

NY LOCAL IN SIXTH MONTH OF STRIKE

Phone Workers Continue Defiance of Sellout

After six months of stubborn determination by telephone workers, the New York phone strike suddenly seemed to come to life, seemingly with the blessings of all the leaders. Mass picketing of Bell installations, "education" of scabs, and militant marches through the streets of Manhattan and Brooklyn by masses of phone workers expressed new spirit. The New York strike is yet another example of the great capacity of the American workers for sacrifice on behalf of their class, and the role of the bureaucracy as an essentially fragile lid atop potentially enormous force. The furious determination of the leading strikers reveals again the hollowness of the old rationale for the left's opportunism toward the union bureaucracy: that the workers are not prepared to take the extreme steps necessary to oust the bureaucracy and overthrow the condition for its existence—capitalism.

The CWA international leadership under Joseph A. Beirne, which has attempted to sabotage the strike in the interests of maintaining the nationwide settlement of last July, has switched tactics. Beirne bought a full-page ad in the *New York Times* (2 Jan.) which backed the membership and vowed, "CWA will not violate its rules and 'order' its members back to work." Beirne knows that N. Y. Telephone, which has managed to keep working with its operators and out-of-state scabs, plans to keep stalling until the strike exhausts itself; yet suddenly he encouraged street demonstrations and militancy. The reason for this is no mystery, and it's certainly not a change of heart on the part of Beirne.

Beirne's "Rules of the Game"

The only "rules" Beirne will never "violate" are the rules of power—and the Phone Co. has power. In 1968, CWA workers in Michigan also

voted to stay out after rejecting the sell-out national contract of that year (which Beirne himself later implied was "small potatoes"). Beirne's response was swift: he split the locals and cooperated with the company, to deprive them of their dues check-off so that he could put them in a position of total dependence on the International. Local 4016 president William Moultrie was blacklisted from the company for doing no more than New York Local 1101 president Carnivale is doing now. In July 1971 Beirne promised not to stop the strike without a membership vote, but five days later, having accepted a pre-strike company offer, he announced the decision of the International Executive Board to end the strike (see *Workers' Action*, Sept. 1971). By using a mail ballot instead of the more democratic, less controllable live membership meetings, Beirne hoped to minimize opposition to the rotten contract. Of the many locals around the country that initially rebelled against this betrayal, only the New York state locals, mainly because of the power of the New York City rank and file and the state-wide unity, were able to hold out against Beirne and the company.

Beirne's real role, like the rest of the labor "leaders" both reactionary and liberal, is to discipline the workers to safeguard exploitation of labor by the corporations; his only real "rules"—keep the struggle safe for capitalism! In order to do this, however, the bureaucrats must maintain some credibility as leaders. Beirne, particularly, needs to cover his bets for the next CWA convention. If he appears to abandon New York while Carnivale leads the strike, he could eventually be stampeded out of office. By appealing for militancy now, he puts the blame on Carnivale if the ranks exhaust themselves in the streets and achieve nothing. Or, if New York Bell is prepar-

ing to offer some minor concessions on local issues, a burst of activity now, giving the membership the feeling of having won some kind of "victory," may be a trick designed to put over a new sellout. Either way, the result is essentially the same—six months out for another betrayal.

Learn the Lessons of the Past!

This familiar pattern explains the extremely high rate of turnover of CWA local leaderships. Carnivale, who was recently elected as a militant and "good guy" on a wave of dissatisfaction with the old leadership, is presently popular. He will probably try to maintain a militant image kept within the bounds of Beirne's "rules." His militant posturing will not bring results, and he will take the rank and file down to defeat with him. Without a rank-and-file struggle against the entire bureaucracy, from Carnivale to Beirne, and a serious attempt to shut down the Phone Co. completely, the most militant street demonstrations will not prevent defeat.

What Is Needed to Win

The real issues of the strike call for economic and political solutions beyond the imagination of Carnivale and Beirne, and show where they have failed. To begin with, the limits imposed by the national sell-out must be broken. The official settlement of a 12.4% wage increase retroactive to May 1, 1971 and a pathetic 3% each of the two succeeding years does not even catch up on the wages lost through inflation and taxes since the 1968 settlement! The so-called cost-of-living increase in the last two years of the contract is insignificant. Many CWA operators (at the bottom of the scale) are getting less than 10% the first year. In light of recent wage settlements by coal

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Phone Workers

miners, aerospace workers and longshoremen—and a possible longshoremen's strike to break the wage controls—12% increases each year is minimum for a decent CWA contract.

The decisive part of the settlement as far as the leadership is concerned is the "modified agency shop" provision, which fattens the bureaucracy's treasury without really strengthening the union by allowing them to collect dues from non-members. Furthermore, town classifications, and area wage differences, with different contracts for different sections of the country (corresponding poorly or not at all with actual living cost differentials), only serve to pit work-

working-class political program. Carnivale is apparently too popular right now for United Action to dare more than a one-sentence swipe at him for "careerism" in its 3 January issue. The most political article of the issue, entitled "Beirne Must Go!" practically invites Carnivale to join: "If the CWA is to be effective, rank and file groups must organize in each local to make our leaderships fight the company and the international" [emphasis ours].

While these phonies refuse to challenge "their" "good guys," they also refuse to really fight "bad guy" Beirne when they get a chance, as revealed in "What Beirne Really Said..." in the same is-



—New York Daily News

ers from one area against another, and to keep all wages low. There should be a union shop and one nationwide contract and pay scale with equal wages for equal work, including an unlimited cost-of-living escalator. The New York workers must mobilize CWA ranks across the country behind this.

Organize Operators!

Local issues center on grievance procedure, upgrading (the question of seniority vs. hiring off the street), absence control, etc. Important as these are, Beirne will grab at the smallest "local issue" bone tossed out by the company that he thinks he can get by with, to avoid confronting the decisive issue of breaking through the limits of the national settlement. After a strike as long as this one has been already, such an end would be a grotesque insult.

More vital is a "local issue" of a different kind—the question of the operators, whose company union is not honoring the strike. Furthermore, some of the women CWA members in clerical and other titles have scabbed, feeling they have been left at the bottom too long by the CWA leadership. This disunity enables Bell to keep going no matter how militant the strikers are on the streets. Organizing travelling pickets against the out-of-state scabbing is acceptable to Beirne and Carnivale to a certain extent; but organizing the operators would require organizing on the basis of a struggle against the CWA bureaucracy. It was Beirne's betrayal last July that turned the tide among the operators against the CWA in the subsequent representation election. But the "militant" Carnivale refused to tackle precisely this task of organizing the operators, despite pressure from the ranks, out of fear of Beirne's retaliation for breaking the "rules."

The United Action caucus in Local 1101, heavily publicized by *Workers' Power* of the International Socialists (IS) has failed utterly to fill the need for hard, alternative leadership based on a

sue, a report of an "impromptu" meeting with Beirne in Washington, D. C. The article—the entire issue, in fact—contains no mention of the slightest political challenge to Beirne by United Action on any aspect of the need for a rank-and-file caucus, a fight to overthrow the bureaucracy, or transitional demands—despite Beirne's reported statement that he "is seeking intervention by various political figures to mediate the issue." Beirne's subservience to the political handmaidens of the giant corporations stands in marked contrast to the attitude of the ranks of 1101 at a recent street demonstration, in which a Brooklyn Assistant to the Borough President was booed and shouted down amid general condemnation of "politicians." The indivisible marriage of the trade union bureaucracy to the bourgeois politicians, particularly the Democratic Party, is central to their role as the bosses' policemen within the labor movement. United Action's silence in the face of the open betrayal of inviting these enemies to interfere in labor affairs is typical of IS's craven cowardice and opportunism.

