure while beginning an orderly program for the relocation of the peasant refugees. In any case the working and poor population should have itself decided in democratic soviets how to deal with artificially overpopulated cities. Certainly they would not decide to drive out the aged and the infirm, which surely would kill them."

—"Indochina: Deformed Revolution," *WV* No. 72, 4 July 1975

Worker-Peasant Paradise or Rural "1984"?

For better or for worse, depending on one's viewpoint, the Cambodian Stalinists have yet to produce any significant written material for foreign consumption. (Among other notable features, they are probably the only deformed workers state not to have flooded the world, or at least the Maoist bookstores,

folksiness, the hard-line Peking loyalists of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) (CP-ML—formerly the October League), have grasped what's really behind the aggressive Khmer nationalism, approvingly quoting Pol Pot's warnings against "outside aggression." "This was a clear warning to the superpowers who have tried to prod neighboring countries into attacking Kampuchea," they write in the 10 October *Call*. Vietnam, in this case, is the local stand-in for the Soviet Union.

Such utterly cynical Stalinist apologetics are, in their own way, as revolting as the malicious ravings of right-wing journalists, whose nostalgia for the "good old days" of comprador capitalism is packaged in such trashy pulp "exposés" as *Murder of a Gentle Land* (New York, 1977), by two *Reader's Digest* editors, John Barron and Anthony Paul. In their imperialist tourist mythology, Phnom Penh had been "a city of tranquility and orderliness, a city of gentle, laughing people, a city of striking women and good cuisine, a city of easy days and amiable nights." With languid racism they bemoan the crushing of "the Khmer ideal, which is to 'listen to the wind blow, watch the rice grow and make love.'" Given that introduction, it's hard to believe anything else in the book.

Actually, the corrupt, callous, incompetent Lon Nol regime was quite gruesome, and its war-torn capital was a

tality of the Khmer Rouge regime. Even such notable "progressives" as French author Jean Lacouture, long-time friend of the Viet Minh, have expressed horror and shock at the brutality of the Cambodian Stalinists. Like the liberal American "China hands," Lacouture saw the Khmer Rouge as simple "agrarian reformers" and was dismayed when their Stalinist face showed through. In a review of *Cambodge, année zéro* by the French Catholic priest François Ponchaud, who spent ten years in the country prior to the demise of Lon Nol, Lacouture flatly asserts that in Cambodia "the bloodiest revolution in history is now taking place." Worse than oriental despots, medieval inquisitors, Auschwitz or Stalin's Gulag, Cambodia represents "the ultimate in horror."

"Here is only madness," writes Lacouture in his sadder-but-wiser liberal disillusionment. Nat Hentoff, always a bellwether for rad-lib trends, quotes Lacouture's world-weary comment: "It is always more difficult to be the friend of the conquerors" (*Village Voice*, 28 February 1977). This fits right in with the 1950's-style, "God That Failed" rhetoric of 110 former "peace movement leaders" who last year signed a statement criticizing Vietnam for "violations of human rights." But where this was not simply deliberate pro-imperialist propaganda, it only revealed the inability of liberal moralists to understand

reported large-scale killings of officials and soldiers of the former regime, few executions seem to have occurred."

—*Asia Yearbook 1977*

There was and continues to be reported considerable discontent over the regime's collectivization of agricultural production, which was apparently total and immediate. There are no private plots and the organization of production is along military lines. The degree of regimentation equals that in China in the heyday of the communes during the Great Leap Forward; the amount of violence used to impose this organization on a predominantly land-owning peasantry recalls the forced-draft collectivization campaign undertaken by Stalin in 1930-32, when millions died as a result of calculated starvation policies. While collectivization is an important gain of the revolution, the Stalinists were incapable of carrying this out in any but a bureaucratic fashion, neither gradually nor with the consent of the working population. Moreover, the material-technical basis for a successful collectivization of agricultural production is totally lacking in Cambodia. Not even mentioning tractors, "a Phnom Penh Radio broadcast urged people to use muscle-powered water wheels rather than foreign oil-consuming pumps" in irrigation works (*ibid.*). Fuel is reportedly obtained primarily by smuggling from Thailand in *plastic bags*.

But the truly staggering crime of the Khmer Stalinists was not massacres in general or bureaucratic arbitrariness per se, but the deliberate, murderous and apparently successful destruction of urban life. For a period of months this was evidently near-total in scope, and only now are the cities and towns slowly being re-populated. This was not simply a question of sweeping out prostitutes corrupted with Western ways, but represented a conscious program against industry. Even today:

"Our direction in this field [industry] is to consolidate and perfect [existing] factories, and we have no plans to build other factories," Pol Pot noted.... According to a report by the New China News Agency, about 100 factories and workshops had been put back into operation.... the factories were mostly repair shops or handicraft workshops."

—*Ibid.*

This "unique social revolution," because of the extreme nationalism and xenophobia of its Stalinist leadership combined with the peasant distrust of the cities has attacked the only economic means by which it could hope to begin to climb out of poverty. And the attack on the productive forces is not simply in material terms: in the course of depopulating the cities, the Cambodian Communist Party literally atomized what tiny proletariat the country possessed, while throwing the valuable skills of petty-bourgeois professionals to the winds.

While this is far from being "the bloodiest revolution in history," it is certainly one of the more irrational of recent Stalinist-led social upheavals. In part this is because the Cambodian case more closely resembles a classical *jacquerie* and the bloody elemental peasant revolts of the pre-capitalist era. These outbursts of suppressed rage at brutal oppression have always left in their wake vast devastation and carnage—the smoldering ruins of landlords' chateaus, the heads of tax collectors on pikes. The Russian "Time of Troubles" of the 17th century, the great Chinese peasant revolts against the Ming dynasty and the German peasant wars of the 1500's all were accompanied by tremendous cruelty—and were met with even more terrifying repression. In China during the four great rebellions of the mid-nineteenth century (the Taiping rebellion, Yunnan uprising, northwest Muslim rebellion and the Nien rebellion) it is estimated that some 10 to 20 million died; 40 years later travelers shuddered at the sight of great empty walled cities. In turn, peasant leaders when caught were impaled, beheaded,

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Khmer Rouge marching into Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975.

with the immortal writings of their glorious leaders—which is just as well, as anyone familiar with the collected works of Kim Il Sung or Enver Hoxha can attest. However, we may be only temporarily spared, for it is only in the last month that it became known just who the Great Father of the Khmer People is.) So apologists for "Third World" Stalinism are forced to rely on the unutterably trivial, incredibly saccharine set-pieces published by Peking featuring sparkling-eyed, red-cheeked sons and daughters of the people, singing and dancing such items as "The Cambodian People's Spirit of All-Out Dedication" while working away in the "heroic spirit of self-reliance."

