



Baltimore, September 1980—10,000 people apply for 70 jobs.

Wide World

## Reagan's "Honeymoon":

# Inflation, Recession, Austerity

As Ronald Reagan, the consummate Cold War brinksman, moves into the White House, the economy is on the brink, Central America is on the brink, and, of course, the permanent hostage crisis undulates to the brink and back. It has become a cliché that Reagan faces the worst economic

situation since FDR took office in 1933, but talk of a national "economic emergency" program was dispelled as soon as it was mentioned by a Reagan aide. Reagan did not plan to take "extra-legal" steps, assured Edwin Meese III, big shot of the transition team. And on December 24, Reagan's

most prestigious economic adviser, former Federal Reserve head Arthur Burns, warned that there is no sense talking now about an economic emergency when a "real one" is on the way.

While right-wing true believers may have thought they put their man in the

White House, economic policy is firmly in the hands of Wall Street, not the Orange County Chamber of Commerce. The New Right is understandably upset that the new treasury secretary is Donald Regan, chairman of Merrill, Lynch stockbrokers,

*continued on page 8*

# For Sit-Down Strikes! Restore Parity With Ford and GM! No Concession to Chrysler Blackmail!

Once again snapping the whip of threatened company bankruptcy, Chrysler in league with the federal government is leading an assault on a basic principle of trade unionism—equal pay for equal work. Sensing the UAW leadership's timidity, now Ford too has stated it will follow Chrysler in a wage-cutting, benefit-slashing offensive the likes of which the UAW has never yet seen. As we warned a year ago, the Chrysler bailout was the opening wedge of a capitalist drive to gut the union. This is not just a matter of solidarity with the brothers in Chrysler now under the gun; it is a matter of life and death for the United Automobile Workers. Beat back the Chrysler/bankers/government attack—restore parity with Ford and GM!

"At Chrysler, at least, no more automatic wage increases tied to inflation," chairman Lee Iacocca decreed on December 17, and he went on from arrogance to insult: "Boys, you've been the highest paid group of guys in the world.... It's freeze time, boys. Chrysler's got good jobs available at \$17.50. We don't have 'em at \$20." Tossing aside

any pretense of negotiating, he lectured about the workers' "binge" and warned that the freeze plan was "rigid." As for the 45,000 Chrysler workers on indefinite layoff, Iacocca had nothing to say (*Detroit News and Detroit Free Press*, 18 December 1980). Thus, the Chrysler chairman unilaterally ripped up the sweetheart contract negotiated last year. It just wasn't sweet enough for him.

But for auto workers, it was a sellout of sellouts. As we wrote at the time:

"In the old days before unions, when a company lost money it turned to the workers and told them: take a wage cut or you're out on the street. Eliminating this cutthroat practice was one of the main goals of the great CIO organizing drive in the 1930s. Equal pay for equal work, regardless of profits or losses of a particular capitalist employer, was and is a basic principle of industrial unionism. But with Chrysler facing bankruptcy, the Fraser bureaucracy... has brought back the 'pay cut or walk' era."

—"Chrysler Bailout Bleeds Workers." *WV* No. 246, 28 December 1979

About half the workers got a pay cut, the other half got their pink slips.

Since the company continues to lose

*continued on page 8*



Workers must not pay for unsold Chryslers.

AP

## Italy: Struggle for Power

Milano  
22 December 1980

To the editor:

Would you bring to your readers' attention the article on the FIAT strike appearing in *Le Bolchévik* [paper of the French section of the international Spartacist tendency]. Though most of the article duplicates "Italian CP Knives FIAT Strike," *WV* No. 270, 12 December 1980, the longer *Le Bolchévik* article includes additional political material emphasizing the centrality of the Transitional Program in leading the class struggles of the militant Italian proletariat to decisive victory.

Parodi  
for the Lega Trotskista d'Italia

*WV* replies: See below for material from *Le Bolchévik* No. 21.

EXCERPTS FROM *LE BOLCHEVIK*, JANUARY 1981

...In Italy [capitalist "austerity"] meant a direct attack on the conquests of the "Hot Autumn" of 1969 when the bosses conceded demands going to the limits of militant trade unionism, and beyond, in order to cut short a mushrooming pre-revolutionary situation that was spreading down the peninsula from the huge FIAT works in Torino. These concessions had placed Italian capitalism in an excruciating contradiction, impossible to maintain over the long run.

So long as the economy was on the upswing, the bourgeoisie could tolerate—against its will—far-reaching union power at the factory level. But caught in the throes of a deepening international depression, FIAT & Co. went on the warpath against the gains of '69, demanding that the laws of capitalist economic rationality finally be applied. To win this crucial strike it was necessary to mobilize the working class, throwing Italy into a pre-revolutionary crisis and pointing with a series of transitional demands toward the proletarian rule in which socialist economic rationality would prevent massive unemployment and huge pay cuts. But since the present misleaders of the workers movement oppose the overthrow of the bottomlessly corrupt, bankrupt Italian ruling class, they went the other road, sabotaging the FIAT strike and leading it down to defeat. The consequences of their treachery will be felt by workers throughout West Europe....

The inability to answer Agnelli's frontal attack on the gains of the workers movement revealed again the glaring crisis of revolutionary leadership. Against the economic chaos and destruction being wrought by moribund capitalism, in Italy today the need is posed pointblank for a planned economy based on collectivized property. Yet once again, as during the Torino factory occupations of 1920 and the "Hot Autumn" of 1969, the workers movement has failed to transcend a syndicalist form of militant reformism and assert its will to rule. Endlessly demanding "more" amounts to declaring a permanent strike while the workers continue receiving pay and the petty bourgeoisie grows increasingly desperate. Continuing this impossible situation will simply produce a big fascist movement as the capitalists insist on the iron necessity of smashing the bourgeois-democratic framework in order to restore "profitability." Clearly this is what the ominous anti-union back-to-work march at FIAT could lead to,

and that is why Berlinguer & Co. went into panicky retreat.

Nowhere is the need more evident for the Trotskyist Transitional Program of proletarian revolution. The FIAT strike begins as a trade-union struggle, but in order to succeed class-struggle policies are urgently needed pointing to a working-class seizure of power. Against galloping inflation and looming mass layoffs, the present wage "indexation" and unemployment insurance are wholly inadequate. What is needed is a genuine *sliding scale of wages and hours*, extended to cover previously non-unionized wage earners as well. Rather than the contradictory "factory council unions" (*sindacati dei consigli*), the hybrid synthesis of the "conquests of '69," communists must demand the imposition of *workers control*, i.e., dual power at the factory level. And instead of calls for PCI "participation" in the government, reinforcing the rickety bourgeois state with the "clean hands" of a popular front, there must be a *workers government* of soviets. That is what it will take to expropriate FIAT, the bellwether of Italian private capital....

The combativity repeatedly displayed by the Italian working class over the last dozen years has not yielded a leadership to match this quality. Nor will more militant struggle alone produce such a leadership. Yet the conditions are present for the rapid building of a Bolshevik-Leninist, Trotskyist party. As a result of the 1969 upsurge Italy saw the largest growth of centrist groups in all West Europe, embracing tens of thousands of militants seeking to break with the dead-end reformism of the PCI. Here also was the home of "proletarian" urban guerrillaism à la Red Brigades, also growing out of leftist frustration with the phony communism of Berlinguer & Co. The Trotskyist Transitional Program is crucial to break through the impasse of popular frontism and terrorist despair.... ■

## SWP Scurrying Over FBI Informer

New York, N.Y.  
November 15, 1980

Dear Spartacist League:

Enclosed you will find the draft of a position paper I have written for the North American Man/Boy Love Association on the topic of man/boy love and feminism. This is for your information....

I also enclose a copy of an introduction I have written to a new publication of internal SWP documents on gay liberation, to be published as a book fairly soon by Steve Forgione and Kurt Hill, both former SWP members who are gay. Their book will pick up where the one I put out in 1976 left off—that is, from 1974 to 1979, the last discussion on gay lib within SWP for the foreseeable future, no doubt. I don't think they have very many queers left inside the group, which is not surprising. My introduction is a bit bitchy, perhaps, but entirely accurate, I believe, in assessing why the SWP behaved the way it did in implementing its "turn" to the "working class."

I thought the Workers Vanguard article (Nov. 14, 1980 issue) on Ed Heisler was quite good. Having read Seigle's internal "security" report, I think, if anything, you could have punched away a little harder. It looks to me like there's a lot of scurrying around going on over there at SWP. So far, interestingly enough, they haven't uncovered any FBI informants or pigs involved in the various internal SWP struggles on gay liberation, but here they come up with one who helped them to implement their "turn" to the "working class," which they attempted to use against involvement in gay liberation. The key and most interesting question is why Heisler revealed this information at this time and in this way. Maybe he's going to testify as a government witness if the SWP trial ever comes up. Or maybe—speculation only, of course—the government wants to protect agents it has placed even higher up in the SWP apparatus. I find it hard to believe that the greatest influence they were able to acquire after decades of effort was Heisler, but who knows? Anyway, Seigle's report surely fell short of his own personal capabilities, I believe. It just goes to show what hacks the SWP leadership have become.

Incidentally, you may get a charge out of this. I know I did. In August of this year, I am reliably told that the New York local of the SWP heard a "security report" (?) which was followed by a vote to ban several

New Yorkers from any future SWP forums or public events. These individuals included myself, Steve Forgione, Kurt Hill, and John Lauritsen. The SWP is really insane. At least now I know I'll have all my Friday nights free. Still, I haven't been to one of their forums for more than a year and a half. What are they afraid of?...

Yours for freedom and socialism,  
David Thorstad

## What About the "Trend"?

Minneapolis, Minnesota  
December 6, 1980

Dear Spartacist,

Maybe the incomparable polemicists of the Spartacist League are getting a little rusty or they just choose to ignore developments in "the Trend," but I urge you to consider some kind of polemics against it. Sad as it may be, this rump of the new left is about the only barely living thing in the Stalinist movement, and is attempting to establish a new round of Stalinoid/Maoist groups. I must quote yourselves in the pamphlet, "China's Alliance with U.S. Imperialism": "Thus the main challenge to Trotskyism will come not from the dwindling band of post-Angola hard-line Maoists, but from the critical Maoists, dissident Maoists and ex-Maoists. A main orientation of Trotskyists at present must be to prevent the deep crisis of Maoism from dissipating itself in a new layer of nationally limited, impressionistic, inherently unstable Stalinoid formations."

Couldn't have been said better. The Bukharinite/liberal Maoist TR, the workerist Stalinists of the PWOC-led OCIC, and the slightly more sophisticated "ideological" Stalinists of the Silberite Line of March journal are battling over what's left of the new left, all trading jabs at Trotskyism, and all trying to prove which side of the flip-flop is better.

You may think I'm some kind of crank to keep on writing these letters but I think you're getting a bit out of touch with some wings of the left. If you can write 2-1/2 pages on the RWG, why not "the Trend"?

Sincerely,  
Gregory Gibbs

P.S. The SWP has changed or is changing their line on Afghanistan, according to anti-draft activists in Mpls. This came out about 2 months ago. Hadn't seen any

hints of this in your press so I thought you might not know.

*WV* replies: Reader Gibbs has got a point. Since our analysis of the immediate predecessor of the "Trend" in our 1977 article, "The Maoists United Will Never Be Repeated" (*WV* No. 183, 25 November 1977), we have not commented much on this soft Stalinoid milieu. We intend to rectify this deficiency.

## Would Sollenberger Kiss the Cross?

New York City  
4 December 1980

To the editor,

I would like to inform *WV* readers of a little-known incident quite relevant to the article "RWG on Religion and Poland—On the Road to the 'Third Camp'," in *WV* No. 269, 28 November. Peter Sollenberger's Revolutionary Workers Group (RWG) accuses the Spartacist tendency of wanting to divide the Polish working class along religious lines. On the contrary. It is the leadership around Walesa which is seeking to direct the new union movement into an anti-communist religious crusade.

The West German *Der Spiegel* (17 November) contains a diary-type account of the Gdansk-centered general strike last August by Ewa Milewicz, a member of the social-democratic KOR. She describes what happened when a delegate to the Interfactory Strike Committee stated he was a member of the local executive of the Communist party:

"The hall is an uproar, there are shouts: 'Out with him. Out!' Totally confused, the man on the podium attempts to justify himself before the excited delegates. He was ready to swear on everything that was sacred and dear to him: he was a believing Catholic, had married his wife in church; although a party member, he had his children baptized.

"The hall howls: 'We know his sort! Who made *him* delegate?' The man on the podium turns white with fear. The people in the hall remain implacable. In the end he says: 'I will swear to you on the crucifix that I'm telling the truth—I'm a party member, but in reality I belong to you.'

"The crucifix is hanging too high for the small man. Someone gets a chair, the man climbs on it, kisses the figure of Christ."

Knowing Peter Sollenberger, we have no doubt that in a similar situation he would not only kiss the crucifix, but wouldn't admit he was a member of the RWG in the first place.

Comradely,  
J. Seymour

## JACKIE CLARK General Executive Board International Convention Delegate



member of the Militant Caucus. I helped build the labor-centered mobilization that stopped the Nazis from "celebrating" Hitler's birthday in San Francisco in April. I stand for:

\*Early strike preparation for 1982 Master Contract to win what we need — 100% COLA, right to strike, no probation period, shorter work week with no loss in pay.