The 21 January *Workers' Power* can do no better than to note a byproduct of rank-and-file determination to act (in this case, sending "flying squads" of pickets to installations in surrounding regions and Detroit) in spite of bureaucratic sabotage: "determined rank and file militants can force the labor bureaucracy to do certain things, including get out of the way.... With a strategy and an understanding of what the real power relationships are, mass rank and file action can change things." IS has noticed that the labor bureaucracy will go further under pressure than they will go without pressure. A profound insight! But the bureaucracy can bend to "determined rank and file" militancy until it is exhausted in the absence of a programmatically distinct caucus fighting for leadership. Concessions from bureaucrats can best be won by the real threat of an opposing caucus with a revolutionary transitional program, in the same way as greater reforms are won from the bourgeoisie by a revolutionary threat than by reformist pressure.

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On a larger scale, the effect of policies like those of United Action would be disastrous for the political consciousness of the workers. Many of the most militant would come to see the "left" caucuses in their unions as a brake upon achieving what they want, as a pusillanimous left cover for the bureaucrats. The result would be increasing spontaneist attitudes among the workers, leading to heroic actions and inevitable disorganized defeat. In the present case, IS chooses a time when the workers have demonstrated willingness to go to extreme lengths, for their talk of "forcing the bureaucracy to do certain things"! When the opportunity is lost, and the workers exhausted, they may revert to a more far-reaching perspective, since then they will have no worry about being taken too seriously and possibly being faced with the responsibilities of providing revolutionary leadership accruing from smashing the bureaucracy.

The lesson of this strike must be the realization that a fight for a contract that satisfies the needs of the CWA membership necessarily means a struggle to oust the rotten leadership locally and nationally. The bureaucrats maintain their position by limiting the struggle to the narrowest range of economic and trade union issues and by keeping the workers confused and divided into separate, competing unions and locals. But the workers are confronted every day with an entire range of social and political issues that directly affect their lives and future: unemployment, wage controls, inflation, war, racism, sexual discrimination. The interests of the working class as a whole, internationally, in these and other questions stand diametrically opposed to the interests of the corporations and banks ruling most of the world. Therefore, any organized opposition in CWA or any union must fight for a full range of class demands if it is not to be still another device for some hustler's career. The program must include ending unemployment through a shorter work week at no loss in pay, decent contracts, union democracy, an end to discrimination against racial minorities and women, labor off the pay board, strike action against war and a working-class political party to smash the influence of the bosses' political lackeys and lead the labor movement out of the hands of their reformist bureaucratic friends.

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Defend the Gains, Defeat the Usurpers

SET THE BASE AGAINST THE TOP!



Hungarian Workers Destroy Stalin Statue, 1956

The differences expressed below between the "Anti-Stalinism Study Group" (ASG) and ourselves have a significance beyond the issues discussed (which are of sufficient importance in their own right). By itself, the ASG is but a small group in northern California which publishes the newsletter *Tsūshin*, and with whom we have had comradely relations. But the ASG is a direct expression of a major and characteristic section of the very important Japanese revolutionary left, in particular the Kakumaru faction of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League led by comrade Kuroda. Given the profound contradictions of Japan and in the context of the mounting world crisis, the capacity theoretically, politically and organizationally of the Japanese revolutionists can well determine the outcome in victory or defeat of the Japanese proletarian revolution, itself an issue of overwhelming importance in East Asia and of first magnitude in global impact.

But the Japanese movement is disoriented, as illustrated by the Kakumaru faction's "world revolutionary strategy of 'anti-imperialism, anti-Stalinism.'" This view, originating in superstructural parallels, implicitly equates the vastly different phenomena of capitalist imperialism and the essentially derivative Stalinist bureaucracies. It leads logically and practically to incapacity in the struggle against Stalinism within the workers' movement. Without smashing Stalinism the Japanese revolution will surely miscarry.

The Japanese revolutionary left arose out of the Stalinist party after the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and attempted to interpret that event essentially on the basis of national recent experiences alone. The official "Fourth International," deep in its own revisionist decomposition, only damaged and further disoriented the Japanese comrades. The essential task facing the Japanese comrades is to take as the central axis of their movement the organically assimilated experiences of the international communist movement: the Leninist first four Congresses of the Communist International, of the subsequent International Left Opposition and of the present struggle toward rebirth of the Fourth International.

Only through critical and searching internal struggle, necessarily as a component part of the world Trotskyist movement, can the Japanese comrades overcome the particularities of their own origins and win a Leninist clarity. Many will fall by the wayside, but out of the process will emerge the Japanese vanguard party, section of the Fourth International.

Letter to the Editor:

The symposium on "August 6 and International Anti-War Struggles" sponsored by our group had as its main purpose the promotion of revolutionary anti-war struggles from the standpoint of proletarian internationalism. Convinced that the experiences of the Japanese revolutionary Left is extremely relevant, we presented an outline of the development of the Japanese anti-war movement, with specific emphasis on the Japanese anti-Stalinist Revolutionary Left which has been taking a militant stand in the forefront of these struggles.

In organizing the symposium, we were guided by two principles. First, it is our opinion that only those organizations in the U. S. which base themselves consciously on an anti-Stalinist orientation will be capable of leading the American anti-war struggles in a revolutionary direction. Secondly, while there is a necessity for these revolutionary groups to engage in common struggle, it certainly should not be done to the exclusion of ideological confrontation between themselves so as to sharpen the basis for promoting a revolutionary movement here in the U. S.

Despite the elemental militancy which is frequently displayed by groups which have embraced Stalinist politics, we do not believe that such groups can possibly function as even a potential vanguard of the American revolution nor hardly of the world revolution which must sweep aside both imperialism and Stalinism. For our August 6 symposium, we called upon speakers from their position as anti-Stalinists to present their perspectives on international anti-war struggles and concerning Stalinism. (Since the S. L. was well aware before August 6 of the specific groups from which we were requesting speakers, we think that if the S. L. was sincerely interested in inviting P. L., they might have brought up this issue with our group before August 6. Yet, the first we heard about this was in the pages of *Workers' Action* in late September!)

Socialism in One Country

Although we do not deny the superficial militancy of the P. L. and its pro-working class orien-

tion, we know that P. L. has never broken with Stalinism and is merely another of the all-too-familiar left-wing Stalinist sects. We have seen many of them in Japan and are not at all impressed by them. We further cannot agree with you in defining the essence of Stalinism as being "class collaboration." Our understanding is that the ideology of Stalinism is essentially characterized as being the theory of "socialism in one country"—the idea that it is possible and necessary to accomplish the revolution in a single country and to construct "socialism" in a single country. Thus, Stalinism amounts to an abandonment of the very concept of world revolution and of the Marxian concept of world socialism. Stalinists may or may not engage in class collaboration; they may advocate peaceful coexistence or armed struggle; they may simultaneously arm themselves with nuclear weapons while seeking out negotiations with the imperialists.

We do not use the word "Stalinism" as a mere curseword; our definition is quite precise. Although we are willing to work together with P. L. in the attainment of certain immediate goals where there is elementary agreement, we do not delude ourselves into believing that they have broken away from Stalinism.