Not to be outdone the over-aged New Left *Guardian* has printed quantities of mushy enthusing over the "original, revolutionary" Cambodian society. Notable "Third World" buff Wilfred Burchett, writing from Paris, has explained at length that—based on his great familiarity with the Khmer people, discussions with "responsible cadres," and photographs (!) of the new society—all assertions about repression in Democratic Kampuchea are simply CIA-cooed slanders. Why, he writes (*Guardian*, 14 January 1976), the new Khmer constitution "is as Cambodian as 'prahok,' the fish sauce indispensable for any Cambodian meal"! (As American as apple pie? As corny as Kansas in August?) Undoubtedly, the vast majority of the Cambodian people would eagerly exchange "their" constitution for a single bowl or jar of "prahok."

In contrast to the *Guardian's* sappy

far cry from this idyllic picture. The sober *Far Eastern Economic Review* (7 January 1977) recalled that after Lon Nol took power in a 1970 coup, "outraged peasants had actually eaten one of his brothers." This evidently became something of a traditional form of protest, as shortly before the neo-colonial regime finally disintegrated, Lon Nol's own soldiers, starving and embittered, ate one of his paymasters after not being fed or paid for months. While the streets of the capital were filled with "gentle, laughing" cripples, beggars, prostitutes, pimps and starving children, the generals put on lavish feasts for those exquisite Cambodian "ladies of the night" with their "elegant French pronunciation."

Before the Khmer Rouge victory *Murder of a Gentle Land* sees nothing but sweetness and light; the authors claim that the figures on the hundreds of thousands of Cambodians slaughtered by U.S. bombing (which they do not even mention) are totally "undocumented." Afterwards they see nothing but hideous massacres and the transformation of the pretty little country into a vast concentration camp, policed by the robot-like minions of the sinister dark force of the "Angka" (loosely translated as "the organization"), its fields strewn with human skeletons, its rivers choked with corpses of those trying to escape and its forests infested with man-eating tigers, their appetite for human flesh stimulated by the "Angka's" carnage.

However, it is not only the open reactionaries such as Barron and Paul who have expressed outrage at the bru-

fundamental social questions such as revolution and counterrevolution.

Cambodia: A Really Deformed Workers State

The truth about Cambodia lies neither with the Stalinist regime and its starry-eyed apologists nor with the bourgeoisie's hired pundits and the incomprehending, horrified liberals. Cambodia, a very backward peasant country ruled by a very weak Stalinist bureaucracy, embodies in heightened form all the contradictions of the deformed workers states. In order to defend Cambodia against imperialism it is not necessary to prettify the real bureaucratic terror and senseless suffering engendered by its present rulers. It is necessary to understand their origins.

Were there massacres? Undoubtedly. There was certainly plenty of killing, as inevitably accompanies the extension of a revolution throughout the country. Moreover, these were intensified because of the extreme youthfulness and small numbers of the nervous Khmer Rouge troops. But while most refugees interviewed by the more objective Western journalists reported seeing dead bodies, actual reports of massacres referred mainly to executions of officers of Lon Nol's puppet army. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported:

"Life in Cambodia... slowly returned to normal in 1976. One sure indicator, which perhaps also demonstrated increasing Khmer Rouge social control, was the sharp drop in the number of refugees trekking to Thailand.... Unlike the situation in 1975, when refugees

South Africa...

(continued from page 1)

of free press" existed before the October 19 crackdown. Numerous black and leftist newspapers have been outlawed in the three decades of Afrikaaner Nationalist rule, and their editors and reporters arrested or "banned."

Carter's national security affairs advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski repeated his boss's point on Sunday, explaining on a television news program that: "...our response sought to focus on the specific events of last week and try to correct them, rather than to go whole-

scribed character of the Western moves against South Africa. He had to defend, for instance, the American decision, despite its own arms embargo resolution, to continue supplying nuclear fuels to Pretoria: "If you break the relationship altogether, there is no way to monitor and it is almost because you can't trust them [the Vorster regime] that you have to stay close to them!"

The moral posturings of the liberal imperialists are a dangerous trap for the international working class, whose advanced elements have demonstrated an impulse to take action in solidarity with their class brothers in South Africa. After conniving in apartheid for years,

urging their leading companies to act more "responsibly" toward non-white employees in South Africa. Late last month the European Economic Community (EEC) Council of Ministers unveiled a new code of conduct for Common Market companies operating in South Africa. Partly reflecting pressures generated from the labor movement and transmitted through the social-democratic parties, the code, initiated by British foreign minister David Owen, contained some surprisingly strong provisions.

The most important urges EEC corporations to recognize black unions in South Africa. While these embryonic organizations are not formally illegal, neither the government nor the corporations recognize them. Other provisions of the EEC code ask that the corporations "formulate specific policies aimed at improving their blacks' terms of employment," help combat restrictions on blacks' freedom of movement, and discriminatory wage rates and, as far as possible, eliminate workplace segregation (*Economist*, 24 September).

The entire code is, however, purely voluntary and can be ignored with little risk except bad publicity. West Germany's foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, felt obliged to take to the airwaves to appeal to German companies to abide by the code. In response, the industrial federation warned that "a general politicization" of international trade would jeopardize West Germany's commercial relations. The Dutch Industry Federation also bemoaned potential business involvement in what it termed "a political-ethical decision" (*Business Week*, 24 October).

The point which will most easily go by the boards in the EEC code is the question of trade-union recognition for black workers. In fact, of the 300 American companies operating in South Africa, only Ford has signed a contract with a union representing its black workers. A South African executive of General

taken in by this trick. U.S. imperialism props up scores of reactionary regimes around the world and as the Vietnam War showed, it will butcher millions of people to make the world safe for capitalist exploitation. It is therefore important that our union, in expressing its solidarity with the heroic struggles of the South African masses, NOT ally itself with the Carter administration's hypocritical 'human rights' crusade.

"Unfortunately, some groups in the local leave us wide open to this danger by calling on GM to get out of South Africa. Let's be clear. We are for the South African workers smashing the apartheid regime, establishing a black-centered workers government, and EX-PROPRIATING the capitalists, including GM, IBM, etc. It sows the worst kind of illusion to call on GM to quit investing in South Africa, that is to forget their profits and become 'moral.' This just won't happen. The way to fight the capitalists is the class struggle. The imperialists can't be reformed or made 'humane.' They must be thrown out, here and in South Africa.

"As a union, we can come to the aid of the South African workers. Black workers are barred from organizing trade unions in South Africa. Many of the giant capitalist corporations which employ black labor in South Africa such as GM are unionized in the U.S. Selected strikes by U.S. unions could play a big role in forcing these companies to recognize the now-illegal black trade unions. Union recognition would be an enormous help to the South African black workers, worth a hundred times more than charity or appeals to the imperialists."