\*Independence of the union from government intervention. Answer fines and injunctions with strong, united action. Union action, not phoney government programs, to fight racial and sexual discrimination. No lawsuits against the union.

\*For organized labor defense against racist KKK/Nazi violence. The government won't stop them — we must.

\*For labor solidarity here and internationally. Honor all picket lines. Help striking unions with pickets and money. Join actions that aid workers in other countries.

\*No support for Carter or Reagan. Democrats and Republicans are bosses' parties. Both try to whip up reactionary war sentiment against the USSR. We need a workers party that will defend our interests and fight for a workers government.

**JACKIE CLARK**  
Book #10509

Our union is under attack. It is the only thing that stands between us and the companies in their drive for productivity. The companies haven't changed much since 1934, but the union no longer uses the tactics that built the ILWU. To beat back company attacks (firing stewards, scrapping grievance procedures, attendance policies, productivity quotas, runaways) we must use the full strength of the union — mass picketing, the right to strike, honoring all picket lines, support from the longshore division and the Teamsters.

We need a new leadership with a program to turn the union around, making it into a fighting union that defends and improves conditions.

I am a steward at Heublein and a

## MIKE KASIAN General Executive Board International Convention Delegate



1200 people came to "Sweep the Nazis Off the Streets!" Labor stopped these scums from "celebrating" Hitler's birthday. Build labor/minority defense guards against Klan/Nazi violence.

Assist class brothers and sisters in other countries. For international labor solidarity.

Carter and Reagan are both whipping up Cold War hysteria against Russia. They hate the USSR for the same reason they hate unions — both stand in the way of corporate profit. Soviet leaders are just like our union bureaucrats — they are only out for themselves. Soviet workers are better off having kicked out their capitalists and organizing a planned economy. But just as we defend our own misled union against the bosses, we stand with Soviet workers against "open shop" Carter. Soviet workers will settle scores with their own misleaders.

Labor must break its alliance with the Democrats and build a workers party based on the unions. War, racism, inflation and unemployment are permanent features of capitalism, and only a planned economy, organized by a workers government will end this once and for all.

Member Woolworth House Committee.

**MIKE KASIAN**  
Book #10462

Employers are on a rampage against union conditions. The Militant Caucus stands for mobilizing the full strength of the ILWU to defend our jobs. The port shutdowns in Los Angeles and Seattle are examples of militant action. For mass pickets to defend striking houses. Defy court injunctions. Eliminate the "no-strike" clause.

I am against suing the union. Intervention by the bosses' courts will only weaken us. Fight discrimination with union action.

The U.S. economy is a shambles. We must not pay for capitalist bungling. Prepare now for the '82 contract. Fight for a shorter work week at no loss in pay, 30 for 40.

I helped organize the San Francisco ANCAN mobilization in April.

Electoral statements of victorious Militant Caucus candidates.

# Two Militants Elected in New Bay Area ILWU Vote

OAKLAND—A big victory was scored by the Militant Caucus in December 11 elections of the West Bay division of International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) Local 6. Militant Caucus (MC) members Jackie Clark and Mike Kasian, both first-time candidates, were elected to the General Executive Board (GEB). This topped the Caucus' excellent showing in the first vote on November 13 in which Clark was elected to the GEB (see "ILWU Local Elects Militant," *WV* No. 269, 28 November 1980). A new election was held because the November 13 vote in the West Bay was invalidated by the local's Balloting Committee.

The militants' gains were made with a

large voter turnout: 1,130 voters in the December 11 rerun, down only slightly from 1,342 on November 13. And the militants improved their relative standing in the hotly-contested GEB race, in which 18 candidates competed for nine positions. Jackie Clark had placed sixth in the earlier vote, but was fifth in the rerun with 395 votes. And Kasian went from number 13 to number 9 with 320 votes!

"In the new elections we pushed very hard on the fact that the policies of Jimmy Carter and the Democrats got us into this situation we're in now and put Reagan in the White House," Mike Kasian told *WV*. "We emphasized the need for a workers party, while the bureaucrats had come out for Carter. We also said the Greensboro verdict gave a green light to the Klan. We in the Militant Caucus helped organize the April 19th rally that stopped the Nazis in San Francisco. Now there's the racist violence in Contra Costa, and a lot of members, especially black members, see the need for the union to take action. We call for the ILWU to take the lead in organizing defense guards of unions and minorities to stop those attacks."

### Militant Action Needed to Stop Colgate Shutdown

Another key issue in the ILWU is the loss of union houses through plant closures and runaways to non-union states, especially Nevada. Militant Caucus candidate Pete Woolston, from the East Bay division of Local 6, proposed union action in his official election statement in the November *Local 6 Bulletin*:

"Fight runaways with real organizing drives plus agreements with Teamsters/Longshoremen to ship nothing to/from runaways unless Master Con-

tract scale paid. To prevent closures, sit-down strikes should be organized well in advance and backed up by whole union."

Woolston fought for adoption of this strategy as a department steward at Thrifty, when the company was preparing to close the plant down in early 1979. Due to the Local 6 leadership's do-nothing policy, Thrifty succeeded in running away to Nevada without a serious struggle by the union.

Now the burning issue of plant closures has again shown the need for the MC's program. The Berkeley Colgate plant, one of four Colgate-Palmolive facilities in the United States, is being "studied" for probable closure by the company. Even Abba Ramos, the usually complacent business agent for ILWU workers at Colgate, commented worriedly:

"300 Local 6 jobs are at stake. Colgate is the largest Local 6 house in the East Bay and has been part of this union for over 40 years. Some of the most militant strikes in the history of the ILWU have been waged by brothers and sisters at Berkeley, including an 11-month strike in 1962."

—Local 6 *Bulletin*,  
22 November 1980

But is Ramos' answer militant union action? Hardly. "There must be legislation to curb these monstrous acts," he wails (*People's World*, 13 December 1980).

The Communist Party's *PW*, which regularly lauds Ramos, is stumping for "a new plant closure bill with strong teeth to deal with such things as restricting runaway shops." The same issue of *PW* headlines yet another call to "ban the Klan." As always these reformists counsel the workers to rely on the government, not the power of labor. The idea that the capitalist government will stop plant closures or

protect minorities from the Klan is only more ludicrous now that Ronald Reagan is moving into the White House.

The Colgate issue is providing an early demonstration of the bankruptcy of the "rank and file coalition," members of which make up most of the active union leadership in the plant. This ramshackle opportunist bloc includes not only *PW* supporters, but also supporters of Irwin Silber's "Trend," a resting place for homeless ex-Maoists. Trend supporter Bob Seltzer, a member of the Colgate plant committee, came out openly *against* strike action at a rally at the Berkeley City Council on November 25: "If you strike at this point, Colgate would love it. People would lose their severance pay, probably." Strike action, plant sitdowns, appeals for hot-cargoing are always unwise "at this time" for the reformists. Instead, Seltzer advocates the International's timeworn impotent strategy of yet another consumer boycott. Clearly these reformists are no alternative to the present top leadership of the ILWU.

Far from proposing any solution to runaways and job losses, incumbent Local 6 president Keith Eickman in his election statement attempted to paint a glowing picture of rising living standards and conditions in the union, utterly flying in the face of reality. Then he sniped at his opponents: "I ask you to reject the attempt to build caucuses" (*Local 6 Bulletin*, November 1980, election edition). Far from taking his advice, the membership has given the class-struggle Militant Caucus more electoral support than ever before. Now the MC must move forward from its electoral victory and consolidate this support, building the caucus to prepare a new fighting leadership for the ILWU. ■

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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# Anti-Union Decision in Anwar Case

An arbitrator ruled December 5 against Keith Anwar's bid for reinstatement at the Inland Steel Company in East Chicago, Indiana. Anwar, a United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 1010 member, was fired in May 1979 for refusing to cross the picket line of another Steelworker local. The case was supported by steel workers throughout the Chicago/Northern Indiana district. In October 1979 Local 1010 had sponsored a rally to defend the right to honor picket lines at which Anwar was the featured speaker. Over \$2,000 was donated for the defense, and resolutions in Anwar's support were passed by Steelworker locals and the USWA District 31 Conference.

A leaflet issued December 18 by the Keith Anwar Defense Committee reported:

"It took a hell of a fight to get this case to arbitration but once there, the union fought hard and shot holes through every company argument. But this 'impartial' arbitrator sided with the company on every issue. 'The arbitrator told a union official at Local 1010 that although the union presented a good case he couldn't 'let one man stop 19,000.' This comment zeroed in on the real stakes in this case—the right to strike and honor picket lines. The historic, labor solidarity tradition of honoring picket lines is what built the unions we have today."

In supporting the steel bosses' claim that they have a ("god-given"?) right to fire any worker who respects an official union strike picket line, the arbitrator argued, "the no strike—no lockout provision of the Collective Bargaining Agreements between the parties has appeared in Collective Bargaining Agreements for a period of approximately 35 years."

Over the years, the USWA tops have capitulated to management's attempts to tie steel workers' hands through a dangerous no-strike clause. But nothing in this clause, or the contract as a whole, prohibits honoring picket lines, a right which has been repeatedly recognized by the NLRB. Moreover, the right to strike and to honor picket lines was not the result of backroom bargaining, but won through bitter struggles—such as the Little Steel Strike of 1937. The arbitrator's cynical attempt to use the union contract to justify the anti-union decision is a stinging indictment of how the bureaucracy has whittled away the fundamental gains on which the CIO was built.

How the steel union misleaders who negotiated the no-strike Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA) have eroded labor's basic rights can be seen in the bitter seven-month USWA strike now going on at NIPSCO

Victimized steel worker says: Picket lines mean don't cross.



WV Photo

(Northern Indiana Public Service Company). Here, company operations are going on with unionized tradesmen crossing Steelworker picket lines. The 4,000 workers from USWA Local 12775 (production) and Local 13796 (clerical) struck against massive company "takeaway" contract demands. But local building trades unions have refused to stop the scabbing, despite appeals from the steel workers, including a personal appeal from International President Lloyd McBride.

The NIPSCO strike can be won—and fast—by stopping the scabbing and shutting the plant down! But USWA District 31 director Jim Balanoff and McBride have no intention of defying the state and company and mobilizing for a mass, militant picket line. Indeed, construction union bureaucrats often try to justify their own members' scabbing by pointing to such incidents as the 1978 bricklayers strike

at Inland Steel, where McBride/Balanoff sent USWA workers across the bricklayers' lines. (Again, it was steel worker militant Keith Anwar who refused to cross that picket line.) The key to victory at NIPSCO is enforcing the elemental working-class principle for which Anwar and his supporters have fought: "Picket lines mean don't cross!"

Despite the setback at arbitration, the Keith Anwar case will be pursued with the National Labor Relations Board. The Defense Committee announced, "we hope the union will support his effort... we cannot stand by and watch the companies destroy our picket lines and our ability to defend ourselves." Funds are urgently needed to continue the fight. Contributions can be sent to: Keith Anwar Defense Committee, Box 7914, Chicago, Illinois 60680.

# For Labor/Black Defense Against Contra Costa Klan Terror!

OAKLAND—Since July an escalating series of race-terror attacks, some accompanied by KKK death threats, has aimed at driving several black homeowners and families out of Contra Costa County. It is the urgent task of Bay Area trade unions to organize integrated labor/minority defense guards to protect the homes and stop these attacks. However, a collection of reformists and union bureaucrats have formed a "Contra Costa Community Coalition" explicitly on the basis of relying on government authorities to stop the attacks. Yet the cops and courts deliberately look the other way as the cross-burners and night-riders go into action!

Among the victims are 51-year-old black longshore union member Roosevelt Presley and his family. According to Stan Gow, an ILWU Local 10 Executive

Board member and co-editor of the "Longshore Militant," Presley attended the Local's Executive Board meeting December 11 to ask for the union's aid. ILWU International officials had prepared a statement calling for the formation of a union committee to "work with the Contra Costa County sheriffs' department."

Presley quietly demolished this strategy with a brief factual account: three sheriffs sit in their patrol cars every night in the parking lot of Lucky's supermarket three miles away. Meanwhile racists cruise by his house throwing bottles through the windows, and on November 20 firing a shotgun blast through his front door. When asked what he wanted from the union, Presley responded, "a lot of big guys" prepared for defense. At the meeting Stan Gow put forward a motion:

"Be it resolved, that Local 10 organize defense squads to protect the homes of brother Presley and other families under attack... that ILWU Local 10 calls on Locals 2, 6, and 34 and the rest of the Bay Area labor movement to organize similar squads and cooperate with ILWU Local 10 to put a stop to these outrageous assaults."

Turning their backs on the black longshoreman facing Klan terror, the Exec Board defeated Gow's motion. Attempting to cover this betrayal, the officials finally came up with the idea of helping Presley by... hiring a private security guard! After the meeting, even some board members who voted for this plan were wondering aloud, "But what's this guard going to do when 20 KKKers come after him?" More to the point, what's fellow unionist Presley supposed to do?

## Pacifism Invites Attack

The Contra Costa Community Coalition was formed December 13 at a

meeting attended by some 400 people and dominated by union bureaucrats, ministers and reformists (most notably the Stalinist Communist Party [CP], and the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party [SWP]). In its majority, this coalition opposes the formation of labor defense guards. And it operates in tandem with the social-democratic-led East Bay Organizing Committee, which is in charge of listing "house-watchers," whom they require to sign a pledge to be on an "unarmed nonviolent volunteer watch."

