



The Call

Klonsky and Hua toast. "If the CCP elected a chimpanzee as chairman, Klonsky would send him a telegram of support."



WV Photo

Avakian at "Throw the Bum Out" rally. The Bum—Nixon—was a Mao favorite.

Gang of Four Purge Rips Apart Maoists

RCP SPLITS!

What was once the largest Maoist organization in the U.S. is ripping apart at the seams over the China question. Long-simmering clique warfare in the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP—formerly Revolutionary Union) exploded last weekend in Cincinnati as club-wielding supporters of the "Gang of

Four" had it out with backers of the current Hua/Teng regime in Peking. This is the largest and deepest split in New Left Maoism since SDS fractured in 1969. But unlike that split, from which emerged a "pro-working-class" wing as well as a hardened petty-bourgeois nationalist current, the RCP has divided along well established clique lines with no political left wing. Followers of RCP Chairman Bob Avakian in California are certainly no less reformist than the faction grouped around Mickey Jarvis in New York.

WV Exclusive THE INSIDE STORY

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As we go to press it appears that the RCP will lose more than a third of its 600-700 members—not only the bulk of the

East Coast but also key chunks of its Midwest industrial concentration and the entire youth operation outside the West Coast. Consequent demoralization will certainly produce additional resignations. The RCP has been split and wrecked by bureaucratic cynicism and political incapacity.

News of the split has traveled in shock waves through the ranks of the organization. And no wonder they're shocked. Their party has been blasted apart and they have only the fuzziest idea what it's all about. As a matter of conscious policy, both wings of the leadership have worked to keep the ranks in the dark, with hints and rumors their only clue to the crisis shaking the organization.

Even when the Jarvis faction, after a long underground existence, surfaced within the leadership following the mid-December Central Committee plenum, the membership was shut out from the desperate struggle at the top. There were the frantic whispers about secret meetings and hidden positions: "Bob's for the Gang"; "Mickey's backing Hua." But the severity of the crisis was not for the ranks' tender ears.

The purpose of this conspiracy of silence was more than the simple

invocation of bureaucratic privilege. Unity of the warring leaders against the membership is as organic to the RCP as it is to the Chinese Communist Party or any other Stalinist formation. At all costs, those on top must prevent a critical discussion of political questions. For the RCP, the immediate question is China. And any serious examination of that question raises the dangerous spectre of the "Russian question": the nature of the USSR and Stalinism vs. Trotskyism. The RCP tops must avoid this issue like the plague. But burning questions sometimes burn out of control.

The chasm separating the RCP from Leninist norms of democratic centralism is evident in the fact that many of the RCP ranks will learn of the most wrenching internal struggle in the history of their own organization in the pages of *Workers Vanguard*. But more importantly, this is also the only way they will learn the political meaning of the split. For when the "discussion" does at last trickle down to the ranks, it will be drained of political content, obscured by a tradition of Stalinist lies, packed with self-serving bureaucratic cover-up.

The RCP split is a dramatic shift in the political landscape of the U.S. left. But given the ultra-bureaucratic, Stalinist

practices of this organization, many RCP members are ignorant of what really is happening in their own party. They ought to get the story straight and political—no Mao-talk, no phony-baloney, no moralizing nonsense. And they'll only get it here.

One Divides Into Two

In its factional explosion the RCP ludicrously aped its mentors, the Chinese Maoists: the split was the final explosion of a prolonged clique war marked by secret positions held for years. Its characteristics were the exiling of oppositionists to the sticks; leaderships reshuffled by bureaucratic fiat; whole branches put on probation—with scarcely a word to the bewildered party ranks.

The issue was, of course, the mantle of Maoism. The Avakian supporters solid- arize with the "Gang of Four" and, of course, Mao (the Gang of Five?) while the forces around Jarvis opt for the present Peking regime and (need we add) Mao. The spectacle recalls the 1969 SDS split in form, where both sides waved the Little Red Book and furious-

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RCP...

(continued from page 1)

ly quoted Mao at one another. But in substance, the connection is that of tragedy and farce. The deepening radicalization of the Vietnam war period propelled many thousands of impressionistic petty-bourgeois youth toward New Left "anti-imperialism," but in the absence of a forceful Trotskyist alternative to discredited Communist Party (CP) reformism, they overwhelmingly embraced Stalinism in its "Third World"/Maoist variant. Ten years later, the once-idealistic student youth who passed from collectives to "party-building" have become the demoralized pawns of maneuverers like RCPers Avakian and Jarvis, and Mike Klonsky, head of the "official" pro-Maoist organization, the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) [CP(ML)].

The present RCP factional line-up reflects the RCP's origins in the New Left. A series of scattered Revolutionary Union collectives was amalgamated in 1975 primarily through the patchwork merger of Avakian's Bay Area stronghold with the East Coast operation built by Jarvis out of the crumbling remains of SDS's RYM II faction. Avakian's RU was New Left Maoist pure and simple. The clot headed by Jarvis—a red-diaper baby who left the CP in 1969 with a pro-China line—has always tended toward a more classic Stalinist coloration based on sycophancy toward the "one country" in which "socialism" was presumably being built. Hence the Jarvis clique is terrified of "isolation" from the Peking regime, while the Avakian wing is more responsive to the old "anti-imperialist" milieu whose admiration for China was badly shaken by Peking's role in Angola and embrace of NATO against the Soviet "superpower."

While Mao was alive his authoritative bonapartist role between the wings of the Chinese bureaucracy sufficed to hold the RCP together. But with his death, it soon split apart. Demonstrating that the organization never transcended its initial federalism, both sides are taking out roughly what they put in, with Avakian's stronghold remaining the Bay Area and Jarvis' New York.

In his documents Jarvis defined his faction as the right opposition to Avakian's "left idealist" tendency which, in "giving the Gang a home," was leading the party into "degeneration and isolation." For his part, Avakian had declared war on the "bourgeois headquarters" headed up by Jarvis, the "second center" in the RCP which had been "intriguing, conspiring and working for a split" for "years." The period of actual debate—of course restricted to the RCP elite—was brief and quickly resolved itself into tense confrontations complete with bodyguards, and worse.

Whereas in China the working people learn of their leaders' magical transformations from proletarian heroes to "capitalist roaders" through wall posters pasted up after the fact, the RCP ranks have been kept entirely in the dark, expected to follow along when the time comes on the basis of whoever first recruited them.

RCP Ducks the China Question

The story properly begins with the death of Chairman Mao, which found the RCP leaders preoccupied above all with keeping the reverberations of the shake-up in the Chinese regime from affecting their own organization. Unlike the RCP's more left-wing predecessor, Progressive Labor (PL), which tried in an infantile way to cope with the Mao/Nixon alliance and, spinning off into the realm of "left" anti-Leninism, actively dug its own political grave, the RCP tops simply stuck their heads in the sand.

In the fall of 1976 Avakian and Jarvis, playing for time, reached the agreement

that while the arrest of the Gang of Four by Hua "looked like a bad thing," it required "further investigation." This enabled the center to publish its one and only statement on the Chinese events, the 15 October 1976 *Revolution* article which while, in Avakian's words, "upholding socialist China had a clear 'tilt' in the direction of the line of the Four." But with the rehabilitation of Teng Hsiao-ping and the 11th Party Congress Jarvis became increasingly restive over the "tilt" and a "compromise even-handed" stance had to be taken.

With their only public statement rendered moot by Teng's rehabilitation and Avakian and Jarvis unable to reach a further "compromise," the RCPers spent the next year and a half crawling pink-faced through their public work. In November of that year they managed to get themselves in the ridiculous situation of holding a "Conference on the International Situation" where they were baited on all sides for having no line on China.

For a while they could fake it. Avakian was happy to say nothing which could make things worse for him in China. Jarvis, in his inimitable clique style, was sticking to the compromise whenever Avakian's agents were in earshot, while whispering his dissatisfactions on his own turf. This had the effect of landing some of the more naive Jarvisites in periodic hot water as they occasionally tried to raise criticisms through regular RCP "channels" only to get smashed by the Bob/Mickey combo. Avakian describes this period in a document:

"It often happened that when things 'got out of hand' and the Party center stepped in to struggle with these lines and forces that Comrade Jarvis would then take part, even vigorously take part, in the struggle along with the center. But the effect of this was usually to produce in those forces he had unleashed a feeling that he had 'punked out' to the center and had, in fact, 'set them up'."

—"Central Committee Report," (Volume 3, Number 1)

As the months went by, events continued to press down relentlessly on the RCP. Externally Peking was forcing the issue by granting its "franchise" to Klonsky. Internally the subterranean

factionalizing was reaching epidemic proportions. A hot issue was the question of changing the name of the youth organization. Things had gone so far that while Avakian was pushing for a "communist" youth group, Jarvis was actively lining up the non-party youth against the center in favor of a "mass" organization. The real issue was power politics: the Jarvis clique's challenge to the Avakian leader-cult, as a document by "the Chairman" makes clear:

"...in many ways the Party as a whole has been effectively split for a year or more. This has come out around various issues, including the questions involved in forming a young communist league. This went so far that some comrades took a factional attitude toward the Party as a whole and a hostile attitude toward the Chair. This was objectively encouraged by Com-



Mao and Lin Piao applaud Red Guard parade in 1966.

rade Jarvis who at one point told the Chair he had no right to speak on this question because he hadn't investigated (in fact, the Chair had done some investigation), and who while upholding the line in some ways also 'floated' ideas to these comrades that encouraged them in their wrong thinking and their tendency to oppose the Party politically and organizationally."

—*Ibid.*

Avakian put down the youth revolt only by putting the fear of Mao into the dual members about what would happen to them if they did not fight for the center's line at the mid-November youth conference. This tactic was to eventually backfire on Avakian. His heavy-handed approach to the youth members marked a watershed in Jarvis' decision to surface the faction and was to cause Avakian to lose much of the RCYB in the split.

"Rectification"

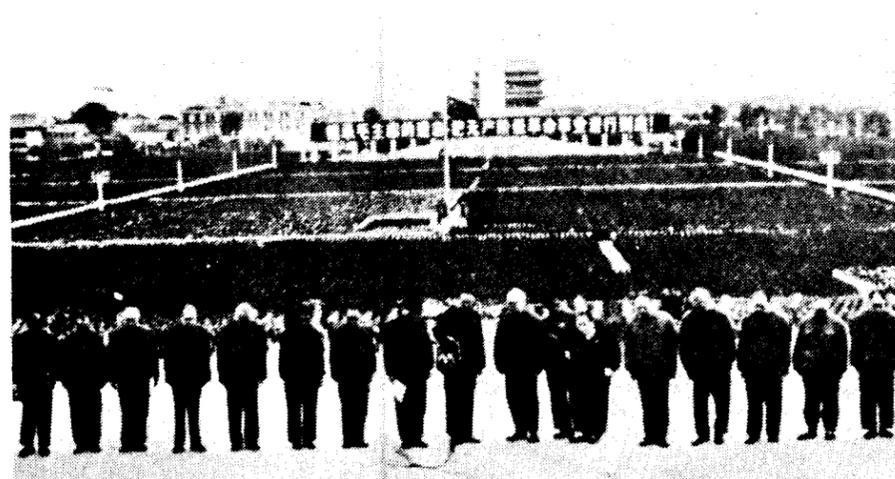
Following the youth name-change confrontation, the Central Committee and other leading members were called to Chicago in mid-December for a meeting, ostensibly to set guidelines for opening a discussion within the RCP on

China. But by the time they arrived Avakian had decided to wage his fight in a more exclusive body, and the center ordered the CCers to spend the weekend discussing the "Worker" newspapers. With the organization paying the plane fares, the disgruntled cadres left Chicago muttering "No Taxation, No Representation."

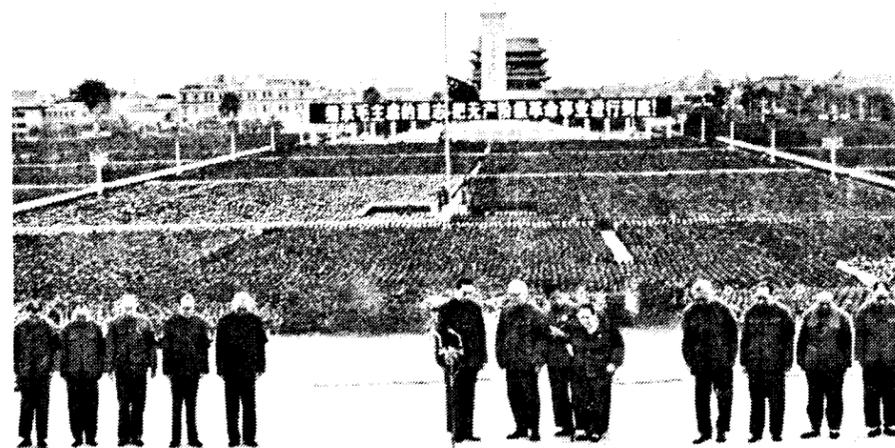
With their departure the real leadership of both sides got down to business. Avakian began by introducing his factional document, "Revisionists Are Revisionists and Must Not Be Supported, Revolutionaries Are Revolutionaries and Must Be Supported," hot off the press. Though prior to this the internal discussion on China had only taken place in whispers among an elite few, the document was rammed down the body's throat. The vote was not reassuring for Avakian. Only by ignoring the sizable "silent minority" who simply abstained could he claim a two-to-one victory in the vote. (The Jarvis faction of course counts the abstentions differently and arrives at an almost even split.)