"Anti-Imperialism, Anti-Stalinism"

In your article, you referred to the Kakumaru's "general slogan" of "anti-imperialism, anti-Stalinism" and an "earlier slogan" of "Down with US-USSR Nuclear Testing!" This is an error. The "slogan" "Anti-imperialism, anti-Stalinism" is a concise formulation of the world revolutionary strategy of the Kakumaru faction. The slogan opposing US and USSR nuclear testing was a concrete application of this world revolutionary strategy, as it is applied to the conditions of today's world, characterized by the vicious cycle of nuclear tests between the Eastern and Western blocs. In raising this slogan, the Kakumaru faction was exposing the corruption of all the existing Left, which was symbolized by their willingness to oppose nuclear testing by American imperialists but their inability to resolutely oppose

the testing by the USSR, just as they had been unable to denounce the USSR's suppression of the Hungarian revolution of 1956. The position of the Kakumaru faction is that the essential aims of anti-war struggles at the present stage are "to expose the corrupt realities of the contemporary world itself, which consists of reciprocal repulsion and reciprocal dependence between the imperialist bloc and the Stalinist USSR bloc, and to create an organizational power aiming at the fundamental overthrow of these contradictions and the realization of true peace. In other words, to create a revolutionary current containing within itself also a breach with Stalinism in the form of transcending the existing peace movement—this is the central task of anti-war struggles at the present stage." Consequently, this slogan of opposition to both US and USSR nuclear testing contains within it an impetus urging the masses to understand not only the essence of imperialism, but also the anti-proletarian nature of contemporary Stalinism. (On this point, see Kuroda Kan'ichi, "What is Revolutionary Marxism?" pp. 77-78.)

Armed Force

Even if one were to view the Stalinist rulers as a "counter-revolutionary bureaucratic caste" sitting on top of revolutionary gains, this would not prevent one from protesting resolutely against the counter-revolutionary policies pursued by the Stalinist bureaucracies. One of these policies is the exclusive reliance on escalation of armed force (nuclear weapons, the arms race) coupled with summit talks and negotiations. This two-faced policy is consistently adopted by the Stalinist bureaucracies, who are unable and unwilling to lead the world proletariat towards the proletarian revolution. We feel that it is essential that the revolutionary Left consistently confront, and resolutely and courageously expose this anti-proletarian policy by the entire world Stalinist movement.

In today's world, weapons are consistently used by the Stalinists in a manner inimical to the revolutionary struggles of the masses. The uprising of the Hungarian workers was crushed by Soviet tanks. The rebellion of the population of East Pakistan, the armed struggles of the youth and students of Ceylon, have been crushed with Chinese arms. Someday, even the nuclear weapons of these countries may be put into use to suppress the revolutionary struggles of the working people. Are we to defend each and every counter-revolutionary policy of the Kremlin and Peking bureaucrats because of some imputed "revolutionary gains" said to be inherent in the nationalized means of production? Are we to refrain from exposing the counter-revolutionary policies of the USSR-Chinese bloc because this would be to deny these Stalinist countries their weapons and to invite imperialist attack? We say No! The Stalinist bureaucracies, the Stalinist parties, and the Stalinist ideology must be thoroughly exposed and smashed everywhere in the world. It would be criminal to foster any illusions about the "progressive" or "revolutionary" nature of any Stalinist group or party, and to refrain from struggle to overthrow Stalinism on the strength of illusions

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PRESSURE MOUNTS IN NYC UNION RANKS

As the election year opens, and John Lindsay begins his hoped-for leap from Mayor to President, the crisis he is trying to leave behind in New York City has developed into a catastrophe for the working class. The imposition of government wage controls nationally has combined with the inflation, the lifting of rent controls, cutbacks in city services, deliberate city-created unemployment, another transit fare hike and skyrocketing tolls and taxes to force the problems of the capitalist system into a ferocious attack on labor. The "leaders" of labor, meanwhile, have cooperated as usual.

Compulsory Arbitration Imposed

Lindsay has finally capped the onslaught with a crown of rare "achievement" in a "labor" town like New York—a compulsory arbitration bill for city employees which, combined with the state's anti-labor Taylor law, effectively hamstring the most important city unions and sets a dangerous precedent for labor in every city. Until now only Vallejo, California and Eugene, Oregon had similar laws. It fits in well with the need of the ruling class nationally, in its present crisis, to break the strength of the labor movement, and is an important feather in Lindsay's cap in his bid to be the Washington representative-in-chief of the bourgeoisie.

Response to this imposition of "public" (read capitalist) dictatorship over the workers (by City Council vote of 34 to 3) from the buzzards in the halls of labor was predictably nauseating. Most gave it back-handed support by their silence or refusal to fight it, while Victor Gotbaum—head of DC37 of AFSCME, the largest union of city employees, and one of the most ambitious fakers in labor—openly endorsed the bill at Lindsay's signing ceremony. He tried to bail out Lindsay by blaming Rockefeller: "State law gave us no alternative..." Only one city union head, John DeLury of the Sanitationmen's Association, opposed the bill flamboyantly on TV—but said he would go along if he could name the arbiter, thus giving himself an opening to sell higher later. In order simultaneously to expose his contradictory role and drive the struggle ahead, the ranks of labor must raise demands on DeLury for action against compulsory arbitration; Gotbaum stands already exposed, since he has entirely suppressed his role as labor leader in favor of 100% support of the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Lindsay: Club-Fisted Strikebreaker

The record leaves no doubt as to why Lindsay took this step or why the labor bureaucracy has sunk to such an abysmal depth of treachery as to welcome what is intended as labor's death warrant. From its inception, the Lindsay administration has been nakedly anti-labor and clumsily provocative in its strikebreaking. Lindsay's very first act in office was to provoke the first transit strike in the history of the TWU by ordering his flunkies to refuse to negotiate, then jailing TWU President Quill for violating the Taylor law (which outlaws strikes by public employees). In the 1968 sanitation strike, when other city employees refused Lindsay's orders to scab on the garbage collectors, Lindsay tried to call in the National Guard, and was only stopped when Rockefeller intervened! He next provoked a teachers' strike in which he used the Ford Foundation and black "community" demagoguery to try to break the union.

Urged on by complaints from such quarters as the anti-labor New York Times about the "insufficiency" of the laws against public-employee strikes, Lindsay has worked toward compulsory arbitration to fill this "gap" and make up for his own club-fisted incompetence in dealing with strikes. He was preparing as early as 1969 a bill to strengthen the Office of Collective Bargaining

(OCB), which now administers the compulsory arbitration.

Playing the Game

The labor "statesmen," for their part, have been helping Lindsay out all along. Gotbaum successfully headed off a powerful build-up toward a general strike, spearheaded by city workers in 1971 when the state legislature broke precedent by refusing to approve pension gains negotiated with the city by his union. He called a dramatic two-day action in which bridge workers stopped traffic by locking the bridges into Manhattan open, but he then gave up on every single issue involved, referring to the promise of a new legislative budget discussion the following year—which is standard—as a "victory"! He thereby drew the steam off the general strike build-up and handed city and state governments the precedent that they can annul collective bargaining agreements at will (see Workers' Action #9, July-August 1971). Labor is now contending with the full application of this principle. A slick maneuverer, Gotbaum has always used "inside" connections while opposing open struggle, enhancing his personal power while the workers face abject defeat. In the key test of Lindsay's campaign to save city credit and bondholders' profits by laying off city workers, Gotbaum refused to fight the first such firings since 1935, thereby paving Lindsay's road ahead.