To make matters worse, Organizing Committee leader Paul Milne has repeatedly been quoted in the local press saying that these watchers are "unarmed and nonviolent" and are only there to see that the police do their job! As a direct result of this idiot advertisement, the emboldened racists have attacked, threatened and chased these sitting-duck "watchers" (who ran for the sheriffs and couldn't find them)!

At this same December 13 meeting, a couple with "white power" T-shirts attempted to gain entrance. They posted themselves by the door for two hours, until they were finally surrounded by some 60 black motorcycle club members who had heard about the meeting on radio and drove up in formation to volunteer their services in stopping the attacks. As this incident shows, if the unions actually took the lead in organizing defense guards against KKK attack, they could quickly mobilize the necessary muscle to stop the fascists!

The Contra Costa Coalition's subcommittee on unions is a reformist sandbox with a large component of CP and SWP supporters. It is controlled by ILWU International loyalists and preoccupied with forming committees to form still more committees to organize a

march on Martin Luther King's birthday "or on a later date." This is the same cast of characters who last April 19, because they were afraid of a "confrontation," did everything in their power to prevent the successful mobilization of 1,200 unionists, minorities and socialists that stopped the Nazis from celebrating Hitler's birthday in San Francisco.

At the December 23 meeting of the Coalition's union subcommittee, interventions by Stan Gow and several Spartacist League supporters from various unions succeeded in polarizing the meeting for-or-against the need for workers' self-defense. Gow read a motion he had raised in the Local 10 Exec Board and called for all who stood for self-defense to work to win their unions to organizing defense guards. SL spokesman Al Nelson drew out the conclusions of the debate on the floor:

"It's clear there are two different positions being put forward here. On the one side, union officials have made it clear from their statements—the motion from AFSCME Local 1695, the SEIU motion and the ILWU officers' official statement—that they are opposed to self-defense and instead they are for calling on everyone from Governor Brown to the sheriffs to the FBI to stop these attacks. Furthermore, these pacifists invite trouble by declaring publicly that they are unarmed and unable to defend themselves and in so doing are simply inviting attack by the Klan and the racists...."

"Several years ago in UAW Local 6 a member named C.B. Dennis was undergoing the same kind of attacks as has been happening here. His house was firebombed. His local, UAW Local 6, organized official 24-hour defense guards around his house and those attacks stopped. When local racists were interviewed in the press, one stated that they were afraid of the UAW. He said, 'We don't mess with the whole UAW!'"

"Unfortunately, given the opposition to self-defense manifested in the

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# 1,200 WSU Students Demand:

# Oust South End Apologists for KKK/Nazi Murder!

Students at Wayne State University in Detroit are campaigning to oust the editors of the campus newspaper, the *South End*, for their grotesque apologies for racist murder. On November 17, an all-white jury in Greensboro, North Carolina acquitted five Klan/Nazi killers, who had in broad daylight, in front of TV cameras, slaughtered five supporters of the Communist Workers Party at an anti-Klan demonstration. This racist "justice" provoked outraged editorials in student newspapers around the country—but in the heart of black Detroit, long a labor stronghold, *South End* editors Mike Struggle and John Burnett brazenly saluted the acquittal, apologizing for the racist murders, and provocatively insinuating that the anti-Klan protesters had staged their own executions! "Perhaps they needed martyrs for an issue that would rekindle the flickering fire of racial animosity," commented Nuttle in his vicious 25 November editorial, "Leftists Hinder Justice at Greensboro Trial."

The Spartacus Youth League (SYL) at Wayne State took the lead in joining with other outraged students to form the "Ad Hoc Committee to Oust *South End* Apologists for Klan/Nazi Murder." Over 1,200 students on the largely working-class and minority campus have signed the Committee's petition to oust Nuttle and Burnett. In addition, the black fraternity Phi Beta Sigma, professors, campus workers, former *South End* staffers and former editor Pat Byers are supporting the campaign, as are prominent Detroit unionists and civil rights leaders, including United Auto Workers Region 1-A and the Detroit NAACP. Other supporters include state senator Jackie Vaughn III; Robert Katz, chairman of the Detroit Bar Association's Civil Rights Committee; Dan Bremer, Board of Directors, Flint ACLU; and eight members of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) student assembly, including president

## Leftists hinder justice at Greensboro trial

"A jury Monday found four Ku Klux Klansmen and two Nazis innocent of murder and not in the deaths of five communists at a 'Death to The Klan' rally last fall.

The protesters were killed during a confrontation at a march sponsored by the Communist Workers Party.

Protesters who survived the shooting labelled the trial a sham and refused to testify for the prosecution.

This is a partial account of the outcome of the Greensboro trial by Associated Press and United Press International compiled and printed by the Detroit Free Press.

The following is another account of the trial's outcome, as it appeared in a leaflet distributed at a demonstration to "Protest Racist 'Justice' in Greensboro."

"Monday an all-white jury in Greensboro, North Carolina let six Nazi/Klan murderers go free! This amounts to a KKK license to kill Blacks, other minorities, unionists and leftists. Meanwhile the victims of last

November's Greensboro mass still up on charges for 'inciting this is justice in Carter's Racist America. Come to the lion to protest this racial out individual who agree with it

are urged to participate, bringing their own slogans and banners. The time to act is now! All out!"

"Racist justice?"

How can this trial be labelled "justice" when witnesses against the

klansmen refused to testify for the prosecution? One can't protest "Racist justice" hindering the execution of that justice.

One can't label a trial a 'sham' and retort to the trial's outcome by accusing

dent Carter and President-Elect Reagan of fostering a "racist America."

One can't attack the judicial system as being unfair to minorities after failing to aid that same system in prosecuting those accused of committing atrocities against minorities.

It reeks of hypocrisy.

It is impossible to say whether or not testimony from members of the Communist Workers Party would have convicted the

klansmen. However, attorneys for the klansmen contended that the klansmen had killed the communists in self-defense because the communists fired first.

would have been incarcerated already. The question was merely who shot first?

Why would the CWP members refuse to

## The South End

tactic to try to equate the Klan with the courts, or at least imply that the courts favor the klansmen and their racist beliefs. Hence, we arrive at "Carter's/Reagan's racist America" as the villains in the flyer distributed to announce the protest of "Racist justice."

Perhaps it's a cruelly manipulative game, whose intentions are to possibly set the scenario for even greater attempts at mass manipulation.

One can only speculate when motives are at



Young Spartacus

Infamous editorial supports racist "justice" (above). *South End* editor calls cops on student protesters (right).

Marc Breakstone, Nelson Johnson, a CWP leader and survivor of the Greensboro massacre, also endorsed, as did 50 other participants in a December 5-6 conference in Greensboro on fighting racist repression.

The Ad Hoc Committee's petition stated in part:

"Sounding like J. Edgar Hoover incarnate, Nuttle amalgamates CWP and Wayne State protesters who, he speculates, are engaged in 'a cruelly manipulative game whose intentions are to possibly set the scenario for even greater attempts at mass manipulation.' He sees no 'manipulation' by the state in securing the acquittals of five known murderers.... The *South End* editorial might go over in some lily-white bible school in Mississippi, but it won't go

over here!... Once a paper which defended the rights of blacks and labor, the *South End* has become a nest of apologists for racist murder. The 25 November editorial must be the last such reactionary filth to be inflicted on the Wayne State campus from the pages of our paper!"

The *South End's* first response was to print "Shove It—SYL!" on its masthead, while Burnett crumpled up and threw the petition in the face of a Committee member. When over 20 Committee members again presented the petition to Burnett, he called the cops on them—which caused even the do-nothing Student Council to protest, and brought the number of students signing the petition from 450 in the first

statements of the trade-union officials here tonight, I'm afraid it's going to take someone getting killed before you wake up to the seriousness of this. If those black families are left isolated by the labor movement and forced to rely on their own resources to defend themselves, it's going to result in a race war on the Klan's terms."

As usual, the union bureaucrats lined up on the side of suicidal pacifism and calls for the "protection" of the capitalist government. Trying to straddle the middle ground in this fundamental division there huddled an exposed clot of centrists including supporters of the Socialist League/Democratic-Centralist (SL/DC), the Revolutionary Workers Group (RWG) and none other than perennial Trotskyoid opportunist Harry Turner.

The SL/DC and RWG introduced six motions to the subcommittee, one of which contained a call (on the coalition) to form union defense guards. The motion naturally failed. The centrists naturally remained part of the coalition, and even ran for the steering committee. Thus they lent credence to an outfit formed for the purpose of calling on the cops to "defend" the threatened families and fundamentally opposed to labor/black defense guards. Thus they played a role similar to the loyal left opposition in the SWP's class collaborationist

antiwar NPAC coalition with the Democratic Party doves.

This is a perspective of defeat. It will not aid the Presleys or any of the other victims of Klan terror. The program of the Trotskyists was succinctly summarized by comrade Nelson at the December 23 meeting: "The Klan has maybe a thousand members in northern California, but there are hundreds of thousands

of union members in the Bay Area. What there needs to be is a show of force by the labor movement in the form of officially organized defense squads, like 50 big union guys standing outside those houses with baseball bats and cargo hooks in front of TV cameras saying very simply, 'There will be no more attacks on these houses.' This is called self-defense." ■

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two days to over 800.

Nuttle/Burnett's reactionary, dictatorial policies are nothing new—last June they tried to set up the SYL with a libelous editorial by Nuttle which sought to link the organization to some fires set in the Student Center Building. "Firebug Hits Student Center; Spartacists Cry 'Frame-Up'" was the front-page headline for the *South End's* grossly distorted story. And they refused to print a petition by over 80 WSU students, professors and workers protesting the smear campaign (see "Nasty Lies or Murder Set Up?" *Young Spartacus* No. 84, September 1980).

Nuttle and Burnett arrogantly refused to print the Ad Hoc Committee's petition and just before Christmas brought out a *South End* full of anti-communist baiting and a racist pro-Klan "humor" column. Meanwhile, the Committee's support continued to grow, and on December 12 Committee spokesman Gloria Howse presented its case to the WSU Board of Governors, which retains real control over all official "student" publications, stating:

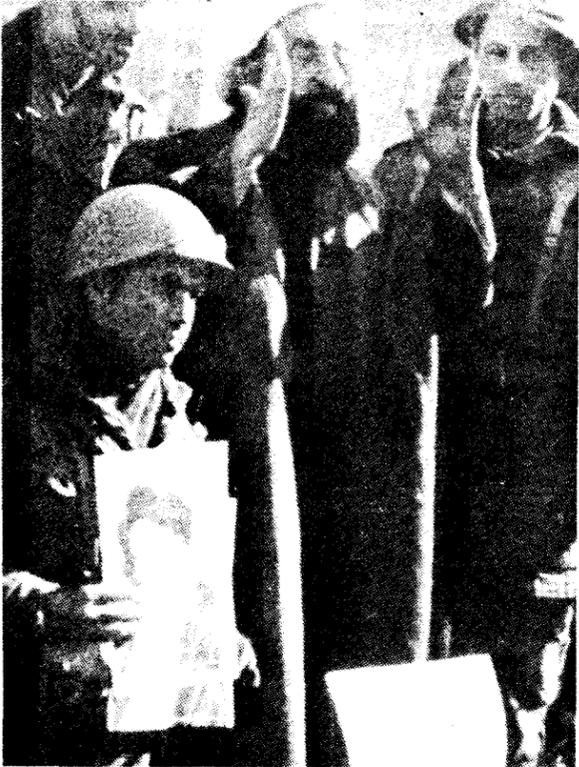
"Attempting to create a climate for racist terrorists to act with impunity, the editorial is an offense and a threat to the students and staff of Wayne State and the Detroit black and working-class population. Just as those who deny or try to minimize the reality of the Holocaust are rightly taken as Nazi sympathizers despite pious disavowals, so the *South End's* attempt to pass off racist terror as a little 'racial animosity' inflamed by those who protest against it cannot be tolerated by defenders of the civil liberties of minorities, unionists or socialists....

"Hence, the petition to you... that you remove from their positions of abusive authority the apologists for racist murder currently running the paper."

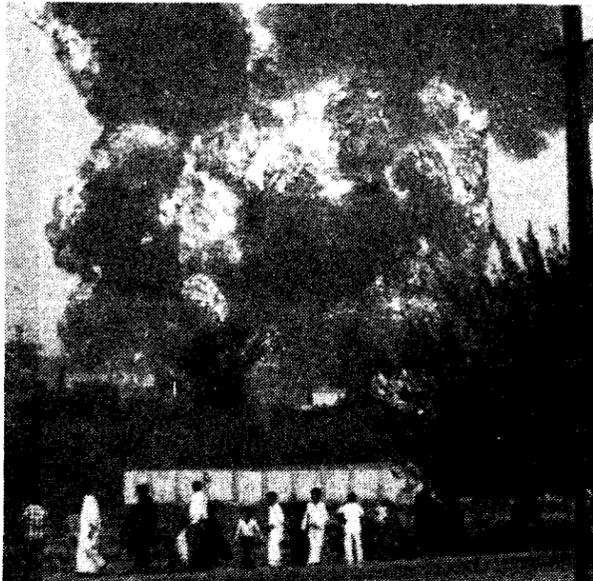
The Board, however, refused to take any action, retreating hypocritically behind vague statements about "freedom of the press." But it is Nuttle and Burnett—and the WSU Board of Governors—who have consistently squelched and censored student opinions. As Howse pointed out in her speech, the *South End* has been managed undemocratically for 11 years. Its publication was suspended in 1969, and black radical editor John Watson, a leader of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, was removed for explicitly political reasons. That was a particularly dirty business, as the *Detroit Free Press* (29 June 1977) has pointed out, printing an FBI statement which admitted that anonymous critical letters (part of the FBI COINTELPRO program) had "played a major part in the reducing of the *South End* yearly allotted funds by \$10,000." Freedom of the press for the *South End* means removing those responsible for its racism, redbaiting and squelching of dissent by suppression and slander.

