

China's Bloc with South Africa

Angola: Maoists Marching with Pretoria

JANUARY 10—Ever since Teng Hsiao-ping and Gerald Ford vowed last month in Peking to combat "Soviet social-imperialism" in Angola, the main trend in the Maoist world today has become "State Department Marxism-Leninism." After weeks of embarrassed silence or contorted stonewalling apologies on Angola the Maoists finally crawled out for a forum yesterday and a demonstration today in NYC, both staged by the New York African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) under the slogan, "Imperialism (United States, Russia, South Africa) Out of Angola." These self-proclaimed "anti-imperialists" are marching in step with the U.S. imperialists who also favor "superpowers out of Angola" as the only effective strategy for defeating the "number one enemy," Russia. Just today the *New York Times* "summed up" the Chinese line by calling upon the Organization of African Unity "to demand an end to all foreign

intervention—Soviet and Cuban as well as South African, Chinese and American," and calling for "a government of national unity" in Angola.

The ALSC-sponsored forum on Angola attracted over 200, including contingents from the October League (OL), the Congress of African People (CAP), the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRRWO), the Revolutionary Workers League/Marxist Leninist (RWL/ML), the Central Organization of U.S. Marxist-Leninists (COUSML) and the pro-Moscow Communist Party (CP). Conspicuously absent was the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP, formerly Revolutionary Union). The main speaker presented the New York ALSC's position paper on Angola, which denounced the Soviet Union as "the most dangerous threat to causing new world war" and called for "superpowers out" and a "coalition government."

During the floor discussion on this



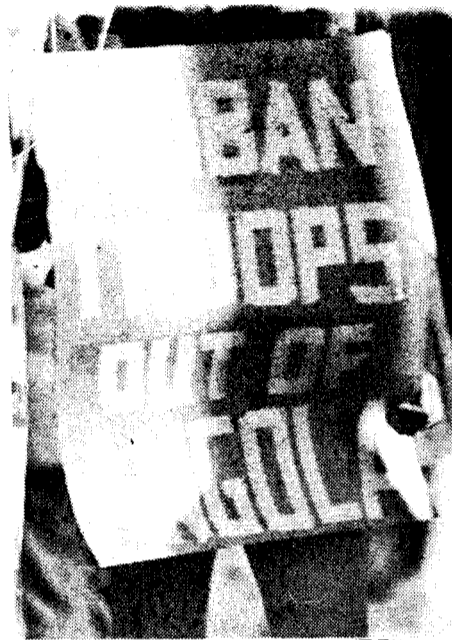
WV Photo

Maoists side with U.S./South Africa on Angola, NYC demonstration, 10 January.

application of "Marxism-Leninism-Henry-Kissinger-Thought," CP leader Tony Monteiro in an oh-so-comradely response defended the USSR and its unconditional political support for the strikebreaking petty-bourgeois Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Several other "independent Marxist-Leninists" also solidarized with the MPLA, arguing that the Luanda government was not a puppet of the "Soviet social-imperialists" and had already won the backing of the "progressive" African regimes.

Answering Monteiro's charge of a Mao/Kissinger bloc, the ALSC spokesman shouted, "Yes, we stand with Kissinger, but you stand with Brezhnev!" Thunderous applause followed. Then a Maoist from the floor sputtered that the Angolan people should fight with rocks and spears rather than accept weapons from the "Soviet social-imperialists," while another howled that

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WV Photo

Mao-thought of the day: "Cuban troops out of Angola!"

The Guardian "Respectfully Differs" with U.S./South Africa/China Axis

In the international battle raging over Angola, "People's China" has lined up foursquare behind the U.S./South African axis. Not only have Chinese military advisors for several years trained a border army for the violently anti-communist, CIA-backed Front for the National Liberation of Angola (FNLA); since Washington and Pretoria drastically escalated their intervention against the Soviet-allied Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) last fall, Peking has likewise stepped up its fulminations against... "Soviet social-imperialism"! A 28 December Hsinhua News Agency dispatch brazenly asserted that "the Soviet revisionists are the archcriminals who have stirred up and exacerbated the civil war in Angola and undermined African unity" (*New York Times*, 30 December).

Mao's scandalous de facto military bloc with U.S. imperialism in Angola has sent shock waves through Maoist circles worldwide. It was hard enough explaining why Nixon and Chou were sipping cocktails to the tune of "Home on the Range" while B-52 bombers pounded away at North Vietnamese cities. Now they have to justify Peking-trained troops killing their African brothers with U.S.-supplied weapons under the command of South African, Portuguese colonialist and U.S. mercenary officers. So far most of the

American Maoist groups have not publicly broken their lock step with the Peking bureaucracy over Angola, but there is plenty of embarrassed silence.

The one nominally Maoist organization in the U.S. to openly come out against the Chinese policy on this issue is the fanatically pro-Stalin Communist Labor Party (CLP), which in recent months had already shifted visibly closer to the Russian orbit (see "CLP Embraces Détente," *WV* No. 74, 1 August 1975). It calls the MPLA "the only liberation force in Angola" and trumpets "Long Live the [MPLA-led] People's Republic of Angola." However, so far the CLP has denounced only "the treachery by Vice Premier Teng of China" (*Western Worker*, 1 January 1976).

