

Miners: Defy Slave-Labor Law!

You Can't Mine Coal with Bayonets!

MARCH 7—For over three months the striking coal miners have waged the most magnificent strike battle in over 30 years of labor history. With inspiring militancy and ironclad solidarity, the mines have got the coal operators, steel barons and utility executives by the throat. They have overwhelmingly rejected two giveaway settlements that the mine bosses, the government and their own union leadership tried to impose on them. Now Jimmy Carter has jumped in on the bosses' behalf, ripped away the mask of federal "impartiality" and is out to break the miners' strike.

Coal Miners! You have defied Taft-Hartley before, every time it has been used against you, and you can do it again! There is in fact every indication that the miners have no intention of returning to the pits under this slave-labor law.

With bonfires consuming the "proposed agreement" the miners are sticking by their tradition of "no contract, no work" and are vowing to continue their strike. One miner in Kentucky spoke for thousands when he said, "Let Taft and Hartley come dig the coal." As if with one voice, miners from Pennsylvania to Alabama, from West Virginia to New Mexico, are telling the peanut boss millionaire the same thing they told Arnold Miller when he tried to sell them a stinking bill of goods in early February: shove it!

For weeks Jimmy Carter and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) bureaucracy have been attempting to wheedle, coax and intimidate miners into accepting one or another contract that would represent a fundamental capitulation to the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) campaign to break the back of the union. Before the balloting the Democratic Party administration threatened drastic federal action unless

the membership ratified the contract proposal. Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall even proposed to starve out the strikers, menacing a cut-off of federal and state food stamps were the miners to defy anti-strike injunctions. UMWA district and International bureaucrats tried to sell the rotten deal by whining that a "no" vote could lead to government seizure of the union treasury.

But well aware that they had cut scab coal production to a trickle and forced the bosses against the wall, the strikers refused to surrender. The margins by which the latest proposal was defeated were overwhelming, in sharp contradiction to the projections in the big business press that the final tally would be close. Still incomplete results showed 35,000 in favor and more than 80,000 opposed. Fully 70 percent of the UMWA members voted to reject. This lopsided total underscored the ranks' undaunted solidarity and the isolation of the top union officials from their base.

Nobody really expected that Carter's Monday morning lecture on "respect for the law" would get the miners back to work. His sweetener of allowing the companies to pay a dollar more an hour—which the tight-fisted operators balked at anyway—was simply an insulting attempted bribe. Carter will now have to come up with the means to enforce his court order.

The president's injunction named up to 1,000 local union officials who can be fined or jailed for non-compliance. The union's treasury may be hit. Federal marshals and FBI agents are on an alert to back up state police and national guardsmen who threaten the roving pickets who have shut down so much scab production. Reportedly the U.S. Army's high command is even reviewing

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Wide World

Miners burn Carter's contract in Appalachia, Virginia.

Miners Ready for War

CHARLESTON, West Virginia, March 7—"We've been on strike for 91 days and we know that within the next week we're going to be fired, we'll be harassed, we might be put in jail and some of us might even die. But we're not going to go back to work with someone pointing a gun at our head. And if we have to die we'd rather die on the surface than go back to work and die under that contract that was just turned down by the membership."

This bitter defiance of President Carter's back-to-work order came from Jim Nuccetelli, a United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) safety committee member from Local 1197 in western Pennsylvania's District 5, at a press conference in New Stanton which was called by officials representing 36 locals. Following the miners' stunning 70-30 rejection of the latest sellout contract proposal, Nuccetelli's bitter promise is the answer of the striking miners to the coal operators, union misleaders and the federal government, which is seeking to force the miners back into the pits under the strikebreaking Taft-Hartley Law.

In union halls, taverns and miners' homes across the coalfields, strikers listened as the president intoned that "the country [i.e., big business] can not afford to wait any longer." As long as the companies had big coal stockpiles and the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) was seeking to out-wait the strikers, Carter saw no emergency; now that the bosses are hurting, however, the miners are suddenly holding the country for ransom. Hoping to break the mine workers' solidarity with an offer of company-by-company discretionary wage increases, Carter stated that he would, "seek to permit any company to offer this new wage settlement [from the rejected BCOA pact] to those who return to work under the injunction." Miners, such as those gathered at the union hall in Dilles Bottom, Ohio laughed scornfully as Carter described these wages as "generous." And there is no indication that any significant section of the strikers will fall for the government's attempt to split up the union.

Strikers were not surprised by Carter's actions. But unlike UMWA president Arnold Miller, who stated that he had "no intention to pre-empt President Carter's own responsibility," the union ranks are preparing to oppose this government strikebreaking. In the 36 hours since Carter's televised announcement that the hated "slave-labor law" was being invoked, *Workers Vanguard* teams in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Illinois-Indiana have found a solid will to resist. Government speculation of a return to work by a minority of union members appears to be based on nothing but wishful thinking.

"There's going to be pickets," a Cabin Creek, West Virginia miner said simply

after the White House announcement. In Kentucky one of the few top UMWA officials to openly assail the contract told *WV*, "Here the people say they are not going back to work regardless of what President Carter said or what anyone else says." He added that the anti-injunction fight would be initiated by the ranks and "we are leaderless." A Pennsylvania miner said, "If Carter sends in the troops we'll have a Vietnam in this country. If he's asking for war, he's going to get one."

Both Miller and Carter, whose agents engineered the rejected proposal, were counting on a so-called "silent majority" of the UMWA membership to approve the contract. Instead, the majority spoke loud and clear, and everywhere the message was the same. On Saturday as members of the 1,200 man Local 762 (Jones and Laughlin Steel's Vestabury Number 5 Mine) lined up to vote, typical remarks were, "Miller's silent majority is giving it to him," and "You tell the pricks down in D.C. that the silent majority is speaking."

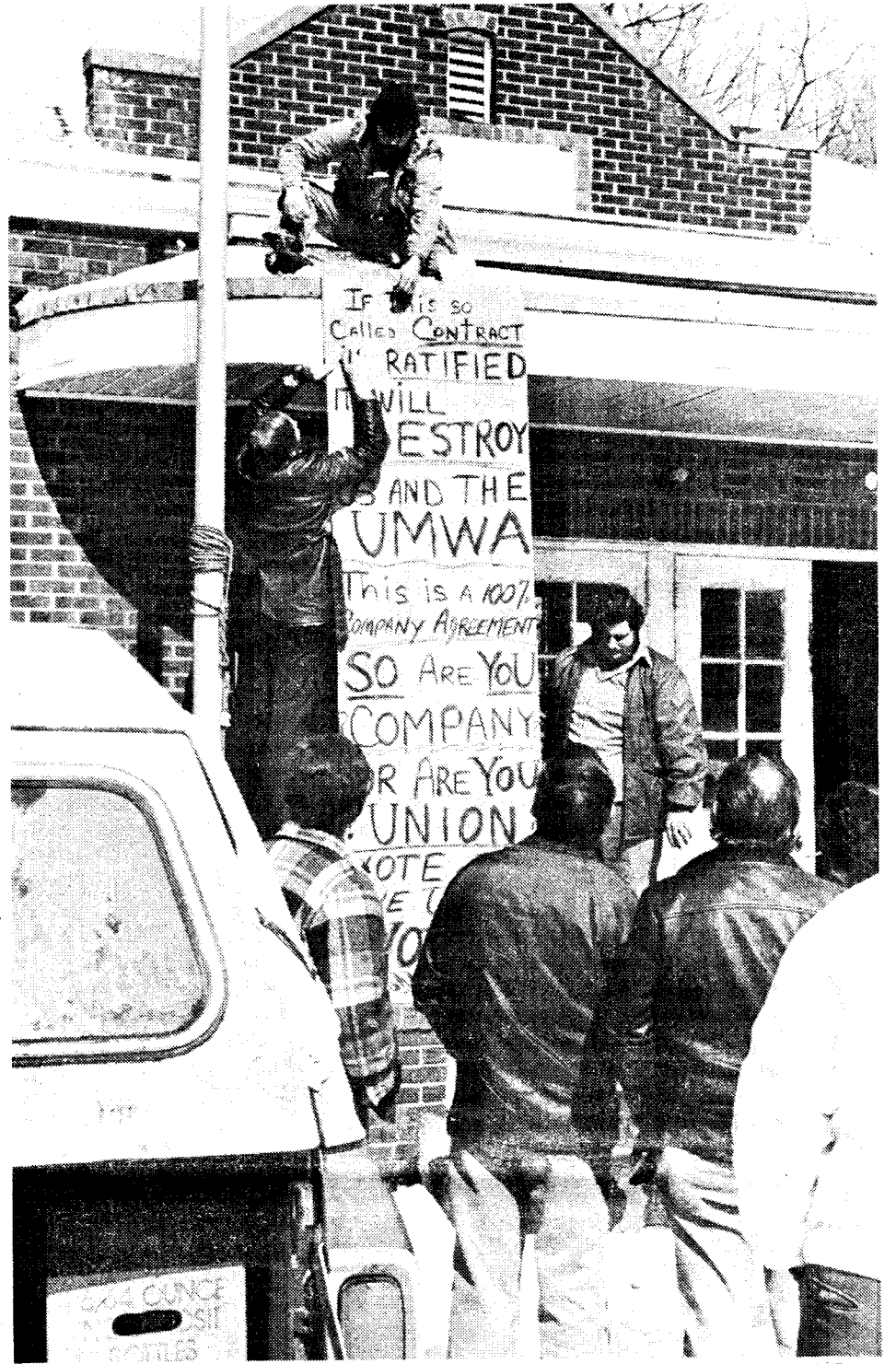
Early on it was clear that Carter's contract was in trouble. In 1974 UMWA locals in West Virginia voted two-to-one to accept Miller's tentative agreement with the BCOA. This year, even in the UMWA president's home district (17), the pact was decisively turned down and in District 19 (southeastern Kentucky) the margin was better than nine-to-one against the sellout.

Miller paid a Washington public relations firm \$40,000 to help sell the sell-out. Pro-contract International and District officials went on the radio to urge ratification. Last week in Barnesboro, Pennsylvania a group of miners reportedly blocked the entrance to radio station WNCC in an effort to keep two officials from taping such a pro-contract announcement. The media blitz backfired, however, as the miners wondered why a good contract could not speak for itself. "How can they lay their hands on that money if we're broke?" a striker asked.

Miller warned of financial ruin for the UMWA if the contract were rejected, resulting in the possible destruction of the union. But the UMWA ranks didn't buy this excuse for capitulation either. "If it [the proposed contract] is accepted, the union is going to be destroyed," a striker at Bethlehem Steel Local 750 in Kayford, West Virginia countered. A striker from Pennsylvania added, "The UMWA ain't in danger of being destroyed. The only faction that is disintegrating is the top leadership. The miners are more united than ever."

Even after this contract and its bureaucratic sponsors were overwhelmingly repudiated, Miller claimed not to know why. "I don't think it was warranted and I have yet to figure out any reason for it" (*Charleston Gazette*, 6 March). The bewildered Miller is scapegoating the media which he says is acting "irresponsibly" and "didn't tell all the facts." In addition to going after the bourgeois press—which in fact hailed both of Miller's miserable proposed settlements—Miller is attacking "the divisive people in our union," and announced that district officials who failed to boost the contract will face disciplinary action from the UMWA International Executive Board.

The union leadership is indeed in complete disarray but it is not the result of bureaucratic sabotage as the paranoid union chief believes. Instead the most militant union in the American working class is leaderless because no one at the International or even district level has advanced a strategy to effectively bring the BCOA to terms. In fact on February 20 two-thirds of the



WV Photo

Miners in Vestabury, Pennsylvania protest Carter-imposed agreement last Sunday.

UMWA Bargaining Council approved a contract with the Pittsburg & Midway Coal Company as the basis for the BCOA pact just turned down by the ranks. Now they too have been repudiated by the ranks.

In the face of the gaping absence of leadership at the top of the UMWA, throughout the present strike the Spartacist League has counseled the miners to elect district strike committees to extend and coordinate picketing efforts throughout the coalfields. In recent weeks while the UMWA Bargaining Council proved nearly as anxious as Miller to end the strike on terms acceptable to the coal operators and the White House, we have urged that such

committees demand an emergency convention to elect a new bargaining council which is immediately answerable to the ranks.