In any case Avakian got what he had come for. At long last there was a

Maoist School of Falsification



Hsinhua



Hsinhua

党和国家领导人华国锋、×××、叶剑英、×××、宋庆龄、××、×××、李先念、陈锡联、纪登奎、汪东兴、吴德、许世友、韦国清、李德生、陈永贵、吴桂贤、苏振华、倪志福、赛福鼎在追悼大会上。

Photograph of Mao memorial published in Peking press before (above) and after (below) campaign against "Gang of Four" began in 1976.

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majority line and he could move against the Jarvis "headquarters." His "rectification" campaign, patterned after the Chinese CP's "ideological criticism and self-criticism" campaigns used to justify revolving-door purges, called for "organizational steps" against the opposition. In typical fashion Jarvis and his supporters voted for the "rectification," which included throwing themselves off the Central Committee and exiling themselves from the major party centers. In a classic Stalinist statement, Avakian reported:

"The Central Committee has made arrangements for [Jarvis] to undertake work to make contributions to the Party, has assigned him some leading responsibility in the Party and while struggling with him has expressed every hope that he'll change in the course of work and study."
—*Ibid.*

RCP: Bureaucratic Nightmare

After some debate in Chicago, it was decided that China was a "tactical" question; thus, upon return to the branches, there would be no more said about China. That's right—Avakian directed that there be *no* discussion of events in China: not in meetings, in corridors, in cars or closets. As for the regional leaders and branch chairmen who were simply to vanish after the Chicago meeting, not a word of explanation was to be given. These regulations led one baffled cadre to ask, "If China is not a principled question for an organization which claims to be Maoist, what is?" In the RCP, as in China, the only "principled" question would appear to be the survival of one's own bureaucratic clique.

The Chicago meeting was the beginning of the end. The Jarvis people headed to New York for the holidays, en route to their reassignments, and began furiously scribbling documents. Sliding over his vote for the "rectification," Jarvis wrote:

"In looking over the rectification bulletin one can say that the lack of theoretical and political line is astounding. One-half of the standing committee is removed, one-half of the political committee removed, almost one-half of the voting Central Committee members removed, suppressed or surrounded, and not a word of explanation...."

A suspicious Avakian showed up in New York to ensure that the line voted in Chicago would be taken down to the membership; the task of the cadres was simply to "absorb" it, under the Stalinist dictum, "unity of will, unity of action." According to Avakian only the majority document was to be discussed, only sections at a time, only through regular RCP "channels" (with leading cadres required to present the center's line in lower bodies) and only twice:

"This report on China as well as on the revisionist line and headquarters of course represents the line of our Party. Leadership of all units has the task of leading their units in study and struggle to grasp and apply this line. If there are any disagreements, they should be raised for struggle only in the highest body one belongs to."

"For six weeks, beginning the first of the year, the discussion should center on the line on China in the accompanying report. One or at most two initial discussions of the part of the report dealing with rectification should be held during the period."

— "Central Committee Report,"
(Volume 3, Number 1)

Meanwhile the hyperactivism of the RCP—exemplified by campaigns such as the "People's Bicentennial," Kent State and NUWO, designed to keep the members too busy to think—would be stepped up:

"Mass work becomes our main emphasis, unlike in the period of forming the Party."
—*Ibid.*

Even in the RCP, Politics Will Out

The spectacular fracturing of the RCP over China is more than poetic
continued on page 4

RCP's "Secret" Position on China

Excerpts from "Revisionists Are Revisionists and Must Not Be Supported, Revolutionaries Are Revolutionaries and Must Be Supported," pages 75-76 [emphases added], by the Chairman [Bob Avakian], adopted by the Central Committee:

IV. What Do We Do Based on a Correct Understanding of What Has Happened?

I have put forward in blunt terms what I believe to be the undeniable truth about events in China. A revisionist coup has taken place, a serious blow has been delivered to the proletariat and its revolutionary leaders. The capitalist-roaders are not only still on the capitalist road, they have now usurped supreme power and are taking China down the capitalist road....

The situation presents us and genuine Marxists everywhere with many difficult and complicated questions.... Should we come out now and publicly support the Four and denounce the current rulers? No.... Should we continue to put forward China as a socialist country? Yes, for now we should, because it is still an objective fact. But we should, in discussing China, put stress on Mao's line, the Cultural Revolution and the fact that in socialist society classes exist, class struggle is acute and the danger of capitalist restoration is ever-present and great.... We should avoid as much as possible giving any support to the current rulers of China and certainly continue not to congratulate them on any posts any of them assume, and most definitely not on any of their victories over the proletariat—i.e., the smashing of the "gang of four."

As far as our public position on China we should take the following approach. With the "general public"—that is people not close to us, including opportunists—we should say that there are obviously reasons for concern about what is happening in China... but we should put this in the context that China is a socialist country and that the class struggle under socialism always goes on and at times becomes very acute. In short, we should uphold China as a socialist country while pointing to problems and areas of struggle and say that we are closely following and continuing to study events in China. *On Teng Hsiao-ping, since our last public statements on him (correctly) labelled him a counter-revolutionary, but since he has since been restored to very high office, we should just say (to the "general public") that his return to office has to be viewed in the overall context of what is happening in China and that we are taking up the question of his return to office in that light and in the same spirit as we are following and studying events in China in general, as summarized just above. Comrades should keep in mind that what they say to workers and others whom we cannot count on as being completely reliable have to be put in the category of statements to the "general public," since they may very well become that (for example a worker may have contact with both us and the OL-CPML, and may not understand why he should not discuss with them what we tell him about our position on China).*

At the same time, as stressed before, we must educate not only our own members but reliable advanced workers and others close to us (*those who will understand why they should keep what we say to them about China confidential*) about what is actually going on in China and give them the basis for grasping the real lessons of this. Otherwise

there is no way we can carry out our duties as a Party or overcome demoralization that will inevitably set in as it becomes more and more clear what road China is taking. Further we should find the ways to do broader education on the crucial questions related to developments in China without commenting directly on the situation there—for example articles about the process and lessons of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union, articles about the gains and lessons of the Cultural Revolution in China, etc.

Should we continue to work in U.S.-China [Peoples Friendship Association]? Yes, we should, but we must recognize the obvious fact that it will be an extremely difficult task to carry out. In particular it will be extremely difficult to balance building friendship for China as a socialist country, which is still correct at this time, with not contributing to building up the current rulers in opposition to the Four (not to go along with the Association's doing the latter will be impossible of course, and we should not put up struggle to try to prevent it from doing this, though we should try to keep it from being the main thing the Association does, and as much as possible we ourselves should not contribute to it—as I said this will be extremely difficult). Careful guidance must be given to comrades doing this work....

* * * * *

Excerpts from Avakian's "Central Committee Report," pages 9-10 [emphases added]:

Public Stand on China

It is also important to grasp that, having taken this line internally, our purpose and task is not to undertake an anti-China crusade.... This means we will write articles in our press on such questions as studying the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and on the gains of the working class under socialism—focusing on gains of the Cultural Revolution, which now (though we won't go into this) are under attack. These articles will stress political line, without being open attacks on the Chinese leadership.

In talking to people outside the Party, we must draw distinctions. *We can speak about our whole line on this only to people who are very close to the Party and who can be trusted to grasp not only the line, but the reasons we are not expounding it publicly (this should be explained to them).... To others we work with, we should explain we uphold China as socialist, answer their questions by saying that many of the gains of the working class are under attack now... and then go on to explain even if restoration were to occur, this would not mean you cannot win, but only that the historic mission of the working class... can only be accomplished through twists and turns, temporary reversals, and hard struggle, but that it will inevitably be achieved....*

The RCYB [youth organization], because of its nature, should not have a line on this question (though, obviously, Party members within it have a line). Only those closest to the Party within the RCYB should be told our full position, as outlined above. Within the RCYB generally, our line on China should be the same as our broad public position. Articles from our Party's press which touch on relevant line questions can be used for RCYB educationals on the victories of and the class struggle under socialism, but in these discussions all-around conclusions about China should not be drawn....

RCP...

(continued from page 3)

justice. It is a demonstration that even in the RCP—where absorption in idiot adventurism and stultifying workerism, as well as pervasive cynicism toward political questions, work against the drawing of political lines—political confrontation, though suppressed and distorted, cannot be indefinitely staved off.

Certainly this redivision of the organization along old clique lines recalls previous splits in which disputes were papered over until the divergent groupings (e.g., the clot around guerrillaist Bruce Franklin, which formed Vencemos, or the Steve Hamilton grouping which was to become the Bay Area Communist Union) finally departed to go their own ways, without causing undue static in the rest of the organization. But while Avakian's and Jarvis' efforts to shift the blame for various domestic disasters onto their clique rivals played no small part in the split, the China question—long shoved out of sight by mutual consent—finally provoked the unstoppable escalation of the discussion and made a deep and bitter split inescapable.

The Avakian and Jarvis wings of the RCP have come up with two mutually exclusive attempts to escape the problem. Of course, the lengthy internal documents hastily produced by the two sides on the China question never pose this problem directly, but it is the basis for the morbidity of the RCP: *Klonsky has the China franchise*. And that simple fact makes a Peking-loyal Maoist RCP unviable—and not just the RCP, but all the formations outside the CP(ML) who continue to back the ruling bureaucracy of the Chinese state. To openly break from the Chinese for their only real "crime" in the eyes of a U.S. Maoist—not the suppression of the Chinese proletariat, not the systematic betrayal of international revolutionary struggles, but the selection of the wrong American epigone for the "franchise"—means that one is no closer to the seat of power anywhere in the world than is a miserable "Trotskyite." But to refuse to break deprives the RCP of any reason for independent existence outside Klonsky's CP(ML). Neither wing of the RCP can escape this dilemma, for both accept the Stalinist framework of a bureaucratic caste where policy and privilege are determined by reshufflings at the top, whose American "comrades" are selected not for their capacity to lead the U.S. working class to state power but for their slavish services as publicity agents for whomever is currently top dog in Peking.

Perhaps a less gutless Avakian might have seen in the purge of the "Gang of Four" a means for carving out a niche for himself by frontally challenging the legitimacy of the Hua regime's claim to the mantle of Maoism. This would have meant an eventual split with those in his organization for whom apologetics for China mean more than cultist devotion to Avakian. It would have meant renunciation of the vicarious participation in the perquisites of power in China which consoles American Maoists for their irrelevance to the American working people.

Worst of all it would have brought the RCP up against the spectre of Trotskyism, for Stalinism without a country is unstable in the extreme, as Progressive Labor found out. Warding off that spectre, Progressive Labor embarked on the path of political slow death. The collapse of PL's impressionistic centrism and its reformist spiral into oblivion is the unacknowledged deterrent for leftist impulses in the RCP. But the PL horrible example is probably superfluous for Avakian, whose own New Left parochialism would itself be sufficient to preclude any attempt at global Stalinist revisionism in the style of the old Progressive Labor. So he opts for



Chou En-lai with Teng Hsiao-ping.



Chiang Ching with Chou.

the no-win policy of public silence on the question of the present Chinese regime.

Thus the line of Avakian's documents—now the officially adopted line of the RCP—is that "a revisionist coup has taken place" in China. "The capitalist-roaders are not only still on the capitalist road, they have usurped supreme power and are taking China down the capitalist road." And what is the RCP going to do about it? Well, they are going to publish articles about "capitalist restoration" in the USSR, they are going to commemorate the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" whenever possible, they will seek to avoid "contributing to building up the current rulers in opposition to the Four" in the U.S.-China Peoples Friendship Association. They will try to avoid incidents like that of the appointment calendar produced by RCPers in Philadelphia, described by Avakian:

"This calendar is a factional calendar, particularly because of how it handled the Chou En-lai question when it was well known to some that this was a very controversial question which would soon be summed up. It has two pictures of Chou—one of the type reserved only for the "Big 5"—Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. It printed the Central Committee statement on his death,

praising him for 'upholding the red flag against all enemies within and without,' which in today's context of Chou being praised in China for fighting the Four is a back-door way of taking a position on this struggle. While we have not officially repudiated that CC statement, neither have we been repeating it, any more than we have been repeating the *Revolution* article of October 15, 1976..." (our emphasis)

—*Ibid.*

And they are going to preserve a discreet silence about China in public and even in their own youth organization (see box accompanying this article), except when dealing with "those who will understand why they should keep what we say to them about China confidential"! In other words, Avakian knows that for admitted Maoist Stalinists, the RCP's line on China is actually *shameful*; rather than fighting for it, they must keep it secret. The staggering cynicism of these exhortations to secrecy is matched only by the stupidity of putting them down in black and white. Perhaps Mao backed by the armed forces could pull it off. Avakian can't—as our readers can read for themselves.

