

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

formerly SOCIALIST VOICE

X-523

\$1.00



Published by the LEAGUE FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Re-Create
the Fourth International

Jackson Helps Democrats Move Right Election '84: the Trap is Baited

"The perception was that Jackson was humiliated on the platform planks and the constituency came away with nothing." (*New York Times*, August 13)

So spoke Walter Mondale's deputy campaign manager in mid-August. Jesse Jackson had said the same to the Black Caucus at the Democratic National Convention in July: after listing the plums granted to all the other party sectors, he added, "And you ain't got nothing."

It is absolutely true, and it confirms what this magazine has been saying all along: the Democratic Party is a death-trap for all mass movements. It is designed to slice up the population into warring ethnic and racial sectors, to separate broad class interests into narrow regional and sectoral ones, and thereby to undermine or incorporate the struggles of working-class and oppressed people. And in racist America, under present-day crisis-ridden capitalism, it leaves blacks precisely where they start from, at the bottom of the heap. Thus Jackson's campaign to add a black stripe to the party rainbow had pulled millions of black votes but was granted little reward.

That didn't stop Jesse Jackson from doing his bit to bait the trap. Given two hours on nationwide television, he played his role to perfection. He groveled before the racist



Democratic Convention in July: Blacks came from the back of the bus to get the back of the hand.

party bosses to apologize for his indiscretions. He preached the unity of oppressors and oppressed: he cajoled the black masses to come out and support the Democrats, and he promised the party bosses to lead the masses nowhere but to the polls. He spoke in the name of "the desperate, the damned,

continued on page 18

Nationalism vs. Revolution in Southern Africa

The Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) led by Prime Minister Robert Mugabe held a congress in mid-August to adopt a constitution calling for "a socialist state in Zimbabwe based on Marxist-Leninist principles." Those are fine words, but these days each new appeal by ruling parties to the principles of Marx and Lenin serves only to deceive the masses of workers and peasants whom these principles were designed to liberate. That is the case in Zimbabwe, as is shown by the history of ZANU-PF in power and, more strikingly, by the recent actions of other "Marxist-Leninist" rulers in neighboring states.

Last March, Samora Machel, president of Mozambique and leader of the "Marxist-Leninist" FRELIMO guerrillas who came to power with the collapse of Portuguese colonialism in 1974, signed a peace pact with the white rulers of South Africa. The agreement extended South Africa's economic domina-

tion over its neighbor and pledged both sides to curb guerrilla activities against each other. Shortly afterwards the Mozambican authorities arrested exiled activists of the African National Congress (ANC), the black South African group fighting to overthrow apartheid.

In the same month South Africa achieved a non-aggression

continued on page 25

— Inside —

Salvador Workers Revive	2
Miners' Strike Rocks Britain	3
Trotskyism and the Russian Question	9
The Farrakhan Fracas: Blacks, Jews, Nationalism ..	22
New York Hospital Strike: 1199 Victorious?	32
Immigration Bill Threatens Workers	32

Salvador Workers Revive, Guerrillas Divide

After almost four years of deathly stillness, the struggle in the cities of El Salvador is beginning to revive. A strike wave broke out in the spring, thousands of workers have faced down security forces in the streets, masses of peasants have protested against land reform cancellations, and parents of the "disappeared" have demonstrated in public. The new government of Jose Napoleon Duarte has had to make concessions to striking workers as part of his effort to give the bloody U.S.-backed regime a cleaner image before world public opinion.

There have been more strikes and strikers this year than in the previous three, when some 30,000 workers and peasants were massacred by the death squads and "security" forces; for long stretches the army occupied major workplaces, making the workers toil literally under the gun. Working-class revival is the only way for socialism and liberation to win

in El Salvador. But the Salvadorean workers can expect no real help, political or military, from the leadership of the nationalist FMLN-FDR guerrilla and diplomatic organizations. For it was these petty-bourgeois leaders' policies that led to the defeat and demoralization of the proletarian struggle in the first place.

The present upsurge is still dwarfed by the mass strike movement of 1979-80. When the working class rose up in general strikes and factory occupations in 1979-80, the rebel leadership failed to arm the mass of the workers and did not mobilize for working-class power. It allowed the struggle to exhaust itself with repeated strikes for narrowly limited goals and led mass demonstrations of unarmed workers into massacres. When the workers' struggle waned as a result, the nationalists turned to the countryside and their guerrilla strategy, abandoning the urban masses to the death squads. The strategy of "prolonged peoples' war" took them as far from most of the people as they could get.

Politically, the guerrilla organizations started out with a program for a "Democratic Revolutionary Government" that would negotiate with the United States; it was to be a coalition of the FDR-FMLN with openly bourgeois forces to the left of Duarte. As time went on the FMLN broadened its projected coalition to include ever more rightist factions, till it now calls for a "National Government of Broad Participation" that would include everyone except supreme death squad leader Roberto D'Aubuisson and his ARENA party. Whereas once the FMLN denounced Duarte as a front-man for the

continued on page 27

Key Articles in Back Issues

- No. 1: The Struggle for the Revolutionary Party (on the origins of the LRP).
- No. 2: Capitalism in the Soviet Union (including a polemic against Ernest Mandel's workers' state theory).
- No. 3: The Class Nature of the Communist Parties.
- No. 4: The "Marxism" of the Petty Bourgeoisie — the Spartacist League and State Capitalism.
- No. 5: U.S. Labor and the Left; A Bukharinist Theory of State Capitalism.
- No. 6: The Labor Party in the United States; Is Nationalized Property Proletarian?
- No. 7: The Black Struggle: Which Road Today?
- No. 8: Myth and Reality of the Transitional Program "Workers' Government" vs. Workers' State.
- No. 9: Marxism and the Draft; Afghanistan and Pseudo-Trotskyism.
- No. 10: Polish Workers Shake the World.
- No. 11: Iran — Revolution, War and Counterrevolution.
- No. 12: No Shortcuts to Stop Klan; For Socialist Revolution in El Salvador; Church and State vs. Polish Workers.
- No. 13: "Left" Betrays Salvador Revolution; Marxist Response to Reaganism; Poland: Solidarity Forever?
- No. 14: Anti-Reaganism vs. Anti-Capitalism; Spartacist Popular Frontism on El Salvador; Britain's Hot Summer.
- No. 15: Reagan's Russian Dilemma; Polish Workers Under Siege; Labor after Solidarity Day.
- No. 16: How Solidarity Was Defeated; Marxism vs. Reformism — A Test of Theory; Haitians Fight for Freedom
- No. 17: On the Road to Capitalist Crash; Peace Movement Sets Stage for War; Open Letter to ICC; Malvinas War.
- No. 18: LRP Convention Charts Course; Concessions Fightback; Trotskyism vs. Ultra-Leftism; Palestinians.
- No. 19: Black Upsurge Meets Electoral Trap; Karl Marx and the World Crisis; "Democratic Socialism"; Central American Volcano.
- No. 20: Renounce the Imperialist Debt; Democratic Party Disaster for Blacks; Planning and Value in the Soviet Union; The Rape of Grenada; Sri Lanka Report.
- No. 21: Left Sinks into Democrats' Swamp; Labor's Dead-End Electoralism; The Theory of Permanent Counterrevolution; Nicaraguan Concessions; Grenada

To Our Readers

We apologize for having had to produce this issue of *Proletarian Revolution* on a computer printer. Our outmoded typesetting equipment broke down, and we are in the process of replacing it. The present method of production is only temporary. We welcome contributions from our readers to help pay for the necessary new equipment.

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Published by the Socialist Voice Publishing Co. for the League for the Revolutionary Party.
Editorial board: Walter Dahl, Sy Landy, Bob Wolfe
Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the viewpoint of the LRP.
Subscriptions: \$5.00 for eight issues; \$10.00 for overseas airmail. Back issues \$1.00 each.
Make checks or money orders payable to *Socialist Voice*. Send to: Socialist Voice, 170 Broadway, Room 201, New York, NY 10038, USA.

Miners' Strike Rocks Britain

The biggest outbreak of the class struggle in the West for a decade has erupted in Britain. In a strike that began in March and quickly spread, most of the country's 185,000 coal miners have now been out for months, fighting to stop the planned closure of dozens of mines by the reactionary Thatcher government. To show that the government means business (in more ways than one), mining villages and picket lines at scab mines have been hit by an unprecedented wave of police violence against strikers and their supporters. County boundaries have become patrolled frontiers, with cops stopping and harassing cars and buses of picketers and their supporters; two pickets have been killed, hundreds injured and thousands arrested.

The conflict in Britain began as part of a wave of working-class struggles across Western Europe. A seven-week strike by half a million West German auto and metal workers for a shorter work week was stimulated by mounting unemployment. Tens of thousands of French steelworkers marched on Paris protesting the Socialist and Communist Party government's austerity cutbacks. There have also been outbreaks in Belgium, Italy and Spain, not to speak of the massive protests against austerity imposed from abroad throughout the less industrialized nations of Latin America. The basic cause is everywhere the same: world capitalism has not recovered from the 1982 recession, its deepest economic downturn since the 1930's. The bourgeoisie everywhere is striving to save its profits by squeezing the working class, and now workers in the richer countries as well are emerging from relative passivity to fight back.

In the final analysis, the crisis of capitalist decay will be resolved only by overthrowing capitalism as a system, through socialist revolutions by the workers of all major countries. Marxists believe that working people will come to see the potential for proletarian power and socialism by winning victories in the struggles forced on them by the system's day-to-day exploitation. That is why, when a giant class conflict erupts as in Britain today, it is necessary to draw out the chief strategic lessons: not only how the struggle can best be fought and won, but also how the intensified political consciousness of workers who are fighting the bourgeois state can be led to revolutionary conclusions. One crucial lesson is that the workers will have to break the shackles of reformism, left as well as right. Nowhere is this clearer than in Britain.

British Workers Back Miners

While Prime Minister Thatcher denounced militant miners as "the enemy within," the intensity of their fight against scabs and the state inspired much (officially illegal) supporting strike action from the start, especially by railroad workers also facing severe government cutbacks. But there was no official union solidarity; the steel union head denounced miners picketing steel plants, saying that "his" industry was being "sacrificed on someone else's altar."

The first breakthrough came in mid-July, when dockworkers incensed at British Steel's use of non-union labor to move coal and fearful of further job losses themselves, shut

down all ports and effectively halted the movement of goods in or out of the country. Clearly the solidarity of the dockers' strike was linked to the miners' intransigence, even though their union leader vehemently denied that his workers were striking in concert. Nevertheless, talk of a general strike filled leftist newspapers and worried the bourgeois press, and the government threatened to call out troops.

But it didn't happen. After a week the transport union settled the dockers' dispute and sent them back to work,



British cops drag miners' leader Arthur Scargill off to jail. Mine-workers have bravely fought back against police terrorist thugs. Workers must arm for self-defense.

while the miners' picketing and the cops' rabid attacks continued. British bourgeois spokesmen boasted that the back of the strike had been broken: that there were coal stocks from pre-strike production, scab mines and imports to last into 1986. Militant miners and leaders of their union, the NUM, vowed to fight on and did so, despite the rest of the union bureaucracy's refusal to mobilize mass actions in support.

In late August militant dockworkers again went out, and the general strike became a threat again. The Trades Union Congress (TUC: Britain's AFL-CIO) met in September faced with a demand by the NUM for official backing. Under pressure, it passed a militant-sounding resolution denouncing the government, supporting the miners' objectives, raising money in solidarity and vowing not to move coal or substitute fuels across miners' picket lines. But right-wing officials objected, notably those of unions like the electrical power workers' whose active support is crucial. So the resolution backed down: "The NUM acknowledges that the practical implementation of these points will need detailed discussions with the general council and agreement with the unions who would be directly concerned." Some support!

At the time of this writing — and from this distance — it seems that genuine workers' support for the combined miners' and dockers' strike could signal a breakthrough by the working class into a concerted struggle. That is what the bureaucrats fear. If the workers realize the power they have

when united, then the sky is the limit. The union bureaucracy, right and left, is doing all it can to prevent it.

Reformism, the Enemy Within

The British working class is under the leadership of conscious reformists: politicians who defend the nation in the name of the workers but really in the interests of capitalism. The Labour Party has served British imperialism with devotion throughout the century, and the TUC has done the same on the industrial front. In response to the all-out attack on the working class by "Iron Lady" Thatcher — through gutting social services, stirring up racism, driving industries to the wall — the reformist leaders have confined themselves to protest-bleating in general and maneuvers to preserve their own narrow sectoral interests.

Even before the miners' strike, any of Thatcher's vicious moves ought to have inspired working-class leaders to say: we will take no more, we will close down every workplace in the country if this goes on. There was no virtue in the miners' striking arduously for months in isolation when everybody could see that the government was attacking the working class across the board. What use are a party of labor and a national trade union federation if they leave each sector of the class to fight back alone?

From the very beginning, the fight should have been conceived as a general strike, an all-out response to an all-out offensive. And once the miners' strike did break out, extending it to a general strike would have been the best, possibly the only, way to victory — the bosses were uncompromising and the miners' livelihoods were at stake. Of course, this response would have challenged the capitalists' minority rule; that's one reason the labor statesmen didn't do it.

The reformists' responsibility for the impasse of British workers is greater still. For the Labour Party operates not only by dividing workers' struggles but also by rationalizing capitalism in a desperate attempt to save it from its inevitable decay. Thus the industries most directly involved in this summer's strikes are state-owned: mining, railroads, steel. They were nationalized by a Labour Party government after World War II when they were economically weak but still vital for British capitalism. They have been losing money and starved of investment for years; Thatcher is carrying out the current needs of British capital by slashing them back at the workers' expense.

A common view among Labourites is that the solution to the conflict between Thatcher and the miners is to oust the Conservative government and bring Labour to power again. However, Labour governments in the 1970's closed more mines than Thatcher is threatening now (with the compliance of NUM bureaucrats serving on joint review committees with the mine bosses). Labour also introduced productivity schemes under the auspices of Tony Benn, then minister for energy and now the leader of the Labour left. These have created wide wage disparities among miners and encouraged those in the richest coal fields to scab on the present strike.

Left Labourites like Benn and NUM president Arthur Scargill (currently the devil incarnate to the British bourgeoisie) are at least willing to fight for one sector of the working class at a time as the capitalist attacks rain down. But they too falsely identify the workers' interests with

the nationalist needs of capital. Thus the NUM is demanding in its strike that coal imports be stopped; instead, it asks the state to subsidize less productive mines, make new investments in coal and increase exports to Europe. Unfortunately, this protectionist policy of trying to build up exports to replace other countries' production only sets workers of different nations in competition against each other, each driving their own wages down so that "their" coal is cheapest. Where coal is imported because labor is paid far less elsewhere (as is the case in South Africa and Poland), the proletarian policy must be to fight to boost wages on a world scale.

Of course, during the strike the miners have every right to stop imported coal; bringing in coal means strikebreaking. It is interesting to note that one of the countries shipping scab coal to Britain is Poland. When the Polish regime imposed its military rule on Polish workers and their union movement Solidarnosc in 1981, Scargill supported the crackdown as a defense of socialism! During the present strike he appealed to General Jaruzelski to stop Poland's scabbing, to no avail. Scargill reportedly apologized to Lech Walesa for his previous stand after he got no support from the Polish authorities — he recognized a Stalinist crime only when his own base was undercut.

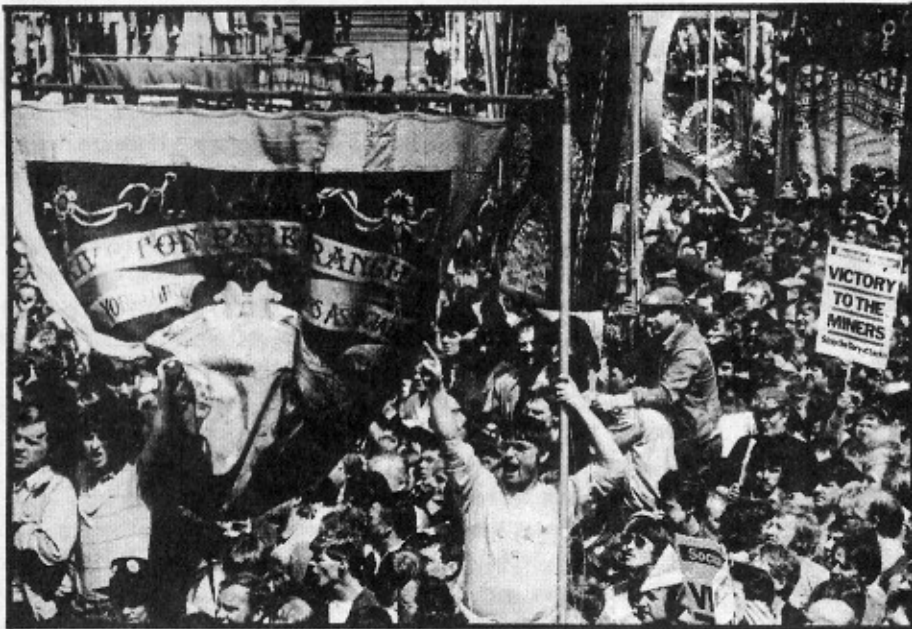
The Polish state capitalists were behaving consistently: they stamp on workers' rights everywhere. A live Polish workers movement, on the other hand, would have been a real ally. It is significant that Solidarnosc, with all its political limitations that this magazine has noted in the past, nevertheless issued strong statements of support to the British miners.

In demanding subsidies, the union leaders are modifying the interests of their national capital only to the extent of trying to keep their own base employed. In turn, the ruling class will always try to see that subsidies for one sector of workers are taken out of the pockets of others. As the crisis of capitalism deepens, the industries collapsing into bankruptcy will increase in number and there will be many fewer surviving firms left to subsidize the losers. Preserving obsolete industries under obsolete national capitals can't work: international competition sooner or later will force either new technology or abandonment. By not attacking the root of the problem, the productive anarchy of capitalism itself, the Scargills are setting up their own (and the workers') destruction.

The Marxist Alternative

The Marxist program does not depend on preserving capitalism, so it can permanently defend the workers' jobs and advance their living standards. We stand with all workers against Thatcher's attack: not one mine must be allowed to close, not one job must be lost. But while fighting together we argue that the reformist program only staves off death today by insuring death tomorrow; there is an alternative. When progress permits the working class to labor less, not more, we want to see our class gain the benefits. This means shortening work hours so that the necessary labor is divided among the available workers, with no loss of pay. Such transitional demands can be fought for under capitalism, but their gains will be preserved only under a workers' state.

The Labour Party leadership waffled throughout the miners' strike, typically condemning violence "on both sides" while offering token sympathy. Some left Labour politicians gave militant speeches of support but could not see beyond continuing the strike at its present level. Scargill showed considerable personal courage and militancy, but even he showed great respect for the prerogatives of his fellow labor bureaucrats, even those scabbing on the strike he leads. For most of the strike he made no effort to demand all-out strike support from the TUC or even from the rail and steel unions nominally allied to the miners — not to speak of demanding a general strike.