Today's racist, provocative editorial policy in the *South End* is the result of the Board's actions over the years. The *South End* is a disgrace and insult to the Wayne State student population. Wayne State students must, with the aid of their allies in the Detroit labor movement and black community, continue the fight to regain control of the *South End*, so that it no longer be used as a mouthpiece for racist reaction and a threat to every defender of the rights of minorities, unionists and socialists! ■

# IRANIAN LEFT AND THE TEST OF WAR



Chauvel/Syigma



Setboun/Sipa-Black Star



Bureau/Syigma

In the war between Khomeini's theocratic state and Hussein's military dictatorship, the main enemy is at home.

As the Iran-Iraq border war drags into its fourth month, Khomeini's "Islamic Republic" is as chaotic and unstable as ever. The Kurdish insurgency in the northwest has tied down more than a quarter of Teheran's armed forces, leaving the fighting on the Iraqi front in the hands of a motley collection of army regulars, fanatical *pasdaran* ("revolutionary guards"), mullahs and assorted leftists. Meanwhile, the political tug of war between the "ties" and "turbans"—the more Westernized and conservative camp followers of President Bani Sadr versus the Persian equivalent of the Moral Majority—has sparked riots around the country.

When the shah of Iran was overthrown almost two years ago by a popular uprising led by the Persian Shi'ite clergy, the entire left with the exception of the international Spartacist tendency came out in support of the "Islamic Revolution." Khomeini was hailed as a "progressive," even though he had already declared a holy war on communism, democratic rights, unveiled women, booze and sex. To the left apologists for "the Imam," Khomeini's curses against America as "the Great Satan" were proof enough that he was leading an "anti-imperialist revolution."

However, it didn't take too long for the popular euphoria over the "Islamic Revolution" to begin to dissipate. Workers and the poor got endless sermons about martyrdom but few jobs and little to eat. Kurds and other oppressed national minorities had their villages bombed to rubble. Arab oil workers had their strikes smashed by the Persian-chauvinist *pasdaran*. "Immoral" women were viciously assaulted and even stoned to death, "deviants" were put up against the wall and shot. The left increasingly came under attack by armed gangs of Muslim fanatics whose bloody work was blessed by "the Imam."

Now the reactionary war between the Ba'athist colonels in Baghdad and the Teheran regime has posed an acid test for the entire Iranian left. For Leninists it's perfectly clear that neither side in this wretched war deserves support. The bonapartist Ba'ath regime, which has terrorized Iraqi Kurdistan and driven the mass-based Iraqi Communist Party underground to preserve its shaky rule, is fighting to grab oil-rich Khuzistan, cripple its historic Persian rival and emerge as the new dominant power in the Gulf. Teheran is fighting to preserve Iran's "territorial integrity"—that is, to keep the Kurds, Arabs of Khuzistan and other national minorities captive in this prisonhouse of peoples.

In such a conflict, Marxists must adopt a position of *revolutionary defeatism* for both sides. As we wrote shortly after the war began:

"Clearly the working people and oppressed of the Middle East and the world have no interest in the victory

DOWN WITH  
THE COLONELS!  
DOWN WITH  
THE AYATOLLAHS!  
TURN THE GUNS  
THE OTHER WAY!

of either side in this squalid border war to determine which anti-working-class gang of chauvinists controls the Shatt al-Arab."

However, our position is not one of above-the-battle neutralism or pacifism:

"But war is also the mother of revolution. And the Iraqi-Iranian conflict lays bare their real 'border problem': the oppressed nationalities that are divided by the artificial border separating Iran and Iraq, especially the Kurds and the ethnic Arabs who compose a majority of Khuzistan...."

—"Iran/Iraq Blood Feud," *Workers Vanguard*  
No. 265, 3 October 1980

A defeat for either side could open revolutionary possibilities for the Iranian and Iraqi proletariat not seen in years. Given the Communists' historic strength among the strategic Iraq oil workers, a humiliating outcome for Hussein's great military gamble could well produce a proletarian-centered popular explosion. As for Iran, a military defeat would give a revolutionary proletarian vanguard an exceptional opportunity to break the laboring masses from the chauvinism and obscurantism of the Shi'ite clergy. This is why revolutionary defeatism is not simply an internationalist obligation but the key to the liberation of the Iranian and Iraqi masses.

Tragically, none of the major left tendencies in Iran has adopted a revolutionary perspective of struggling to transform the reactionary nationalist war into civil wars against the Ba'athist colonels and the Persian Shi'ite ruling caste. Publications of the various Iranian left groups are often hard to come by and sometimes even harder to interpret. But from the materials that have recently been available in Europe and the U.S., it

is possible to see where the more significant tendencies line up on the key issue of the Iran-Iraq war.

## Social Chauvinism

Although Khomeini endlessly curses "godless Communism," the pro-Moscow Tudeh party has rushed to the defense of the "Iranian Revolution." Tudeh party members have been instructed to report to the mosques to sign up for military duty under the *pasdaran*. The Stalinists are capable of incredible feats of opportunism, but they've really outdone themselves on this one. The Tudeh party is defending arms in hand one of the most crazed anti-Soviet, anti-communist regimes in the world from the very government that Moscow for years has promoted as one of the vanguards of the "Arab revolution!"

The other main tendency in Iran taking a defensist position is the Fedayeen Majority. In contrast to the Stalinists, the Fedayeen haven't been simply faithful followers of "the Imam" all along. Fedayeen guerrillas played a courageous role in defending Kurdish areas under attack by the army and *pasdaran* last year. But under the pressure of the wave of popular patriotism, these radical-populist nationalists made common cause with "their nation."

With the outbreak of the war, the Fedayeen Majority instructed its members and sympathizers to sign up for military duty. However, Khomeini branded the Fedayeen as being "the same as Saddam Hussein" and these would-be "soldiers of Islam" were rebuffed. When they were finally allowed to consummate their betrayal and join the units under the control of *pasdaran*, the Fedayeen Central Committee sent Khomeini a telegram vowing that "the blood of the Fedayee and the Pasdaran would flow in the same stream while defending the Islamic Republic."

Bani Sadr had already made it clear what "defending the Islamic Republic" means: "First of all, we must purge Kurdistan of armed political groups in order to be able to face the Ba'ath regime." Obedient to the bourgeoisie, the Fedayeen Majority purged itself from Kurdistan and declared that it would "not participate in any military operation against the forces of the Iranian Islamic Republic" (*KAR* supplement, October 1980). Meanwhile, in the first week of the war the government bombed Mahabad, a key center of the Kurdish insurgency.

Of all the defensists, perhaps the most despicable are the so-called "Trotskyists": the utterly craven HKE allied with the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the gyrating HKS aligned with the Mandeliste wing of the United Secretariat (USec). The HKE in particular has done just about everything possible to make Trotskyism synonymous with

WORKERS VANGUARD

opportunism, cowardice and treachery in the minds of Iranian militants. The HKE hailed the veil as a "symbol of resistance," denied the right of self-determination to the oppressed minorities, referred to the bloody *pasdaran* as their "brothers," cheered the Islamic thugs' "purification" of the universities that left 20 Fedayeen dead at Teheran University alone, and condemned the leftists who resisted the clergy's stormtroopers.

Today both HKE and HKS want to be known as the "best builders of a *pro-war* mass movement for the Islamic theocracy. In its 30 September issue the HKE's *Kargar* carried a five-point "action program" for the war effort. By endlessly repeating the phrase "Iranian Revolution," the HKE hopes to obscure the fact that it is calling on the oppressed to be cannon fodder for a clerical-reactionary, Persian-chauvinist regime ruling a *capitalist* state. As for the HKS, it rationalizes its defensist line by portraying the Iraqi attack as imperialist; its statement on the war in *Kargaran-e-Sosialist* of 2 October babbles about "a united mobilization against the counterrevolution," "militant resistance to imperialism," and "the imperialists' military intrigues against the revolution."

A defensist line for Iran in this war is so patently anti-Leninist that even in the USec there's opposition. A war of words has been going on in the pages of the British section's *Socialist Challenge*, and the Japanese and Lebanese sections have submitted oppositional resolutions calling for a defeatist position on both sides. The Lebanese section's resolution correctly states, "Any position on the left supporting one of the two camps in the current war in its present form is incompatible with the most elementary internationalist duty" ("On the Current War Between Iraq and Iran," in Arabic). Quite correct, but what about the USec's support to the Arab states in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, its siding with Algeria in its 1963 border war with Morocco, etc.? The USec's rotten revisionism didn't begin yesterday.

### "Independent" Defense of the Fatherland?

With the Tudeh party and the Fedayeen Majority solidly (though not too comfortably) in Khomeini's camp, the most significant semi-opposition, in a numerical as well as military sense, to the Iranian regime comes from the Mujahedin Khalq. At the beginning of the war the Mujahedin reportedly announced that it was mobilizing its militias but was keeping them independent of the control of the *pasdaran* and army (*Guardian* [New York], 26 November). According to *Le Monde* (16 October) in Khurramshahr and Abadan, Mujahedin Khalq militants fought alongside the *pasdaran* and Fedayeen.

The Mujahedin certainly have no principled objection to defending the "Islamic Republic" against Iraq. Leninist principles are alien to these radical populist Muslims, who base their vision of a classless society on the *Koran*, not *Das Kapital*. Their independent stance and critical attitude toward the government have much more to do with the fact that their organization has suffered particularly intense repression.

Like the Mujahedin, the Fedayeen Minority has kept its military forces independent of the *pasdaran*. But the Minority has adopted at best a vaguely neutralist political line on the war. In a policy statement entitled "We Condemn Iraq's Military Intervention" (23 September) the Minority asserts that "the recent war has a reactionary content" and "while the outcome can be anything for the Iranian and Iraqi governments, the result for the oppressed masses of both countries can only be ruin and misery."

The Fedayeen Minority concludes that "the principal task is to organize and lead independently the mass resistance movement in the occupied territories" (*KAR* [Minority version], No. 81). Clearly the Fedayeen Minority does *not* call for resistance in the *unoccupied* territories against the reactionary, chauvinist Khomeinist regime. And this is made fairly explicit:

"... if, in Iraq, the objective conditions are prepared, the task of communists and other Iraqi revolutionary forces is to transform this war into a civil war against the regime. But in Iran the masses are not conscious and have confidence in the government. One cannot have this slogan..."

In other words, these Iranian leftists call for the overthrow of the Iraqi state, which happens to be fighting their "fatherland," but refuse to call for the overthrow of their "own" bourgeois government.

A line somewhat similar to the Fedayeen Minority is that of the Ashraf Deghani group, which split from the Fedayeen upholding that organization's earlier guerrillaist orientation. The Ashraf group's position on the war can best be characterized as abstentionist: "Communists will never participate in a war that has an unjust character" (*Über den Krieg der beiden Staaten Iran und Irak*, September 1980). Over and above such statements the group's propaganda consists of vague rhetoric about "defending the masses," a formulation which could in the future open the door to defensism. The clearest indication of the

nationalist-populist (i.e., non-Leninist) nature of the Ashraf group is that it has *nothing to say to the Iraqi proletariat*; indeed, the Iraqi working class is not even mentioned in its basic statement on the war. And a leaflet distributed by Ashraf supporters in Germany, "Autonomie für Kurdistan," amid much talk about not forgetting about the oppressed Kurds, refuses to call for the right of self-determination for the Kurds.

### Peykar: Stalinists Caught in Contradiction

Surprisingly, the closest approximation to a revolutionary line on the war has come from the hard Stalinist-Maoist Peykar (Struggle) group. Originally a split from the Mujahedin Khalq, Peykar had a reputation as "super" Maoists, enemies of "Soviet social-imperialism" and the like. It is also insanely, violently anti-Trotskyist. For example, last January Peykar supporters in Frankfurt endorsed a murderous assault on the German section of the international Spartacist tendency, which nearly cost the life of one of our comrades, in a meeting on Afghanistan. And on October 25 in Paris Peykar members stood by while a pack of mullah lovers attacked comrades of our French section selling *Le Bolchévique*. Several hours later, as a reward for their sectarian stance, Peykar militants who had been criticizing the Fedayeen for selling out to Khomeini were themselves attacked by an alliance of Fedayeen and Muslim fanatics.

Peykar adheres to the "two-stage revolution" (first the bourgeois-democratic, then the proletarian revolution). This is, of course, a central defining feature for a Stalinist organization, especially in backward countries. However, on paper at least, the group has taken a revolutionary defeatist position on the war:

"The proletariat of Iran and Iraq should aim their guns towards their own governments. They should continue their revolutionary policy in their own revolutionary war—i.e., the overthrow of the reactionary regimes and establishment of the rule [of] workers, peasants and other toilers."

—*Peykar* No. 73, 24 September 1980

(This is not, however, the position of Peykar's Iranian supporters in West Germany, who are propagating the usual "defend the fatherland" line.)

