

CUBA: Evaporation of a Myth

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Election Babble Begins

Ford Budget Debate Covers Real Attacks

Opening salvos are being fired for the upcoming elections in November. In January, President Ford delivered his State of the Union message and proposed his budget for the upcoming year. These stand as a statement of the political program he will be running on for the election.

In response to his nationwide address, the Democrats immediately got into the act. Two days after Ford's speech, Senator Muskie went on TV and gave the official Democratic Party response. And other Presidential hopefuls like Humphrey have been in the forefront in criticizing Ford's program.

All this highly publicized campaigning, which will be in the limelight even more in the upcoming months, is taking place at a time when the capitalist system is in its worst crisis since the '30s. Unemployment, already massive and long term, continues at very high levels. Prices tower over wages and millions find it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. At the same time the struggle of the people is growing.

Given this situation all the politicians are pretending to speak to the problems of the people and to offer solutions. Things are so bad that both the Democrats and the Republicans have been forced to admit there is a crisis and to base their campaign promises largely around questions like unemployment and inflation. Each one would have us believe that he alone is different and that electing him and implementing his programs will solve these problems.

But while all the Democrats and Republicans try to sell their programs under different advertising signs, they all have the same class content. They reflect attempts by the bourgeoisie to solve its profit crisis at our expense. The "solutions" offered by the politicians boil down to two: efforts to get more profits by increasing the exploitation of the working class in this country and preparations for a war to defend and expand U.S. investments overseas.

Despite their promises to solve the crisis, these solutions can only lay the basis for still deeper crises and more misery and impoverishment for the masses in the future.

Jobs

One of the hottest issues this election year is the question of jobs. What do the Democrats and Republicans say about this?

President Ford starts out saying "Five out of six jobs in this country are in private industry." "Common sense tells us this is the place to look for more jobs, and to find them faster." So what he proposes is more government money pumped into private industry. Businesses would be given a big tax break—totaling \$6.2 billion in 1977 alone, and probably more in later years. One result: the Treasury Department would be paying \$10 out of every \$100 invested in new machinery and equipment. Ford says this will stimulate private industry and create more jobs.

At the same time Ford proposes a direct attack on workers collecting unemployment benefits. Job training, employment and labor services would be slashed 25.7%. Unemployment benefits would be chopped down from a maximum of 65 weeks to 39 weeks. All this to save the government money and to force the unemployed into the supposedly newly opening jobs.

This program is designed to stimulate only

one kind of "recovery"—a recovery of the profits for the capitalists. But this can only be at the expense of the working class.

New machinery, financed in part by government tax breaks, will be used to get even more work out of fewer and fewer workers. Forcing some of the unemployed off unemployment benefits will tend to drive wages down for the entire working class and be used by the capitalists to increase speedup and general labor discipline on the job. The idea that this government give-away for the purpose of exploitation will somehow result in more jobs is nothing but the old 1930's "trickle-down" theory of President Herbert Hoover, which came to be despised and hated by millions of workers in the Great Depression.

An example of what this kind of "recovery" pro-

gram means in practice is the auto industry. The auto companies are "recovering," with production in many places being pushed back up to the level of September, 1974 (before all the huge 1975 layoffs). But this is being accomplished mainly by grinding speedup. The auto companies are calling back as few workers as possible.

The end result of Ford's job program will be the same. There is no guarantee of more jobs. There is only the attempt to increase the profits of the capitalists through even more exploitation of the working class.

The policies proposed by the Democrats for jobs, while slightly different than Ford's, have the same content. They make the question of jobs the main thrust of their attack on Ford. So what do they offer as an alternative?

Democrats—More of Same

Despite their loud attacks on the Republicans, the Democrats want basically the same tax cut to stimulate profits in private industry. In fact the Democratic controlled Congress already has passed a temporary law giving corporations a 7% tax cut until 1977. So right from the start, the Democrats and Republicans agree on the same scheme which increases the profits of the capitalists at the expense of the working class.

Their "big" difference with the Republicans boils

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Battle Brews In Garment Industry

The opening battle was signaled on February 2, in this year's contract struggle between clothing manufacturers and over 200,000 garment workers in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union and some other smaller unions. The ILGWU leadership announced that a settlement had been reached for 55,000 New York and East Coast workers with employers' associations of the Women's Dress Manufacturers.

Union officials called the settlement "revolutionary" and predicted it would be a pacesetter for ILGWU contracts covering about 60,000 workers yet to be negotiated with women's coat and suit manufacturers (expires May 31) and women's knit goods manufacturers (expires July 31). The central feature of this so-called "landmark agreement" is a plan to give the bosses greater profits through stepped up productivity at the expense of the workers' wages, conditions and jobs.

Although the union leadership may have enough control to block a rejection of their settlement this time, it is clear that they have gotten a lot stronger reaction against the contract than they counted on. As of February 13, none of the locals had okayed the contract, and a similar agreement was recently voted down by Local 102 garment truckers at their first meeting.

Garment workers have expressed bitter opposition and anger at the sell-out terms. The Garment Workers Committee of the United Workers Organization (UWO), the garment section of the new area wide workers organization in New York and northern New Jersey, has launched a campaign to vote down the contract and to build the fight against the union leadership

attempts to impose this "pacesetter" on upcoming contracts.

Rank and file workers are sick and tired of working for pennies in garment sweatshops. There has been strong support for the Committee's proclamation that a "no" vote in each local is not only a vote against a lousy contract but a call to all other workers voting on their contract. It is also a statement for the contract and battles to come that garment workers intend to fight the rotten wages and lousy conditions that the company and the union are trying to jam down their throats. The struggles around these contracts are vital in building a strong rank and file organization among garment workers, as part of a class wide movement against the capitalists.

Intense Exploitation

For generations the garment industry has been infamous for its vicious exploitation of workers. But the struggles of garment workers against miserable wages and sweatshop conditions have marked some of the proudest moments of the history of our class. The uprising of 20,000 women shirtwaist makers on March 8, 1908, sparked strikes by tens of thousands of New York garment workers in the following years and built the base for the ILGWU. This strike was the inspiration for communists and other workers throughout the world to proclaim March 8 International Women's Day.

Today the exploitation in the garment industry is no less intense than it was at the turn of the century. Garment workers are among the lowest paid industrial workers. The system of piece work is ram-

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The Detroit busing plan is a sharp attack and was widely opposed by the people of Detroit. The demonstration above was organized by the Committee to Fight the Attacks on our Schools on January 26, the day the plan went into effect.

Kids Get Dirty Deal

People Resist Detroit Busing Plan

On January 26 the Detroit school busing plan started. Since then the ruling class has been crowing over how it went over "without a hitch." Contrary to this lie, the working class in Detroit hated the busing plan and put up a real fight against it. Fighting this attack was no easy task—the ruling class went all out to push it through. They offered the working class two alternatives, either take their poison peacefully, or end up fighting each other. Organizations like PRO Detroit, crammed full of people like Gerstenberg, ex-head of GM, other big Detroit financiers and former and present mayors, and all their mouthpieces, went on and on about how they "didn't want to have another Boston." The working class, however, had no intention of fighting each other. But they had plenty of fight when it came to the busing plan.

The Detroit busing plan bused 26,000 kids and "reassigned" 30,000 others. The plan has been in and out of the courts for 5 years, when, in the spring of '75, it was announced that it would be implemented. Workers of all nationalities spontaneously said "No way!"—they didn't want their kids bused and this plan had nothing to do with equal or quality education. The ruling class was forced to back off and regroup and then come right back with a plan called "reassignment" instead of busing, and all frosted up with "components" that were supposed to make the plan for "quality and equal education."

But the ruling class had neither the intention nor the ability to deal with either of these. As in Boston and Louisville, their busing plan was aimed at dividing the working class, getting us fighting over the shrinking "educational pie" at a time when we need unity. At the same time this busing plan especially was a cover for planned attacks and cutbacks in the schools.

A look at Detroit tells something about where this plan is coming from. The crisis has hit deep, struggle and resistance is brewing among the workers of all nationalities. Unemployment is everywhere and for youth especially, there are no jobs. They city has been cutting back in services and offering wage cuts and layoffs to city workers. And in the schools, education is going from bad to worse throughout the city, with schools in many Black areas even harder hit.

In the midst of all this the ruling class has slated several schools to be shut altogether under the plan. All school construction has been halted since the courts eagerly agreed to a 1971 NAACP suit demanding that no money be spent on construction to insure there would be enough money for busing. In one neighborhood on the east side of Detroit, where parents had gotten together and fought to get a school built, funds were cut off and the new "school" stands as an empty shell. A much needed addition to Northwest High School was also curtailed. This is how busing is supposed to bring better education to the children of Detroit.

As for equality, the busing plan had nothing to do with that either. The only equality the ruling class is talking about is *equal misery*, grabbing the opportunity to drive *all* of the children's education into the dirt.

Neither integration nor real equality will be given

to the working class through court orders. The working class fights for integration by opposing discrimination in housing, the realtors' and banks' policies of "red-lining," demanding new schools be built in areas accessible to children of different nationalities and adjusting boundaries of school districts where such adjustment corresponded to the interests and desires of the families affected.

United Against the Plan

PRO Detroit and their class wanted desperately to get this plan over and to make Detroit an example of the working class taking their busing plan lying down. The truth is there was a lot of struggle, both spontaneous and organized. Hundreds of parents came out to schoolboard meetings to oppose the plan. At the Franklin school in a multinational neighborhood, Black, white and Latino parents fought like hell to keep their kids from being "reorganized." At one meeting when the schoolboard tried to put them down and was whining about how the busing issue was dividing the community, one mother shouted, "We're not divided, we're *united* against this busing plan."

In Region One, which is the central city district and mainly, but not entirely, Black, some of the worst schools in the city are located. These schools, according to the ruling class, are not being reorganized or bused, but many schools are slated to close and four already have, forcing the children to walk long distances to school. For the most part these schools are old and should be closed but only when new and better ones are built in their place. When the parents in Region One got wind of these attacks,



Picket line at the Maybury School, January 19.

hundreds attended meetings demanding that their schools be kept open. They circulated petitions demanding the same. Chrysler has its money down on the property for at least two of the closing schools.

When Black students who would have gone to Pershing, a predominantly Black high school on the north side, were told they were being "reassigned" to Northern, in the central city, 100% Black and one of the two worst schools in the city, hell broke loose. Three hundred outraged parents turned out to a community meeting to protest. One angry parent said, "The NAACP has a lot of nerve saying this is about better education."

Because of actions like these, when the final busing order came down it was forced to include some concessions to the struggle of the masses.

The Committee to Fight the Attacks on Our Schools (CFAS), an organization of working people of all nationalities, played an important role in building the struggle of the workers against the busing plan. The committee's slogans—Stop the busing plan! Fight attacks on our schools!—became the slogans of hundreds of workers. The committee wrote a broadsheet to take out broadly among the masses. It said, in part,

"The rich class tries to cover up that they are the cause of inequality—and segregation. They own the companies that drive Black people into the lowest paying jobs. It's their banks and insurance companies that "red-line" whole neighborhoods. It's their real-estate companies that live by block-busting and discrimination. They own the housing and services of the inner city that are in total decay.

"They try to play up the differences between the schools. Everyone knows that the inner-city schools are the worst of a bad lot. But the fight of the people is to make *all* the schools better, not equally lousy. Yes, there are differences in Detroit schools, but compare any Detroit schools with one of the exclusive private schools the rich send their kids to with money they stole from our sweat.

"No, the deteriorating conditions in our schools aren't the fault of the people, Black or white. The ruling class throws out some measly crumbs and tells us 'that's all there is—fight over it.' But it is a war between *us* and *them*, and in a war it is deadly to think of friends as enemies and enemies as friends."

10,000 copies were passed out at plants, shopping centers and schools. Several thousand signatures were collected on a petition demanding an end to the busing plan and calling on people to unite and fight to stop it. Leaflets, petitions and bumper stickers were taken door to door in some neighborhoods. Committee members were out at the schools when parents dropped off and picked up the children, talking to them about organizing to fight, sometimes sending home leaflets with the children. The committee went to schoolboard meetings, held several picket lines, and all the time put the heat on the ruling class. Workers came forward to join the committee because of its fighting line and its call for *all* workers to unite.

Organizing to Fight

Workers would pick up the CFAS flyer and say "these are the people we need to get in touch with." The committee, along with people from the community, held neighborhood meetings in several areas, some with as many as 35-40 people. These meetings were "speak bitterness" sessions and got down about how to fight the plan, which unleashed the initiative of the participants. From there they went out all over their neighborhoods to spread the word that we could fight the busing plan. People went to the schools to which their schools were paired, to pass out committee literature and talk to the parents about getting organized. They came back with the same message, "They don't like it either, but how can we fight it?"

CFAS led a one day school boycott in southwest Detroit, a mainly white and Latino working class neighborhood, which was 95% effective. Sixty parents came out in 5 degree weather to picket the school. The first committee newsletter carried news of the struggle and was taken out broadly to workers. This newsletter carried up to date information about the struggle to stop the busing plan and tried to answer important questions arising in the course of struggle. Although the busing plan has begun, the newsletter continues to be a force among the masses in spreading the committee's line and the struggle. Even neighborhood kids went door to door, and put the newsletter into their paper routes. In all there were about 17,000 newsletters in three editions that have been distributed.

In the southwest and on the east side hotlines were set up, in addition to the main CFAS hotline, and they rang off the hook with parents and other workers calling to discuss how to stop the busing plan.

Where the committee's line did get out, it was enthusiastically picked up by the masses. If it had been able to get out even more broadly, the committee would have been able to play a greater role in leading

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Cuba: The Evaporation of a Myth

From Anti-Imperialist Revolution To Pawn of Social-Imperialism

Cuba's role in the world today makes it increasingly important to expose the class nature of its leaders and the real character of Cuban society.

In words, Cuba is socialist. Its thousands of troops fighting in Africa under Soviet leadership are said to be there to advance the cause of proletarian internationalism. But the American paid for mercenaries fighting there also wave banners of freedom and "anti-imperialism." Obviously it is necessary to go beneath the appearance of things to understand what's really going on in the world. To understand a country we have to ask what class is in power there. And to understand a country's politics we have to ask what class these politics serve.

The revolution led by Fidel Castro in 1959 was a tremendous step forward for Cuba, clearing away the rule of the U.S. imperialists and the Cuban landlords, dependent capitalists and all their parasites, pimps and gangsters. Because of this, and because of the revolutionary goals that Castro and those around him proclaimed, many people all over the world looked to Cuba for inspiration and guidance in their struggles.

But the class outlook, political line and methods that the leadership promoted have led to nothing but setbacks and defeat everywhere in the world they've been taken up. They have proved wrong and harmful to the development of the revolutionary struggle.

In Cuba, too, the revolution has turned into its opposite. Cuba today is as much a colony of the Soviet Union as it once was of the U.S., its economy dominated by sugar, and its working people wage-slaves laboring to pay off an endless mortgage to the USSR. The leaders of the anti-imperialist revolution of 1959 have now themselves become a new dependent capitalist class.

The question of Cuba is particularly sharp right now for two reasons. Internationally, the Soviet Union, which is itself an imperialist country trying to upset the applecart of U.S. domination in order to grab up the apples for itself, is making increasing use of Cuba. It uses Cuba as both a carrot and a stick. In Angola, Cuban troops spearhead the Soviet drive to conquer that country under the cover of opposing U.S. imperialism (which is trying to do the same), while the Soviets point to Cuba as an example of how Soviet "aid" has bought socialism for Cuba and offer the same deal to Angola and other countries. This combination of "anti-imperialist" rubles and "anti-imperialist" tanks is key to the Soviet social-imperialists' efforts to replace the U.S. as the world's main imperialist power, and for that Cuba is invaluable to the Soviets.

Humble Words at Party Congress

Within Cuba, the first congress of the country's revisionist "Communist" Party in December, 1975, marked the economic and political consolidation of Cuba into the Soviet bloc and the formal emergence of capitalist relations into the sunlight in Cuba, after years of being hidden under "revolutionary" rhetoric.