Last night on their own initiative miners in West Virginia's District 17 took the first step to mounting an organized challenge to the treachery of Miller & Co. Seven hundred strikers meeting in a fieldhouse in Logan reaffirmed their determination to resist a Taft-Hartley injunction and elected three representatives from their sub-district to meet with other such delegates from sub-districts throughout the UMWA. According to one miner this delegation would "replace or sit in on bargaining council meetings" to voice directly the contractual demands of the ranks. If in the coming days a union-wide delegate body were formed by the membership through such elections, it could provide a vehicle to sweep aside the existing bargaining council, demonstrate the solidity of rank-and-file defiance of Taft-Hartley and chart a course of militant action to achieve victory. The UMWA ranks must take up the initiative of the Logan miners. ■

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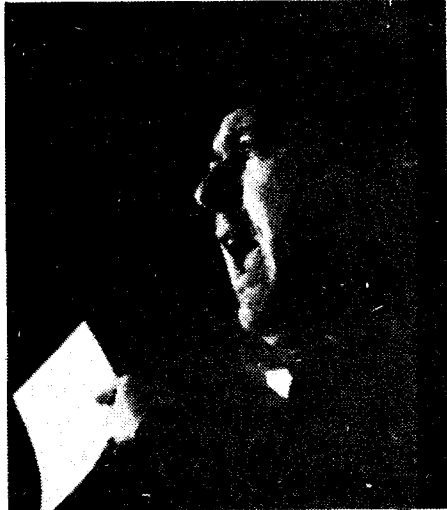
WORKERS VANGUARD

For a Joint Coal/Steel Strike!

Chicago USWA Mine Strike Support Rally

CHICAGO—In recent weeks the three-month-old coal miners strike has been causing commotion in District 31 of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), the center of greatest concentration in basic steel. With 60,000 USWA members thrown out of their jobs in the last year and the industry threatened with even more massive layoffs and plant closures, there is an increasingly felt need here for solidarity action between steel workers and the closely allied miners. Thus in late January workers in Local 65 at the U.S. Steel Southworks plant debated proposals for hot-cargoing scab coal and striking jointly with the miners. Then in late February a special meeting of the same local gave rousing applause to visiting Harlan County militants urging steel workers to join in the miners' struggle. And on March 5 approximately 200 people attended a Local 1010 (Inland Steel) miners' support rally where the need for joint strike action with the miners was again raised.

At the January 25 meeting of Local 65, members debated a resolution



WV Photo

USWA Local 65 militant Jay Frank

calling for hot-cargoing scab coal and a joint strike with the miners (see "Toward a Joint Coal/Steel Strike!" *WV* 191, 3 February). But after some fancy footwork and a lot of help from their fake-left "oppositionist" friends the local bureaucracy was able to defeat the resolution. For months the miners have been defying their misleaders and facing loaded gun barrels and bayonets to stop the mining and transport of scab coal. But the so-called "militants" of Local 65 refuse to help the miners in this effort if such action would question their loyalty to Arnold Miller's cohorts in the USWA bureaucracy.

A month later, on February 26, Local 65 held a "South Africa Night" where, in addition to the scheduled program, miners from Harlan County, Kentucky came to address the crowd. Bessie Lou Cornett was introduced as one of the leading activists in the documentary movie, *Harlan County, U.S.A.* She told the audience that "miners are disgusted with this contract" and that it "gives operators the right to purge any radical... which means anyone who will stand up for their rights." Summing up the need for solidarity which went beyond sending money or speaking to the press, she said, "We'd like the steel workers to come out and join us." At the clear call for closing down steel and joining the miners pickets the hall burst into wild cheering and applause, not the least by the phony reformist "oppositionists" who had just weeks before argued and voted against such action.

Over 200 people turned out March 5 for the Local 1010 Inland Steel miners support rally where *Harlan County, U.S.A.* was shown in addition to speeches by a West Virginia coal miner and members of the Local 1010 leadership. At the meeting these bureaucrats

This is the speech of steel worker militant Jay Frank which the bureaucrats tried to suppress at the March 5 coal mine strike support rally of USWA Local 1010. The end of the speech was carried over NBC television in Chicago that night:

"Sometime tonight or tomorrow President Carter is going to declare war on the coalfields. Brother Sam [Farley] made it very clear that they are up against tremendous odds. I think it's important that we go beyond simply collecting canned food and sending dollar donations. Sister Cornett from Harlan County was up at Local 65 not too long ago and she said, 'We're down to the wire, it's important for steel workers to come out.'

"Now we passed around a resolution here and this resolution is straightforward: here at Inland, over at Gary, we are making steel with scab coal! A hundred and sixty thousand miners are trying to stop the movement of that scab coal. Now our responsibility is straightforward, too, and that's what this resolution speaks to. The brothers and sisters here can read it. Hot-cargo scab coal! Denounce Taft-Hartley! Mobilize the Steelworkers. Have the district—District 31, the largest district in the USWA—mobilize steel workers to go down with their brothers and sisters in the mines to help shut down those scab mines, to help stop the trains of scab coal into places like Inland, into places like Gary, Republic, Youngstown Sheet and Tube, Southworks. Mobilize mass meetings of Chicago and northwest Indiana labor to discuss other ways we can actively and militantly show solidarity with these people who are going to be in a hell of a mess come tomorrow.

"And finally brothers and sisters understand that we are fighting, or should be fighting, very much that same kind of fight. We do not have the right to strike! We do not have anything but a rotten compulsory arbitration scheme to our entire contract. If the basis exists now both in solidarity with the miners and to fight for our own demands that this district sanction strikes of USWA in coordination with the UMW, so we can both win the demands of the UMW, support them in their struggle and win for steel workers the shorter workweek, a fight against the goddamn layoffs that are wiping us out. An end to the ENA [the no-strike Experimental Negotiating Agreement], that's what support means! [Loud applause]

"Our power is at the point of production; our power is the power to withdraw our ability to work.

"Let Carter stand up there and watch 120,000 steel workers in District 31 say: No scab coal is coming into Gary! No scab coal is coming into Inland, into Republic, into Youngstown Sheet and Tube! That's the power we have!

"Not tuna fish, not canned goods, not dollar donations—although that is important. But let's use the power we have!"

Black ban coal to the U.S.!

—reprinted from *Australasian Spartacist* No. 51, March 1978

According to the *Financial Review* (24 February) and the *Australian* (25 February), at least two Australian firms—Coalex Pty. Ltd. and R.W. Miller (Holdings) Pty.—are contracted to ship coal to the U.S. Such shipments can serve only one purpose at this time—strikebreaking. International labour solidarity demands that all Australian unions involved in the handling of coal—including the Miners Federation, the Seamen's Union, the Watersiders, and the Federated Engine Drivers—black ban all coal intended for the U.S. as long as the miners strike continues.

Workers Vanguard

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Spartacist League Forum

Victory to the Coal Miners Strike! Labor Must Smash Taft-Hartley!

Speaker:

PAUL COLLINS
SL Central Committee

Friday, March 10 at 7:30 p.m.
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CHICAGO

made it clear that their conception of strike "support" was nothing more than vacuous verbiage and a quick passing of the can. In a "panel discussion" Local president Bill Andrews proclaimed his full support for whatever the mine workers do and passed the mike on to Sam Farley from District 29 of the UMW in West Virginia. Noting the dangerous conditions in the mines, Farley went on to explain the attacks on safety regulations, health benefits and the right to strike by the coal operators. He ended by stressing the critical juncture facing the mine workers as they reject Carter's sellout contract.

As Rudy Schneider, chairman of Local 1010's Miners Support Committee was closing this part of the program, a steel worker from USWA Local 65, Jay Frank, asked if there would be any chance for discussion. Schneider and Andrews tried to yell Frank down. Frank stood his ground, however, to present a resolution he and other steel workers had distributed for a vote at the meeting. He would have been cut off entirely but the bureaucrats became embarrassed when television cameramen, who had come to report on the meeting, focused on Frank, and he was allowed to speak.

Noting that workers at Inland and at the U.S. Steel Gary, Indiana plant were making steel with scab coal while the miners were battling to stop its distribution, Frank called on the members to show their solidarity by refusing to handle the coal and received loud applause when he said:

"Let Carter stand up there and watch 120,000 steelworkers in District 31 say: No scab coal is coming into Gary! No

scab coal is coming into Inland, into Republic, into Youngstown Sheet and Tube! That's the power we have!"

Frank called for a vote on the resolution he had distributed but the cowardly local bureaucrats would have none of this. Other steel workers argued for discussion and a vote on the resolution to show the sentiment of the body. Andrews and Schneider solved their dilemma by calling lights out and starting the movie.

During intermission when film reels were being changed, a letter from Bessie Lou Cornett was read. She correctly said that what happened to the mine workers today could happen to steel workers and auto workers tomorrow. A steel worker then rose to say that the Harlan militant was right and called for a vote on the resolution.

This was just too much for the bureaucratic tops to stomach. Schneider ordered lights out and movie rolling. Then he and other bureaucrats forced the steel worker who had just spoken, as well as Frank, from the hall saying, "Their kind aren't needed here."

It is exactly the kind of class-struggle actions Frank and the other steel worker were advocating which can decisively help win the miners' strike as well as wrest the right to strike and end layoffs for steel workers. The actions of the USWA Local 65 and Local 1010 bureaucrats and phony "oppositionists" in District 31—all supporters to one degree or another of "reformer" Ed Sadlowski's bid for the International presidency last year—have made it clear by their actions that they are an obstacle to that struggle. ■

How the Miners Beat the Government

In a desperate bid to force an end to the powerful three-month-long miners' strike, Jimmy Carter is pulling out his heavy artillery: the strikebreaking Taft-Hartley law and the threat of government seizure of the coal mines. After weeks of intense federal jawboning and arm-twisting proved futile in the face of the miners' determined resistance, the move was a desperate gamble. Carter knows that these measures have been wielded against the coal miners before but failed to break their resolve.

Taft-Hartley has been previously invoked three times against the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)—and each time it has been defied. Both Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman also seized the mines during the 1940's in furious attempts to stop miners' strikes. But running the red-white-and-blue up over the nation's coal pits did not impress the miners. The strikers stuck to their guns and both presidents were forced to back down, authorizing contracts which conceded vital issues the miners had struck for.

With their traditional battle cry "You can't dig coal with bayonets," miners have squared off with presidents who were in a far stronger position than born-again peanut boss Carter—and won. FDR attacked the miners as a popular president in the middle of a popular war. Truman went after them as an anti-labor Cold War witchhunt was gearing up to hammerlock the unions and purge them of all militancy and "radicalism." Carter has neither wartime patriotism nor very good relations with the AFL-CIO hierarchy upon which to base his anti-miner campaign. If UMWA strikers could whip his more powerful predecessors, they can take on Carter as well.

The history of the miners' confrontations with the federal government demonstrates once again that the government is not neutral in the class struggle. The government intervenes when the coal operators and their industrial allies are being pressed to the wall. Its first priority is always to get the miners back to work. But this history also shows that the Democratic Party's partisan defense of the bosses' interests can be defeated. If the miners refuse to bow to the government threats and particularly if they are backed up by concrete actions of labor solidarity, they can emerge victorious as they have before and set an example of successful labor struggle that would inspire unionists throughout the country.

The World War II Strikes

When Roosevelt launched the U.S. into the inter-imperialist conflict of World War II, he demanded the complete submission of American labor to the dictates of the capitalist war machine. Fawning trade-union leaders rushed to assure the White House of their 100 percent prostration. They promised a "no-strike" pledge for the duration and agreed to submit all disputes to the War Labor Board, a tripartite body of union officials, management and so-called "neutral" representatives of "the public." Though

personally sour on Roosevelt and somewhat of an isolationist on matters of foreign policy, UMWA president John L. Lewis went right along with the war hysteria and agreed to these measures.

It did not take long for Roosevelt's "equality of sacrifice" rhetoric to prove itself a gigantic swindle of the working class. Prices skyrocketed and war profiteers raked in millions while workers were subjected to a virtual wage freeze under the notorious "Little Steel" formula. While the bosses pushed speed-up to unheard-of levels and harassed unionists who objected, grievances backlogged for months at the Labor Board and were almost always decided in management's favor.