We do not know what Peykar's paper defeatist line means in terms of the real life of the organization. Is it a conjunctural, even accidental, position or does it represent significant motion within the organization? The rest of the Iranian left is predictably accusing Peykar of having gone "Trotskyist." But there is no reason to believe the group has broken fundamentally with Stalinism. It is virulently anti-Soviet, supporting the feudalistic Islamic counterrevolutionary guerrillas in Afghanistan. If, however, Peykar is seriously carrying out a defeatist line in Iran, this places this arch-Stalinist group in an insoluble contradiction.

### Join with Kurdish, Iraqi Workers!

Unlike petty-bourgeois nationalists, Marxists have no reason to take a pessimistic, passive or pacifistic attitude toward the revolutionary possibilities posed by the Iran-Iraq war. Here we have two bonapartist

regimes, both resting on a relatively narrow social base and both beset by considerable domestic social disaffection, that have been locked in a military stalemate. On each side there is a real proletariat, concentrated in the oil industry and having traditions of militant, even insurrectionary, struggles under mass Stalinist parties. And straddling the borders of both belligerents are the Kurds, whose struggle for an independent state has periodically destabilized both the Iranian and Iraqi bourgeois regimes.

But for the Stalinists and the Fedayeen Majority, "defense of the Iranian Revolution" means the Kurds' just struggle for self-determination must be put on the back burner. Ghani Boulourian, leader of one of the splinters of the Kurdish Democratic Party (Iran) who is close to the Tudeh, recently stated, "The Islamic Republic is engaged in an anti-imperialist struggle that must be sustained as a priority" (*Le Monde*, 13 December). Meanwhile, despite Peykar's formally correct position on the war, it too avoids calling for the right of self-determination for the Kurds and other national minorities. Neither its main position paper on the war nor the two pamphlets on the Kurdish question by its Kurdish co-thinkers, the KOMALA group, even touch upon the question of Kurdish self-determination! But for Trotskyists, as long as the Kurdish struggle is not decisively subordinated to one or another side in the squalid Iran/Iraq border war, it merits military support from Trotskyists, who unlike the Stalinists and radical-populist nationalists are defenders of the democratic right of self-determination.

Just as the Iranian Stalinists hide class betrayals behind rhetoric about the "Iranian Revolution," their Iraqi counterparts use empty phrases about the "Arab revolution" to cover their class collaborationism. When the Iraqi CP was participating in the bourgeois government of General Abdul Karim Kassem after the overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy in 1958, the Stalinists denounced the Ba'athists as "fascists." When the Ba'ath regime of Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr let the CP into the government in 1972, these "fascists" had become "socialists." Today the Iraqi CP leadership in exile in Syria is calling for a popular front with the genuinely fascist Shi'ite terrorist group Al Dawaa to oust the "reactionary" Ba'athists.

From the national-defensist social-patriotism of the Fedayeen Majority to the "defend the masses" Guevarism of the Ashraf group and the social-patriotic tailism of the Fedayeen Minority, there are only differences of nuance over the Iran/Iraq war. And a "pox on both your houses" neutrality sometimes expressed by the Fedayeen Minority is only the beginning of wisdom. What is necessary is the forging in both Iran and Iraq of Trotskyist parties that can win the working classes and oppressed minorities to a common internationalist struggle. As Trotsky wrote in "War and the Fourth International" (1934): "modern war between capitalist nations carries with it a war of classes within each of the nations... the task of the revolutionary party consists in preparing in this latter war the victory of the proletariat." ■



February 1979, leftist-populist Fedayeen rally behind "Islamic Revolution." Soon Khomeini reactionary fanatics terrorized left, national minorities.

# Reagan "Honeymoon"...

(continued from page 1)

sometime backer of Democrats, and Eastern Establishment figure *par excellence*. Oh well, they can at least take heart in the appointment of the secretary of agriculture, John R. Block, a former paratrooper who believes "food is now the greatest weapon we have" and intends to make foreign countries beg for their wheat!

Amid all the speculation and comparison with the outgoing Carter administration, one thing not in doubt is the steadily rising Cold War buildup of U.S. imperialism's arsenal. In addition to the massive increases in the military budget established by the Carter "human rights" anti-Soviet crusaders, the Reagan "nuclear superiority" anti-Soviet crusaders are pushing for another \$20 billion for fiscal year 1981, including money for the once-rejected B-1 bomber and a mobile version of the Minuteman ICBM.

But (most of) the American voters who brought in the Reagan gang didn't do it to start a nuclear holocaust. They were fed up with Carter's economic policies and threw him out. Traditionally Democrats and Republicans place before the American people a rather different menu of rhetoric, but very much the same plate of policies. The Democrats preach a brand of phony populism and pork-barrel politics while the Republicans rely on a more ideological appeal to the "good old" verities of free-market capitalism. How many actually believe in the Republican Party rhetoric about "getting U.S. capitalism going again" is another question. But anybody who bought Reagan's snake oil about unleashing a revitalized U.S. capitalism will find out in a short time that Reagan has only more of the same and worse: inflation, recession, austerity, and ultimately economic crisis and war.

## Double-Dip Trouble

Interest rates at an all-time high, accelerating inflation, 7.5 percent unemployment—and things are going to get worse. We are about to be hit by the second half of a double-dip recession. Arthur Burns admits the economy "could be on the brink of another downturn" (*New York Times*, 25 December 1980). *Business Week* (29 December 1980), which is pretty conservative in its predictions, states categorically in its year-end issue: "The point is that the business upswing is over, no matter what the numbers show over the next several weeks. The year 1981 will begin in recession."

It's common in business circles to blame this second dip of the 1980-81 slump on the high interest rates. This is confusing cause and effect. What the jump in the prime rate from 11 percent in July to 20-plus percent now shows is that at the present time any, however

modest, increase in production immediately drives up prices, triggers even greater inflationary expectations and involves massive borrowing by capitalists, consumers and government alike.

Although production has increased since July, the real volume of retail sales (corrected for price hikes) has remained flat. Thus, the mini-recovery from the roller coaster slide last spring/early summer was in effect an inventory buildup, especially in consumer durables. One of the reasons for business borrowing, up 9 percent since July, has been to finance unexpected and unwanted inventory accumulation.

At the same time real take-home pay for the average worker has continued to fall. So many people can try to maintain their standard of living only via the credit card, installment purchase, bank

head of the Office of Management and Budget David Stockman, concede:

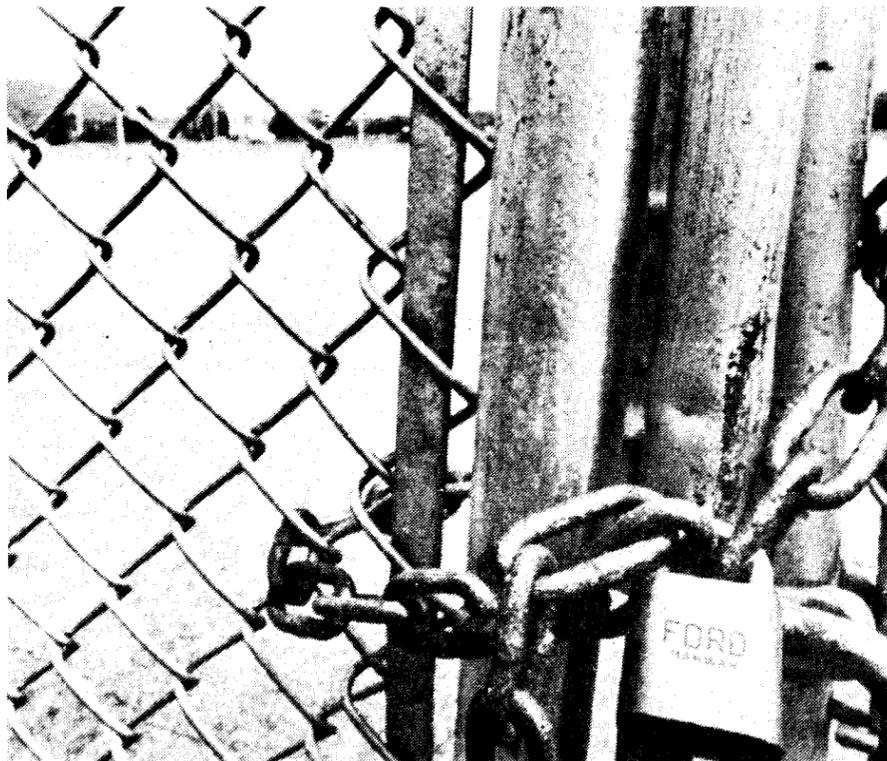
"The vigorous tax-cut package required to spur the supply side of the economy could raise the total fiscal 1981 deficit to the \$60 billion to \$80 billion range. Thus, unless the tax-cut program is accompanied by a credible and severe program to curtail fiscal 1981-1982 outlays, future spending authority, and overall Federal credit absorption, financial market worries about a 'Reagan inflation' will be confirmed." [our emphasis]

—"Memo to Reagan: 'Avoiding an Economic Dunkirk'," *New York Times*, 14 December 1980

Messrs. Kemp and Stockman demand that Reagan call "an economic state of emergency" to enact a few "modest proposals": reduce social-welfare programs such as unemployment compensation, Medicaid, food stamps, school

downturn was exceptionally sharp, it was also highly concentrated in Midwest heavy industry, especially auto and steel, and in housing construction. Thus, the large majority of workers are being killed by inflation, while not immediately afraid of pricing themselves out of a job. For that reason, the American ruling class is worried about determined catch-up wage fights by its workers in the coming period. "Unions are expected to drive some hard bargains next year to try to defend their members' real take-home pay," observes the conservative London *Economist* (13 December 1980) writing on the U.S. economic scene. Moreover, the three big unions with contracts coming up in the first half of 1981—coal, railroad, postal—are in a strong economic position even in the face of a recession. In at least two of these three situations a full cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is the key issue.

As workers and blacks begin to fight, black misleaders and labor fakery will start winding up the "fight the right" rhetoric in the attempt to lead workers back into the Democratic Party in opposition. The Democrats' ace in the hole is that they know that the problems which defined the Carter years can only get worse under Reagan. Their first response, therefore, after the Reagan/Republican election victory was to say, "Go ahead, drastically increase the military arsenal, cut taxes, balance the budget and end inflation." The Democrats know that what angered people against Jimmy Carter will soon enough be directed at Ronald Reagan and the Republicans. Democratic leaders like Kennedy can be more easily sold as an opposition by the reformists who long for a class-collaborationist anti-Reagan movement, remembering nostalgically the "good old days" of FDR and the popular front. But the real "fight against the right" must be a fight against both parties of the ruling class. It must be a political fight to mobilize the workers as a class contending for power, and behind their leadership the black ghetto poor, in the fight for a workers government and socialist economic abundance. ■



Marshall/UAW Solidarity

## Ford Mahwah, N.J. gate closes shut behind 3,500 jobless auto workers.

loan and so forth, although consumer indebtedness was already at an historic high when the bottom dropped out of the economy last spring. Then, too, they figure they will be paying back these loans in worthless dollars. But the bankers don't intend to let that happen, so they have jacked up interest rates well above the present rate of inflation.

## Reaganomics: Spell It I-N-F-L-A-T-I-O-N

Whatever big business is saying about Reagan, they are acting like he won't be able to do a damn thing about the economy and what he does do will feed the inflation. That too is why interest rates took off from the day after the election. And the money market boys are certainly right.

Insofar as Reagan's economic program is not just campaign rhetoric, he presented himself as the great tax cutter. All the problems of the economy, indeed, of declining American power, were to be exorcised by the simple formula: cut taxes. All this tax-cutting talk was associated with the new-fangled "supply-side" economics. In its unadulterated form, "supply siders" like Arthur Laffer argued that a big enough tax cut would stimulate such a vast outpouring of work effort that national income would increase enough to restore the old total tax revenue. This Alice-in-Wonderland "theory" was the rationale behind the famous Kemp-Roth tax bill, which proposed to cut tax rates by 30 percent over three years without touching government expenditures. The American big bourgeoisie were not amused. They regarded Kemp-Roth (rightly) as inflationary fiscal crackpotism.

And now that they have won governmental power, even the Reaganite "populists" are singing a different tune. The two leading "supply siders" in Reagan's entourage, Congressman Kemp of tax-bill fame, and designated

lunches by 20 percent; cut back construction of highways, mass transit, sewage facilities by 20 percent, etc. This is all they want to do!

Even the new, more right-wing Congress is unlikely to risk the popular furor this volume of cutbacks would unleash. After all the budget squabbling is over, Reagan will get his big military spending hikes and his constituency will pressure him into some kind of tax cut. Since it is politically impossible to push through non-military cutbacks in the Kemp-Stockman range (smaller ones there will be), the coming budget deficits will be very large indeed. So, spell Reaganomics i-n-f-l-a-t-i-o-n.

## Hard Times for Labor, Blacks

Reagan can't do anything to speak of about inflation and unemployment, but he can punish the so-called welfare bums, dump the CETA program, close ghetto hospitals, dismantle inner city schools, scrap the minimum wage for black youth. Axing these programs will, of course, do next to nothing to bring down the massive federal budget. But it will serve as a racist gesture from a government whose electoral platform the KKK said could have been written by a Klansman. Many blacks see the connection between the rise of racist terror across the country and the occupation of the White House by a certified right-winger. And we can expect black struggles ahead over the cutbacks in social programs, as witness the 2,000 people who came out to protest the closing of Harlem's Sydenham Hospital last fall.