Within the American Maoist movement, the one serious attempt to justify a break with the Peking line on Angola has come from the widely read weekly *Guardian*. Announcing in a 26 November editorial that it "respects, but differs with, the position of People's China," the newspaper is now campaigning aggressively for the MPLA. Although it is organizationally independent (having been until recently the lap dog of the October League, notable for its absolute fidelity to Peking in all its betrayals, both big and small), the *Guardian's* dissidence is significant for it both reflects and influences the broad radical

milieu out of which the Maoist organizations recruit. Its break with the Chinese line on Angola is a step toward the isolation of the Peking-loyal Maoists and their transformation into justly despised sects.

Is the War in Angola a National Liberation Struggle?

In his column "fan the flames" (24 December 1975), *Guardian* editor Irwin Silber seeks to give a general theoretical justification for support to the MPLA, despite its ties to "Soviet social-imperialism." Although brief, Silber's article is important and cogent, and could well become a basic document for "critical Maoism."

Silber begins by appealing to the orthodox Leninist position on national liberation struggles in the context of inter-imperialist rivalry. A genuine nationalist movement, by accepting aid from an imperialist power hostile to its direct oppressor, does not thereby necessarily become an instrument of that power. A war of national liberation does not become an inter-imperialist conflict simply because the nationalist forces receive support from "the enemy of their enemy." No genuine communist would reject these general principles.

Lenin supported the Irish national uprising during World War I although it received some material support from Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany. Trotsky

supported China's resistance to conquest by Japan although Chiang Kai-shek's government was receiving aid from the Western powers including American military volunteers (Claire Chennault's Flying Tigers). The attempted Kurdish uprising against Iraq last winter, although decisively militarily dependent upon the Shah of Iran (who sacrificed it), was a genuine national struggle.

But is the situation in Angola comparable to the above examples? The *Guardian* would have us believe so. Silber justifies support to the MPLA in terms of "the achievement of Angolan independence under its most consistently patriotic force." Another article in the same issue approvingly quotes Samora Machel, president of Mozambique:

"In Angola, two forces are confronting each other; on the one hand, imperialism with its allies and puppets; on the other, the progressive popular forces which support MPLA. There is nothing else."

Machel to the contrary, Soviet bloc intervention is a decisive factor in the conflict. U.S. opposition to the MPLA is not because of its domestic economic policies, but because of its alliance with the Soviet bloc. Washington is determined to prevent Angola from becoming a Soviet-allied state, a base for the Russian navy and a conduit for the

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Guardian Differs...

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Kremlin's maneuvering in Africa. Kissinger has recently made it absolutely clear that he is willing to accept a Neto government if it moves away from the USSR in the manner of Anwar Sadat's Egypt:

"We are not opposed to the MPLA as such. We make a distinction between the factions in Angola and the outside intervention. We can live with any of the factions in Angola and we would never have given assistance to any other faction if other great powers had stayed out of this... We accepted in Mozambique without any difficulty a pro-Marxist faction that came to power by indigenous means, or perhaps with some minimum outside support, in Frelimo... the issue is whether the Soviet Union, backed by a Cuban expeditionary force, can impose on two-thirds of the population its own brand of government."

—New York Times, 24 December 1975

Kissinger's stated attitude toward the MPLA is *not* that of an imperialist power toward a national liberation movement it is determined to crush. The British in 1916 did not state they would accept a Pearse/Connolly government in Ireland if only the latter stopped conspiring with the Germans. Japan in 1937 did not offer to withdraw from China if Chiang changed his foreign policy. Ba'athist Iraq made no pretense at agreeing to an independent Kurdistan on condition that it be unaligned with Iran.

Kissinger is offering to accept an MPLA government if it breaks its alliance with the Soviet Union, and that is a fundamental difference. That is why the present war in Angola is not a

national liberation struggle against U.S. imperialism. Rather, as the London *Economist* accurately described it, "Angola has become a proxy battlefield between the major powers."

Angola is Not Puerto Rico

Silber's article deals with only two concrete situations—Angola and Puerto Rico—and draws a certain parallel between them. Silber lashes the October League (OL) for moving away from unconditional support to Puerto Rican independence. The December issue of the OL's *Call* contains the incredible assertion that "In the past period, Puerto Rico has become one of the Latin American areas in sharpest contention between the superpowers, the U.S. and USSR." The *Call* goes on to state, "the USSR has attempted to exercise its dominance through control of the independence movement." Incredibly, the OL is Kremlin-agent-baiting the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP).

Whatever the degree of Brezhnevite influence in the PSP, Silber is certainly correct to dismiss out-of-hand Soviet involvement in the Puerto Rican national question. At the present time, the Puerto Rican question is a straightforward conflict between American colonialism and not very strong indigenous nationalist forces, with Russian involvement less than minimal.