This congress ratified Cuba's new "Economic Planning and Management System," sanctifying "the profitability criterion" as the country's highest principle. It also featured a long self-criticism by Castro for not coming around to the Soviet's way of thinking sooner, a "self-criticism" in which he tries to justify Cuba's present situation and bows down so low before the New Tsars that it serves as an outstanding indication of Cuba's present neo-colonial status.

"Had we been humbler, had we not had excessive self-esteem," Castro explained, "we would have been able to understand that revolutionary theory was not sufficiently developed in our country and that we actually lacked profound economists and scientists of Marxism to make really significant contributions to the theory and practice of building socialism. . ." (Castro's speeches and other congress documents can be found in *Granma*, the official Cuban publication.)

Humble words indeed from the Cuban leadership who, not that many years ago, were portraying themselves as the lighthouse of revolution for the Third World and elsewhere in contrast to what they considered the "conservatism" of the revisionists, and what they slandered as the "dogmatism" of the genuine Marxist-Leninists.

In the 1960s the Cuban leadership had actually become humbler and humbler in serving as a Soviet political errand boy whenever it was necessary to pay the rent—for instance, by attacking China and Mao Tse-tung in 1966, backing the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and so on. But at that time the Cubans did try to maintain some distance between

themselves and the Soviets, if only to maintain Cuba's prestige and "ultra-revolutionary" image at a time when the new Soviet capitalist ruling class was beginning to smell worse and worse to a growing number of revolutionary-minded people.

But now the Soviet strings which hold up the Cuban regime have been pulled very tight, and the Cuban leadership is to be more "humble" than ever. Today, Castro says, Cuba's foreign policy is based "in the first place, on staunch friendship with the Soviet Union, the bastion of world progress."

The use to which the Soviets have put the "staunch friendship" of Cuba has changed over the years. In an earlier period the weaker Soviet imperialists' relationship with the U.S. imperialists tended more towards surrender and collaboration. Now with their competition with the U.S. becoming sharper and more violent every day, the Soviets' use of so-called "detente" is mainly as a cover for Soviet aggression and preparations for war—while the U.S. imperialists use it for the same purpose themselves. Times have changed. But it seems *anything* the Soviet rulers want is fine with Cuba.

Castro goes out of his way to make this point unmistakably clear by going back over the 1962 missile crisis, when the USSR rashly set up long-range missiles in Cuba, and then, when challenged by the U.S. imperialists, not only capitulated completely by taking the missiles out, but also promised the U.S. it could inspect Cuba to make sure that they were gone—without asking the Cuban government. At that time, Castro correctly denounced the Soviets for it.

Now, Castro says, he was wrong for "not understanding" that this cowardly use of Cuba as a bargaining chip with the U.S. was "objectively" a "victory for the socialist camp."

But this is not the only crow Castro was forced to eat at the congress. Not only should the Cuban leadership have been "humbler" regarding Soviet foreign policy, they also should have been "applying correctly the main useful experiences in the sphere of economic management" in the Soviet Union.

Laws of Capitalism Govern Cuban Economy

What experience does he mean? That "economic laws" (especially the law of value) "govern socialist construction," and that "money, prices, finances, budgets, taxes, credit, interest and other commodity categories should function as indispensable instruments. . . to decide on which investment is the most advantageous; to decide which enterprises, which units, which collective of workers performs best, and which performs worst, and so be able to take relevant measures" (Speech at Party Congress).

This, Castro claims, is dictated by "reality," but it's not the reality of socialism. The working class must take these laws and categories into account so that it can consciously restrict and limit their sphere of operation and develop the conditions to do away with them once and for all. But socialism can't be governed by the economic laws of capitalism or else there wouldn't be any difference between the two systems! Castro's words here are taken lock, stock and profit margin from recent Soviet economic textbooks—summing up the experience of restoring capitalism in the Soviet Union.

The "new economic system" Castro goes on to describe is based on the same principles that do govern all capitalist countries, especially in the form of state capitalism: that prices be fixed according to the cost of production; that the factories and industries which produce the highest rate of return on their investment should be the areas of most expansion; that the managers of these units should be paid according to their social position and also the profitability of their enterprises; that workers be paid according to the profitability of the enterprises they work for and lose their jobs if production would be cheaper without them; and furthermore, that workers be paid strictly according to their productivity as measured by piecework (which, Castro reported, now determines the wages of 20% of Cuban workers) or by whether or not they meet the production quota set for their jobs—in other words, whether they make rate (this is already in force for 48% of Cuba's workers).

This is truly capitalism in its full glory. Nowhere is this more ugly than when Castro says that he's sorry that there's such a terrible housing shortage in Cuba, but "the revolution hasn't been able to do much" about it—while later revealing that the government is building 14 new tourist hotels and expanding others. Clearly, the consideration isn't what people need, but

what's most profitable. Of course, Castro doesn't call this capitalism, any more than do the present capitalist rulers of the USSR. All the revisionists claim that this kind of thing is just a little more "realistic" version of socialism.

Cuba's \$5 Billion Mortgage

The irony of it is that for many years the Cuban leadership argued that Soviet aid and sugar purchases were allowing them to buy everything they needed to "build socialism and communism simultaneously in Cuba." Now, with the island \$5 billion in hock to the USSR and more dependent on it economically than ever, it's pretty clear that what really happened was exactly the opposite—the USSR was able to buy itself a neo-colony. This development also makes it clearer than ever that the Cuban leadership's strategy had nothing to do with the working class' strategy for building socialism—that *in fact Cuba was never a socialist country*. It raises the question of what kind of revolution Cuba did have and why it was turned into its opposite, so that, far from being socialist, Cuba today has not even won its independence and national liberation.

Petty Bourgeoisie Comes to Power

This isn't the first time that an imperialist power has taken advantage of the Cuban people's struggle for national liberation in order to take over the country for itself. The Soviet rulers' present tricks are nothing new in the world—although painted red, they are fundamentally no different from what the U.S. imperialists have been doing for years.

In 1898, when the Cuban people were on the verge of winning their independence from Spain after many years of fighting, the U.S. stepped in under the pretext of helping Cuba against Spanish colonialism and thereby seized the island as a neo-colony for the U.S. With monopoly capitalism only recently established in the U.S., this was the U.S.'s first imperialist war to open up new areas for the export of American capital and sources of raw materials.

The flood of U.S. investment to Cuba re-enforced the colonial and semi-feudal nature of Cuban society that centuries of Spanish colonialism had created in Cuba. The U.S. imperialists propped up the rule of the landowners in Cuba and created a handful of capitalists dependent on U.S. capital, thus transforming Cuba from a colony of Spain to a neo-colony of the U.S., stifling all possibilities of progress. At the time of the 1959 revolution the system of the ownership of land in Cuba had remained almost unchanged since the days of the Spanish empire, and the country's one-crop economy had long been stagnant.

This system laid the most crushing burden on the urban and rural working class and the landless and small peasants. At the same time, it also held back the fortunes of all but the richest landowners—the small and very weak national bourgeoisie (confined to manufacturing the few things not made by U.S. subsidiaries or imported), and the relatively large urban petty bourgeoisie.

Throughout most of these years, Cuba's workers played a leading role in the country's fight for independence and national liberation, as well as fighting bitterly for their own immediate interests. This reached a high point in the 1930s, when under the leadership of the then existing Communist Party the working class and its allies unleashed a huge wave of strikes and demonstrations, including armed uprisings and the establishment of soviets (revolutionary workers' councils) in the sugar mills.

The existing U.S. puppet government was overthrown, but it was soon replaced by an army coup led by Fulgencio Batista. Although the struggle was very intense for the next several years, the working class was not able to consolidate its advances and eventually was driven back. As some of its previous errors came to the fore, the Communist Party became more and more revisionist. In the 1940s its leadership accepted a partnership in the Batista government, then, when Batista dropped them, crawled into the woodwork, where they remained until the eve of the 1959 revolution. This contributed greatly to the weakening of the workers' movement as a conscious and organized force,

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although the workers never stopped fighting their conditions.

Volatile Petty Bourgeoisie

By the 1950s the petty bourgeoisie had become the most volatile class in Cuba, and the best organized to fight for its interests. Castro's July 26th Movement arose from the urban petty bourgeoisie, 25% of Cuba's population—the tens of thousands of businessmen with no business, salesmen with no sales, teachers with no one to teach, lawyers and doctors with few patients and clients, architects and engineers for whom there was little work, and so on. In its 1956 "Program—Manifesto," it defined itself as "guided by the ideals of democracy, nationalism and social justice, . . . [of] Jeffersonian democracy," and declared, "democracy cannot be the government of a race, class or religion, it must be a government of all the people."

This certainly expressed the outlook of the petty bourgeoisie, with its hatred for the big bourgeoisie that held it down, its repugnance for the revolution of the working class, and its dreams of a "democracy" above classes. Its practical program aimed at restricting the U.S. and the landlords by ending the quota system under which the U.S. controlled Cuban sugar cane production, restricting the domination of the biggest landlords over the medium-sized growers, distributing unused and stolen farmland to the small peasants, and a profit-sharing scheme for urban workers to expand the market for domestic manufactures and new investment.

With this program, Castro and a small group took up arms against the Batista government in the Sierra Maestra mountains, while other young intellectuals and professionals organized resistance in the cities. This war won support from nearly every other class except the tiny handful of people directly tied to the landlords and the U.S. Many workers supported it and joined in. In the fighting itself, the most decisive force was the rural petty bourgeoisie, especially the small peasants for whom armed struggle was the only way to defend their land from the landlords and the army. Made up largely of peasants itself, Batista's army soon began to fall apart.

The Batista government disintegrated after two years of fighting involving only a few hundred armed rebels. In the last months, even the U.S. government dropped some of its support for the Batista government, believing that it was more likely that the July 26th Movement would agree to come to terms than that the Batista government could survive.

Just after seizing power in 1959, Castro went to the U.S. on a "good will tour," declaring in New York, "I have clearly and definitely stated that we are not communists. . . The gates are open for private investment that contributes to the development of Cuba." He even called for a massive U.S. foreign aid program for Latin America, "in order to avoid the danger of communism." But these words weren't enough to reassure the U.S. ruling class.

Despite Castro's proclaimed desire to get along with the U.S. government and the U.S. imperialists' desire to get Castro to support their interests, nothing could change in Cuba without seizing the sugar estates and mills and ending the monopoly American business held there. These were the pillars of the economic and political system that had given rise to the rebellion. To challenge them meant challenging the whole colonial system and its master, but to retreat in the face of them was not possible without abandoning everything.

When Castro proclaimed the first agrarian reform law which limited the size of the biggest estates (many of them owned by U.S. sugar companies), all hell broke loose. The U.S. began applying economic and political pressure to topple the rebel army—which in effect now was the government—and in turn the Cubans began to take over the property of those forces whose interests were opposed to the island's independence. By 1961, the government found itself in possession of key sections of the economy, while the U.S. had imposed an economic blockade. In April, the U.S. launched the futile Bay of Pigs invasion.

Fidel Castro: Secret "Marxist-Leninist"

Early in that year the USSR had sent its first trade delegation to Cuba, and Khrushchev had offered to protect Cuba with Soviet missiles. On May 1, Castro announced that henceforth Cuba would be a socialist country. Later that year he declared that he was and always had been a Marxist-Leninist, explaining, "Naturally if we had stood on the top of Pico Turquino (in the Sierras) when we were a handful of men, and said we were Marxist-Leninists, we might never have gotten down to the plain."

The U.S. imperialists used this development to say that the revolution's leadership had hidden its real intentions all along and came to power under false pretenses—in other words, to find some excuse other than



Cuban prisoners freed from Batista's jails on Jan. 1, 1959 as troops of the July 26th Movement marched into Havana. The masses of Cuban people enthusiastically hailed the revolution that swept the U.S. imperialists and their agents from the island and wanted to tear down the old social order. Instead, the Cuban leadership has ended up maintaining the old class relationships, in a new form, while proclaiming that socialism is being built.

naked self-interest for why they had opposed the Cuban revolution the minute it had touched their property. And they also used Castro's sudden announcement to slander communism, by saying that this was how communists operate, by sneaking their system in through the back door without bothering to tell the masses what's going on, and that communists don't really rely on the masses but operate as "masters of deceit."

The great majority of Cuban workers and peasants were strong supporters of the revolution, and very much in favor of the measures it had taken, such as taking over the estates and mills and guaranteeing small peasants the right to their land (and in many cases giving them more), reducing rent, electricity and other prices, putting thousands of unemployed workers to work constructing hospitals, roads, schools, etc., launching a tremendous literacy campaign, and other steps which removed some of the weight from the masses' backs and allowed their enthusiasm for change to show itself in action. And many were enthusiastic about the idea of going on to socialism.

But socialism is not just an idea, nor a matter of words, nor just a government take-over. It's a social revolution, a revolution in the relations of classes so that the working class is not just the owner of things in theory, but also in practice the actual master of production and society, through the leadership of its own Marxist-Leninist party, and its political rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat. On this basis the working class can lead repeated and successful struggles against the bourgeoisie and in the process it is able to transform material conditions and itself, so as to gradually do away with classes altogether.

This is not the road that Castro and those around him took despite all their rhetoric to the contrary. They had rebelled against the neo-colonial, semi-feudal conditions of old Cuba, but their petty-bourgeois position and outlook which had given rise to the longing for a quick and radical change in their status also gave rise to the ambition to retain—and strengthen—their

privileged position above the masses of workers and peasants. This only capitalism could give them. This same class outlook also caused them to hate and fear the difficult class struggle and long years of hard work that proletarian rule and the real transformation of Cuba would mean. While the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia did hate the ugly features of capitalism, especially as it had oppressed them, they didn't want to change society's division of labor, which had placed them above the masses, free to develop their careers instead of laboring as wage slaves.

In the early years following the revolution, their class position and outlook was manifested in an idealist political line. This line reflected the desire of the petty bourgeois revolutionary intellectuals to see a world without oppression. But it also reflected their contempt and fear for the only force in society that can lead the process of transforming the world, the working class.

This so-called "Cuban line" reflected the impetuosity of the petty bourgeoisie in wanting their "ideal society" right away and without class struggle, especially without the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Cuban leaders talked as if communism was right around the corner and as if the classes were eliminated simply by expropriation of individually owned property.

In fact the essence of utopian socialism, an early form that the idealist world outlook took among the Cuban leaders, is that the building of socialism depends on "enlightened" rulers with the interests of the masses at heart. The Cuban leaders, who viewed themselves as among the most enlightened "saviors" of the masses of all time, believed they could impose their wishes on society. In fact this whole line had great appeal for many revolutionary minded people from the petty-bourgeoisie in this country and around the world who wanted to see a better society but shared the Cuban leadership's view of the working class.

The same "left" political line stemming from the idealism of the petty-bourgeoisie was manifested in the activities of the Cuban leadership in international affairs. They developed the so-called "foco theory" in which small bands of armed men begin waging guerilla struggle in the countryside, and rise up and more or less spontaneously overthrow the old regime, putting the "heroic guerilla" in power.

This is against the experience of every successful communist revolution, which is based on the conscious and organized struggle of the masses. In China, for example, this meant people's war: mobilizing the peasantry, under the leadership of the working class, establishing base areas in the countryside, and waging a protracted war. When Che Guevara tried to put this "foco theory" into practice in Bolivia, he was killed, the whole operation a complete fiasco.

People, Not Things, Are Decisive

Underneath the petty-bourgeois "left" political line and coming more and more to the surface was undisguised revisionism. Instead of mobilizing and relying on the working class to change the actual class relationships that existed in Cuba, to eliminate the warped economy that imperialist plunder had created in Cuba, and on this basis to develop the productive forces, the Cuban leaders looked for something that could substitute for the masses and class struggle. Despite the rhetoric of building the "new man," they more and more based themselves on the line common to all revisionists, that things, not people, are decisive; that in order for their version of "socialism" to triumph in Cuba, productive capacity had to be obtained from

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Castro embraces Khrushchev at the UN in 1960. The Soviets continued to tighten their grip ever since.

Cuba...

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abroad. Their class outlook insured they could never understand that revolutionizing the relations of production is the key to developing the productive forces. Still less could they understand that in Marx's words, the "greatest productive power is the revolutionary class itself." In place of the conscious struggle of the masses the Cuban leaders sought to purchase socialism by mortgaging the economy to the Soviet Union.