The RCP's Private Line

Trying to back the right horse has never been easy in the Stalinist movement, where heads have to roll to excuse the defeats and betrayals which are the bureaucracy's stock-in-trade. But it is harder under the ghost of Mao than it ever was under the Stalin monolith. In a masterpiece of unintentional humor,

Avakian hails as "prophetic" Mao's statement that:

"The right in power could utilize my words to become mighty for a while. But then the left will be able to utilize others of my words and organize itself to overthrow the right."

The dilemma for Maoists in not being able to communicate with the dead is evident in Avakian's document, whose thesis that the "Gang of Four" represents the continuity of orthodox Maoism is now the official, though secret, line of the RCP. Not that the "Great Helmsman's" last words matter, except to sycophants like Avakian or Jarvis. Thus Avakian can only guess:

"In fact there were, as subsequent events have made abundantly clear, powerful forces in the Chinese leadership who strongly opposed the campaign against Teng and the right deviationist wind... But exactly because Mao threw his weight behind this campaign, these forces had to beat a temporary and partial retreat and go along with knocking down Teng. But they certainly were not about to allow one of the Four to become acting head of the Central Committee and the country in effect. Therefore they backed Hua, someone who, as an analysis of his line and role has shown, was politically in their camp but was not such an easy target with long years of brazen revisionism to attack, like Teng.

"Under these conditions, with the balance of forces being what they were, Mao had to go along with Hua's appointments....

"Mao knew that the deeper this struggle against the right deviationist wind went and the more thoroughly it was carried out, the harder the blows at the rightists and the more favorable the conditions for the left.... And we have seen what

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happened to that struggle after Mao died—those who were actively leading it, the Four, were almost immediately smashed and the target of the struggle was shifted from the right to them, the (genuine) left.”

—“Revisionists Are Revisionists...”

Essentially the Jarvis document, “Uphold the 11th Party Constitution,” simply denies Avakian’s assertions about Mao’s attitudes toward “the Four” and toward Chou En-lai and asserts the opposite. Avakian claims Chiang Ching was carrying out Mao’s line against Chou, Teng, Hua, etc.; Jarvis insists Mao and Chou were united against “the Four”:

“But even more underhanded is the attempt to imply that Mao and the gang were in fundamental unity. On the very points mentioned, it was with the gang that Mao had very sharp differences. On the necessity of stability and unity and pushing the national economy forward, it was the gang who in fact stood in the way of these correct thrusts by metaphysically opposing them to ‘revolution’ and ‘class struggle.’”

—“Uphold the 11th Party Constitution”

Where Avakian says that Mao supported the “Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius Campaign” as a means of attacking Chou, Jarvis says Mao prevented the Gang from using that campaign to attack Chou:

“Once more rewriting history is used to say that the Lin Piao Confucius Campaign was led by Mao and aimed at Chou. The truth is quite otherwise. The gang distorted the Lin Piao Confucius campaign to try and aim it at Chou and their veteran cadres and at the masses.... The gang may have wanted to aim at Chou, but what they did [was] aim at Mao and the CCP. Mao told them to stop it, to stop weakening the campaign.”

—*Ibid.*

One of the most striking aspects of Jarvis’ and Avakian’s documents is that both sides are utterly in the dark about what really goes on in the Forbidden City. Lacking any substantial communication with CCP leaders they are reduced to reading the tea leaves of *Peking Review* to find out who’s on top or what Mao really meant. To make sense of it all they have to resort to bourgeois sources. Thus Avakian relies on a compilation of translations by the U.S. government while Jarvis takes a particularly damning quote from Chiang Ching from a CIA-connected Taiwanese propaganda mouthpiece. What else can they do—their own oracles are silent.

These polemics are rather reminiscent of the Japanese film *Rashomon*, in which several witnesses gave flatly conflicting accounts of a rape and murder. In the movie a medium contacts the murdered man’s spirit (who presents yet another version). Since the RCPers posture at being Marxists (i.e., materialists), they cannot claim to commune with Mao’s ghost. Even if they could, that ghost would oblige them only with more of the forked-tongue epigrams of a bonapartist balancing between the competing interests of bureaucratic cliques and the empty moralizing about “revolution” designed to cover the systematic betrayal of the Chinese and international proletariats.

“Cultural Revolution” Mystification

If the “Gang of Four” was so bad, why did Mao tolerate them—if not actively support them—in positions of power? This is the main theme of Avakian’s document, to which he returns again and again.

It is indeed an awkward question for Peking’s present rulers. The Hua regime has been compelled to supply a series of not very convincing answers. For one thing, they claim that the Gang’s crimes escalated sharply in the last months of Mao’s life. Second, Mao was, as all Maoists know, the very soul of comradely tolerance, and was patiently seeking to get the Gang to change its evil ways. And third, Hua supporters contend that if Mao had not been ill or had lived longer he would have taken

action against the Chiang Ching clique.

In one sense Avakian is right. The Chiang group were Mao’s people, a clique whose positions of power depended solely on his personal sponsorship and protection. Thus they could be axed when the Chairman’s corpse was scarcely cold. However, Avakian’s contention that Mao was engaged in a major struggle with Chou En-lai, Hua, Yeh Chien-ying is no less fantastic than the counter-claim that he would have purged the “Four” had he been healthy. As representatives of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy, Hua and Teng are also Mao’s legitimate heirs.

Hua/Teng can legitimately argue that the purge of the “Gang of Four” is the logical culmination of a trend that began in late 1967 when Mao decided to suppress the Red Guards. Since late 1967 the most prominent victims of the Mao regime have been the original leaders of the Cultural Revolution (Wang Li, Chen Po-ta, Lin Piao), while most “capitalist roaders” purged in 1966-67 have been reinstated.

As a result of his sponsorship of the disastrous “Great Leap Forward” (1958-61) Mao lost much of his authority among the CCP old guard. In 1965, in alliance with Lin Piao, he moved to restore his former dominance. This was the origin of the Cultural Revolution. But the veteran party cadre proved to have considerable powers of resistance, including the ability to mobilize groups of workers against the student-youth Red Guards. So in the end Mao had to retreat and come to terms with so-called “capitalist roaders” like Teng. Mao’s personal authority remained sufficient to—through the mediation of Chou En-lai—work out a rapprochement with the old guard.

September 1967 was a decisive turning point in the Cultural Revolution, when Mao moved sharply against the Red Guards and their supporters in the regime. Because of massive popular



Red Guards display Mao’s “Little Red Book” at Peking demonstration during the Cultural Revolution.

resistance to the “radical” Maoist Red Guards, particularly among the working class (e.g., the Shanghai general strike in January 1967), Mao had to call in the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) in early 1967 to “support the revolutionary rebels.” The conservative PLA officer corps, of the same flesh as the civilian party and government bureaucracy, naturally neutralized rather than supported these “rebels.” Frustrated by the nature of the PLA’s intervention, some Red Guard groups came out for extending the Cultural Revolution into the army, mobilizing the soldiers against the officers.

The army is the core of bureaucratic rule in China. As a representative of the bureaucracy, Mao was committed to maintaining the army as an effective repressive apparatus against the potentially rebellious Chinese workers and peasants (e.g., the army was brought in

to break the nationwide railway strike in January 1967). Mao declared in no uncertain terms that the PLA was off-limits to this so-called “revolution”:

“The army’s prestige must be resolutely safeguarded and there can be no doubt about that.... The chief danger of the moment is that some people want to beat down the PLA!... There must be no chaos in the army.”

—*Survey of the China Mainland Press*, 5 November 1967

With the liquidation of the Red Guards came the purge of those Cultural Revolution leaders most closely associated with them. In September 1967 Wang Li and two associates were purged from the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution as “ultra-leftists” who encouraged attacks on the army. In 1971 a far more important Cultural Revolution figure, Chen Po-ta, head of the Group in Charge and Chiang Ching’s closest associate, was also purged as an “ultra-leftist.” Soon thereafter came the purge of Marshal Lin Piao, Mao’s officially designated successor. Mao, who had no intention of becoming overly dependent upon any individual, clique or power bloc within the bureaucracy he headed, moved to destroy Lin’s influence and in so doing created a situation in which Teng and the other purged “capitalist roaders” were restored to power.

Avakian himself is forced to admit that Mao restored Teng in order to counter the influence of Lin’s followers in the PLA. He accepts this as a justifiable tactical maneuver:

“...after Lin Piao died and his closest co-conspirators alive were arrested, his followers and the problems his camp created were far from cleared up, especially but not exclusively in the armed forces. It should be remembered that the PLA played a huge role during the Cultural Revolution up to that point—army people were everywhere, in every major institution, in city and countryside—playing a leading role, and this Mao had only begun to seriously

So according to Avakian, instead of mobilizing the masses against Lin Piao’s nefarious followers, Mao formed a bloc with the leading “rightist revisionist” in China and restored him to power. Thus in his own way Avakian acknowledges that Mao was an opportunist bonapartist whose options were defined by the exigencies of bureaucratic rule.

The “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” was not a revolution, and had even less to do with the proletariat than it had with “culture” (see “Maoism Run Amok,” *Spartacist* No. 8, November-December 1966). It was a massive bureaucratic conflict which, provoked by the spectacular failure of the “Great Leap Forward,” was extreme in form and ferocity. The dominant Mao forces mobilized student youth, backed up and restrained by the army, on the basis of radical-sounding demagoguery. When the deluded youth threatened to get out of hand, Mao smashed them with the army.

For all wings of the RCP, the only question is which part of the Maoist bureaucracy to support. Even in his indictment of the incumbent Chinese regime, Avakian dares not flirt with the only revolutionary alternative to the Maoist bureaucracy: political revolution by the Chinese proletariat to oust all wings of the bureaucracy and establish democratic control of industrial and governmental policy through proletarian soviets. For the gulf between bureaucratic purge politics and the revolutionary action of the working masses under the leadership of the authentic proletarian vanguard party is the gulf between Stalinism and Trotskyism.

In a most revealing remark, Avakian says: “A genuine revolution now can only come from the ‘bottom,’ and frankly I don’t expect to see such a revolution in the near future.” So he must hide in his closet of secret criticism of Hua/Teng while the real revolutionaries, the Trotskyists, not cowed by the magnitude of their task, struggle to build the international party of proletarian revolution over the political corpses of the Avakians, Jarvisses and Klonskys.

Hua’s Friends

A more seasoned Stalinist than Avakian, Jarvis has less difficulty than Avakian in accepting the gyrations which characterize a “flexible” Stalinist policy. If Avakian has on his side the evident empirical fact that Mao was the backer of the Gang of Four, Jarvis can counter that Mao (we might add, supported by the Chiang Ching clique) liquidated the Cultural Revolution. Jarvis correctly recognizes that the Cultural Revolution was an exceptional episode incompatible with the normal mode of Stalinist bureaucratic rule: “...as an outburst of intense rebellion, the GPCR could not continue indefinitely without turning into its opposite— anarchy and attacks on the masses.” Poor Avakian is “stuck on the Cultural Revolution”:

“The Cultural Revolution with its mass character and rebellion against reactionary authority made Marxism acceptable to large numbers of petty bourgeois revolutionaries. But these same forces summed up the Cultural Revolution without regard to condition, time and place, and many within our Party, as well as in China, have raised the forms and methods of the Cultural Revolution as an idealist ‘best’ method of carrying on the class struggle. In any and all circumstances. They have in a word, gotten stuck.”

—“Uphold the 11th Party Constitution”

The key concern of the Jarvis wing of the RCP, however, is not to be found in his reply to Avakian’s China document, but rather in his accompanying opus, which appeals to the ranks on the basis of organizational atrocities and domestic disasters (to be discussed in more detail in our next article). In the first page of this hodge-podge document he attacks Avakian’s appeals to take “the high road” as “the road of rationalizing further isolation from our fellow workers than conditions demand.” Counter-

continued on page 8

LCR Dissident Denounces Class Collaboration

French Pabloists in the Camp of the Popular Front

We reprint below an open letter and leaflet distributed in Paris last week to a national meeting of the "far-left" electoral bloc made up of the fake-Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR—de facto leader of the United Secretariat [USec] "mainstream"), the Maoist Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs (OCT) and the Comités Communistes pour l'Autogestion (CCA—Communist Committees for Self-Management). The CCA is composed of followers of Michel Pablo who split from the left-social-democratic Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU) last year to regroup with elements breaking to the right from the LCR. In the election meeting this leaflet was widely discussed and eagerly passed from hand to hand.