But this is certainly not the case in Angola. There the Portuguese colonial army has left and the three-cornered civil war between the competing nationalist movements has been superseded by a conflict between the U.S. and the USSR through the intermediary of their local allies. Should the MPLA defeat the U.S. South Africa-led bloc arrayed against it, Neto's Angola would undoubtedly be, in the next period (which does not exclude subsequent shifts), an ally and client of Moscow in the manner of Iraq or Somalia.

American intervention is aimed precisely at preventing this development. Kissinger's policy is to oppose the MPLA *because* it is allied to the Russians, *or* to pressure it to break that alliance. The MPLA is not receiving aid from the Soviet bloc in order to liberate Angola from American neo-colonialism; rather it is under attack by

U.S. imperialism because it is allied to the Soviet bloc.

Abstracted from their slanderous characterization of the USSR as capitalist imperialist, the mainstream Maoists' assertion that the present war in Angola is one of "superpower" contention is empirically correct. Those "critical Maoists" who support the MPLA, as well as the "third-camp" Shachtmanite International Socialists and Revolutionary Socialist League who do the same, must distort reality to justify their position.

Basing ourselves on the internationalist and proletarian principles of Marxism, the Spartacist League has called for

Black Self-Defense...

(continued from page 7)

ty, a conclusion that once again contradicts the actual unfolding of the struggle in Monroe. After recounting one act of treachery after another by the Wilkins NAACP leadership, the author of *Negroes With Guns* wrote: "I don't want to leave the impression that I am against the NAACP; on the contrary I think it's an important weapon in the freedom struggle and I want to strengthen it."

In his interview with the *Young Socialist*, he says of Martin Luther King:

"The one thing that I was most critical of him about was that I don't believe in being dogmatic and excluding other points of view. You see, I didn't criticize his tactics. I took the position that I would do anything that would be successful, but Dr. King didn't feel that way. He said that it was morally wrong to use violence even in self-defense."

Williams maintains that, while he was personally not non-violent, it was "all right" for other people. This "do-your-own-thing" liberalism is simply an abdication of political responsibility. As his book eloquently demonstrates, every small gain made by the pacifist civil rights movement was accompanied by the gratuitous bloodshed of non-resisting black demonstrators. Their philosophy of moral persuasion was a dramatic failure in the face of rabid mobs of racists.

All roads do not lead to Rome; all paths do not lead to victory. Black and leftist militants must unconditionally defend all victims of bourgeois repression. But this must not lead us to excuse confused and conciliationist views which could pave the road to disaster. Solidarity against the class enemy must not be empty unity mongering. Only the sharp clash of counterposed lines in open political debate can galvanize a truly revolutionary, Trotskyist, workers party capable of guiding the working class and oppressed minorities forward to final victory against their capitalist oppressors. ■

military support to *all* the Angolan nationalist groups in the anti-colonial struggle, and refused to back *any* of them in the three-way power fight which lasted from the 1974 ceasefire with the Portuguese until last autumn. But the departure of the colonial troops and administrators in November effectively dissolved Angola as a state, while the assumption of command by imperialist forces over the FNLA/UNITA military coalition (South African-led armored column in the south and Portuguese colonialist direction of the FNLA army in the north, coupled with massive U.S. military aid), *together with the introduction of Soviet military advisors and Cuban troops*, decisively internationalized the conflict.

The fighting in Angola is no longer a domestic civil war, but a "war by proxy" between the U.S. and the USSR. As Trotskyists we do not give one iota of *political* support to the treacherous petty-bourgeois nationalists or Kremlin bureaucrats, both of whom seek a deal with the imperialists and are bitterly opposed to international socialist revolution. Yet, even though the social conquests of the October Revolution are not directly threatened by the battle over Angola, in this simple contest ("war by proxy") between American imperialism and the Russian degenerated workers state, communists must *take sides*. That is why the Spartacist League calls for military victory of the Soviet-backed MPLA against the imperialist coalition.

Not Critical Maoism, But Trotskyism

The false argumentation the *Guardian* employs to defend its pro-MPLA stance is not a scholastic issue, but directly impinges on whether the present crisis of world Maoism will be resolved in favor of revolutionary Marxism (Trotskyism) or Stalinoid eclecticism. As China's alliance with Gerald Ford's America becomes ever more open and all-sided, from Oman to Berlin to Luanda, "critical Maoism" will tend to displace the Peking-loyal variety. The important Italian Maoist syndicalist group Lotta Continua has recently openly criticized China's foreign policy. Hardline Peking loyalists will undoubtedly degenerate into despised sects (as the PCP-ML already is in Portugal today), incapable of recruiting youth newly drawn to revolutionary politics.

Revolutionary politics are impossible without a correct position on the "Russian question," and the most important lesson to be drawn from Angola is the counterrevolutionary conclusions inherent in the doctrine of "Soviet imperialism." This treacherous policy sooner or later leads its advocates straight into the arms of the CIA. It already did so in the 1940's and 1950's with the Shachtmanites, who fled from revolutionary Trotskyism into the bosom of "State Department socialism." Today it leads the Peking-loyal Maoists into the camp of Kissinger and Vorster. ■

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Williams Interview...