Lenin said, "Clearly, in order to abolish classes completely, it is not enough to overthrow the exploiters, the landlords and capitalists, not enough to abolish their rights of ownership; it is necessary also to abolish all private ownership of the means of production, it is necessary to abolish the distinction between town and country, as well as the distinction between manual workers and brain workers. This requires a very long period of time." (*A Great Beginning*)

This is the line of the working class in building socialism and carrying on the revolution for communism. In Cuba it certainly would have meant mobilizing the workers to break down the divisions of labor inherited from the old semi-colonial society. This would especially mean changing the organization of the island, which served the almost single purpose of producing sugar for the imperialist world market. But the Cuban leaders, because of their petty bourgeois position and outlook, rejected this path.

Castro said that the main problem facing the revolution was how "to produce the abundance necessary for communism"—meaning, to him, trading sugar for the means of production and machinery that he felt the working class could never produce by relying on its own efforts. And to do this the Cuban leaders' plan amounted to putting the *substance* of the old relations of production, in somewhat altered form, society's old division of labor and its sugar plantations, to work at top speed to produce the goods to sell to get this wealth. Now the buyer and "provider" was no longer to be the U.S., but the Soviet Union.

Once this line was adopted, the enthusiasm of the masses for changing the old society was increasingly perverted so that the role of the working class, rather than revolutionizing society, was reduced to working hard to produce the necessary cash. Thus the basic capitalist relation of production was preserved and strengthened—the subordination of the working class to production for profit. Rather than a new socialist society, and still less communism, this was, in essence, the same old society with new masters. The workers' role was to work hard. The Cuban leaders more and more became bureaucratic state capitalists dependent on a foreign imperialist power.

Even the revolutionary fervor and desire of the Cuban people to support anti-imperialist struggles, exemplified by their support for the people of Vietnam, was twisted to support Soviet adventures abroad against their U.S. rivals, as in Bangladesh and currently in Angola.

Once the basic political road was taken of purchasing "socialism" instead of relying on and mobilizing the class struggle of the working class and masses which alone could revolutionize society, the basic economic policy of the Cuban revisionists followed as surely as night follows day. The cash that Castro sought could only be obtained by preserving and strengthening the very lopsided and semi-colonial economy that had led to the Cuban revolution in the first place. The production of sugar for sale to the Soviet Union became the basis of economic policy, which all the get-rich-quick schemes, "socialist" proclamations and gimmicks depended on and served. And this economic dependency, in turn, became the basis for the further development of the political line of the Cuban leadership.

Sugar Coated Road To Neo-Colonialism

Sugar had been a curse on Cuba. The U.S. had used its control of the sugar market to control Cuba. The American and Cuban sugar lords had tried to keep the people from growing food on the unused land in order to keep them impoverished and without property, with no choice but to work in the sugar. The sugar lords tied the whole island to producing sugar for export, while this fertile tropical country ended up importing much of its food. This was the most profitable arrangement for the landowners and imperialists. Because food was so expensive, the majority of Cuban workers and peasants ate only rice, beans and roots.

In the first few years of the revolution, as the land and, above all, those who worked it, began to break free of this system, crops were diversified, with sugar production continuing where it had been planted in the past, while other land was used for other crops. These were the years of greatest improvement in the living standards of the masses, as working people and material resources that had been kept idle were freed up. The



Cuba was chained to sugar production under Spanish colonialism, served as a sugar plantation for US imperialism, and today sugar remains the main pillar of the neo-colonial economy under Soviet domination.

development of some industry was initiated and the construction of schools, hospitals and other projects were begun.

In the early 60s the U.S. closed off Cuba's former sugar market, so the purchases by the USSR and China helped Cuba out of a jam. In early 1963, as the economy's advance began to falter and shortages appeared, Castro went to the Soviet Union for talks with Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders. When he came back, he had a new plan. *Instead of diversifying agriculture, Cuba would produce more sugar.*

By then Cuba had borrowed quite a bit from other countries. The USSR offered to substantially increase its loans to Cuba and buy up to five million tons a year of Cuban sugar—more than the country was then producing—at higher than the world market price at that time, so that Cuba could buy goods from the Soviets. The "aid" was the bait, and sugar the hook—and the Cuban leaders swallowed it.

Behind Soviet "Aid"

For the rulers of the Soviet Union this was good business. Having overthrown the rule of the working class in the USSR, these new capitalists were increasingly driven by the laws of imperialism: the need to monopolize sources of raw materials, export capital for the purpose of extracting superprofits and to contend with imperialist rivals for world domination. They saw that in tying Cuba into their imperialist orbit they would be able to extract great wealth out of Cuba over the years and use Cuba as a political tool in their contention with their U.S. rivals.

Like any good dope pusher, the Soviets gave the first samples at a low price. The first couple of years

of "aid" were loaned interest-free, later they began charging 2.5% interest. Their actual rate of profit was much higher than this. In the original agreement, 80% of the USSR's credit and money had to be used for purchasing Soviet products at highly inflated prices. (As in the case of interest rates, once the dependency of Cuba had been established, the Soviets upped the ante, requiring all credit to be used on Soviet products.) According to an author with access to Cuban statistics, the USSR was charging Cuba 11% to 53% more for machinery than the price of comparable machines in the West. And making this robbery even more outrageous, although at first the Soviets paid Cuba more for its sugar than the world market price at the time (you guessed it, they stopped this practice too), they turned around and resold much of this sugar at an even higher price to Eastern Europe.

This is standard Soviet practice throughout the world. *"It is through unequal trade that the Soviet Union realizes the surplus value generated by the export of capital.* In essence, it is little more than a book keeping arrangement as to whether the profit comes back to the USSR in the form of interest or in the form of super-profits from sales *when the sales are tied by trade agreement to the export of capital.*" (From *Red Papers 7: How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union And What This Means for the World Struggle*, emphasis in the original)

But the Soviet Union has much bigger ambitions than mere domination of Cuba. Like all imperialist powers their appetite continually grows and they seek world domination. For the Soviets Cuba represented tremendous political "capital" with which to penetrate other countries in Latin America and throughout the world, by hiding behind Cuba's "revolutionary" image. Because of the tremendous importance of gaining a foothold in Latin America and in hopes of making even greater political (and eventually military) use of Cuba in their struggle with the U.S. for world hegemony, the Soviets were willing to give Cuba a better "deal" than other countries under their grip.

Self Sufficiency Not "Convenient"

The reasoning of the Cuban leadership for mortgaging their country to the Soviets went like this: Cuba had extensive sugar fields and mills, and unused land besides. It had relatively few factories, low grade iron ore and little facilities for making steel. Sugar was very profitable to grow and sell on the international market, whereas diversifying agriculture and building industry would be slow and expensive.

As Castro explained in a speech, "To become self-sufficient in rice...we would have to use 330,000 more acres of irrigated land and invest in them our scarce water supply...Undoubtedly, it wouldn't be convenient for our country to stop producing one and one half million tons of sugar, which is what we could produce on 330,000 acres of irrigated land planted to sugar cane, and which would increase our purchasing power abroad by more than \$150 million, in order to produce on this land, with the same effort, rice valued as \$25 million."

Why not take land out of rice production and plant cane, and use the money to buy rice with a good bit left over? This is the course the government followed with a vengeance. In 1964 Cuba decided to up its production of sugar cane from 3.9 million tons to 10 million tons a year by 1970.

All this made perfect economic sense—very "convenient"—according to capitalist economics.

Objectively, this was a decision to develop Cuba exactly as the U.S. imperialists had developed it—in a lop-

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Although the efforts by the U.S. imperialists to reassert their control over Cuba met with ignominious defeat at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, they have not given up their hopes of someday recapturing Cuba for themselves. Here President Kennedy accepts the banner of the U.S. backed and organized invasion force at the Miami Orange Bowl in 1962. He promised "to return the banner to the brigade in a free Havana."

Important Workers Organization Formed In NY-NJ Area

On January 20, 200 workers met in a day long conference which formed, amid stormy applause, the New York-Northern New Jersey United Workers Organization. The organizing committee for the conference was made up of workers organizations which have grown up in several different industries in the area, like Outlaw in the post office, On the Line in auto, and Temperature's Rising in hospital. These groups, together with individual workers, joined together to form the new United Workers Organization, which will strive to take up all the major questions facing the proletariat and masses, while continuing to have sections in various industries to carry on the struggle there as part of the overall struggle of the class.

The conference was a working conference with a lot of time spent in workshops discussing key battles around which the masses of workers can be mobilized. The UWO is planning aggressive campaigns, which will help make it a real social force in the class and among the masses. There were four workshops—on the fight for jobs, the 1976 contract fights, the New York City crisis, and the capitalists' productivity offensive. The new organization also enthusiastically endorsed and pledged to build for the July 4 Bicentennial demonstration in Philadelphia.

Although just formed, the United Workers Organization is in action already, planning work around layoffs in North Jersey. Three big plants there are slated to close in the near future, runaways, and large scale layoffs are in the works at two others. Metal, electrical and auto workers are all affected, and UWO plans to base the struggle in these industries and help spread it throughout the class.

Individual sections are also moving ahead, like the garment committee which is organizing against the recent ILGWU sellout and in preparation for large contracts this spring. The office workers committee is building support for the strike against a giant productivity drive at Group Health Insurance, and a number of GHI workers have joined UWO. The new united organization has also already been able to move on forming new committees where there had not previously been industry wide organization, like electrical.

The United Workers Organization is the second such organization to be built. The first, the May First Workers Organization (M1WO) in the San Francisco Bay Area is also advancing. It has been holding regular meetings, spreading experience and taking up key questions facing the class like "Buy American," and attacks on childcare. Just this month, M1WO mobilized boldly in Bay Area plants to build a powerful demonstration around indicting the cops who murdered Tyrone Guyton in Oakland. (see page 11)

Both the United Workers Organization and the May First Workers Organization are young organizations, which have been built based in the rising workers movement of the 1970s and are tools for making that movement a *revolutionary* workers movement, which wages every battle as a struggle of our class against the enemy class. Their formation is a powerful step forward along the path charted in the Programme of the RCP: "The proletariat and its Party must set its sights high and aim to build these organizations in every part of the country as a tremendous force for the class struggle." ■

Editorials

The Stronger the Role Of Women - The Stronger Will Be Our Movement

One of the working class' most important holidays is March 8, International Women's Day, which has been celebrated in countries throughout the world ever since 1910. Born in the struggle of working class women against exploitation, this holiday hails the part women have played and are playing in the struggle to change the world and points the finger of blame at the wealthy parasites under whose rule the overwhelming majority of women suffer great oppression. In doing so it shows how this oppression can be ended only with the end of capitalist rule and the construction of socialism and communism. In short, in the struggle for this bright future—the stronger the role of women, the stronger will be our movement.

Women have played an increasingly strong role in every movement against oppression and most importantly in the growing workers movement. As women, like the great majority of people, resist the increasing assaults of the crisis-ridden rich, they are more and more breaking through the obstacles the capitalists have maintained to the participation of women in the struggle against them. These obstacles are found both in the actual conditions that exist for women in capitalist society and in the ideological poison the capitalists spew out to perpetuate these conditions and to prevent the unity of the masses by promoting divisions between men and women.

As the Programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party says, "Women are victims of discrimination and inequality in almost every aspect of society—employment, education, and in legal, financial and other spheres. And, central to their oppression, women are bound to the household and its drudgery by tradition and the organization of society itself."

At the same time, 47% of American women of working age, most still carrying the responsibility of raising a family, are in the workforce. This is ten percent more than in World War 2, when "Rosie the Riveter" took over for the men in the armed forces, and it has created conditions for greater unity and power within the ranks of the proletariat. At the same time becoming a wage slave represents great suffering for these women. As real wages fall, it has become more and more impossible to keep a family going on one income. More and more women have been forced to take jobs themselves to supplement their husbands' wage. There is even more compulsion on the millions of women raising families without husbands, whose only alternative is the enforced poverty and semi-starvation of welfare.

Attacks on the Family

The monopoly capitalist system has so weakened the family that the divorce rate is about 30%. The ruling class has always tried to mold marriage in its own image—a business deal between a superior "breadwinner" and a subordinate "housekeeper" rather than a voluntary union based on love, equality and mutual respect. And precisely because working class families

are potential unions of strength and mutual support in the struggle against them, the capitalists are happy to take advantage of the mess they've created in society to see husband and wife turn the blame for increased hardships on each other instead of on the capitalists. So today, the owning class is even more frenzied in promoting their own decadence as a "solution" to the point where every other song on the radio is devoted to the pleasures of "cheating."

Forced to seek work by economic necessity, women are then forced into low paying and generally non-union jobs, either in labor intensive light manufacturing shops or marginal service, sales and office jobs. Women have an unemployment rate even higher than the national average and because of this various politicians and bourgeois experts are blaming *them* for high unemployment. Although the capitalists have forced them into the job market and although individual bosses are only too happy to pay meager wages to them, they now want a lot of the women to disappear for a while.

Contributions of the Class Struggle

But all of these attacks have met with firm defiance from the masses of women. Throughout the history of the American working class, women have taken part in the battles of the class and often meant the difference between an advance and a setback. A favorite ploy of the bosses has always been to play on the isolation and responsibilities of housewives, which they themselves have maintained, to make the women a conservative force. In strikes, they often try to use economic hardship to mold wives as the core of a "back-to-work" movement. But wives have refused to take this role. Women have organized to fight—from the Women's Emergency Brigades at the Flint Sitdown Strike of 1937 to those today, like the wives of steelworkers striking the McNeil Company in Akron, Ohio, who answered a company "send your husband back to work" letter with an angry picket line just a couple months ago.

The ruling class devotes even more effort to its attacks on women in the workplace, who are constantly told they're just in it for "pin money" and don't deserve decent pay or conditions. With unemployment high and workers forced to compete with one another just to get a job, the low pay and lack of unionization faced by women is used to force down the wages and conditions of all workers. The capitalists push the same "pin money" lies among male workers too in order to keep resentment and divisions among the workers stirred up.

But just like men workers, women have no real choice but to resist the constant and growing attacks of the bourgeoisie.

Nowhere in recent years has the potential of women's contributions to the class struggle been clearer than the nearly two year long strike for union recognition at Farah. Women stood up boldly in spite of centuries of tradition that said they could not, shaking off backwards ideas as they organized themselves and brought forward leaders from their ranks. They came to see they were fighting not just for themselves but in the interests of the whole working class and gave them the strength to persist until victory. This same spirit and determination are being shown not only in organizing in areas considered "women's work"—from Office Workers United in New York to the Electronic Workers Organizing Committee in the Bay Area—but also in taking part and often leading struggles in workplaces where women are not a majority. This kind of struggle is an inspiration for the whole working class.

Even though its time-honored bonds on women are unravelling in the course of struggle, the capitalist class will not—and cannot—give up its oppression and super-exploitation of women. Instead it has been trying to dress up its attacks on women and its efforts to split and weaken the class in new clothes. In doing

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Women

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so, it has tried to turn to its own advantage the big advances women have made in the last ten years and their determined fight for equal rights and opportunities. The capitalists are trying in a big way to split this struggle from the movement of the working class.

Powerful sections of capitalists continue year after year to push the so-called "Equal Rights Amendment" as part of and as a general umbrella for their ruling class "equality" schemes. Their version of equality is currently on display at Zenith in Chicago where the bosses have a new technique to carry out layoffs—women workers are bumped into heavy jobs formerly done by men and then laid off without callback rights when they are unable to do the job. Zenith is out to "liberate" women alright—from their jobs!

Such attacks in the name of "equal rights" can be resisted, even when they are given a "progressive" cover by feminists and some self-proclaimed "communists," like the ones behind a lawsuit against GM and the UAW in Fremont, California. They sued for a plan of "affirmative firing," in effect demanding that men with more seniority be laid off before newly hired women—in other words, that the men be punished for the company's discriminatory hiring. A crossfire was set up when various company and union officials took the "opposite" position, promoting the idea that the women *should* be laid off because they didn't really need the jobs! However, genuine communists in the plant and advanced workers, men and women alike, persisted in building a broad fight against *all* layoffs and forced overtime. As a result of this struggle, when GM recently stepped up production, the company had to call back laid off workers instead of putting on still more overtime and speedup.