The fact that a long-time member of the LCR is reduced to publicly distributing his document in opposition to the LCR's electoral bloc is itself a significant statement concerning the internal life of the USec.

In the French electoral system there are two rounds of voting. If no candidate wins an absolute majority on the first round, there is a second round, generally between the two candidates with the largest vote totals on the first round. The question of which candidates withdraw on the second round is therefore very important. The Socialist Party (PS) has proposed the automatic withdrawal of the Union of the Left candidates with fewer votes, while the Communist Party (PC) has ostentatiously refused to commit itself (though it will undoubtedly follow this guideline in practice). This jockeying for position has been reflected in the debates among the centrists, with the OCI making the central issue of its electoral propaganda the campaign for automatic withdrawal ("désistement"). This is only the most grotesque example of the capitulation of the French "far-left" to the popular frontism of the reformist workers parties under the guise of "unity" for unity's sake. While aping the Union of the Left through their own "revolutionary" electoral blocs, the centrists give "critical" support to popular frontism by calling for votes to the Union of the Left or its working-class components.

Open Letter to the LCR

Comrades, this evening's meeting is being held under the slogan "Defeat the right!" This slogan totally abandons any revolutionary opposition to the Popular Front, as the LCR has so often done in the past and as the United Secretariat did in Chile, Portugal and Spain. The only effect of the LCR's electoral bloc with the OCT and the CCA is to mobilize elements which are subjectively to the left of the reformists around support to the Union of the Left.

Rouge has made a great to-do over the Communist Party's announcement ("definitively" for the moment) that it would not make any agreement concerning withdrawal prior to the second round. Does that mean that the Union of the Left is now but a memory? Does that mean that Marchais has given up his goal of administering the capitalist state in alliance with a bourgeois party, be it Radical or Gaullist? Has either of

the reformist parties of the Union of the Left rejected the Common Program which serves as the framework for the Popular Front? No! The Popular Front still exists.

I have been a member of the LCR (and its predecessors) since February 1969; I belonged, in succession, to the "Against the Stream" tendency (1973-74), to Tendency 4 (first Congress of the LCR, 1974), to Tendency C and then to the unified Tendency A (second Congress of the LCR, 1976). I have submitted two documents to the LCR Political Bureau. My first document ("The Situation in the International After the Dissolution of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction: What Perspectives for a Trotskyist Opposition?") pointed out that oppositionists in the LCR, including those within the LTF who had joined with the reformist American SWP have been incapable of presenting a Trotskyist opposition to centrists like Mandel, Krivine and Yvetot. Today, the USec claims to be the Fourth International; in fact, it was their Pabloism which destroyed the Fourth International. Pabloism is the revisionist theory which consists of hunting for a substitute for the working class led by the Trotskyist Party to make the revolution. The substitutes have been many and varied: capitulating to the Popular Front is only the most recent.

Comrade Puech told me that last weekend's Central Committee meeting would fix a date for the publication of my documents. But it didn't discuss this question: and it was not just due to the Central Committee's well-known incompetence that this point wasn't put on the agenda. The LCR leadership wants above all not to be bothered by a discussion over the difference between an opportunist policy of pressuring the popular front and revolutionary opposition to it. I am distributing this document tonight in order to maximize the possibility for all members of the LCR to understand where the leadership is taking them.

Comrades: remember the slogan you shouted in demonstrations after the September 1973 massacre: "France will not become Chile!" The incorrigible leaderships of the LCR and the USec are going to apply the very policy which allowed the Chilean reformists to open the door to the massacre, which allowed the Portuguese reformists to smash the forward motion of the Portuguese proletariat.

—Comrades! Demand that this meeting be transformed into a real political debate on the burning question facing the working-class movement: the question of the Popular Front!

—Demand that debates be immediately organized in the cells!

—Demand an immediate break with the LCR-OCT-CCA electoral bloc, whose function is to bring the Popular Front to power!

10 January 1978

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Der Spiegel

Union of the Left leaders Marchais, center, and Mitterrand, center left, lead march in Paris last year.

For a Trotskyist Opposition to the Popular Front!

"The question of questions at present is the People's Front. The left centrists seek to present this question as a tactical or even as a technical maneuver, so as to be able to peddle their wares in the shadow of the People's Front. In reality, the People's Front is the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism."

—Leon Trotsky, "The Dutch Section and the International," (July, 1936), *Writings*, 1935-36, p. 370

The core of my opposition to the LCR's electoral policy can be compressed to the following: to call for a vote for the Communist and Socialist parties—which are today still tied to the Left Radicals and which have still not repudiated their commitment to the Common Program—is to vote for the candidates of a Popular Front, i.e., a bourgeois formation. All the "critical" remarks and suggestions made in Rouge for "improving" the Union of the Left do not in the least change the fact that what the LCR leadership is doing by calling for this vote is using what little social influence it has to insure the victory of the Popular Front. And that, comrades, is purely and simply a betrayal. Today's call for such a vote justifies the prediction that tomorrow, if the Union of the Left wins the elections, the attitude of the LCR leadership will not be one of revolutionary opposition to this capitalist government, but one of pressure, in one form or another, on the Popular Front. This was the Chilean MIR's attitude toward Allende's Popular Unity: and we know what came of that. This was also the attitude which Marceau Pivert's Revolutionary Left

took in 1935-36: Pivert explicitly fought for a "fighting popular front."

"FURism"

The LCR, the OCT and the CCA formed this electoral bloc in the tradition of the Portuguese FUR, Democrazia Proletaria in Italy and the Spanish FUT. Far from offering a means to express some kind of "mistrust," this bloc subordinates any programmatic consideration to the hopes that if it can get enough people together, it can wheel and deal with some future popular front government. Flattering itself with the illusion of national influence, and claiming that a vote for the bloc would represent a warning to Marchais and Mitterrand, the bloc promises that its opposition to the Popular Front will be a loyal opposition: "defeat the right on the second round" actually means bring the Popular Front to power.

What is the Program of this Bloc?

This miniature "common program of the far left" contains a characterization of a Union of the Left government which at least is correct: "Such a government... would be nothing but a bourgeois government" (Joint Platform, point 2). For years the LCR leadership has refused to say that the Union of the Left is a bourgeois formation; it has used the formulation "global reformist alternative"; and it still refuses to say it is a popular front. Five years of urging a vote for the Popular Front have so dulled the political sensibilities of LCR militants that the LCR leadership's explicit declaration that a Left government will in fact be bourgeois now merely aids it to better pressure this bourgeois government. As to its so-called principled opposition to voting for the bourgeois candidates of the Union of the Left, it is enough to recall that in the [spring 1977] municipal

elections the LCR also called for a vote for Union of the Left slates including bourgeois candidates, except when the slate was headed by one of them.

Alain Krivine, intervening in the name of the LCR's Political Bureau in the debate over nationalizations, was concerned only about the extent of nationalizations, whereas the question, above all, is to know *who* should nationalize (a workers government) and *how* (without compensation). He proposed establishing "a minimum threshold of nationalizations that will change the logic of the capitalist system" (*Le Monde*, 29 September 1977). Even this reformist conception of nationalizations is nowhere to be found in the LCR-OCT-CCA program, which raises the question of nationalizing businesses only "when the private owners turn out to be incapable of providing the workers with jobs" (Platform, point 4-1).

It is impossible not to point out also the following little sentence on the Russian question from the manifesto of this bloc between pseudo-Trotskyists, Maoists, and advocates of "self-management": "In countries like the USSR or Eastern Europe, the existing regimes have nothing to do with socialism" (Platform, point 5). In order to be able to make this bloc with the OCT and the CCA, the LCR leadership "disappeared" the class characterization of the USSR and thus also the Trotskyist demand of unconditional military defense of the deformed and degenerated workers states. And this is perfectly logical: tailing after the ecologists, the LCR calls on "all the workers states to unilaterally destroy their nuclear arsenals" (*Soldat-Travailleur* No. 7, Sept.-Oct. 1977). This position will please the reformist American SWP which, in its campaign to present itself as American social democracy, has abandoned de facto its position of defense of the USSR in order to echo Jimmy Carter's "human rights" crusade.

The creation of this bloc was accompanied by a violent polemic against *Lutte Ouvrière* [LO] which has refused to renew the agreement made for the municipal elections. In fact, what LO should be criticized for is having accepted this deal in 1977 and also because its currently projected campaign, addressed to the least politically conscious workers, does not project fighting on the Transitional Program and for a workers government, but is based, rather, on rank-and-file economism. No doubt LO will also vote for the candidates of the Union of the Left Popular Front on the second round.

What Unity? In the Name of What? Against Whom?

After the falling-out in September among the Radicals, Socialists and Communists, *Rouge* demanded that the bureaucrats unite "in order not to betray the workers' trust" since "at present the workers are worried by the division, feeling powerless" (*Rouge*, 24 September 1977). This appeal for "unity" was also concretized by the proposal to hold assemblies "where all the unions and all the workers' parties explain their positions. After a democratic debate, the workers will vote [on the discussion], and the PCF and the PS should commit themselves to taking their opinion into account" (*Rouge*, 26 September 1977). Under the pretext of "unity" and "workers democracy," the LCR leadership is no longer pushing merely a "fighting popular front," but a democratic popular front, and actual proposals to become part of it! As Trotsky explained regarding Marceau Pivert's Revolutionary Left:

"This grouping is characterized by a complete lack of understanding of the laws that govern the movement of the revolutionary masses. No matter how much the centrists babble about the 'masses' they always orient themselves to the reformist apparatus. ... At a time when it is a life-and-death question for the masses to smash the opposition of the united social-patriotic apparatuses, the left centrists consider the 'unity' of these apparatuses as the absolute 'good'

which stands above the interests of revolutionary struggle.... The condition for the victory of the proletariat is the liquidation of the present leadership. The slogan of 'unity' becomes under these conditions not only a stupidity but a crime."

—"The Peoples' Front and Action Committees," 26 November 1935

The LCR and the OCI raise the slogan "for a PC/PS government." But this is at best a parliamentarist bastardization of the Transitional Program; in no case do they put forward this demand in a manner that counterposes to the Popular Front a revolutionary workers government based on working-class organs of dual power (such as strike committees in a general strike situation). The OCI's latest act of parliamentary cretinism—after having asserted that a left electoral majority would sweep the Fifth Republic away, after having refused to run its own candidates and then having launched a hysterical campaign for [automatic] withdrawal—is Stéphane Just's statement: "...and even a PS electoral victory would, despite itself, immediately call into question the institutions and functioning of the Fifth Republic" (*La Vérité*, No. 579).

In these elections, the call for a PC/PS government has nothing to do with a "class against class" policy. In the framework of the present relationship of forces, with the working class' prevalent illusions and without a definitive break by the reformists with the Popular Front, this call cannot be anything but a promise not to hinder the electoral victory of the bourgeois Popular Front. While it is possible to envisage, under certain conditions, critical support to a workers party which campaigns independently of a bourgeois party, it is totally out of the question to currently apply this in France. As a minimum precondition for their possible electoral support the workers must insist that the PCF and PS break with their bourgeois electoral partners and with the Common Program which serves as the framework for this class-collaborationist alliance.

For a Trotskyist Opposition to the Popular Front!

Comrades, in order to present a Trotskyist opposition to the Popular Front, one must begin by demanding an immediate break from the LCR-OCT-CCA electoral bloc. In these elections, real revolutionaries must present, in proportion to their forces, candidates of their own party, unconstrained by any propaganda blocs, "broad vanguards" and other centrist baubles, which serve only to mask their rejection of a head-on confrontation with the Popular Front/Union of the Left, governments à la Gonçalves, or the Moncloa pact.

In addition to immediate economic demands, a Trotskyist candidate would take up the essential elements of the Transitional Program, including the call for a workers government based on workers councils to expropriate the capitalist class.

The LCR-OCT-CCA manifesto's demand for "purging the administration and dismantling the military hierarchy" shows how far this program is from being revolutionary. This is purely reformist! Moreover, while the struggle for the democratic rights of soldiers is altogether legitimate, revolutionaries are for the *destruction* of the bourgeois army. A Trotskyist program would include a call for the formation of workers militias, as an outgrowth of picket lines to protect militants (such as Pierre Maitre), workers organizations and their offices, to confront tomorrow's fascist bands—to constitute "the proletarian vanguard for seizing power when the hour strikes." Another important demand should be to exclude the police from the trade-union movement, since the Popular Front, in the name of the pact concluded with the bourgeoisie, will use them to break strikes. Blum's

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AC Transit Strikers Reject Sellout

Shut Down BART!