Clearly even the left-most bureaucrats are not eager to trigger a mass upsurge. They remember the 1926 general strike, when the labor leaders shamefully backed down. Their thinking is best summed up by Prime Minister Lloyd George's appeal to their predecessors at the point of a powerful strike threat in 1919:

"In these circumstances, if you carry out your threat and strike, then you will defeat us. But if you do so, have you weighed the consequences? The strike will be in defiance of the Government of the country and by its very success will precipitate a constitutional crisis of the first importance. For, if a force arises in the State which is stronger than the State itself, then it must be ready to take on the functions of the State, or withdraw and accept the authority of the State. Gentlemen, have you considered, and if you have, are you ready?" (Taken from *In Place of Fear*, the autobiography of the World War II-era left Labourite Aneurin Bevin.)

The bureaucrats backed off then and ever since have been prepared to quit in advance. However militant or daring, Labour ministers and union leaders are never ready to challenge the existence of the capitalist state. Clearly these people cannot be relied on to find a strategy for victory that firmly counterposes the workers' needs to capital's. Just as the miners' strike points to a general strike, the general strike in turn points the way to workers' power. It shows the working class its own collective strength, enables it to organize self-defense organizations to confront the

bourgeois state's armed thugs, and helps build the revolutionary party out of the advanced militants seeking to act in the interests of their class as a whole. The general strike can be a giant step towards socialist revolution, but it requires a clear confrontation with the reformist politics of union and Labour officials.

The Role of the Left Organizations

In Britain there is a spectrum of several professedly revolutionary organizations, Trotskyist in inspiration, that have been active in or in support of the miners' strike. They ought to have no illusions in capitalism, but in our view they are centrist: reformist in deed despite their revolutionary talk. Still we can go further into the lessons of the struggle by critically examining what several of them have done and said.

It must first be understood that the left in Britain is much larger and more influential among workers than in America. The Labour Party contains a large but amorphous left wing nominally committed to socialism. Secondly the Communist Party still has a sizeable union base and influence among officials; for example, Arthur Scargill was once a CP youth leader and retains some CP politics (including critical support of Stalinist regimes) and left-reformist ideas. Then the Militant Tendency, a nominally Trotskyist current deeply entrenched in the Labour Party, has two Labour members of Parliament and several union

leaders, dominates the city council in Liverpool (Britain's 6th largest city) and runs the party's youth section. There are also several smaller groups, some inside and some out of the Labour Party.

We start with the Militant group. In constantly urging unity behind the miners to fight "the real enemy" — the Tories, Thatcher's Conservative Party — the *Militant* newspaper covers up for union and Labour leaders. After the striking dockworkers had returned to work it hailed their "victory," noting that dockers had "won a respite" and regretting that "union leaders did not make the most of the possibilities by forging closer links with the miners' fight." But the dock union officials refused to make links; it's not that they tried badly and failed. If their criminal betrayal was a victory, will it also be a victory if half the miners are sent back with a "respite" and leave their fellows further isolated? Enough such "victories" and the class will be sliced to ribbons.

Socialism via the Labour Party?

Militant's endless faith in the Labour Party effectively makes it an accomplice. Despite Labour's consistent pro-capitalist record, the *Militant* sees it as the solution to the miners' struggle. It writes: "The Tories and their system offer no future to working people. The labour movement must take up the fight for the return of a Labour government committed to fundamental socialist change." However, the system does not belong just to the Tories. Labour is just as much a

part of it. A Labour government "committed to fundamental socialist change" might nationalize some industries (but still run them along capitalist lines) and perhaps give more tariff preference to British goods. In the past, Labour governments have been the vehicle for delivering gains won by the working class. But capitalism today rules out anything "fundamental."

If "socialist change" is supposed to mean socialism, it can be achieved only through working-class power — a revolutionary state based on centralized workers' councils that destroys the old capitalist state, its ruling bodies and its armed force. Socialism cannot be achieved through Parliament and a Parliamentary party designed only to talk and pass laws while the real levers of the state and the military remain with the bosses. But that is what a Labour government means, no matter what "socialist" qualifications are attached to it. Any program short of revolution means keeping capitalism afloat. Those who tack on militant socialist rhetoric to this are playing the traditional centrist role of disorienting the most revolutionary-minded workers.

A similar line is taken by the newspaper Socialist Organiser, also published by would-be Trotskyists buried inside the Labour Party. It too says "We must fight for a Labour government. At the same time we must fight in the labour movement to commit such a government to anti-capitalist measures." And it gets slightly more explicit: Labour's present leadership under Neil Kinnock will not do. "Labour needs a leader like Tony Benn or Eric Heffer, who would stand by Party policy and support struggles like the miners'" (April 5).

Yes, Benn has impressed many miners with his readiness to express support, unlike Kinnock's waverings. But we already have seen what Benn stands for: left bourgeois nationalism and protectionism, including the productivity schemes that set miners competing regionally against each other. He is not for solidarity strikes with the miners or stopping the transport of coal.

Benn and Scargill are both obstacles that a fighting working class will have to learn to push aside. This does not rule out critically supporting them when they do stand against capitalism (and especially when the bosses' government has singled them out for attack). But for "revolutionaries" to champion them as real solutions is to lie to the working class, to perpetuate the most dangerous illusions.

Both Militant and Socialist Organiser have called for a 24-hour general strike to back the miners; Socialist Organiser at least urges this as a preparation for an all-out general strike. But the bureaucracy has used local "days of action" to deceive workers who are eager to show support for the miners: they can blow off steam without doing any lasting damage to profits. For revolutionaries to raise the same demand only gives a left cover to the bureaucrats' betrayal. The all-out general strike has to be the primary strategy, placed as a demand on the bureaucrats and counterposed, not attached, to their strategy.

A very different approach is taken by the Socialist Workers Party, which does not work inside Labour (although it always supports it in elections, even when Labour has as dazzling a record of betrayals as in 1979). The SWP is pessimistic, because there aren't enough revolutionaries around

for the strike to win. It reasons:

"We have to look reality in the face. The truth is painful but telling lies can lead to death. The truth about this strike is that it has been going on for six weeks and still the picketing isn't being effectively organized. ... So what can we do? The key weakness is a weakness of leadership. The key thing we have to do — and we shouldn't be ashamed about this — is to build the network of revolutionary militants in the class necessary for the battle afterwards."

This comes from a talk by SWP leader Chris Harman on "the state of class struggle in Britain today" in Socialist Review, May 1984. It sounds daring and honest; Harman even cites the example of Lenin returning to Russia during the 1917 revolution to fight against the stream of all other anti-capitalist currents. But it is dead wrong. It means in reality that the SWP can do little more than the daily work the bureaucracy accepts, joining picket lines and collecting money for the strikers and their families. It covers this with abstract and formal propaganda about the future, not in order to point out a new direction for the struggle but as a way of fatalistically accepting its weakness. The strike can be won through a new strategy. Defeatism is self-fulfilling.

The real task is to show workers not just how to picket better but that the road to victory is counterposed to that of the sell-out leaders. The SWP does not raise an overall working-class strategy — not even the Labour entrists' "Labour to power," much less the general strike needed to win. And Harman lets the bureaucrats off the hook, for they too can say they don't have an adequate network of militants to run a better strike.

Revolutionary Party as "Network"

Harman holds that revolutionaries are too few now to affect the strike, so "we must make sure our forces are bigger when the next battle comes." There are two big problems with this. One, you don't recruit many confident militants and make them revolutionaries out of defeats; the revolutionary forces will grow only through class struggle victories that ignite workers' confidence and consciousness. The best set of leaders in the world couldn't have pulled off the 1917 revolution without the mass actions that led workers to demand revolutionary answers.

Two, Harman's forces, the "network" he calls the revolutionary party, are really little more than militants who coordinate their militancy (it is no accident that he uses this trendy but apt term). It is different from the reformists' sectoralism, but it is no answer. What a mere network cannot do is campaign relentlessly for a political line sharply counterposed to the present leadership's. Like the Labour leftists, the SWP avoids challenging the labor bureaucracy's misleadership head-on. It accepts the reformists' parochialism as a factor to be built on rather than destroyed.

The characteristic SWP idea is that the key for socialists is the "rank and file," that is, the mass of workers as they are. For Marxists the key is the politics workers learn in struggle from a revolutionary party that keeps the interests of the entire working class in view. Lenin, even as quoted by Harman, fought for slogans like "Down with the war!" and "Down with the provisional government!"; he didn't call

for a more effective provisional government or a better-fought war. Harman cleverly uses the phrases of party and leadership, but it is the same old semi-syndicalist line in Leninist garb.

Abstract Democracy vs. Trotskyism

At the left of the spectrum is the Workers Power (WP) group, which justly attacks both the SMP and the left Labourites for letting the bureaucracy off the hook. But it does not overcome their problems; it only pushes each brand of centrism further left. For example, Workers Power newspaper (April 19) had the strike headline "Rank and file control — the key to victory," and the article called for democracy in the NUM, built out of the strike movement and keeping the elected leaders under membership control.

This is a demand that must be fought for in the struggle, far better than the SMP's rank and file organization without a fight for power. But it is not the primary question. Militant workers will rarely see any point in a hard fight for mass democracy in their union unless they see that the tasks ahead demand their control. The real key to victory, when the stakes are as high as today, is the revolutionary workers' party and a class-wide response. Given a winning strategy, something real to fight for, workers will gladly clear obstacles out of the way.

Workers Power's use of "the rank and file" as a magic amulet for solving all problems derails the struggle for revolutionary leadership. Thus its criticism of Scargill is that he's not rank and filist enough; WP makes a sort of united front approach to Scargill over union democracy, inviting him to "give the lead in organizing the rank and file" to oust the right-wing union leaders and "hold all officials, including themselves, directly to account" (April 5).

list pap, not Trotskyism.

Rank and filism and abstract democracy can often be used to downplay the key questions of action. Thus at the beginning of the miners' strike Workers Power was very concerned about the question of a national strike ballot. Tory and right-wing Labour spokesmen were demanding that Scargill poll the NUM before leading a strike; the militants correctly rejected this and went on spreading the strike from mine to mine. Action rather than abstract democracy left the initiative in the hands of the militants rather than handing it to the bosses' press and the scabs. WP rejected the "bosses' ballot" but instead suggested strike votes at mass meetings at each mine in order to convince reluctant miners to come out. Although different, this still feeds into the right-wing ballot propaganda. Making the general strike demand primary would have done more to draw backward workers into the strike.

Workers Power did call for a general strike, and more. In an article on "the general strike and working class power" (May 16), it outlined a multi-stage scenario. First there is a general strike controlled by workers' councils, forcing the Tories out of office; then the Labour Party is elected, but the councils stay in operation to exert mass pressure on the new government. Ultimately, since "parliament would not long be reconciled to the competing power base of workers' councils," the councils have to take sole power forcibly, through revolution.

Much of this scenario is a valid compilation of Marxist-Leninist lessons, but there are two glaring problems. The first is the seeming inevitability of a Labour Party government. As the article notes, "a Labour government, even one stuffed full of Tony Benns, would be an almighty betrayal of a general strike." Yes, and therefore it would be necessary

Militant British miners stopping coke delivery at power station. Despite filthy scab policies of reformist union bureaucrats, elementary class solidarity has not been eradicated.



WP warns that this won't happen because Scargill and the left leaders are in danger of becoming "lifelong prisoners of their positions" (April 19). But if that and not his sectoral, reformist politics is Scargill's problem, the next leader, even if chosen by the rank and file and subject to its control, will also be imprisoned by the office. WP also lets Scargill off the hook, for if leadership generally is no good then it looks like Scargill is managing to do pretty well. The point is that the "rank and file" has no particular politics, and the key question is revolutionary leadership versus reform. Workers Power's rank and filism is popu-

to fight for an alternative to Labour, a workers' state, from the start — instead of taking Labour's triumph as given. Depending on circumstances, Marxists might stand opposed to Labour in elections, especially under revolutionary conditions; critical support is only one possible tactic. Workers Power does not indicate how, or even whether, to decide this or carry it out (just as under recent non-revolutionary conditions it has always chosen to support Labour). WP simply assumes that Labour will take office and then describes the inevitable growing conflict between its government and the workers' councils.

This leads right to the second problem: there is no mention at all of any revolutionary party until the very end, after the revolution. Then we are told that "to overcome the horrors of capitalism will be an immense task, a task for decades of a planned economy. It is a task which, like the conquest of power itself, above all needs a leading and directing revolutionary party." Despite the afterthought about the conquest of power, Workers Power obviously felt no urgency for the revolutionary party before and during the revolution. We note that this matches WP's theory of Stalinism, which sees workers' states created in Eastern Europe and elsewhere without a revolutionary party. In Britain too, the revolutionary party is the icing on the cake, not a necessary ingredient.

WP's scenario is as fatalistic as the SWP's. Since each stage is inevitable, there is no need to fight for the revolutionary party until the requisite preceding stages are exhausted. There is no conception of a communist nucleus growing among increasingly class-conscious workers by counterposing its revolutionary program to the reformists at every turn. No wonder WP's scenario had Labour assuming the government so easily: without the revolutionary party, there would of course be no one to mount a challenge, certainly not the "rank and file" councils under unspecified leadership. When the workers do break with Labour, WP leaves the initiative for the break to Parliament -- again, no wonder, in the absence of a revolutionary party to lead the workers to revolutionary consciousness.

Workers Power's scenario amounts to "First Labour, then us," a conception that turns the revolutionary party into the last runner on a relay team, ready to take the proffered baton. But Labour is not on our team. It will never peacefully pass the baton to revolutionaries.

Certainly Workers Power knows abstractly of the importance of the revolutionary party in Leninism, and occasionally it gets tacked on to an article or two. What WP really stands for, however, is the rank and file in counterposition to the leadership. As with its approach to Scargill, it defies the united front of militants. Incessant use of the united front, especially an amorphous one, inevitably hides the centrality of the party, as Trotsky observed. No wonder WP's revolutionary party is an afterthought.

Class struggle as keen as the British miners' not only sharpens traditional Marxist lessons; it also exposes the caricatures of Marxism that abound in more passive times. For example, the Spartacists' programmatic interventions in the labor movement have been a joke since 1979, when they urged Detroit auto workers to seize and auction off Chrysler's assets as a proletarian solution to the company's financial crisis. They sensibly do not raise such a program for the British mines, although Thatcher for one might agree with it as a contribution towards free enterprise.

This time their pro-Stalinism led to a new bright idea. Faced with Poland's scab coal exports and given Scargill's hostility to Solidarnosc, Spartacist Britain (April 1984) wrote that "the NUM leaders have some real authority to appeal to the government of the Polish deformed workers state." When this attempted left cover for Scargill proved worthless, they tried to make the best of it by denouncing the strikebreaking British miners as a "Solidarnosc-style

splitaway" (July 1984). In reality, of course, it was Solidarnosc which led massive strikes, and the state-run unions which the Polish workers split from which scabbed. Inability to tell strikers from scabs, or the workers' allies from their enemies, is not the strongest basis for advising workers' struggles.

More relevant to the issue at hand is the Spartacists' approach to the call for a general strike. They couple this with another gimmick: denunciation of Workers Power for placing the general strike demand on the TUC. Doing so creates illusions in sell-out bureaucrats, the Spartacists insist, for the TUC is "a bunch of proven scabherders and strike-breakers."

True, but proven to whom? The TUC is unfortunately recognized as the workers' official leadership. Leftists may already understand that the union bureaucrats are proven traitors; most workers, even those who distrust union officials, still have to be shown proof in practice. Marxists warn the workers that the bureaucrats will inevitably betray any struggle. But these leaders cannot be ignored. If the TUC is exposed for not responding to the miners' demands, the workers would be far readier to move past the bureaucratic obstacle and follow a fighting leadership to spread the strike.

The SL line amounts to denouncing Trotsky in the early 1930's for demanding united action against the German Nazis from the leaders of the Social Democratic Party, a bunch of proven class traitors if ever there was one. Yet millions of workers who wanted to smash the Nazis followed them. The purpose of united front demands such as these is not to ensure political agreement but to carry out action in common despite disagreements, even vital ones.

Centrists Cover for Reformism

The Spartacists' attempt to tail Scargill was covered only lightly with a few criticisms. They justify their unwillingness to raise demands on the TUC by identifying closely with the NUM leadership's line: their August paper approvingly quotes the chairman of a strikers' meeting, "NUM policy is not to call on the TUC for anything!" This is precisely how Scargill left the other bureaucrats off the hook. Then in late August strike pressures forced Scargill to shift and request TUC backing. Continuing his pro-bureaucratic policy, he didn't demand a general strike but applauded the TUC's treacherous "support" instead of challenging it.

As the worldwide struggles of the proletariat mount, militant workers are learning to detest the reformist Kirklands, Kinnocks and Mitterrands who base themselves in the working class in order to betray it. Revolutionary workers must see more: that even the reformists like Benn and Scargill who talk and even act left are dangerous. Their narrow sectoralism means disaster for the working class at a time when capitalism is picking workers out for the scrap heap one sector at a time. Even the nominally Trotskyist organizations don't understand this. They too are obstacles; they too have swallowed the parochialism that reformism fed the working class in more prosperous times. So in their various ways they avoid making the necessary criticism of the left-wing reformists. A revolutionary party cannot abstain from sharp criticism of centrism as well as reformism. ■

Trotskyism and the Russian Question

A running debate has been taking place at Oberlin College in Ohio between Socialist Voices-LRP, a student group sympathetic to the League for the Revolutionary Party, and the Spartacus Youth League (SYL). The debate arose over two demonstrations at Oberlin against CIA and Marine Corps recruiters in February and March; both times Socialist Voices tried to organize united front protests against U.S. militarism. The SYL's newspaper Young Spartacus carried two ranting articles on the events, both of them cavalierly dealing with the facts, crudely falsifying our Oberlin comrades' role, lumping our politics together with the social-democratic DSA's and politically botching up the Marxist united front tactic. We answered all this in the leaflet "Thank You, Young Spartacus!", distributed to a Spartacist League educa-



Babrak Karmal, head of Afghanistan thanks to Russian army, addresses first conference of Islamic mullahs in country's history. Spartacists can be proud: "Hail Red Army!" "God is Great!"

tional conference in New York and to an SYL forum at Oberlin in mid-April, and reprinted below.

In its summer issue, YS countered with an article called "Thank You, LRP?", partly in reply to our leaflet but mainly to a shorter letter by Socialist Voices-LRP (which it printed) addressed to the first of its two articles. Here the Spartacists have changed their tack. First, they tell no more outright lies about our politics; evidently our exposure of their lying, recognizable as such to their own members, has had a hygienic effect. Then they admit the SYL was wrong on the united front and thank us for stimulating "an educational discussion so that not just the Oberlin SYL, but all the comrades of the SYL/SL, might be better and more effective Marxist-Leninists." And in an accompanying article on another Oberlin sit-in protest, they carefully credit our comrades for playing a militant role and working with the SYL in a united front against DSA maneuvers.