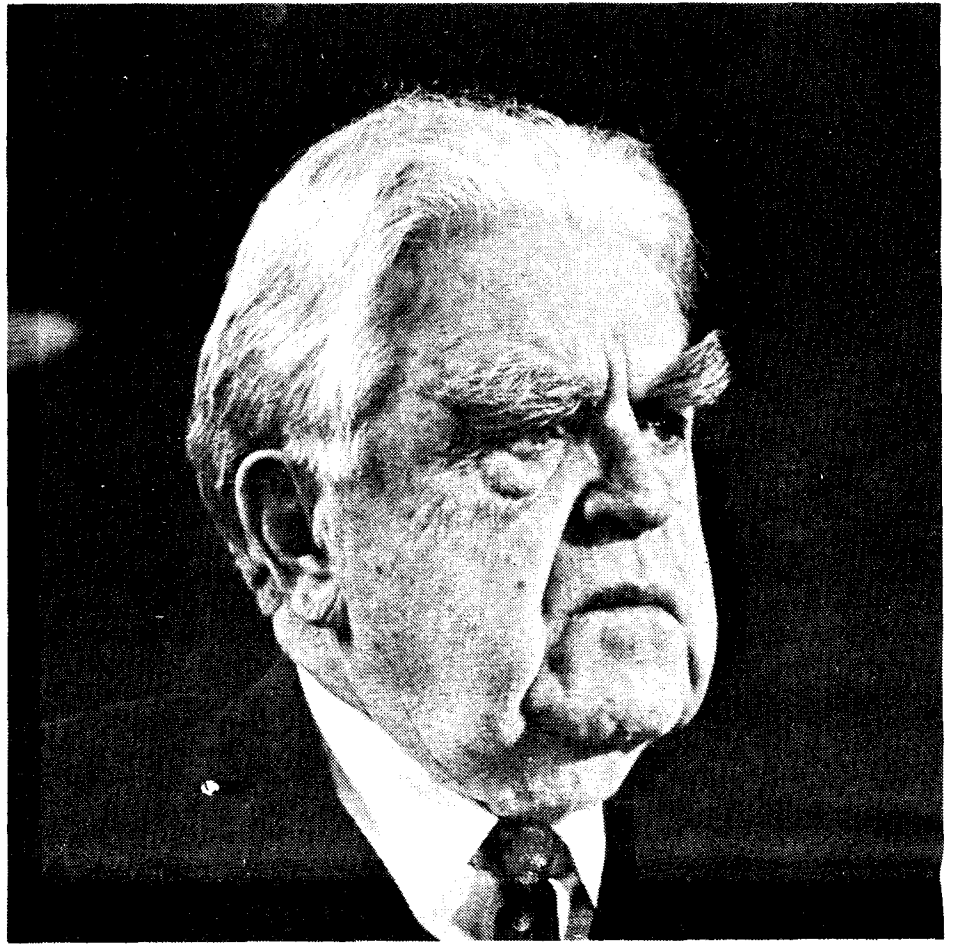
Discontent in the unions began to erupt as early as 1942. That year there were more strikes than there had been in all but two years since 1919. But these were wildcat strikes, generally suppressed in a short time by the official union leadership. In 1943 a wildcat strike demanding higher wages to keep up with soaring inflation swept the anthracite (hard coal) fields. It ended only after three weeks of pleading by Lewis, his expulsion of the strike leaders from the UMWA and six days after a back-to-work order from Roosevelt. Lewis knew that pressure was building up in the coalfields with the bituminous (soft coal) negotiations just around the corner, and he finally balked at trying to ram the government's wage freeze down the militant miners' throats. The most explosive labor struggle of the war, and the biggest strike the country had ever seen, was about to begin.

On March 10 the UMWA convention demanded a \$2-a-day wage increase plus portal-to-portal pay (until then travel time from the mine entrance to the coal face, often miles away, had been unpaid). The contract, which was extended one month, had an April 1 expiration but both sides girded for war. On April 8 Roosevelt issued an executive order barring further wage increases and the War Labor Board (with the treacherous affirmative vote of the CIO and AFL representatives—the UMWA had already walked off) demanded "uninterrupted production of coal."

Though the new expiration date was set for May 1, miners started to leave on April 24. Thousands followed every day. On April 29 Roosevelt raged and denounced the "strikes against the United States government itself" and threatened that if work were not resumed, "I shall use all the power vested in me as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy to protect the national interest and to prevent further interference with the successful prosecution of the war."

Ten thousand Ohio miners answered FDR the next day by walking off the job and on the morning of May 1, "no contract, no work" prevailed—530,000 coal miners were on strike. That same day Roosevelt seized the mines.

But the miners would not dig coal on Roosevelt's orders. They returned to work only when, a few days later, Lewis agreed to a two-week truce. And they



John L. Lewis

U.S. News & World Report

were out again in force at the beginning of June.

The miners walked out four times in 1943, defying mounting government threats and increasingly even their own union leaders. The miners became restless with Lewis' cat-and-mouse strategy of calling frequent truces and resuming production. Between 200,000 and 300,000 stayed out for days after Lewis called a truce in June. The union's July 22 order to return to work was ignored by 100,000 miners. About the same number quit work prior to a new October 31 deadline, despite an appeal by Lewis and the officials. Throughout the 1943 crisis, Lewis' hand was forced by the miners' mounting anger and militancy which threatened to get out of control.

Throughout the six-month fight against Roosevelt, the miners faced a merciless hate campaign in the big business press. One editorial after another screamed for the blood of Lewis and the miners. The most famous instance was the U.S. Army *Stars and Stripes* which ran a front-page headline, "John L. Lewis, Damn Your Coal-Black Soul." Roosevelt himself stood at the head of the chauvinist frenzy, blustering that the strike involved "a gamble with the lives of American soldiers and sailors...." The President threatened to send troops to the coalfields and to draft the strikers into the army.

Democrats and Republicans joined hands to rush through Congress the strikebreaking Smith-Connally Act, which made striking or even advocating a strike against government-managed industry a felony punishable by one year in jail and a \$5,000 fine. Roosevelt

objected, saying the bill wasn't strong enough!

Roosevelt's strikebreaking efforts were backed by the entire upper crust of the trade-union bureaucracy. CIO head and United Steelworkers president Phil Murray, a former UMWA vice-president, treacherously condemned the miners who had lifted him to power, as did ex-UMWA leaders John Brophy and Van Bittner, both CIO representatives on the War Labor Board. UAW president R. J. Thomas condemned the walkout as a "political strike against the President."

Having crawled into Roosevelt's lap as a result of their virulent pro-war line ordered by Moscow, the thoroughly degenerated Stalinist Communist Party (CP) took up a position on the extreme right wing of the labor movement. The CP sent organizers and speakers, including the well-known William Z. Foster, into the coalfields demanding that "treasonable strikes" end and urging the miners to ignore the union's contract deadlines. CP chairman Earl Browder wrote in the July 1943 *Communist* "there is not the slightest doubt that Lewis is working and has worked during the past two years at least as an integral part of the pro-Nazi fifth column." Whatever authority the CP had in the mines was justly shattered by its vicious anti-strike propaganda and shameless recruiting of scabs.

But while the longtime red-baiter Lewis was using the CP's strikebreaking treachery to whip up anti-communism among the miners, the real communists—followers of Leon Trotsky, who had been murdered on Stalin's orders—stood by the embattled miners through thick and thin. The *Militant*,

WORKERS VANGUARD



Lewis defies Roosevelt (left), who called miners' strike a violation of pro-war no-strike pledge. CIO tops denounced miners as "fascists," while the CP's Daily Worker called on miners to go back to work.

newspaper of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), was virtually the only voice in the labor movement that consistently championed the miners' cause. While the bosses, pro-war labor fakers and Stalinists vilified the miners, the Trotskyists defended them, attacked the government strikebreaking ploys and called for labor solidarity with the UMWA.

The Trotskyist message found a significant echo in the ranks, if not the craven leadership, of organized labor. Thousands of messages of support, AFL and CIO local union resolutions supported the miners fight. Right after Congress passed the Smith-Connally bill, the Michigan CIO, representing 700,000 unionists, voted to repudiate the no-strike pledge. On May 2 a thousand delegates at a Michigan UAW conference voted to override their national officers and support both the miners' demands and their strike. Four days later an east coast UAW conference resolved that, "The miners fight, involving as it does the struggle against the lowering of their living standards, is

actually the fight of every working man and woman in America."

Finally, by early November, the government was worn down and capitulated to the miners, who once again left the pits half-a-million strong. Roosevelt, who at the beginning of the strike said, "The U.S. cannot make an agreement with its employees," dramatically reversed course and ordered his Secretary of the Interior to sign a contract with the insurgent miners. The miners breached the wage freeze, winning a \$1.50-a-day increase.

The miners' strike had a powerful impact on the rest of the working class. Gone were the days when capitalist governments could simply taunt "you can't strike against the government." In the entire period since the formation of the CIO, this strike was the most militant confrontation between a section of the union movement and the Democratic Party in power. It was not merely a battle between the miners and the coal operators; it directly pitted the UMWA against the federal government. The stunning strike victory

electrified other workers. Roosevelt had to seize the railroads in 1943 to avert a nationwide shutdown. Two hundred thousand steel workers wildcatted for several days in December of 1943 against the continuing wage freeze. The auto workers wildcatted again and again throughout 1944 and nearly overturned the no-strike pledge at their convention that year.

Eventually the trade-union tops succeeded in clamping the lid down. Wage demands were routed back through the Labor Board where they were quashed. Although the UMWA was the only national union to strike in the war years, their victory had become a part of the miners' living memory. No U.S. president would ever again be easily able to dictate terms to them or order them, against their will, into the mines.

Defying Truman and Taft-Hartley

The end of World War II released the pent-up discontent of millions of American workers. The year 1946 saw the greatest strike wave ever to sweep the U.S. Nearly 5 million workers hit the bricks, demanding the higher pay and better conditions that had been denied them during the war.

But the post-war strike wave encountered a massive capitalist backlash. Determined to strengthen the "free world" in the face of an alleged Soviet "Red Menace," the politicians demanded a crackdown on the unions, a purge of militants and "reds" and new government strikebreaking weapons. One product was the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act which provided the government with power to seek injunctions and fines against striking unions and to order 80-day back-to-work "cooling off" periods to halt walkouts.

When 72,000 anthracite miners struck in April 1945, Truman seized the mines. But, having seen this ploy before in the hands of a far more adroit FDR, the hard coal miners stuck it out and soon won the benefits that their union brothers in soft coal had achieved during the war.

As the 1946 bituminous negotiations approached, the UMWA turned its attention to the long-standing problem of health and safety. Mining was then, as it is today, the nation's most hazardous and killing job. The union produced figures proving that, throughout the war years, working in a mine was more likely to result in death or injury

than being on the battlefields of Europe or the Pacific.

Lewis demanded the establishment of an employer-financed health and retirement plan. To win such a comprehensive fund, fully financed by the employer, would be a milestone for the labor movement, but it would take the miners over three years of battles against the operators, court fines, mine seizures and Taft-Hartley injunctions to win this vital gain.

The operators refused to consider the union's welfare fund demand and on 1 April 1946 every bituminous mine in the country was shut down. Truman railed against the strike, calling the welfare demand illegal and the strike a "national disaster," and in May ordered the mines seized. But within a few days the government was once again forced to capitulate to the miners' strength. On May 29 the government signed with the union providing for a health and pension fund financed by a five-cent-per-ton levy on coal.

In November Lewis demanded that the contract be reopened to provide higher royalties to the fund and a sizable wage increase. The government, still technically owner, rushed to court and obtained an injunction ordering the miners to stay at work. But on November 20 the coal miners struck in defiance of the courts. Truman then picked a new club against the union. Lewis was hauled into court in early December and the UMWA was fined \$3.5 million with a \$10,000 fine against the union president personally. Lewis capitulated and called the strike off for the time being, but the fight was not over.

Meanwhile the government was forging new anti-strike weapons. The Taft-Hartley Act was being cooked up in Congress with a host of draconian provisions. The bill outlawed "secondary boycotts," the hot-cargoing solidarity tactic that had been crucial in CIO organizing drives; banned Communists from holding union office; prohibited strikes by federal employees and gave the Labor Department sweeping access to the internal affairs of unions. Its most notorious provision empowered the President to seek federal court injunctions to impose "cooling off" periods on strikes.

Truman knew he could safely veto the bill as a gesture to labor and have the Congress pass it anyway. Though the trade-union leaders denounced the bill and hailed Truman's veto, when the bill was re-passed by a lopsided Congress-

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Editorial in The Worker, May 2, 1943, began: "The President's action in having the government take over the mines is essential to the safety of the nation. There can be no dispute about it."