DeLury, though he speaks gruffly at times and plays his cards more closely to his chest, plays the same game. He was one up on Gotbaum in 1971; not only did he let the precedent of legislative action against a contract get by, but he actively aided the state by ordering sanitation trucks to cross the pension strike picket lines! (This tough-talker had only three days earlier threatened a general strike if any city workers were laid off as a result of budget cuts!) In due course the identical pension gain was lifted from DeLury's sanitation contract, signed later the same year, on the precedent of Gotbaum's "victory." DeLury's mostly verbal role-playing as the "tough" labor leader has about as much meaning in its outcome to the workers as Gotbaum's inside maneuverings, yet his posturing also directly reflects the thrust of the rank and file against the reformist limitations he helps the capitalist system set for them. He won't soon forget the time a few years ago when he was physically assaulted by his own ranks outside City Hall as he emerged to announce the great "victory" he had just extracted from the mayor.

"Urban Crisis"

Lindsay's portrayal of the political issue as his struggle on behalf of the afflicted cities for more help from the tight-fisted states and federal government is so much snake oil. Since the Roosevelt New Deal, the cities have been forced to assume more and more services, many once provided by private companies, in transportation, health, housing, education, etc. These services are vital to the capitalists for re-creating the labor power they need in the form of people who are minimally fed, rested, cured, educated, and at the place of work on time. Yet the costs for this are shifted onto the backs of the working people in order to help the capitalists beat the crisis of their ever-narrowing profit margins. In 1915 business taxes made up 96% of the New York City budget with real estate taxes paying 92% of the total; by 1934 real estate had dropped to 84% and stands today at 24%! Meanwhile city employment together with government employment in general has increased, as important sections of employment in private industry have contracted due to automation, farm mechanization, layoffs, etc.

The interest of the working class lies in increasing employment and services by forcing the capitalists to pay for the re-creation of labor power. But financial interests, often the same capitalists who bled the services dry in a private

capacity, have reaped extra profits at the workers' expense through interest on the loans and bonds by which the city bought and maintained the services. In New York, the big banks—First National City, Chase Manhattan, etc.—are losing confidence in the city's ability to pay back this ever-mounting, interest-bloated "deficit" (over \$700 million!). Their program called for an end to "rampant" expansion of expensive services, which jeopardized the city's ability to pay, from a tax base limited by workers' opposition. The old Democratic political machine, relying on paternalism, graft, etc., to keep the working-class vote, was undependable in this regard—too likely to favor more services for electoral appeal.

Lindsay, besides being a "clean-up" man who would end machine corruption, vowed to put the city right financially. He was the bankers' boy! Lindsay's regressive tax proposals have continued to throw the burden for services on the workers and poor, but his plan to reduce the city budget by eliminating as many as 90,000 city jobs through layoffs and a process of "attrition," is the centerpiece of his table of benefits for the bankers. The debt service comes first, services second. Welfare workers are enraged as job attrition drives up their case loads and recipients must spend hours, sometimes days, on line to see someone. A heavy snowstorm in 1968 revealed that half the city's snow removal equipment was out of repair. "Breakdown" maintenance is the subway rule despite the transit workers' struggle for increased hiring to perform the preventive maintenance necessary for safety and dependable functioning. To prevent the resulting suffering from finding powerful expression through organized labor, Lindsay must break labor's power in the city. Lindsay's "solution" to the urban crisis will destroy human living conditions for the city's workers and unemployed completely unless the working class mobilizes against him, his banker-capitalist employers, and the reformist labor fakers!

Transportation Bond Swindle

Rockefeller, who was acclaimed a "humanitarian" shortly after committing mass murder at Attica, jousts with Lindsay over the electoral spoils in a sickening public display of ruling class hypocrisy. Their essential unity on all issues in the class struggle—which are the real political questions—is typically displayed in the shell game of transportation bond issue, subway fare hike, and tax package. Each choice contains the same reactionary imposition of service costs on the workers, who can decide democratically how they are to be bilked.

Lindsay and Rockefeller, capitalists and "labor" (read bureaucrats) lined up behind the bankers' swindle of the bond issue to "save the fare" by re-financing the subways and lining the bankers' pockets with workers' tax money later. Despite the "unanimity," the voters overwhelmingly rejected the bond issue in last November's elections because—as everyone noted—they wanted no more taxes. "Democracy," chirp Lindsay-Rockefeller; has ordained that "we" need a fare hike, increased bridge tolls, and more taxes! What we need is a working-class political movement and party to replace the Lindsay-Rockefeller, Democrat-Republican medicine men and their hustler-friends in the labor movement as well!

Transit Strike Dud

A unique opportunity to blow apart this ruling class labor bureaucrat hypocrisy was missed when the Guinan-Gilmartin leadership of the Transport Workers Union sold out for a miserable contract, in the face of a clear membership mandate for a strike voted a few days before the New Year deadline. A revolutionary labor leadership was lacking to mobilize the discontent, which burst into mass picketing and demonstrations at the next page...

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Crackpot Social Democracy

these countries into the train of Ben Bellas, Nassers, etc. and to in turn use these regimes to lay the basis for reorganization for healthy internal agricultural development, and in turn the imperialist exploitation of these countries."

—Conversations With Wohlforth, Seventh Session, p. 2

And in 1967 we are told:

"In order to open up the Southern Hemisphere for direct internal market investment, a new 'Marshall Plan' would have to be launched. . ."

—Marcus, *The Third Stage of Imperialism*

Once again Marcus' theories collide head-on with reality, and hence with Marxism. He is wrong on the magnitude of U. S. "aid," wrong on the effect such "aid" has or conceivably could have, and utterly wrong about the class consciousness and the options open to the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Despite the "Alliance for Progress" and "Development Decade" rhetoric, U. S. foreign aid increased from a trivial \$1.9 billion in 1960 to an equally trivial \$2.2 billion in 1965. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations were both deeply hostile to nationalist economic policy by the underdeveloped countries, although they didn't say so in State of the Union messages. At the important 1964 U. N. Conference on Trade and Development, the U. S. voted (often as a minority of one) against compensation for worsening primary product terms of trade, against preferential tariffs for industrial exports of backward countries, and against using funds released by disarmament for development aid; it abstained on supporting

protective tariffs for industries in backward countries. The international financial policy of Kennedy and Johnson was extremely conservative. The International Monetary Fund regularly demanded domestic deflation (e. g., in Chile) as a condition for renewing loans. Failure to repay IMF loans on time was an important factor leading to the overthrow of Sukarno and particularly Goulart.

What does the "aid" that is given consist of? Around half is military and virtually all the rest is absorbed by the local ruling elites and their apparatus. Any "development" funds that do increase production are purely demonstrative, if not accidental. Even the bourgeois press of all shades recognizes this and documents the siphoning off of "aid" funds in endless exposés, usually without saying, of course, that such is the intended fate of the funds. The "development" money poured into South Vietnam is unusual only in amount, otherwise typical of the entire "aid" system: increased purchases of (American) barbed wire is the approximate extent of the economic development fostered there.