Good. We accept their correction, reluctant though it is. We think it is a little ungallant of the SL chiefs to

put the blame for their un-Bolshevik tactics on the local youth and by implication the whole membership, when the same sectarian policy of imposing political agreement on key issues like Soviet defensism as a condition for united fronts has been an old Spartacist habit. We also question how well they learned: as our article in this issue on the miners' strike in Britain shows, the Spartacists there still reject united front tactics — as recently as in their July paper! We further note for the record that YS makes no response to our earlier charges of falsification, thereby implicitly acknowledging their accuracy. An honest, Bolshevik, course would require an explicit public correction of false charges. That is still too much to expect from the SL.

The bulk of the YS reply is devoted to a different matter. In a condescendingly "comradely" tone (chosen to mask their concession on the crucial united front tactic), they take up the history of Shachtmanism and expound on Marxist-Leninist theory — in order to debate the class nature of the Soviet Union. Condescension by the Spartacists is particularly inappropriate on the Russian question, since they have been avoiding a reply to us on it for years. For example, they have never answered our thorough dismantling of their theory in Socialist Voice No. 4, written in 1977.

For our part, since we welcome every opportunity to get to the roots of important theoretical questions and analyze their political consequences, we take up the Spartacists' challenge here. Obviously another all-SL self-educational discussion is called for. But as we shall show, more is needed, much more.

Thank You, Young Spartacus!

It might seem difficult at first glance to see why we in the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) would be grateful to Young Spartacus for its article in the April issue on the Socialist Voices-LRP group at Oberlin College. After all, it was a hard-hitting attack on a group we have close relations with. Nevertheless, we found it very useful — for us.

Spartacist League publications used to boast of their reputation for honesty and accuracy, claiming that even opponents had to admit their high standards. But rarely is this claim made any more — for good reason. This article is a case in point: containing almost as many lies as words, it replaces truth with invective.

The article purports to describe two events that took place this [spring] term on the Oberlin campus. In referring to the DSA's "die-in" against Marine recruiters on February 7, it states: "The Spartacus Youth League held a militant protest to drive the Marines off campus and the wimpy 'third campists' of the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) sat quietly with the DSA while the campus cops excluded the SYL from the site of the 'die-in'."

This report is fiction from beginning to end. The SYL's

"militant protest" made no attempt to "drive the Marines off campus." When it attracted next to no onlookers, the SYL had to come over to the far larger DSA die-in. And there the SYL saw that the Socialist Voices members had not "sat quietly with the DSA," since they had refused to sit "down or "die" or be quiet. The group distributed a leaflet hostile both to the miserable die-in tactic and to the reformist pro-Democratic Party DSA line which disconnected war from its bourgeois causation. Its signs aimed at the die-in participants read: "Capitalism Needs Marines — One Won't Go Without the Other!" and "Democrats Use Marines Too!" That is why the DSA tried to block the group's placards and its leaflet distribution.

The falsity of the second charge, that the group ignored the SYL's exclusion, is also well known to the SYLers. Socialist Voices had no knowledge of the exclusion at the time it occurred, for if indeed the SYL was excluded it made no noise about it. [We know now that the SYL was excluded--ed.] The Spartacist supporter who remained at the demonstration until the end neither created any protest nor informed Socialist Voices of what had happened. When an SYLer did inform a member of the group afterward, he replied that the group would have supported the SYL had it known. Given this history, the Young Spartacus charge is a slander.

The article's description of what happened when the CIA came to campus on March 22 is another series of lies. Young Spartacus writes: "The LRP speaker confined himself to a mealy-mouthed exposure of some of the CIA's more notorious plots"

In fact, the speaker made a blistering attack on the CIA, and the brunt of his talk was devoted to the point that the CIA was inevitable under imperialism and could not be destroyed without overthrowing the capitalist system. Socialist Voices' large banner could be overlooked only by conscious falsifiers. Its slogans read: "Working Classes of the World Unite Against Imperialist Agents," "Democrats and Republicans -- Twin Bosses of the CIA," "Gay and Lesbian Rights through Socialist Revolution," "Capitalism/CIA/Military -- One Won't Go Without the Others." Another sign read, "Rebuild the Fourth International." Mealy-mouthed indeed. The SYL's slogan "Abolish the CIA" shows a far lower understanding of what reforms are conceivable under imperialism.

According to YS, Socialist Voices made no objection when another sponsor, the Lesbian and Gay Union, "simply protested the CIA's discrimination against homosexuals" Again a lie. The SV-LRP speaker openly attacked the Lesbian and Gay Union's line. He noted that gay and lesbian liberation can be achieved only through the overthrow of capitalism and its secret police, and that gays and lesbians have no reason to defend a society that inevitably oppresses them.

YS castigates the LRP for having a united front with "a group that merely wants to 'democratize' the Company." But this only shows the Spartacists' disagreement with the Bolshevik understanding of such fronts. Trotsky pointed out that he would make united fronts with "the devil and his grandmother" in order to achieve communist goals. For Bolsheviks, united fronts mean common action despite fundamental political differences. For the Spartacists they mean political agreement — but if tendencies fundamentally agree, they

should merge, not form united fronts!

That is why Socialist Voices invited the SYL to join the action against the CIA. YS quotes the group's letter to the SYL (accurately, for once) as saying: "Have the courage to stand on the same platform as us before a larger audience than a programmatically sectarian demonstration could draw." But the SYL did not have the courage to accept, claiming that the LRP "has the gall to condemn us as cowardly and sectarian" because we refuse to drop our defense of the gains of the Russian Revolution. What hypocrisy!" No: what a lie!

The Socialist Voices letter to the SYL called for a joint protest under anti-CIA and anti-U.S. militarism slogans, and added, "The politics of the LRP will be presented from the platform ... and hopefully we will win people to support us by what we say and the strategies (including those presented by other speakers at the event) we expose." The SYL was invited to do the same, not to give up anything, including its Russian position.

As we predicted, the SYL's "spirited protest" attracted nobody but Spartacists from nearby Cleveland; so they had to troop over to the united front rally of 40-50 people, where they were given a chance to speak from the podium. And what was the SYL's retort to this insulting offer to share a platform with "CIA democratizers"? It accepted! Somehow the Young Spartacist account neglects to mention this rotten bloc. Every activist at Oberlin knows the SYL participated. Thus the YS attack on "hypocrisy" overlooks the real example — its own.

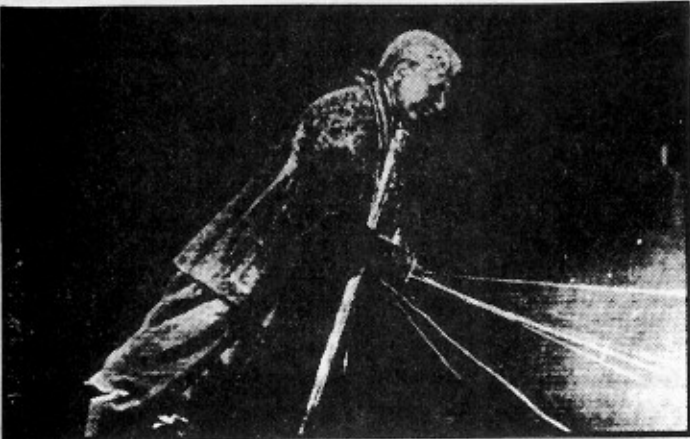
In the course of its diatribe the SYL claims, "The LRP's got some nerve to expect us to look to them for opposition to the CIA: after all, you're the group that lines up with the CIA's company union in Poland, and the barbaric mullahs they call 'freedom fighters' in Afghanistan!" However, not only does the LRP not call the barbaric Afghan mullahs "freedom fighters," we condemn them and have never supported them politically or militarily. Unlike the Spartacists, the LRP also condemns the petty-bourgeois popular-frontist cretin Karmal (no friend of women's and workers' rights either), his defense of the "Holy Koran" and his conciliation of prominent mullahs. We also condemn the USSR's invasion, which destroyed most of the pitifully few and distorted gains the aborted Afghan bourgeois-democratic revolution had achieved.

As for Poland, the LRP has always fought against the CIA line. Our defense of Solidarity versus the regime is counterposed to the Western-oriented, Church-ridden, reformist leaders like Walesa who continually seek to capitulate not only to the West but to the Stalinist state. We support the ranks of misled workers whom Archbishop Glemp condemns as "Trotskyites" for their militancy. From the Spartacists they get only pro-Stalinist attacks.

The article attacks the LRP as "third campists" (YS uses quotation marks as if it is quoting us) and "Shachtmanites," neither of which is even remotely true. There are only two camps: the camp of capitalism, including Moscow and Peking as well as Washington, and that of the proletariat. We think that Trotsky was mistaken in the last years of his life in believing that the USSR was still a degenerated workers' state rather than statified capitalism, even though he knew it had definitively passed over to the side of counterrevo-

lution.

But we are totally with Trotsky when he condemned the Shachtmanites who, in adopting the anti-Marxist "bureaucratic collectivism" theory, threw out not only the remaining gains of October but also the belief in the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat. Shachtman's cynicism was later adopted by the Pabloites (and so-called anti-Pabloites) who defended the idea that a socialist revolution (in East Eur-



1956: Hungarian workers topple Stalin's statue. Phony Trotskyists now try to defend his "progressive" achievements.

ope, China, Cuba, etc.) could be made by the petty-bourgeois Stalinists without the working class. This kind of rampant cynicism has produced tendencies like the SL, which can repeat lie after lie in its press in front of its own members, who know it is lying or don't care any more.

The LRP remains committed to proletarian permanent revolution throughout the world. We reject the cynical, reformist garbage of DSA and its friends like Mitterrand and solidarize with the French workers who excoriate him. We likewise condemn outfits like the Spartacists who hail a counter-revolutionary pig like Andropov and who fail in the elementary communist task of offering military support to the Lebanese fighters against American imperialism.

The reason we thank Young Spartacus for its article is simple. As the SYL knows and chooses not to mention, the Socialist Voices-LRP comrades at Oberlin are sympathetic to the LRP but not members of our organization. We have been endeavoring to win them by demonstrating our commitment to the fundamental proposition Trotsky was so fond of repeating: "Tell the workers the truth." Today's fraudulent rightward-galloping left (including the SL-SYL) is a model of what not to be. The SL-SYL, with an article which our comrades know (and know the SYLers know) is a pack of lies, has provided one more piece of evidence showing the difference between cynicism and the revolutionary communist politics of the LRP.

Trotskyism and the Russian Question

YS frames its reply by labeling us as "Shachtman's bastard children," political descendants of Max Shachtman, the American Trotskyist leader who deserted the Fourth International after the Hitler-Stalin pact on the eve of World War II. Let us first clear up errors in both the Socialist Voi-

ces-LRP letter and the YS article on Shachtman's ideological history.

When he broke politically with Trotsky in 1939, Shachtman did not refuse to characterize the USSR as a degenerated workers state, as YS writes; at first he still accepted the term. But he did refuse, in opportunist and anti-Marxist fashion, to draw the necessary conclusion of defending any workers' state -- however degenerate -- in any war against capitalism.

Shachtman soon changed his theory and adopted the "third camp" view (already held by many of his followers) that the USSR was bureaucratic collectivist, a new form of class so-



Crowd during Hungarian revolution holding picture of Premier Imre Nagy. SL too has illusions: can't tell nationalist from real revolutionary.

ciety neither bourgeois nor proletarian. Even then he was consistent only in his anti-Marxist opportunism. Initially he maintained that bureaucratic collectivism was progressive over capitalism; this ought to have implied that it was "worth being defended," as our comrades wrote. But not for Shachtman, who asserted that the collectivized economy was defensible only if attacked, not when engaged in an inter-imperialist war allied with one imperialist bloc. Later in the war the idea of Soviet progressiveness was quietly dropped, and by the end of the 1940's he was finding "democratic" capitalism preferable to Russian rival. This logic inexorably led him all the way into the U.S. imperialist camp.

Our comrades' letter was wrong to truncate Shachtman's career at its semi-defensist stage, but this was done not by "consciously lying" as YS asserts (Shachtman's subsequent history of "neutrality" and then support for the West is too well known in left political circles for anyone to consciously conceal it), nor obviously out of any interest in admiring Shachtman for defensism or for anything else. Their point was to illustrate the common methodology of Spartacism and Shachtmanism -- an entirely valid one, as we shall show.

What Is a Workers' State?

YS starts right off with a backhanded salute to Shachtman that allows us to illuminate its position: "Shachtman was far too intelligent and experienced as a (deteriorating) Marxist to ever claim that the state which issued from the Bolshevik Revolution was capitalist in any way, shape or form." But what the Spartacists admire as Shachtman's "Marxism" is precisely his lack of it.

Marx reasoned that communism in its lower stage would have to retain bourgeois standards in the distribution of its products. Of course, a workers' state still in transition to communism would all the more be forced to keep bourgeois forms, and in production as well. Lenin, in his State and Revolution, spelled out the necessary conclusion that "bourgeois right in the distribution of articles of consumption inevitably presupposes the existence of the bourgeois state, for right is nothing without an apparatus capable of enforcing the observance of the standards of right. Consequently, for a certain time not only bourgeois right but even the bourgeois state remains under communism, without the bourgeoisie!" Trotsky also discussed the workers' state as a "bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie" in The Revolution Betrayed. According to Marxist tradition, therefore, the Soviet state that emerged from the Bolshevik revolution was capitalist in a certain "way, shape or form."

To see why, let us examine this transitional workers' state more closely. Its ruling class, the proletariat, arises under capitalism; it is defined not as a sociological income group but through its relationship with capital, embodied in the capitalist class that owns the means of production. The two classes exist only together, as unified opposites. When the proletariat overthrows capitalist rule via the socialist revolution and makes itself the ruling class, capital and capitalism still remain -- until all capitalist relations are destroyed and classless communism is achieved. In contrast to the bourgeoisie, which seized power from the previous feudal rulers at a point when its own mode of production already operated, the proletariat can only begin to create its own communist mode once it holds state power.

Marx observed further that no class society leaves the earth until it has developed the means of production to the extent it is capable; but at a certain point its social relations of class conflict become a barrier to further expansion. By the twentieth century capitalism had developed the productive forces to the point that scarcity was no longer inevitable, but its social fetters prevent the achievement of abundance. The task of the workers' state is to carry out the accumulative potential of capitalism and thereby destroy the material basis for scarcity and for the very existence of classes. When the proletariat eliminates itself as a sepa-

rate class, the final remnant of capitalism is abolished and communism begins.

Thus the workers' state is not some third form of society; it is part of the capitalist stage of history. Marx, Lenin and Trotsky all understood that only two forms of society were possible in this revolutionary epoch (short of a cataclysmic mass defeat sending civilization centuries backward). Capitalism and communism correspond to the two decisive classes in modern society, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. All third alternatives are either utopian dreams or despairing nightmares, imagined by middle-class theoreticians whose social bases have no direct connection with the major means of production and therefore no decisive social power, no way of achieving their own unique form of society. Spartacism, like Shachtmanism, is rooted in a petty-bourgeois view of capitalism. It is not accidental that both invent the fantasy of a modern society fundamentally distinct from both capitalism and communism. It is accidental only that they give it different names.

In order to overcome the laws and relations it inherits from capitalist rule, the workers' state must consciously plan its economy. As increasingly more is produced and scarcity is conquered, the capitalist laws, operating because of scarcity, are gradually reduced in force. The workers' state is the arena of struggle between capitalism's blind laws and planning: conscious human control over society. Planning becomes fully dominant only when scarcity is ended, when communism is achieved. Both the Spartacists and Shachtman, however, believe that Stalinism is a society in which planning (albeit mangled planning) rules at the same time that scarcity exists. The idea is an absurdity, and an idealist one at that, a typically petty-bourgeois conception that asserts the primacy of consciousness over material conditions.

What Is Capitalism?

In denying the capitalist aspects of a workers' state the Spartacists expose the class basis of their own method. But they are not really thinking of the revolutionary state of Lenin; what they have in mind is its Stalinist degeneration, which for them has even less resemblance to capitalism. The allegedly Trotskyist SL indeed asserts that Stalin led the USSR farther from capitalism than did Lenin and Trotsky! In their pamphlet Why the USSR is Not Capitalist (to which our 1977 Socialist Voice article was a reply) they write: "The social structure of Russia in the 1920's (though not the regime) was far more conducive to capitalist restoration than in the USSR today" (page 90). Trotsky in contrast warned that the Stalinist counterrevolution posed a grave danger of capitalist restoration. For Trotsky that became the hallmark of Stalinist rule in the Soviet workers' state of the late 1930's.

The Spartacists do not agree with Shachtman over whether the USSR is progressive, but they do agree on the theory that it has moved further away from capitalism under Stalin. While Trotsky did not see the restoration of capitalism that took place at the end of the thirties (as we do), we share his view on Stalinism's trajectory toward capitalism. The Spartacists and Shachtman also share a certain cynicism towards the proletariat's revolutionary possibilities in the USSR, linked to their common inability to recognize any laws

of motion — let alone those of capitalism — in the Soviet system.

To show that Soviet society can't be capitalist, YS begins with a typically superficial look: "It is a funny kind of capitalism indeed, comrades, where the economy is completely planned and where the state has a monopoly on foreign trade. ... an economy where there are no profits and no competing capitals and where there is no reserve army of the unemployed."

We have answered these gibes before (most recently in "Planning and the Law of Value in the USSR," Socialist Voice No. 20), but here is a quick summary. Completely planned? Hardly: the USSR runs a command economy constantly altering its "plans" to match its results and never fulfilling them. Trotsky wrote in 1933, "The Soviet economy today is neither a monetary nor a planned one. It is an almost purely bureaucratic economy." It is now more monetary than it once was but just as bureaucratic and still in no way scientifically planned.

A Funny Kind of Capitalism

Monopoly on foreign trade? In the USSR yes, a leftover gain of the workers' revolution distorted by the Stalinist bureaucracy. But other Soviet-style economies (Yugoslavia, Hungary, China) have dropped the trade monopoly, and a wing of Soviet bureaucrats would love to as well. No profits? There is profit first of all in the Marxist sense of surplus-value created by the working class; as Marx, Lenin and Trotsky all understood, there has to be value in a workers' state still short of communism, all the more so when workers' rule has been overthrown. And there is also profit in the bourgeois sense of a given enterprise's surplus over costs: it is one of the chief indicators of a Soviet enterprise's performance and is enshrined in Article 16 of the new Constitution of the USSR.

No competing capitals? The various ministries and enterprises are independent and do compete, over assigned output targets and for investment, labor and materials if not for sales. And at least in the military sector, they do compete for sales. No industrial reserve army? In the USSR there is no mass unemployment, another gain left over from the workers' state that gives the rulers headaches in trying to discipline the workers today. But Yugoslavia is at the head of the European unemployment league, and Poland, China etc. also have high jobless rates (China even sells battalions of excess workers to foreign capitalists under contract) — so full employment is not a necessary Stalinist trait. On the other hand, neither is full employment impossible under capitalism: Nazi Germany had it, and like Stalin's USSR used police measures rather than pure economic pressure to keep the workers in line.