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there that relates to a big political debate within the left, which is whether it is consistent with a policy of organized self-defense to also call on the federal government to provide protection for black people...

Williams: In the South, before we started to organize self-defense and even after, we always appealed to the federal government for enforcement of the Fourteenth Amendment... This carried great weight with people who were leaning a little bit toward the pacifist movement but were not pacifists. People like to find, especially petty-bourgeois people, like to believe that they have exhausted every remedy possible... The only way that you can bring them around to this is by constantly appealing to the federal government...but in the meantime you're preparing to defend yourselves.

WV: I don't agree with you. Let me approach the question from a different angle. What would have happened if you had only appealed to the federal government and had not organized in your own defense?

Williams: Oh, I'd be dead now. I'd have been dead. We wouldn't have lasted any time. We would have been completely devoured by racist elements. ■

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French Army...

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Ferrand and Cherbourg. Alain Krivine of the LCR was detained for several hours.

The extent of the police terror is indicated by an incident reported in *Le Monde* (18 December). On December 4, cops raided the house of the secretary of the CFDT in Seine-St. Denis. They took the unionist's 38-year-old wife to the station and interrogated her for three hours in order to "verify her identity"! Four days later, she committed suicide.

PCF, PS Side with Government

The Communist and Socialist Parties were quick to dissociate themselves from those arrested. The day following the first wave of searches French Communist Party (PCF) head Georges Marchais announced that the PCF

"has nothing to do with these leaflet-provocations distributed by ultra-left groups against whom we have fought continuously for years and years and which we were alone in fighting for a long time."

—*Le Monde*, 7-8 December

The PCF has for the last three years sought to revive the popular-front experience of the late 1930's and 1940's. Creating the popular-front Union of the Left, which includes the reformist Socialist Party and the bourgeois Left Radicals, the PCF endowed it with a "Common Program" that goes to great lengths to assure the ruling class of the bloc's harmless intentions, even promising not to withdraw from the anti-Soviet NATO military pact. Now the PCF goes

even further in disavowing the communist tradition of anti-militarism:

"We will never defend those who are working for the disintegration of the army and who advise men to turn their guns against their officers."

—*Le Monde*, 10 December

Thus the PCF placed itself unambiguously in the camp of those social patriots who railed against the revolutionary defeatist propaganda of Liebknecht, Luxemburg and Lenin during World War I. It was only logical, therefore, that the PCF refused to support a demonstration on December 5 in solidarity with the imprisoned soldiers and CFDT unionists.

As for the CGT, it obediently followed in the footsteps of its ideological mentors by boycotting the demonstration. H. Krasucki, editor of the CGT weekly *Vie Ouvrière*, editorialized:

"It is no mystery that ultra-left elements occupy responsible positions in a certain number of CFDT organizations. That is the CFDT's business. But CGT organizations need to know whom they are dealing with, whether it is really with the CFDT or something else."

—*Rouge*, 19 December

CGT head Séguy echoed this sentiment: "we are not unconditional supporters of inter-union solidarity" (*Le Monde*, 11 December).

But as the arrests continued, pressure mounted upon the PCF/CGT to make at least a gesture toward defending the victimized militants. Despite the leadership's evident willingness to let soldiers and unionists rot in jail (the *minimum* sentence is five years!), more than 40 CGT locals and area councils have endorsed motions demanding the release of the imprisoned militants and the

cessation of all arrests and prosecutions. The PCF/CGT were finally obliged to participate in a united-front demonstration of over 50,000 in Paris on December 18, but not before making their position clear in the negotiations leading to the protest. The CGT National Bureau wrote to the CFDT:

"Any unity of action on this question supposes a categorical and explicit condemnation of the irresponsible anti-militarist activities of ultra-left groups and their exclusion from any action."

—*Rouge*, 19 December

During the "defense" demonstration itself, the PCF/CGT *refused* to demand the freedom of those in jail, instead limiting themselves to pushing the Common Program.

An even more sharply defined differentiation between the sellout leadership and the solidarist impulses of the ranks took place in the case of the Socialist Party (PS) and CFDT. PS head François Mitterrand pontificated:

"No one has the right to question the Socialist Party's patriotism... the fatherland belong to everyone... [The PS] condemns the anti-militarist theses of minority groups, especially soldiers unions."

—*Le Monde*, 9 December

When LCR leader Krivine was detained the PS publicly announced it would not defend him.

But it was not so easy for the PS-dominated union federation, the CFDT, to get out from under. The bulk of the government's fierce repression has been aimed at its members and local leaders, and the indignation of the union's ranks was enormous. Moreover, the CFDT's verbal leftism had gotten it in trouble. The federation had repeatedly called for the "full exercise of all the constitutional rights of citizens, in particular trade-union rights" in the army (CFDT National Bureau declaration, 13 January 1975). CFDT members reputedly active in supporting the soldiers' organizing efforts were no doubt under the impression that they were following a well-defined policy of their union.