This class-struggle approach stands in sharp contrast to the impotent moralism of fake radicals and petty-bourgeois liberals who advocate university divestment of stocks in companies investing in South Africa, consumer boycotts of Krugerrands, sardines and other South African exports and endless appeals to the UN, appeals which are taken seriously only when they coincide with the interests of international capitalism. Such a strategy can do nothing to aid the black workers of South Africa, the motor force in the struggle to smash apartheid, and, in fact, if actually suc-



Anti-apartheid demonstrators are arrested in Soweto.

Keystone

sale at the generic causes of the problem" (*New York Times*, 31 October).

The imperialists' dismay grows partly from the broad sweep of the current crackdown. Last month Vorster's stormtroopers beat the prominent young black nationalist leader Stephen Biko to death. The 30-year-old founder of the Black People's Convention had close relations with important white liberals and had earlier transmitted a plea to imperialist chief Carter to champion the cause of South Africa's blacks. This month Pretoria attacked both the "black consciousness" groups and a number of internationally known liberal clergymen and editors who had been demanding publication of the truth about Biko's death.

The imperialists can read the writing on the wall. South Africa is in the throes of a major political crisis, and its rulers envision an escape route paved with the corpses of untold numbers of blacks. As Afrikaaner Nationalists (and not a few English-speaking whites) withdraw into their *laager* (armed camp), they are drastically limiting the rights even of the white bourgeois opposition, centered in the major South African corporations, the English-speaking political parties, the liberal press and churches. It is precisely these forces which the Western powers count on to avoid a race war through incremental concessions to the black population, particularly the urban petty bourgeoisie. Hence the arms embargo, intended as a signal to the Vorster regime to call off its repression of domestic bourgeois critics.

The arms embargo also provides the Carter administration with an opportunity to pretend that its "human rights" campaign is something more than an anti-Soviet crusade and an attempt to refurbish the tawdry international image of post-Vietnam, post-Watergate America. The UN resolution is the climax of a carefully stage-managed drama involving diplomatic protests, recall of several Western ambassadors from South Africa and high-level meetings in Washington and at the United Nations.

At the same time, Andrew Young, supposedly the champion of "Third World peoples" in the Carter administration, has been assigned the delicate task of explaining the sharply circum-

the Western powers now claim to be horrified at the brutal police-state measures necessary to defend it and, indeed, they are now trying to pose as the spearhead of the fight against white supremacy in southern Africa.

For years the Soviet Union, pro-Moscow Communist Parties, Maoists, African nationalists and assorted anti-racist liberals have demanded the severing of diplomatic relations and a ban on investments and trade with South Africa. Numerous such resolutions have been raised at the UN, only to be vetoed or ignored by imperialist governments. In 1963, for example, Britain and France declared that they would not abide by the voluntary arms embargo. The U.S. agreed to respect it, then circumvented it in numerous ways such as selling light planes and personnel carriers "for civilian use" to Pretoria, knowing full well that once in South Africa they were easily outfitted for military purposes. Coming from the Stalinists and African nationalists, such demands are simply the old shell-game of asking the "democratic" imperialists—the present and former overlords of the economically backward capitalist countries—to "save" the world from the more openly reactionary imperialists.

For the Western powers in the 1960's and early 1970's—when the apartheid structure seemed unshakable—such demands were, at most, minor irritants. But independence for the Portuguese colonies, growing commerce with black African states, increasing Soviet influence south of the Sahara, the massive anti-apartheid struggles and the government's bloody response have all forced the Western powers to consider the major potential for an escalation and internationalization of the crisis in the sub-continent. This genuine concern of imperialist *Realpolitik* dovetails with the Carter administration's so-called "human rights" campaign and with the efforts of the ruling social-democratic parties of Western Europe to divert moral outrage from their own oppressive, exploitative and militarist societies.

Rather than embrace the Stalinist/African nationalist panacea of withdrawing "clean" U.S./European money from "dirty" South Africa, the liberal imperialists have found a middle route:



Front gate of Chrysler plant in South Africa.

United Nations

Motors, one Ron Ironside, even attempted to defend the suppression of the black workers movement by appealing to "democratic principles": "We would want to be sure that the union was representative in the long term. Union membership figures tend to fluctuate" (*Business Week*, 24 October). The figures "fluctuate" as union organizers are jailed and union supporters fired by company after company!

Such naked hypocrisy must not go unchallenged. This is precisely the point on which the international workers movement must make its weight felt in solidarity with its class brothers and sisters in South Africa.

Recently, an oppositional group of U.S. auto workers raised just such a perspective in the Fremont, California UAW Local 1364. The 6 October issue of the newsletter of the Committee for a Militant UAW (CMUAW) declared:

"The U.S. government, loyal servant of the giant capitalist concerns, whose South African operations reap big profits, is trying to turn the anger and revulsion against apartheid to its own advantage by lecturing South Africa about 'human rights.' No one should be

cessful it would weaken the already tenuous workers organizations by increasing unemployment.

Instead, international labor actions—such as a union boycott of all arms shipments to South Africa—must be organized around key democratic slogans including: free all victims of apartheid repression, rescind all restrictions on black political organizations, abolish the pass system and all racist legislation, end the industrial color bar, for equal pay and working conditions at the highest existing levels, for the right of trade-union organization.

The class-struggle unionists of the CMUAW have taken a stand embodying the clearest expression of proletarian internationalism. The South African revolution will not be advanced by reliance on imperialist corporations and governments—either to withdraw or to behave "responsibly." But concerted international labor action can wrest real concessions from these exploiters and lend concrete assistance to the non-white working masses ground down by the apartheid jackboot. ■

Mandel's Unwanted Children...

(continued from page 5)

sued a long polemic castigating her ex-hubby for his positions in this conflict.

This personality cult is most notable for its New Left polyvanguardist insistence that the woman question must be elevated to "equal and interlocking" status with the class question; the CRSP Statement of Purpose dutifully states that "the double oppression of women, like the double oppression of minorities, creates a special dynamic amongst them that has already begun to transform every other social movement and political process in this country." Reflecting the FSP's more recent infatuation with the gay movement, the document solemnly postulates that "the gay upsurge has taken the form of a great mass movement whose historical destiny is to link up with the revolutionary forces in this country."

It was the FSP's paper, the *Freedom Socialist*, which last spring became the press agent for homeless veteran American Pabloites with a front-page article subtitled "Marxist Scholars Electrify Seattle Audience." The bombastic piece explained that "the occasion of this thrill-of-a-lifetime event was the recent re-encounter, after 15 years, between the founders of the Freedom Socialist Party and two distinguished guests from New York City—Myra Tanner Weiss and Murry Weiss, veteran figures in the history of American Trotskyism." The "historic" meeting was described as "a giant step forward that might well lead to revolutionary regroupment."