The Soviet economy is "a funny kind of capitalism indeed," deformed by the workers' gains that it usurped, and gravely weakened by the bureaucrats' inability to wield the capitalist tools of mass unemployment and full internal competition. But this is nothing new. In this epoch capitalism in general has become deformed: individual entrepreneurs have given way to vast monopolies, the classical bourgeois motto of equality is turned inside out in the age of imperialism. It is no surprise, therefore, that the destruction of

the soviet revolution produced an even more distorted form. Marxists analyze society as it develops historically, not by contrasting reality against some ideal norm.

The Spartacists refuse to look for the inner laws of the Soviet system, preferring to compare it with a norm. This method can more readily be turned against them. After all, they conceive of today's USSR as a workers' state. But where are the workers' councils? The workers' parties or workers' militias? Trade union and elementary democratic rights? Wage equalization and abolition of class distinctions? Anything that might suggest the working class is in power? No such thing exists; it was all wiped out by the counterrevolution of the 1930's. The Spartacists will answer that property is nationalized. It is indeed — but not socialized, not even centralized so that scientific planning is conceivable. For the SL nationalized property is an unchanging abstraction independent of material reality.

The whole approach is wrong. As Trotsky observed (appropriately enough, in a polemic against Shachtman):

"Vulgar thought operates with such concepts as capitalism, morals, freedom, workers' state, etc. as fixed abstractions, presuming that capitalism is equal to capitalism, morals are equal to morals, etc. Dialectical thinking analyzes all things and phenomena in their continuous change, while determining in the material conditions of those changes that critical limit beyond which 'A' ceases to be 'A,' a workers' state ceases to be a workers' state." (In Defense of Marxism, page 50)

Capitalist Laws Operate

A Marxist analysis has to look below the surface and discover a society's historical context and its laws of motion. We have done this and found Marx's laws of capitalist development in operation in the USSR, although obviously not in pure form. The SL ignores the problem; it denies that any Marxist laws operate and never proposes alternatives. The clear implication is that "complete planning" allows the bureaucracy to do whatever it pleases. Here, for example, is what the YS article has to contribute, with truly academic obscurity, on the workings of the Soviet economy:

"A hard-core economic analysis of the Soviet Union shows a quantitative gradient in how much surplus product is appropriated, with the bureaucracy skimming off extra for itself, and no qualitative counterposition between a non-existent labor and capital. Comrades, quantitative parasitism does not a ruling class make."

Really? Non-existent labor in a workers' state? This would best be interpreted as a gross slip of the pen, were it not for the fact that the Spartacists have said it before. Workers Vanguard wrote in 1978 about the devastation of Cambodia under the Stalinist Pol Pot regime that "the tiny proletariat was destroyed" — although the Spartacists still regarded the country as a workers' state. So the "deformed workers' state" invention does not depend on even the existence of workers, much less their power. A strange kind of workers' state indeed.

All right, let us suppose the Spartacists simply slipped and forgot Marx's distinction between labor and the commodity labor-power, the workers' capacity for labor which is sold to the capitalists in exchange for wages. They probably meant to say that there is no selling of labor-power under Stalinism, for they said so in their pamphlet on the USSR. But then they have to face the problem of Soviet reality. Why do wages exist? Why do firms compete for workers, offering high salaries to lure laborers to Siberia? (Why, for that matter, do consumer goods cost more in Siberia? Could it just be that the law of value requires that added labor costs for transportation be included?) Why do workers so

not with a degenerated workers' state but with an actual communist (or socialist) society that had already eliminated all class distinctions but still retained massive parasitism. To take their Marxist verbiage seriously the Spartacists would have to say that the USSR is a degenerated socialist state. Then they would have to junk their tattered claim to Trotskyism, since Trotsky insisted on the absurdity of Stalin calling his domain "socialist" when scarcity still reigned.

But the social difference in the USSR is far greater. As Trotsky described the bureaucracy when there was still a degenerating workers' state in the mid-thirties, "It is in the



Lech Walesa addressing crowd of Solidarnosc workers. Spartacists can't distinguish between masses and misleaders, but can distinguish between capitalism and a workers' state — the latter has no workers. And these muddleheads pose as Marxists!

frequently change jobs, looking for better conditions? Because the (non-?)workers are flighty and irresponsible, as the bureaucrats believe? No: because they are proletarians, selling the one commodity they own for the best deal they can get. Any worker, anywhere, recognizes this universal proletarian condition.

Of course, if there is no labor-power then there is also no capital counterposed to it. This was the essence of Shachtman's bureaucratic collectivism: exploitation yes, but workers and capitalists, no. Shachtman first called the Soviet producers slaves, but reality kept intruding: they behaved like workers. He ended up calling them workers as a concession to the obvious, but his theory denied their existence. The Spartacists do the same.

However, if there is no working class and also no exploitation — as the Spartacists believe — then everybody, rulers and ruled alike, is socially equal. Hence this business about mere "quantitative" parasitism. In plain language they are saying that the only difference between the bureaucrats and the masses of pseudo-workers is their income. If that were really the only difference, then we would be dealing

full sense of the word the sole privileged and commanding stratum in Soviet society" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, page 249), and that is true today. Trotsky went on:

"The means of production belong to the state. But the state, so to speak, 'belongs' to the bureaucracy. If these as yet wholly new relations should solidify, become the norm and be legalized, they would, in the long run, lead to a complete liquidation of the social conquests of the proletarian revolution."

And so it happened. We need add only that Trotsky wrote this just before the Moscow purge trials opened, signaling the immense and one-sided civil war waged by the Stalinist bureaucracy against the workers and the remnants of working-class power. It speeded up the counterrevolution and made the long run considerably shorter.

Defense of the Soviet Union?

The Spartacists' lack of interest in theory is evident. The reason is that for them theory is just a rationalization

to answer one question: do you or do you not defend the Soviet Union? They do, and consequently cook up their "theory" to fit the conclusion. That is, they don't defend the Stalinist states because they are proletarian. Rather they defend Stalinism, and therefore call it proletarian. Marxists, on the other hand, have to examine the society scientifically to see what revolutionary gains survive to be defended.

It is, we believe, unfortunately possible for a degenerated workers' state to exist. Even if all the workers' rights have been destroyed, the remnants of a dynamic economy might still provide the basis for qualitative expansion of the productive forces until the workers' struggle revives -- that was Trotsky's hope and expectation in the 1930's (as it was for millions of workers around the world), and that's what made the degenerated USSR defensible. There still exist proletarian gains in the USSR, as there do in the West. But defending the state as opposed to defending specific gains against the state requires that the system as a whole work for the proletariat, not against it.

USSR Not Proletarian

Today such a defense is impossible. The Soviet economy is bureaucratic, rigid, conservative in the extreme, dependent on old-style Western capitalism for capital, technology and even food. Trotsky stressed the advance of labor productivity as the true test of the capacity of the Soviet economy. Now it is plain that in this the Soviet system lags behind even the crisis-ridden West. Look at Poland's economic collapse, Yugoslavia's floundering in massive unemployment and inflation, China's desperate turn to imperialist aid. This is the wave of the future? The Soviet system has its pluses and minuses in comparison with the West, but in no way do they add up to a qualitative step forward, a workers' state. "Defense of the Soviet Union" today means defending one decaying power against another. The working class has to defend its future against both.

Since nothing proletarian remains of the Soviet state, what does the SL defend? The answer becomes clear when we ask a related question: why not defend the "workers' states," not just the Soviet Union? After all, the Spartacists believe there are several of these, created after the war, qualitatively equivalent to the USSR. But when "workers' China" attacked "workers' Vietnam" in 1979, the SL not only sided with Vietnam (on the grounds that China was acting as a tool of U.S. imperialism) -- it urged the Russian rulers to make a nuclear attack on China:

"As for Moscow's ultimate option, there is much that it could do to bring China around if Brezhnev & Co. were really committed to the international solidarity they cynically profess. Peking has an extremely narrow nuclear establishment, all of it targeted by the USSR. Likewise the Chinese oil industry is extremely vulnerable even to a surgical attack by conventional forces in Sinkiang and Manchuria."

It is cynical enough to believe that there can be workers' states at war with one another. It is somewhat more so to urge the escalation of that war to the point of wrecking a workers' state's economy. The Spartacists' are not even

attempting to defend proletarian remains in their "workers' states" but are simply defending the USSR as a power -- including its most blatant nationalist and anti-proletarian interests. Similarly they defended the erection of the Berlin Wall to imprison East German workers, and in 1981 they turned their verbal guns against the Polish working class.

The Spartacists reduce all questions of program to this pre-ordained "defense." They think Shachtman's bureaucratic collectivism is a smarter idea than the LRP's statified capitalism, but they don't really care. "Comrades of the LRP," they assure us, "there is no big political difference between saying a new bureaucratic class came to power in Russia and arguing that capitalism was restored there. ... the program is the same" -- because both reject defense of the USSR. Of course, if this were true then the whole Spartacist methodology would be correct: theory wouldn't matter, and you could just skip it and move on to "program."

But again, it is not true. A third camp theory like bureaucratic collectivism could conclude either that its new society is progressive over capitalism, as Shachtman once did, or reactionary, as Shachtman did later. There are several such theories around on the left under different names, and they go both ways. Rudolf Bahro, Paul Sweezy and Umberto Melotti all have third camp theories that claim Soviet society is progressive. Several Eastern European theorists as well as Shachtman's followers call it reactionary. Their programs, even limited to the Spartacists' single question, are different: some defend the Soviet Union, some the West. A third camp theory must come down on one side or the other; it cannot balance on a tightrope forever.

Of course, there are "state capitalist" theories which to all intents and purposes are the same as bureaucratic collectivism and lead to similar conclusions. On the other hand, a genuine theory of Soviet capitalism defends neither imperialist rival since they both belong to the camp of reactionary capitalism opposed to the proletariat.

The Russian Question in Practice

A theory of Stalinism, in addition to answering the "defense" question, ought to guide one's programmatic intervention in the daily struggles of the working class. Few do. When the Polish workers erupted in 1980, what third campist had anything to call for except democracy? What "deformed workers' statist" had any better guidance for the workers? But the workers' own demands did go further, based on the clear understanding that they are exploited by a "red bourgeoisie" through the wage system and the entire economic structure. They undoubtedly came to their program not from Marxist theory but from material experience. Marxism's greater historical experience and theoretical analysis could have taken them further.

Spartacism and Shachtmanism would have been of little use. YS observes accurately that Shachtman's view "does provide at any static moment in time a similar picture of Soviet society" to its own. Even more is true: the two theories provide a similar dynamic picture, for they agree on denying the applicability of Marx's laws of motion, as admitted, and see no others. Neither foresaw the economic crisis of Stalinism that became so explosive in Poland, and neither could explain it except in conjunctural terms.

Moreover, the Shachtmanites do not favor socialist revolution under Stalinism. Their enthusiasm for democracy led them to support the anti-revolutionary Walesa in Poland and the democratic middle-class dissidents in Russia. They are liberal critics of the regimes, not revolutionaries against it. The Spartacists, from their quite different standpoint, have moved closer to becoming liberal critics too. Their assessment of Yuri Andropov -- some pluses, some minuses, not a thorough counterrevolutionary -- is clear evidence. Shachtmanites and Spartacists support different forces within Stalinist society but both currents in practice come out for reform rather than revolution.

Our differences with the Spartacists in practice derive from one main political point, obviously closely linked with theory: we, with Trotsky, see Stalinism as counterrevolutionary; they don't. The YS article invokes "the Trotskyist analysis of the bureaucracy as a contradictory caste." But Trotsky changed his early analysis that the bureaucracy was centrist and therefore contradictory. For him the Soviet Union was contradictory, torn between its progressive economic base and its reactionary rulers. After the Spanish civil war he saw the bureaucracy as having definitively passed over to the side of the bourgeoisie.

Denying that the Stalinist bureaucracy is counterrevolutionary leads straight to asserting its progressive potential. Thus, in arguing that the bureaucracy cannot be a class, Young Spartacus asks, "What ruling class in history has ever split in the face of a revolutionary threat to its rule as the Hungarian bureaucracy did in 1956, with one small wing of the bureaucracy and the security police fighting against the workers and the bulk of the state apparatus going over to the side of the workers' unsuccessful political revolution?"

The question is revealing. First of all, it has long been a Spartacist myth that the bulk of the Hungarian ruling bureaucracy joined the workers in 1956. Tracing this myth back to its origins, we find the statement in a 1966 issue of Spartacist magazine that 80 percent of the Communist Party did so -- quite a different matter from the top bureaucracy, since the party included workers and low-level officials many of whom did join the revolution. The actual bureaucratic ruling class did not split quite so sharply, and those who opposed the Russian invasion, like Premier Imre Nagy, did so for nationalist reasons rather than communist ones.

Secondly, ruling classes often split under revolutionary pressure. Take the Russian bourgeoisie in February 1917. Large sections, even a majority, abandoned the Czar when the workers and soldiers brought down the autocracy and "went over" to the revolution in order to contain it within capitalist channels. In this they were aided by the reformist Menshevik and SR parties in the working class. Hungary in the fall of 1956 is analogous to February, not October, of 1917, because the workers were not yet led by a revolutionary party. It was still possible for sections of the ruling class to be revolutionaries against the old regime, the better to forestall the proletariat from taking power into its own hands.

Had the Hungarian revolution survived to reach its own "October," the liberal nationalist Stalinists would have been just as counterrevolutionary as reformists like Keren-

sky proved to be in Russia. And the workers damned well better not have counted on any "80 percent" of their bosses to join them. The Spartacists' admiration for that fictional 80 percent shows just what sort of revolution they wanted: a February, not an October -- that is, social reforms, not the overthrow of a liberal Stalinist regime.

Hail Stalinism

The SL's devotion to the Stalinist forces becomes clearest when they discuss Afghanistan and Poland. But we first have to dispose of a little foolishness concerning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The YS insists that the "LRP prefers to see the victory of CIA-financed Islamic reaction," because "there is no other possible interpretation of your 'condemnation' of the only force militarily capable of defeating the mullahs."

By the same scholastic logic, since we also called for the mullahs' defeat, we realistically have to be for a Soviet victory. Or, given Lenin's condemnation of the Czar's war against Germany in 1914, "there is no other possible interpretation" than to say, as many Mensheviks did, that he supported the Kaiser. Again, since the Spartacists themselves would like to see Reagan defeated and since there is no realistic alternative except Moncale ... But this is stupid. It is perfectly possible to oppose both reactionary sides. When we wrote on Afghanistan that "Marxists call for the defeat of both warring counterrevolutionary sides" (Socialist Voice No. 9), we stood in a long Marxist tradition and meant no other interpretation, possible or not.

The SL's crazy logic stems from its illusions in Stalinism: since Afghanistan so clearly poses the question of good versus evil, whoever is not with us is against us. Young Spartacus claims that "today only the Soviet Red Army stands between the reforms initiated by the petty-bourgeois nationalist regime (such as teaching women to read and write) and the mullah-led forces of Islamic reaction." And a photo caption reads, "LRP Women's Commission? No--it's women chained to the veil in Afghanistan. Hail Red Army!"

The trouble with this is that the revolutionary nationalist regime of 1978-79 that introduced fundamental reforms was overthrown by the Soviet invasion! Once installed, Russia's new Afghan ruler Babrak Karmal did his best to curry favor with the reactionary mullahs: he swore loyalty to "sacred" Islam and its medieval "family traditions," replaced the revolutionary red flag with an Islamic green one, issued a decree guaranteeing private property, brought pro-monarchist figures from the pre-revolutionary regime into his cabinet and tried to make friends with Ayatollah Khomeini in next-door Iran, reversing the previous regime's policy of condemning Khomeini's "tyranny and despotism." More recently Karmal has "enacted legislation giving extensive local powers to tribal chiefs," according to the May 27 Manchester Guardian Weekly. He is subsidizing the tribal leaders, the mullahs' allies, and plans to convoke the monarchist Loi Jirga, or tribal assembly, promising not to run party candidates against the tribalists' for local office.

The Spartacists do not even bother to discuss actual Afghan events. Since they "know" the Soviets play a revolutionary role, they assert this over and over, using it chiefly as a club to wield against other leftists and to show

their own supposed concern for the basic rights of miserably oppressed Afghan women. But the club is hollow. Out of either ignorance or intent, they are on a side capitulating to pre-capitalist reaction and national oppression. Ironically, the tendency that boasts itself the most consistent and intransigent foe of Islamic reaction (in Iran) is hailing its supporters in Afghanistan. Nothing more clearly demonstrates the SL's politics of pretense, posture and pro-Stalinism.

(We add two footnotes for the sake of accuracy: 1) There is no longer a Red Army. During World War II Stalin changed the former revolutionary name to "Soviet Army," replacing a class designation by what had become merely a national one. The Spartacists' usage gives Stalin's change a revolutionary cover. 2) Since YS expresses concern about our Überlin comrades' spelling of Shachtman, we can return the favor and suggest that it defend the Afghans, the people, as well as the Afghans, their currency.)

Solidarnosc: a Workers' Movement

Next comes Poland. YS notes, accurately enough, that "the LRP 'defends' Solidarnosc while condemning its 'Western-oriented, Church-ridden, reformist' leaders." Yes, we often distinguish between the struggles of a mass movement and the politics of its current leadership. We defend, for example, the U.S. trade unions, despite the always pro-capitalist and often reactionary policies of their leaders. This distinction, crucial for Marxists and for anyone who wants to fight for workers' interests in the labor movement, is lost on the Spartacists.

For in its very next sentence YS concludes that we "defend a 'movement' that is blatantly Pilsudskiite, priest-ridden, anti-Semitic and pro-capitalist." No, Solidarnosc was not all this. There were small groups of Pilsudskiites and anti-Semites in it, wielding far less influence than such scum have had in Polish Stalinist governments over the years. There were some pro-capitalist theoreticians (in the Spartacists' sense) attached to Solidarnosc, but there was no mass sentiment for eliminating state ownership of the means of production. Moreover, General Jaruzelski also has plans for decentralizing the economy, no less far reaching than those proposed inside Solidarnosc. Finally, the movement was priest-ridden, but that circumstance must be blamed on the deeds of the Stalinists who permitted no legal opposition except through the Church, as the Spartacists sometimes recognized in their more lucid moments.

In a sense this is all beside the point. Solidarnosc was a mass workers' movement of ten million people. At its peak it stood for the interests of all the oppressed and unrepresented sectors of Polish society. It was created out of the struggle of the Gdansk MKS in August 1980, a near-soviet achievement (in the sense of 1917) that posed the question of working-class revolution; the union formation adopted at the urging of Walesa and his reformist allies (in conjunction with the regime) was a step backward. At its end it was an obstacle to the workers' struggle as so many union apparatuses are in the West, doing its best to hold the masses back from confronting the repressive, self-serving and incompetent authorities.