**THE SLP
VS.
LENINISM
PART
3**



The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

During the past two years the long-ossified, sectarian social-democratic Socialist Labor Party (SLP) has put on a trendy new look in an attempt to compete with more active currents on the left. As part of this face-lifting it is now attempting to present De Leonism as a serious revolutionary Marxist alternative to Leninism and Trotskyism. In the first part of this series ("Was De Leon a De Leonist?" WV No. 192, 10 February) we dealt with the latter-day SLP's anti-Leninist exploitation of the great American Marxist Daniel De Leon, who died in 1914. The second part ("The SLP and the Russian Question" WV No. 194, 24 February) considered the SLP's several positions on the Russian Revolution and class nature of the Soviet state. This concluding article focuses on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.



Librairie Hachette

Bolshevik officials on tour to consolidate support for Soviet power.

Marxists hold that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the form of social organization of the transition period from capitalism to socialism (i.e., a classless, stateless society). One of its central defining features is a *coercive* governing apparatus of the workers state, capable of suppressing capitalist-restorationist forces. Capitalist restoration is *objectively* possible due to the continued existence of economic scarcity and with it of class stratification.

The working class as it emerges from bourgeois society does not have the cultural level to undertake such positions as, for example, director of an airport, chief statistician in a census bureau or head of a publishing house. Such administrative/technical positions can initially be filled only by a *distinct*, essentially petty-bourgeois stratum, imbued with many of the same reactionary prejudices which this class exhibits under capitalism. This petty-bourgeois administrative stratum provides an objective social base for capitalist-restorationist forces.

Furthermore, sharp and even potentially violent conflicts over scarce economic resources can cause sections of the proletariat to rebel against the authority of the workers government and to support reactionary movements to one degree or another. The transition to socialism, like the overthrow of capitalism, is in no sense an automatic or spontaneous process. To successfully effect the transition from capitalism to socialism requires the leadership of a Marxist vanguard party governing on the basis of workers democracy.

For 60 years a theoretical hallmark of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) has been the position that the dictatorship of the proletariat does not apply to

advanced capitalist countries. In the latter, particularly the U.S., there will supposedly be an immediate transition from the "government of people to the administration of things" through Socialist Industrial Unionism. It was primarily opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat for the United States which caused the SLP to reject the famous 21 conditions for membership in the Communist International in 1920.

The SLP's rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat was based in part on the non-Marxist conception that it necessarily referred to the rule of a minority of the population. Therefore, such a program was meaningful only in backward countries where petty proprietors (overwhelmingly peasants) constituted the majority, like Russia in 1917 or Germany in the 1870's. This SLP position is clearly stated in an introduction, written in 1922, to Marx's 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Program*:

"Conditions may arise in Europe (especially in the industrially backward countries) which might make this 'dictatorship' inevitable, or at least the proper thing. Here in the United States it is out of place, and would, in fact, become a hindrance, and encumbrance to the orderly [!] progress of the revolution, and could be readily turned into an instrument of reaction."

The SLP's confused notion that the dictatorship of the proletariat means

some kind of minority socialist regime led it to counterpose this to workers democracy, thus predisposing it to more or less equate Leninism and Stalinism. Until 1939 Petersen's SLP supported first Lenin and then Stalin as progressive in backward Russia. Conversely, the new Karp regime now argues that Lenin and Trotsky were progenitors of Stalinist "bureaucratic state despotism."

However, the De Leonists' rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat goes far beyond the false conception that it means minority proletarian rule over a peasant majority. Petersen's SLP rejected Marx's conception that economic scarcity, the opposition of intellectual to manual labor and differential wages will continue to exist for a lengthy period after the overthrow of capitalism. In attacking Leninism, Petersen put forth the incredible position that the U.S. was economically already at the level which Marx termed "the higher phase of Communist society":

"When they [Leninists] quote Marx on the difficulties to be encountered in the early phase of Socialist society, they fail to understand that the tremendous degree of development that has taken place since Marx obviously has caused a change in the social conditions. They have completely failed to grasp the simple fact that economically, from the viewpoint of production capacity, we in the United States are now, *de facto*, in

the *higher economic* phase of Socialist society. And that, therefore, in this country all this talk about transitional measures, political dictatorships, survival of capitalist practices, etc., etc. becomes unintelligible gibberish...." [emphasis in original]

Soviet Russia: Promise or Menace? (1939)

Petersen's notion that the twentieth-century U.S. has attained the economic level of full communism is chauvinist utopianism in the service of a social-democratic (i.e., legalist, electoralist) program.

As we have previously discussed, the new Karp leadership of the Socialist Labor Party is seeking to compete with other American left organizations, most of which claim the Leninist tradition. Therefore, in a recent pamphlet directed against the Maoists, *After the Revolution: Who Rules?* (January 1978), the SLP now pays formal obeisance to the orthodox Marxist position on the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"For Marx, as has been shown, the dictatorship of the proletariat was a revolutionary government that allowed the democratically organized proletariat to assert its collective will. It would therefore be quite correct to define the SIU [Socialist Industrial Union] as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries...."

"The coming forward of the organized workers' government in the name of



Title page of first edition of Soviet constitution, 1918 (above). Poster urges "All for the War!" (right).



society 'abolishes the state as state' and the basis of class distinctions. What 'dies out' are those secondary functions (analogous in some sense to state power) which arises from the continued remnants of classes or the legacy of class-divided society."

This pamphlet is, in one sense, supremely dishonest for there is no mention that the SLP has changed its decades-old line on this question. On the contrary, the pamphlet gives the impression that the SLP has always accepted the dictatorship of the proletariat, but only opposes the Stalinist concept of bureaucratic ("one party") rule.

More significantly, there is no reason to believe that the January 1978 pamphlet represents an *internal* change in the SLP's position on this question. Probably the Karp leadership is simply paraphrasing orthodox Marxist and Leninist formulas without really accepting or even understanding them. The pamphlet contains no criticisms of the theoretical premises underlying Petersen's rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat for advanced capitalist countries. There is no discussion of the continued existence of economic scarcity, of a distinct petty-bourgeois administrative stratum and of bourgeois ideological attitudes. On the contrary, *After the Revolution: Who Rules?* contains passages along the old Petersenite lines that the collectivization of the productive forces leads immediately to the abolition of class differentiation.

The Petty Bourgeoisie and Counterrevolution

The capitalists do not rule society with their own bare hands. Rather the capitalist class administers the state and the economy through an intermediate (petty-bourgeois) stratum. Ultimately the bourgeoisie retains state power through the military officer corps. And in economically advanced, bourgeois-democratic countries, the capitalist class normally has the political support of a significant section of petty bourgeoisie who provide the electoral base of the bourgeois parties as well as the lawyers, economists, academics, etc., who staff the corporate and governmental apparatus.

Historically the SLP has denied that there is a significant petty bourgeoisie in the advanced capitalist countries or else defined this stratum out of existence. This notion is central to its rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In a debate with the Communist William F.

Dunne, SLP spokesman Adolph Singer stated:

"We have two classes in the United States today, the working class and the owning class. As soon as the revolution is accomplished the owning is done with, so we have no class contrasts.... "In America the management of production is mainly in machinery and in the heads of wage workers. So after our revolution in the United States, we can completely discard the capitalists." *Weekly People*, 6 February 1926

This is not an exaggerated statement of the SLP's view of American society. Arnold Petersen's 1931 pamphlet, *Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism*, says pretty much the same thing:

"The overwhelming, the immense majority of the people in this country is of the wage working class. The so-called middle class is so dependent on 'big business' that its group status is largely a fiction. In a revolutionary (or any other thoroughgoing crisis) it would, almost to a man, be hurled into the ranks of the proletariat." [emphasis in original]

And even though the new trendy SLP leadership pays lip service to the dictatorship of the proletariat, it, too, still perpetuates the false notion that the expropriation of capitalist property is tantamount to the elimination of class division in society:

"A class's existence is determined by its relationship to means of production, but with the socialization of those means, every member of society joins the ranks of active producers. Eliminating private ownership of the productive forces at once creates the basis for the elimination of class distinctions." [emphasis in original]

The notion that everyone who is employed by capital is a member of the working class is totally un-Marxist. No Marxist, including De Leon, has ever regarded foremen, accountants, engineers, trade journal editors, professors, etc. as part of the proletariat. And this administrative/technical stratum is numerically *very large*, even in relationship to the industrial proletariat. For example, here are the most recent statistics (in millions) on the composition of the employed U.S. labor force:

Craft and kindred workers	11
Operatives (factory)	10
Operatives (transport)	3
Laborers (non-farm)	4
Total	28

Professional & technical	13
Managers & administrators	9
Total	22

U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* [1976]

Thus in the U.S. today the administrative and technical petty bourgeoisie is almost as numerous as the industrial proletariat.

While the socialist revolution will materially benefit the majority of the petty bourgeoisie *as individuals*, it will eliminate much of their socially and economically privileged status relative to the proletariat. Thus, the petty bourgeoisie tends to *vacillate* between the two basic classes in modern society—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In periods of revolutionary upsurge intermediate social layers can rally to the socialist cause.

Thus in Portugal in 1974-75 the mass of the urban petty bourgeoisie, rebelling against the stifling decades-old, right-wing Salazar/Caetano dictatorship, supported far-reaching nationalizations of the banks and industrial monopolies. Likewise, in France in May 1968 much of the middle class, especially the students, would have welcomed a socialist revolution against De Gaulle's semi-bonapartist regime. At the other extreme, an economically desperate petty bourgeoisie can be mobilized behind fascism, particularly if the workers movement pursues false, indecisive policies in the face of a deep social crisis.

The petty bourgeoisie does not in general politically support the workers movement. In every advanced bourgeois-democratic country except the U.S. the mass of the industrial proletariat supports parties which call themselves "socialist" or "communist" (i.e., social-democratic or Stalinist) while the majority of the petty bourgeoisie supports avowedly capitalist and anti-labor parties (Christian Democrats in West Germany, Gaullists in France, Tories in Britain, Liberal Democrats in Japan). Although the SLP insists *ad nauseam* that its program is uniquely suited to the most advanced capitalist countries, its denial of possible opposition by the petty-bourgeois stratum to proletarian socialism reflects the exceptional political backwardness of the American working class, its self-identification as "middle class."

Fascism

Political polarity between the petty bourgeoisie and proletariat in advanced capitalist countries can at times reach the point of civil war. Such a conjuncture occurred in Germany in the early 1930's. In the July 1932 parliamentary

elections the Nazis got 13.7 million votes, 37 percent of the total, emerging by far as the largest party. What did the fascist victory signify to the SLP? Petersen & Co. came close to labelling it a mass movement of deluded workers:

"With the 'dirty work' done, the Nazi leaders are discarding their anticapitalist phraseology with which they won a majority of the people to their banners...." [our emphasis] *Weekly People*, 20 August 1933

Here we are presented with a class-undifferentiated German people who supposedly supported the Nazis on account of their anti-capitalist demagoguery.

In reality, Nazism was the mobilization of an economically desperate petty bourgeoisie *against* the organized proletariat. The electoral base of Hitler's party consisted of office workers, professionals, government bureaucrats, petty proprietors, etc. In the early 1930's the university students, the most volatile section of the urban petty bourgeoisie, were overwhelmingly pro-Nazi.

The need for the dictatorship of the proletariat is demonstrated as much by the defeat of the working class in economically advanced Germany in 1933 as by the victory of the proletarian revolution in backward Russia. For the working class to defeat Hitler in 1933 would have meant a civil war not only against the traditional state apparatus but also against the Nazis' petty-bourgeois and lumpenproletarian base.

In the course of such a struggle many of fascism's marginal supporters could be won to proletarian socialism. During the civil war and subsequent revolutionary terror the hard core of Nazi criminals would certainly be killed or imprisoned. But a victorious German proletariat in 1933-34 would have found hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of government functionaries, teachers, managers, students, etc., who remained ideologically hostile to proletarian socialism but were prepared to bow before its military authority.