Building Working Class Unity and Power

To women and men alike, life presents this lesson again and again: the rich and powerful seek in every way to pit women against the struggle of the working class—as a force for keeping the *status quo*, as a source of high profits through low paid labor, as a means to promote divisions among the workers—but in every way the contributions of women are a key and necessary source of strength for the proletariat in its struggle against capital. Thus the task of communists and all class conscious workers is to build the links bringing the strength of women to the revolutionary workers movement. To do this successfully it is necessary to expose the source of women's oppression, monopoly capitalism, to be the same as the source of the misery of all the masses, and especially the working class, in whose ranks stand the great majority of women with more and more of them direct wage slaves to the capitalists.

Waging struggle on this basis not only builds unity, but also shows how revolution alone can finally sweep away women's oppression. "Only with the seizure of power by the working class and the building of socialism will the basis exist to deal with most 'household' work through large-scale socialized labor, to free women to play a full and equal role in production and political life, to break down the 'division of labor' that keeps women in an inferior position in capitalist society and to fully develop relations between men and women based on mutual respect and equality." (Party Programme)

In recent years, celebrations of International Women's Day in this country have been large and lively events with an increasingly proletarian character. Recognizing, as Joseph Stalin said, that "there has not been in the history of mankind a single great movement of the oppressed in which women toilers have not participated," the RCP, USA, together with other organizations of the working class and masses is organizing celebrations this year in cities across the country. We urge workers and all revolutionary minded people to build and attend celebrations in your local area. *The stronger the role of women, the stronger will be our movement!* ■

Revolution

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Los Angeles demonstration against the California Industrial Welfare Commission in 1974. The IWC used the lie that it was making women "equal" to eliminate protective laws that workers had previously won. Workers are organizing to fight to regain these advances.

"Equal Rights" Used as Cover

Cal. Women Robbed Of Overtime Pay Law

This has been a big year for talk in the ruling class about "women's rights." While the bourgeoisie has paraded Betty Ford, women bank presidents, politicians, newspaper editors and the Equal Rights Amendment as examples of great progress toward equality for women, they have continued to use the guise of "equality" to eliminate protective laws.

Just recently the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Homemakers, Inc., which employs both men and women as domestic workers and practical nurses, didn't have to pay \$18,000 in back overtime pay to its women employees, striking down a section of the California Labor Code requiring overtime pay after eight hours a day or forty hours a week. *Two million women workers* in California now are left with no legal right to overtime pay.

A large section of California's workforce is unorganized women. Every year the big electronic corporations, giant agribusiness firms and other industries bleed billions of dollars from women who often work ten hour days for two or three dollars an hour with hardly any benefits. Now in the midst of a profit crisis, these bloodsuckers want even more by eliminating the protective laws.

1974 Attack on Protective Laws

One of the first battles the working class waged when it first emerged as a class was the fight to limit the hours of work for women and all workers. California used to have over sixty laws protecting hours and working conditions of women workers. But in 1974 the state Industrial Welfare Commission was mandated to review all the protective laws, in light of all new legislation. Workers appeared in the hundreds to the IWC public hearings to let them know they were in for a fight if they tried to eliminate the laws. Corporate lawyers came to the hearings to whine that their companies couldn't make profits without mandatory overtime and child labor.

The IWC was originally set up with a flourish of fine words about protecting women workers. But, like every other arm of their state, it was also set up to do its best to serve the capitalists' interests in the conditions of the time. Most of its members are capitalists, some big employers of women. They decided that the protective laws were discriminating against men and wiped out all but three of them.

On June 1, 1974, when the new laws went into effect, people demonstrated in Los Angeles and San Francisco. In San Francisco 700 people marched to the State Building. Bus loads of homemakers from Sacramento and striking electronic workers from Ruckers in Concord, Calif., joined farmworkers,

glass workers and many others, organized and unorganized, in demanding, "Restore the protective laws" and "We fought for these in the first place and we'll fight the attempts of the capitalists to take away everything we've won."

The fight is still on. Right after the Supreme Court decision on the Homemakers case, one electronics company instituted "premium pay" instead of overtime pay for work after eight hours—a lousy thirty-five cents an hour.

Garment employers are finding ways to alter time cards to cheat workers out of overtime even when it is guaranteed by contract. Maternity leave was negotiated out of Kaiser Hospital contracts on the grounds it was "discriminatory."

The reaction of workers in California, both organized and unorganized, is "We can't let them get away with it."

Governor No Friend of Working Class

California's Governor Brown is promising he will appoint a liberal to the IWC and that it's only a matter of time until they get the state laws in shape—extended to men. But to the millions of workers who can't live on the wages they get now, much less without overtime pay, asking them to wait for the governor to come to the rescue is a sick joke. Liberal and conservative politicians alike all look out for the interests of the capitalists. If they could get away with it they would have us working even more hours each day.

But the working class has never stood still while the capitalists tried to drive it completely into the dirt. The protective laws were fought for as part of the struggle to organize unions, to win the 8 hour day and to end child labor.

In California resistance to the axing of the protective laws is growing, as is the overall fight against attacks on wages and working conditions and the fight to organize the unorganized.

From its origins decades ago, the working class has always opposed the Equal Rights Amendment precisely because it would lay the basis for getting rid of protective laws. This year new attempts will be made to pass the ERA in states where it hasn't been yet, for example, in Illinois. What the capitalists are doing to the working class in California under the guise of "equal rights" is even further evidence of why the working class must oppose the ERA, must continue the fight against the oppression of women, and must battle to defend and extend every protective law struggle has won. ■

4000 Demonstrate for Jobs in Atlanta

March Leaders Push Dead-End Schemes

Four thousand people, employed and unemployed workers, students, and others marched in Atlanta on January 15. They were there to demand jobs. The organizers of the march put forward the demand "economic justice." The march and rally occurred on the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., and his widow, Coretta King, and her Center for Social Change (CSC) were prime movers in the event.

The marchers were there for some action. Unemployment in Atlanta is higher than the national average. "Merry Christmas" shutdowns took place in steel. The new MARTA subway project has proved to be public works with a double punch. The workers will have to work at non-union scale, which has already brought construction workers into the street and in addition, a few blocks of a shopping area were torn down to make room for the subway, laying off hundreds of clerks. To serve all this up on a silver platter, the Georgia Assembly is considering House Bill 1367, a bill to cut 20,000 people off compensation—anyone who quits, gets fired, was working part-time or who refuses to agree to take minimum wage jobs, even if the jobs are just some bureaucratic's imagination. But none of these things were even mentioned by the leaders of the rally.

Working class action was not where the march was headed. The event was billed as a "Full Employment March and Rally" by its organizers—a coalition of leaders of the old civil rights movement, union bigwigs, politicians on the scout for votes, and businessmen. Participants in the day's event included Amalgamated Clothing Workers' president Murray Finley, Atlanta

Mayor Maynard Jackson, Coretta King and some grey flannel type from Xerox.

Their morning began with some "Full Employment Councils" where the plight of the working man was discussed over breakfast. One featured speaker was I.W. Abel, Steelworkers' Union president, whose major contribution to the working class has been the infamous no-strike deal. "Management" was also represented. They probably *didn't* speak about how auto factories now produce the same amount of cars—or more—with fewer workers and how this, and the thousands of other examples at their fingertips, contributes to "full employment."

After the march, there was a rally—stage and sound equipment set up courtesy of the Georgia National Guard—where the likes of Mayor Jackson, Amalgamated Clothing Workers' president Finley, feminist Gloria Steinem, Georgia Congressman Andrew Young and New York City's Mayor Abe Beame spoke. Abe Beame is an expert on full employment, having recently laid off tens of thousands of city workers. While not speaking himself, Atlanta's top cop was introduced from the stage by Mrs. King.

Mayor Jackson, carefully avoiding the MARTA subway situation right there in Atlanta, addressed his speech to the White House, pleading for Gerry Ford not to "do what Nixon did, sit on the beach and let us drown." Also being peddled from the stage were calls for a better man in the White House, support for a number of relief bills and in general "more responsive" elected officials. In spite of this steady diet of promises, by the time the third speaker finished, over half the

crowd had turned around and headed for home, or back to a downtown park where McDonald's, trying to get into the act, was passing out free burgers. People were left cold by the whole show.

At the center of the planning for January 15 march and rally was Coretta King and CSC. Mrs. King is trying to reconstruct the "New Deal Coalition" between the leadership of union hacks, politicians and old leadership from the civil rights movement like herself. The purpose of such a coalition, says Mrs. King, is to win "economic justice" under this system. Such coalitions in the past have always been a means by which the ruling class has tried to keep a lid on the struggles of the masses, make them into a prop for the Democratic Party, and to try to prevent the linking of the struggle of the working class with the struggle of the oppressed nationalities on a revolutionary, class, basis.

In order to promote this development, Mrs. King distorts the actual history of the civil rights movement of the '50s and '60s and the reasons for its demise.

The civil rights movement developed in close connection with the economic changes that were going on in the South at that time, as the majority of Black people went from living in the rural south as sharecroppers to the cities of the North and South where, in their great majority, Black people are wage earners—part of the overall U.S. working class. The first targets of the movement were those practices and laws—Jim Crow laws, KKK terror, etc.—that reflected and propped up the old semi-feudal system of sharecropping in the South.

The civil rights movement was successful in wiping out many legal barriers to Black people, from bogus poll taxes to less discriminatory hiring. But the civil rights movement ran into the barrier that capitalism, itself, is the cause of the oppression of Black people and the whole working class and that justice and especially "economic justice" are impossible under this system. It was this obstacle that left people like Coretta King in the lurch as the struggle of the masses passed over from simply a struggle for democratic rights to a more conscious struggle against the nature of the system itself.

Today attempts to steer the struggle in the direc-

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Houston Fight Against Union Busting

In early January, thousands of angry construction workers really put it to the Charter International Oil Company in Houston, during a struggle against out-front union busting. Their fight has had an electric effect on the working class in Houston, a city which the bourgeoisie has been trying to paint as "an island of prosperity in the midst of the recession."

The whole thing started on January 9, when without any warning, the bosses at Charter Oil laid off 900 union construction workers, who were building two processing units at the plant. Many of the workers had come from distant corners of the country, looking for work. Charter terminated the union contractor, Lummus Construction Company, who employed these workers and switched to Payne and Keller Inc., which is non-union.

This is part of a national wave of union busting in the construction trades which has met with angry resistance all over the country (See *Revolution*, Vol. 1, No. 4).

Naturally the workers weren't going to take this lying down. So on January 12, 600 of the laid-off workers and supporters from their local unions picketed the Charter Oil plant in order to keep Charter and Payne and Keller from stealing their jobs. Three Payne and Keller trucks were turned over, which was just a small dose of the type of action these union busting bosses were to get.

The next day hundreds of workers showed up again and these two big companies had to get protection from over 50 cops, including the SWAT team, who brought out clubs, two attack dogs, and a sub-machine gun. If there was any question about which side these cops stood with, it was soon shown very clearly when they viciously clubbed and arrested seven workers on the phoney charge of "suspicion of inciting a riot."

On Monday and Tuesday the struggle was organized mainly by individual militants in the Pipefitters local. Tuesday morning the company and their police goons

had the upper hand, but on Wednesday 3,000 workers showed up, after the anger of the rank and file had forced all 17 construction unions to call out their men.

Workers Barricade Streets

For over three hours workers controlled the whole area around Charter Oil. They barricaded the streets with their cars, went into the plant grounds and showed Charter International Oil what workers will do when the rich try to bust our unions and leave us without jobs. They overturned a crane and burned company records and offices. They answered police lines with rocks and bottles. The cops backed down the street and the workers surrounded squad cars and started rocking them. Against their dogs, their helicopters, and their SWAT team, the workers had the upper hand.

This struggle so shook up the capitalists in the Houston area that they put the National Guard on alert and had one of their judges issue an injunction against violence and mass picketing. Then on Thursday, they brought out 1,000 cops, nearly the entire patrol division in Houston, determined not to be "caught with their pants down," as one police captain put it.

At this point the union officials backed down and most of them even began apologizing for the whole upsurge, a few explaining they had no control over their men. So when workers came out on Thursday

many split in the face of all the cops and the sellout of some of their officials. At this time the police, courts and most of all, the lack of solid rank and file organization in the face of the collaboration of the union officials have temporarily halted the struggle.

Struggle Exposes "Prosperity" Lie

This outburst of sharp class struggle has nevertheless ripped the mask off the bourgeoisie's rosy picture of Houston as "the newest, most prosperous, fastest growing urban industrial center in America," as *The New York Times* called it.

Things there are comparatively good—for them. *Dun and Bradstreet*, a big Wall Street information firm, put out a report calling Texas the best place in the states to do business. Why? Four reasons were given: low government debt, no corporate income tax, weak unions and low workers' compensation.

And even this "boom" is busting. Houston is still part of the U.S. capitalist system and can't escape the effects of the capitalist crisis. Even though it has been billed as having "negative unemployment," layoffs are starting to escalate: 800 at Armco Steel, a third of the workforce at Mosher Steel, the work week cut to 36 hours at Cameron. The Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC) just started up in Houston.

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When 3,000 angry construction workers at Charter Oil were laid off and replaced with non-union labor, 3,000 angry workers from all over Houston showed up January 14, to show the company that they weren't going to just stand there and take this union-busting, job stealing attack.



Seattle workers march January 31, against a state bill threatening to cut back and restrict unemployment benefits.

Fight Mounts As Jobless Benefits Cut

From all around the country the same story is coming in: the capitalists are on a major drive to slash unemployment benefits. Through outright lies and meaningless statistics about unemployment rates, to state legislative proposals and other measures, they are trying to take away as much of the income that belongs to unemployed workers as they can get away with. As far as they're concerned money going to support workers who can't find jobs is a waste. It could be much better spent trying to increase their own profits.

Early in February Ford announced the "good news" that unemployment had declined from 8.3% of the work force in December to 7.8% in January, supposedly the biggest single monthly drop in 16 years. The editorial pages of the bourgeois media have been crowing about this ever since. Meanwhile the government says that unemployment has dropped to such an extent that 20 states and the District of Columbia no longer qualify for the two 13 week federal unemployment compensation extensions.

But even while the bourgeois "experts" run out this line, they are tripping over their own facts. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on February 9, that these figures didn't count all the people who "normally" get laid off in January. On an "unadjusted basis, however" (if hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers are not "adjusted" into non-existence) "the number of unemployed actually rose in January to 8.2 million, or 8.8% of the labor force, from 8.3% in December... To say that unemployment fell 450,000 in January on a seasonally adjusted basis actually means that unemployment rose by 450,000 fewer people than usual in January"!!

And none of these statistics really correspond to the actual number of workers who can't find jobs. Official unemployment statistics, for example, don't count workers who have given up looking for jobs and treat part-time workers, even those who would like to be working full-time, as though they were fully employed. Nor do these statistics make clear that for large sections of the working class, Black people, national minorities and youth, the real unemployment rate is closer to 30 or 40%.

Angry Reaction All Over

Unemployed workers are getting sick and tired of all this statistical mumbo-jumbo and recovery talk that is nothing more than a shabby cover for attempts to cut benefits. Initial reports from the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC) in several states show that the reaction of workers to these latest attacks is one of anger and growing determination among many to organize and fight against any attempt to cut unemployment compensation.

In late January over 100 workers attended meetings in Dayton, Cincinnati and Cleveland called by UWOC to map out plans in the fight against the governments cut of 26 weeks of unemployment benefits.

Coming out of the Ohio meetings is a plan for a

statewide "Jobs Convoy" to the Ohio state capitol in Columbus on Friday, February 27, to confront the Governor and the state head of the unemployment office, demanding, JOBS NOW—NO CUT IN EXTENSIONS—BENEFITS UNTIL THERE IS WORK.

Person after person stood up at the meetings and told of being face to face with real hardship and desperation. There were many older workers who had put in 15, 20 and 25 years for the same boss, only to get laid off. A woman in Cleveland was laid off over a year ago from her plant with only two years to go for her pension. She told of having to sell many of her possessions since her unemployment ran out.