Nevertheless, as long as Solidarnosc was a movement based on the working class and defending its interests, how-

ever badly, Marxists had the elementary duty to defend it from attack. But the Spartacists did not: they applauded the Stalinist military crackdown, welcomed it in advance at whatever cost in blood and shed crocodile tears over the fate of the workers. That was a criminally anti-working class position, equivalent to supporting the Soviet counterrevolution in Hungary in 1956, or Stalin's mass murders in the 1930's, or Noske and Scheidemann in 1919. The Spartacists were in noble company: although Reagan protested the crackdown for his own political ends, Western bankers quietly cheered Jaruzelski on (how else recover their millions?) and the workers' false friend in the Vatican intently urged them to stay calm.

What could possibly bring a professedly Marxist and Trotskyist organization to such a pass? Only the most extreme cynicism, the utmost contempt for actual working-class people as opposed to the rational "planners" who rule fictitious "workers' states." This element has always been present in Spartacist politics, but it emerged with a vengeance in the last decade or so. In the past the SL at least tried to be critical of Stalinism while defending the USSR; now its pro-Sovietism has simply become pro-Stalinism, brandished as a shield to ward off opportunist spirits that plague the group. To no avail: the SL's underlying U.S. chauvinism behind its admiration of rationalism and planning always gets out. Its recent opposition to the forcible expulsion of U.S. marines from Lebanon was only the latest example of a pro-American appeal cast in anti-imperialist form; we have documented others in issues of this magazine.

The two cases of Afghanistan and Poland are supposed to prove that we in the LRP, "despite your protestations to the contrary, stand with imperialism against the Soviet degenerated workers' state." It doesn't work. Both the Afghan invasion and the Polish crackdown were done in the interest of world, that is, imperialist, stability. The Spartacists applauded this explicitly over Afghanistan ("everyone recognizes that the Russian presence on the Afghan border of Iran is one of the few stabilizing features in a dangerously unstable situation" — Workers Vanguard, May 2, 1980), and Jaruzelski did so for them in Poland. Contrary to their charge against us, it is they who stand with imperialism against the workers and the oppressed in an increasing number of cases — wherever this stance can be given a pro-Soviet justification. Shachtman too started slowly down the pro-imperialist road.

There are perhaps young comrades of the SYL who have not been totally corrupted by all this; the fact that our leaflet and letters (together with Young Spartacus's blatant lying) forced a reconsideration may indicate some healthy honesty and concern for genuine Trotskyism. But more than re-education over tactics is required to to realign adherents of so cynical a tendency with Marxism. It means crossing the barricades, to the side of the proletariat. ■

CAPITALISM IN THE SOVIET UNION

A pamphlet consisting of articles from *Socialist Voice*. To order, send \$1.00 to Socialist Voice, 170 Broadway, Room 201, New York, NY 10038.

Election '84

continued from page 1

the disinherited, the disrespected and the despised," but he promised them only the chance to vote for Mondale over Reagan.

"I will deliver" the black vote, he repeated two weeks later to the National Urban League, and to Walter Mondale a month afterwards. In the early part of the campaign Mondale haughtily ignored Jackson's pleas for a piece of the action; later he granted some posts to blacks, mostly those who had supported him, not Jackson — and this was enough to pull Jackson into line. Of course, Jackson couples his party loyalty with pledges to maintain his independence and campaign for "freedom" as well as the ticket. But this too is intended to make plausible his drive to ensnare more black voters.

Democrats Act Like Republicans

The real story of the convention and subsequent campaign is not Jackson or Geraldine Ferraro but the party's clear turn to the right. Despite the outpouring of support for Jackson, despite the unprecedented role of labor in the primaries, despite the first nomination of a woman for national office (made possible by the Jackson effort), the choice between Mondale and Reagan looks even less meaningful than before. The Democrats feel they can take for granted the votes of millions of blacks, workers and women who appear to have no place else to go. It is this void on the left that enables the party to move right. Capitalism owes a debt of gratitude to Jesse Jackson which it probably will never pay.

Mondale may even win in November, thanks to the votes of millions of black and other working-class people, but this will not mean the end of the Reaganism that many see as the enemy. For although Democrats and Republicans appeal to different constituencies, they operate in and for the same system: capitalism — imperialist, decaying capitalism. Mondale in office will be subject to its demands just as much as Reagan. And under its present conditions he has already promised to carry out much the same program.

Mondale summed it up in his best himself in his convention acceptance speech: "Look at our platform. There are no defense cuts that weaken our security; no business taxes that weaken our economy; no laundry lists that raid our Treasury."

Yes, let's look. Should Mondale win, the massive arms build-up begun by Jimmy Carter and speeded up by Reagan will not stop; only Reagan's rate of acceleration will be slowed (from 7 to 4 percent yearly). Business taxes, which have been slashed under every recent president and cut to the bone by Reagan, will stay minimal; hence what workers' have to pay will stay maximal. On top of this Mondale noted: "Let's tell the truth — Mr. Reagan will raise taxes, and so will I. He won't tell you. I just did." But if that's the truth (and it is), and if business taxes won't be raised (and they won't), whose taxes are left? There might be a token increase for the rich, but the bulk of the funds to cut into Reagan's deficit will have to come from the working class.

Notice also Mondale's implication that tax cuts for busi-

ness have strengthened the economy. But there has been no payoff in productivity, and not even Reagan claims that the world-historic deficit stemming from his arms spending and tax cuts is something to be proud of. So how do business taxes "weaken our economy"? Mondale's statement makes sense only if he is worried about weakening business profits, not the economic health of the vast majority. Naturally he says that Reagan rules for the rich and privileged, but so would he. That's one truth he's not telling.

The "laundry list" that Mondale now mocks used to include such welcome (but false) promises from the Democrats as national health insurance and low-income housing. The fact that it's not there is a further indication that now both parties have given up claiming to be able to meet the needs of the desperate and despised. In sum, if you like Republican economic policies you've got two candidates to choose from.

Now look at foreign policy. Public opinion polls show that on this issue the Democrats could have their biggest advantage; people may be fooled by the temporary upturn in the economy, but many still don't trust Reagan at the head of the armed forces. Yet the Democrats complain that Reagan can get hundreds of soldiers slaughtered in Lebanon and still smell like roses. Why? Well, for starters, does anyone remember Mondale's position on the troops in Lebanon? Or on the invasion of Grenada? Reagan at least appears to know what he's doing; even when he changes his mind he does it decisively. Nobody knows what Mondale stands for.

Mondale Also Imperialist

Underneath all his waffling what Mondale does stand for is not all that different from Reagan. Both his acceptance speech and the party platform framed the world's crises in terms of "Soviet meddling" and stuck to the usual imperialist parameters in democratic disguise: for one example, they vowed to pursue peace in the Middle East by continuing to militarily champion Israel, the region's chief warmaker; for another, he said nothing about the U.S.'s racist ally, South Africa (despite Jackson's importunings). Mondale supports the meaningless "nuclear freeze" only to leave funds for strengthening the readiness, mobility and size of "conventional" imperialist forces.

On Central America Mondale did sound different from Reagan. He came out for "human rights" in El Salvador like his mentor Jimmy Carter, but remember that Carter used that cover five years ago to back Duarte's civilian facade for military rule. Today both Reagan and Mondale are both fans of Duarte. Mondale also promised to "stop the illegal war in Nicaragua." This sounds good, but remember that when Gary Hart called for a U.S. military withdrawal from Honduras (where American "advisers" conduct the contra operation), Mondale charged him with "pulling the plug on Central America."

Nor can we forget the previous presidential promise to stop an illegal war: Lyndon Johnson's campaign pledge in 1964 to stay out of Vietnam. Democratic presidential candidates have a long history of getting into wars after promising peace; this is, in fact, the chief bourgeois technique of softening the country up to accept a "necessary" war. Even if Mondale did withdraw from one war, his dedication to U.S. imperialism would inevitably lead him into others.

Both the convention and campaign meshed with the platform's conservatism. The much admired keynote speech by Mario Cuomo married all the old empty liberal phrases to patriotic icons like family and pioneer spirit. The selection of Geraldine Ferraro, a Tip O'Neill hack liberal, former prosecutor and millionaire real estate speculator was made to appeal to traditionally conservative Catholic ethnics as well as women. Mondale also tried to refurbish Bert Lance to please the "conservative South." At that rate he would have promised to move the White House to Jerusalem if he thought that would win him Jewish voters drifting rightward into Reagan's camp. Accordingly, Mondale's campaign themes have become patriotism, hard work, thrift, law and order and religion.

Why the Democrats Shifted Right

The excuse for the Democrats' move to the right is that Reagan won in a landslide last time and is wildly popular, so an appeal must be made to his conservative base. That is why for three years congressional Democrats gave the votes needed to pass Reagan's cutbacks and tax breaks for the rich, and why they supported most of his aid to Central American reactionaries. During the primaries the candidates had to appeal chiefly to the Democratic Party's own base, so their appeal sounded more liberal. But they are now back in what they see as Reagan's territory.

No doubt the Democratic politicians believe that they have to move rightward so visibly in order to catch up with the voters. But there is a deeper class reality underneath their shift. The Democrats are not simply liars and opportun-

upper-echelon Democrats. The motion of the masses themselves has in fact been contradictory.

The Democratic Party has always had at its core a share of big capitalists, allied to certain petty-bourgeois and labor aristocratic layers. With the fading of the post-war prosperity, the "newly arrived" elements grew more defensive towards U.S. capitalism now that they had a stake in the system. They view the rise of overseas upheavals with dismay and favor strong "defense" to ward off disasters. They also fear mass discontent at home growing among out-of-work, low-paid and precariously employed workers; while they welcome the traditional economic promises (now emptier than ever) they also see themselves as border guards for American values. Symbolic of this trend are the labor and Jewish leaders, champions once of Democratic liberalism but now of the status quo.

But the party's voting base was built among the large urban working class, largely Catholic but including blacks and other minorities as well. Their stake in the system is less solid. While they share in part their leaders' attitude, theirs has another dimension: many white workers voted for Reagan in 1980 as a radical act, signifying not a deep conservative ideology but an urgent desire for something different. Reagan's decisiveness, his theories of how to achieve prosperity and his unwavering opposition to the "Eastern establishment" looked better than Carter's "malaise," flip-flops and austerity program.

Reagan, however, acted differently in office (as we predicted). Because his sunbelt bourgeoisie is intimately intertwined with Wall Street, he waged no war against the estab-

lishment but blended it into his administration. The polemics against the big banks died out; what held his restive petty-bourgeois voting base was his conservative social program (anti-abortion, pro-prayer, etc.) as well as his debt-based "recovery." Reagan's program is unabashedly capitalist. It celebrates profits and, without the annoyance of working-class or black upheavals, it makes no concessions. Reagan basks in the bourgeoisie's support and acts with confidence if not consistency. He is the Great Warrior, up against a Great Waffle.

Mondale's waffling, like his other "personal" characteristic of boring preachiness, is less a matter of personality than of class relations. The Democrats have been historically torn between their essential task of defending capitalism and their mass

appeal to their working-class base. In prosperous times they appear less split; now, with world capitalism desperate to stave off depression, their contradictions become glaring. The old liberal rhetoric glowed when there was money behind it for concrete payoffs to masses in motion; now Mondale's speeches sound stale because his promises can only be few and hollow.

The Democrats know the system cannot afford more for the deprived sectors (let alone whole classes); indeed it must take more from them. Yet the party must retain its base



Walter Mondale, hawk, laughs it up with Lane Kirkland, hack.

ists who will adopt any policy to win votes. They have convictions based on their class position; they interpret the voters' attitudes from their particular capitalist vantage points.

Reagan's popularity (even if normally overestimated) stems from the tenuous economic upturn and his apparent decisiveness. The latter is crucial, because millions of Americans are confused and worried about the future. The image of an increasingly conservative America falling for Reagan's fabled attraction is false, but it mirrors the views of the

among ethnically divided workers. Hence the inevitable wobble. Set in motion by the contradictory class bases, the wobble is most visible on the surface where the party's various sectors (the unions, the minorities, nuclear freezers, save the whales, etc.) compete for attention. Mondale is obliged to be all things to all men and all women, all blacks and all whites, all yuppies and workers, Jews, Italians, North, South, etc., etc. But his payoffs for the base are more vicarious than real.

Jesse Jackson was only the latest Democratic supplicant. He got nothing because there was nothing, no worthwhile social promise, to give. And he shares the blame: black and labor leaders who detour their rebellious bases into electoralism thereby remove the pressure on the system felt by the Democrats. Ironically, Jackson's campaign to move the Democratic Party left only succeeded in helping it move right. The party need only offer a few border guard positions to the new arrivals to ensure their votes. Gerry Ferraro as vice president will do nothing for working-class women; the blacks anointed by Mondale will only become spokesmen for austerity.

Of course, when the workers' struggle does revive you can be sure that some Democratic politician (Ted Kennedy? Jesse Jackson?) will be waiting at the pass to head it off. He (or she) will promise all kinds of good things as long as the workers' stay tied to the Democrats or some other suitably capitalist party, and don't disentangle themselves from electoralism. The fact that Mondale makes no such promises now proves the passive state of the labor movement, most notably its official leadership, the labor bureaucracy.

Labor's Dead-End Electoralism

Mondale is supposed to owe lots of favors to the labor bureaucrats, since it is their funds and manpower that boosted him over the top in a hard-fought primary campaign. Yet their strategy ensures that there will be no workers' movement left to demand anything from either Mondale or Reagan.

For example, there are three major industrial sectors with contracts up for negotiation between now and November: the coal miners, auto workers and postal workers. The UAW bureaucrats have indicated that the last thing they want is a pre-election strike, out of fear of giving Reagan an electoral boost. Reagan has already called for "restraint" by the auto union in an attempt to intimidate workers. But the auto companies' highly visible profits, coming after major concessions by their workers, have raised the ranks' expectations. A union sell-out could backfire against the bureaucrats and drive workers away from their candidate.

Postal union officials have already acted to avoid a strike, despite the provocation by Reagan's Postal Service minions who threatened to introduce a two-tier wage system and thereby break the unions in all but name. The Letter Carriers' convention in Las Vegas in August decided to go to arbitration, effectively postponing their new contract until after the elections in the hope that a Reagan defeat will improve the political climate. The APMU reasoned similarly. But a Mondale administration dedicated to deficit cutting will be of little more help than a hostile Reagan.

The unions' strategy of pinning everything on the elections guarantees that their defeatist line in industrial

struggles will be reinforced this year. Electoralism rules out major strikes, especially those that could escalate into serious confrontations with political effects. Under current capitalist circumstances, it also means that nothing will be won from the Democrats -- since it takes mass struggles to force the politicians' hands. The upshot is that the working class loses either way.

Unless the electoral trap is broken, the efforts of the masses will be channeled into narrow sectoral avenues and even fratricidal warfare rather than class struggle. As the past has proven, capitalism in crisis won't pay to meet working-class needs, but it will pay for war preparations, leading to conflicts between not only sectors but nations too.

There is a way out of the trap. Tragically, the bureaucrats have prevented a general strike aimed at stopping Reagan's attacks, leaving each union alone. Workers justifiably fear that isolated and bureaucratically led strikes lead to defeat. But broader strikes uniting several sections could break the isolation and lead to a general strike to crack the capitalists' stranglehold. (The accompanying article on the New York hospital workers' strike shows how this could have been done.) A general strike would teach workers a practical lesson in class consciousness as opposed to the present sectoral division and powerlessness. And it would also prove to workers that the state is their enemy, that their only real alternative is revolution.

Leftists in the Capitalist Camp

But fighting for such a strategy requires a leadership totally different from today's bureaucrats, an alternative dedicated to the working class and not to capitalism. Workers who recognize this (today relatively few) look to the left. What they most often find is far from revolutionary.

It is not just union bureaucrats who are tying working people to the capitalist Democrats. Most of the organized left, drifting steadily to the right, has played the same role in this election period. The excuse for some was the Jesse Jackson "movement," supposedly a totally different matter from everyday corrupt bourgeois politics. (For social democrats and the Communist Party, of course, no excuse was needed; they've always found the Democratic evil lesser.) Now that Jackson is in Mondale's everyday bourgeois camp, we may ask: whither the left?

One large radical newspaper, the Guardian, showed what is happening. It argued in an August 8 editorial that "Reagan Must Go" and urged a vote for Mondale, adding apologetically, "but much more important for the left is militant organizing against the policies Reagan stands for." It claimed to have "no illusions about the Democratic Party" and reasoned, "A defeat of the reactionaries in November can offer an important breathing space to the left and progressive forces in the U.S. and, perhaps more important, to liberation movements and anti-imperialist countries around the world."

Two accompanying articles, however, demonstrated that the Guardian has illusions aplenty in both the Democrats and the left. One offers advice to the Democrats: "instead of proposing a watered-down Reaganism, they would do better to run on a straightforward platform that would address the interests of Blacks and other minorities and the working class and mobilize them. That way seems to offer the best possibil-

ity of beating Reagan." As if the Democrats ever wanted to mobilize workers and the oppressed; their whole purpose is to demobilize the working class and steer it into electoralism! As for addressing the interests of the masses, the article itself stumbled onto why this wasn't done: "The Democrats may be politically and economically unable to offer the broad and costly New Deal/Great Society-type programs."

The editorial endorsing Mondale makes the same point, that Reagan's right-wing policies "more fundamentally are a reflection of the general crisis of capitalism." But it concludes without explanation that while the Democrats have no solutions to fundamental problems, "we have every faith that the reactionary forces headed by Reagan will continue to make them worse." This argument (or lack of one) evidently means that the Guardian has "every faith" that the Democrats will not make them worse. It is quick to forget not only Jimmy Carter and Lyndon Johnson but also its own Marxistical verbiage about the capitalist crisis.

As for the "breathing space" for the left to mobilize, we are dubious. Up until the Democratic convention mobilizations were few and far between, since the so-called left devoted its energies to campaigning for Jackson. (There was, for example, no mass protest against Reagan's military intervention in Lebanon.) Just as the union officials fear strikes that might damage Mondale's chances, leftist pseudo-realists looking for "the best possibility of beating Reagan" will prefer to postpone "divisive" mobilizations.

They are likely to follow their model Jesse Jackson, who (as reported the second article, on the "Rainbow Coalition") will be giving his time to voter registration to aid Democrats -- that is his form of "mobilization." This article also shows that the "militant organizing" the Rainbow leaders are interested in is electing politicians to local office; no other kind is mentioned.

Moreover, there is nothing left or militant about Jackson's local Democratic candidates. In our last issue we detailed how Jackson's local leadership in Jersey City, New Jersey, was linked to the pro-Reagan mayoral machine. Since then, Jackson's big primary victory in Jersey City spilled over into votes for the machine -- which thereby consolidated its grip on the Democratic Party and used it to continue riding the town of its poorer, mostly black and Hispanic, workers. Predictably, when local members of a Workers World Party front group campaigning for Jackson were picked up by Jersey City cops and subjected to vile racist attacks, they got no support from their Jacksonite "friends."