What should a workers government do with a large population of individuals sympathetic to fascist ideology? Put them all in labor camps? No, such a policy would be economically wasteful and possibly politically counterproductive. People who are not actively conspiring against the workers government and are not guilty of crimes should be given socially productive work. But should individuals knowingly hostile to proletarian socialism be given the full rights of workers democracy? For example, should an accountant in a factory, who supported the Nazis during the civil war, be allowed to run for soviet delegate? Absolutely not. Such a liberal policy would open the way for the reformation of a fascist movement. A revolutionary workers government will not permit capitalist restorationist forces to gain power. At the political level, this is what the dictatorship of the proletariat means in practice.

A mass fascist movement represents in an extreme form the tendency of the petty-bourgeois strata to defend their privileged status by opposing the political rule of the proletariat. The objective economic differentiation between the administrative stratum and the industrial proletariat does not disappear immediately after the socialist revolution. Thus the continued existence of a distinct petty-bourgeois stratum provides an important objective social basis for capitalist-restorationist forces.

On the Economics of the Transitional Epoch

Marx's classic statement of the nature and goals of the dictatorship of the proletariat is contained in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*:

"What we are dealing with here is a communist society, not as it has developed on its own basis, but, on the contrary, as it is just *emerging* out of

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Miners Beat Government...

(continued from page 5)

sional vote the union officialdom sat on its hands. Not so the miners.

When the bill became law on 23 June 1947 over 200,000 miners struck against it in Pennsylvania, Alabama, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia. A week later both the government seizure of the mines and the federal contract with the union ended with the expiration of the Smith-Connally Act. More miners left the pits in droves. By the end of the first week in July every soft coal mine in the country was again shut down.

Faced with the miners' solid strike front and determination to fight the government's new anti-strike measures, the coal operators quickly collapsed and signed a contract with sweeping gains for the miners. Wages went up \$3 a day, the work day was reduced from 9 to 8 hours and the tonnage royalty into the welfare fund was doubled. In addition, in an attempt to avoid the Taft-Hartley Act, the new contract was to apply only when the miners were "willing and able to work." Penalties on wildcatters were also scrapped.

But the miners' fight for their benefits was far from over. The coal bosses constantly sought to sabotage the welfare fund by manipulating its administration. The fund had been set up with three trustees—one from the union, one from the operators and one so-called "neutral." Just as with "neutral" arbitrators, the "neutral" always voted with management and kept the funds tied up. For eight months after the settlement of the 1947 contract, the operators held up the disbursal of \$30 million.

Finally in March 1948 200,000 miners struck to break the impasse. In early April a raging Truman demanded a court injunction under Taft-Hartley to end the dispute. Although the courts cooperated, the injunction was ignored by the striking miners. On April 20 a federal judge again fined the UMWA \$1.5 million and Lewis \$20,000, and issued an order banning the strike for 80 days. But by this time the miners had already forced the operators to promise a \$100-a-month pension. This was far superior to any other union pension at that time. The auto workers pension, won later that year, for example, was \$100 a month *minus* government Social Security benefits.

Still the dispute over the funds did not end. The operators appealed the pension plan in the courts and the miners struck four times in 1949 to force them to pay up. In addition Lewis told the miners in June to begin working only three days a week, which kept coal stockpiles down and infuriated the coal operators who saw their "right" to manage the mines being usurped. In December a series of wildcats began spreading in the coalfields and by January 1950 nearly 100,000 miners were out, refusing Lewis' appeals to return to work.

Truman was beside himself. At the end of January he demanded that the strike end. But afraid that a Taft-Hartley injunction would be ignored the president offered to set up a "fact-finding" panel if the miners would return to work for a 70-day cooling off period. Truman was answered when 270,000 additional miners walked off the job in early February.

An irate Truman then grabbed for Taft-Hartley, but was stymied when a nervous federal judge refused to find Lewis and the union leadership in contempt though the membership was still on strike. Indeed Lewis was appealing for the men to return to work but the miners weren't going back without a clear-cut victory. The desperate president then turned to Congress and demanded legislation authorizing him to seize the mines once again. But the coal operators, worn down by the

tireless miners and dismayed by the strikers' success in thumbing their noses at Truman, finally collapsed and on 5 March 1950 settled with the union. The protracted and bitter struggle over the health and pension fund was settled with Josephine Roche being appointed the "neutral" trustee. In reality, this guaranteed union control of the funds, as Roche was a long-time personal friend of Lewis; for the next 20 years she never voted against the union's positions on the trustee board.

From 1943 to 1950 the miners repeatedly fought the government toe-to-toe. "The law," they had shown through their militant struggles, was the result of the balance of class forces. Obeying the bosses' laws where there was sufficient organized strength to defy them would simply embolden the profit-gouging coal operators. The only way to win the workers' just demands was by relying not on the phony "neutrality" of the capitalist government but on the union's strength. And that is just what the miners did. By defying mine seizures, Taft-Hartley injunctions and presidential back-to-work appeals, they had won the highest wages of any U.S. industrial workers and the best health and pension system in existence up to that time.

From Lewis to Miller

But preserving the gains the miners had made in the 1940's required more than militant trade-union tactics and guts. The laws of the capitalist market and the profit-drive of the coal operators required a class-struggle program and strategy. In its absence the gains won by the UMWA were to deteriorate markedly over the next two decades.

After World War II the demand for coal dropped rapidly. Domestic production fell from a 1947 high of 688 million tons to 392 million tons in 1954. Oil, natural gas and other fuels replaced the need for coal, particularly in home heating and on the railroads.

But the drop in the number of working miners was far greater than the 40 percent drop in production. There were over 500,000 miners during World War II; when Lewis retired in 1960 only a little over 100,000 jobs were left, a decline of 80 percent. To keep their profits up, bosses had drastically increased productivity through widespread mechanization and automation.

To defend the miners' jobs the UMWA would have had to wage a fierce struggle for a shorter workweek at no cut in pay, counterposing nationalization of the coalfields with no compensation to the operators' drive to stabilize profits by laying off hundreds of thousands of miners. But Lewis had no fundamental quarrel with the coal operators' "right" to make a profit, even if it meant devastating unemployment for the miners. In a widely publicized statement, Lewis declared, "From a policy standpoint, it is immaterial to us whether the union has a million or a half million members." The actual figures were, of course, much lower. In any case it makes a great deal of difference to half a million miners whether they are unemployed or not.

With this pro-capitalist logic, Lewis could not even defend the interests of the working and already-retired miners. Though the UMWA invested millions in real estate, railroads, utilities and even non-union coal companies (!), the welfare and retirement funds were continually cut back. Pension requirements were tightened, miners unemployed over a year were denied medical coverage, dental benefits dropped and disability payments for miners, widows and their children restricted.

When Lewis retired in 1960 the once-powerful UMWA had been ground down to a shadow of its former self. The massive, militant strikes of the 1940's were a thing of the past. The Appalachian coalfields were stricken with poverty, squalor and unemployment. Lewis'

successors, Tom Kennedy and then Tony Boyle, blithely continued the disastrous course of the 1950's.

In the early to mid-1960's coal production picked up and wildcat strikes began to break out in protest against the Boyle regime's pro-company policies. The upsurge in activity reflected an influx of new, younger miners and renewed protests against the incredibly unsafe conditions maintained by the mine bosses, highlighted by such infamous massacres as the explosions at Mannington and Farmington, West Virginia.

Jock Yablonski, a long-time Lewis/Boyle lieutenant, sniffed the opportunity to unseat the unpopular Boyle and, prodded by liberal Democratic spokesmen like Joe Rauh and Ralph Nader, challenged the UMWA president in 1969. Shortly after the notoriously rigged election Yablonski, his wife and daughter were found shot to death in their western Pennsylvania home, a heinous crime that was eventually traced to high union officials, including Boyle.

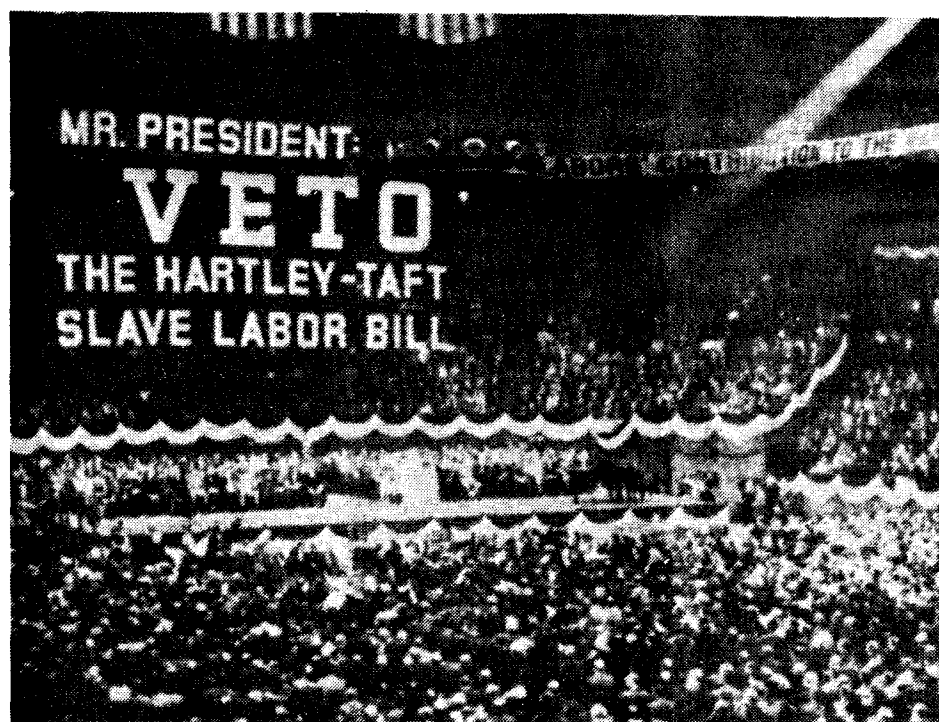
The Yablonski murders and the increasing unrest in the miners union convinced a section of Democratic Party liberals that Boyle had to go. The Miners for Democracy (MFD) reform group that coalesced after Yablonski's death was braintrustered and heavily backed by the liberals, who hoped to "clean up" the miners union and install a leadership that could deal with the increasingly restless ranks better than the discredited Boyle.

The MFD's central axis was appealing to the federal government to boost it into power. Through endless lawsuits against the union officers, through constant appeals to Nixon's

Communist Party, the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, the social-democratic International Socialists and the Maoist Revolutionary Union—prattled about how the MFD would restore democracy to the UMWA, we warned that government intervention in the union was counterposed to genuine workers democracy and predicted that in any decisive confrontation Miller & Co. would stand with their new-found friends in the capitalist state against the miners. The whole succeeding history of five years of Miller strikebreaking and sellout contracts has dramatically proved that the reformists were wrong and the Trotskyist SL was right.

In 1974 Miller traded away the miners' right to strike for a worthless grievance procedure. Outside arbitrators were supposed to satisfy the miners' grievances and federal inspectors insure safety in the mines. Instead the companies stepped up their harassment of the miners, the "neutral" arbitrators ruled regularly against the miners (including banning "roving pickets" last year), government safety inspections were still sporadic and ill-enforced, and the courts handed down one injunction after another every time the miners dared to strike. Whenever the ranks exploded, as in three particularly massive wildcats in as many years, the MFD team of Miller, Harry Patrick and Mike Trbovich acted as the government's policemen in the union, trying to order the miners back to work.

Miller "fought" not for strengthening the union's control of the health and retirement funds but for Congress to pass the Pension Reform Act, where the federal government would supervise and "guarantee" benefits. What the miners got instead was a drastic cutback of health benefits last summer.



Bureaucrats relied on "friends-of-labor" for protection from anti-union legislation at 1947 rally.

Labor Department to virtually take over the UMWA, the MFD and its presidential candidate, Arnold Miller, finally succeeded in ousting Boyle in 1972. But in the process they succeeded in giving the government a free reign in the internal affairs of the union.

The MFD's reliance on the government, for its very existence as well as its electoral success, ran directly counter to the vital lessons of the history of the UMWA. The miners had made their biggest gains in bitter struggle *against* the government, which at every point acted as the protector of the coal operators. The miners had made their union strong by *resisting* federal meddling in their affairs, while the MFD urged the Labor Department's agents to walk right in, with Arnold Miller on their shoulders.