What does it all mean for the working class? Since the fall of 1978 (when Carter and the union tops agreed to wage-price guidelines), the real take-home pay of the average worker fell 11 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics press release, 23 November). That is one of the main reasons the Democrats lost the election. While the spring/early summer

# Chrysler Blackmail...

(continued from page 1)

money hand over fist, it is now threatening an even bigger pay cut. The new plan would drain as much as \$600 million out of the UAW contract in addition to the \$450 million in special concessions made last year. It involves a 21-month freeze on the base wage and abolition of the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). This means that each worker would surrender \$2,000 per year in COLA in addition to the \$8,000 already given up!

## How Much Will Fraser Give Up?

The Solidarity House gang surrendered last year and is ready to do so again. "I don't see any other choice," moans Fraser, "the Chrysler Corp. is in real trouble." And Chrysler division vice president Marc Stepp echoed the

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# Anti-Galbraith

The latest *New York Review of Books* (22 January 1981) contains an essay by the doyen of liberal economists, John Kenneth Galbraith, on "The Conservative Onslaught." This is a good example of the intellectual bankruptcy of New Deal liberalism, even in the hands of its most sophisticated representatives. As a polemic against Milton Friedman and the other ideologues of the Old and New Right, it is pathetic and evasive. While tilting at such straw men as the "romantic" belief in "the free market," Galbraith does *not* deal with the main economic argument of the big capitalists like Chase Manhattan's David Rockefeller and Citibank's Walter Wriston. These plutocrats, the real powers behind "the conservative onslaught," maintain that the present level of government expenditure, taxation and borrowing depresses business investment and so has caused the progressive collapse of industrial productivity.

Galbraith cannot explain why Friedmanite economics (once generally ridiculed) has won increasing support on Wall Street and in Fortune 500 boardrooms. Nor can he account for the new-found appeal of the Republicans among blue-collar, even unionized workers (44 percent of those who voted pushed the lever for

Reagan). The frustrated liberal eminence is reduced to scapegoating Carter's economic advisers for blowing the election:

"Much, if not most, of Mr. Reagan's success must be attributed to President Carter's economists—to the macroeconomic management that combined a severe recession with a severe inflation, with a drastic slump in the housing industry, with particular economic distress in the traditional Democratic industrial states—and all these in the year of an election."

But this does not explain why the liberal wing of the Democratic Party in Congress was routed by the Republican right. And it certainly doesn't explain why (as Galbraith himself likes to point out) Carter's own economic policies were more Friedmanite than Keynesian. Recall in 1976 the farmer from Plains, Ga. campaigned against "big government."

If Galbraith's analysis of the conservative onslaught is worthless, so is his alternative to it. To the right-wing demagogue's cry, "Slash taxes!" he answers with the traditional liberal-populist refrain of "Tax the rich":

"When demand presses on resources, there must be increased taxes and these must be primarily on the affluent.... I would urge increased use of indirect taxation on objects of upper-income or luxury consumption;

it is hard to have tears for those who must pay more for luxury automobiles, furniture, housing, attire, or entertainment."

Galbraith evidently assumes the rich have no powers of economic resistance, that they are passive objects at the hands of the IRS. In his liberal-populist sociology, classes are not determined by the relation to the means of production (capitalists and workers), but by the level of consumption (rich and poor). Thus, Galbraith writes archly:

"We hesitate in these careful days to suggest an opposition of interest between the rich and the poor. One should not stir the embers of the class struggle."

Reading his essay one would think the rich get their money off trees in their backyards or are simply highly-paid employees of impersonal corporations. We must inform the distinguished Harvard professor that the affluent of this society are rich because they *own the means of production*. It is they who *decide* what fraction of corporate profit is expended on executive salaries, dividends, internal loan repayments, "perks" and the like, and what fraction is reinvested in plant, equipment and hiring more labor.

Let us take a major shareholder of a big corporation, whose personal income largely derives from its dividend payments. What will he do if the income tax rate for his bracket is sharply increased? Will he manfully tighten his belt, give up his member-

ship in the country club, move out of his mansion into an apartment house? Don't bet on it. He and his fellow shareholders will simply vote to raise dividend payments or take money from the firm in other, less obvious ways. In addition to executive salaries, dividends, interest payments, every corporation enhances the affluence of its principal owners in innumerable *non-taxable* ways. Increase sales taxes on Cadillacs and Mercedes, and more will be purchased by businesses as "tax-deductible expenses."

In general an increase in government expenditure, *regardless of the mechanisms by which it is financed*, will be offset by a reduction of private capitalist investment. That is why Japan, which has a very small military budget and a relatively small non-military budget, has by far the highest rate of industrial investment of any advanced capitalist country.

For decades liberals like Galbraith have maintained that capitalism could be made to work better—be more productive, more egalitarian—through this or that fiscal or monetary policy. Back in the 1930s John Maynard Keynes argued that capitalists could be induced to "play the game," i.e., reinvest their wealth in increasing production, for lower stakes. Experience since has shown him wrong. That is the underlying basis behind "the conservative onslaught." What the working class has to do is to change both the game and the players. This is called socialist revolution.

company's not-very-subtle threat: "I'm firmly convinced the workers will do what they have to do to survive" (*Detroit News*, 17 December 1980). If Fraser was upset with Iacocca, it was not for wanting to cut the ranks' wages, but because the Chrysler Corp. chief infuriated auto workers by his insulting tone. "You make this process extremely difficult for the union with such off-the-cuff remarks," Fraser advised Iacocca in an official union letter.

Indeed, the "process" of gouging the UAW ranks did not sit well with the 250 delegates to the Chrysler Council which met in Detroit on December 22. The Council did vote by a show of hands to re-open the contract, but Fraser admitted there was a "pronounced minority"

bosses' government!

Making some pretense at being unionists, the Chrysler Council came up with a few of their own demands, such as additional "profit-sharing"—truly a sick joke! But then there's no sign that Fraser opposed the Chrysler plan in his role as a member of the board of directors (another "gain" of the bailout). And he reportedly absented himself from a recent board meeting which discussed labor issues. Meanwhile the *Detroit Free Press* (16 December 1980) reports Fraser is angling for a seat on the Ford board of directors as well!

This role as a director of the American auto industry is increasingly fitting for Fraser, whose *only* long-term "strategy" for mounting unemployment

capitalist system (production for profit not use) except unemployment for workers in other countries. Instead of fighting the class struggle here and abroad, Fraser & Co. agitate for trade war against the Japanese and West Europeans. And at a certain point trade war escalates into a different order of war.

## No Bailout, No Concessions, Restore Parity!

Chrysler has already drawn down \$800 million of the \$1.5 billion in federally guaranteed loans authorized a year ago, while in 1980 the firm ran \$1.7 billion in the red, the largest loss ever for an American corporation. These losses are not simply a result of the present recession. Chrysler failed to retool in the late 1970s and so cannot supply (even to the extent GM and Ford can) the demand for smaller, fuel-efficient cars.

What will the incoming Reagan administration do about the Chrysler lemon? A strictly "free market" policy would dictate no loan guarantee. But a Chrysler bankruptcy would create tremendous financial chaos, and Reagan's is nothing if not a Wall Street administration. At any rate, what is clear is that the government, no less than the company, will make the workers pay.

What is also clear is that the new scheme will not "save jobs" any more than the last round of concessions did. When Chrysler first called for a government bailout in 1979, indefinite layoffs from Chrysler numbered about 25,000; *they now number 45,000*. At least one plant (in Warren, Michigan) was recently sold with millions in cash going to the bosses. And the Mack Avenue stamping plant is scheduled for closing June 20. When the UAW bureaucracy campaigned for the Chrysler bailout over a year ago, the reformist left quickly fell in behind, sometimes tacking on a call for "nationalization" as a socialist-sounding cover. We warned that such reformist schemes to prop up inefficient firms would come out of the workers' hides. And we put forward a class-struggle alternative striking at the heart of capitalist property rights:

"The only way workers can hope to salvage this situation of sunk companies



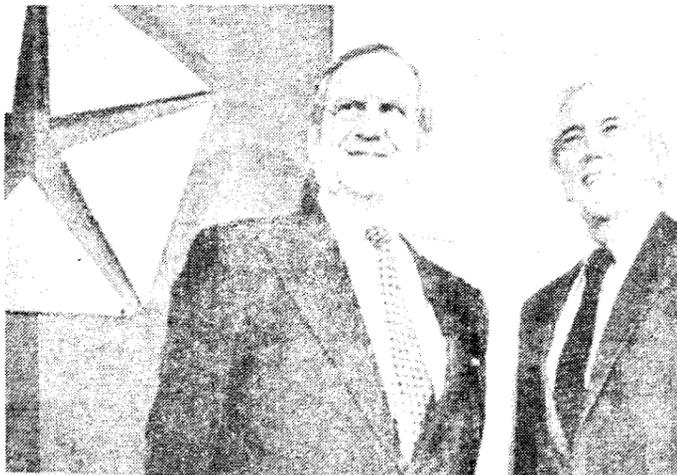
Detroit, July 1979—Militant auto workers demonstrate for sit-down strikes over Chrysler closing.

is to seize them. Not piracy but mutiny. What then? Either Chrysler is broke or it isn't. If it is broke then the workers ought to democratically elect a board to liquidate Chrysler. But not a cent to the Wall Street shareholders of Chrysler! Let the stocks, bonds and bank debts go down the tubes. All the money from the sale of assets should go to the Chrysler workforce including the foreign workers."

—"Whatever Chrysler's Worth—Give It to the Workers," *WV* No. 238, 17 August 1979

Now Chrysler (with Ford right behind) is threatening the workers: either a massive pay cut or massive layoffs. But auto workers are not powerless. The sit-down strike was key to creating the UAW in the 1930s. The same weapons can defeat the auto bosses now.

- No concessions to Chrysler—Restore parity with GM and Ford!
- Prepare for strike sit-down action! Workers to get all money from any Chrysler liquidation!
- For guaranteed unlimited sub/unemployment pay and welfare benefits!
- Oust the bureaucrats—For a workers party to fight for a workers government! ■



Chrysler boss Iacocca's (left) arrogance makes it harder for Fraser (right) to sell sellout to the workers.

in opposition, and the initial *New York Times* report said the Council had rejected a freeze. UAW spokesman Don Stillman made a point of refuting this report: "It is inaccurate to say that we rejected the Chrysler plea." But many of the ranks have a rather different attitude toward "the Chrysler plea." Said one: "They can take that wage freeze and stick it. You're goddamned right I'm upset. We can't make a living the way it is, with prices always going up."

Trying to make the sellout easier to sell, Solidarity House says it is awaiting a verdict by the government Loan Guarantee Board that the concessions are a "true necessity." But whose government is it, anyway? Reagan's appointed cabinet of corporate executives only underscores what is no less true of Democrat Carter's—it is the

is a chauvinist campaign against foreign cars. The UAW has reportedly spent \$200,000 of its members' money to place ads for slogans such as "Paying for Imports With Our Jobs Is a Price We Can't Afford." But what working people here as well as in other countries cannot afford is national economic protectionism. Freed from any competition GM and Ford would profit-gouge like there was no tomorrow. Americans, including blue-collar workers, buy Toyotas, Datsuns and Volkswagens because they save a lot of money not only on the car but also on \$1.40-a-gallon gas. And with real wages having fallen more than 10 percent in the past few years, this is no small saving.

The UAW bureaucracy, vaguely social-democratic in outlook, has no solution to the irrationality of the

# Indian Left Chauvinism Over Assam Violence

by Umesh Sharma

WEST BENGAL—It is more than a year since a chauvinist movement began in [the northeastern Indian state of] Assam to drive out the non-Assamese. What began with the slogan "Ali, coolie, Nepali, Bengali, uaal jao" ("Muslims, imported Indian laborers, Nepalis and Bengalis, get out!") has now become a matter of the formal legal status of the immigrants from Bangladesh. Pogroms against these so-called "foreigners" have spread to Tripura and neighboring states, leaving hundreds dead and tens of thousands homeless.

New Delhi became especially alarmed when the Assamese chauvinists stopped the flow of oil out of the state, which is the source of most of India's domestic production. But after denouncing the agitation as a conspiracy inspired and financed by the CIA, China, Bangladesh and Pakistan, the government of Indira Gandhi has started discussions with the leaders of the agitation in hopes of finding a way out. A strange way of dealing with conspiracies!

In order to understand the reality behind these developments, we should first remember the fact that 99.4 percent of the Assamese-speaking people of India live in their home state of Assam. The Assamese have been historically the least mobile section of Indians. It is also a fact that Assam remains underdeveloped. In the tea plantations, the labor has always been drawn from other parts of India, including Nepali-speaking people from West Bengal and Nepal, and also workers from U.P. [Uttar Pradesh], Bihar and other Hindi-speaking areas. The latter are called "coolies" by the Assamese gentry. Finally there are the Bengali-speaking people in Assam who for decades have been the main victims of Assamese chauvinism. They constitute the second-largest linguistic group in Assam.

When the British hoisted their flag over Assam in 1826, they adopted a policy of appointing mainly Bengali Hindus to the lower rungs of administration (the upper were reserved for white men). Then the British sought to increase agrarian revenue and adopted the policy of importing lakhs [hundreds of thousands] of Bengali peasants to settle in the uncultivated riverine tracts along the Brahmaputra. The British, however, did not like to annoy the tribal population of Assam, and to that end in the 1920s they instituted the Line System, which excluded certain tribal areas from the new settlers.