OAKLAND—Members of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) East Bay Local 192 delivered a sharp rebuke to their union leadership January 15 when they voted to continue their two-month strike against AC Transit, heavily rejecting the tentative pact endorsed by Local president John Wesley.

The "no" vote of 697 to 397 came after Wesley barely managed to get an eight-to-seven approval for the pact from the union's negotiating committee. The strikers were particularly angered by Wesley's sending ATU maintenance workers across union picket lines to prepare the transit buses even before the membership vote on the new proposal!

When a woman driver attending the union meeting protested this scabbing order, Wesley responded, "We've got to get those buses rolling.... Tell what's-her-name she can leave if she doesn't like it!"

Throughout the negotiations AC management has treated the union with utter contempt. The "new" offer was virtually the same package offered seven months ago, with only a minor redistribution of money. As bait the AC bosses offered a slight improvement in pensions and a paltry \$145 per worker provided the union returned to work within 14 days.

In return, however, drivers would get a worsened sick-benefit plan, no wage increase and no retroactive payment of cost-of-living increases lost since the contract expired. On top of this, management attempted to create a layer of second-class union members by instituting a wage cut for new hires, while lengthening the probation period so it would take *three years* for a new hire to qualify for full pay.

Predictably, AC Transit is pleading poverty, claiming a "projected deficit" of \$4.5 million in transit funds. Since the strike began it has been raking in an estimated \$650,000 a week from tax revenues, without having to pay out a single penny in wages, benefits or operating costs. Management strategy has obviously been to wait it out—i.e., stall—and then use some of these accumulated revenues to provide a sop to entice back cash-starved strikers.

AC Transit normally carries about 115,000 passengers every day. Part of the vacuum during the strike has been filled by BART, the cross-Bay rapid transit system. Although BART is also organized by the ATU, both the ATU Local 1555 misleaders of the BART operators' union and the Alameda County Central Labor Council (CLC) have made no move to halt service. This contrasts sharply with CLC leader Richard Groulx's action several months ago when he created massive traffic jams by unexpectedly shutting down BART in order to honor the picket lines of transit cops who had struck. Groulx feels more solidarity with the armed agents of the bourgeoisie—professional strikebreakers—than with transit workers.

BART must be shut down by mass picketing of Local 192 members! Local 1555 ranks must go out in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Local 192!

When the Berkeley school board recently appropriated money to use elementary school bus drivers to transport junior and senior high school students, who would normally use AC Transit buses, Groulx announced the setting up of a so-called "informational picket line." Nothing has been done to prevent members of the Berkeley Federation of Teachers from crossing it. The ATU must mobilize pickets to stop the scabbing in Berkeley and demand that these picket lines be respected!

Instead of pursuing such policies, however, the Wesley leadership of Local 192 has followed policies that can only demoralize the membership. From the very beginning of negotiations last June, militants demanded that contract proposals be put to a vote of the membership at a mass meeting and that negotiations be open to permit the rank and file to remain accurately informed. Wesley and his lieutenants beat back every attempt to establish any kind of democratic control by the ranks, including refusing to publish contract proposals for the membership to read.

The current AC Transit strike is only the most recent of a series of long strike battles fought by the Local 192 membership. Four years ago the union went out for 66 days; other strikes in recent years lasted 76 days, 31 days and 18 days. Unable to win real victories because of its class-collaborationist policies, the Local 192 leadership "prepared" for this present battle by attempting to convince the ranks that strikes weren't necessary. Wesley campaigned for office on precisely this anti-strike view. In a flyer passed out last February, he stated: "We don't advocate going on strike for we feel, with your cooperation, our contract can be settled long before that date."

Wesley and his gang counseled that the union could win its demands by wheedling concessions out of Democratic Party politicians. This strategy has blown apart in the current strike, as the Bay Area bourgeoisie, whose posture has become increasingly hard-line in the wake of the San Francisco city craft workers and Alameda County workers' strikes in 1976, has once again bared its teeth toward the labor movement. The bosses have shown that they are in no mood to be sweet-talked into concessions.

Recently Tom Bates, a local Democratic Party assemblyman and reputed "friend of labor," introduced a bill to cut off all state tax revenues to AC Transit for the period of the strike. While Bates feigned neutrality, claiming that "both sides are stonewalling" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 January), his maneuver was clearly designed to enable AC Transit to plead poverty and force the union to accept a rotten settlement.

If the Local 192 strikers are to win, they must reject the class-collaborationist policies of the Wesley leadership. Democratically elected strike committees must be established, and mass picket lines set up to halt scabbing in Berkeley. BART must be shut down by mass picketing. The union must mobilize the sympathies of poor and working people by demanding free public transit, a position which Local 192 has long held but never taken action on. AC Transit drivers do not need misleaders who preach reliance on the bourgeois state; they need instead a class-struggle leadership to mobilize the union against the bosses and their strikebreaking government. ■

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RCP...

(continued from page 5)

posing a more classic Stalinist pitch to Avakian's New Leftist "leftism," his urgings combine the craving for a more "mass" line at home with a pitch to remain in the Maoist mainstream:

"While it will certainly take a different form for the RCP, the ideological and political line of the Gang now being embraced ('Give the Gang a home', as it is being said) cannot help but lead to political degeneration and isolation from the working class. For the Gang it meant becoming the target of the hatred of the Chinese working class and peasants and the hatred of millions of genuine communists of the CCP. For our Party it will certainly cause less emotion from the U.S. working class but in some ways it can be more tragic—stripping the U.S. working class of its Communist Party."

"Two-Line Struggle"?

The magnitude and ferocity of the RCP split is testimony to the preexisting instability of the organization more than to the seriousness of the differences. For indeed the Avakian and Jarvis wings of the RCP have a lot in common. They share not merely the responsibility for the theoretical ineptness, anti-democratic corruption, economist practice and gangsterism of the RCP, but also a common anti-Marxist analysis and anti-revolutionary program.

It is notable that both Avakian and Jarvis understand that China's foreign policy—defined first and foremost by the alliance with U.S. imperialism against the USSR—is Pandora's box. Had they undertaken a conscious conspiracy to divert attention away from the atrocities which have shaken the American Maoist movement (Peking's support to U.S./South Africa in Angola, its courting of the bloody Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, China's scandalous backing of the Shah of Iran, and its repeated calls for a strong NATO), the silence could scarcely be more complete. About the only thing that seems to upset Avakian, who holds no brief for the Hua regime, is that China has "reversed the verdict on Yugoslavia" by establishing diplomatic relations with Tito. Of course, this discretion is indeed the better part of valor for the RCP, which like any other Maoist sect would have an uncomfortable time determining where to locate a "degeneration" of Chinese foreign policy. From Sukarno's decimation of the Indonesian CP to Bandaranaike's massacre of Ceylonese youth rebels, the Maoists never allowed bloody repression to dampen their enthusiasm for "anti-imperialist" dictators so long as they maintained friendly state relations with China.

Avakian does attempt to distance himself a little from the "Soviet social imperialism" line:

"It is correct, as our Party has consistently pointed out, for the Chinese to target the Soviets as the main danger to them and to make use of certain contradictions on that basis; but there does seem to have been a tendency on the part of the Four and Mao (as well as the line of the latest major articles from China) to take this as far as saying the Soviets are the most dangerous

source of war, the main danger to the world's people, etc."

—"Revisionists Are Revisionists..."

What this indicates is that Avakian—the New Leftist whose historic line has been the so-called "United Front Against Imperialism"—can view with equanimity the Maoists' campaign against the USSR so long as he can hang loose from a "united front" between the RCP and U.S. imperialism's "hawks."

Avakian and Jarvis also share the Maoist idealism which is a necessary underpinning of the concept of "capitalist roaders." Jarvis is appalled by the heresy of Avakian's characterization of the Chinese constitution as "fascist," but has no quarrel with the notion that the class character of a state resides in the ideas of its leaders, as summed up in Mao's dictum, "the rise to power of revisionism means the rise to power of the bourgeoisie."

The notion that under "socialism" classes are defined by the thoughts of individuals poses certain difficulties. Avakian explains:

"In capitalist society if someone occupies a certain material position—for example President of a corporation, or head of the finance department of the state—it is easy to identify such a person as part of the bourgeoisie. But in socialist society the matter turns not only and not even mainly on social position but on line—that is, the head of a ministry or manager of a big plant is certainly not part of the bourgeoisie by mere virtue of occupying such a position, but becomes part of the bourgeoisie only if and when he implements a revisionist line and more than that persists in taking the capitalist road."

This idealist gobbledygook, according to which class struggle is held to intensify under socialism (the achievement of which is moreover divorced from economic advancement, material plenty and the "withering away of the state"), is central to Maoist ideology. The concept of "capitalist roaders" is not merely the justification for bureaucratic in-fighting in China; it provides the means for evading a class analysis of the Soviet Union. For a real attempt to apply scientific Marxism—objective class criteria—to the "Russian question" would make an examination of Trotskyism mandatory for any serious revolutionist. But not even the combined efforts of Avakian/Jarvis and the reformist ex-"Trotskyist" Socialist Workers Party can inoculate the ranks against Trotskyism. The Maoist movement is being shaken apart by its inability to address the fundamental questions which confront its cadres at every turn.

With the isolation of the world's first proletarian state power and the relentless pressure of imperialism upon the USSR, a Stalinist bureaucratic caste emerged within the Soviet Union. The consolidation of that caste wrested political power from the Russian proletariat and transformed the Communist International from a revolutionary world party into an instrument of pressure on the "democratic" bourgeoisies for "peaceful coexistence." The ideology of that caste was "socialism in one country"—the ideology of Stalin/Khrushchev and Mao, whose differences over which was the "one country" made the Sino-Soviet split inevitable.

To be sure, the existence of a nationalist bureaucracy—with its disorganization of the economy, its demoralization of the proletariat, its foreign policy sellouts that work against the extension of the revolution (which alone can protect and extend the dictatorship of the proletariat which still exists in the deformed workers states)—creates powerful forces toward capitalist restoration. But the fundamental class transformation from workers state to capitalist state cannot occur peacefully—through a factional struggle, a palace coup or any reshuffling of personnel at the top—any more than capitalist property relations can be destroyed through such changes in the composition of the bourgeois state; those who postulate a peaceful, gradual return to capitalism in the deformed workers states are merely, to quote Leon Trotsky, "unrolling the film of reformism in reverse."

A precondition for capitalist counterrevolution is the growth of an economically-based capitalist class, through the disintegration and disembowelling of the collectivized planned economy. A capitalist restorationist movement would be visible and aggressive, challenging the regime, polarizing society. In the face of such a movement the Stalinist bureaucracy—a brittle privileged layer—would split, with a conservative wing seeking to preserve their parasitic social position and another wing going over directly to the camp of counterrevolution. But the workers would move to defend their interests from the growing restorationist danger. Capitalism could triumph only through a civil war in which the class-conscious proletarian elements were defeated in the course of their struggle to defend collectivized property as the economic basis for the transition to socialism.

Neither Avakian nor Jarvis can challenge the anti-Leninist doctrine of "socialism in one country" which, in response to the narrow needs of a privileged, nationalistic stratum, sets itself against the urgent needs of the working people of China and the whole world. These needs include the defense of all the deformed workers states, including China and the Soviet Union, against rapacious imperialism. Avakian's and Jarvis' commitment to the Stalinist bureaucratic framework in China allies them not only with the Stalinist traitors who undermine the defense of their own deformed workers state and sell out the working masses of the world from Chile to Iran, but also with U.S. imperialism in its ultimate aim of bloody reconquest of the USSR.

Whither the RCP?

Now that the split has smashed to smithereens any utopian dream Avakian had of keeping the RCP's China position in the closet, his choices are limited to the "high road" to PL-style oblivion or the "low road" to "socialist Albania." And while Enver Hoxha may claim to be the guiding light to the peoples of the Adriatic, he is surely the kiss of sectlet death for the RCP. Avakian remains essentially an unconstructed New Leftist whose formative political experience was vicarious identification with the Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution. With the Jarvis faction's criticisms of his line

being in the main apolitical, focusing on the meager results of past opportunisms in the U.S. and the dangers of "isolation" from the Chinese regime, Avakian's support to the defeated side in China tends to give him the appearance of having vestiges of "principle." Thus, insofar as the ranks are not choosing on the basis of personality, Avakian will tend to get the people who favor a more critical posture.