A more pathetic example on the capitulating left is the Communist Workers Party, which had campaigned enthusiastically for Jackson but disdained Mondale. "Workers, Blacks and other oppressed people in the U.S. will gain nothing if Mondale beats Reagan. We will lose nothing if Reagan beats Mondale," it once wrote. But as our magazine predicted, such

brave words could not withstand the opportunist logic the CWP had already accepted: once you abandon the class distinction between Jackson and the proletariat you might as well go all the way.

So now Workers Viewpoint muses, "... while Mondale as President will not improve the daily lives of our people and we would have to continue to fight for our basic needs and rights under a Mondale administration, many of us prefer to fight Mondale than Reagan. In the short run Reagan is more dangerous in that he is more capable of starting a nuclear war. In addition, there is a strong mass sentiment against Reagan given his inhumane policies. Given this situation,



Philadelphia postal workers demonstrate against U.S. Postal Service's union-busting attack. Labor support to Mondale undermines workers' defense.

what should we do? We believe we should work to defeat Reagan ..." (Workers Viewpoint, July 4).

The CWP's hesitant turn is a far cry from its earlier confidence: "The real revolutionaries are people willing to go into the Democratic Party, the bourgeoisie's turf, and put their politics out to the millions." Brave but empty words, for with its political turn Workers Viewpoint folded shop: it announced suspension of publication so that the staff could "devote all our attention" to "a process of re-evaluating the paper's role and direction."

This excuse is absurd from the paper's own viewpoint: fold now? When the masses are out there in their millions? When the danger of nuclear war is at hand? It has no logic to it, except that jumping into the bourgeoisie's gutter can be demoralizing. The CWPers are not the first to abandon even nominally revolutionary combat, and they will not be the last.

Another tack was taken by the arch-Stalinist "Bolshevik League," which supported Jackson in the Democratic primaries and now urges him to run for president as an independent. In doing so they pretty up his ardently pro-capitalist program (for specifics of it see Proletarian Revolution No. 21) and

overlook the central fact that the whole purpose of Jackson's campaign was to boost the Democratic Party. Such leftists who still publicly enthuse over Jackson — while he himself takes to the stump for Mondale — are, like it or not, serving to build the Democratic Party's standing among the masses.

The Democrats are proving once again that bourgeois electoralism is no solution at all for capitalism's victims. Everywhere black and working-class struggles will be fettered by their middle-class leaders' dedication to electing Demo-

crats. If working people allow their strikes and other class battles to be derailed so that Mondale can pass, they will win even less. Fellow workers devoted to the fight against capitalism must join the LRP in struggle against the electoral trap and for the general strike. In this we are laying the basis for the revolutionary party that is the only genuine alternative to the Mondales and the Reagans.

A Vote for the Democrats or the Republicans
Is a Vote for Racism, Depression and War!

The Farrakhan Fracas

Blacks, Jews and Nationalism

Now that Jesse Jackson is out of the central media spotlight, the controversy over Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan's remarks about the Jews has ebbed. But only for the moment; Farrakhan is not just a media creation invented to harass an unconventional black candidate. Both he and the issues he has become associated with are here to stay.

The demands on Jackson to repudiate Farrakhan for his anti-Semitism were hypocritical in the extreme. The same critics did not demand that Walter Mondale repudiate friends like Ed Vrdolyak, the openly racist Democratic machine pol in Chicago, or Ed Koch, the less open but equally racist mayor of New York. Nor have they suggested that Mondale dissociate himself from those Jewish groups supporting him that regularly spew out anti-Arab caricatures, or that Ronald Reagan break from innumerable racist Republican supporters.

For that matter, they haven't asked Jackson or Geraldine Ferraro to denounce segregationist George Wallace, to whom both made pilgrimages during their campaigns. And the Senate's 95 to 0 vote condemning Farrakhan as a bigot was an abomination, coming from a body that has nothing to say about the bigots within it and never saw fit to condemn the Ku Klux Klan and similar white racist outfits.

It is true both that the attacks on Farrakhan (and through him, on Jackson) were racist, and that Farrakhan made anti-white and anti-Semitic comments. But the two cannot be equated: there is an essential difference between the racism of the oppressors and that of the oppressed. The view of many German Jews that the whole German people were responsible for Hitlerism was wrong, racist and disastrous for their resistance — but it was hardly equivalent to the Nazi crimes. Racism in America leads to mass violence against blacks, whereas Farrakhan represents a dangerous ideology capable of irreparably harming the struggle against it. In the long run he provides yet another method for racist capitalism to maintain its dominance over black people.

Farrakhan vs. Hitler

The uproar over Farrakhan started when he was accused of being an admirer of Hitler. He is, but in a specific sense. For example, he said that Hitler was not just "great" but "wickedly great." He admired not Hitler's massacre of the Jews, despite the Zionist smears, but rather his nationalism. He may aim to become a true Hitler in the future — his views favoring the most retrograde forms of capitalism, the



Leo Frank, a Jew, lynched by KKK. Lynching was aimed mainly at blacks, but Jews didn't escape. Capitalism will try to massacre both in future holocaust.

subjection of women and the oppression of gays are already reactionary enough — but that's not what he is saying now:

"Here the Jews don't like Farrakhan, so they call me Hitler. Well, that's a good name. Hitler was a very great man. He wasn't great for me as a black person, but he was a great German. Now I'm not proud of Hitler's evil against Jewish people, but that's a matter of record. He rose Germany up from nothing. Well, in a sense you could say there's similarity in that we are rising our people up from nothing. But don't compare me with your wicked killers."

Nationalists think alike: the problems of their people can be solved by building a great nation. This is why Farrakhan admires Hitler. He sees blacks as an emerging nation with their own emerging religion of Islam — a totality that

includes all blacks except "traitors." So too he sees Jews as a totality: Judaism = Zionism = Jewishness. This parallelism does not of course mean that rival nationalists like each other. Each is out for his own nation within the existing world of capitalist imperialism and its unceasing war of all against all. Different nations and nationalists make alliances and break them; each is for his own at the expense of all others. Farrakhan puts it in religious terms:

"This I want the Jews to know and we want the world to know: that they are not the chosen people of God. ... What will you do today when the lie is uncovered and we show the world that we are the chosen people of that promise? We are the people who have no land that we can call our own. ... We are the chosen people of God and can back it up. We are ready to do battle with you wherever you come from in the earth. It is the black people in America that is the chosen people of Almighty God."

There are apologists (including socialist ones) who insist that Farrakhan is simply anti-Zionist -- opposed to the racially exclusive state of Israel -- but not anti-Jewish. The Socialist Workers Party's Militant (July 13) asserted that the charge of anti-Semitism "is a lie from start to finish." But it had to admit that there was something a mite off the mark in Farrakhan's reference to Judaism as a "gutter" (or "dirty") religion, that while he attacks Zionism "he incorrectly equates those who adhere to the Jewish religion with Zionism." Exactly: if he's anti-Zionist but defines all religious Jews as Zionists, then he's anti-Jewish. Likewise, when he singles out Judaism as a "gutter religion" while not attacking other religions, he is again anti-Jewish. The SWP notes that Farrakhan's "mistake" in equating Judaism with Zionism is the same as the Zionists' denouncing all critics of Israel as anti-Semites. Very true, but to show that Farrakhan uses the same nationalist logic as Zionism is hardly a defense.

The Workers World Party also eulogizes Farrakhan. It not only campaigned for Jesse Jackson but also wanted to see his alliance with Farrakhan maintained. As for the "dirty religion" matter, Workers World demurred: "Unfortunately, this attack on an individual religion is incorrect and could well be taken as being anti-Semitic." Indeed it could, but we are not told how the WWP takes it. The SWP and WWP's diplomatic delicacy in defense of chauvinism against Jews is really a demonstration of their patronizing attitude towards blacks. Like the claim that Farrakhan is engaged in a sort of national-religious overstatement or "hyperbole," this patronization is contemptuous of the black audience Farrakhan is trying to mislead.

Farrakhan vs. Malcolm X

To see this clearly one only has to read Malcolm X, who, even when he was a firm black nationalist, characteristically aimed at clear, concrete explanation illustrated by sharp examples and metaphors. He aimed to inform an audience he respected; he said what he meant and he meant what he said. Perhaps that helped lead him away from nationalism and its mystifications. In any case, Farrakhan detested Malcolm so much that he contributed to the atmosphere of murderous threats that led to Malcolm's assassination (Farrakhan was hardly hyperbolic when he wished Malcolm dead). Of course,

Malcolm's clarity came from his politics: for one thing, he fully understood that blacks' reliance on the racist Democratic Party was a disaster -- unlike Farrakhan and Jackson.

Nationalism and Integrationism

Farrakhan's particular nationalist views are important even though blacks in the U.S. are not a nation. The persistence of nationalism as an ideology shows that it reflects aspects of reality among American blacks, just as does the persistence of assimilationism. Blacks constitute a specific caste in American society placed in a contradictory position. Periodically the promise of equality and acceptance is dangled before them, but it is always obvious under the surface (and especially during crises) that capitalist America cannot allow true equality or integration. Out of this contradiction spring both integrationism and nationalism as different ways of fighting to survive.

Farrakhan's rhetoric talks of creating a separate black economy. He is a vigorous advocate of "free enterprise" and the hiring of black labor by black businesses. The fact that black workers today are overwhelmingly exploited by the dominant white capitalism, while only a few work for the tiny black bourgeoisie, determines that Farrakhan's ostensible goal is to create a nation with an organic relationship between its bourgeoisie and proletariat.

Despite their differences, Farrakhan's friendship with Jesse Jackson and Operation PUSH is built upon a common social conservatism and business orientation. PUSH pushes to enlarge the realm of black business by getting more and better franchises from white-owned corporations. It accepts the present corporate domination as a fact of life. Like Elijah Muhammad and Marcus Garvey before him, Farrakhan tries to develop a network of black businesses in present-day America, more independent than those envisaged by the integrationists; his talk of a separate black nation and economy in the future serves to attract black masses yearning for solidarity today. Farrakhan the nationalist admires Jackson the integrationist not only for his pro-business leanings but for bringing the growing black consciousness to a head through his electoral campaign.

Just as Farrakhan supported Jackson's attempt to gain clout within the system, many blacks who do not share Farrakhan's nationalist views still welcomed his adherence to Jackson's cause. The bloc seemed to represent the need for black unity, self-assertion and self-defense. When the power brokers tried to hobble Jackson by hypocritically using Farrakhan's words against him, blacks saw the racist attack underneath the charges and lined up in support.

Each in his own way, Jackson and Farrakhan believe in the American dream: social mobility, working one's way up the ladder provided by capitalism. The desire to "move on up" involves a change in class and is of necessity an individualistic outlook; small numbers of petty bourgeois aspirants succeed, and this success serves to quicken the (doomed) hopes of the masses. For the excluded races, religions and nationalities, moreover, the few individual "successes" are possible only through consolidation of group power, the ability to exact demands from the ruling class.

Significantly, the Jews are a key model for many black leaders engaged in this quest. Many blacks (and many Jews)

believe that Jews as a group, once beyond the pale, have "arrived" in the mainstream of American society. There has been some assimilation, but it was only made possible by the strengthening of Jewish solidarity on the terms of the bourgeois and professional Jewish organizations. This permitted the triumph of Zionist ideology among U.S. Jews and was itself accelerated by Zionism and its result, Israel. The black future that Farrakhan desires mirrors the Jewish development he despises as its rival. Not accidentally, until the 1960's all wings of the black leadership were pro-Zionist. Many believed that if the Jews could make it (both in the U.S. and in their own Zion), then blacks could too.

The Jews, however, arrived during capitalism's Indian summer, the post-war prosperity bubble. It won't happen again: the pie is shrinking, not growing. Moreover, the bourgeois and middle-class sectors of groups that have recently "made it" are becoming capitalism's border guards, trying to keep out newer claimants. The middle classes are being squeezed, and most American Jews are white-collar work-

Minister Louis Farrakhan, while under racist attack, vies with Zionists over whose people are "God's chosen." Blacks need class war, not holy war.



ers whose hopes of rising further are evaporating. Increasingly reactionary "neo-conservative" Jewish leaders are mobilizing against blacks as the enemy whose "quotas" are seen as blocks to Jewish hopes. The fact that Jewish acceptance in America is so precarious (despite the new superpatriots' delusions) only accelerates hostility to black self-assertion. Yet there are still many Jews who know that becoming oppressors here or in Israel is no way to end the oppression of Jews. One distorted reflection of this was the higher vote for Jesse Jackson among Jews than whites in general.

Nationalism vs. Socialism

As the capitalist crisis deepens, the sense of desperation among blacks is bound to grow. The divide-and-conquer tactics of capitalism are already apparent. The great hopes held by black workers in the Democratic Party and in Jesse Jackson's campaign are already being undercut; their enemy now seems to be not only those who precariously made it up the ladder but also competing "out groups" like Hispanics and women. The daily papers are full of stories about conflicts over positions and crumbs between the sectors' rival brokers. In everyday life black and Hispanic workers view each other not only as jointly oppressed comrades but also as competitors for jobs and housing. The potential for a separatist go-it-alone consciousness looms.

But capitalism itself also produces a deeper trend of working-class, interracialist and internationalist consciousness that recognizes all workers as victims of capi-

talism. Economic and social crisis makes radical polarization — toward both socialism and reaction — inevitable, and this will force the nationalists to alter or adapt their separatist message.

Nationalist ideology accepts the inevitability of capitalism, but desperate people do not easily fall for the absurdity of "free enterprise" and "no state intervention." The nationalists will have to take into account the appeal of their socialist rival and the mass need for social relief and self-defense (especially for blacks) in the face of economic collapse. Farrakhan or his descendants will have to cover their capitalist beliefs with social demagoguery (in the name of the truest nationalism) — as did the Hitlers and Coughlins of the 1930's. His petty-bourgeois forces and lumpenproletarian base will inevitably move toward some form of fascist demagoguery. Although Farrakhan is not now a fascist, he will be pushed that way if he tries to champion the "black nation" in severely worsening times.

Nationalism of the Oppressor vs. the Oppressed

The Zionists and leftists who denounce Farrakhan as a "would-be Hitler" are missing a crucial point. Hitler's fascism arose out of the nationalism of the dominant race; Farrakhan as a black man can only represent the reactionary impulses of the petty bourgeoisie of an oppressed race. There is an ironic precedent for this sort of role: the Jewish Zionists in relation to Nazi Germany, and Farrakhan already knows their history. As he observed in his "gutter religion" speech, "So Zionists made a deal with Hitler. These are the same people that condemn me for saying Hitler was a great man, but a wicked man."

It is true. Zionists concluded a deal with the Nazis to get money out of Europe to help build a Jewish state (on land where another people lived); they broke an international boycott of German goods to do this. The fascistic wing of Zionism also supplied Jewish police for the ghettos, collaborating with Nazi rule in East Europe. During the war, radical right-wing Zionists tried to deal with Hitler to undermine British colonial rule in Palestine. The other side of the Zionist crime was to oppose resistance and class struggle in Europe on the grounds that Jews ought to go to Palestine rather than fight at home.

Of course, the Zionists never got the big deal they wanted with Hitler: an agreement that Germany would be for the Germans and Palestine for the Jews. Just as capitalism today needs to scapegoat black people as a threat to the jobs of whites when the system plunges into crisis, so the Nazis used the Jews as a different kind of devil. The Jewish banker became the safety valve enemy to release hatred of capitalism. Those Jews today who think they have achieved acceptance by getting America to view Arabs as money-grubbing bankers (and worse) are in for a rude awakening. American capitalism will not hesitate to follow the Nazi example when it feels the need to substitute the symbol of Shylock for the reality of Uncle Sam.

Extreme black nationalists, Farrakhan or others, will inevitably be forced to try to deal with their oppressor as did the Zionists. But when capitalism is deeply in crisis, as it was then and will be again, oppressor nationalism demands not the end of capitalism but the destruction of an-

other nation. In the coming crisis blacks will face a holocaust too, even worse than what their ancestors have suffered on these shores in the past. When "black Zionism" seeks to strike a deal with imperialism it will have as little success as its model.

The Black Struggle Ahead

If the grim crisis we think possible turns into reality, it is not excluded that the black people in the United States could be forged into a nation. The possibility seems unreal now for most blacks; it lies not so much in their nature as in that of their enemy, and holocausts have created nations before. Even though Marxists are not advocates of nations and national boundaries, we stand squarely for the right of self-determination of the oppressed, including that of U.S. blacks. We urge blacks not to choose separatism despite their group oppression, because black unity under capitalism (even black capitalism) means continued subordination to imperialism; that has been the lesson of all the independent nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America. But black people have the right of self-determination, and the choice is theirs. The only alternative is a united proletarian resistance to capitalism, and by our defense of black rights we seek to demonstrate the possibility of genuine internationalism and class consciousness.

Only a mass working-class movement in the U.S. can break through the sectoralism that divides the masses against each other in the rulers' interest. Yet the black masses, given their history of slavery and oppression, have a deep-seated and realistic need for black unity, identity and defense. The Marxist attitude to this need is similar to our defense of the right to self-determination. We do not oppose black

unity to class-wide unity: American history has given black working people absolutely no reason yet to trust the white working class to defend them, and if the two are counterposed black workers face a desperate choice.

But the two choices need not be counterposed. Black unity as proclaimed by the Jacksons and Farrakhans indeed means united exploitation under the imperialist boot. Black workers, however, through their more advanced political understanding compared to the majority of white workers and in part through building their own organizations, will provide much of the leadership for the entire working class. Their strategic position in heavy industry in the major cities enables them to play a leading role that would have been impossible decades ago.

Unity and Self-Defense

One model for black workers to avoid is that of today's American Jews. In the past there was a powerful movement of revolutionary proletarian consciousness among Jewish workers, but it was dissolved by the advance of the Jewish bourgeoisie and the erosion of internationalist consciousness. It is not too late for all sections of the working class to learn from the Jewish experience. One lesson is central. In the 1930's, inspired in part by the defeat of the European Jews, the black Marxist C.L.R. James and Leon Trotsky began to shape the idea of building an independent black workers' organization for unity and self-defense; revolutionaries would work in it and campaign to win the black masses for the cause of socialism. It is still necessary to fight for this today as part of the struggle for building the revolutionary proletarian party in the United States. ■

Southern Africa

continued from page 1

pact with the "Marxist-Leninist" MPLA government of Angola. A joint patrol of equal numbers of Angolan and South African soldiers patrolled the border between Angola and Namibia (South West Africa), thereby isolating the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO) guerrillas fighting to free Namibia from the apartheid state's colonial rule. The patrols are also policing the ANC's withdrawal from Angola. It was reported in the Western press that these patrols has already encountered and clashed with SWAPO contingents. Angola, SWAPO and their leftist followers were quick to deny the clashes (see for example the U.S. Guardian of April 4), but the existence of the joint patrols was carefully not denied.