A popular CFDT leader in Besançon, Gerard Jussiaux, was arrested in the first series of raids. Four other CFDT officials were rounded up in Seine-St. Denis, a Paris suburb which is traditionally a PCF stronghold. Even the CFDT police union of the Seine-St. Denis *département* felt compelled to issue a communiqué on December 5 which

"vehemently protests the intimidation and repressive operation being carried out against union militants in the form of interrogations and searches both at their homes and in union offices... The departmental union and the departmental section of the CFDT police express their total solidarity with the militants who are victims of repression, whether they are unionists or soldiers, and demand that prosecution of them be dropped and they be immediately freed."

Meanwhile, the national CGT and CFDT bureaucracies were rushing to assure the bourgeoisie of their servility with flag-waving declarations. The Executive Committee of the CFDT issued a statement pointing out that the CFDT

"had always come out for national defense in the service of national independence and the independence of the entire people and for a profoundly democratic army—democratic in its organizational form, its functioning, its objectives. There is not the slightest trace of anti-militarism in any form...."

How true!

The crass and explicit rejection of elementary proletarian solidarity by the labor lieutenants of capital provides authentic revolutionists with a promising opportunity to couple the fight to defend the victimized militants with the struggle to expose and oust the treacherous PCF/CGT and PS/CFDT leaderships from the organizations of the working class. The bureaucrats' slavish capitulation in the face of savage ruling-class assault has rendered them vulnerable before the ranks of labor. But the centrist French "far left" organizations

have refused to link their defense efforts with the revolutionary program which provides the only real alternative to these sellouts. No defense of democratic rights in the armed forces is possible without addressing the central question of the class nature of the state.

"Far Left" Fronts for Reformism

The "anti-militarism" of the ostensibly Trotskyist organizations in France has always been more verbal than real—and now even that has collapsed at the first serious sign of government repression. Previously, the LCR had tailed after the democratic illusions of the "Call of the 100." Just before the recent arrests began, the LCR undertook a polemic with the Révolution! group. While giving lip-service to "the strategic perspective of destroying the bourgeois army" and the need for "developing revolutionary propaganda without any concessions," the LCR proposed "to wage a unitary political battle for concrete objectives corresponding to the preoccupations of the large mass of soldiers and not just a revolutionary minority" (*Rouge*, 29 November).

This "unitary political battle" means nothing if not "unity" with the super-patriotic reformists around a minimum program which buries the explicitly anti-militarist fight. This rationale has for years characterized the methodology of the Pabloist revisionists: reformist demands supposedly engender a "revolutionary dynamic" and "objective historical processes" will see to the rest. The LCR's current formulations—that

Popular-Front Betrayals— Then and Now



In 1936, leaders of popular-front government after smashing general strike. From left: Socialist premier Blum, PCF leader Thorez, interior minister Salengro.



Last fall Union of the Left parties refused to defend arrested anti-militarist militants. From left: Radical Fabre, Socialist Mitterrand, Communist Marchais.

ist STATEMENT

Defend Victimized French Anti-Militarists!

Comité national pour la libération des soldats et des militants emprisonnés

Dear Comrades,

After months of preparation, the French government unleashed a carefully orchestrated wave of repression and intimidation against soldiers and militants who were attempting to assert elementary democratic rights within the army, in particular by organizing Soldiers Committees and trade-union sections.

The international Spartacist tendency, and its French sympathizing section, the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, stand firmly on the side of the intended victims of this repression. We demand that all indictments be dropped and all prosecution halted: for the immediate liberation of the jailed soldiers and militants.

At the same time, we condemn the fact that Union Ouvrière (some of whose supporters had been arrested) was not allowed to speak in its own name at the 15 December meeting at the Mutualité in Paris. All participants in the Committee must be allowed to speak in their own names and present their own programs and differences. Political censorship, even when some centrists take the initiative in liquidating their independent political presence and program into such a Committee, serves only to weaken the defense and would mean that principled revolutionists could not participate in the Committee.

international Spartacist tendency
Ligue Trotskyiste de France



Paris Match

Soldiers sit in at Draguignan last year.

"the permanently unsafe...conditions constitute, more than any supposed plot, a serious attack against the morale of the army"—are not just caution in the face of repression; they unmistakably imply that the LCR favors improving the morale of the bourgeois army.

The Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI), continuing its rightward plunge, has simply abstained from any positive position. Until recently it virtually ignored the question of the army, except when raising the most minimal reform demands (such as the reduction of military service from a year to six months), implicitly presenting conscription as a "step"... "towards workers militias" (*La Vérité*, January 1975). Nowhere does it (or the LCR) call for opposition to the draft (conscription), the means by which the capitalist army extorts the corvée labor and cannon fodder for its imperialist adventures.