Murry Weiss: Then and Now

The Weiss grouping did indeed play a real role in the struggle for Trotskyism in this country. When in 1953 the James P. Cannon leadership of the then-revolutionary SWP undertook to resist the Pabloist degeneration of the Fourth International, reflected within the American section by the Pablo-backed Cochran/Clarke faction, Cannon's principal bloc partner was none other than Murry Weiss. Together these Trotskyist leaders combated Pabloist revisionism, characterized by the liquidationist assumption that the "objective dynamic" of the "unfolding world revolution" would compel the mass reformist parties—Stalinist and social-democratic—to outline a revolutionary course, thereby obviating the need for the building of Trotskyist vanguard parties except as pressure groups on (and, when possible, within) the reformist organizations to hasten the presumably irresistible pressure toward revolution. A leading figure among the American Pabloists was SWP New York organizer Mike Bartell, who is none other than Milt Zaslow.

But by 1963 when the SWP—in the grip of its headlong plunge toward reformism—reunited with its former European Pabloist opponents to form the USec, the Weissites had themselves degenerated and stood to the right of the SWP majority. Murry Weiss had drifted into inactivity, and while Myra Tanner Weiss, as head of a dissident tendency within the increasingly bureaucratic SWP, blocked around party democracy with the left oppositionists who later became the Spartacist tendency, our comrades and the Comrades Weiss were moving in flatly counterposed directions.

The latter—and their party—had by 1963 simply become centrists. The Weisses now maintain (as does the SWP) that the 1953 split between the SWP-backed International Committee and the European Pabloists—in which Murry Weiss himself had played such a prominent role—was an error. This is logical from their point of view. The *Freedom Socialist's* account of the "his-

toric" meeting at "good old Freeway Hall" in Seattle last July includes lengthy remarks by Murry Weiss which capture how completely he has embraced the revisionism he once fought:

"Stalinism caused enormous damage to the world revolutionary process by its deal with imperialism and its betrayal of revolutions, he explained, but it was unable to stop the development of world revolution....

"Communist parties can be transformed and can follow through with their own momentum...."

—*Freedom Socialist*, Spring 1977

At the Los Angeles meeting which founded the CRSP in July, Weiss's unashamed enthusiasm for the "revolutionary" potential of Stalinism was so fulsome that the archetypical Pabloist Zaslow was forced to discover some "orthodox" rhetoric:

"Communist parties, Zaslow said, while capable under exceptional circumstances of leading peasant armies or guerrilla forces to military victory, have never led the *proletariat* to power anywhere, cannot be pressured into it, and are inherently incapable of doing so. He contended that the PCP [Portuguese Communist Party] provided no revolutionary leadership, restrained and derailed the masses into reformist channels, and helped restabilize Portuguese capitalism....

"Murry Weiss argued that it was necessary to keep open the possibility that the PCP could become transformed into a revolutionary instrument in the course of events....

"Both sides agreed that the struggle itself would determine the answer to the question...."

—*Freedom Socialist*, Summer 1977

The Weisses have been an expression of Pabloist liquidationism since the 1960's. But for the SWP itself, the centrist verbiage which prompted the USec 1963 "reunification"—on the basis of convergence around petty-bourgeois guerrillaist cheerleading—was only a transient posture; by late 1965 the party was locked on a reformist course and saw its "main chance" as a political bloc with that section of the capitalist political establishment which opposed the losing war in Vietnam as not in U.S. imperialism's best interests. (At that time the SWP had little to offer the bourgeoisie in the way of a plebeian base to sell out—a deficiency which it is today attempting to remedy through its "turn" toward the trade unions.) Hence the much-vaunted "reunification" had by 1969 created a two-headed monster: the USec centrists and SWP reformists were locked in a bitter faction fight which has lately been cooled down. And as the SWP fled from any residues of Trotskyism toward social democracy, it passed through the Weisses' centrist political terrain and left them behind.

The last straw for the disaffected Weisses was the SWP's wretched anti-communist line on Portugal, where the SWP saluted the CIA-funded Socialists and excused the burning of PCP offices as expressions of the workers' craving for "democracy." The Weisses' document was super-Pabloism, saluting the bourgeois Armed Forces Movement (MFA) and Stalinist head Cunhal as the spearhead of the progressive forces:

"One may not know from so far who these revolutionists in the MFA are and what their evolution has been. And one cannot anticipate therefore what they will do next. But one can react to what they have done—that is, hail their revolutionary acts. One is reminded with what joy we witnessed Castro's victorious fight against Batista.... In destroying Batista, Castro had begun a process that necessarily impelled him to socialism—if he remained a revolutionary. And he did."

An anti-imperialist pronouncement in which Cunhal proclaimed capitalism destroyed in Portugal was hailed in no uncertain terms:

"Bravo! These are great words. They breathe clarity and revolutionary independence from reformism and people's front Stalinism. If only [the SWP's] Comrade Foley could understand them!"

—"A Letter From Two Former Members of the SWP," [SWP] *Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 3 in 1975, November 1975

The same internal bulletin reprints a letter to the Weisses from IMT spokesman Pierre Frank which gives a good taste of the maneuverist power-games which pass for "internationalism" in the USec:

"I hope that your intervention, though you are no more formally members of the SWP, will have some good repercussions in it, and that it will help the interventions of the United Secretariat...."

It is no wonder that the American IMTers, having been sporadically utilized as a little crowbar against the SWP, have finally reacted in bitterness and desperation to the latest move (dissolution of factions), which leaves them without any leverage.

The formation of the CRSP is a last-ditch attempt to hammer on the gates of the USec, which has proclaimed itself anxious for "fusions" with every kind of current including forces outside ostensible Trotskyism (state-caps, Mao-oids, etc.) while slamming the door in apparently decisive fashion on the homeless American IMTers. These orphans seem to have recognized at last that the only "principle" with which the USec has no argument is success; the IMT will give no quarter to its decomposing supporters, no matter how slavishly they follow their mentors' dictates, but may feel forced to deal—even if only under the table—with a "bold new revolutionary" formation, if only the CRSP can manage to drag somebody or other under the umbrella.

The "Weiss Crispies"

But the CRSP, animated by assorted aging centrists like Milt Zaslow, Clara Fraser and the Comrades Weiss, is already finding the going pretty rough as it attempts to regenerate an American IMT. Despite grandiose promises about the appeal of "non-sectarian Trotskyism," the CRSP is finding its hoped-for associates in Baltimore and Denver holding themselves aloof from the new lash-up. The Denver bunch—derived loosely from Sam Marcy's Workers World Party, a rabid Stalinoid sect which left the SWP hailing the Russian army's suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956—was seen as a sort of American repository of the "new mass vanguard" by some of the former leaders of the IT. The Baltimore clot has been in the Zaslowite IMT orbit for some years. Thus the CRSP may find itself restricted to the three cities (Los Angeles, Seattle, New York) where the veteran initiators have had their separate home bases for years.

Most indicative of the CRSP's severe difficulties is the apparent inability of the Weisses to win more than a half-dozen or so hard supporters to the CRSP out of the Marxist Education Collective (MEC) and its School for Marxist Education where the Weisses have been "respected teachers" for some time. By submerging their ostensibly Trotskyist convictions in the MEC's "non-sectarian" New Leftism, the Weisses certainly expected to win a goodly number of new forces to their orbit. But this periphery is balking at coming into the CRSP "regroupment."