Behind Marcus' swallowing of liberal international rhetoric is his total inability to understand what bourgeois class consciousness and rule are all about. For Marcus, capitalism is a rational, although inferior, system rationally maintained through changing institutions to meet various kinds of problems. Apart from the fact that this view qualitatively overestimates the influence of the capitalist state over the world market, it completely misunderstands the nature of bourgeois class consciousness. Bourgeois class consciousness is necessarily a false conscious-

ness, organically incapable except within very narrow limits of understanding the contradictions in the capitalist system and reacting to them in a rational way. The bourgeoisie responds to social crises and revolutionary movements by retreating into obscurantism and barbaric fantasies epitomized in—but in no way limited to—fascism.

One would look long and hard to find any evidence of the reasonable-sounding policy of sucking the workers and peasants into support of "managed social revolutions" laying the "basis for reorganization for healthy internal agricultural development," etc., in the key test of U. S. imperialist policy over the last decade—in Vietnam. American policy in Vietnam has without exception been the exact opposite of the "enlightened" imperialism Marcus describes. It has been expensive, embarrassing, hopelessly misinformed and unintelligent, to the exasperation of important sections of the bourgeoisie. The French bourgeoisie, led by de Gaulle, was forced to carry out a coup, with all its dangers for them, because the dominant wing of the ruling class clung obstinately to the madness of maintaining direct French rule over Algeria; a bonapartist regime was required in order to buy off the nationalist-limited struggle by granting Algeria national independence while continuing economic domination by French capital.

Beyond the fundamental irrationality of their order, the bourgeoisie faces an additional, secondary but politically vitally important stumbling block: the most willing and persuasive political representatives of the bourgeoisie must often be those (like Johnson or Nixon) stupid or narrow-minded enough to believe in their own rhetoric—their policies, if not checked in time, can carry the entire ruling class to the brink of disaster. Fascism naturally best epitomizes this danger to the bourgeoisie, and hence is supported by the main weight of the bourgeoisie only when they see no other way out, but in this respect the fascists merely carry to an extreme the characteristics required of royalist, militarist and parliamentary bourgeois politicians alike.

Since the onset of modern imperialism in the 1880's and particularly since the Russian Revolution, the bourgeoisie has become progressively more reactionary, both politically and ideologically. The class whose early ideologues waged an unrelenting struggle against religious obscurantism has long since embraced the church as a necessary ally from the Carolinas to Java. Adams and Jefferson were deists who called for government in the spirit of rational humanism. Today Nixon lends his authority to Billy Graham, the worst kind of holy roller, and presidential inaugurations resemble meetings of the National Council of Churches. That U. S. imperialism must prop up every monarch and militarist from Tierra del Fuego to Persepolis is not the result of bureaucratic conservatism, parliamentary cretinism or stupidity, although the representatives of the bourgeoisie share all three in copious measure. It is the very essence of modern capitalism, the necessary policy of a class which long ago outlived its historic mission. ■

any National Caucus of Labor Committees throws labor out with the bureaucrats by rejecting union struggle altogether (see article on page 8). And like the so-called "Workers" League of Wohlforth & Co., the Labor Committee apparently doesn't see much distinction between labor and the cops, as revealed in their run-down of Lindsay's betrayals (*New Solidarity*, 8-12 November 1971), which rails against his breaking the police "strike" and docking cops' pay. Like the Communist Party it imitates so well, the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party leaped at Lindsay's bait in 1968 and helped pit black workers against white in the "community control" attempt to smash the teachers' union. (This was on its days-off-for-good-behavior from the anti-war movement, where it was sponsoring Lindsay as a prominent speaker.) It has since taken to physically assaulting left opponents of its pop front with the liberal bourgeoisie, and is squelching those who recently advocated a return to its long-abandoned "proletarian orientation."

Oust the Bureaucrats!

What the many fake leftists fail to grasp is the need for a political movement in the unions, to uproot the trade union bureaucracy, which is the social force that keeps the struggle of the workers confined to the narrowest of trade union channels and insignificant, reformist demands. Ousting the bureaucrats requires a highly conscious and well-organized alternative leadership to break through these artificial limits with a programmatic alternative, through the organizing of caucuses and the creation of a communist cadre in the unions on the basis of a transitional program. This program must include among its demands: breaking state wage controls, a sliding scale of wages and hours, opposition to the special oppression of blacks and women (particularly in the unions), opposition to protectionist nationalism by the labor movement, strike action against the Vietnam war, defense of the deformed workers states and opposition to the renewed threat of inter-imperialist war, breaking the working class from the two capitalist parties and establishing a workers party based on the labor movement. ■

Peas in the "Left" Pod

While the hopelessly reformist Communist Party orients toward one wing of the trade union bureaucracy distinguished only by "progressive" rhetoric from any other, the inherently reaction-

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SET THE BASE AGAINST THE TOP!

(Continued from Page 3)

about any "revolutionary" gains said to be embodied within the politico-economic structure of the Stalinist bureaucratic system. Those who are unable to discern the counter-revolutionary, anti-proletarian essence of Stalinism (its ideology, its politico-economic system, its diplomatic policies) are certainly unable to lead the American working class forward towards the contemporary world revolution. To avoid the tragedies of the Russian Left Opposition, the Spanish and Vietnamese Trotskyists, and Trotsky himself, it is essential for all American revolutionaries to assimilate the revolutionary theory of Trotsky and Trotskyism, to overcome its defects, and to move forward towards the creation of revolutionary theories based on Marxism-Leninism for the accomplishment of the contemporary world revolution, overthrowing both imperialism and Stalinism.

We re-affirm our resolution to continue to struggle together with all groups of the American anti-Stalinist revolutionary Left and will continue to call upon them to unite in joint actions on the basis of opposition to both imperialism and Stalinism.

Anti-Stalinism Study Group
October, 1971

WV REPLIES:

To the extent that you have addressed your arguments on Stalinism to the Spartacist League you imply that the SL maintains a more favorable evaluation of the fitness of Stalinists for revolutionary leadership than you do. Our differences with you on Stalinism are of another kind entirely.

To begin with: we have always held, with Trotsky, that the Stalinist regimes and parties are centrally responsible for the decades-long delay of world proletarian revolution, a delay which increasingly poses for mankind the barbarian alternative to socialism. In their powerful reinforcement by their betrayals of the ability of the bourgeoisie to control the workers, they fully merit Trotsky's characterization as "the syphilis of the working class." The question, then, is how Stalinism is to be expunged. For this, an understanding not only of the magnitude of its crimes but its social origins and nature is essential.

Your letter is not clear on what you believe the Stalinist bureaucracies to be. You strongly suggest, however, that you disagree fundamentally with the Trotskyist analysis of the Soviet and kindred bureaucracies as parasitic, politically reactionary ruling strata which constitute a step toward capitalist restoration but are not in themselves that restoration. You say, "Even if one were to view the Stalinist rulers as a 'counter-revolutionary bureaucratic caste' sitting on top of revolutionary gains..." You ask: "Are we to defend each and every counter-revolutionary policy

of the Kremlin and Peking bureaucrats because of some imputed 'revolutionary gains' said to be inherent in the nationalized means of production?" [Emphasis added] Are you implying that our position means that we are defending these counter-revolutionary policies? You cite the necessity to "assimilate the revolutionary theory of Trotsky and Trotskyism" and "to overcome its defects," in order to avert further tragedies for the workers' movement like that of Trotsky himself.