The OCI has formally come out for the release of the arrested militants. But in specific actions, such as the united-front demonstration on December 18, it not only failed (as did the fake "Trotskyists") to raise its own slogans, but even failed to mobilize its members to participate.

The OCI has trotted out its universal panacea, the "workers united front," to obtain a release of the jailed militants. In fact, at the present time a common front does exist among the mass workers organizations: the CP, SP and trade union bureaucracies are unanimous in condemning any consistent opposition to the bourgeois army. As the OCI hastens to underline, the empty call for "unity" in the face of explicit capitulation by the existing leadership of the working class is nothing but a cover for programmatic *laissez-faire* toward the bodies of armed men which exist to protect the bourgeois state:

"All working-class organizations, all workers parties, have their own conceptions of the army and the role of the army. But that is not the question today...."

—*Informations Ouvrières*, 18-24 December

Indeed, what is the question? It is correct and necessary to demand that the treacherous, pro-army misleaders of French labor undertake action to free the imprisoned anti-militarist militants, but this must not be used as an excuse to drop the struggle against the capitalist war machine.

In the abstract, Lutte Ouvrière (LO) has a formally correct position, calling for the destruction of the bourgeois army and opposition to the draft. But formally correct slogans are tested only in reality, and LO has miserably failed this test. LO explicitly forswears the fight for revolutionary policies toward the army on the grounds that it is not a mass revolutionary party. Until then, LO is content to support reformist politics and even to propagate them:

"In fact, at the present time, revolutionary socialists can do no more than

support the demands and the struggle of the conscript army and can do nothing to change the limited scope of the former. This is because they do not have firm enough roots in the factories and thus cannot really link the soldiers' struggles to the workers' struggles."

—*Lutte de Classe/Class Struggle*, February 1975

While the French centrist organizations have generally moved steadily to the right in repeated capitulation to the popular front during the past several years, there has lately been increased activity among several small "ultra-left" groups. Unlike the LCR, OCI and LO, during the present crisis these groupings did attempt to maintain a principled anti-militarist position. Accordingly the government has arrested members, not only of the most

"The prisons, the guns, stand ever ready to smash GI dissent as long as this arsenal of repression is controlled by the brass. While every split, contradiction and weakness in the ruling class should be exploited to the utmost, unless defense work is coupled with political and class demands that the arsenal of repression be removed from the hands of the brass, the illusion that the Army is reformable is fostered. These illusions will shatter as soon as GI dissent deepens and intensifies, as soon as it constitutes a threat."

—*GI Voice* No. 2-3, May 1969

GI Voice was an anti-Vietnam War soldiers' newsletter politically supported by the Spartacist League.

prominent left groups, but also of the minuscule Bordigists and others, on the flimsiest of excuses.

For the centrists, the division between minimum and maximum demands is nothing but a cover for gross abdication. The ultra-lefts' new-found willingness to raise "minimum" and even "democratic" demands—such as the creation of soldiers' organizations and the liberation of the jailed militants (Bordigists), or the linking of "down with the army of capital" with "freedom for the imprisoned soldiers" (Combat Communiste, another split-off from LO)—may indicate an effort to intersect a real movement of the advanced workers and soldier militants. Such healthy impulses must be generalized into the recognition that there is indeed a revolutionary program which can actively intervene into the class struggle without liquidating the fundamental strategic aims of communists: the transitional program of Trotsky.

Down with the Bourgeois Army!

In the face of the government's savage repression, the fight to defend the jailed soldiers, unionists and leftists is a crucial responsibility of the workers movement. Stop the prosecutions! Freedom for all

the victimized militants!

The absence of such a united defense campaign is a glaring danger to the working class, exposing its unions and parties to the continued frenzy of the class enemy. Such a defense can be mounted only by fighting within the mass organizations of the working class to expose and drive out the capitulationist leaders who cravenly refuse to wield the power of the workers movement in defense of the repression's first targets.

Solidarist sentiment among the ranks has been overwhelming. But instead of using this manifest dissatisfaction to launch a campaign within the unions, the spurious "Trotskyists" have simply liquidated themselves into a "National Committee for the Liberation of Jailed Soldiers and Militants."

The current debates over the form that an organization in the army should take serve only to mask the fundamental question: revolutionists interest themselves in the fight for soldiers' democratic rights in order to agitate against the bourgeois army as an institution, but never to make the army more effective as a tool of the bourgeoisie. The PCF's demand for "clubs" containing both draftees and officers is an obvious example of naked class collaboration.

For further articles on the military question and the French army, see:

- "Proletarian Military Policy," *RCY Newsletter* No. 13, August-September 1972.
- "Lessons of the French Student Struggles—Down with the Bourgeois Army!" *RCY Newsletter* No. 18, July-August 1973.
- "French Pseudo-Trotskyists Campaign to Reform Army," *Young Spartacus* No. 29, February 1975.