The Weisses' main antagonist in the MEC is Arthur Felberbaum, a cynical ex-SWPer whose high-handed bureaucratic style may be his opponents' best credential for recruitment out of the MEC, where—ritualistic Pollyannaish professions of "unity in struggle" notwithstanding—heated charges of conspiracy and suppression drown out the ostensibly political debates.

Felberbaum's earlier policy toward the "Weiss Crispies" had been one of disingenuous obstructionism. Invited to attend the Los Angeles meeting which launched the CRSP in July, he wrote to Zaslow on July 21 that "we see the conference in Los Angeles as an important step in the process we are participating in to regroup the revolutionary

Marxist left." But he objected to the organizers' professions of solidarity with the IMT:

"The fact that the International Majority Tendency of the Fourth International feels that the Socialist Workers Party is the inheritor of the Trotskyist movement in the United States and does this in spite of its principled disagreements with that party in which it took a stand in Portugal on the 'other side of the barricades'—does this fact not bring into question at least two of the occasions for the regroupment discussion?"

This convoluted query shields Felberbaum's real motivations. He has used every kind of tactic to ensure that the "School" is not identified with ostensible Trotskyism and intends to preserve the MEC as a hodge-podge of "independent" radicals to be manipulated only by Felberbaum and not by the IMT. His pitch that open identification with any disciplined political current will isolate the MEC from "broader" layers of radicals is exactly the kind of approach that the USec has followed for years, as it twisted itself around every bump and bulge of the "mass movement."

The Weisses had placed considerable hope in their ability to outmaneuver Felberbaum within the amorphous MEC. When the CRSP launched its ambitious "Proposal for a United Socialist Slate of Candidates in the 1978 New York State Elections," it was obviously banking on active support from the MEC, which ought to have found such a proposal for "unity" right up its alley. A September 14 letter by Myra Weiss to her collaborators reported on efforts to build support for the CRSP in the MEC and boasted that "I think we can easily win our election proposal."

But instead of allowing the "Crispies" to capitalize on the "non-sectarian" rhetoric which the MEC has bandied about for years, Felberbaum struck back. The election proposal was not endorsed and most recently, "Weiss Crispie" candidate members of the MEC had their applications for full membership "tabled." The Weisses' present tactic appears to be an MEC "Women's Caucus" which—given the MEC's rampant polyvanguardism and consequent proclamations of the right of the oppressed to organize separately—cannot be so easily combated by the Felberbaum clique.

Morbid Prognosis

These reverses are symptomatic of the unenviable situation of the CRSP, which must carve out a niche for itself between the reformist SWP and the Trotskyist Spartacist League in a period when the wretched protoplasm of American centrism has become decidedly necrotic. The initiating elements of the lash-up have political differences among them, but for this opportunist crew programmatic heterogeneity is probably less important an obstacle to collaboration than the years of isolated activity and semi-activity which have made them rather quirky even as embodiments of the all-over-the-map IMT "line."

Zaslow, Fraser, Weiss, the badly scarred remnants of the IT—these are the forces which expect to construct a party out of at most a few dozen supporters, politically tailing the cynical IMT honchos who have made it quite clear that only crocodile tears will be shed for their American fans. In Seattle, Murry Weiss addressed the FSP in optimistic tones:

"The American working class is the most powerful in the world, he stressed, capable of any feat, yet is has no political organization of its own. 'But *that*,' he said, 'can happen in two weeks!'"

Sound easy? It isn't. But it would appear that the "Crispies" are trying to make that projection a reality. Hatred of the SWP reformists and distrust of the IMT manipulators is all well and good, but neither a coherent program nor a real organization can be generated out of them by the soggy "Crispies" and their stillborn "regroupment" venture. ■

Stearns...

(continued from page 12)

picket lines were not intended to include actual scabbing miners. He noted that "...commencing on October 12, 1977, the plaintiff has started crossing the picket line with miners and threatens to increase the number of miners entering the compound daily. It was never the intention of this court to require the state police to be a perpetual escort service for the plaintiff."

Nevertheless, when the testimony was concluded, the prosecution waived its summation and Johnson proceeded immediately to sentencing without any deliberation whatsoever.

This is not the miners' first taste of capitalist "justice" from the bench of J.B. Johnson. In late May the judge fined the union \$4,050 for nine counts of contempt. He also ordered the UMWA to post a \$100,000 penal bond for future damages to the company as a condition for any continued picketing. The same judge has continually restricted the number of workers allowed to picket. While the strikers were denied any right to defend themselves against the heavy gunfire which for months poured from the Storm guards' bunkers, the trigger-happy gun thugs were merely instructed to reduce the size of their arsenal.

The miners will appeal Johnson's latest decision, which also stipulates that no more than one union organizer at a time can be present at the picket site, but until a hearing is set, eleven coal miners will remain behind bars. The court order which legally prevents meetings or mass picketing even on the strikers' property adjacent to the mine is also under appeal. However, violation of any law during the next year can result in six months in jail for any of the 68 strikers currently free on bond. In addition to this legal barrage, 31 militants must face felony charges stemming from an incident in April when miners allegedly stripped three Storm guards of their guns (and their pants) during a night-time ride around the county in a striker's pick-up.

Finally, 39 women who support the Stearns organizing drive will eventually appear in court to answer charges stemming from their solidarity during the

October 17 fight with the police. The cops stormed onto a union supporter's property with drawn guns and proceeded to threaten, hit and arrest the militant women. One 62-year-old woman was dragged 50 yards by her hair to a squad car, a pregnant woman was kicked in the stomach and a protesting youth was struck in the mouth with a billy club, yet the women were charged with criminal mischief, destruction of state property and threatening police officers' lives before they were released.

"They Ain't Gonna Scab That Mine!"

Despite the combined efforts of the company, cops and courts, the miners' morale remains high. *Workers Vanguard* and Partisan Defense Committee representatives spoke with many strikers in their local hall last week. Many of them limped or bore stitches, but all were proud of their resistance to the cops the previous week.

When the police charged, the miners said, so many blows were rained on the cops' helmets that it sounded like gunfire. The police were driven back in their first charge and had to attack again before the workers' ranks gave way. One striker, frustrated that his club had no effect on the heavily padded cops, threw it aside and flattened his opponent with his fist. Another worker climbed into a tree as the cops assembled before charging and literally leaped into the fight when the swinging started.

Retired coal miners and strikers' wives were equally determined that "they ain't gonna scab that mine." One old timer swore that retirees would take the place of jailed militants and proposed that someone take the scabs "down to the river and baptize them."