In 1972 the Spartacist League (SL) was virtually alone on the left in refusing to join the government in supporting Arnold Miller. While reformist groups notably the Moscow Stalinist

Miller urged the miners to vote for Democrats and campaigned for Jimmy Carter. Now the Democrats howl for a crackdown on the miners and Carter is trying to shove a Labor Department-written BCOA-inspired contract down their throats. And with Miller now discredited, the Labor Department is once again shuffling through the union's district leaders, trying to pick a new "responsible" leader who can control the ranks better than Miller has been able to.

For Working Class Independence! For a Workers Party!

The miners' victories of the 1940's proved positively, as the MFD debacle of the 1970's did negatively, that the working class can fight and win only by a policy of independence from the capitalist government. The institutions of government and the "laws of the land" exist to protect the property and profits of stockholders and coupon-



Charleston Daily Mail

Wildcatting West Virginia coal miners march in Charleston demanding the right to strike.

clippers who pull the strings in both the Democratic and Republican parties. Though it is useful for the government and politicians to maintain a facade of "impartiality" in the class struggle, this veneer is wiped away at every point of decisive conflict, such as the current miners' strike. Carter's policy of "non-intervention" in labor disputes rapidly evaporates in the face of capitalist pressure for the same strikebreaking weapons used by Roosevelt and Truman against the miners.

Previous Democratic administrations, such as Kennedy's and Johnson's, had less need to resort to direct strikebreaking attacks on the union, but this was not because the Democratic Party had changed its character. The capitalist state has not had to *regularly* and *systematically* intervene to crush labor struggles because the labor bureaucrats have done their job of keeping the ranks in line.

That is the key difference between the present period and the more militant years of the CIO. The AFL-CIO, Teamsters and United Auto Workers leaderships are hardened pro-capitalist cliques, living in gilded comfort off the workers' union dues, with power and prestige assured them by the millionaires and their kept politicians as long as they subdue the rank and file. So long as the Abels and McBrides can impose no-strike pledges on steel workers and the Woodcocks and Frasers can quash wildcats and keep the workers chained

to the assembly lines, the need for overt government strikebreaking is considerably lessened.

But every outburst of class struggle that breaks the bureaucratic straitjacket imposed by the labor lieutenants of capital raises anew the clearly anti-labor role of the Democrats and Republicans. When Arnold Miller proved incapable of cramming the BCOA contract down the miners' throats it was Carter and the Democratic Party that stepped to the fore to defend the interests of coal companies. While the miners *can* resist the government's strikebreaking, through massive demonstrations of militancy and solidarity, it is clear that they and the rest of the working masses need a political weapon of their own.

Ever since the founding of the CIO the major obstacle to the further advance of the working-class movement in the U.S. has been the labor bureaucracy's slavish alliance with the Democratic Party. The task of breaking the trade unions from the capitalist parties remains unsolved today as it was 40 years ago. Not a single leader of a national trade union has led a fight against this dead-end policy. Even John L. Lewis, who unlike most of his fellow bureaucrats refused to support the Democrats in the 1940's, simply switched horses and supported the other capitalist party, the Republicans. This only disgusted workers who were looking for a political alternative to the strikebreaking Democrats. Labor militants had little difficulty in determining that the Wendell Wilkies and Thomas Dewey's of the GOP were no answer to the bogus "friends of labor," Roosevelt and Truman.

Even if, through their iron determination and intransigence, the miners beat back the government/coal operator offensive, the capitalists and their parties will only lie in wait for the opportunity to throttle the workers as they have done before.

The miners' inspiring militancy can breathe life into the entire labor movement if they successfully beat back the government's threats. But this does not end the battle. The International Executive Board, which let Carter's flunkies browbeat it into accepting the present contract proposal, is no real alternative to Miller. Even the so-called "dissidents" were just as eager as the MFD leaders to run to Uncle Sam to intervene in their union.

No class-struggle leadership can be forged without an intransigent fight for the independence of the workers movement from the capitalist state. And this struggle must go beyond purely trade-union bounds to take up the cause of a workers party, based on the unions, to fight for a workers government. Only when such a government finally gives the coal operators and the rest of their class the boot will it be possible to free the miners from brutal exploitation in deathtrap mines. ■

SLP...

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capitalist society; hence, a society that still retains, in every respect, the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society after the deductions have been made exactly what he gives to it....

"In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but of life's prime want; after the productive forces have increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" [emphasis in original]

Once one understands how Marx defined full communism, the SLP's notion that such a society can be established immediately after the overthrow of capitalism in the U.S. must be viewed as sheer social-democratic utopianism. It is an obvious absurdity to believe that the oppositon of intellectual (administrative) to manual labor can be



Daniel De Leon

eliminated within a short period after the socialization of the means of production. It is simply egalitarian fantasizing to maintain that such positions as manager of a steel mill or head of a construction project can be filled by the *rotation* of the general population or even a significant part of it.

Raising the great majority of the American population to the *present* cultural level of the technical intelligentsia would undoubtedly require several generations. It would involve not only a several-fold increase in the real resources devoted to education, but also an enormous expansion of free time. This, in turn, would require a qualitative increase in labor productivity. In addition such a radical raising of the cultural level would involve overcoming backward attitudes toward learning and toward independent creative work, attitudes deeply impressed on the masses by bourgeois society.

It is equally utopian to think that the principle, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," can be an immediate goal of the socialist revolution. If free distribution were instituted the day after the American socialist revolution, the total demand for consumable goods and services would exceed the potential output many times over. And, of course, labor input would plummet to a fraction of its present magnitude. The working class, as it is conditioned by capitalist society, will not labor without some form of economic compulsion.

The SLP's preposterous view that full communism can be established on the economic level of the contemporary U.S. should not be laid to Daniel De Leon. In this, as in most other questions, De Leon was no De Leonist. De Leon had the orthodox Marxist position that differential wage labor would continue

in a "Co-operative Commonwealth." If anything he bends the stick too far toward inegalitarianism, projecting some kind of individual piece-rate system:

"It follows that so far as 'income' is concerned, that will depend, not upon the category of the worker, or work done whether 'skilled' or 'unskilled' but upon the rate of effort that the worker will have contributed toward the totality of the collective work done. "The income of the skilled worker, who loiters, will be less than the income of his unskilled fellow-worker who bestirs himself."

Fifteen Questions About Socialism (1914)

The continuation of differential wage labor is not a "technical" or simply economic question but is centrally related to the need for a communist vanguard party after the revolution. It proves the fallacy of the SLP's Socialist Industrial Union government as a purely administrative organ. Differential wage labor expresses not only continuing economic scarcity, but the *absence of a uniform socialist consciousness*. In this important sense, the mass of the working class after the overthrow of capitalism has a lower level of socialist consciousness than the members of a revolutionary party under capitalism. A revolutionary party pays its functionaries on the basis of need, not relative productivity or earning capacity.

The SLP's concept of a Socialist Industrial Union government is that of a purely administrative organ, kind of a technical coordinating body for the various branches of the economy. This flows from its denial of continuing economic scarcity. In reality, a revolutionary workers government, regardless of its form, must be primarily an arena for resolving conflicts of interest within the working class and between the working class and other social strata. Such questions as the structure of labor payment, the level of social services (e.g., education) or the amount of economic transfers to backward countries will produce sharp differences among the constituents of a workers government. Organized groups (parties) will fight for very different policies on such questions. The more backward workers will tend to favor higher immediate consumption *at the expense of* investment, education, aid to backward countries, etc. The international vanguard party must stand for the *egalitarian* and *internationalist* goals of communism against short-sighted and parochial sections of the working population.

Conflicts over scarcity during the transitional epoch are aggravated by the internationalist dimension of the communist program. The SLP has an essentially chauvinist conception of socialism, in which the productive forces of the U.S. are to be exclusively devoted to meeting the economic needs of the American population. The Socialist Industrial Union is projected as a purely American institution. We reject and oppose such an inegalitarian, nationalist conception. Closing the gap between the most developed and the poorest countries is the responsibility of the international proletariat *as a whole*. International socialist planning will strive to secure a *higher* rate of economic growth for backward than for advanced workers states. And this will require a relative redistribution of wealth from the latter to the former.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx stated that the communists are distinguished from the mass of the proletariat in that they represent the proletariat as an international class and the general, historic interests of the workers movement. In this important sense the relationship of the communist vanguard to the proletariat is not fundamentally altered with the overthrow of capitalism. Communists must continue to combat short-sighted and parochial tendencies, particularly national narrowness, which remain obstacles to the realization of socialism. ■

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France...

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mations Ouvrières, 22 February 1978), the OCI does not hide the fact that it avoids putting forward any position which would either call the popular front into question or set the ranks of the PS against their leadership: "I want to explain that we are not running any candidates because the question before the workers is that of undoing Giscard, that of the PS/PCF majority.... We Trotskyists of the OCI are not in agreement with the PS, but we say: enough of these attacks on the PS." Small wonder that the OCI gets the applause it does! Mitterrand himself could hardly detest this kind of "critical" support.

In contrast, the comrades of the LTF who have intervened in OCI meetings have always intransigently defended a revolutionary policy of proletarian opposition to the popular front, insisting that no votes should go to any of the Union of the Left candidates. At one of these meetings, at [the university at] Tolbiac, Charles Berg, national secretary of the OCI, made no secret of the scarcely revolutionary appetites of his organization. According to him, if the OCI were a "leading party of the working class," its candidates would call for a PS/PCF/OCI government (!) and would oppose "the Union of the Left candidates *only if they were not candidates of the working-class wing of the popular front*" (our emphasis). This speaks volumes about the OCI's designs: even if it were a "leading party of the working class," the OCI still would seek to bring the popular front to power!

The OCI's shameless campaigns for unity and withdrawal of candidates have provided ammunition to those mortal enemies of Trotskyism and the revolutionary working class who accuse the OCI—and, by false deduction, Trotskyism—of being agents of social democracy ("Who's the OCI running for? The PS is receiving strange reinforcements in its efforts to pressure the Communist Party," *L'Humanité*, 21 February). The editors of *L'Humanité*

are correct in pointing out that the OCI is tailing the social democracy, to the point of committing the ignominious act of voting for the official yearly report given by the leadership of the FEN [National Education Federation—the only union in France which did not split into Stalinist and social-democratic wings in 1948], even though the PCF's hue and cry over the OCI's concessions to PS class collaboration is designed merely to distract attention from the PCF's own vile class collaboration. (It should be pointed out that *L'Humanité* picked the OCI because the other main usurper of Trotskyism, the LCR, itself is tailing after the *Stalinist* bureaucracy!) All the same, the fact that the OCI's opportunism enables the Stalinists once again to slander Trotskyism is a grave insult to the memory of those who fell at the hands of the Stalinists in Spain, France, Vietnam and elsewhere in the world defending the Trotskyist program against precisely such sordid lies.

To the Pabloists of the LCR, the only drawback to the Common Program is that the PCF and PS bureaucrats will not try to apply it. In speaking to the PCF and PS Krivine said: "We are speaking to the workers of the PC and the PS, to these parties as a whole: 'Today we have the same demands on many subjects. We do not seek to differentiate ourselves *a priori* from your demands.... Thus we have the same demands today against the austerity imposed by the right. What separates us however is that you believe that once in the government the PC and PS will satisfy these demands.'" Having taken great care not to differentiate themselves from the PCF and the popular front, the LCR's candidates have a good chance of falling flat on their faces.

The electoral platform of the LCR/OCT/CCA [OCT: Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs, a Mao-oid group. CCA: Comités Communistes pour l'Autogestion—a split led by Michel Pablo from the PSU in the spring of 1977] gives as its sole characterization of the USSR and the eastern European countries that they are countries "which have nothing to do with socialism." The LCR is more than ready to neglect any mention in its platform of

the Trotskyist slogans for political revolution in, and unconditional military defense of, the deformed and degenerated workers states in order to cash in on the anti-Communist human rights crusade launched by the imperialists.

In its utterly insane campaign, Lutte Ouvrière is running more than 470 candidates in the legislative elections; its "star," Arlette Laguiller, is running in a tiny rural district in Puy de Dôme. At LO's latest election meeting at the Mutualité hall, our comrades of the LTF were able to gather a group of several dozen people around them to explain what a revolutionary opposition to the popular front is. Most of LO's members must have been far from Paris, gone off to canvass door-to-door in an attempt to convince "factory workers, salaried employees, artisans, small businessmen, small farmers and women" to vote for LO's candidates, since only a handful of LO militants were present at the Mutualité.