Of course, this will not be many. The RCP has been built around cultist loyalty to the megalomaniac who walks around like the reincarnation of Mao, refers to himself as "the Chair" and accuses the minority of trying to "get to him" through his wife, whom he actually honored with the post of "head of culture." Ms. Avakian is nicknamed "Chiang Ching" by her enemies; so high does emotion run on this question that Avakian's loss of much of the membership in his own Chicago national center is alleged to be due largely to personal animosities toward his wife.

An unstable, New Left, demagogic tendency, the Avakian faction is capable of both extreme adventurism and slavish capitulation to the worst backwardness of the working class. The post-split RCP will likely be simply a personality cult, crassly opportunist, violently sectarian and programmatically extremely unstable. It could go anywhere—from trying to seize Solidarity House to blocking with the Ku Klux Klan (as it did in hailing the anti-busing

French Pabloists...

(continued from page 7)

government had the friends of Marceau Pivert beaten up and assassinated by the "democratic" police at Clichy in 1937. Trotskyists must absolutely and inseparably include in their program—and in particular put forward in the unions—a call for the immediate and unconditional break of the mass [workers] organizations with the Union of the Left.

If they had the electoral strength Trotskyists would maintain their candidates on the second round as the only independent representatives of their class.

Trotskyists do all they can to prevent the workers from repeating the disastrous experience of popular-front governments: France 1934-36, Spain 1936-37, France 1944-47, Chile 1970-73, Portugal. In contrast, centrists of all stripes are ready to relive the experience.

Such is the framework and the program on which the LCR is getting ready to "pressure" the Popular Front government which might issue from the 1978 elections: its only content is betrayal of the proletariat's interests.

Comrades, will you accept being accomplices?

Comrades, have you already forgotten the last desperate act of the Chilean *cordones industriales*, calling on the majority leaderships of their class, in September 1973, to "Break with the bourgeoisie!?" It is not for pedagogical reasons that the LCR and the OCI have refused to put forward this demand, preferring instead the slogan "PC/PS government," and the OCI simply "PC/PS parliamentary majority." It is to place themselves on the terrain of the Union of the Left—because, according to them, this is a "necessary stage" on the road to socialism.

—For a Trotskyist opposition to the Popular Front!

—For a workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie!

—Workers organizations, break with the Union of the Left and with the Common Program!

—No vote for any of the Popular Front candidates!

—Against the LCR-OCT-CCA bloc!

Cranac'h, 7 January 1978

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mobilizations in Boston and Louisville as "fightback").

In background, training and appetite Jarvis has always stood politically closer to Klonsky than to Avakian. Less inclined toward flashy cultism—though not above it—he seems to tend more toward blocs with the bureaucracy and penny-ante shop-floor organizing than toward Avakian's pan-union gimmicks. His group probably contains a considerable spread on China, running from gut level anti-Avakianism to fawning Peking sycophancy to those who support the purge of the "Gang" but have remaining criticisms of Chinese foreign policy along the lines of the *Guardian*. This faction will either find a niche in the CP(ML) or become an irrelevant anti-Klonsky sect of Peking-loyal Maoism.

The CP(ML) is already hot on the scent, with an appeal for a "Marxist-Leninist unity committee" ("The Road to Communist Unity," *The Call*, 26 December 1977). The RCP's foam-flecked reply, "Repudiate the Call for Menshevik Unity," in the January 1978 issue of *Revolution*, contained a few aesopian slaps at the Jarvisites:

"Those who would like to embrace only one aspect of the CP(ML)'s revisionism will find that it comes in a package—if you take one bite you will be forced to swallow and choke on all of it.

"The CL(ML)'s proposed 'unity conference,' if it comes up at all, will be like the founding of a new conglomerate—each comes in with a certain amount of capital and in return receives an appropriate number of shares in the new enterprise. This is the basic theme that Klonsky hopes will appeal to other opportunist 'leaders': no one is so famous that we can't all share the pie...."

Needless to say, *Revolution* contained nothing else that could possibly be interpreted as a reflection of its split.

The Jarvis grouping's intentions toward the CP(ML) are not at all clear. His characterization of the Klonsky group as "careerists" who claim "there is no class struggle in China" would not seem devastating enough to preclude an eventual deal. Some of the ambiguity of the situation revolves around speculations that a venerable old man of the Jarvis clique may be the means for brokering a rapprochement between Jarvis and the Chinese which would probably entail some kind of perspective toward the CP(ML). On the other hand, even the damaged ex-RCP cadres might have difficulty swallowing orders from the man of whom RCP honcho Clark Kissinger once said: "if the CCP elected a chimpanzee as chairman, Mike Klonsky would send it a telegram of support." While backing Hua, Jarvis has remained agnostic on the return of Teng, perhaps to preserve a reason to avoid becoming a Klonskyite.

Is there a chance that some segment of the RCP, shaken in their smug anti-Trotskyist prejudices by the manifest bankruptcy of their clique-leaders, can be salvaged for the revolutionary cause? Certainly there is a chance, but the prognosis is not good. The much-abused cadres of the RCP have gone very far down the road to cynical destruction of any subjectively revolutionary fibre. It is a genuine tragedy that virtually an entire radical generation of "anti-imperialist" youth have had their consciousness systematically attacked by Maoist shysters, their revolutionary optimism eroded by taking the pronouncements of the "Great Helmsman" for Leninism, their energy consumed by trying to run an organization on the rationalizations of a petty-bourgeois caste committed to the building of "socialism in one country." But if in its grotesque death agony the RCP has served to shake up even a few of its supporters enough to impel them toward an examination of Trotskyism—the revolutionary Marxism of our time—then the RCP will have performed one useful service in the years of frantic opportunism which preceded its demise.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Free All Political Prisoners?

No Amnesty for Nazi Hess!

Rudolf Hess's golden wedding anniversary last month provided an occasion for those who have sought to make the vicious old Nazi in Spandau Prison a prominent tragic figure. While formerly the clamor for Hess's release was pretty well restricted to "humanitarians" of the far-right (and officials of the West German government), the advent of Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" campaign has brought respectability to the "free Hess" clique. Liberals as well as Nazis' hearts now bleed for the imprisoned fascist, and recently U.S. secretary of state Cyrus Vance pledged to work to get Hess freed. Hess, Hitler's deputy and officially second-in-command after Göring in the Nazi Reich, was condemned to life imprisonment at the 1946 Nuremberg Trials. Today at 83, he remains the only prisoner in the Spandau Prison in Berlin.

For some time now the Western bourgeoisie has sought to use Hess's incarceration as a symbol of Soviet inhumanity, since the only reason Hess is not today a free man is that the Russians—who together with British, French and American authorities administer Spandau—have consistently refused to let this unregenerate Nazi leader go. The other three powers have made repeated pleas on "humanitarian" grounds to let him off.

This Christmas the usual crop of "heartrending" stories about "poor old Hess" appeared in the press, along with pitiful tales of how his wife (herself a former Nazi) was allowed to see him only for a half hour on their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Both the *New York Times* and *Manchester Guardian Weekly* published editorial statements on his plight, on how he's suffered enough, the cruelty of the Russians, how his suffering reflects on all "civilized" people who allow it to continue and so on.

There were also the usual maudlin accounts of Hess's stomach pains, his grieving relatives trying to see him and his attempted suicides. (Hess must be the most spectacularly unsuccessful man ever to attempt suicide in prison, since he's apparently been trying to do away with himself since the 1940's—in contrast to left-wing prisoners, most notably those of the Red Army Faction, who are regularly reported to be found dead in their cells.)

The English and American bourgeoisies are particularly fond of Hess because of his spectacular 1941 flight to Scotland to singlehandedly make peace with Britain. In Winston Churchill's words: "Whatever may be the moral guilt of a German who stood near to Hitler, Hess had, in my view, atoned for this by his completely devoted and fanatic deed of lunatic benevolence."



Rudolf Hess with Hitler.

MacMillan

Behind this "fanatic deed" was a fanatic determination that Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union succeed at any cost.

"We remember everything about the past," Soviet authorities said in refusing to release Hess last May. The Moscow publication *Literaturnaya Gazeta* asked: "Is it necessary to be merciful to one of those who wanted to drown humanity in blood and establish in its place the 1,000-year Reich of the fascists?" It would indeed be a vile insult to those survivors of the Nazi terror to release Hess, one of the principal architects of the Nazi Reich.

Hess embodies the perfect refutation of the classless liberal slogan "Free all political prisoners!" A devoted disciple of Hitler since 1921 who once led a student Storm Trooper brigade, Hess remains to this day a heroic martyr in the eyes of contemporary Nazi organizations, commemorated in their "Rudolf Hess bookstores" (such as the one which recently opened in San Francisco), "Rudolf Hess awards," etc. Some of his outstanding accomplishments include plotting and commanding the purge of Ernst Röhm and Gregor Strasser in 1934; attempting an assassination plot against Von Papen, ambassador to Vienna, in order to set the stage for a Nazi coup; the imposition of censorship in German schools; the 1935 Nürnberg Laws, which took away civil rights and legalized the racial persecution of Jews; and a special role as overseer of the German courts, empowered to take "merciless action" against those whom the Nazis felt had gotten off too lightly. The usual result of Hess's intervention was the sentencing of his victims to concentration camps or death. This is the "poor old man" for whom mercy is asked!

Of course the bourgeoisie have a point—it is something of a historical anomaly that Hess is still in jail when so many of his fellow fascists are today leading comfortable lives in the West,

protected and even hailed as noble anti-communist fighters. For those who are concerned about Hess's solitary confinement, we can suggest a rather long list of Nazi criminals who should join him in Spandau, including a large number in the U.S.—like Valerian Trifa of the Rumanian Iron Guard, today a respected bishop in Detroit; Andrija Artuković of the Croatian Ustashi; Boleslavs Maikovskis; Tschermir Soobzokov, and Vilis Hazners. In Europe there is Helmut Kappler, who recently made a spectacular escape from an Italian prison and now enjoys West German state protection.

Bourgeois preoccupation with Hess is no accident. The fascists have always been the shock troops of bourgeois reaction, a reserve force to be brought out and let loose against the working class when the bourgeoisie itself is in crisis. Hess's release would be an emboldening propaganda victory for those fascist terrorist groups which are today again raising their heads and a vile insult to the working class, Jews and the millions who perished in the Nazi holocaust. ■

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CHICAGO

Pinochet Plebiscite...

(continued from page 12)

it differs from a traditional Latin American caudillo (from Rosas to Somoza or Stroessner) in that the officer corps of the armed forces—the very essence of the state—directly assumed governmental power in the face of increasingly sharp class conflicts.

Moreover, the junta's economic model is sharply different from the corporatist regimes of fascist Italy and Germany. The "shock treatment" of Nobel Prize winner Milton Friedman, based on a program of "free market" liberalism (free trade and export stimulation, devaluations "mini" and otherwise), has been unable to overcome runaway inflation and despite optimistic government figures the foreign debt is reaching mammoth proportions. It all comes down to unloading the burden of the budget deficits on the backs of the working class and petty bourgeoisie.

While benefiting a few monopolies and of course the "multinationals," this policy has led to a serious decline in industrial production and large numbers of bankruptcies. Thus the policy of the "hard-line" sectors of the junta—i.e., Pinochet—is being challenged by important sectors of the bourgeoisie and by small businessmen and property owners. Ironically these are many of the same forces who actively worked for the 1973 coup through their "destabilization" (employers' work stoppages by truck owners, shop owners, professionals, etc.). The DC proposes to lead this movement and with his document, "This Is My Reply," Eduardo Frei made his public debut on the field of opposition. Even the criminal ultra-rightist organization Patria y Libertad (Fatherland and Freedom) is now opposing the junta.

The different pressures resulting from the current situation are reflected within the junta, and we see Pinochet balancing on a trapeze that is already rather frayed. Both General Leigh and Admiral Merino of the Navy have come out against the plebiscite. The motives are not the same: Merino has always acted directly on the orders of the Pentagon and the CIA, while the air force commandant has been the spokesman for a corporatist policy, calling for more representation for the *gremios* (business and professional associations) in search of mass support, thereby appearing as the representative of the fascists of Pablo Rodríguez (leader of Patria y Libertad). Pinochet opposes such a change of course, and it is in this framework that he called his "national consultation" as a desperate attempt at self-defense.

The Tragic Pinochet Farce

The motion approved by the United Nations, condemning Chile for its continuous violation of human rights, reportedly "angered" President Pinochet. The latter decided to respond with his plebiscite, subsequently rebaptized "national consultation," in which every citizen was called upon to declare "if he backs the president of the republic," or if instead he supports the UN's pretensions "to impose upon us from the outside our future destiny."