The reader must be struck by your reluctance to say openly the only thing your statements can mean. We doubt that you are suggesting that Trotsky expected revolutionary good deeds from the Soviet bureaucrats. The only "defect" for which you can accuse Trotsky on this score is his understanding of the class nature of the Soviet state, and the policy of working-class defense of that state against imperialism, the primary enemy of the working class and the objective cause of the Stalinist political excrescence. Trotsky certainly did not regard the revolutionary gains preserved in the nationalized means of production as a matter of opinion, or "imputed gains." He considered the nationalized means of production, the absence of a bourgeoisie, as defining the Soviet Union as a workers state—"a priceless pledge for the future"—despite its degeneration. For this reason, and not from any softness toward the political phenomenon of Stalinism, Trotsky never placed imperialism and Stalinism on the same level as implied in the slogan, or "world strategy" of "Anti-imperialism, anti-Stalinism" although his position was both anti-imperialist and anti-Stalinist.

Stalinist Dilemma

To whom is your question, "Are we to defend each and every [sic] counter-revolutionary policy of the Kremlin and Peking bureaucrats..." addressed? Does it apply to us? What counter-revolutionary policies do you feel we support? Your next question reads "Are we to refrain from exposing the counter-revolutionary policies of the USSR-Chinese bloc because this would be to deny these Stalinist countries their weapons and to invite imperialist attack? We say No!" And so do we! But in fact you frame the question after the fashion of—the Stalinists. It is they who insist, as your question implies, that the interests of the Soviet state and its parasitic bureaucracy are identical. Your kind of criticism of the counter-revolutionary policies of the bureaucracy includes in effect denying defense against imperialism to the Soviet Union and similar states. The Stalinists have always slandered the Trotskyists, insisting that the gains of the October Revolution can be defended only by supporting the bureaucracy. Our demand is for an end to the policies which endanger those states, including Stalinist peaceful co-existence illusions. We consider it tragic, and a great service to Stalinism, that you in fact call for a defenseless Soviet Union and China—precisely what the Stalinists have always alleged was the core of Trotskyism. Do not swallow the Stalinist bait! As you pose the question, any militant who desires the defense of the deformed workers states against his own imperialist government must as a matter of principle support the Stalinists! A tragic dilemma you pose to anti-imperialists, and one which can only benefit the Stalinists.

We do not regard imperialism and Stalinism as symmetrical evils. Rather, we see Stalinism as the product, within non-capitalist states, of the pressure of dominant world imperialism. Our view does not deny their reciprocal relationship, but rather explains it. Stalinism—at bottom the result of the pressure of world imperialism, materially and ideologically, upon the state of the proletariat—gives imperialism new lease on life. The programmatic conclusion of this analysis is the call for political revolution to sweep away the Stalinist bureaucracies. The demand for political revolution, however—as distinct from social rev-

olution—would be pure (though perhaps militant) reformism if applied to a capitalist state.

Third-Camp Pacifism

The logical result of your understanding of Stalinism is a species of third-camp pacifism. Your undoubted desire for proletarian revolution will in no wise save you from the programmatic implications of such a policy. Your analysis must lead you to oppose not merely nuclear armament, but all armament, for the Soviet Union and China: "In today's world, weapons are consistently used by the Stalinists in a manner inimical to the revolutionary struggles of the masses." (In yesterday's world, too, we might add.) Note that your statement is not restricted to nuclear weapons. Presumably we should seek the scrapping of Soviet tanks and rifles, too, since they can be and have been used against the working class.

Is the problem Soviet armament or the political leadership controlling it? The two do not at all amount to the same thing. Were the Soviet Union a healthy workers state in an imperialist-dominated world, it would still have to maintain a large military readiness. But in the case of imperialist powers, we oppose armament regardless of their political regime.

We oppose under all conditions the armed force of the capitalists. But were the trade unions



Stalin at Signing of Nazi-Soviet Pact

armed, would you demand their disarmament pending the removal of bourgeois agents, reformists, and Stalinists from their leadership? Our analogy may seem to you overdrawn, but you must admit that George Meany is in no way superior to a Stalinist bureaucrat, and he would to whatever extent he could use the working class' arms to discipline the workers. Or would you demand the disarming of a Menshevik-led soviet until a Bolshevik leadership can be installed? Our policy would be to demand that more workers be armed with better weapons—a measure clearly in the class' interest—and expose the bureaucrats' resistance to this policy. To oppose the armament of even the most wretchedly bureaucratized and treasonably led working-class formation would be interpreted (correctly) by the workers not as revolutionary principle on our part, but a neutral policy toward working-class defense against the class enemy. Such a policy would only aid the bureaucrats and discredit the revolutionaries. In fact, our trade union analogy is essential to the understanding of Stalinism. The Soviet bureaucracy resembles very closely what we could expect from a reformist-led trade union raised to state power and administering a publicly-owned economy.

Disarm the Stalinist NLF?

What are the implications of your analysis for Vietnam? We support the military victory of the NLF over U.S. imperialism and its Vietnamese agents, and we seek simultaneously to expose all the forces standing in the way of such an outcome. First and foremost among the forces in which we express absolute lack of political confidence is the Stalinist leadership of North Vietnam and the NLF itself. We certainly do not demand the disarming of the NLF, although its leaders can turn

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its weapons against the working class—an act they have committed before, as in the massacre of the Trotskyists in the late 1940's. Do you call for the military victory of the NLF, and on what grounds? That they don't possess nuclear weapons? That they are little Stalinists while the Soviet bureaucrats are big and powerful Stalinists? But the Soviet bureaucrats are arming North Vietnam and the NLF. Is the refusal of the bureaucrats to back the NLF to the hilt, with more modern weapons and even the nuclear shield, something for which we are thankful or another instance of their counterrevolutionary treachery? How could one demand more military aid to the NLF from the Soviet Union and other deformed workers states while simultaneously opposing Soviet armament? One might reply that the NLF struggle is militarily supportable on grounds of Vietnamese self-determination. The IS invokes such a position to explain its switch from a third-camp position to support for NLF victory. For us the self-determination issue, although a supportable component of the Vietnamese struggle, pales in significance to the change in class relations which the Viet Minh and NLF created, as did Mao's Red Army. You must recognize that the Vietnamese struggle is neither politically nor militarily independent of the Stalinized states you seek to disarm. It would seem that unless you wish to abandon the NLF to the fate Washington plans for it you must support the armament of the Stalinized states up to some point. We should like to know to what point you support it and why?

Class Collaboration

Your understanding of Stalinist ideology is muddled. "We... cannot agree with you in defining the essence of Stalinism as being 'class collaboration.' Our understanding is that the ideology of Stalinism is essentially characterized as being the theory of 'socialism in one country...'" Fine. But explain then what is wrong with the theory of socialism in a single country. Our chief objection to it is that such a "theory" is a justification of class collaborationist appetites, the only such justification open to the Soviet bureaucrats. They had to cover their abandonment of a world revolutionary perspective (the antithesis of class collaboration) with a "socialist" "theory." With the new "theory" Stalin was able to rationalize bargaining away the international revolution with capitalist powers, turning the communist parties into pressure groups for Soviet deals with capitalist diplomacy, all on the grounds that his policy was preserving and advancing socialism in the Soviet Union at least. In other words, the theory was not merely an egregious departure from Marxist theoretical understanding of capitalism as world system and the internationalist preconditions for socialism, but more fundamentally a cover for a program of betrayal, i. e. class collaboration. Recall the close similarity between the conduct of Stalinist and social democratic parties. Revisionism generally is the result of the pressure of capitalism materially and ideologically upon the movement of the revolutionary proletariat. Stalinism as a particular variety of revisionism is the product of that pressure upon the state of the proletariat. The social democrats do not accept the theory of socialism in a single country only because they do not need it to cover their betrayals; they do not have to reconcile their betrayals with their rule of a non-capitalist state—i. e. they do not have to "theorize" the squeezing of the October tradition into capitulation to the bourgeoisie. The bureaucracy and its program did not arise from the theory; the theory was developed by and for the bureaucracy.