That did not satisfy a section of the Bengali leadership. Maulana Bhasani migrated to Assam in 1928 and demanded the abolition of the Line System, putting forward the idea of a united "Bangassam" as a solution to East Bengal's landlessness. Then came the Muslim League ministry in Assam in 1937, which carried out the policy of "sponsored immigration" of Muslims from East Bengal. After partition in 1947, and again in 1950 and 1964, there were Hindu-Muslim riots which led to further immigration of Bengali Hindus into Assam. After the 1971 civil war which led to the creation of Bangladesh, persecuted Bihari Muslims fled to Assam, and many Bengali-speaking Muslims also immigrated to escape the famine in Bangladesh.

So the problem in Assam is that although the Assamese-speaking people constitute the largest linguistic group in the state, they are not an absolute majority. The Assamese elite and ruling class consider the big non-Assamese groups to be a threat to their political power. More serious is the problem of unemployment and pressure on the land. Even workers of the tea plantations and their kin, faced with unemployment, have reverted to agriculture. The Assamese petty bourgeoisie has to face fierce competition from the non-Assamese in business and also in white-collar jobs. Thus they have tried to disenfranchise many of the non-Assamese immigrants.

In 1950, just before the 1951 census, riots broke out in Assam that in effect allowed the Bengali Muslims only two alternatives: death and depredation, or repudiating their real identity in the census and declaring themselves non-Assamese. Riots broke out against Bengali Hindus before the census of 1961 and again in 1971, with the result that they too had to disown their identity. Most of the Bengali-language institutions in Assam were closed forever. And now a new census is imminent in 1981 and we have the present agitation, which despite claims to the contrary has meant barbarous attacks, arson and torture of the minorities. About 5,000 people have had to seek refuge in West Bengal, while others have fled to Bangladesh.

That is the real nature of the agitation which was characterized as a "popular movement" not only by the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Janata Party and Lok Dal [all fragments of the former Desai/Singh governments], but also initially by the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (CPI) and by the "Marxist-Leninist" RSPI(ML) [Indian associates

of the British Socialist Workers Party of Tony Cliff and Michael Kidron]. The Communist Party (Marxist), the major Stalinist party in India (which wields power in state governments of West Bengal and Kerala), in contrast, denounced the Assam agitation as "secessionist." The CPI soon followed suit, sermonising about the sacred nature of national unity. The CPI(M) seems to have forgotten that Stalin (their hero) had discovered 800 nationalities in India, and to be sure, the Assamese were one of them.

The CPI(M) defends the Bengali-speaking minority of Assam, which is not unexpected as the majority of that party belongs to West Bengal. But they forget about the legitimate national rights of Assamese-speaking people. After opposing deployment of central government troops in other states, after denouncing central interference in the affairs of West Bengal, CPI(M) leader Jyoti Basu did not hesitate to appeal to Mrs. Gandhi to intervene in Assam. She did indeed, dissolving the CPI(M) governments of Assam and Tripura, while the killings go on and on.

Though the majority of the so-called "Naxalite" (i.e., Maoist) groupings have denounced the agitation as chauvinist, there are some even in West Bengal (e.g., the group that published *Aneek* in Bengali) who support it as a "popular movement" and invoke the principle of the right of self-determination. What is missed in their arguments is that Marxism is opposed to national oppression of all kinds. Unlike the fake "socialists" and "communist" companions of Jyoti Basu, Bolshevik revolutionaries believe that the Assamese have a right to secede, but they have no right to oppress non-Assamese. Moreover, the interests of the revolution are the supreme law to a Bolshevik, and that demands unity of the working masses.

The worst position on Assam is, however, that of the state-capitalist RSPI(ML). This group, which borrows everything from Cliff and Kidron while presenting it as the original contribution of their leaders K.P. Sharma and D.O. Brahma, blames the whole problem in Assam on "Bihari Muslims, the staunch enemies of Indian nationalism and newly emerged Bangladesh nationalism," who were allowed "to enter northeast India without authorisation and live there" (*Krantiyug*, 5 August 1980). The RSPI(ML) observed "Assam People's Movement Day" on August 15, and wrote in a verbose editorial:

"When the popular movement of Bangladesh was built and led against the domination of West Pakistan, it became difficult for the Bihari Muslims

to live in East Pakistan. They fled to Assam from East Pakistan. . . . Responsibility for rehabilitation anywhere in India lies with the government of India, not with the people of Assam, as these foreigners have entered forcibly."  
—*Krantiyug*, 29 July 1980

The editorial calls upon the government to "rehabilitate" the Bihari Muslims elsewhere.

It is not the case that the unfortunate Bihari Muslims were admitted to India. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who allowed one million Bengali refugees to stay in India in 1971 and armed and fed the forces loyal to the Awami League [which on Indian bayonets became the leadership of Bangladesh], has shown consistent hostility toward the [mainly Muslim] Urdu-speaking population of Bangladesh. It was not without support from Indira Gandhi and "progressives" of India that the Awami League killed and maimed Bihari Muslims as "collaborators" of the Pakistani regime and forcibly occupied their houses and property.

Pakistan today feeds no fewer than 700,000 Afghan refugees on "grounds of humanitarian and Islamic brotherhood," but showed no such consideration for the 350,000 Bihari Muslims they left stranded since 1972 in 66 camps in Bangladesh, living "in unbearable, inhuman conditions, surrounded by filth and misery" (*Sunday* [Calcutta], 14 September 1980). In 1979 the Stranded Pakistanis' General Repatriation Committee gave a call to 50,000 Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh to undertake a long march to Pakistan through India. Both Prime Minister Charan Singh and Jyoti Basu, head of the CPI(M)-dominated "Left Front" government of West Bengal, were prompt in sealing the borders.

The sad plight of the Bihari Muslims has been called "processed genocide." To Indian followers of Stalin and Tony Cliff, that is okay because the victims happen to be "staunch enemies of Indian and Bangladesh nationalism." Most of these, however, were poor people from U.P. and Bihar who went to East Pakistan either as a result of the anti-Muslim pogroms after 1947 in India or due to abject poverty. It is criminal to exterminate, deport or even disperse a people against their will in order to ensure a majority for a given group. True Bolshevik revolutionaries defend the right to national self-determination while opposing all forms of national oppression. Fake Marxists like Basu and "Leninists" like Sharma/Brahma reveal their true colours by worshipping the deities of bourgeois nationalism. ■

## El Salvador...

(continued from page 12)

aristocracy came to a crashing end in 1929. As the bottom fell out of the world market, Salvadoran farm laborers were hit with mass unemployment. Meanwhile, the oligarchy moved to oust an elected "reform" government. In January 1932, the newly formed Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS) planned an insurrection after a putsch by General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez. Although the PCS leadership was rounded up (and later executed), coffee estate workers in western El Salvador rose and were brutally repressed. In the following weeks Hernández drove home this bloody "lesson" to the working masses, teaching them to "stay in their place" by slaughtering 30,000 people, roughly 3-4 percent of the country's entire population.

This was *la matanza*, the Salvadoran bourgeoisie's response to the first Communist-led uprising in the Americas. No one on either side of the class

barricades has forgotten it, and today 1932 is still the watchword of hardliners in the ruling class and army. When the FDR leaders were assassinated, the crime was attributed to a "Maximiliano Hernández Martínez Brigade." And a spokesman of the growers association recently remarked, "Coffee growers should not anguish over the situation today; there was a similar one in 1932, and if it was solved then, it can be solved now" (*NACLA Report*, March-April 1980). Only this time the "solution" they are talking about is 100,000 dead.

### Bullets Replace Ballots

The roots of the current political crisis can be traced most directly to the heavy-handed vote fraud which stole two elections, in 1972 and 1977, from Christian Democratic (PDC) winners and continued the succession of repressive army governments under military hardliner General Carlos Romero. With liberal reform efforts consistently stymied, a radical left opposition grew rapidly both in the cities and countryside.

Three different guerrilla "armies" arose, each with its own mass-based coalition. The first, the FPL, was founded by Salvador Cayetano, a former leader of the Communist Party who split from the PCS over its supine support for El Salvador in the 1969 "football war" with Honduras. The FPL is linked to the People's Revolutionary Block (BPR), the largest and originally most radical of the coalitions, which grouped most of the organized rural laborers and the teachers union. The second guerrilla outfit is the ERP, originally a Guevarist group which had roots in the left wing of the Christian Democrats. Its "popular organization" is the February 28th People's Leagues (LP-28), strong among high school students and market vendors. The third group, the FARN, is a front for the United People's Action Front (FAPU), which controls the largest union federation, including the combative electrical workers.

The incredible number of fronts, armies, parties, coalitions, etc. makes El Salvador left politics extremely difficult

to unravel. However, several points can be made. First, the main left groups are based on mass organizations of workers, peasants and the urban poor, counting tens of thousands of supporters. This contrasts with Nicaragua where the strategy of the bonapartist Sandinista armed forces was to conquer the main urban centers from without. This mass mobilization is one reason why the imperialists are more worried about the Salvadoran left taking power than they were at the prospect of a Sandinista victory in 1979. Second, the political differences are at most tactical and even then murky. Furthermore they are extremely fluid, so that groups pass easily from one coalition to another, and yesterday's left wing today stands on the right. And while today "unity" is the watchword, Salvadoran factional politics can be deadly: when the ERP's most prominent member, well-known leftist poet Roque Dalton, opposed its "militarist" line in 1975 he was executed by his "comrades." Above all, even before their general rightward turn since 1979, none of the "guerrilla left" groups

had a program and strategy for proletarian revolution in Central America; all were based on an eclectic mishmash of radical nationalism and various brands of Stalinist "revolution by stages" reformism.

During the early and mid-'70s the guerrilla groups engaged in a series of kidnappings, radio station takeovers, embassy occupations and assassinations of hated military figures and capitalists. The kidnappings proved highly profitable—the ransom for coffee baron Jaime Hill was \$8 million, and the FARN alone gathered roughly \$40 million between 1975 and 1979 (Harald Jung, "Class Struggles in El Salvador," *New Left Review*, July-August 1980). Meanwhile, falling coffee prices and a bad harvest in 1978 led to unrest in the countryside, while strikes increased in San Salvador. The right wing replied with bloody terror. When the BPR occupied the capital's basilica in May 1979, police mowed down demonstrators on the cathedral steps, leaving more than two dozen dead. But the demonstrations continued.

### "Human Rights Junta"

Obviously, General Romero's white terror was not working to stem the tide of worker and peasant unrest. It was at that point that Jimmy Carter's "human rights" administration stepped in. Shortly after Somoza fell, Carter sent State Department Latin America expert William Bowdler to El Salvador, asking Romero to step down. When the general refused, he was overthrown on 15 October 1979 in a coup which was obviously "made in USA." The composition of the new junta was clearly brokered by Washington: it included "moderates" like Colonel Adolfo Majano, leader of the "Military Youth" officers faction, together with right-wingers like Colonel Jaime Gutiérrez, reputedly the Pentagon's man. They were joined by the "social-democratic" MNR leader, a leading industrialist and the head of the Catholic university.

The left was initially disoriented by the U.S.' maneuver. But almost as soon as they were sworn in, the "human rights junta" was presiding over an unprecedented wave of rightist terror. The army, national police and paramilitary thugs went wild in the slums and villages murdering peasants and leftists at a rate unheard of under Romero. In response the "guerrilla left" and their above-ground "popular organizations" began drawing together with the Communist Party, leading to the formation of the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses (CRM) in early January. On January 22, anniversary of the 1932 revolt, the CRM held a mammoth inaugural rally of an estimated 200,000 in the capital. As the crowd entered the Plaza Central, rightist snipers on the rooftops of the presidential palace and the Bank of El Salvador began firing automatic weapons into the crowd: over 100 dead, 300 wounded...

At the turn of the year the junta fell apart, with reform-minded civilians opting out. Education minister Samayoa joined the FPL guerrillas (and was captured later, never to be heard from again). Agriculture minister Alvarez Córdova left to form the Democratic Front, which joined with the CRM to form the Revolutionary Democratic Front, and this "black sheep" of one of the 14 Families became the titular head of the opposition popular front. They were replaced by more Christian Democrats. But the killing went on.

While the junta's agrarian "reform" and its associated terror got under way in March, the left-wing guerrillas stepped up harassment of government armed forces. In the cities increasingly massive demonstrations reached a peak with a successful two-day protest general strike in June which solidly shut down San Salvador. But eventually the massive bloodletting began to intimidate the left's supporters from repeatedly trooping out to face deadly machine-

## ILWU Boycotts Military Shipments to El Salvador!

SAN FRANCISCO—ILWU International president Jimmy Herman announced here on December 22 a boycott action by the union's 18,000 longshoremen at 30 ports on the U.S. West Coast, British Columbia and Hawaii against American military goods to the junta in El Salvador. A Delta Lines shipment of batteries and vehicle parts designated as riot-control equipment was immediately stopped on San Francisco's Pier 30.

This boycott is thoroughly needed and can be a powerful act of labor solidarity with the El Salvadoran workers and peasants. But why is it so belated? Herman's press statement explained: "Our policy in this matter is in line with the suspension of military assistance ordered by President Carter earlier this month."

Thus the ILWU bureaucracy is mainly tailing after the Carter administration (which supported, supplied and still supplies every bloody right-wing junta in Latin America) in its

supremely hypocritical and low-cost attempt to clean up the image of the Democratic Party for a future electoral comeback. The outgoing Jimmy Carter cut off aid only after American nuns were killed, and Jimmy Herman acted only after Jimmy Carter gave the green light.