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But the LCR's demand for a soldiers union—organized around demands restricted to working conditions and democratic rights, and "link[ed] to the trade unions"—amounts to the same thing. To raise demands which if realized would mean a better-fed, more democratic, straighter-shooting imperialist army with higher morale is worse than reformism. To call for "soldiers trade unions"—and to link them to the labor movement without posing the programmatic basis for a clear struggle against the pro-capitalist bureaucracies—means abandoning the soldiers to the flag-waving reformists, and therefore to the bourgeoisie.

The right of soldiers to organize politically and to form a unitary organization, counterposed to the command hierarchy and the officer corps, in which political tendencies could struggle for their positions is an elementary democratic demand which must be supported. Where such soviet-type soldiers councils appear, as began to occur in Portugal last fall, they represent the emergence of *dual power* in the capitalist army. The first principle of revolutionaries' propaganda and agitation directed toward the heart of bourgeois state power—the armed forces—must be the resolute call for the destruction of the bourgeois army. ■

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Marching with Pretoria...

(continued from page 5)

the Cuban soldiers were "the same" as the South African troops! When a Spartacist League spokesman intervened, cutting through the deceitful "non-partisan" posture of the Peking Stalinists and characterizing the USSR as a degenerated workers state, the audience of bickering Stalinists and vicarious "third world" nationalists finally found their "point of unity," stomping their feet to a chant of "No Trots!"

At the demonstration today, which drew about 150 from the same Maoist groups, slogans abounded condemning Rêd Imperialism and Cuban troops. A leaflet distributed by the Workers Viewpoint group denounced the Cubans for "objectively acting as mercenaries," then compared Angola with "free Europe" on the eve of World War II, warning that "the U.S. Congress' cutting off of the large scale covert operation in Angola...resembles the infamous Munich Pact"!!! Following the Chinese line, which criticizes the U.S. for conciliating the "fascist" USSR, the Workers Viewpoint condemns the U.S. imperialists for "giving" Angola to Brezhnev just as Anglo-French imperialism offered Czechoslovakia to Hitler.

Likewise, the PRRWO leaflet aims its fire at the "slimy new tsars of Moscow," and the "Cuban mercenary troops," calling for the Angolan forces to "wipe these monsters off the face of Angola." These Maoists rant and rave against the USSR and Cuba, but pass over the South African invasion in just one sentence! The OL dismissed South Africa as the "number three enemy," to be defeated only after the Cubans are driven into the sea:

"While the presence of all foreign powers must be opposed, only a united Angolan people will be able to repulse the South African racists. Such unity can only come about when the superpowers stop their meddling."

While the OL justifies a bloc with the South Africans against the Cubans and MPLA, COUSML attacks "naked aggression" by Cuba but mentions *not one word* about South Africa in its leaflet! Moreover, COUSML declares, "UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi, is leading the national liberation struggle of the Angolan people." In fact, UNITA forces are fighting under the command of the South African military, and Savimbi is a stooge for the white supremacist regime, whose newspapers have lauded him as the "hope of the whites" and "man of the hour."

War is a continuation of politics by other means. In Angola today the Maoist line that "Soviet social-imperialism" represents the "most dangerous" enemy means: kill the Cubans. The Stalinist "syphilis of the working class," to use Trotsky's phrase, has so blinded and mentally enfeebled the Maoists that they openly side with the imperialist Dr. Strangeloves and the consummately racist South African regime against the Russian degenerated workers state. ■

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Soldiers Committees Spread Like Wildfire in French Army

When the soldiers committee of the French army's 19th Regiment, located in the town of Besançon, transformed itself into a section of the CFDT trade-union federation last November 4, the government of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing responded by reactivating a special State Security Court, issuing "John Doe" warrants and instituting blanket arrests for "participation in efforts to demoralize the army." In the next two months soldiers committees sprouted up in scores of army units, and close to 50 people (both soldiers and civilians) were detained on charges of anti-militarist activities.

This wave of agitation in the French armed forces has roots that go back several years. The crucial question of the army as a central institution of class rule was already sharply focused by the massive general strike of May-June 1968. When the resistance of the French working class to General de Gaulle's decade-long efforts to rationalize French capitalism at the workers' expense boiled over in 1968, it was unclear whether the overwhelmingly conscript French army could be counted on to obey orders to smash the general strike. Only after de Gaulle received assurances of allegiance from elite paratroop units in Germany was he able to move to decisively defeat the strike of ten million workers.

The implicit challenge to bourgeois rule posed by the pre-revolutionary situation of 1968 was betrayed by the misleaders of the French working class, the Stalinist and social-democratic lackeys of capital who head the mass reformist workers' parties and trade-union federations. Nonetheless, the French proletariat has retained a generally high level of militancy in the face of repeated ruling-class attempts to take back gains won by the workers in 1968.

Today the bourgeoisie is seeking to "end the depression" at the workers' expense. The combination of stubborn labor struggles to defend the proletariat's living standards and expectations aroused by the political upheaval in Portugal and the predictable turmoil in Spain has produced a potentially explosive situation. The army's responsiveness to the needs of the bourgeois state power could again become a crucial question at any moment, especially given the government's proclivity for using the army to break strikes (postal strike in 1974, Paris garbage strike in 1975).