After these capitulations by South Africa's leftist opponents it was announced that a similar pact had been signed two years ago by Swaziland; in April there were gun battles between the ANC and Swazi troops. There is now no nearby refuge for the ANC fighters, since Mugabe has never allowed the ANC even a diplomatic mission in Zimbabwe, much less guerrilla bases. In military terms the diplomatic deals have dealt both the ANC and SWAPO serious setbacks. At the same time raids by South Africa-backed forces in Mozambique and Angola continue; UNITA now reigns over about one-third of Angolan territory and seems able to sabotage almost any-

where in the country outside the capital of Luanda.

South Africa has tightened its sub-imperialist control over the southern part of the continent. The great hopes kindled ten years ago when Portugal's retreat left South Africa isolated as a bastion of white rule have been betrayed. Of course, the apartheid rulers were never really alone. World imperialism led by the United States kept up its economic and military support despite occasional criticisms of apartheid and some wrist-slapping boycotts. U.S. officials played a key behind-the-scenes role in brokering South Africa's diplomatic triumphs.

The capitulating regimes have their apologists. "Both progressive governments are standing firmly and the efforts to impose inadmissible conditions, such as the sharing of power with the UNITA bands in Angola and the MNR in Mozambique -- demands supported by the Americans -- have all been in vain," wrote the left-nationalist AfricaAsia magazine (March 1984). But South Africa will have no need for its own direct agents in neighboring governments if the "Marxist-Leninists" in power have become so "realist" that they act as such themselves.

"Despite its immense military superiority," AfricaAsia continues, "Pretoria has been unable to advance in its design of surrounding itself by a constellation of docile states, or to brake the progress of the liberation movements shaking both South Africa and Namibia." This is precisely wrong, for although South Africa has won no lasting victory

or destroyed its foes, it has been able to "advance its design" and "brake the progress" of its enemies.

"This is the decisive factor that will shape the political future of southern Africa," the magazine concludes, and fortunately this too is false. As any Marxist or Leninist ought to recognize, the real liberating force in the region can only be the 10-million strong black working class in the mines, ports and factories of South Africa itself. There is the massive social power that can not only liberate black Africa from imperialism (and from its own fake socialist Bonapartists) but can also bring about a socialism worthy of the name -- through proletarian revolution to get rid of capitalism in all its forms. The revolution of the South African proletariat would spark workers' upsurges throughout Africa and thereby lay the basis for the socialist and internationalist federation of countries so desperately needed by the masses.

Unlike its neighbors, South Africa is not susceptible to all the illusions of guerrilla revolution. In certain respects it is like an advanced capitalist country; in particular its peasantry was wiped out in the process of developing an internal capitalism, so the base for a guerrilla strategy does not exist. Its economy is dependent on manufacturing and mining, with nearly half the industrial production of Africa south of the Sahara. A proletarian strategy, on the other hand, is eminently possible. The black working class in the past decade has made great progress in union organization, militancy and tactics. It has a lively internal political life, debating both the multi-class popular-front ideas of the ANC as well as syndicalist theories based on union power. Proletarian revolutionaries armed with genuine Marxism-Leninism -- that is, Trotskyism -- have fruitful soil to work in and combat both conceptions.

Permanent Revolution

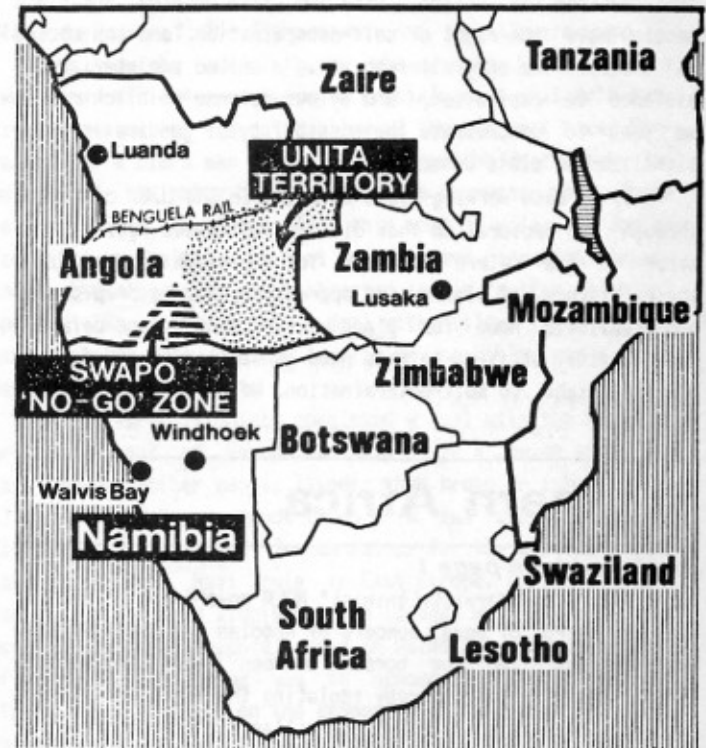
The key to a victorious strategy is the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution. The democratic struggles proclaimed by the black nationalist and "black consciousness" forces can be won only by the strength of the black proletariat, not by them. Rule by the masses themselves is conceivable only through a working-class seizure of power and the creation of a workers' state. A capitalist democracy is impossible: South African capitalism and its imperialist backers are so heavily dependent on the super-exploitation of the workers achieved through apartheid that the surgical excision of apartheid in order to retain capitalism, as in the ANC's program, is out of the question. Democratic demands including the aim of national liberation will necessarily be a powerful stimulus to the workers' movement, but communists must fight to prevent workers' consciousness from being limited to democratic and nationalist (and hence capitalist) goals.

The new states of Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe have small working classes and large peasantries. This balance of forces helped nationalism stop their revolutions short, for the moment. They are governed by petty-bourgeois nationalists who fought to eliminate imperialist and racist rule that looted the resources of their countries and deprived the black masses of all democratic rights. Now the imperialists do not rule politically, and black parties are in pow-

er. But the masses of black people still have no power and little democracy, and imperialism still reigns indirectly through its worldwide economic sway. No isolated country can escape the dictates of the world market and world finance, especially small ones that have been kept industrially backward.

The "front-line" states of southern Africa are perfect examples. Much of their industry is owned by South African capital, their trade is heavily dependent on South African rails, roads and ports, and a lot of it is with South Africa directly. The newly independent economies are not compatible with each other, having been designed under colonial rule to export raw materials to Europe. Attempts at regional coordination have been made, but without much success in breaking from South Africa and the West. These states remain capitalist dependencies, their Marxist-Leninist facades notwithstanding.

Nationalist policies only accentuate their weaknesses,



since each nationalist defends his own nation, if necessary at his neighbors' expense. That is what has happened in southern Africa, where the ANC and SWAPO -- exactly the same petty-bourgeois social forces as ZANU-PF, FRELIMO and the MPLA once were -- have been told that they're on their own. As *AfricaSia* nicely put it, "The Angolans and Mozambicans did not hesitate to participate in the Lusaka and Maputo negotiations because they are confident that SWAPO and the ANC will each be victorious against the racist Pretoria regime" -- so confident, it seems, that a stab or two in the back couldn't do them any harm. "With such friends ...", the saying goes -- and nationalists are always such friends. In previous decades Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, etc. were liberated under "socialist" nationalist leaderships, and they stabbed the next generation of guerrillas when imperialist pressure became too great for them to withstand.

Zimbabwe, the newest recruit to the pseudo-socialist camp, has been ruled by ZANU-PF since its electoral sweep in

1980. Mugabe's victory over the less radical-talking Joshua Nkomo and Bishop Abel Muzorewa, the black front-man for continued white rule, signaled the masses' hope for the farthest-reaching equality and independence. They did not get it. Mugabe was quick to break the strike wave that greeted his victory; he has tried his best to keep the local white and imperialist capitalists content. He left alone the large foreign-owned ranches and plantations in his land reform, and even kept Lieutenant-General Peter Walls in charge of the military (until pressure against him mounted) — this is the colonialist criminal who the day before had led the Rhodesian security forces against Mugabe's guerrillas.

Mugabe's "reconciliation" strategy worked for a time, and the economy prospered for two years given the boost of foreign loans. But it is now in crisis. The white farmers retain their stranglehold over Zimbabwe's economy, along with their South African allies. Zimbabwe has also capitulated to the International Monetary Fund and has raised taxes, banned strikes, cut food subsidies and slashed funds for land reform. The British Economist magazine smiled, "The new

government set about the deficit with Thatcherite zeal." Tribal oppression undoubtedly continues in the province of Matabeleland, although journalists have been barred from it and reports are few. In a way it is no wonder that ZANU-PF is now boasting of the socialist future; how else take the workers' and peasants' eyes off the present?

Communists cannot be nationalists. We cling to no obsolete national boundaries, we do not sacrifice the international proletarian revolution for the survival of separate, dependent economies. Imagine if the front-line states really were led by Marxists: they would stand united against Pretoria rather than divided against each other, they would do everything needed to aid and arm the South African workers, and minority rule in Pretoria would be on its last legs. That was the hope raised by the anti-colonial victories, and that is the hope that the "Marxist-Leninist" satraps have done their best to crush. The South African proletariat will rise up despite them in its time, and the pseudo-socialists will be among its most deserving victims, second only to the racist murderers of the apartheid regime itself. ■

El Salvador

continued from page 2

military and the death squads, now it accepts him as a "valid interlocutor." The workers in the cities, deserted by their former leaders who act like second-rate Christian Democrats, are not the ones to blame for electing the real Christian Democrat Duarte.

Rising class struggle and the rightward move of the FMLN — together with the loss of the left's working-class following to the bourgeois Christian Democrats — has led to serious splits in the guerrilla organizations. The assassination of the second-in-command of the People's Liberation Forces (FPL), Melida Anaya Montes, in Nicaragua last year, followed by the supposed suicide of their senior leader, Salvador Cayetano Carpio, was undoubtedly the result of a factional fight over the move to the right which he opposed.

Despite the suppression of all discussion in typical Stalinist fashion (the FPL leadership accused Cayetano Carpio of vague crimes like "demoralization" and "unprincipled functioning"), the factionalization continues. Two large groups have split off: the Revolutionary Workers Movement (MOR) and the Clara Elizabeth Ramirez Brigade. The FMLN labels the splitters as CIA agents, a fitting charge coming from proponents of a coalition government with parties openly supported by the CIA.

The Ramirez Brigade seems to be urban guerrillaist, having carried out assassinations of rightists and raids on big stores and banks — in deliberate isolation from the mass struggle. The MOR claims to have a working-class base and to have led some of this year's strikes. Both of the new groups hold to the original FDR-FMLN program for a Democratic Revolutionary Government; the MOR says that this formula guarantees the "hegemony of the working class in the revolution." Unfortunately it does nothing of the kind. In order to keep some capitalists in the government, this program would require the workers to keep their demands moderate enough to

encourage ample profits. The logic of this program demands that the workers' struggle be held back: it leads directly to the rightward conclusions already drawn by the bulk of the FMLN. And in espousing guerrillaism, the left-split groups are sticking with the strategy that led to disaster in the first place. Only now the stakes are higher.

The ARENA party may be evolving toward genuine fascism: it is building a mass base of middle-class elements desperate to maintain their standing as the economy slides downhill. It is acquiring the tone of phony radicalism that distinguishes fascism from more traditional far-right politics. Its pronouncements against "Yankee interference" in El Salvador and its plot to assassinate U.S. ambassador Pickering show how it could adopt a nationalist "anti-imperialist" coloration.

ARENA is biding its time. The conditions for fascism are ripening. The worsening economic situation, despite U.S. aid, means that the bourgeoisie will not tolerate Duarte's concessions to the workers much longer. Now that Duarte has done his job of shaking loose more money from the U.S. Congress, the Salvadorean rulers can dispense with the cover of a "democratic" government. D'Aubuisson the savior would discipline both the masses and the bourgeoisie to guarantee profits. When the oligarchy and its imperialist backers determine to confront the workers and peasants, ARENA will be ready. Over the corpses of hundreds of thousands of workers, it plans to bring "peace" through a fascist regime that will crush the masses for decades. And this "unfortunate necessity" will inevitably have the backing of U.S. imperialism (both Republican and Democratic), as Pinochet's slaughter did in Chile in 1973.

The situation is critical. Now, when the working class is recovering, revolutionaries have a chance to build a genuine communist party that will fight for the arming of the whole working class, the seizure of the landed estates by peasants and farm workers, the expropriation of industry under workers' control and the establishment of a government of workers' councils to overthrow the capitalist state and spread the revolution throughout Central America. ■

Immigration Bill

continued from page 32

solve their problems.

The imperialists are divided over immigration. On the one hand, they know that "third world" countries are ready to explode and that a safety valve of immigration is necessary to defuse mass discontent. Some sections of the bourgeoisie are fearful of trade wars and seek to stabilize the international market; so they oppose protectionist moves, including certain restrictions on immigration. As well, there are those who are happy to have a larger pool of workers at home to exploit.

On the other hand, the rulers of countries like the United States feel it necessary to solidify their rule through increased nationalist fervor, calculated to convince workers that the crisis is due to other workers, not the system itself. Protectionism and trade wars are only the beginning; the final capitalist solution to its crisis is war itself. In defense of its nation, each national bourgeoisie will eventually turn to immigration restrictions and other chauvinist moves much worse than this initial step.

Our opposition to Simpson-Mazzoli is not based on technical questions like rates of immigration or availability of jobs; as Marxists we know that the technology already exists to feed, clothe and shelter everyone on the planet. We take our stand on the basis of internationalist proletarian principles designed to advance all workers' revolutionary consciousness. But to accomplish this it is also necessary to expose the immediate lies of the workers' enemies.

Reactionaries Back Simpson-Mazzoli

The House bill's major provisions are: 1) sanctions against employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers; 2) permission for agriculture bosses to hire several hundred thousand "guest workers"; 3) a big increase in funding for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the notorious border and factory-raiding cops; 4) permission to deport immigrant workers without trial if they lack suitable papers; and finally 5) an amnesty clause giving legal status (but no eligibility for federally-funded aid) to immigrants who can prove U.S. residence since 1982.

In terms of numbers alone immigration today is not vast. Legal immigration is set at about half a million per year. Estimates of illegal immigration range between 100,000 and 500,000 yearly, with an accumulated population of 2 to 10 million. The absolute immigration growth is thus about the same as in the peak period of 1880-1920, but today's overall population is more than twice as high, so the growth rate is much smaller. Moreover, the claim that immigrants drain resources is belied by official estimates that show 73 percent of undocumented workers paying income tax (many without filing for refunds) and 77 percent contributing to social security (and unable to collect about \$80 billion in funds).

Reactionaries favoring the Simpson-Mazzoli bill seek to blame economic hardship and social instability on the increasing numbers of workers from abroad, mainly Latin Americans fleeing poverty and oppression. They paint a picture of alien hordes shattering law and order and draining the re-

sources of hard-working citizens. Ronald Reagan has said, "The simple truth is that we've lost control of our own borders, and no nation can do this and survive." Reagan repeatedly invokes the specter of future communist takeovers in Central America sending masses of exiles northward. One aim of Simpson-Mazzoli, clearly, is to win support for U.S. military intervention in support of reaction in Central America.

But the main reason is that the capitalists are looking to scapegoat foreigners for the burdens of the world capitalist crisis. Employers in the Los Angeles area are already laying off Hispanic workers in the face of potential Simpson-Mazzoli penalties. And even though the U.S. is currently in an economic upturn, Reagan's boomlet for the bosses is heavily based on keeping wage bills down; hence he pushes a typical crisis-oriented immigration bill. On the other hand, farm bosses' organizations lobbied heavily for the provision letting in Mexican and other "guest workers." The House bill was a compromise among different capitalist sectors who understand in time-honored tradition that immigrants can be both hired to keep wages down and fired to appease others. Anything goes, if it serves to keep the working-class divided and weak.

There are also some bourgeois forces that oppose the bill. These include right-wingers who can't stomach the idea of even a limited amnesty for immigrants, and economic conservatives like the Wall Street Journal editors who like "open borders" because the more workers there are in the country, the more they have to compete with each other to drive wages down. This theory assumes, of course, that the labor bureaucracy is so tame that it would never think of unionizing immigrant workers. Unfortunately this is pretty nearly true.

Some liberal politicians are also against the bill, under pressure from their working-class constituents. But that didn't prevent the Democratic-run House from adopting one version. Liberals have also boasted of their courage in killing provisions in the immigration bill mandating a national identification card to identify "illegals." But the bill still takes the first steps toward making such an ID out of the social security card that all workers carry. Simpson-Mazzoli provides for a social security card hotline that employers can use to check on job applicants. It is a set-up for employers and cops to crack down on militant and leftist workers of every nationality.

Other so-called "progressive" provisions are also poison. Anticipating the bill's "amnesty" provision, the INS is now rounding up immigrants to deport them as quickly and quietly as possible. This campaign is hitting not only the victims of Reagan's murderer pals in Haiti and El Salvador; in white working-class neighborhoods of New York City there has been similar hounding of Irish and Eastern European immigrants. Even those entitled to amnesty under the bill will have trouble proving it: many had no choice but to use false names and deal in cash, leaving no written records.

The "amnesty" comes hog-tied with dozens of restrictions, including a minimum income provision of over \$9000 annually, an impossible figure for most farmworkers. As well, the rule that those receiving amnesty learn English, U.S. history and "civics" encourages arbitrariness and bias. It is reminiscent of the literacy tests in Southern states

that excluded blacks from voting for decades. Likewise, the "guest" farmworker clause gives the workers no rights; similar to apartheid South Africa's pass laws for black workers, it simply legalizes migrant workers' already slave-like conditions. And it is limited to perishable crops, the agricultural sector that the United Farm Workers union has bitterly fought to organize.

Nevertheless, the U.S. labor bureaucracy supported most of the Simpson-Mazzoli bill. It likes the employer penalties against hiring undocumented workers on the grounds that they will make more jobs for Americans; it opposes the farm worker exception because it takes jobs away. However, U.S. unemployment is due to the normal operation of capitalism, not immigration. Rather than echoing Reagan's defense of U.S. borders, labor ought to defend the well-being of all workers. The only way to stop the bosses' wage-cutting by importing workers and exporting investment to cheap-labor areas is to fight for jobs for all at union-scale pay at home and abroad. Organize the unorganized! Big capital is organized internationally; it is suicide for labor not to be.

The three chief candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination all ostensibly opposed Simpson-Mazzoli. Mondale and Hart did nothing serious to defeat it. Mondale,

tied to the AFL-CIO tops who backed the bill until the last minute, promised Hispanic delegates at the Democratic Convention to make a fight — but only after the Democratic-run House had already passed it. Jackson opposed the "guest worker" amendment, not because it encourages the super-exploitation of immigrants, but because U.S. Hispanics supposedly need low-paying jobs (International Herald Tribune, June 18). He supported an alternative bill that is little better, the Roybal bill calling for tougher enforcement of laws safeguarding working conditions but also for more INS cops. Jackson, who mobilized millions of blacks for the Democrats, is as closely tied to the interests of U.S. capitalism as the AFL-CIO bureaucracy he rightly excoriates as racist.