LO's campaign rests upon one central theme, repeated *ad nauseam* on every poster and in every leaflet: LO's candidates, if elected, will conduct themselves as a loyal opposition to the popular front:

"Lutte Ouvrière's deputies would be left deputies who would support everything a left government would do in favor of the workers, but left deputies who do not toe the line, who will stand in the way and will warn the workers as soon as Mitterrand or Marchais betray the interests of the working class."

—Lutte Ouvrière, *Banque Nationale de Paris*, 6 February

There is likely to be more than one LO militant who feels he's been had in this campaign: when LO launched its campaign a few weeks ago, it refused to participate in the LCR/OCT/CCA bloc because what was at stake was support to a possible "left government." LO accused the LCR members of capitulating to the Union of the Left. Today these accusations must be acutely embarrassing to certain LO militants!

Neither the candidates of the LCR/OCT/CCA bloc nor those of LO deserve any votes in this election.

Polemizing against Pierre Frank's capitulation to the popular front in 1935, Leon Trotsky said:

"No organizational ultimatum. What a revolting distortion of the Leninist formulation! No ultimatum whatsoever in relation to the masses, the trade unions, the workers' movement; but the most intransigent ultimatum in relation to any group that claims to lead the masses. The ultimatum that we are talking about is called the *Marxist program*.... The program now concerns the fight for the new party, against the two Internationals, and against Marceau Pivert (SAP, IAG), the servant of unity between the reformists and the Stalinists. To fill one's mouth at this time with 'organic unity,' and likewise with 'revolutionary organic unity,' is to mislead the masses along with Marceau Pivert and other servants of social patriotism. *Committees of action, the revolutionary party, and the Fourth International*: this is where an adequate program for the present moment must begin."

—"An Abdication of Principles," in *The Crisis in the French Section* (1935-36)

Today it is the Ligue Trotskyste de France which has taken up Trotsky's revolutionary imperatives; its program stands in contrast to all variants of centrist accommodation to the popular front, and will provide the means by which the working class can break with its traitorous leaderships. The LTF is building the revolutionary party which will be the French section of a reformed Fourth International!

28 February 1978
Ligue Trotskyste de France

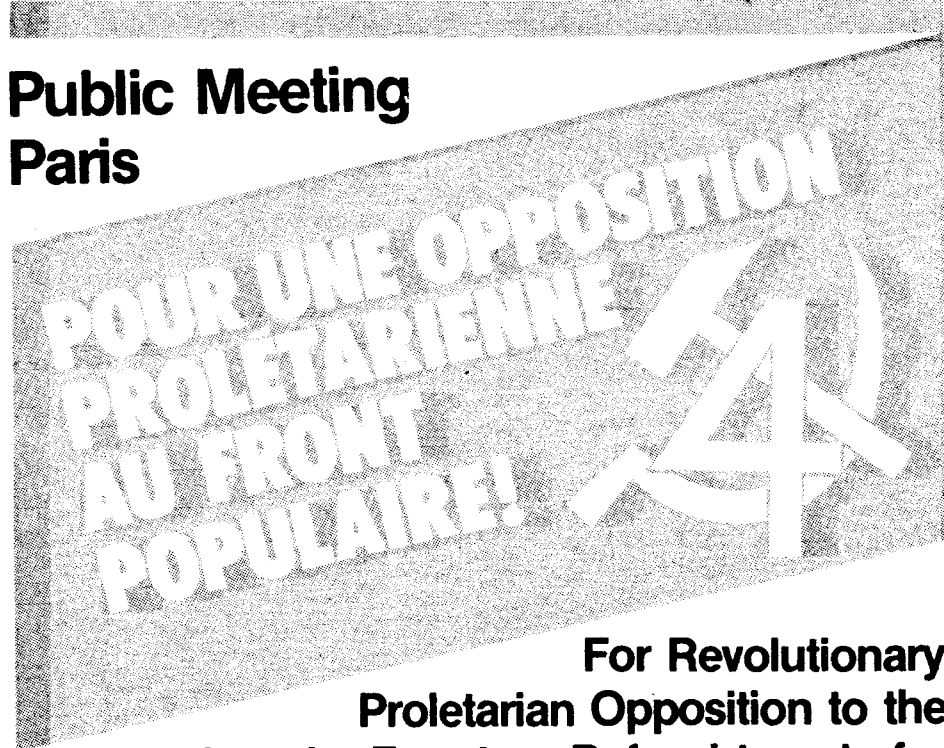
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For Revolutionary Proletarian Opposition to the Popular Front! — Refusal to vote for workers parties committed to a popular front. key to international regroupments.

Speakers:

Alastair Green
Central Committee, Spartacist League/Britain
ex-member, Trotskyist Faction of the Workers Socialist League

Cranac'h
Ligue Trotskyste de France
ex-member LCR

Wednesday, 15 March,
1:30 p.m.
Université de Villetaneuse

Friday, 17 March,
8:30 p.m.
Salle-Lancry, 10 rue de Lancry
Métro République

Bayonets...

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contingency plans to dispatch federal troops if necessary.

Don't Let the Government Rip Up the UMWA!

Miners! Carter knows he cannot jail all your local leaders or dispatch troops without risking an explosion he is not eager to set off. Don't be intimidated by these blustering threats: bayonets still can't mine coal! If you stick to your guns you can win the right to strike, full health benefits, equalized pensions and safer mines. Previous presidents have threatened to arrest you, fine you, draft you and fire you—and you beat them back and won your demands. To hell with Carter's threats!

Don't let the government rip your union to pieces! One ace up Carter's sleeve is his declaration of a "bargaining impasse" which allows each of the BCOA's 130-member companies to reach separate agreements with locals or districts. The Labor Department agents who engineered a "pattern setter" P & M agreement will no doubt be scurrying behind closed doors trying to reach separate pacts to break down your strength.

But separate agreements, particularly if some miners started up production, would mean a shattering of your solidarity, your greatest weapon, and would be a historic step backwards. Destruction of the industrywide benefit and pension funds in favor of company-by-company health insurance and retirement plans is just what the operators have been seeking. The UMWA fought for nearly seven decades to achieve industrywide bargaining and a national contract. Don't let the government split you up! Not one local back to work until you all go back together!

Carter has another card he has not yet played: government seizure of the mines. He reportedly opted for use of Taft-Hartley and against seizure because he didn't want to "look soft" on the miners, wait for Congressional action or be in the position of "bargaining" with the union. But as the miners successfully defy Taft-Hartley, he may still order the mines seized.

This tactic, like Taft-Hartley, has been used before. To end coal strikes Roosevelt seized the mines in 1943, Truman did so in 1946 and threatened it again in 1950. *Every time, the miners won their demands only because they struck against the government under these seizures.* Every time the government hoped to get the miners back on the job, strike action made the politicians and operators cough up what the miners wanted: portal-to-portal pay in '43, the health and retirement funds in '46, \$100-a-month pensions, the highest of any union at that time in 1950.

The government is not neutral, and Carter is no "friend of labor." As defenders of the interests of the capitalist class, they want the miners back in the pits in a hurry. They want the coal stockpiles rebuilt. They want to give as little as possible. As one miner said this week, "Government seizure is just Taft-Hartley with the flag wrapped around it" (*New York Times*, 6 March). If the mines are seized, miners will get only as much as the power of their strike can force out of the government.

But the miners' enemies are not just in the White House and halls of Congress. They are also in UMWA headquarters. The despicable Arnold Miller, having thoroughly capitulated to the coal operators' contract demands, has also said he will knuckle under to Taft-Hartley, "...it is the law and I will do what the court tells me to do." And why not? For five years he has done everything else the courts, Labor Department and government told him to do.

No matter how Carter and the bosses slice it, they know they have little chance to beat the miners unless they crack the

WORKERS VANGUARD

tremendous solidarity of the union. That explains the manner in which Carter invoked Taft-Hartley. On the one hand, he announced that he was seeking a court order that would enable individual operators to offer the higher wage scale agreed to in the recent contract as an inducement for miners to return to work. On the other hand, his announced intention to make hundreds of local union officers liable for prosecution under Taft-Hartley was designed to spark separatist back-to-work movements by picking off weaker locals. To remove any ambiguity on this score, federal officials have argued that if only 15 percent of UMWA miners returned to work, the economy could continue "indefinitely" without worsening qualitatively.

But the great strength of the UMWA is precisely its solidarity and militancy. Carter's two-bit bribes, threats against local officials and tough talk about backing up the injunction with whatever force is necessary to guarantee that "lives and property are fully protected" will only drive miners to close ranks even tighter. No one familiar with the union's militant history of defying Taft-Hartley and aware of the powerful impetus given the morale of the miners by the massive rejection vote could believe it likely that the miners will return to work under Carter's order.

In the likely event that miners refuse to comply with Taft-Hartley, there is a strong possibility that Carter will resort to getting Congressional authorization to seize the mines. Under such a scheme, the miners will temporarily become employees of the government.

Many miners share the illusion that if they return to work under the conditions of the 1974 contract, with the government running the mines, that Carter will agree to a contract that is qualitatively better than previous offers. But that is dead wrong. Miners must not be misled into relying on the Democratic Party and the capitalist state. The Carter administration has endorsed every sweetheart contract proposal, and in fact, was effectively the *author* of the last stinking deal that the miners voted down. And now the peanut millionaire has invoked the hated anti-union Taft-Hartley act.

Miners must not confuse a temporary government seizure with the demand for expropriation of the mines. Nationalization without compensation to the bosses is a class-struggle demand to *kick out* the parasitic coal operators, who have historically been among the most vicious and brutal employers. The nationalization demand, an official slogan of the UMWA in the 1920's, is directed against the capitalist system and the right of the bosses to exploit the working masses.

On the other hand, although the operators often raise a hue and cry against federal seizure because they are deprived of the right to make unilateral decisions, none of their *fundamental* interests have ever been injured under such a scheme. To the contrary, it has simply meant government operation of the mines in the interests of the operators. The bosses are not kicked out at all. They are simply "hired" on by the government as managers, they continue to receive all the profits of the operation, etc.

When Roosevelt seized the mines in 1943 in an effort to stop a UMWA strike against the wartime wage freeze, he did not offer the miners a penny. When Truman seized the mines three years later, he initially rejected the key UMWA demand, for establishment of a welfare and retirement fund, as illegal. It was only when the miners went out on strike against the government that they were able to win their demands.

Whether or not the Carter government orders a seizure of the mines, the guiding principle for the miners must remain the same: "No contract, no work!" If the miners stand firm and refuse to submit to either Carter's strikebreaking injunctions or

inducements to return to work under schemes like government seizure, then there will be very little that the coal bosses and Carter can effectively do to keep the UMWA from achieving victory!

UMWA Bureaucracy on the Rocks

The UMWA bureaucracy is now in shambles. Not only Miller and his flunkies but also two-thirds of the union's 39-member Bargaining Council, composed of district leaders, caved in to government pressure and approved a Labor Department-written contract, which the ranks have thrown back by better than a two-to-one vote. Even many of the "dissidents" went into the coalfields to urge ratification, afraid to risk their careers by bucking Carter. The test of any leadership is its ability to respond to great social struggles such as the current coal strike. The United Mine Workers bureaucracy has flunked this test spectacularly, leaving a gaping vacuum of leadership in the union.

This must be an object lesson for all workers, not only coal miners. The particularly dramatic fashion in which the UMWA tops have flamed out is conditioned by the fragility of the Miners For Democracy leadership, imposed by the U.S. Labor Department, as well as by the thoroughgoing incompetence of Arnold Miller himself. But in essence the pro-capitalist politics of Miller & Co.—their support to the Democratic Party, subservience to the capitalist government, etc.—are the same as that of the brittle AFL-CIO/UAW/Teamsters bureaucracy that lords it over the rest of the trade-union movement.

The first casualty in the UMWA strike was Arnold Miller. When he tried to palm off the outrageous February 6 contract proposal on the membership, he lost whatever credibility he had in the union. From that time onward, he has simply been a figurehead; the Labor Department and federal officials have conducted all the key negotiating with other UMWA officials behind Miller's back. Miller did not dare go to the coalfields to campaign for the last contract; in fact, he even skipped out of the official briefing session.

Miller's demise activated a slew of district-level bureaucrats who sniffed an opportunity to advance their own careers, with the blessing of the Carter government. In short order Labor Secretary Marshall was able to line up a number of these officials who proved willing to prostitute themselves by using their "anti-Miller" credentials to sell a modified version of the February 6 proposal to the members. Three of these "dissident" bureaucrats—Ken Dawes of District 12 (Illinois), Tom Gaston of District 23 (western Kentucky); and Jack Perry of District 17 (central West Virginia)—were added to the union's negotiating team at the urging of the government.