There were vets out of the service for a year and more who still hadn't been able to find jobs, people laid off from the big plants and young people who are facing a bleak future of unemployment. One worker at the meetings said, "They can keep their extension if they'd give us jobs, but we ain't gonna starve while we are waiting."

In addition to efforts by state and federal governments to cut the length of time workers can receive unemployment benefits, many states have proposed legislation to sharply restrict who is even eligible to apply for unemployment.

Cutting Off Unemployment Insurance

In Washington State it is estimated that the legislation (Senate Bill 2373) would cut 40,000 people off unemployment the first year. It would raise the eligibility requirements from 16 weeks worked in a year to 20 weeks, hitting especially hard at seasonal and part-time workers. It would also eliminate compensation for any worker who is fired or quits—for any reason. And any company that fires a worker or forces him to quit will pay less into the unemployment fund than a company that lays off. You can bet there will be a lot more firings if S.B. 2373 passes.

A similar measure has just passed one house of the Georgia legislature. This measure, similar to Washington's, adds that after 13 weeks of unemployment they can ask you to take a job at minimum wage—not even offer a concrete job, just ask you if you'll take it. And if you refuse you would be cut off unemployment compensation.

In Massachusetts a piece of legislation called the "Voluntary Quits Bill" will deny unemployment benefits to workers who quit or are fired "due to misconduct in willful disregard of the employing units interests"!!!

The fact is that the capitalists can't provide jobs and they are trying to cut back or cut out the meager benefits we receive while we are out of work. In the face of all this, unemployed workers and UWOC are stepping up the fight, demanding jobs and enough compensation to live decently while out of work.

This was the message that rang out clearly in Atlanta on February 9, when UWOC sponsored a picket line and rally at the Georgia state capitol. This militant

action, and the exposure of the legislation received enthusiastic support from workers. UWOC had a petition drive for two weeks before the demonstration, and gathered over 1,600 signatures in the communities, on shop floors and in union halls.

In Seattle workers filled the downtown streets on January 31, in a march against Senate Bill 2373. A worker who helped organize the rally said, "the capitalists are sneaking around trying to get this bill through, but we're putting it right out in the streets where the people are, to show these bosses they're not getting away with it."

Sneaking around and lying to get over their plans is exactly what the ruling class is doing. They are sitting on a powder keg and they know it. So while they can't deny that millions of people are without work and facing desperate circumstances (18 states have already run out of unemployment compensation funds and are borrowing from the federal government) they are using all their "economic recovery" talk to cover their moves to cut unemployment benefits.

Benefits to Blame?

In addition to their lies about unemployment figures, the ruling class is trying to split employed and unemployed workers by making it seem like workers taking unemployment are just too lazy to work and want to be supported by the taxes of employed workers. Increasingly the newspapers and TV are filled with stories that jobs are available, but workers can't be found to take them. In fact, says Arthur Burns, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, extended unemployment benefits are themselves partially to blame for keeping the jobless rate so high. He suggests cutting benefits from a minimum of 65 weeks to 13 weeks might spur job hunting. And for the millions of unemployed young workers he wants a public job program with pay "well below the minimum wage."

These cuts and threats are spurring unemployed and employed workers alike. It is spurring the anger and organization of workers all over the country against the capitalists' attacks.

At one of the UWOC meetings in Ohio a hospital worker described a slowdown in the dietary department that had bucked a plan to speed up and overload workers. "The employed are united with you in demanding more jobs for the unemployed," she said. An older worker joined in and added, "That's good—we've got to build a movement that goes beyond just one hospital, one factory, or one city—we need a nationwide movement of the working class against this class of world billionaires."

All around the country anger and organization are growing and the fight indeed is becoming nationwide. ■

40,000 Apply For 2,000 Jobs

40,000 workers, including large numbers of young people, waited in line all day, some overnight, to apply for 2,000 part-time jobs at minimum wage in the San Francisco Bay Area last month. For the owners of the Santa Clara Great American Amusement Park it was a big joke, a publicity stunt. "What's Up Doc?" said the cartoon-like job applications handed out by people dressed up as Bugs Bunny and Sylvester the Cat.

For the 40,000 people desperate for work it was no joke. They were damn angry. UWOC talked to hundreds of workers waiting on the line and many signed the petition demanding JOBS NOW and JOBS at UNION WAGES. "This is a hoax... Everyone of us is angry about it. It's a rip-off," were the sentiments of workers who signed the petition. "They don't give a damn how they treat us," said one older woman who came for a job. "They just want to crank us through as fast as they can."

The company had been advertising on radio stations all over the Bay Area for people to come and get jobs. But when people got there, most couldn't even get applications. They may have been short on jobs, but they had plenty of cops and security guards on hand to control the people's anger. One of the managers of the Park smiled at the TV cameras and said, "sorry, did the best we could... can't give everyone in America a job."

The fact that tens of thousands would show up for part-time, minimum wage jobs shows just how desperate the situation is. And it also shows the callousness of the capitalists who claim to be concerned about the plight of the unemployed but are willing to send thousands into a wild goose chase if it will help them sell a few more tickets for their roller coaster. ■

Budget...

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down to a few paltry jobs bills they want passed. In fact this "big" difference is so miniscule that we're talking about something that effects only a very small percentage of the unemployed. And even more importantly, the Democrats have in mind using all this as a wage cutting device.

What would the creation of these kinds of jobs mean? Last year the federal government also had a public service jobs program, although on a smaller scale. A large bulk of these jobs were part-time, working only 20 or 30 hours a week for low wages. They were also temporary, usually lasting less than a year, and with no job protection or union rights. Furthermore, in many places, like New York City, the jobs were not "created" at all, but either public service workers were given jobs which replaced laid off civil service workers in libraries, courts, schools, parks, etc., or the funds were used by the local government to keep people on the job who would otherwise have been laid off, so no new jobs were created.

The working class demands union jobs at union wages and will fight for these jobs from government or industry, including public works. But the thrust of the Democrats' plan for jobs is to use public works bills to undermine unions and to cut the wages of government workers and in industry generally by replacing higher paid jobs with low paid jobs.

Another thing all sides are talking about this election year, especially President Ford, is fighting inflation, cutting the budget, fighting "big government," giving working people a tax break, etc. Ford, for example, makes a big deal about cutting inflation by holding down the budget. He criticizes the Democrats for wanting the federal government to spend too much. For their part the Democrats criticize Ford for being "penny wise and pound foolish" and for wanting to go "backwards" and not "forwards."

What is all this rumbling about?

Growing Deficit

The capitalists are caught in a real dilemma. On the one hand they must gear up for war in order to defend their overseas investments and the federal government must continue to spend record amounts to shore up their tottering economy. That is why no major politician today has real plans for significant cuts in the military budget or for not having the government run up huge deficits. For all his talk about holding down federal spending President Ford still proposes a record military budget of \$101.1 billion, up 9% over last year, and an overall budget which will run up the deficit at least \$43 billion next year. The main line Democrats, despite recent criticisms of Ford's policy in Angola, also want a big increase in military spending and propose a budget with a deficit up to \$75 billion.

While a huge national debt and deficit spending have become a permanent, and necessary, feature of monopoly capitalism, this huge and growing federal spending is leading to big cracks in their economy. In the first place it threatens to rekindle the fires of inflation. In the second place it is intensifying their capital shortage crisis by diverting a lot of capital that would otherwise be spent in private industry into paying for these huge government expenditures.

This is one of the contradictions the capitalists face. And to try to resolve this, to the degree that they can, they are forced to cut social services like crazy. This is exactly what their talk about fighting inflation and holding down the budget means in the real world—cutting the things the working class needs and has won through its struggles and gearing up the budget still more for the things the capitalists need in order to make profits.

For example besides cutting unemployment benefits and job training, President Ford's budget would also put the axe to these kinds of programs:

- Already low benefits to veterans would be cut 9.5%.
- School lunch programs chopped 7.6%.
- Higher education programs reduced 14.3%.

And although they make a lot of noise about opposing some of these specific cuts, the Democrats also want to slash social services. In the official Democratic Party response to Ford, Muskie said, "wasteful Government spending, inefficient and ineffective programs are burdens taxpayers ought not to be asked to carry"—which translates to mean social service programs should be cut back. The Democrats have also been helping to step up the propaganda campaign recently against "welfare cheaters" and "food stamp chiselers," laying the basis for cutbacks in these areas in the future.

Some of these cuts in social services are already happening, more are coming in the future. The capitalists try to justify these cutbacks by telling the employed workers it will mean a tax cut for them. Look,

says Ford to the employed workers, "For every dollar saved in cutting the growth in the federal budget, we can have an added dollar in federal-tax reduction." They are trying to divide the employed and unemployed by spreading the lie that cutbacks affecting what they contemptuously call the "unproductive section of society," (meaning the unemployed) will lead to decreased taxes for the employed.

But the fact is that even the proposed tax cuts are so small that they are a joke. While some taxes are cut for the average working family, there will also be an increase in social security taxes which almost wipes it out. In fact a family of four with one worker earning \$7,000 a year would actually have its taxes increased under Ford's plan.

It is the capitalists, not the unemployed, who are responsible for running up huge deficits to keep their system going and then soaking the people to pay for it through exorbitant taxes. They are the ones who push speedup and every other attempt to increase their profit at the expense of the employed workers. It is their rotten system which is responsible for throwing millions of unemployed into the streets. The real interests of both the employed and unemployed is to unite to wage a common struggle against this common enemy and this is exactly what is starting to happen in many struggles around the country and will continue to develop regardless of the capitalists' divide-and-rule schemes.

War Preparations

Naturally a great many people are outraged to see their hard earned tax money spent on war preparations while millions lack jobs and the country seems to be going to hell. Trying to pimp off this healthy

sentiment, certain politicians and opportunists make a big stink about "reordering priorities" to "jobs not war." But it is not as if the government were free to choose between guns and butter or they have a "policy" of fighting unemployment through defense spending.

Both war and unemployment are built into their capitalist system. They are forced to go to war to defend their overseas investments. This is why the U.S. imperialists have no choice but to step up their preparations for war against their rivals in the Soviet Union. The laws of capitalism, not bad people or wrong priorities, are the cause of this huge stepped up military budget and the slashing of social services.

The bourgeoisie is fond of pointing to the so-called democratic electoral system as a way of justifying their continued rule. This country might not be perfect, they say to the working class, but at least you have the right to change it by your vote.

This election year is a fine example of exactly what this means. There are a whole host of candidates from the Democratic and Republican Parties. Each one says he is different than the other. Each one claims to have the solution to the crisis.

But when you come right down to it, choosing between a Republican and Democrat is no choice at all. Each one is worse than the other. None of these politicians can solve the problems faced by the masses of people, not only because they are corrupt (although most undoubtedly are) but because they serve the capitalist class. Their "solutions" reflect the bourgeoisie's answer to the crisis—to increase profits. And this can only be at the expense of the working class. Either Democrat or Republican in office next November is sure to mean two things: increased efforts to exploit the working class and intensified preparations for a new war. ■

selves as members of UWOC, rapped about UWOC's fighting program for Jobs or Income, and then started the chant, "Unemployment, it ain't funny. We want jobs or we want money!" Despite sound problems, workers who could hear joined in and really got into it! Then the group sang "Ain't Gonna Be Treated This Way" which had been rewritten to reflect a militant, fighting spirit. All this time the politicians and big-wigs on stage were getting visibly uptight. Congressman Young and ACWA president Finley tried to put the clamps on UWOC but failed.

Forces like those who led the January 15 march and rally and the Washington jobs demonstration are likely to be around for some time to come. The harsh realities of the economic crisis spur on the workers' determination not to take it on the chin any more. The Center For Social Change, the National Committee for Full Employment and other similar outfits will be trying to harness the growing struggle and channeling it into organized reformism and spreading the dead-end illusion of the possibility of full employment under capitalism.

This only underscores the importance of building a strong working class movement, with its own stand, organization and strength. In Atlanta, UWOC made clear that to get the things we need, "we have to be organized to fight for them! We have to build our own movement—take things into our own hands and not leave it to the politicians or the thousand and one others who try to pimp off of us every day." The message is getting louder and it's coming across clearer: Organize to Fight! ■

Atlanta...

Continued from page 8

tion of begging Congress for "economic justice" flies in the face of the reality the masses themselves have come up against in the struggle and where the fight has to go. Even if the capitalist politicians that Coretta King and her crowd promote were the friends of labor and Black people they are portrayed to be, they could no more outlaw unemployment under capitalism than they could prevent winter by passing a law against it. The real reason for their fancy talk is to sit on top of the struggle and trade their ability to do so for positions in government.

Even putting together this motley coalition is running into difficulties, with all the would-be leaders scurrying around to protect their positions from each other, and especially from the masses. Originally the union hacks in Atlanta claimed they would turn out 20,000. But they ended up making only a very perfunctory attempt, organizing hardly anybody. This is because they are somewhat hesitant to throw in their lot with the CSC types completely. But mainly it reflected their fear of a repeat performance of last spring's jobs demonstration.

In Washington, D.C., last April 26, 60,000 workers came to RFK stadium to a demonstration called by a group of unions. Some union hacks thought they could satisfy the rank and file's demands for action around unemployment and still control the unions from the top down. But the workers stole the show—including large numbers brought by UWOC and other workers organizations—booing down politicians like Hubert Humphrey who'd been trotted out to mouth promises.

UWOC Contingent

The Atlanta chapter of the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC) built for the demonstration at unemployment offices, job centers and in communities. In their leaflets they put forward the demands: "Jobs Now! Extend and Raise Benefits! No Cuts! No Penalties! Checks on Time!" At the march itself about thirty workers, including members of the Birmingham UWOC, marched in a UWOC contingent under the banner, "We Demand Jobs—Organize to Fight!" UWOC was a real working class contrast to the dead-end leadership of the event.

While some carried signs, others in the UWOC contingent passed out some 5,000 leaflets to other marchers and to hundreds of onlookers who lined the streets. UWOC members raised up chants like, "Unemployed workers say, 'We want jobs at union pay!'" and "What do we want? JOBS! When do we want 'em? NOW! How are we gonna get 'em? FIGHT FOR THEM!!!" Hundreds of workers joined in the chanting, including those in the Laborers International Union and Distributive Workers Union contingents, on either side of UWOC during the march.

By the time a UWOC singing group from Atlanta was introduced on the stage, only about a quarter of the marchers remained. The singers introduced them-

Houston...

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with its first demonstration, December 15, and jobless workers are responding enthusiastically.

Struggle in Houston Heating Up

Still, the crisis hasn't yet hit Houston in the same way as it has, say, New York or Detroit. But the bourgeoisie doesn't intend to let any of this well publicized "prosperity" fall into the hands of the workers. To keep their profits up, they have launched the same kind of union busting, speedup and wage cutting attacks as bosses everywhere else. The construction battle was the sharpest, but workers at Tenn-Tex, an alloy plant, had to wage a bitter 5 month struggle to get a decent contract. Mack Truck workers have been out 6 months, costing the company over \$200,000, and are still going strong.

The Charter Oil battle shows that people in Houston are fighting mad at these attacks. Workers from all over were ready to join the construction workers' fight when they heard about it on the news or from the leaflet the Revolutionary Communist Party put out calling on all workers to show up and support them. UWOC got the same kind of response, at unemployment centers and construction union halls, to its leaflet demanding the Texas Employment Commission not send people out to scab. Everything points to more bitter battles erupting in the "island of prosperity" before too long. ■

Imperialism Guilty In Guatemalan Tragedy

On February 4, a large earthquake struck Guatemala. Like a hammer beating a gong, over 200 aftershocks continued to reverberate, causing further havoc. On February 6, another major quake shocked the country. It is estimated that over 20,000 people died, tens of thousands were injured and hundreds of thousands were left homeless.

There were many instances of heroism: most common were people running back into houses, with the earth still trembling and walls still crumbling, pulling the injured and the stunned out into the streets into relative safety.

The capital, Guatemala City, was left without water and electricity. Several smaller cities, Joyabaj, Tecpan, Patzicia and Chimaltenango, were totally destroyed. The possibility of epidemic disease was great.