As Trotskyist militants we do not place an ounce of confidence in the international organization of the bourgeoisies—in which the representatives of the ruling bureaucracies of the degenerated and deformed workers states also participate. Moreover, this UN resolution is part of Jimmy Carter's anti-communist campaign of defense of "human rights." The principal target of this campaign is the Soviet Union and its satellites, and its aim is to "morally" rearm Yankee imperialism, weakened after its humiliating defeat in Indochina. In this context we reject the crocodile

tears coming from one of the principal authors of the present situation in Chile and the main counterrevolutionary force on a world scale; and at the same time rejecting the jingoism of the "consul" Augusto Pinochet.

In this framework of "defending Chile," the ballot paper for the "yes" vote bears the colors of the national flag and the following text:

"Against the international aggression unleashed against the government of our fatherland, I support President Pinochet in his defense of the dignity of Chile and reaffirm the legitimacy of the government of the republic to conduct

Christian ideology. They asked that it be suspended "for the prestige of the junta and the Armed Forces." In this way they wished to show that their concerns were in no way intended to question the military regime.

The controller general, Héctor Humeres, who has held this post for 11 years—under Frei, Allende and Pinochet, rejected the plebiscite decree, saying it lacked sufficient legal grounds. Of course, this act caused Humeres' immediate removal, with labor minister Sergio Fernández, who naturally had no objection to the plebiscite decree,



Abril Press

Leftists demonstrate in Chile capital January 3 for first time since 1973 coup.

in a sovereign manner the process of institutionalizing the country."

The muzzled Chilean press, entirely pro-government to one degree or another, was flooded with propaganda for a "yes" vote. The threat of violence against opponents of the regime was barely disguised. To prevent a massive boycott voting was made obligatory. At the time of casting a ballot each individual's identity card would be punched and marked with a special stamp; those who failed to present themselves at the polls (where "suspected subversives" could be easily arrested) had one week to explain why to the authorities or else their papers would become void.

Pinochet undertook the plebiscite without even consulting the other members of the junta, who reacted by disagreeing with his initiative. Their principal objection was that Pinochet would use this device to further remove the other members of the quadrumvirate from the actual exercise of power. In a letter addressed to Pinochet, Leigh expressed himself in the following terms:

"We reject referenda of a plebiscitary character, typical of personal governments... It is for this reason that power does not reside in any one of us, but in the government of the junta... Your excellency has organized a referendum despite the opposition of two members of the junta..."

The other junta member referred to is Merino. In his own message to Pinochet, the admiral expresses himself in harsh terms, less "elegantly" than Leigh, even stating:

"The instructions given to provincial authorities, that they consider voided and blank ballots as votes in favor, will cause the election results to lose all moral value in the eyes of public opinion nationally and internationally."

On the other hand the church, represented by the permanent committee of the Chilean Bishops Conference, asked Pinochet to postpone or suspend the plebiscite until conditions were more favorable. Although this attitude was widely interpreted as opposition to the "consultation," they argued that they wanted to contribute to the unity of all Chileans, declaring the "vote" positive and in accordance with

assuming the post.

The Christian Democrats came out against the referendum because it was not "clear and legitimate, nor does it represent the sovereign will of the people." Frei declared that the referendum was not clear because the electorate was forced to reply to two questions: if it supports the president, and if it reaffirms the government's legitimacy. He added that "there could be people who answer the first question in the affirmative and the second negatively." And: "One must not confuse the country with the government, and much less with a single person." Thus Frei suggested that a mere rewording of the question could have made the plebiscite legitimate.

More generally, just as did the bishops, he emphasized that he was not challenging the junta itself. Rather, the Christian Democrats' passage into active opposition over the issue of the plebiscite was most likely an integral part of the opposition to Pinochet's maneuver by a section of the junta. And it was certainly not unrelated to the occasional notes of displeasure emanating from the State Department. The picture of an emerging alliance running



Wide World

Christian Democratic youth clash with police in Santiago while leafletting for "no" vote in plebiscite.

from the fascists through General Leigh to the DC should not be surprising. Both Patria y Libertad and the Christian Democrats have received fabulous sums from the U.S. in the past, and Frei (together with other DC leaders) started his political career in the fascistic Falange. During the Allende period the DC's ties to the *gremios* provided the meeting ground between these enthusiasts of the "Alliance for Progress," the CIA and open fascists.

The Left and the Pinochet Plebiscite

Likewise the parties of the UP and the MIR came out against the plebiscite at various levels. According to press reports the Communist Party, the MIR and the Radical Party called for a "no" vote, while the Socialist Party called for a boycott of the plebiscite. A joint statement of the UP (signed by the PCCh, the Radicals, MAPU [United Popular Action Movement—a "Marxist-Leninist" split-off from the DC], the IC [Christian Left—a later Christian Democratic split from the DC] and independents) denounced the "vote" as "a simple masquerade of the purest Hitler-Franco variety." However, the UP, like Frei, made clear that its orientation was toward the opposition against Pinochet's maneuver within the junta. "The armed forces," it said, "cannot continue lending their support to this demented policy, which has brought about such a dangerous situation... choosing the path of provoking the international community" (quoted in *Mundo Obrero* [Madrid], 5-11 January 1978).

The Communist Party called for abstention or a "no" vote. In an interview, PCCh general secretary Luis Corvalán stated that "the majority of our compatriots intend not to vote or to vote 'no.' The people will discover and apply other forms of protest which it considers appropriate and possible" (*Excelsior* [México], 4 January). But the Stalinists' main concern is to pursue Frei and other influential sectors of the bourgeoisie in order to seal a Chilean "historic compromise." Pinochet cannot, said Corvalán, stop "the process of getting together of the anti-fascist and non-fascist democratic forces" (our emphasis). What he means is the formation of an alliance with the very motor forces behind the 1973 coup!

There is no doubt that the plebiscite was unilaterally called by Pinochet and represents his last card in this game to strengthen his position and overcome his current crisis. The "consultation" is nothing but a monstrous fraud and the Chilean working class and other exploited sectors can only repudiate this masquerade, whose result, of course, was known beforehand. Where possible, revolutionaries would seek to express this repudiation in boycotting the phony plebiscite. But the government an-

nounced that whoever did not participate in the referendum would thereby void his identity card. A general slogan of boycott could bring serious consequences, involving isolation from workplaces and legally could also lead to prison and/or deportation. Where it is not possible to boycott the plebiscite, the proletariat and all the exploited should express their rejection of the Pinochet farce by casting a blank ballot. In no case can we vote "no" since this would endorse the electoral procedure.

It is basically the political and organizational situation of the working class which at present makes it impossible to advance more resolutely in mobilizing against the junta. And it is due to the betrayals of the workers' leaders who seek an alliance with the bourgeoisie that the proletariat today finds itself politically disorganized.

Frei and His Stalinist Cohort

The policies of the reformist mass parties, the PCCh and the PS, following the lines of the Menshevik-Stalinist concept of revolution by stages, pose the "anti-fascist struggle" as the objective for this period. To accomplish this objective their plan is to broaden class collaboration through an alliance with the Christian Democracy. Thus in the case of the plebiscite they chimed in with the same slogans as the DC. These traitors to the working class stealthily watch the development of the class struggle and the workers movement from behind the priests' cassocks. In the same way they chased after the demonstrations against the plebiscite organized by the falangist Christian Democratic youth of Frei.

On October 12 the DC issued its first formal declaration of opposition to Pinochet, entitled "Patria Para Todos" (Fatherland for All). This statement calls for a gradual transfer of power to a civilian government, the first step being



Carlos Altamirano

the lifting of the state of siege. While rejecting any "illegal conspiracy" against the regime, it says a constitutional assembly should be called within a year to reform the 1925 constitution. Following this a new government would be elected to succeed the junta. In other words, the military dictatorship would be recognized as legitimate and it would continue to rule throughout this period! The "constitutional assembly" proposed by Frei would have no more power than the tsarist Dumas; when the autocratic regime which holds the reins of power digs in its heels, this sand-box assembly could either acquiesce or be dissolved.

In response to the Christian Democrats' "Patria Para Todos" declaration, Corvalán, speaking in Paris in December, proposed the following: "...a democratic government, widely representative, on the basis of an understanding, an alliance between the UP and the DC, and with the participation of democratic sectors of the Armed Forces." This is the same treacherous line which these gentlemen imposed during the Allende government, only then it was the "constitutionalist" officers who received their praise;

among them one of the most prominent was... Augusto Pinochet.

The UP is seeking an alliance with Frei and the Christian Democrats just as they did in the last months before the coup. But the MIR, which still wants to play at "ultra-leftism," is also a vital part of this anti-working-class chorus. In a MIR bulletin of September 1977 we read: "The interior secretariat of the MIR... renews its call to the parties of the UP and democratic sectors of the PDC to make the greatest effort so that 1977 can be the year of the definitive consolidation of the unity of the people and of the resistance." The Chilean Castroists think they can fool the proletariat with references to the "democratic sectors" of the DC. But didn't these "democrats" participate, directly or indirectly, in the preparation of the military coup? If one didn't already know the politics of these appendages of Stalinism one could think that they had been hoodwinked. Not at all! Comrades of the MIR, one does not fight the bourgeoisie with a bourgeois program, and it is just such a minimum program which you signed with the UP in August 1977. Falling into line with the Christian Democrats' call for a glorified Duma, this joint platform even dropped the revolutionary democratic demand for a constituent assembly.

The proletariat must not allow itself to be dragged down by popular frontism. Democratic and trade-union rights will not be voluntarily granted by the bourgeoisie, but must be wrenched from them by the workers mobilized together with all the exploited. We demand freedom for all prisoners held under the rightist repression, legalization of the workers' political and trade-union organizations, as well as amnesty and the right to return to Chile for all those forced into exile by the junta's repression. Counterposed to reformist adaptations to the bourgeoisie's program, as Trotskyists we raise the demand for a constituent assembly with full powers, directly and secretly elected by universal suffrage. A genuine constituent assembly by definition could only be convoked under conditions of full democratic liberties, permitting the participation of all the parties of the working class. Thus it requires as a precondition the revolutionary overthrow of the junta, something which the DC and the reformists, despite their lengthy list of democratic demands, fail to mention.

Not by Democratic Demands Alone...

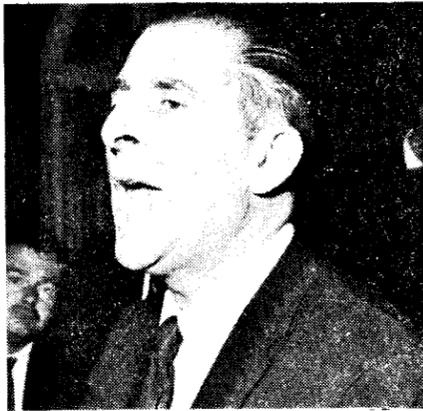
The proletariat does not turn its back on other social sectors that want to struggle alongside it. However, our espousal of revolutionary democratic demands is set in the framework of a program of transitional demands incorporating the needs and aspirations of the peasantry and other exploited sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and leading to the historic objectives of the proletariat: destruction of the bourgeois state through the taking of power by the workers and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We fight for the power of soviets, or workers and peasants councils. This type of class organization was represented in embryo in Chile by the *cordones industriales* (industrial belts) which arose after November 1972. But the *cordones* appeared at a time of mounting workers struggles (and despite the treacherous misleaders). Conditions prevailing in Chile today are very different from what existed in early 1973; we presently face the full fury of a counterrevolutionary regime, under which even the most minimal democratic liberties have been abolished. Under one of the harshest reactionary dictatorships history has known, the political reorganization of the working class must take place against the bourgeoisie which is supported by the reformist bureaucracies.

A dramatic proof that the struggle against the junta cannot be limited to democratic demands was provided by

the 12-day strike by the El Teniente copper miners in November. This walkout involving hundreds of workers took place against the efforts of the puppet "union" leaders imposed by the junta. While granting demands for payment of productivity bonuses due the workers, Pinochet subsequently exiled several of the Christian Democratic miners union leaders to the far north of the country. Today the reformists and centrists hail the latest El Teniente strike as a symbol of "the resistance." Yet the Stalinists and social democrats raise no demands for working-class struggle, such as the fight for a sliding scale of wages and hours to protect against inflation and open jobs for the unemployed.

When the El Teniente workers struck during the UP regime (April-May 1973) in defense of their sliding scale of wages (cost-of-living escalator), the Trotskyists of the international Spartacist tendency were among the very few



Former president Eduardo Frei

working-class organizations which defended the miners' just struggle to protect this union gain, won from the former U.S. bosses through hard fights, against the popular front's anti-working-class austerity and speed-up program (see "Defend Chilean Miners' Strike," *WV* No. 23, 22 June 1973). A revolutionary leadership of the unions would have extended the strike, demanding a workers government and expropriation of all industry. This would quickly scuttle the reactionaries' attempts to use the strike for their own purposes. In contrast, Allende denounced the strikers as a "privileged sector" while the Stalinists called them out-and-out "fascists" and told their militants to break the strike. Thus only the Trotskyists can stand before the El Teniente miners today and tell them to place no confidence in their Christian Democratic misleaders; the parties of the UP and the MIR would simply be dismissed as scabs.