More puzzling is your statement "Stalinists may or may not engage in class collaboration; they may advocate peaceful coexistence or armed struggle; they may simultaneously arm themselves with nuclear weapons while seeking out negotiations with the imperialists." Since when was class collaboration limited to "peaceful coexistence"? Of course the Stalinists will lead armed struggle—whenever possible along with a section of the bourgeoisie. The NLF, engaged in armed struggle, openly courts the Vietnamese national bourgeoisie. That, it would seem, is class collaboration. They fight the bourgeoisie belatedly and badly—to the extent that the bourgeoisie threatens to deprive them of their social underpinnings. They do not want proletarian upheavals, since they would arouse the working class to the seizure of political power in the deformed workers states; they do not want imperialist invasion, either. They fear the latter not out of socialist principle but because they realize that Rockefeller, for example, has no intention of sharing his wealth with them as a reward for their betrayal. But while defending nationalized property

—much as a union bureaucrat "defends" his union, knowing that without it he is nothing—they constantly undermine the security of that social gain by their limitless desire to shore up the capitalist order provided only that it promises to let them alone. You believe that the Stalinists betray the working class. To whom can it betray them if not to the bourgeoisie? Isn't that "class collaboration"?

Stalinophobia

A final note, on Progressive Labor. The danger of the phenomenon of Stalinophobia is that it can lead one to chase after groups no better and in some cases worse in an attempt to destroy Stalinism. In addition, it blinds one to the differences between the Stalinist leaders and the ranks, many of the latter sincerely desiring revolution but misled by the tops into thinking that Stalinist policies are the road to socialism, or that in order to preserve the achievements of revolution even in a "single country," it is necessary to

would not adhere to its proclaimed promises.

The SWP, which you invited to the symposium, does not even make the appeal to subjective revolutionary desires as PL did at the July Conference (since then, PL has moved right to its old talk of "honest center forces," etc., in typical Stalinist left-right oscillation). At that time there was a basis for an appeal to PL for certain common action and discussion in an anti-imperialist framework. But the SWP had invited a representative of the bourgeoisie to the NPAC Conference. They are "Trotskyist" like the Communist Party is "Leninist." In a sense our greatest difference with you is not over the non-invitation of PL to the August 6 symposium, but the invitation to the SWP, which at that time stood qualitatively to the right of PL on the question of the anti-war movement. To the PL militants we would say: "We are with you in your desire to get rid of the bourgeoisie in the anti-war movement. We want to show you by our argument and practice that with

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shelve the struggle here. We seek to win these people to the understanding that they have been betrayed and terribly poisoned, to win them, in a word, to Trotskyism.

You imply that by inviting a group like PL to a united front action we render some kind of assistance to Stalinism. Exactly the opposite is our intent, and exactly opposite is the result of such a call, whether their leaders respond or not. We want to force the members of a Stalinist organization, when its leaders are taking a "left" posture, as PL did at the NPAC Conference, to ask: "Why do we denounce the Trotskyists as agents of counterrevolution? They agree with us in our desire to rid the anti-war movement of the class enemy—an anomalous position for counterrevolutionary swine—and they are more consistent in this policy than we. How can our leaders turn a deaf ear to such reasonable proposals for debate and common action? Who has the correct revolutionary strategy for the anti-war movement? We are not fools, we can judge for ourselves." Stalinism is in trouble when our policy makes it possible for such attitudes to circulate in the ranks.

Trotsky did not propose a united front with the Social Democracy in order to assist in its sell-outs, but rather to convince the worker militants still deceived by the leaders of Social Democracy (and they were the bulk of the German working class) that the Communists were the best fighters shoulder to shoulder with them against fascism—a struggle their own leaders would carry out treacherously and half-heartedly. In 1940 Trotsky even insisted in discussions with the SWP leadership on critical support to the Stalinist CPUSA because he recognized more opportunity among their ranks than with the "independent" anti-Stalinist "progressives" whose anti-Stalinism very often covered the reality of anti-communism. Then the best elements in the CP, those whose activity made the party attractive to workers, would be more likely to listen when the SWP reminded them that they had predicted the CP leadership

your present—Stalinist—methodology you cannot achieve your wish, but only be used by your leaders to betray the struggle you joined your organization seeking to support." We cannot say even this to the SWP, the "Trotskyist" fiction aside, when their role was not confused opposition to the bourgeoisie's presence, but its conscious support. That is, their rhetoric could not be contrasted with their class-collaborationist behavior to the edification of their supporters, because their public line, too, was class-collaborationist; with PL it was at least possible to contrast the revolutionary rhetoric and their actions at the July NPAC Conference with their Stalinist history and methodology. The pop front with the class enemy is an old Stalinist formula. In this case it was the "Trotskyists" who supported this policy, and the PLers who fought it. Do not let anti-Stalinist labels bemuse you. Scheidemann and Noske were not "Stalinists"; it is in that sense that we must appraise the "anti-Stalinism" of Dobbs, Barnes, Hansen & Co., as well as that of Healy-Wohlforth Ltd, which supported them.

Our difference with you is not, as your letter implies, that we are not sufficiently anti-Stalinist. Our fear is that your analysis leads you to backhanded support to imperialism (neutralism between imperialism and Stalinism) and fatal illusions over "progressives" who loudly proclaim hatred of Stalinism to justify their capitulation to the bourgeoisie. The current leadership of the U.S. labor movement came to power on a wave of "anti-Stalinism"; the SWP and Workers League used anti-PL "anti-Stalinism" as the excuse to physically purge left opponents from NPAC in order to suck up to a U.S. senator. Only the policies which flow from Trotsky's analysis—military defense of the deformed workers state against imperialism, the united front tactic toward reformist workers' organizations including the Stalinist parties—can politically defeat Stalinism in the workers' movement and open the road to the development of proletarian internationalist revolutionary leadership.

(FIRST OF TWO PARTS)

The Labor Committee:

CRACKPOT SOCIAL
DEMOCRACY

The "National Caucus of Labor Committees" of Lynn Marcus, known for its apocalyptic visions and schemes for instant socialism, has become something of a New Left fad. Marcus' ability to foist off crackpot notions as "Marxism"—such as the idea that the U.S. is fighting in Vietnam to gain a rice surplus for Indian industrialization, or that a socialist economy can be realized in twenty-four hours through the organization of bank clerks—is perhaps not surprising given the abysmal level of Marxist education among U.S. radicals.