Casualties were borne by the poverty-stricken masses. Their homes were constructed of adobe bricks, which are mainly just dried mud. Adobe huts have thick walls but are structurally weak. When the quakes hit, the heavy walls came tumbling down. Not so in the districts where the well-off, and especially the bourgeoisie, live. Their homes were well constructed and survived the shocks.

After the extensive damage and death, the survivors picked through their rubble piles to find their pots and pans...or their children or their parents. The homeless were forced to pitch tents in village squares and open fields; the lucky with real tents, the unlucky with a few scraps of fabric. There was little water and little food and unburied bodies everywhere, the second quake even unearthing the graves of those who had died in the first.

Loss of Life Result of Imperialism

All in all it was a disaster and tragedy of massive proportions. But while the earthquake itself must be considered a "natural disaster," the tremendous damage and loss of life had much more to do with the very much "man-made" conditions of life that imperialism has imposed on the masses of people of Guatemala.

This can be seen by the fact that only a few years ago an earthquake of similar strength hit Los Angeles, and despite widespread destruction, only a few dozen people were killed, mostly veterans in a rundown VA hospital. The capitalists don't give a damn about working people in this country either, but technology has advanced to the point where safer construction can be built. It is well known that it is unsafe to build housing out of adobe or brick in earthquake areas, even the building codes in California forbid it.

But what choice did the masses of people in Guatemala have about building materials while living in absolute poverty and in an enforced state of backwardness due to U.S. imperialist plunder of that country? The pitiful amount of humanitarian aid sent by the U.S. ruling class to Guatemala, most of which came from ordinary people's donations, cannot absolve them from their guilt for the magnitude of the suffering.

Struggle Against Nature

The history of mankind has been a history of the struggle against nature. From the earliest battles when man had to defeat animals endowed with natural weapons—sharp teeth and claws—for a chance to drink at a waterhole; to the struggle to tear out a living from the land, against insects, drought and flood; to modern man, who has been able to change the course of rivers, build high into the sky and create tremendous productive forces, able to fling men into space—continually men have become less and less at the mercy of nature and have been able to, in ever greater combination, with greater cooperation and socialization, transform nature and make it serve man.

But since civilization emerged, the struggle against nature has been waged by a society divided into classes. The relations between men, the relationship of classes, can stand as an obstacle to man's further advance in the struggle against nature, as in the U.S. or Guatemala where the system of exploitation is a chain on society. On the other hand revolution resulting in a new relationship between classes has the opposite effect.

On February 4, 1975, exactly one year before the Guatemala quake hit, an earthquake of equal strength

hit the heavily populated Yingkou-Haicheng area in northeast China. But in socialist China, the casualties and damage were significantly less severe. And a week later the area celebrated a spring festival.

China is also underdeveloped, a legacy of a century of imperialist intervention. But in China today, the working class rules. There the masses are not forced into poverty or ignorance.

In June 1974 and January 1975, the State Seismological Bureau convened meetings to discuss the possibility of quakes in the Yingkou-Haicheng area. By analyzing stresses along the quake-prone fault areas a fairly big earthquake was forecast.

The people were widely instructed about earthquakes and mobilized to make observations and take precautionary measures. Amateur earthquake prediction and forecasting organizations, armed with scientific knowledge, linked up with professional seismological stations and observatories. Early in 1975, a warning was issued that a big earthquake would probably occur in the immediate future. Everyone got ready for the shocks. In the days before the Feb. 4 quake, many abnormal phenomena took place, such as a rapid lowering of water in the wells, alerting everyone to the fact that something big was up.

When the earthquake struck, some people died and buildings tumbled. But because the people understood what was happening to them and had taken precautionary measures, casualties and damage were great-

ly reduced. And almost as soon as the earth stopped trembling, the people pitched in and started rebuilding.

Earthquakes are no mystery. The experience of China proves that man is rapidly becoming able to correctly predict quakes and take the proper measures to protect the lives of people and their property. The difference between Guatemala and China is the difference between two social systems. In Guatemala, as in the U.S., it is the almighty dollar that is most precious to the capitalist ruling class. In China, the working class rules and has taken to heart what Mao Tsetung once said: "Of all things, people are the most precious."

Under socialism and communism the struggle by man to master nature will continue. There will still be earthquakes and other natural disasters. But with the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and capitalism, the masses can free themselves to continually advance their scientific understanding of the laws of nature and society and can work together to minimize the destructiveness of natural forces and struggle to prevent them from being "disasters." Even now, it is beginning to be understood how to lessen the impact of earthquakes and theories are being developed about how to ease the stress that builds up until the earth shakes and trembles. The main barrier to this progress is the same barrier to all progress everywhere, a tiny band of exploiters to whom nothing matters but their gold. The blood of thousands of Guatemalans is on their hands. ■



Ever since Tyrone Guyton was shot down by the police two years ago, workers have fought to make his killers pay. Above, workers rally at International Harvester's San Leandro, Calif. plant in 1974.

Fight Continues To Jail Police Killers

Early in February more than 200 workers, high school students and others rocked the halls of the Oakland City Council Chambers with the cry "indict the murderers of Tyrone Guyton." Over two years ago police in Emeryville, California, murdered a fourteen year old Black youth, Tyrone Guyton, for joy-riding in a car. Since that time, thousands of people of all nationalities have taken part in the struggle to jail the murderers.

Oakland's Mayor Reading turned his back on the sight of workers, from many of the industries of the San Francisco Bay area—including auto, electronics, warehouse, transit and the postoffice—crowding the council chambers and loudly demanding action. He ran out of the room declaring the meeting adjourned. The City Council had ignored an advance request of the group to speak. He and other representatives of the ruling class had hoped that they had whitewashed Tyrone's killers once and for all, and that after two years people would give up hope of seeing the murderers punished. But the city council demonstration illustrated the determination of the working class to see the fight through to victory.

The demonstration was sponsored by the May First Workers Organization (M1WO), an area wide class organization of workers throughout the Bay Area and the *Worker* newspaper. In addition, it was endorsed by many workers organizations in various industries and word of the action was spread through many plants in the Bay Area using, among other things, a M1WO button proclaiming "indict the murderers of Tyrone Guyton."

After the mayor ran out, the M1WO and other speakers spoke in the council chambers against the

murder of Tyrone. Workers from the post office spoke of the long history of support of large numbers of postal workers for the campaign to jail Tyrone's murderers and how conditions had been worsening in the post office, including mandatory overtime at a time when the postal bosses are trying to cut back on the work force through a hiring freeze. Speakers talked about the fight against the recent police murder of a young man in San Jose. It was clear from the speeches and the comments of the demonstrators that the workers brought with them not only their outrage against Tyrone's killing and the subsequent cover-up, but their hatred for the whole chain of abuses created by the system of capitalist exploitation.

Young people from the local high schools swelled the ranks of the demonstration. Knowing what a revolutionary powder keg working class youth are, the local authorities did all they could to stop word from reaching students about the demonstration. Cops tried to stop the leafletting of high schools but the reaction of the students was "we should give the cops an 'education'" and took the leaflets and passed them out themselves. At the City Council one young woman stood up to expose the schools. It came out how administrators even required collateral, like a watch, before a student can borrow a pencil!

The demonstration reflected the hatred of the masses of people for a system which would gun down a fourteen year old youth for joy-riding. Newspapers in the Bay Area were forced to report on the demonstration, calling the case a "long smouldering dispute." The fact that the struggle has continued for two years now underscored the strength and determination the working class infuses into every social struggle it takes up. ■

Not "Rule of the People"

1776: Cleared Way For Capitalism

Now that the Bicentennial offensive by the bourgeoisie has entered high gear, even more attention is being focused on the first American Revolution. Overall, the Bicentennial serves the capitalists as a platform from which to attack the struggles of the masses of people and to conduct a propaganda campaign aimed at shoring up what little confidence still exists among the masses of people in their system. It is very important to them to try to repair the veil of "democracy" and "freedom" which they use to try to disguise the rule of capital. In order to accomplish this, they talk about the American Revolution and the political and economic system that arose from it, as if it had nothing to do with classes or the still primitive conditions of man's existence at that time.

The bourgeoisie would like us to believe that capitalism will be with us forever. Naturally they want to maintain the system in which they are the masters of society and the great majority of the people are bound by the hidden chains of wage-slavery. So they try to make it look like the American political system stands, now and forever, as the ultimate that man can establish in freedom and the "rule of the people."

But political systems, forms of government, have their beginning and end like everything else in society and nature. The American Revolution did not develop because of the "democratic ideals of the founding fathers." Still less is the political system it created and the ideas and concepts that grew up alongside it, "eternal." Revolutions and political systems do not spring from the mind of men, but are rooted in the way in which people feed and clothe themselves and provide for their common survival, and the way society is organized to carry out production.

The American Revolution was an important step in that it created a political system that unleashed the productive forces of society, a system which was best suited for the development of capitalism—the only system that could develop society at that time and lead to the tremendous productive power in society we find today. But capitalism and its political system of capitalist democracy then, as now, never meant freedom for the masses of people nor could it have. And today capitalism and the bourgeoisie is itself the obstacle to the further advance of society.

Stealing Gold and Starting Capitalism

Europe's discovery of America and its subsequent settlement had much less to do with Columbus' vision of a round world, and the adventurous spirit of the early settlers, than it did with the birth and growth of capitalism on a world scale. This can be seen by the fact that the Viking's discovery of America amounted to nothing because the economic and historical conditions necessary for the colonization of America were not yet present. America's colonization took place only when Europe was undergoing a profound economic and social upheaval as capitalism gradually replaced feudalism as the system by which society was organized.

In those days there was no industry as we know it today, and all manufacturing was done by hand either individually or in small shops. It was in trade that capitalism was born. The early merchants who bought and transported goods from cities throughout Europe and the East were the forerunners of the modern capitalist class. This early trade, and the development of science, led to the discovery of America and the ability to navigate throughout the world, which in turn was a tremendous impetus to world trade.

From the beginning great fortunes were made in trade and through outright plunder and robbery of peoples throughout the world. It was the hope of following the example of its rival Spain, in stealing gold and silver from the native populations, that inspired Britain to encourage expeditions to the New World. But it soon became apparent that the real wealth to be made in North America lay not in the outright seizure of mineral riches, which proved extremely scarce, but in the establishment of settlements, and the trade between them and the mother country.

Even in the infancy of capitalism no deed was too barbaric for it in the search for wealth. Indians were slaughtered wholesale to make room for settlements. Very early on slavery was introduced, and one of the biggest profits to be made lay in the kidnapping of Blacks in Africa and their transportation to the Americas.

"The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in the mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of

the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production," wrote Marx. Capital comes into the world, "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt."

It was the development of capitalism that provided the impetus for the settlement of America, and to no small extent the capital gained through the settlement of America, that in turn fueled the development of capitalism in Europe. And that development in Europe also provided the settlers to America, by increasingly driving peasants from the land, creating a large pool of landless and destitute men and women, willing to pay the steep price of a ticket to the New World—seven years of virtual slavery known as "indentured servitude."

Wherever geographical conditions were favorable to the large-scale production of export crops, slavery became the principal basis of production, as was the case in the Southern colonies. But the slave system proved to be unprofitable in the other colonies. There, the great bulk of the settlers became farmers, after serving their times as indentured servants, taking advantage of the land available for little money. These early settlers were largely self-sufficient, scratching out a meager existence from the land through their own labor and producing many basic necessities such as food, clothes and housing themselves.

This was in line with the needs of Britain, which did not want rapid economic growth in the colonies. They wanted raw materials, agricultural produce, and the colonies dependent on England for manufactured goods.

As one British authority of the time put it: "The two great objects of Great Britain in regard to the American trade must be: (1) to oblige her American subjects to take from Great Britain only, all the manufactures and European goods which she can supply them with; (2) to regulate the foreign trade of the Americans so that the profits thereof may finally center in Great Britain, or be applied to improvement of her empire."

Laws were passed to enforce these goals—even forbidding trade in manufactured goods, including for instance, hats, from one colony to the next, and outlawing the production of steel. All of these laws were aimed at hindering the development of an American capitalist class that would be in a position to challenge the British ruling classes for the right to rule America.

Capitalist Class Develops

But despite British attempts to prevent it, a capitalist class was developing in the colonies. In New England in particular, and also to a large extent in Philadelphia and New York, merchants began to grow rich carving into the lucrative slave trade, and going in for wholesale smuggling to get around the Navigation Laws. American shipbuilding and fishing grew into important industries competing with the British. The more the early capitalists of the colonies cut into the

profit of the British, the more vigorously Britain tried to put the squeeze on the colonies.

The common people of the colonies had plenty of reasons to despise British rule. The British monopoly on trade and restrictions placed on manufacture could only insure a high cost for imported goods and was a direct barrier to the growing number of craftsmen in the towns of the northern colonies. In addition the masses of farmers made common cause with the merchants and land speculators in demanding the right to settle the lands west of the Allegheny mountains—the Ohio valley—which had been wrested from the French during the French and Indian war.

By the time of the American Revolution the population of the colonies was already in the several millions, and most of the good land in the original colonies was already spoken for and some was already suffering soil depletion. The colonists of all classes demanded a steadily expanding frontier, at the expense of the Indians, of course, who were living there. The prospect of "land beyond the mountains" burned in the eyes of the wealthy slaveholder, and the poor alike, who hoped to acquire their own plot of land.

The situation at the time of the Revolution was that the colonial relationship between the colonies and Britain was becoming more and more of a fetter on the development of the economic life of the colonies. At the heart of the conflict was the contradiction between the young and budding capitalist class of the colonies and the ruling classes of Britain.

Thomas Paine, whose work *Common Sense* was to be the main ideological weapon in the hands of the capitalists to unite the masses of people against Britain, summed up the situation well, "England consults the good of *this* country, no farther than it answers her *own* purpose. Wherefore, her own interest leads her to suppress the growth of *ours* in every case which doth not promote her advantage, or in the least interferes with it."

The Revolution

The British had no choice but try ever harder to crush their upstart competitors—sending thousands of troops to back up their legal restrictions. This oppression bred further resistance, which erupted into armed revolution in April, 1775, when the British tried to arrest some of the leaders of the movement against them and to secure the contents of an arsenal in Concord, Massachusetts to keep the arms out of the colonists' hands.

While the conflict between the capitalists of the colonies and those of Britain was what mainly gave rise to the Revolution and gave it its principal character, it also took place within the context of the world bourgeois revolution in which capitalism was replacing feudalism. In the colonies certain feudal relations had been imported from Europe.

Large tracts of land, including whole colonies like Maryland and Pennsylvania, belonged, in principle at least, to a proprietor who received them as favors from the king. Many of the early struggles of the colonists were directed against this, especially against having to pay rent to settle on this land. The landed gentry, also enjoyed by law and custom, superiority over everyone else—including exemptions from laws enforced on the masses and even wealthy merchants of "common" origin. Practices like this, stood as obstacles to the further advancement of capitalism.

Democracy and Freedom

"Democracy" and "freedom" were the banners under which the American Revolution was fought, banners common to all of the bourgeois revolutions

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An early colonial glassblowing works. Manufacturing even on this scale was extremely rare at that time. The Revolution cleared the way for the growth of factories and a powerful modern working class.



The Sons of Liberty string up a tax collector on a "Liberty Pole," and get ready to tar and feather him. Children at left pluck the goose for the feathers.

1776...

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of the time. They were supported by the masses because of their aspirations for freedom and because the bourgeoisie was the class capable of moving society ahead, at that time. But the freedoms for which the revolution were fought were those freedoms necessary for the development of the bourgeois mode of production, and were not the "eternal ideas" they are portrayed to be.

What was the class content of this "freedom?" Capitalism required freedom of trade, it required the abolition of the feudal monopolies that were based on privileges granted by the monarch, it required, above all, the creation of a "free" proletariat—that is, the freedom of the worker to be exploited. To sell his labor power to the capitalist, the worker first had to be liberated from any ownership of property and feudal restrictions tying him to the land. In order for the bourgeoisie to carry out its revolution it had to enlist the support of the masses, to speak in the name of "all the people," whose interests, unlike today, it did represent to a certain degree.