But the agreement that Dawes, Perry and Gaston had contracted to sell stank—and the entire membership knew it! Hardly any miners ended up voting for this contract because they liked it; of those who confessed to having supported it, most said they backed it because they feared government reprisals. The contract was a pure takeaway deal, aimed at crippling the right to strike so as to strangle militancy. In addition it took major steps backward—or reaffirmed such steps taken in 1974—in the areas of health, safety and pensions. As one young miner put it dramatically, "If ever I voted for this contract, [my father] would come up out of his grave and beat hell out of me. I have to get back the things my father fought for or his life didn't mean anything" (*Washington Post*, 4 March).

So Dawes & Co. were in trouble from the start. In Springfield, Illinois loyal Dawes bureaucrats, including former International head of organizing, John Cox, launched a hysterical goon attack

against three local union leaders who opposed the contract. Western Pennsylvania District 5 head Lou Antal, a long-time confederate of Arnold Miller and favorite of the reformist Communist Party who voted *for* the original proposal, tried to picture the opponents to the contract as a small group of malcontents. The agreement, said Antal, was "the best contract we could get ... everybody's greedy and wants more ... how can you get more if there isn't any more."

But it didn't work. As the first load of contracts was shipped into the coalfields, it was fed to bonfires by militant miners. District officials who attempted to "explain" the details of the contract were mercilessly heckled by the rank and file. It quickly became evident that there was no active support for the contract, and union leaders from vice president Sam Church to Ohio District 6 head John Guzek began to talk about a would-be "silent majority" that would provide the necessary margin for ratification. By the time the votes were tallied, it was not only Arnold Miller who had covered himself with slime in his haste to do the bidding of the Carter administration. The contract was voted down by substantial margins in each of the districts of Perry, Gaston, Dawes, Antal and Guzek—and the ambitions of these aspiring labor fakers have probably been thwarted ... at least for a while.

As an amusing aftermath to the contract rejection, the Washington, D.C. public relations firm of Maurer, Fleisher, Zon & Anderson that had been representing the union announced that it was quitting. After Miller fired most of his staff last fall on charges of insubordination, the U.S. government dug up this outfit to supply the technical personnel to keep Miller's UMWA operation going. During the ratification procedure, the UMWA leadership had paid this firm thousands of dollars from union funds to finance a high-pressure advertising campaign designed to sell the contract to the membership. Upon quitting, a spokesman for the firm announced, "There is nothing more we can do for them." And that is no overstatement. Selling the UMWA leadership and its policies to the rank and file has become a virtually impossible task.

Thus, as the coal miners approach the most critical juncture in their titanic battle against the coal bosses and the government, the union is in disarray and effectively leaderless. The answer for miners is not to unite behind some phony reformer like Miller or Dawes, who will only betray again. Their response must be, instead, to demand the immediate convening of a special convention. Throw out Miller and the rest of the hacks like Dawes, Perry and Antal from the Bargaining Council! Elect a new bargaining council firmly committed to such fighting demands as the unlimited right to strike, full medical benefits, union control over safety, and equalization of pensions at the highest levels! Commit the union to a policy of no contract, no work—no buckling under to Taft-Hartley or other strikebreaking measures! Against any break-away return-to-work movements!

Down with Government Strikebreaking and Bureaucratic Treachery!

In the aftermath of Carter's imposition of Taft-Hartley, the bourgeoisie is attempting to whip up frenzied hatred against the miners. Yesterday Energy Secretary James Schlesinger motivated strikebreaking measures by claiming that if the miners are still on strike in April, over three million workers will be laid off in coal-dependent areas. The bourgeois media are shedding crocodile tears over factory women laid off their jobs in Indiana or pensioners shivering in their Ohio homes. Needless to say, the capitalist press is pinning the blame for the current crisis on the coal miners and not on the blood-sucking, profit-gouging oil, steel and utility companies,

among the largest and most widely hated of the monopoly trusts and the principal operators of the coal mines.

What gall! For three months the coal miners have been striking on behalf of the entire U.S. working class. Now that the stockpiles are depleted and it is beginning to have an effect as an economic strike, suddenly Jimmy Carter is "concerned" about the thousands of laid-off workers. It is *good* that they should be laid off, for this means the bosses are finally feeling the squeeze. So they will have to live on food stamps and unemployment checks for a while—after all, the miners are fighting for them, too. It would be much *better* if the steel workers, auto workers and other key industrial sectors affected by the coal strike would *walk out*, because so far the miners have borne the brunt alone.

The bourgeoisie's concern for the laid-off workers and shivering pensioners is touching. As soon as their profits are affected, the country's rulers become concerned for the plight of widows and orphans. But the widows they are concerned with are the Park Avenue millionaires raking in fabulous sums from their investment portfolios. To prevent a dip in *their* incomes they will impose Taft-Hartley, seize the mines, send in troops. As for the hardships experienced by the coal strikers these are of no concern to Carter and his class, for the miners are their enemies. The working class must take the opposite view. Our attitude toward industry affected by the coal strike is unambiguous: shut it down!

While the class lines are being sharply drawn, AFL-CIO head George Meany is on record declaring that "Taft-Hartley is the law of the land" and he "will not criticize the President" for invoking it. Furthermore, both Meany and United Auto Workers (UAW) head Doug Fraser have called for immediate resumption of coal production under federal seizure of the mines. This disgusting stab in the back is sufficient grounds for ousting these vile misleaders. Mass labor protest rallies denouncing the imposition of Taft-Hartley must repudiate these labor traitors.

Millions of American workers sympathize with the struggle of the miners. They realize that the miners' fight is their fight, that if the miners lose, their own bosses will turn the screws of exploitation. In the face of government strikebreaking, militants must redouble their demands that transport, power and steel workers hot-cargo coal shipments! Steel workers—groaning under the weight of mass layoffs, speed-up and the no-strike ENA—must fight for a joint strike with the miners and prepare to mobilize their ranks to aid miners in shutting down scab mines.

Trade unionists! The militant miners are waging a fight whose success will be a victory for all workers. If the miners win it will be a smashing blow against the bosses and the government's attack on all unions and could unlock the hold that the trade-union bureaucracy exercises on the labor movement. If they lose it will be a demoralizing setback for 20 million union members throughout the country and millions more who need to be organized. *Don't let the miners stand alone! Stop Jimmy Carter's strikebreaking!*

Mass protest meetings bringing together thousands of unionists from every industry and trade must be called to oppose Taft-Hartley and any moves to enforce it. Central labor councils, Teamsters and Auto Workers headquarters should be besieged by demands for strike action to support the miners. Special union meetings should be held to make the same demands. Two-day protest strikes *now* in defense of the miners would send tremors of fear through every capitalist and bourgeois politician in the country. *Victory to the miners' strike! Down with government strikebreaking!* ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

**For Proletarian Opposition
to the Union of the Left!**

No to New Popular Front in France!

by the Ligue Trotskyste de France

Ten years after having relentlessly derailed the general strike of 1968, the Stalinist and social-democratic fakery are in a position to get into "power"—the power to break strikes and social struggles, to institute a left austerity plan and to administrate the armed forces of French imperialism "on all fronts," i.e., against the USSR degenerated workers state. The power they seek is that of a bourgeois popular-front government. Yet the masses of workers and the generation of militants radicalized by [the events of May] 1968 are almost unanimously applauding the advent of this popular front as a "step forward" for the working class. Those militants who in 1968 fought street battles in the Latin Quarter and cursed the Communist Party [PCF] in between fighting off attacks by the CRS [riot police], those workers who tore up their CGT [the Stalinist-led General Confederation of Labor] union cards in disgust, incensed by the PCF's dedicated efforts to save Gaullist capitalism, all have been betrayed by the centrist usurpers—the LCR [Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire] of Krivine/Bensaid, the OCI [Organisation Communiste Internationaliste] of Lambert/Just and the Lutte Ouvrière [LO] of Arlette [Laguiller]. Every one of them promised a revolutionary opposition to the reformists, yet today can offer only "critical" support to the popular front, calling for votes for the PCF and PS [Socialist Party]. In contrast, the revolutionaries of the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF) say: *Comrades, don't vote for the candidates of the popular front!*

The PCF and PS candidates are candidates of the popular front; their alliance with the Left Radicals and their endorsement of the Common Program, neither of which has been questioned for a single moment throughout the whole PCF-PS polemic, are the guarantee given in advance by the reformist workers parties that they will not overstep the bounds acceptable to their bourgeois partners. Voting or not voting for the workers parties in a popular front is not a tactical question—it is a granite-hard principle. Trotsky's call for Committees of Action in France during the 1930's was at that time the programmatic means by which the workers could have been mobilized to break with the Popular Front and the PCF and SFIO [social-democratic] leaderships. But today the working class

is not in the streets as it was in 1934-36, nor is it occupying the factories; and refusal to vote for the PCF and the PS as long as they are committed to the popular front [Union of the Left] is thus the *only* way to express unambiguous proletarian hostility and *opposition* to the popular front.

Today that is the political position around which it is possible to mobilize the workers against their traitorous leaderships and split and destroy the reformist parties. The LCR, OCI and LO spit upon the French workers' aspirations to take power—*working-class* power. By calling for a vote for the PCF/PS, the centrists call directly for the popular front to take power. But when the workers mobilize to insist that their demands be fulfilled by "their" government, they will find the popular front blocking their path. Suffice it to recall the words of [PCF leader Maurice] Thorez in 1936 when he was leading the Popular Front against the workers: "One must know how to end a strike."

Caught up in their worship of the accomplished fact, the "far left" centrists cannot even imagine that revolutionary program can possibly split the reformist parties. The pseudo-Trotskyists of the LCR and the OCI, hard on the heels of the popular front since 1972, have attempted to sanctify their sweeping right turn by putting on a spectacular and hysterical campaign for "unity" between the PCF and PS before the elections, for fear that the reformists may endanger their own electoral victory. With cries of "defeat the right" and "Giscard out," the LCR and the OCI have adopted the excuses traditionally offered by the Stalinists to justify popular fronts. In Spain, for instance, when the Popular Front was the last obstacle preventing the armed revolutionary masses from overthrowing the bourgeoisie, the Stalinists under the slogan "Finish off Franco first, and we'll make a revolution afterwards," organized the bloody defeat of the Spanish revolutionary proletariat.

Notwithstanding their difference in tone, the LCR and the OCI are forced to admit that they are both today putting forward the same slogans: "unity," "désistement" [the demand on the PCF to withdraw its candidates on the second round in order to throw votes to the leading popular front candidate] and "vote PCF/PS." So it is no surprise to



French workers march against inflation and Giscard's economic policies, December 1973.



Union of the Left leaders Georges Marchais (Communist), left, and François Mitterrand (Socialist).

find that the OCI and the LCR, both of which long ago abandoned the struggle to build a Leninist party, have now come to share two of the fundamental conclusions of opportunism: first, that the present period is so "new," with such "different" relationships of forces from those characterizing the period analyzed by Lenin and Trotsky that the Trotskyist program must be modified. The OCI states it clearly in *Fronts populaires d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* [Popular Fronts of Yesterday and Today]: all previous popular fronts demobilized the working class, but this popular front will necessarily open the road to revolutionary struggle. The other conclusion consists in the so-called necessity to "go through this experience" with the workers.

The whole lesson of Lenin's struggle to build the Third International during the patriotic wave of the First World War, and Trotsky's fight to assemble the cadres of the Fourth International, is that in order to have a strategy making

possible the gathering of a revolutionary vanguard capable of leading the masses to power, one must have the hardness and the Marxist perspicacity to defend principles, even when that means swimming against the stream. As Trotsky explained to those who claimed that the revolutionary program was not accessible to the masses:

"When the opportunists raise the fact that the masses are not mature, it is usually only in order to mask their own immaturity. All the masses will never be mature under capitalism. The different strata of the masses mature at different times. The struggle for the 'maturing' of the masses begins with a minority, with a 'sect,' with a vanguard. In history there is not, nor can there be, any other way."

Letter to Daniel Guérin,
10 March 1939

Centrists Tail the Popular Front

When reporting upon its interventions in Socialist Party meetings (*Information* continued on page 10)