Communist policy derives from the needs of the proletariat as a whole. The international working class has no interest in defending international borders. As Karl Marx first explained, the bosses form a veritable fraternity defending capital and profits from the workers. They have their differences; they even turn to war and violence against each other. But they are even more united in defending their common interests versus all workers. The working class will emancipate itself only when it learns to overcome the racial and national antagonisms nourished by capitalism. ■

Hospital Workers

continued from page 32

the lead and waged a bitter, isolated strike that was defeated by a united bourgeoisie determined to hold down wages for all city workers. This year, 1199 was the leader.

The hospital workers' contract expired on July 1, the same date as those of 200,000 city workers. The press reported Governor Cuomo and Mayor Koch's common desire to keep public-sector wage gains down to 5 percent or less; thus an 1199 contract that broke through this figure would have inspired others to fight for more too — a dangerous situation for the politicians. Their friends in the labor bureaucracy made sure it didn't happen.

1199's strike lasted from mid-July to the last week of August — yet, incredibly, no specifics were heard about the municipal unions' negotiations throughout these two months. At one strike rally, city union head Victor Gotbaum did tell 1199ers that "Your fight is our fight. If you take a beating on the picket line, then we'll take a beating at the bargaining table" — but he kept his workers (like 1199's, mostly black and Latin) on the job without a contract. The raw materials for a general strike were there, ready to be seized. Yet 1199 was left to struggle alone.

What's in the Contract?

At the start of the strike, the leadership's admittedly "modest" contract goals were a yearly 10 percent wage increase and a guarantee of every other weekend off (E.O.W.O.) for all workers. Management offered a phony 4 percent, hedged with givebacks. By the end, the result was E.O.W.O. and a 5 percent offer with many of the same givebacks, hence no breakthrough.

One major giveback is a wage freeze for new hires (a two-tiered wage system) to begin next year — which will inevitably divide workers even more and give the bosses a notori-

ous union-splitting tool. As well, the hospital bosses are still quarreling with the union and New York state for financial guarantees. There is a hint that the raise may be taken from a "surplus" in union benefit funds, so that workers end up paying for their own so-called victory.

But the most important defeat is unwritten. Management used the strike to test the strength of a militant-talking union at a time of labor setbacks nationally, and the union miserably failed the test. The result is not just an inadequate contract; it's a big loss of union power on the job. And it means a tremendous shift in the balance of class forces throughout the city.

1199 Strikes Out

Since the economic crisis resurfaced in the 1970's, 1199 under the leadership of founder Leon Davis lost two city-wide and many local strikes and suffered several sell-out contracts. But the current sell-out was more than just routine. Turner bragged at the ratification meeting, "We were the most peaceful people this city has ever seen in a strike this big."

Sadly, it is true. Many 1199ers went further: this was the worst-run strike they had ever seen. It began on a Friday night before the hospitals' slack weekend, postponed for two weeks after the contract expired; most hospitals held no preparatory meetings; the union delayed too long in filing the legally required 10-day strike notices for nurses under separate contracts who were honoring the picket lines.

The trouble was not just bureaucratic incompetence. Turner's strategy was to involve the ranks minimally — just enough to keep the strike going. Significantly, the few times that she did call out the members with promises of action, thousands responded enthusiastically — only to be prevented by the union staff from accomplishing anything. It was generally after these lost opportunities that the bosses chose to sharpen their attacks.

A few examples will suffice. For the first twelve days of the strike, management refused to negotiate, and the union did nothing. Finally on July 25 Turner called a rally at Bryant Park and bored masses of workers with a parade of hollow solidarity speeches. Nevertheless, at the end a spirited march of about 5000 workers took off for the Roosevelt Hotel where negotiations were supposed to occur. But the leadership cut off the action by telling the ranks simply to return to their small picket lines. The next day, with picketing still aimless, a federal judge ordered nurses at three hospitals back to work (at one, the nurses defied the order). The union agreed to comply, even though it was only where the nurses were out that much business was being lost.

Union Desperate to Settle

In the third week, Turner advertised mass meetings at the Felt Forum, exciting workers with the news that management had made another offer. But by meeting time it turned out that the offer was unchanged; Turner had to call for a "no" vote. While workers were disappointed with Turner's failure, they were furious with the bosses. Our arguments for mass picketing against scabs and for a general strike received great applause. Turner demagogically spoke against scabs too, and workers believed her; in the next few days the number of arrests for individual acts rose sharply, but no mass actions were organized by the leaders.

By the fifth week, management had got tougher, cutting off strikers' health benefits. In desperation, Turner called mass rallies at four major hospitals on August 15, with a leak to the press that the union planned to shut them down. The biggest effort was at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, where 3000 angry workers showed bitter hostility toward scabs and eagerness to act. Here again the bureaucrats showed their skill in drowning militancy in a bath of speeches to no useful end. Now that the union's bluff was exposed, the bosses announced their intention of permanently replacing strikers with scabs and even dismantled their Roosevelt Hotel headquarters to emphasize their contempt.

Desperate to settle and end an unwanted fight, Turner & Co. called a mass ratification meeting for August 21 without actually having a settlement in hand. This time Governor Cuomo had intervened on the E.O.W.O. question, and informal negotiations through a mediator had resumed. On that night management delivered another humiliating blow to the union in front of 15,000 workers: it offered a few items but no contract at all. Turner could not even call a real vote; she simply offered more empty rhetoric about "continuing the struggle until we get a contract." When workers shouted out in anger about the scabs, she could only reply facetiously, "Kiss the scabs." With the hospitals' union-busting out in the open, Turner would discuss no action.

So management made its replacement threats specific: "The hiring will begin by Monday August 27, and can only be avoided if striking employees return to their jobs." By that time, most strikers believed that continuing the strike would guarantee the loss of their jobs and the end of the union. "Victory"? Hell, no: it was a stampede.

The 1199 bureaucrats like all others were unwilling to lead the workers in a real fight. They depend instead upon management and government being nice to them because they

are so "reasonable." As a result, the majority of members barely participated in the strike, and a sizeable number scabbed — increasingly many as the strike limped along. The open strikebreaking, plus Turner's puny demands and the lack of strike preparation, created a high level of demoralization from day one. One result was a rash of decertification attempts in the nursing division. 1199 practically invited the bosses to raise their sights and turn to explicit union-busting moves.

The blame for these practices does not lie on Turner alone, as is charged by the opposition within 1199 (called "Unity and Progress") that supports Leon Davis and current National Union president Henry Nicholas. The union's policy has always permitted scabbing, by defining the term as narrowly as possible: only 1199 members were called scabs when they crossed the picket line. Members of other unions, nurses, management, doctors, non-union workers and volunteers were always allowed to maintain hospital services (and income) during 1199 strikes.

In 1976, for example, LRP supporters were active at Mt. Sinai Hospital, where a strike committee had been elected by the membership on a no-scabs basis. At Sinai and other hospitals the pickets tried to block entrances, many deliveries were stopped — and there were more attacks on scabs in that short strike than this summer's long one. But the Mt. Sinai committee and the no-scabs policy were overthrown by union officials and goons sent out on Davis' behalf. Henry Nicholas made a personal appearance to threaten the strike committee head (who was fired a few years later with the help of the Davis leadership). No, the "good old days" of 1199 were just as bad as — and paved the way for — today.

While the bureaucrats always repressed action against scabs, in public they denied the problem existed, claiming "they can't run the hospitals without us." This false line was especially dangerous in the recent strike, for the bosses had practiced over the years how to mobilize staff and volunteers to run the hospitals. And this time members and hired importees scabbed as well. This low consciousness is due partly to the general labor climate in the country: the parade of union defeats has produced growing anti-union sentiment even among union members.

In addition, the climate in 1199 itself has discouraged unity and militancy. For the past few years the union has busied itself with an internal power struggle between Turner (backed by old-line business bureaucrat Al Heaps of the parent RWDSU) and Davis/Nicholas. On July 1, the day the major New York contracts expired, Turner and Nicholas culminated a deal to split the union in half: she got New York and kept the RWDSU affiliation, and he kept the rest.

Turner had built support as a black woman union leader in a largely minority and female union, but she succeeded in squandering even genuine anti-racist sentiment on bureaucratic infighting. (Nicholas is also black, although his image is not that of black militancy.) Both sides followed a "look out for number one" line in practice, countering all their rhetoric about unity. That Turner had fired many of the experienced officials and organizers on Davis' side is surely one reason why the strike looked so bad even from a bureaucratic point of view.

The union's ability to wage a fight has been crippled by its reliance on government officials. Leon Davis had a long love affair with Governor Rockefeller in the 1960's and 1970's, when there were funds available for expanding the health-care industry — in exchange for a union-disciplined work force. But today the cozy attachment to capitalist politicians means retrenchment. Turner was criticized by *Unity and Progress* for not having endorsed Cuomo in his primary race last year against Koch, but that would have made little difference. Turner indeed used the strike to mend her relations with Cuomo, but like every other union bureaucrat, she bent over backward not to embarrass any Democrat in an election year.

Bureaucrats and Democrats

Cuomo, elected by the votes of labor and minorities, stood by for six weeks watching a black and Hispanic union that was asking for practically nothing get beaten to the ground, and didn't say a word. Despite violations galore and illegal union-busting actions, the bosses were never fired, only the union. This is standard practice, of course, but hardly justification for Turner's lavish praise for Cuomo at the end — "We found in this man someone who understands working people" — and her promise of "50 cents a month out of our paychecks to help our friends in office."

What Cuomo understands is union bureaucrats. Turner's praise stems from his belated intervention into the strike, which enabled her to get a contract, even a rotten one. As far as the workers' interests are concerned, the unions' Democratic alliance is a dead-end street.

Turner had ably manipulated the racism issue in her power struggle inside the union, and she could have used it in her demagogic way to force some accommodation from Cuomo as well as mediator (and future black mayoral candidate) Basil Paterson. Paterson too had played "neutral" on the bosses' side. However, not only did Turner salute Cuomo, but her delegates chanted "Paterson for mayor!" when the contract was delivered.

The bureaucrats' pro-Democrat policy boxed the union in. How could they demand that the state shut down hospitals with health violations? How could they suggest in any form or fashion that the state take over the money-grubbing private hospitals (already 90 percent funded by the state)? In fact, how could they raise any demands on the state during an economic crunch when they have to pretend that the Democratic politicians are "friends" of workers.

There is one demand on the state that is popular among union officials — arbitration — but this has been ruled out by the history of 1199. The 1976 strike led by Davis was fought under the union demand for binding arbitration, not any specific wage rise. This was a supposedly clever maneuver to show how reasonable workers could be in comparison to management. Davis triumphantly announced "We Won!" in the union press, but later the arbitrators' decision came down with a truckload of binding givebacks and he was forced to declare "never again." That defeat burned so badly that the idea of arbitration in 1199 is still taboo.

The various "left" groups in the union offer nothing better than Turner or Nicholas. The Communist Party is active in *Unity and Progress*, which predictably offered no alterna-

tive leadership in this strike. Consisting almost exclusively of union officials and delegates, its fundamental strategy is the same as Davis/Nicholas': appealing to other bureaucrats and the pro-capitalist courts for union reforms.

In classic Stalinist fashion, the Bolshevik League swung from ardent enthusiasm for Turner in 1982 to endorsement of U&P this year with nary a comment on the switch. The Communist Workers Party, on the other hand, cited Turner's "objective and indispensable revolutionary role" in championing black leadership, as if Turner is really less dependent on white politicians and bureaucrats than Nicholas. The Progressive Labor Party and its front group, InCAR, have a long history in 1199; this year they claimed to be militant at one hospital picket line but they played no role at the mass rallies and meetings.

Other left organizations commenting from outside did little but cheerlead for the strike (some did this in such a way as to really boost Davis' record over Turner's). Any militant striker who saw *Workers World's* amazing headline, "Hospital workers' victory blazes way for labor triumph," could conclude only that the left is as unscrupulous as Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post*.

At the few rallies that did take place, leftists were present in large numbers but with little fight. They joined in the cheering for the useless visiting bureaucrats rather than giving them the jeers they deserved. And with all the "rank and file" groups that the left has built in city and state unions, they did not even call — much less fight — for a general strike of all workers under the same attack as 1199.

For a General Strike!

The LRP tried throughout the strike to show 1199ers that they were not alone. We spoke at all strike and pre-strike meetings for an alternative strategy — the only oppositionists to do so. We actively tried to build a united front committee with other militants committed to a no-scabs policy, but without success in the climate of demoralization. At the end we argued for a "no" vote on the proposed contract, not to continue the strike as it had been conducted but to turn it around through a mass-based anti-scab policy and a general strike strategy.

Victories will be few and far between until the working class tears itself from the electoralism and passivity of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats. The last thing workers need now is leftists telling them they have won when they have been beaten; the same cheerleaders tomorrow will be moping that nothing can be done, and will abandon the working class for greener pastures. A general strike would not only serve the workers' immediate defense need; it would also show our class that it has the power to overthrow capitalism and get rid of poverty, racism and war for good. But the class needs a revolutionary party as its leadership in place of today's sell-outs.

There are already a number of workers in addition to LRP supporters who see that capitalism cannot survive except at the expense of the working class. Inside and out of 1199 and the other unions, we are seeking to convince them to join us in our struggle for the general strike and a new revolutionary proletarian leadership. ■

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

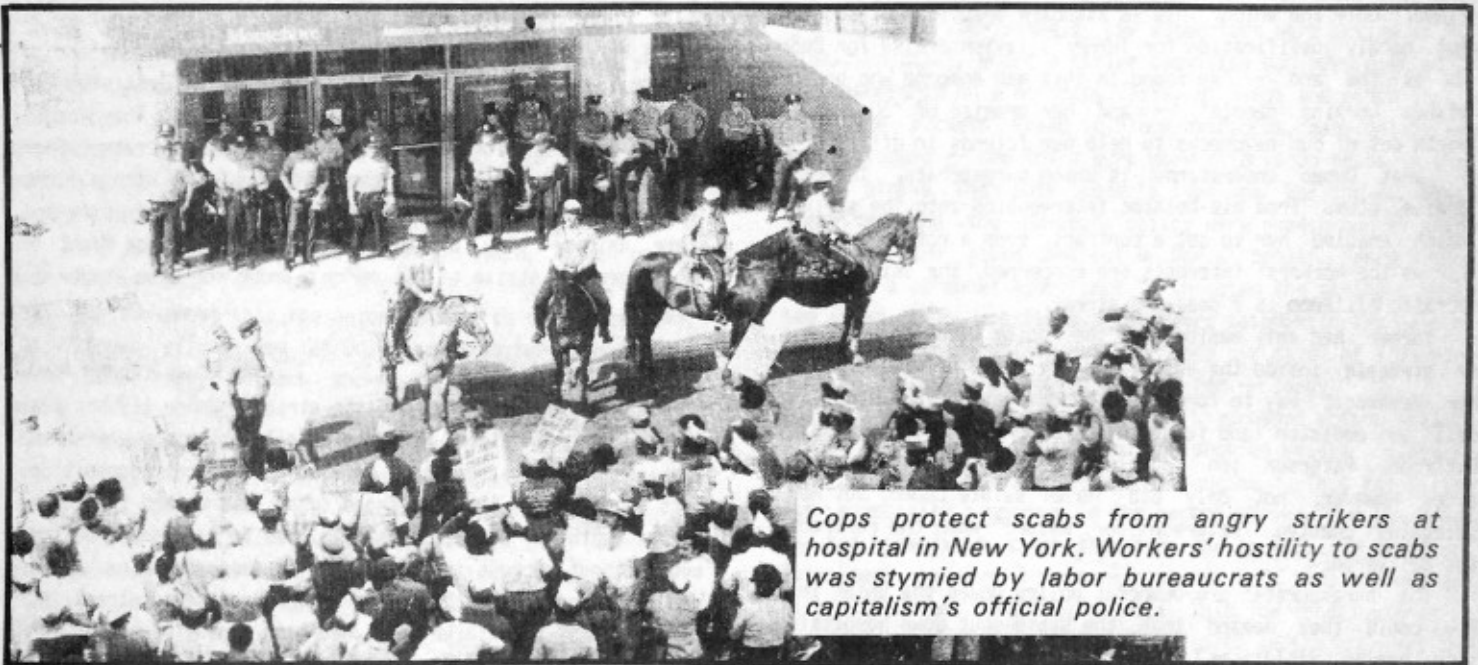
Fall 1984

New York Hospital Strike 1199 Invites Union-Busting

After a strike lasting nearly seven weeks, 50,000 New York City private hospital workers returned to work in late August. Their contract was hailed as a victory by union president Doris Turner of Local 1199, and workers desperate to get back to their jobs overwhelmingly voted to approve it at a mass rally at Madison Square Garden. Yet there was no victory at all, but instead a painful demonstration that union

of Turner and the entire New York labor leadership. It also condemned the so-called left, which preserves its one-way admiration for "progressive" union leaders and Democratic politicians at whatever cost to the workers. They have all contributed to pushing 1199 to the brink of disaster.

Several hospital workers who are 1199 members have been supporters of the LRP for years; we write this article as ac-



Cops protect scabs from angry strikers at hospital in New York. Workers' hostility to scabs was stymied by labor bureaucrats as well as capitalism's official police.

weakness invites union-busting attacks by management.

As of this writing, full details of the 1984 contract are not available. Indications of givebacks are clear already, although the actual extent has only begun to leak out. But this much is certain: the strike was a gross indict-

tive participants in the strike. Long before and throughout the strike, we argued not only for militant tactics but also for a political struggle by a united working class: a city-wide general strike. In 1980 the Transit Workers had taken

continued on page 29

Immigration Bill Threatens Workers

In New York harbor the Statue of Liberty stands caged; its torch lifted to welcome the tired and poor has been removed for repairs. This is an appropriate symbol for the bipartisan Simpson-Mazzoli bill against "illegal" immigration passed this summer by the House of Representatives and awaiting a conference with the Senate. Despite its ballyhooed amnesty for undocumented foreign residents and its sanctions nominally aimed at employers, it is in fact the newest bourgeois attack on working-class immigrants, intended to whip up chauvinist divisions, keep out the undesirable, terrorize the undocumented -- and thereby increase the exploitation of all workers.

Let us make clear from the start the basis for the Marxist position on immigration. As internationalists we reject the idea that existing national boundaries are sacrosanct; they are capitalist institutions designed to maintain imperialist rule by dividing the working class. Although many workers indeed love the country of their origin, these countries belong not to them but to the capitalists. Because of the devastation wreaked by imperialism, many workers leave their homelands in order to survive. We stand for the right of people to migrate wherever they please, although we know that the crisis of capitalism means that immigration will not

continued on page 28