One Bicentennial television program, "the Adams Chronicles," unwittingly exposed the relationship between the bourgeoisie and masses of working people. John Adams, defending the actions of British soldiers in gunning down several people in the Boston Massacre says, "A mob cannot rule a kingdom." "Yes," replies cousin Sam Adams, the "radical," "but it can overthrow one."

Similarly, a major cause of the Boston tea party was the fact that Britain gave permission to the British East India Company to import tea duty free and sell directly to American shopkeepers. This drastically undercut American merchants who had been selling expensive smuggled tea from the Netherlands. But of course the capitalists could not rally the population under the slogan, "save our profits," instead their speeches concentrated on the theme "taxation without representation is tyranny."

Masses Do the Overthrowing

As a class of exploiters, the bourgeoisie approached the struggle against Britain cautiously, always fearing that the masses of people might "go too far" and threaten their property rights. In fact the majority of Boston's merchants even repudiated the "tea party" after the British came down on them. While the leadership of the Revolution was always in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia attached to it (like Sam Adams), the common people of town and country did the bulk of the fighting and suffering. And they made up the bulk of the membership of the most vigorous revolutionary organizations of the time, the Committees of Correspondence and the Sons of Liberty.

The bourgeois revolution roused the population who saw in British rule the source of their own oppression. Throughout the Revolution and immediately following it the masses were the most consistent and energetic fighters against the old order, demanding that the revolution be carried through to the end and be as thoroughgoing as possible. In particular the masses of craftsmen, known in that day as mechanics, in the cities of the northern colonies played this role. During the course of the Revolution the masses of

people at times had to struggle against the bourgeoisie itself, to wrest some rights for themselves.

Some representatives of the bourgeoisie, most notably Alexander Hamilton, first Secretary of the Treasury and honored on the \$10 bill, actually wanted to set up an American *monarchy* rather than a republic. Throughout the course of the Revolution the bulk of the bourgeoisie wanted to grant only the most minimal of rights, those that would establish their rule and increase their profit in the most immediate and narrow sense. The common people, especially the handicraftsmen of the cities, struggled to carry the Revolution through to the end, clearing the way for a more rapid development of capitalism.

Constitution and Bill of Rights

A case in point is the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The Constitution, which was drawn up exclusively by the bourgeoisie and the slaveholders, granted no substantial rights to the masses of people, and narrowly missed being rejected, partly because of this.

The masses of people, led by some more far sighted representatives of the bourgeoisie, had to fight for the Bill of Rights to be adopted. Of course, there is nothing in the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the constitution, that is incompatible with the development of capitalism, in fact history shows that the bourgeois freedoms of speech, religion, the right to trial by jury, etc., are found in most capitalist states. One of the necessary conditions for the development of capitalism was to shatter the fetters that feudalism placed on the development of man's knowledge through the institution of the Church and other barriers. In order for production to advance, science had to develop side by side. Benjamin Franklin, an early leader of America's bourgeoisie ("a penny saved is a penny earned"), also was a pioneer in conducting scientific experiments, such as the famous kite and lightning experiment.

Similarly in its political struggle against feudalism, the bourgeoisie had to be able to make use of the written word, freedom of the press, to attack the old order. All of these things grew out of the earth shaking capitalist revolution on a world scale. But the bulk of the merchants, blinded by their own nature as exploiters, gave up even these rights only after a fight.

George Washington, Slaveholder

And the American Revolution fell far short of completing the bourgeois democratic revolution, leaving the barbaric system of slavery intact, which was to grow and flourish for the first eighty years of the democratic republic, until swept away by the Civil War. George Washington, in fact, was one of the principal slaveowners and land speculators of colonial days and threatened to resign his command as part of the Continental Army until the anti-slavery section was eliminated from the Declaration of Independence.

The bourgeoisie was the revolutionary class in that it alone was in a position to advance the productive forces of society; it alone could seize and hold power, weld together a national market, concentrate the capital necessary for the building of roads and canals and beginning factories. In the French Revolution, a bourgeois revolution of much more thoroughgoing character, that occurred only a few years later, the "radicals," the small shopkeepers and craftsmen, actually held power for awhile. But because they were not a class in a position to organize and advance society, they could not hold power, and inevitably power returned back into the hands of the bourgeoisie.

The "radical" section of the American Revolution was even weaker than in the French—the basic elements of a proletariat were much less developed because the abundance of cheap land made it possible for all but the slaves and Indians to become small property owners. The fact that the development of a proletariat had not yet taken place and that class distinctions in

general remained fluid is shown by the provision in the Bill of Rights granting the right of the people to "keep and bear arms."

The American Revolution resulted in the bourgeoisie gaining control over the State, that is establishing a bourgeois dictatorship. The old colonial legislatures became the basis of the new power in the states, and the Continental Congress became the forerunner of the Federal Government. The American Revolution did not break up or smash the old state apparatus, it wrested it away from the British and perfected it. Tom Paine wrote in *Common Sense*, "the most powerful of all arguments (for independence) is that nothing but independence, i.e. a continental form of government, can keep the peace of the continent and preserve it inviolate from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now...that it will be followed by a revolt somewhere or other, the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all the malice of Britain."

Then as now, bourgeois democracy meant real democracy only for the bourgeoisie, and dictatorship and oppression for the masses of people. And of course this became even more so as capitalism increasingly divided society into hostile camps.

Freedom to trade freely throughout the world; freedom to hire and to fire; the control of the bourgeoisie over the State to coin money, establish a national debt and raise an army; the building of roads and canals; the settlement of the West—these were the real fruits of the American Revolution.

And these things led to the rapid growth of capitalism in the U.S. Within a few years the first factories were set up as soon as the American capitalists were able to steal the blueprints from the British. Capitalism developed society, but at the expense of the great majority—of the workers whom it chained to wage slavery, of Blacks who were turned into outright property, and of the Indians who were nearly exterminated in the process.

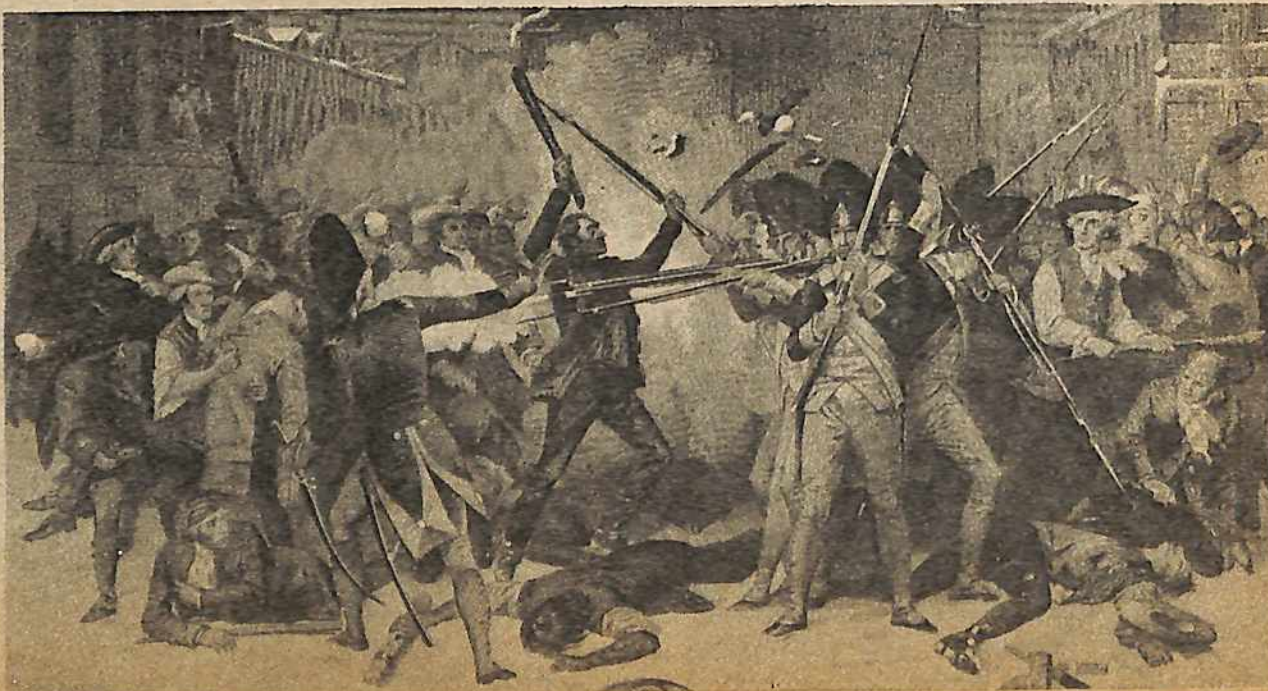
Two Hostile Camps

The cleavage of society into two great hostile camps—the working class and the capitalists—is not a step away from the social system created by the American Revolution, but in fact is the result of it. The revolutionary essence of the American Revolution was that it opened the door for precisely such capitalist development.

Back in those days the tools at men's disposal to squeeze an existence out of the earth were very limited. Almost everything was produced by hand, and most of it individually. The modern working class did not exist in this country. Under such conditions a society without exploitation was impossible, the "equality of man" merely a dream of the oppressed and a deception by the bourgeoisie. Only capitalism, in which all the products of the workers' labor become commodities to be bought and sold in the market place, and the ability of the worker to labor, itself becomes a commodity, only such a system could advance society at that time. It was the only thing possible.

But today the class relations of capitalism, the ownership of the means of production by a handful of capitalists while the bulk of the rest of society is reduced to wage slavery, to spend a life time enriching them, can no longer advance society. On the contrary, this very relationship is what breeds misery for the masses of people. It is what brings crisis and stands in the way of the working class utilizing the tremendous productive capacity that exists today to conquer the earth, and create a world free of poverty and exploitation.

The capitalist would like to have us believe that the system we live under today is the best that we could ever hope for. But today much more is possible than in 1776. A new class is on the scene, the modern working class, and we have no more need for a two hundred year old political and economic system than we have for the blacksmith forge or the spinning wheel. ■



Boston Massacre, 1770. As the contradictions sharpened between the British rulers and the young and developing colonies, the British resorted to stronger repressive measures and opened their guns on the people.

Meetings Held To Honor Life Of Chou En-lai

Throughout the world millions of people have mourned the death of Comrade Chou En-lai. In this country the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Revolutionary Student Brigade, as well as other progressive forces sponsored meetings and other commemorative events to honor the memory of this great revolutionary and to learn from the example of his life.

At meetings called by the RCP in most major industrial cities and many other places speakers from the Party emphasized that Chou En-lai was not only a leader of the struggles of the Chinese people, he was a leader of our class, the working class of all countries. Chou En-lai's whole life was marked by his commitment to the revolutionary struggles of the working class worldwide and to the tasks of strengthening the rule of the proletariat in China and advancing toward communism.

Discussions and speeches at the Party's commemorative meetings centered on the encouragement and inspiration Chou's life gives for our own revolutionary struggles. It was pointed out that Chou was above all a revolutionary fighter committed to the liberation of the people of China from the misery of feudalism and capitalist exploitation. He was not an idealist who just hoped that this would happen and who became discouraged and threw up his hands when the going got rough. He grasped the science of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought which shows the inevitability of the overthrow of the rule of the capitalist class and provides a firm basis for developing the struggle to make the liberation of the masses of people a reality.

In the face of the many difficulties and setbacks that confronted the Chinese people and their Party in the course of 50 years of struggle against efforts by foreign imperialists, Chinese capitalists, revisionists and capitalist roaders within the Chinese Communist Party itself, Chou En-lai based himself on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and kept his faith in the ability of the people to make revolution. Throughout the twists and turns, advances and setbacks of the revolutionary struggle, Chou stood firmly with the interests of the working class and oppressed people, learned from them and led them, and held high the banner of working class rule.

The Revolutionary Student Brigade also sponsored broad meetings of students on many campuses in tribute to Chou En-lai. Photo displays, articles in student newspapers and literature tables helped build these meetings. Nearly one hundred students participated at the University of Illinois and 150 turned out in Norman, Oklahoma. At U.C. Berkeley 200 people heard the speeches. The Brigade reported that "we found a lot of enthusiasm and interest about China, socialism and revolution. Most people had a lot of basic questions like 'Are people really free' and 'How does socialism work?' At many places, people stayed long after, asking questions about socialism and China and discussing revolution in the U.S."

In several cities the U.S.-China Peoples Friendship Association sponsored or participated in commemorations which themselves testified to the great progress that has been made in developing friendship and understanding between the people of the U.S. and China. In New York over 1500 people attended the meeting. Chou En-lai, as part of the collective leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Premier of the National State Council played an important role in advancing this growing friendship.

In accordance with his wishes Chou En-lai's ashes were spread over China, to whose liberation he had made great contributions. But the example and memory of this great revolutionary communist has spread throughout the world. ■

Correction: There was a misprint in the English section of the January 15, 1976 issue of *Revolution*. In the commemoration to Chou En-lai, the last sentence should read, "In this moment of solemn reflection, we strengthen our resolve to unite the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought with the concrete practice of United States revolution in solidarity with the revolutionary struggle of the people of the world."

Busing...

Continued from page 2

the struggle.

CFAS was not the only organization out there—there were organizations consciously trying to lead the struggle of the masses against the busing plan down a dead end. Besides the bourgeoisie itself there were its handmaidens. Mothers Alert Detroit (MAD) is a whites only organization on the northeast side who think of themselves as ROAR's counterpart in Detroit. But unlike ROAR, MAD didn't have the open backing of such powerful political hacks and businessmen, who didn't think their line would get over with the workers in Detroit. Like ROAR, their line was a combination of veiled racism and slobbering about their "sacred rights of Americans" like "there goes 200 years of freedom on a bus." They talked about "protecting the standards in the schools" and "the right to keep our neighborhoods as they are."

Many honest people hooked up with them and later came over to CFAS because "They're racial and they don't do anything anyway." When it got right down to it, what MAD was pushing as a solution to the busing plan was putting kids into private schools and running away to the suburbs. A secondary aspect of their line was channeling the masses' questions about the system raised by the busing plan into anti-communism—"the busing plan is part of a plot by communists to take over the country and Judge Demascio is their right hand man." But their main role was to lead the struggle down a dead end.

Metropolitan Area Parents against forced busing (MAP), a group in the southwest in an unholy alliance with MAD, had the same line—particularly "run to the private schools and suburbs." Once active, their no-fight line led to an ebb in their activity until CFAS began to lead the struggle in that area, and MAP popped up to pimp off the gains made there. They're promoting their leader as the next school board hack, and peddling their votes to whichever politician says he will stop the busing plan and push a constitutional amendment.

While the main line of the bourgeoisie was "take your poison peacefully—it's the law," its media constantly promoted groups like these as the "anti-busing movement" in hopes of splitting Black workers, especially, off from the movement to stop the plan.

From the other side, there was the NAACP. Although originally they had pushed for a plan that would include the suburbs, they called for support of the Detroit busing plan as a step towards Black children receiving better education. They pushed the rotten line, "the green follows the white"—as if the ruling class gave a damn about any working class kid's education. They played on the fact that the Black schools are the worst of a bad lot to raise questions in the minds of Black workers that maybe this plan

would mean a little better education for their children. And all along, they resorted to vicious "honky" baiting—"Let the whites leave the city, so much the better"—and slandered any resistance to the busing plan as "racist." The ruling class media also gave these vermin plenty of buildup.

But when the busing plan started, and there was no fighting at the schools, the ruling class was quick to pat themselves on the back. They turned the schools into armed camps, with police cars, helicopters and local mini-stations to receive the non-existent "racist mobs."

The working class itself takes credit for the fact that there was no violence directed at each other or at any children the first ten days of the busing plan. The struggle against the busing plan in Detroit has been marked, right from the beginning, by a strongly expressed desire for unity on the part of the workers. There are many examples of this. At a picket line at the federal building with parents from the Southwest, the KKK tried to sneak into the line and turn it into a flag waving KKK demonstration. When a parent exposed them, the masses chased the KKK worm out, shouting "Get out of here! We don't stand for what you stand for," and made sure to pass the CFAS brochures out to people on the street, to show what they *did* stand for.