The well-known solidarity in the coal fields is revealed even in minor events. The soft drink company which supplies the local hall's vending machine recently fired a miner for missing work at his temporary job while in jail after the mass arrest. "We don't want scab pop in this county," organizer Jay Kolenc fumed, and a short time later the machine was wheeled away.

The next morning the hall was packed as union lawyers described the 79 defendants' legal situation. Later, the Stearns Women's Club met and agreed on additions to their list of boycotted merchants. The manager of one diner, for example, was told he could serve miners or troopers but not both. After a nearby gas station owner told a miner's wife that the cops "should have killed the sons of bitches," his station was added to the list. Women's Club members stated that they too were anxious to take their places on the picket lines and swore they weren't intimidated by anonymous threatening phone calls received while their husbands picketed. At the same meeting, a solidarity letter was read from the widow of a miner killed at Blue Diamond's Scotia pit, where 26 lives were lost underground in March 1976. (In September, the company attempted to suppress a federal report on this disaster.)

Safety is a key issue in this struggle, and the strikers insist on a union safety committee with the power to stop production. Kolenc told *WV* that the memory of Scotia has contributed much to the resolve of the Stearns miners who felt they were working inside a time bomb. In 1975, when the Stearns Coal and Lumber Company owned Justus, there were 98 federal safety violations. In 1976 Gordon Bonnyman took over the mine, which has rich seams but is laden with explosive methane gas. Under the ownership of Blue Diamond, whose slogan is "higher production, lower costs," there were 101 safety violations in the six working months before the strike. The May issue of the *United Mine Workers Journal* reported that the frequency rate for disabling injuries at the Justus mine was 72 percent above the national average.

Community support for the strike has been impressive. On October 21 union organizers arranged a videotape showing of the recent confrontations between strikers and police. Although the viewing was intended primarily for the membership, several hundred McCreary County supporters turned out. Another showing was planned for October 25 at the county high school, and over 600 people attended despite miserable weather. The crowd cheered as a trooper was seen holding his head and staggering from the fight, and they clapped as their neighbors (the strikers) appeared on the screen.

Performers from the region led traditional miners' ballads including a new song about Stearns by Florence Reece, composer of "Which Side Are You On?" Bill Worthington, a black veteran of "bloody Harlan" in the 1930's who also fought the Eastover Power Company in 1974, was cheered by the audience. Worthington, who was featured prominently in the film "Harlan County, USA," has picketed at Stearns and told *WV* that spirits here are as high as those during the 13-month Brookside strike. Nearly 200 copies of *Workers Vanguard* with recent coverage of the Stearns strike were quickly bought up by the union supporters.

Bring Out the UMWA!

There has been no scabbing at the Justus pit since October 14, but one union spokesman expects Blue Diamond to try again soon. State police continue to guard the mine, and private police act as round-the-clock bodyguards for the scabs. Johnson's strike-breaking orders point to the imminent danger of wholesale scabbering. With 11 leaders already in jail, a nod from the bench could remove the rest of the strikers from any activity. Reinforcements are urgently needed!

The Stearns strike more and more resembles the struggle for union recognition at Brookside. Following court-imposed limitations on strikers' right to picket, the Brookside Women's Club played a militant role in keeping scabs out despite the mobilized Kentucky state police. As *WV* has continually pointed out, the strike was won and the mine organized when Miller finally was forced to call all U.S. coal miners out of the pits in a show of union solidarity.

The militants at Stearns have taken virtually every conceivable step locally to win their strike, but organizing this mine and hundreds of other non-union operations in the U.S. and Canada is a task for the entire UMWA. Union president Arnold Miller appeared briefly in Witley City October 31 and spoke with the jailed strikers. It is mass picketing and a nationwide UMWA solidarity walkout, however, not stealthy visits by the union's "leader," which are required to defeat Blue Diamond.

The subservience before capitalist law, which has characterized the union's legalistic defense of the Stearns militants, typifies all wings of the UMWA International leadership. Miller & Co. have broken three massive wildcats in as many years, including a strike in July 1976 which was fought specifically against government interference in union-management disputes.

The UMWA's national contract with the BCOA expires December 6, but coal stockpiles are currently good for close to 100 days (*Business Week*, 24 October). Thus with management negotiators openly talking of breaking the power of the union, preparations for a bitter struggle must begin now! An immediate industry-wide strike called in solidarity with Stearns and other organizing drives would win union contracts in these pits and could mark the beginning of a militant fight against all coal operators. Miller's reverence for the bosses' law stands as the greatest danger to a successful struggle in December and is a travesty of the traditions proudly upheld in Stearns, Kentucky. ■

Canadian Nickel Miners...

(continued from page 5)

tion Inco has sought to maintain profitability by shifting many of its operations to low-wage neo-colonial countries like Indonesia and Guatemala. In addition, some of its mine sites in the Sudbury area are already severely depleted. Because of all these factors, the proportion of the world's nickel supply mined in the Sudbury area has declined from 95 to 40 percent over the past ten years. Even before the newly-announced layoffs, Inco's Sudbury-area workforce had been reduced gradually from 18,000 to 14,000 over the past several years.

Like the American steel industry, the Canadian nickel industry is being crushed by foreign competition and



Spartacist Canada

Stephen Lewis, head of Ontario NDP.

reduced market demand. And just as the USWA union bureaucrats south of the border are clamouring for protectionist legislation to stop foreign steel imports and "save American jobs," so their Canadian cohorts and the NDP tops are decrying the export of "Canadian jobs" and calling on the government to protect Canadian industry.

But the protectionism and nationalism pushed by the USWA bureaucracy are utterly reactionary: they can only hurt foreign workers. Protectionism divides the international proletariat in the face of the assaults of the capitalist class, fans reactionary chauvinism and escalates international trade rivalries, which in turn lay the basis for inter-imperialist war.

Militants must reject this poisonous nationalist program—and the do-nothing strategy of the USWA bureaucracy, which bends in supplication before the bosses and their government, rather than waging a militant struggle to stop the layoffs. Today, while massive layoffs and plant closures are sweeping the U.S. steel industry, the Sadlowski wing of the bureaucracy is doing absolutely nothing to mobilize the ranks. Similarly here in Canada, Sadlowski-style "rebel" Patterson told *Spartacist Canada* that to talk of a strike against the layoffs would be irresponsible—after all the company already has an eight-month nickel stockpile and is trying to cut back on production. But as an "alternative" he presents a five-point program of ultra-minimalist reforms and no industrial action.

The USWA bureaucracy is fond of talking about the union's role in linking miners and steelworkers together in a single international union ("one industry—one union"). This link between the mines and basic steel must be used today in a militant joint struggle to save the tens of thousands of jobs which are being slashed by the profit-hungry mine and steel barons.

Faced with massive company stockpiling of taconite ore, 20,000 USWA iron miners in Michigan and Minnesota have been on strike since the beginning of August. Just as an extension of this strike into basic steel—the

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industry that uses the mined ore—is essential to ensure victory, so must a strike against layoffs in Canadian mines be extended to the steel production industries. A combined struggle of the mining and basic steel sections of USWA, including occupations of production facilities facing mass layoffs or closure, is necessary to reverse the layoffs and beat the companies' attacks.