From the Debré Law to the Call of the 100

For years the army hierarchy has responded to any perceived threat by brutal repression within "normal" army channels and by prosecution. In 1970, for example, three soldiers were tried for possessing "anti-militarist leaflets" and one received a year in prison.

But over the past few years, open expression of discontent within the

army has been gaining momentum. In the spring of 1973 a broad movement of high-school students arose in response to the "Debré law," an attempt to establish conditions propitious to intensified regimentation in the army by lowering the average age of army induction and thereby increasing the already strong class bias in the social composition of university students (see *RCY Newsletter* No. 18, July-August 1973).

Prior to the 1974 presidential elections, the publication of a "Call of the 100" launched a campaign for democratic rights in the army. Based on a lowest-common-denominator program which gave backhanded support to the idea of bourgeois "national defense," the "Call" took exception to the stationing of French troops in Germany because "there exist established peaceful relations with this country" (*Rouge*, 16 May 1974). Concomitant with the campaign for signatures to the "Call" (it eventually received about 6,000), various "soldiers committees" began forming.

September 1974 marked a new phase in agitation, with a public demonstration in the streets of Draguignan by about 200 soldiers. The government's attempt to use the show trial of the "Draguignan Three" to intimidate militants within the army was unsuccessful; one soldier was released and two others were given only token sentences (see *Young Spartacus* No. 29, February 1975).

In the last year and a half, soldiers committees have spread rapidly throughout the armed forces. Contrary to the claims of both the government and the "far left," these groupings are actually based almost entirely on the issue of democratic rights. Despite ferocious efforts at repression (army officials claim to have destroyed some 20 committees), by December 1975 over 60 committees in France and in the French army in Germany were publishing their own newspapers (*Dossier "La Caserne"* [December 1975]).

After the embarrassment of the Draguignan trial, the government evidently undertook long-range preparations for the current massive repression. *Le Monde* (27 December 1975) reports that French civilian and military police agencies had spent four to five months gathering the dossiers upon which the recent arrests have been based.

From the government's point of view, the committees are particularly dangerous because of their substantial popularity and their links with the civilian trade unions. French military authorities in Germany claim that "only" one to two percent of the troops stationed there are "sympathetic" to the committees; if true, this would represent 500-900 soldiers! Many of the soldiers' papers are reportedly produced with the material support of local trade unions—in particular the CFDT, but in at least ten



Paris Match

French soldiers at press conference announcing formation of army trade union.

cases the CGT—thus raising the spectre of direct links between the soldiers movement and the trade unions which could seriously undermine the bourgeoisie's ability to rely on the army as its primary pool of strikebreakers.

Wave of Repression

The State Security Court, recently resuscitated to try the anti-militarist militants, was created by de Gaulle in 1963, in the wake of the Algerian war. According to the provisions which regulate this "permanent exceptional jurisdiction," cases are tried by a government-appointed court of five (of which two or three are high-ranking military officers). Searches and arrests can be carried out at any time and suspects may be held incommunicado for ten days (as opposed to 24 hours under civilian law). Prosecution is upon simple request of the government and convictions cannot be appealed (except on the basis of procedural errors or new evidence). The virtually unlimited scope of the State Security Court's powers has become shockingly clear during the current witchhunt, as civilians have been arrested simply for possessing "anti-militarist" literature.

In the month following Prime Minister Jacques Chirac's November 26 speech launching the repressive campaign, the government arrested 47 people (12 of these were still in jail as of January 8), mainly civilians. At the same time it initiated an extensive (but much less highly publicized) wave of repression within the army. The military high command moved brutally to break up the soldiers committees (60 days in the brig and even, in some cases, in

solitary), instigating large-scale transfers of those "suspected" of participating in or even being sympathetic to the soldiers committees. Similar measures greeted soldiers arrested after their release from civilian jails (*Le Monde*, 2 January 1976).

The repression has elicited considerable liberal outrage due both to its blatantly arbitrary and authoritarian character and to the effrontery of the government's attack on the alleged civilian support apparatus of the soldiers committees—i.e., the direct confrontation with the French trade-union movement. Amnesty International has protested the arbitrary procedures of the State Security Court, as have the League for the Rights of Man (French equivalent of the ACLU) and the unions of judges and lawyers (*Le Monde*, 28-29 December and 31 December 1975).

The first wave of raids and arrests, on December 4, was aimed primarily at the CFDT: locals in Besançon, Bordeaux and Chaumont were raided and union officials and organizers were arrested there as well as in Strasbourg and elsewhere. Subsequent raids across the country extended to the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU) and groups on the "far left" (i.e., to the left of the Communist Party): the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), Révolution!, the Bordigist Programme Communiste and Union Ouvrière (an ultra-left split from Lutte Ouvrière). A second major wave of arrests occurred on December 15, when offices of the LCR, the PSU, Révolution! and the CFDT were raided in Paris, Bordeaux, Lyon, Amiens, Besançon, Montpellier, Clermont-

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