The shallowness of the International's concern is shown by their unwillingness to back up the boycott with a defense of the union members against threatened company reprisals. The Pacific Maritime Association (the employers' association) claims the boycott violates the no-strike agreement and could lead to suspension of weekly wage guarantees. Instead of announcing the union's readiness to strike if necessary to defend its members' pay guarantees, Herman moaned to local newspapers that this boycott could cost 18,000 union members \$390 a week in pay guarantee plan (PGP) benefits for the presumably lengthy duration of the boycott!

gun fire, and an attempted general strike in August failed to close businesses or stop mass transportation in the capital. Dissension in the opposition led to the resignation of the FARN guerrillas from the guerrilla command, reputedly to seek an alliance with liberal officers around Colonel Majano.

Meanwhile, however, the "Military Youth" have been isolated within the armed forces, its members removed from operational commands and now Majano dropped from the junta. (Like every other former government leader, he immediately went underground.) Pentagon man Gutiérrez is now "vice president" and sole army chief, while PDC leader Napoleón Duarte became figurehead president. (Approving this arrangement, the latest stage in the "creeping coup," was the main business of the special U.S. mission supposedly investigating the nun killings.) The Salvadoran ruling class closed ranks around its military protectors; a "Productive Alliance" document given to Reagan advisers asserted, "The only solution to this problem is to destroy the Communists militarily..." The FARN, its attempt to strike a deal with some dissident bourgeois force having failed, returned to the guerrilla command. And the "final offensive" is proclaimed.

### For Central American Workers Revolution!

With Majano now out of the government and issuing calls to oppose the junta by "any means necessary," the FDR popular front, embracing most petty-bourgeois sectors and several bourgeois figures, may be picking up liberal support. Yet if a few "modernizing" colonels or Archbishop Rivera y Damas were to link arms with the guerrilla left, it would not be to aid revolutionary struggle but to act as a brake, to ensure that it remains within capitalist bounds. Former junta member Majano shares responsibility (no less than the vile Christian Democratic politicians) for the more than 9,000 murdered by rightist repression last year. He is a blood enemy of the Salvadoran working masses. In the opposition, he and his fellow officers would see their primary duty as preventing armed struggle from "going too far." They and bourgeois forces in the Democratic Revolutionary Front seek above all to preserve the blood-soaked officer corps and capitalist property from destruction.

Again and again since the October coup it has been demonstrated that

popular-frontism paralyzes and disorients the struggle against the generals' counterrevolutionary terror. When Romero fell the new junta attempted to neutralize and even win over the left. They almost succeeded. The PCS joined the cabinet. The LP-28 briefly gave conditional "wait-and-see" support. The BPR called on the junta to carry out its promises, helping to spread illusions that it could or would. Later, the August general strike failed (as a strike, anyway) in part because petty-bourgeois components of the FDR kept their shops open and their buses running. After this setback, the FARN broke ranks in order to seek more powerful bourgeois backing. The rest of the left was banking on picking up international diplomatic support through tours by bourgeois scions like FDR head Alvarez Córdova, later murdered by the rightist death squads. Both efforts failed. But it was class collaboration that paralyzed the left in the face of a mounting counter-revolutionary bloodbath.

Nationalism, too, stands in the way of victory over the military butchers. The Central American statelets, which emerged from colonial rule as a single federal state, have never been viable as independent economic or political units. Each one has its own oil refinery, but none have real industrialization, and the Yankees get the bananas. The ruling classes are quick to unite, however, when it is a question of defending capitalist rule from the spectre of communism. The CIA coup against the bourgeois nationalist Arbenz government in Guatemala was mounted from Honduras. Somoza allowed the Bay of Pigs operation to leave from Nicaragua, after training in Guatemala. Today, ex-Somoza troops are serving in El Salvador and several thousand more are being maintained in Honduras, which just signed a long-delayed peace treaty with El Salvador in order to facilitate policing the border against guerrillas.

In the face of likely imperialist intervention, and merely to defeat their "own" bourgeoisie, forces seeking proletarian revolution anywhere in Central America will face defeat if they limit themselves by artificial national frontiers. The borders of El Salvador or Nicaragua are far less defensible than Cuba's coasts, and even there the U.S. attempted a counterrevolutionary invasion. Yet the necessary goal of a Central America-wide revolutionary mobilization of the working masses is frustrated by the class collaboration of the Salva-

He also expressed his pious "hope" that the government would cancel the shipments rather than risk the workers' pay.

Longtime ILWU Local 10 Executive Board member Howard Keylor, co-editor of the "Longshore Militant" newsletter, told *Workers Vanguard*:

"This boycott is long overdue. It's the first ongoing boycott in 40 years that the International has called for more than one day or one shipment. An ongoing boycott could be effective if it's carried through, but it's being carried out in such a way as to leave us open to reprisals and retreats. If Herman were serious about this boycott he'd back it up with the threat of union-wide strike action to defend our PGP.

"It took two years for the International officers to consent to a one-day boycott of Chilean cargo after the 1973 coup. Even that boycott wouldn't have succeeded for the one day it was called without the intervention of the Militant Caucus in San Francisco and the Spartacist League-initiated picket line in Los Angeles. It took another four years and the approval of the Democratic Party leadership for the International to boycott one shipment of bomb fins to the Chilean junta. What the union ought to be doing now is mobilizing the rank and file to stop PMA from penalizing the membership for this action so that it can be carried through."

doran guerrillas and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas. Seeking a modus vivendi with the "national" bourgeoisie, they refuse to internationalize the struggle against the capitalist exploiters: hence the absence of effective Sandinista military support to the Salvadoran rebels.

The Trotskyist program of permanent revolution—not for bogus "democratic" capitalism, but for a workers and peasants government to expropriate the bourgeoisie—is the only banner under which Central America will be liberated from the military boot, oligarchic exploitation and imperialist domination. This program is starkly counterposed to all brands of nationalist populism and Stalinist reformism in the Salvadoran left. Yet the major ostensible Trotskyist grouping in the world, the misnamed "United Secretariat of the Fourth International," has endorsed the program of the FDR popular front, which calls for a "popular, democratic and antioligarchic" (i.e., *not socialist*) revolution, which appeals to "healthy, patriotic, and worthy elements that belong to the current army"—e.g., the Colonel Majanos (*Intercontinental Press*, 5 May).

Two small pseudo-Trotskyist groups inside El Salvador, the Morenoite PST and the formerly Lambertist OSI, raise as one of their central demands in the present revolutionary crisis, "For a free, democratic and sovereign constituent assembly" (*Correspondance Internationale*, October 1980). Yet *not even bourgeois liberals* are calling today for a constituent assembly, at a time when the constitution of soviets, organs of workers power, is on the agenda. Like the USec, the PST's main goal is to gain sufficient importance to enter the guerrilla command (DRU). But the struggle for Trotskyism in Central America is not a fight to unite with the popular-frontists but to defeat them politically, through independent mobilization of the working class around the communist program and internationalist struggle for a Socialist United States of Latin America.

U.S./OAS/Latin American bourgeois rulers: All hands off El Salvador—No imperialist intervention! U.S. workers: Boycott all military goods to Central American rightist regimes! Military victory to the leftist insurgents! For a Trotskyist party! For workers soviets—For workers and peasants governments in El Salvador and throughout Central America! ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Popular Frontism Disarms Masses Before White Terror

# For Workers Revolution in El Salvador!

DECEMBER 28—El Salvador, Central America is on the brink of full-scale civil war. Profoundly socially polarized, wracked by almost indescribably bloody right-wing repression, the country is locked in a battle to the death. On one side is a discredited U.S.-backed regime defending the privileged rule of a tightly knit oligarchy. On the other are the impoverished worker and peasant masses who have suffered for half a century under Latin America's longest continuous military dictatorship. The Carter plan to defuse the explosive situation in El Salvador with a "human rights junta," implementing a few cosmetic reforms, has failed. Now it is a confrontation that can end only with the overthrow of the murderous generals or in a massive reactionary bloodbath, possibly assisted by the direct intervention of Yankee imperialism. Victory depends on mobilizing the energies and determination of the masses to sweep away the uniformed butchers forever, through workers revolution, rather than simply replacing them with a new gang of "democratic" bourgeois rulers.

As Jimmy Carter's lame-duck presidency limps to the end, tiny El Salvador, a country of fewer than five million people, is being posed as the first foreign policy "test" for the incoming Republican administration. The Sandinista victory in Nicaragua and a growing guerrilla insurgency in Guatemala have given U.S. rulers cause to fear that the fall of El Salvador's bloody junta would, in the words of a Christmas Eve *New York Times* editorial, "tip the balance of forces in all Central America and threaten even Mexico." Thus, anxious to create an "irreversible situation" before Reagan takes office, the Salvadoran Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) announced on December 13 that orders had been issued calling left-wing militants to "take up combat positions" throughout the country. "The situation will be red-hot by the time Mr. Reagan arrives," declared DRU member Fermán Cienfuegos in Mexico City (*New York Times*, 27 December 1980). At press time a major guerrilla offensive has reportedly been launched in the northern province of Chalatenango.

Meanwhile, the anti-communist killers are in high gear with their crescendo of mass terror. The spectre of "another Cuba" in "America's back yard" has led the Republicans to signal the Salvadoran military that they will have free rein, and whatever military aid is needed, to drown the left in blood. Asked during his election campaign whether he would send the Marines into Central America, "Big Stick" Reagan replied coyly, "Never say never." There is a very real danger that El Salvador could become the victim of a Santo Domingo-style U.S. intervention, possibly with "inter-American" support from the neighboring dictatorships in Gua-



Salvadoran masses protest junta terror. Only workers revolution throughout Central America can sweep away the bloody oligarchs and their butcher generals.

temala and Honduras. Or from the more presentable Venezuela, Colombia and Costa Rica, whose troops reportedly took part in joint military maneuvers—code named Operation Centaur—with the U.S. on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. As revealed by a recently leaked official "Dissent Paper on El Salvador and Central America," already under the Carter administration plans are far advanced for such imperialist "peacekeeping" action.

Guerrilla leaders have warned that U.S. intervention would turn El Salvador into "another Vietnam and the tomb of the Yankee marines." Given the junta's superiority in firepower, the lack of geographical conditions for guerrilla war, the sizeable military forces of the dictatorship and the (so far) bitter-end resistance of an entrenched bourgeoisie, this will be no easy task. But the Salvadoran masses have no choice—passivity has not stopped the escalating massacre. And if the working masses rise up in an all-round insurrection, from the coffee-growing hills of the west to the San Salvador slums and factories, they can defeat the white terror. Just look at the first days of the Spanish Civil War when nearly unarmed workers successfully stormed Francoist fortresses. Even if the Salvadoran proletariat does not fight its way through to establishing its own class rule, at least a radical plebeian uprising against the murderous junta will enable them to avenge—if only minimally—the grotesque crimes of these butchers and their dollar-crazed oligarch benefactors!

The battle cannot be limited to little El Salvador, however—the "pulgarcito (Tom Thumb) of the Americas." To stop the torturing, murdering Salvadoran *gorilas* and their Yankee godfathers, the whole Central American isthmus must be set aflame with proletarian revolution. This will force the petty-bourgeois bonapartist Sandinista regime in Managua to confront head-on the dilemma it has sought to escape: either breaking sharply with the bourgeoisie and arming Salvadoran leftists, or capitulating to the imperialist pressures and likely sealing its own doom. It also means linking up, just as the imperialists fear, with the potentially powerful Mexican proletariat. And it requires militant acts of labor solidarity from the workers movement throughout the hemisphere, especially in the U.S. The West Coast longshore union's ban on military cargo to El Salvador—though so far only on paper—points in the right direction (see box).

"El Salvador is more sharply divided than Nicaragua between left and right," editorialized the *New York Times* (24 December 1980). And they were right. Here the battle was not against a single tyrant opposed even by important sectors of the bourgeoisie, but a much clearer struggle pitting the exploited masses against their capitalist exploiters. Yet repeatedly the Salvadoran left has tried to paper over the abyss between the opposing class forces by proclaiming a "national" and "patriotic" fight for "democracy," not socialism, and tying the workers to "progressive" bourgeois forces. Already this treacher-

ous policy of popular frontism has blocked mass struggles against the generals' terror, and as the showdown approaches it stands in the way of the key task: splitting the army, not between "democratic" and "fascist" officers, but between the proletarian/peasant ranks and an officer corps committed (even its most liberal elements) to the preservation of capitalist rule. Here the program of agrarian revolution—expropriate the latifundistas and coffee barons—is key to winning the peasant youth conscripted into the army.

The Salvadoran left drew inspiration from the July 1979 overthrow of Nicaragua's bloody patriarch, Anastasio Somoza, by the radical petty-bourgeois Sandinista guerrillas. They have even modeled their joint military command on the Nicaraguan FSLN, baptizing it the "Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front" (FMLN) after a Salvadoran militant who served with Augusto Sandino in Nicaragua in the 1920s and later was the martyred Communist leader of a 1932 uprising in El Salvador. But unlike the Sandinistas, the Salvadoran workers and peasants do not face the tottering power of a hated strongman who alienated the traditional bourgeoisie and transformed the National Guard into his personal bodyguard. In El Salvador the ruling class is centered on a landed oligarchy, the so-called "14 Families," which for at least half a century has solidly supported naked military rule to prop up their economic domination.

The "golden age" of the coffee  
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