Militant Sudbury miners must fight for the union to organize occupations of Inco and Falconbridge production facilities, and must tie these occupations to a call for an industry-wide strike in basic steel throughout the U.S. and Canada, and for hot-cargoing of stockpiled goods by transportation unions. Such a strike with occupations should demand a thirty-hour workweek at forty hours' pay to save jobs, the opening of the company's books for union inspection and the expropriation of the mines without compensation.

Clearly the hidebound bureaucrats of the Steelworkers' union have no intention of leading such a struggle—including the reputed "militants" of the Sadlowski-Patterson ilk. The struggle to win jobs for mine and steel workers and defeat the companies' assaults must be linked to the fight to replace the labor fakers with a new class-struggle union leadership. Such a leadership would not rely on the reformist parliamentarians of the NDP, but would build a new workers party to lead the working class to power. Only a workers government can expropriate the entire capitalist class, create a planned economy and bring the scourges of unemployment and inflation to an end once and for all. ■



Ethiopian youth train with wooden rifles.

C. Leroy



Castro with Mengistu in Addis Ababa last March.

Newsweek

Marcy and Mengistu...

(continued from page 3)

Somalia's Barre (who once proclaimed that the first task of his "socialist" government would be to create a proletariat in this largely nomadic society) lent an ear to the siren songs of reactionary fellow Muslim regimes, principally Saudi Arabia and the Sudan. Last summer, seeing the Ethiopian army in a vulnerable position—pressed by the Eritreans in the north, the American spigot turned off and Russian arms not yet delivered in sufficient quantity—Barre struck out to seize the Ogaden, long claimed by the Mogadishu regime as Western Somalia.

There is a legitimate national question in the Ogaden, whose two million or so inhabitants are a homogeneous part of the Somali people, sharing a common language, religion and culture and living on the same

primitive economic level. This situation is the product of the imperialist carve-up of Africa in the late nineteenth century. Despite the independence and unification of British and Italian Somaliland, about half of the Somali people still lives in the barren Ogaden, the northeastern third of Kenya and the tiny territory of Djibouti (nominally independent since June but with 4,000 French troops still in place).

Marxists support the democratic right of the Somali people in Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti to reunite with Somalia. However, in the recent fighting (in which the efficient Russian-trained Somali army has effectively taken the Ogaden) this issue is subordinated to the reality of a war over territory between two equally reactionary capitalist states. Between Somali irredentism and Ethiopian national oppression proletarian communists must take a position of revolutionary defeatism on both sides, calling for the overthrow of both nationalist military cliques by the working masses. But since

the USSR is now leaning toward Mengistu, the Marcyites denounce the war as an imperialist plot, implicitly backing Ethiopia in this squalid border war.

Marcy's long march from Trotskyism to a gyrating, idiosyncratic Stalinoid personality cult of his own has been marked by successive infatuations with various degenerated and deformed workers states—first Russia, then China, North Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba, even Albania, and now back to the Kremlin again. He has delivered hosannas to whichever bourgeois nationalist movements and "revolutionary governments" were popular at the time on the U.S. left. But even for this cynical publicity agent for "Third World" Stalinism and nationalism, the embrace of bloody Mengistu represents a new low. It should give WWP/YAWF militants pause to realize that those who would march with banners of "Che" in the streets of Addis Ababa are shot like dogs by the murderous junta which is praised in their newspaper. ■

Cambodia...

(continued from page 7)

broken on racks and torn to pieces, while their followers were slaughtered wholesale.

The tremendous repression and seemingly irrational depopulation of Phnom Penh and the Cambodian towns is also an extreme reflection of the consequences of the Stalinist attempt to build "socialism in one country." It is not simply a question of the bizarre lengths to which a penurious, isolated Asian peasant country will go in "self-reliance." Stalinist policy in Soviet Russia as well required the imposition of a brutal bureaucratic police apparatus to seek to isolate the relatively backward country from the powerful disintegrating pressures of the world market. Marxists since Marx himself, and the Trotskyists today, have held that socialism—the abolition of class society through overcoming the socially necessary division of labor as a result of material abundance—cannot occur in a single country, and that even the dictatorship of the proletariat will be endangered if the revolution is not spread

internationally. As Marx wrote in *The German Ideology*:

"...this development of productive forces... is an absolutely necessary practical premise because without it *want* is merely made general, and with *destitution* the struggle for necessities and all the old crap would necessarily be reproduced; and furthermore, because only with this universal development of productive forces is a *universal* intercourse between men established.... Without this, (1) communism could only exist as a local event; (2) the *forces* of intercourse themselves could not have developed as *universal*, hence intolerable powers...; and (3) each extension of intercourse would abolish local communism." [emphasis in original]

If this was true of western European countries in the nineteenth century and Russia in the twentieth, how much more destructive power does the world market have on "Democratic Kampuchea" which faces the attraction of Japanese cars, motor bikes and pocket radios just across the Thai border. Precisely because of the tremendous power of the capitalist market—not simply imperialist spies, although these could presumably be bought cheaply—the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy must tighten its grip even further by building up an even more terrifying repressive apparatus.

For Workers Political Revolution in Indochina!

In world history, the innumerable peasant rebellions against landlords and autocratic regimes came to naught, for the peasantry was not a progressive class with a clear class interest around which it could mold a new society based on a higher level of productive forces. Usually they were defeated by the superior technology and organization of the rulers before they overran the capitals; but in those few cases where they were successful, the peasants proved incapable of ruling. The wave of enthusiasm for peasant guerrilla warfare during the 1960's notwithstanding, the peasantry has not changed fundamentally as a class. To be capable of coherent political action in modern times it has required the imposition of military/bureaucratic control from the outside, in the form of

a Stalinist apparatus.

And even then, Stalinist-led peasant-based guerrilla armies took power in Indochina only under exceptional historic circumstances, in which U.S. imperialism was unable to continue the exhausting war and the native capitalist class was extremely weak, corrupt and disorganized. If in spite of their best efforts to preserve the integuments of capitalism through forming coalition governments, the Stalinists were finally forced to take power, the resulting regimes—not only in Cambodia, but also in Vietnam (north and south) and China—remain *bureaucratically deformed* workers states. Their narrow nationalism and economic backwardness cannot be overcome by a rigidly imposed Operation Bootstrap, but only a workers political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucrats and extend the revolution internationally.

Lenin occasionally wrote in the early 1920's of a "non-capitalist road of development" for the most backward countries of the East. He and the Communist International always stressed, however, that the key was the tie to the victorious Soviet state. Today this argument is totally distorted by the Kremlin bureaucrats to maintain that Egypt, Ethiopia or even India can develop along "non-capitalist" lines so long as they trade with the USSR. What Lenin and the early Comintern were referring to was something quite different, namely the case of Soviet Central Asia and Mongolia—peasant and nomadic societies that were absorbed in toto into the Russian economy.