New Left Utopianism

Marcus' positive appeal, apart from his dependence on prevailing ignorance, stems from a particular amalgam of New Left Utopian ideas and impulses with traditional social-democratic reformism. Lenin characterized petty-bourgeois radicalism as a reflection of the "petty bourgeoisie driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism," with a tendency toward instability and "infatuation with one bourgeois fad or another." The New Left was exactly the morally outraged petty bourgeoisie desperately trying one "revolutionary" path after another—pacifism, Third Worldism, street confrontations, workerism, "liberated" life styles, communalism, etc. What the Labor Committee shares with the New Left world-view is the belief that revolution is easy and instant if one could just find the new gimmick, tactic, posture, propaganda line or organizational form that will bring American bourgeois society tumbling down like the walls of Jericho. Marcus' position that the devaluation of the dollar marks the collapse of the capitalist system; Wohlforth's assertion that the Attica uprising means "the revolution has begun"; Charles Reich's claim that the U.S. revolution is already taking place in the hearts of its youth—all represent typical idealist projection of one's own desires onto reality. On the organizational level, the Labor Committee's "protosoviets," the Workers League's November 12 "general strike" and the Weatherpeople's terrorism are all aspects of the frenzied petty bourgeois' "revolutionary" make-believe.

What distinguishes a genuine revolutionary organization from all forms of adventurism, dilletantism and hustlerism is that it develops with and through the working class. As Trotsky said: "The revolution pursues its course together with its class. If the proletariat is weak, if it is backward, the revolution confines itself to the modest, patient and persevering work of the creation of propaganda circles, of the preparation of cadre; supporting itself upon the first cadres, it passes over to mass agitation according to the circumstances. It always distinguishes its class from the enemy class, and conducts only such a policy as corresponds to the strength of its class. . . ."

The objective forces for revolution are, as Trotsky noted, overripe, but there can be no revolution until the working class is politically conscious and armed with its revolutionary instrument, the vanguard party, whose program and cadres have been prepared and tested in struggle. There is no gimmick which can substitute for that process.

What Is Utopian Socialism?

Utopian socialism corresponds to the world-view of the petty bourgeoisie. Caught between the industrial working class and big capital, and possessing the power of neither, the petty bourgeoisie strives, in Marx's words, "to be above all class struggles" and "transform into harmony" the irreconcilable antagonisms between capital and wage labor. Apart from communal escapism, the

two major currents of nineteenth century Utopian socialism were technocracy and consumerism. Technocracy (Saint-Simon) maintained that the fundamental problems of society can be solved by allowing production to be rationally guided by scientists, engineers and the like. Consumerism (Proudhon) held that the fundamental issues of social conflict are lowering rents, taxes and interest and expanding government-provided services. Technocracy raised the technically trained petty bourgeoisie above all social classes, while consumerism made an amalgam between the petty bourgeoisie and other classes, particularly the industrial proletariat.

Marcusism is a remarkably pure amalgam of Saint-Simon and Proudhon, including the latter's fixation with money, befitting a failing shopkeeper. Marcus' attacks on union parochialism and his pseudo-Hegelian terminology are employed in a sustained attack on the leading role of the industrial proletariat in the socialist revolution. Everything Marcus writes on this subject has but one purpose: to dissolve the working class into some broader social category which explicitly includes the lumpen proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie, particularly the intelligentsia. Gone is the Marxist concept of intermediate strata as capable of playing a valuable supporting role in the revolutionary process on the basis of coming to identify their needs with the fundamental class interests of the proletariat. Instead, these sectors—which are equally capable of going over to the side of reaction—are seen as having identical interests to those of the working class. Marcus' difficulty in inventing a term for his category has led him from "the non-ruling class population" to the current "political working class." And on the terminological level, nineteenth century radicals and today's anarcho-Maoists could contribute

free!

SPARTACIST LEAFLET

December 1971

**The Poverty of
Marcusism**

PORTRAIT OF A UTOPIAN-REFORMIST CHARLATAN

definite clarity to the Labor Committee; Marcus' (non-) "class-for-itself" is nothing other than "the people." For the Labor Committee, the major social conflict of our time is that between the people, led by the intellectuals, and the bankers. Proudhon lives! If the influence of Utopian socialism on the nascent European working-class movement did indeed have tragic dimensions, its recurrence in the Labor Committee is truly farcical:

Social-Democratic Reformism

The Labor Committee shares the pervasive New Left desire to dump "dreary," "old-fashioned" Marxism-Leninism and seek exciting "new" political methods. It also seeks to fill the vacuum created by the complete discrediting of traditional American social democracy. Ten years ago, young political activists who thought in terms of supporting strikes in cooperation with the local union bureaucracy, of pressure groups designed to expand medical care for the poor or to maintain rent control, joined the Young People's Socialist League or the early anti-communist SDS. However, the blatant chauvinism of the trade union bureaucrats revealed by their slavish support to the Vietnam war and the disclosure that the liberal anti-communist front

groups favored by Norman Thomas and Co. were funded by the CIA completely discredited these forces. This left a clear field for political formations not tainted by McCarthyism and the stultifying Cold War atmosphere of the Fifties but catering to the same reformist impulses. By terming a student-based propaganda campaign to oppose a transit fare increase a "proto-Soviet," Marcus seeks to give a revolutionary facade to the kind of politics traditionally associated with the Democratic Party and "socialists" of the Norman Thomas-Bayard Rustin brand.

Mirroring the New Left's contempt for organized labor, the Labor Committee performs an essential task of all social-democratic ideologues—providing an excuse for the conservative politics and sellouts of the union bureaucracy by arguing that they simply reflect the backwardness of the workers and the inherent limitations of unions as social institutions:

"Union leaderships of the CIO type do not 'sell out' the membership because they are wretched in general. On the contrary, the union leaderships sometimes seem to 'sell out' because they, like the majority of 'rank and file' members, refuse to undertake the sole alternative to accepting a poorer settlement. Union leaders of the CIO-type generally go as far as they think the majority of members' union militancy will carry the union in gaining additional benefits. Tiny minorities of 'rank and file' professional insurgents are often more militant on these questions precisely because they enjoy the speculative luxuries of being out of office. The isolated militant can imagine all sorts of wonderful gains which would absolutely not seem credible to him were he faced with the responsibilities of union office, were he faced with the tactical realities which the incumbent union leadership has to face as long as it accepts existing legal forms of labor struggle and as long as the membership is unwilling to go beyond mere legal forms."
—1971 Strategy for Socialism, p. 19

Michael Harrington or Irving Howe couldn't have said it better, including the attack on reds ("professional insurgents") as irresponsible, unrealistic, hopelessly isolated elements in the unions. And *The Campaigner* states categorically:

"Any rank-and-file grouping which assumes power in his [the bureaucrats'] stead would be forced to more-or-less similar practices because of the ordinary petty conservatism and backwardness of the average union member."
—"Trade Unions Today," *The Campaigner*, Spring 1971, p. 33

The position is clear: the workers get the leadership they deserve!

*American Imperialism as the
Rational Development of Backward
Countries*

Only naive liberals—and Marcus and his following—took the "Alliance for Progress" and "Development Decade" seriously. Acting as Wohlforth's theoretician in the unity negotiations with Spartacist in 1965, Marcus stated:

"Since 1959, US has followed policy of managed social revolutions, general policy of imperialism to support nationalist colonial revolutions as long as they remain within control of imperialism. The SWP et al. failed to see this and merely sees US and its allies as conducting a struggle against the colonial revolution. . . this is not the case. They are trying instead to circumvent the Permanent Revolution by sucking working class and peasantry of

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