For Leninists democratic demands are a subordinate part of the workers' class program. As Trotsky wrote of the role of democratic demands in fascist-ruled countries: "But the formulas of democracy (freedom of press, the right to unionize, etc.) mean for us only incidental or episodic slogans in the independent movement of the proletariat and not a democratic noose fastened to the neck of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie's agents (Spain!)" (*Transitional Program*). In countries with a bourgeois-democratic tradition and a politically advanced working class, such as Chile, the demand for a constituent assembly is not a fundamental part of the proletarian program. Thus following the junta takeover, the iSt did not raise this slogan. We raise it tactically at present against the bourgeoisie's efforts, aided by their agents in the workers movement, to make a pact with sectors of the military. Our purpose is to expose the bourgeoisie's fear of revolutionary democracy.

While calling for a constituent assembly, Marxists must point out that the bourgeoisie fears this revolutionary democratic demand, preferring deals with the "democratic" generals; and that even if it were convened, the exploiters would seek to frustrate even the most fundamental democratic measures until their class dictatorship is finally broken (witness the fate of the timid Portuguese

agrarian reform, for instance). Therefore we simultaneously call on the proletariat to struggle for the total eradication of the latifundia through agrarian revolution, expropriating the estates and handing over the land to poor peasants and agricultural workers; for the expropriation of industry and finance; for workers control of production; for a soviet workers government.

Build a Chilean Revolutionary Trotskyist Party!

The working masses cannot spontaneously achieve these things; it is essential first of all to break from the class-collaborationist bureaucracies who are responsible for the defeat, with those who delivered the proletariat, bound hand and foot, to the butchers of the junta. In the struggle to construct an authentic Trotskyist leadership a major obstacle is the centrist conglomeration, those half-way "critics" of popular frontism who are afraid to make a sharp break with the reformist traitors. Thus while the MIR continually tailed the UP, the Liga Comunista de Chile (LCCh—a group created out of thin air by the United Secretariat of Ernest Mandel) crawled after the MIR. The LCCh refuses to characterize the Unidad Popular as a popular front (labeling it reformist), and follows the line of their French comrades, the LCR, who will call for votes to candidates of the Union of the Left in the March elections. The Mandelites' periodic adventurist excesses, such as calling for a "revolutionary general strike" in the period *after* the coup, only serve to cover their political capitulation.

On the other hand, the pseudo-Trotskyists of the former POMR, now called the "Contact Committee of Chilean Trotskyist Militants" (part of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International of Pierre Lambert) label the UP a popular front... yet declare that the 1970 vote for Allende was a "class against class vote." They are right in one sense: *it was a vote for the bourgeoisie against the working class!* The Chilean Lambertists currently center their program on democratic demands, especially the constituent assembly, rather than embedding them in a transitional program for workers power. And following the dictates of their French mentors, they would have the political reorganization of the Chilean workers movement pass through the PS, which is their concept of "constructing the party in the class." Thus they defend the party/swamp which has been one of the main forces for class collaboration in Chile for the last 40 years!

As Chilean Leninists our struggle is based on the application of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, the understanding that only the proletariat under a revolutionary leadership can accomplish the fundamental democratic tasks—beginning with the revolutionary overthrow of the murderous Pinochet junta—and achieve socialism through an uninterrupted process of struggle against capitalism. The revolutionary vanguard of the working class will be constructed by wrenching the masses from the reformists, not by capitulating to them as do the centrists. The demand "Break with the bourgeoisie!"—raised in a contradictory manner by the *cordones industriales* in the last few weeks before the coup—is a call to break the working class from the death-grip of the social-traitors and embrace the program of permanent revolution.

- No To Pinochet's Electoral Farce!
- For a Constituent Assembly—Smash the Junta Through Workers Revolution!
- Build a Chilean Revolutionary Trotskyist Party! Toward the Rebirth of the Fourth International!

Organización Trotskista Revolucionaria de Chile, sympathizing section of the international Spartacist tendency

January 1978

WORKERS VANGUARD

Reformists Chase After "Democratic" Junta Generals

Condemn Pinochet Plebiscite!

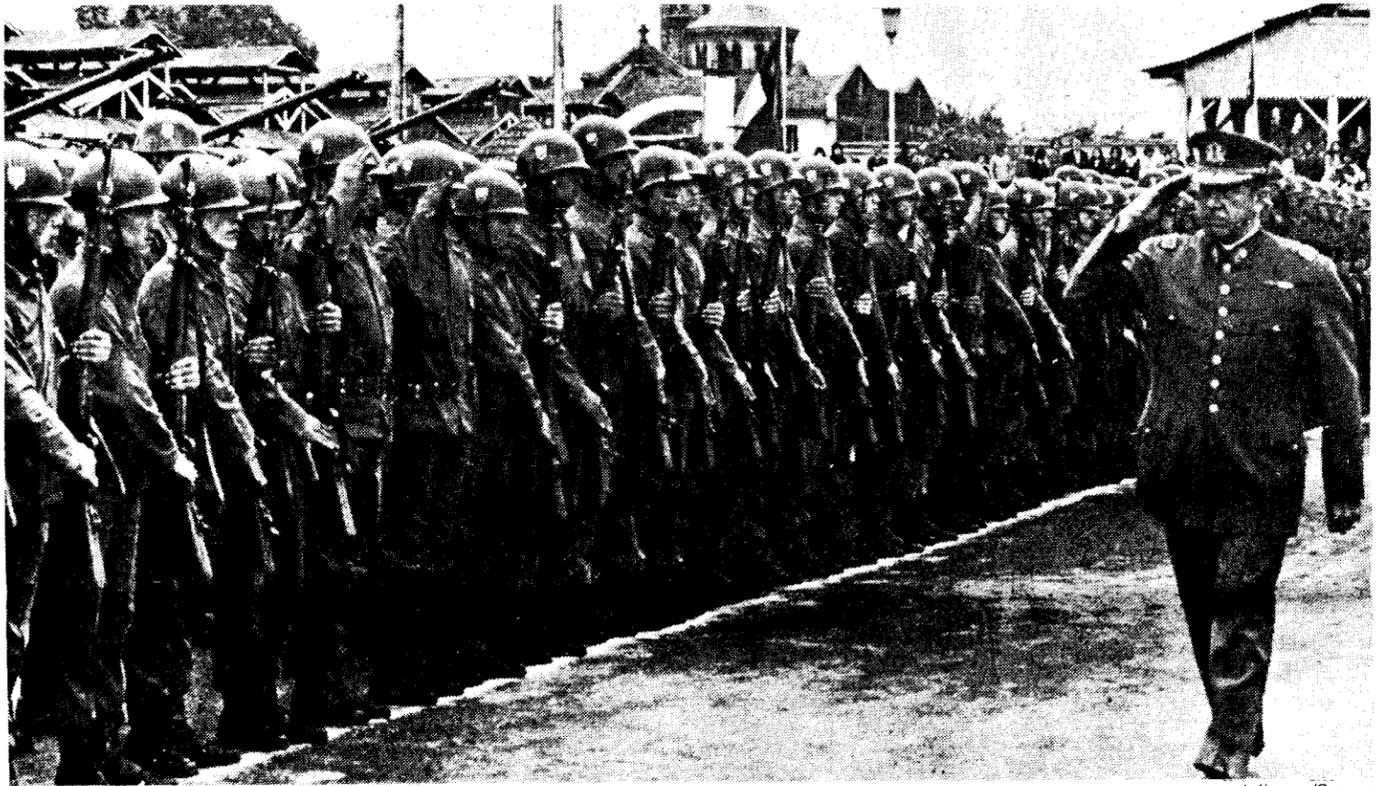
by the Organización Trotskista Revolucionaria de Chile

The January 4 plebiscite orchestrated by General Pinochet, brutish Caesar of the military junta which for the past four years has ravaged the working people of Chile, is a clear indication of the deepening isolation of the bonapartist regime and particularly of its strongman. The rigged results were universally discounted, even by the U.S. State Department, given the obvious impossibility of anything even pretending to be an expression of the popular will under present conditions in Chile. Rather than masking the dictatorship with a veil of democratic approval, the stacked "vote" only succeeded in recalling other unsavory plebiscitary regimes (from Napoleon III, who had his 1851 coup "approved" and himself declared emperor, to similar "consultations" ratifying acts of force by the Nazis).

Most importantly the hopeless attempt to "legitimize" the pinochetista dictatorship unleashed the first open anti-junta demonstrations since the bloody 1973 coup drove all opposition underground. Just in recent months the first limited expressions of mass discontent saw the light of day, braving the ever present threat of deadly repression. In November copper miners at the huge El Teniente mine went on strike, obtaining payment of bonuses due to them. A week later 100 relatives of "disappeared" detainees gathered outside the foreign ministry. In response to the announcement of the plebiscite, for four straight days supporters of the Christian Democratic Party (DC) leafleted for a "no" vote, producing some arrests and small confrontations with the police. And on January 3 an estimated 500 leftists marched through downtown Santiago and demonstrated in front of La Moneda [the burned-out former presidential palace].

The farcical "national consultation" of the tyrant Pinochet constituted a setback for his ambitions of personal grandeur and discredited the junta as a whole. The exercise laid bare the bankruptcy of a regime which has embarked on a deliberate program of deindustrialization, perhaps the only country in the world where a government has produced large-scale starvation among the poor as a conscious policy; of a dictatorship which openly imitated the Nazi Reich, concentration camps and all, in its policies of exterminating left-wing opponents. This failure for the government will hearten opponents of the junta, and revolutionaries must make use of this to work for the political reawakening and rearmament of the Chilean proletariat.

However, far from awakening this powerful giant, the only social force which can put an end to military dictatorships, the reformist Communist (PCCh) and Socialist (PS) parties are working at a frenzied pace to forge new



Pinochet reviews troops before the vote.

Julienne/Sygma



WV Photo

Luis Corvalán

chains to tie the Chilean workers to the class enemy. This time the alliance is to include not only the Radicals and dissident Christian Democrats but the DC itself, including ex-president Frei who played a key role in fomenting the 1973 coup; and "democratic sectors" of the officer corps, meaning any of the blood-soaked generals and admirals who are willing to ditch the sinking Pinochet and agree to a limited "liberali-

zation" of the regime, roughly analogous to the Caetano continuation of the Salazarist dictatorship in Portugal.

It is our duty as revolutionaries of the working class to warn the tragically suffering laboring masses of Chile and the entire world proletariat of the threat posed by the reformists' plans. Talk of a "peaceful transition to democracy" is a deceitful lie! Do not forget where the "peaceful road to socialism" led to: 11 September 1973 and the massacre of thousands of unarmed leaderless workers. The bourgeoisie will not make a present of the democratic liberties so fervently desired by the Chilean masses, for it fears above all the revolutionary potential of an aroused working class. That is why it overwhelmingly backed the 1973 coup and will call forth another counterrevolutionary slaughter if necessary to prevent the masses from "going too far" in the course of overthrowing the murderous junta. The watchword of Leninist revolutionaries is and must remain: Smash the bloody junta through workers revolution!

Junta Rule Frays

The military junta which governs Chile today, made up of representatives of the three branches of the armed forces along with the national police, assumed power through blood and fire as a result of the class-collaborationist policies of the traditional working-class leaderships, concretized in Salvador Allende's popular front, the Unidad Popular (UP). The armed forces coup was the result of the bankruptcy of the popular-

frontist line crystallized in the so-called "Chilean road to socialism," which proved incapable of holding back the working class, together with the incapacity of the bourgeois parties to solve the deepening crisis.

The military junta which took power through spilling the workers' blood and destroying democratic and trade-union liberties has the task of pulling the bourgeoisie's chestnuts out of the fire. The Stalinists and social democrats falsely label it "fascist" in order to excuse their "anti-fascist" fronts with sectors of the bourgeoisie. But although the 11 September coup was applauded by the imperialists and the domestic bourgeoisie, along with important segments of the petty bourgeoisie, the military government has never enjoyed a broad base of active social support, in contrast to the fascist movements which took power in Italy and Germany based on the mass mobilization of enraged petty bourgeois. Similarly the label "gorila [militarist] government"—supposedly more "popular" and "easier to understand"—is simply an attempt to avoid the problem of giving a scientific characterization of the present regime.

For Marxists the Pinochet junta is a bonapartist regime, in which a narrow group or even a single individual attempts to set itself above the normal tugging and pulling of competing class forces, expressed through the mechanisms of bourgeois democracy, to act as supreme arbiter and protector of capitalist class interests. In the present case,

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