Something like this is today occurring with Laos, which has become a satellite of the economically and culturally far more advanced Vietnamese deformed workers state. Because of the long-standing subordination of the Laotian Stalinists to the Viet Minh and its successors, the degree of friction between the two state bureaucracies is evidently minimal. This, however, is a historical exception. In the Cambodian case, immediately following the victory of the Khmer Rouge, border incidents began multiplying not only with the Thais but

also with the Vietnamese. (There are reportedly more Cambodian refugees in Vietnam than in Thailand.) While the Khmer Stalinist regime is certainly marked by extreme xenophobia, its clashes with the Vietnamese are fundamentally no different from the Russian-Chinese border dispute or the festering Albanian-Yugoslav tension.

It is no use counseling the Cambodian people to follow the relatively sensible example of the Laotians, for in any case it could not overcome the strong national animosities between Khmers and Vietnamese. (If it were absorbed under Hanoi's tutelage in a bureaucratically imposed Indochinese federation, Cambodia would doubtless suffer the same sorts of discrimination experienced by the non-Russian nationalities in the Stalinized USSR.) The long history of Vietnamese Stalinist treachery of their one-time Cambodian comrades—beginning with the sellout of the Khmer Rouge in the 1954 Geneva Accords—is convincing proof that real economic integration and a truly democratic soviet federation of Indochina can only come through revolutionary action by the proletariat, above all in Vietnam, to overthrow its bureaucratic oppressors. And for this task the creation of an Indochinese Trotskyist vanguard party is the indispensable condition. ■

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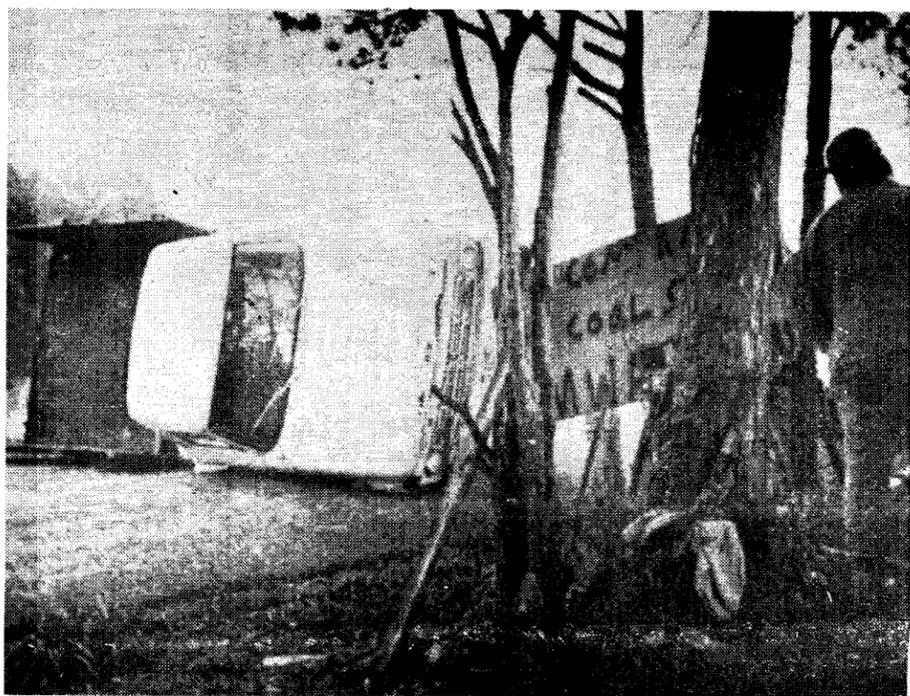
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WORKERS VANGUARD



Stearns miners meet after brutal cop attack.

WV Photo



Overtured truck blocks scabs at struck Justus mine.

McCreary County Record

Bring Out the UMWA!

Company Judge Throws the Book at Stearns Miners

STEARNS, Kentucky—The Stearns coal miners' strike is in grave danger. On October 26 Circuit Judge J.B. Johnson, Jr. sentenced eleven of the most active militants in the bitter 15-month strike to six months in jail. No provision for bail or bond was made, and the miners were led from the courthouse in Williamsburg straight to confinement. At the same trial Johnson leveled concurrent six-month suspended sentences and \$1,000 "good behavior" bonds on 68 others who are striking the hazardous Justus Mine and demanding a United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) contract from the Blue Diamond Coal Company.

Johnson's vindictive verdict is the court's answer to the mass picketing at the mine site on October 12 and 17. On the 12th, the Blue Diamond Coal Co. brought the first scabs into the mine. By quitting time, close to 100 strikers had assembled in protest as bosses and scabs exited from the compound. When the police escorts returned with reinforcements, all seven remaining pickets were arrested for violation of Johnson's restraining order which limits the pickets to six. Nine other miners were later identified and arrested on the same charge. Additional scabs were brought in during the next two days, but on October 17 almost the entire 153-man striking workforce turned out, blocked the road with an overturned truck and refused police orders to disperse.

Well over 100 riot-equipped state cops were dispatched—some by helicopter—to break up the demonstration. Refusing to stand aside for scabs, the miners fought a ten-minute battle, meeting the stick-swinging cops with

Report from the Kentucky Coalfields



Miners who defended picket line are taken to court on charges of violating restraining order.

McCreary County Record

hastily fashioned clubs of their own. Although the miners were eventually subdued as individual militants were overcome and then shackled face down in the dirt, several cops were injured in the brawl. "They knew they were in a fight," one miner told a *WV* reporter in the Whitley City local hall. "They didn't have grounds to brag about nothing," another stated.

Most of the strikers' injuries were sustained *after* the fight, when the miners were already handcuffed. The wife of one militant recalled that the cops covered puddles of workers' blood with soil to hide the evidence of their revenge

from cameramen and photographers at the scene.

Bosses' Justice in the Courts

The October 26 "trial" was nothing but a formality of government strike-breaking. Thirty-five armed cops appeared in the courtroom with about two dozen more outside. Although union lawyers were hoping for a postponement in order to prepare an adequate defense, Johnson ordered the trial to proceed despite the fact that the commonwealth attorney could not attend. Instead the judge appointed Blue Diamond lawyers as state prosecutors, and

they happily obliged. Moreover, the attorneys provided by the UMWA International were not permitted to argue the defense since UMWA District 19 is not formally a party to the case, so the miners were forced to hire a private attorney to defend them!

The defendants pleaded "not guilty" on the grounds that Blue Diamond itself had broken the restraining order by bringing scabs into the mine. Johnson himself acknowledged this violation on October 13 when he stated that his May 19 instructions for state troopers to escort company supervisors and Storm Security Service gun thugs past the

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