But as many workers point out, the rotten conditions in the schools make for an explosive situation. The working class still hates the busing plan and all it means for its children. Kids are made to wait up to an hour at the bus stop, for buses that sometimes never come. Some children don't get home from school till nearly 5 PM, after riding buses for up to six miles. Buses have been involved in several accidents and many near misses in heavy traffic. At the schools two grades are being taught in the same room by the same teacher. Class sizes have increased, while four schools have closed and 24 more have been slated to go. At the Wilkins school on the East side, students found the library and a special reading lab the parents themselves had paid for padlocked and several teachers missing.

This is going on all over the city as the ruling class grabs its chance to snatch back what little benefits the working class had won in the schools and creates conditions to get us fighting over the crumbs. Real estate vultures have been calling people, saying "We hear your children are being bused—want to sell your house?" and the masses tell them, "Go to hell—we're not moving." This is just one more ugly aspect of how profit figures into the busing plan.

A number of so-called "communists" in Detroit, who are really nothing more than opportunists with petty bourgeois contempt for the working class, worked hand in hand with the ruling class to get the busing plan through. They lectured to people about how racist they were for being against busing. One group, the "Communist Labor Party," formed "Let's make it work committees" with PRO Detroit and actually demanded that harming a bus be made a capital offense punishable by death. But these opportunists were left high and dry on Monday, Jan. 26, when they stood alone on the street corners waiting for the "racists" to attack the children. People had real contempt for these fools. As one woman put it "What do they think, we're going to attack our own children?"

Fight Will Continue

On the day the busing plan started and a few days afterwards, thousands of people, Black and white, kept their children home. Attendance was down 40.5% at the "affected" schools. The boycott wasn't organized enough to be a real strong front in the fight against the busing plan, but showed how much the working class in Detroit hated the plan and laid the basis for further struggle. CFAS took the struggle into the enemy camp with a militant picket line at the school board on January 26 chanting, "They lay us off, they drive us down, and now they're pushing our kids round, no way!" People cheered when a member of CFAS, a woman whose kids go to the Maybur school in southwest Detroit, told it like it is, "Are we supposed to believe that the same people who brought us unemployment, wars and crumbling cities are now interested in integration and quality education? No way!" This picket line with its call to unite and keep up the fight summed up the views of working people all over the city about the busing plan. During the Franklin struggle, one of the mothers explained why they were fighting so hard, "A lot of us didn't finish school and some of our parents didn't even go at all. We're determined our children will have a good education. My daughter had a problem learning to read. But after the parents got together and fought for a better reading program, things really improved. Now she really likes school. We're not about to send her to another school."

The working class hated the busing plan, and despite the tremendous push of the ruling class, struggled to unite and fight it. The fight is going to continue against this busing plan, the inequality in the schools and the cutbacks going along with it. At one regional school board meeting recently large numbers of workers came out to raise hell. As one parent said—"This is my first time here, but it won't be the last." ■

Publications

— Programme and Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. 175 pages. \$1.00.

(The following publications were originally published by the Revolutionary Union and were adopted by the RCP, USA, Oct. 1975)

— How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union and What This Means for the World Struggle. 156 pages. \$2.50.

— The Chicano Struggle and the Struggle for Socialism. 59 pages. \$1.50.

— Revolution: Only Road to Women's Liberation. Reprinted from *Revolution*, March 1974. In English and Spanish. 16 pages. 25 cents.

— Classes and Class Struggle. Reprinted from *Revolution*, April 1973. In English and Spanish. 8 pages. 10 cents.

— Proletarian Dictatorship vs. Bourgeois "Democracy." Reprinted from *Revolution*, May 1973. In English and Spanish. 12 pages. 10 cents.

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Paul Robeson: Freedom Fighter



Paul Robeson singing at Peekskill, NY, in 1949, surrounded by workers organized to defend the concert.

Paul Robeson died on January 23 at the age of 77. Immediately the newspapers and TV and radio ran obituaries about him. They noted how he was the first Black All-American football player, Phi Beta Kappa at Rutgers University, an internationally renowned actor and singer who starred in Broadway plays and in the movies and brought down the houses in Europe, Africa and Asia.

Now that he's dead some of the bourgeoisie even feel it's safe to say that the man was a bitter critic of racism, a supporter of socialism and a man who cooperated closely with the Communist Party, USA. After years of constant harassment, they're tipping their hats to his memory—making him out to be the "rare" man, the one man out of millions. They do this in order to gut out the real essence of what Paul Robeson was—an anti-imperialist fighter, who stood with the masses in their struggles, who put politics in command of his art. He saw no art apart from the struggle of Black people to be free and the struggle of the working class against imperialism. He used his talents to serve the people's struggle.

Who was Paul Robeson, who has been lost to most of the last generation of Americans? Many people remember him best as a singer who sang songs of the people's struggle all over the world, as an artist who joined their picket lines. The memory of Robeson evokes strong emotions among the Welsh miners, who remember when he came to the Rhondda Valley, lived with them and portrayed their culture and struggle in the film *Proud Valley* (1939). In welding his art to his strong political convictions he became an inspiration to masses worldwide and an enemy to the ruling class.

Lived Overseas for Many Years

Faced with very limited opportunities in the U.S. as a Black artist, Robeson went and lived abroad from 1927 until 1939, much of it in London. Before going overseas Robeson had spoken out against injustices here—against discrimination, Jim Crow, oppression of Black people, and his experiences abroad firmed up and further developed his political convictions. Early on he came into contact with Africans and became aware of the national liberation movements and anti-colonial struggles around the world, including the Chin-

ese revolution. It was his interest in the liberation struggles of African people that first led him to visit the then socialist Soviet Union. He developed a feeling of common unity with "the many millions who earned their bread by honest toil"—the working class of Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England.

The years 1934 and 1938 were very important in his life. In 1934 he made his first of many visits to the Soviet Union. Knowing well the conditions of life for the masses in the U.S. and in other capitalist countries, he contrasted life under capitalism with real working class rule. It was there he saw that "there are no heights man can't scale." He saw the great strides the peoples of many nationalities had made in 20 years since the Revolution and the elimination of discrimination and building of unity in the course of the battle to build a new society. Later, in speaking of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, he wrote of, "my deep conviction that for all mankind a socialist society represents an advance to a higher stage of life—that it is a form of society which is economically, socially, culturally, and ethically superior to a system based on production for private profit."

His convictions were neither swayed by the promise of gain nor the threat of loss. In 1936 the Republican Party national chairman proposed that he campaign for Alf Landon. His reward would be that as an actor he could write his own ticket to stardom. He declined. Many times he gave up chances for profitable appearances to be where he was needed by the struggle.

A Consistent Internationalist

During the Japanese invasion of China, Robeson toured Europe and the U.S. giving benefit concerts for China Relief. He rejoiced with the Chinese people in every victory over reaction and saw their revolution as the inspiring example to the people of Africa and all oppressed people. Robeson helped to popularize China's struggle and her music. In 1941 he recorded a benefit album—*Chee Lai* (Chinese for "arise").

Spain "was a major turning point" in his life. He sang for the Republican troops and the International Brigades who were fighting Franco's fascist troops. It was in Spain that he saw "the connections between

the problem of all oppressed people and the necessity of the artist to participate fully." With world war on the horizon, Robeson returned home to take part in the struggle, together with the struggle of all workers.

Back in the U.S. during the war years, Robeson stepped up his political activity, constantly speaking out and criticizing the ruling class for denying Black people of their democratic rights. The bourgeoisie held back from major attacks on him during the years of alliance with the Soviet Union. But at the end of the war, the bourgeoisie, fearful of the growing struggle of the working class, took off after him and other supporters and members of the Communist Party.

The witchhunts began in earnest after he made a remark to the World Peace Congress in Paris, in 1949, where he declared, "It is unthinkable that American Negroes will go to war on behalf of those who have oppressed us for generations against a country (the Soviet Union) which in one generation has raised our people to the full dignity of mankind."

Branded a subversive for refusing to sign the then required non-Communist oath, the State Department deprived him of his passport. He was guilty, they said, "in view of his frank admission that he has been for years active politically in behalf of independence of the colonial people of Africa." Robeson did not back down from his stand in the face of this. While this won him the support of the masses, he lost concert bookings, and concerts that were held were disrupted by professional vigilantes. His income dropped from \$100,000 in 1947 to \$6,000 in 1952.

Stood Firm Under Attack

Paul Robeson would not compromise his political convictions for his career, unlike many artists who came forward and then were influenced by the revisionism in the CPUSA. So many of those artists saw themselves as artists first and revolutionaries second. They were caught up in the contradiction that capitalism confronts all artists: "How can I make a living? How can I survive as an artist if my work is revolutionary and the bourgeoisie tries to stifle it and keep it from the public?" In the face of this Robeson boldly stood with the masses in their struggles. And older workers, both Black and white, remember him for that. When professional bookings were denied him, workers opened their union halls.

In August of 1949 in Peekskill, N.Y., Robeson was scheduled to do a concert. Reactionaries and hoodlums aided by police and state troopers attacked it and busted it up, leaving many with serious injuries. Not to be stopped, the Communist Party and thousands of workers rallied and formed defense guards around the concert site and on September 4 the concert was held with 30,000 in attendance.

After his passport had been revoked and he was forbidden to travel, he was invited to sing for the Canadian Mine, Mill and Smelter Worker's Union. In a show of solidarity and contempt for the bourgeoisie's ruling, thousands of workers travelled long distances to Peace Arch Park on the border between the U.S. and Canada to hear him sing.

An older American worker who remembers him said: "It was about 30 years ago when the old Communist Party was still revolutionary. The Party held a rally at the old Baltimore Coliseum on Monroe Street and Paul Robeson was the featured speaker. I was so excited about seeing him I, myself, sold over 100 tickets to the affair. The hall was bursting full up with working people and Paul Robeson was inspirational. It was a glorious evening. He sang songs of working people in struggle. When he spoke, he both made people aware of what was going on and got our enthusiasm up for the struggle. He was a real fighter for the working class."

During Robeson's several decades of revolutionary activity he made many important contributions to the struggle of the working class and the oppressed for emancipation. Millions of Black people in the U.S. saw Robeson as a leader for their fight for liberation and he continually sought to strengthen the links between the Black people's struggle and the worldwide struggle of the working class and oppressed peoples.

But even as he made these great contributions, Paul Robeson became influenced by the revisionism always present within the CPUSA which led to the CP's abandonment of revolution and the cause of the working class. For example he wrote, "Freedom can be ours, here and now: the long sought goal of full citizenship under the Constitution is now within our reach," as if freedom for Blacks, or as a matter of fact any working people, is possible short of the revolutionary victory.

But Paul Robeson was a staunch fighter. And, he remained a friend of China—even in the days of the heated polemics with the Soviet Union, although he never came out against the revisionists. Eventually Robeson's passport was renewed in 1958. He traveled on a world tour for the next five years falling ill in 1961.

His whole life proved him to be a brave and fearless fighter against oppression and exploitation. The working class' tribute lies in building the struggle Paul Robeson was so much a part of—to rid the world of the capitalist parasites so that working people of all nationalities can live in freedom. ■

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Garment...

Continued from page 1

part in the industry. The current union wage in women's and children's clothes manufacturing is \$3.05 an hour. Garment workers are paid by piece rates and theoretically their wages are not supposed to fall below this level. In fact, the union has seldom enforced this minimum, and in reality, it has been meaningless. And garment workers face a constant fight against higher quotas and speedup to stop the bosses' efforts to cut piece work rates. Hardly a day goes by without a work stoppage over rates in some shop.

The whole question of piece rates and the enforcement of the minimum is one of the most important issues in the contract demands of the workers. As a rank and file committee for a decent contract in the Bay Area put it "We need a wage raise now! Not in cents but in dollars. And we demand the same standards in all the shops... We are fed up with the piece rates making us responsible for our incomes. We demand a living wage now!"

Overcoming Divisions Through Struggle

The garment bosses have always used the fact that most garment workers are recent immigrants to try and divide the workers and to intimidate them from building struggle against miserable wages and working conditions, by threats of deportation and immigration raids. In November and December, as the contract negotiations were getting under way, there were four immigration raids a week in the New York garment center, where as many as 30 people were picked up in each raid. The Garment Workers Committee and other workers organizations in the UWO have raised the demand to "Defend the Foreign Born" and the Committee has seen it as an important issue in the fight of the garment workers.

Organizing against the garment bosses is made difficult by the way they have set up the industry. In New York City, for example, there are literally thousands of small contract shops, some with as few as ten workers. One large manufacturer may have as many as 20 shops doing its production. Even the large manufacturing shops often sub-contract out a lot of their work to smaller shops.

But despite these obstacles, the efforts to mobilize the anger and hatred of the workers into a campaign of struggle around these contracts has been growing. The Garment Workers Committee of the UWO has put forward demands that sum up the immediate needs and interests of the ILGWU rank and file in the area.

- 1.) Substantial wage increases, stopping the murderous rate-cutting and enforcement of the guaranteed wage minimum.
- 2.) Job Security—No Lay offs! Stop runaways and closings and oppose the various one week on and one week off tricks of the bosses. Decent benefits for those out of work.
- 3.) A real retirement plan—a decent pension and benefits.

Workers and Companies Together?

The line of the ILGWU leadership has always been to look out for the interests of the employers first. After all, they explain, if the companies are not making an adequate profit, they will close down or move their shops overseas or to some non-union area. To help keep industry profits up they have defended keeping wages down and have never seriously attempted to enforce the wage guarantees or piece work rates.

And as if that wasn't enough, the ILGWU has taken the wages workers pay into the union treasury and loaned it to the employers. On numerous occasions they have suspended the payment the shops are supposed to make into the union benefit funds—sometimes for years. It's happened that shops have gone out of business, leaving workers holding the bag with no pension or benefits.

The union has also fallen right in behind the employers' screams about foreign competition. The new union leadership has tried to cloak itself in the mantle of new, modern, dynamic leadership, but they sing the same old tune: support your capitalist. A "Buy America" campaign, which the union passes off as a "Union Label" drive has been slicked up and pushed heavily. The message is "don't blame the bosses, or even if you do you can't fight them. It's the imports and cheap foreign labor that's to blame for all our problems." It's with this view in their hearts that they have come up with a contract that emphasizes making the industry more "productive."

Not surprisingly, the employers have announced that the dressmakers' contract "is one we can live

with." The contract calls for a 25% raise over 40 months. But even this increase, below the rate of inflation, is more outrageous than it seems. It breaks down to a 12% increase for the lower paid operators and a barely adequate 35% increase for the higher paid cutters. The retirement benefits increase is only from 5% to 6% of the payroll. For most workers who now receive about \$100 a month pension (and some get less than \$50) that would mean an increase to \$120 per month. Welfare benefits are to be increased by one-half percent of the payroll during the course of the contract. In addition, there is a provision for a 90 day study "by both parties to see whether the workers need increased benefits," according to the *New York Times*.

But the heart of the unions "revolutionary new contract" is their scheme for setting piece rates. The *NYT* says, "For the first time the union will offer employers an incentive to modernize their plants and increase productivity... The union is promising to relate the piece rates to the work cycle in the plant, meaning that the rates could be lower if the output was higher."

The real effect of this contract is not hard to see. The union president said "if this system of production is such that with the same amount of effort and sweat a worker can produce more, we'll take a little less, provided the workers can share in the benefits of efficiency." This "sharing the benefits" program is nothing but a plan to chain the workers even tighter to the profits drives of the companies—the source of their miseries and the target of their struggles. And this is the scheme the hacks hold up as a model for the industry and want to impose on the remaining ILGWU contracts this year.

The bourgeoisie is already patting themselves on the back over this first garment contract. *Business Week* magazine notes that this is a big year for major wage settlements. "Some 4.5 million workers in com-

panies employing 1,000 or more workers will be getting new contracts... The year started on a note of restraint though. The first major union to come to bat, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, settled for an average of 7½% for the first year of the contract, less than that in the second and third years."

Wide Resistance

But the growing battles of garment workers in New York and around the country, as well as workers in other industries, is an indication that there is going to be sharp struggle against the capitalists efforts to ride roughshod on the workers' backs.

A good example of this, is the battle building among workers in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union at Farah Pants Mfg. in Texas. After 22 months of a bitter strike that won wide support and inspired thousands of workers in industries throughout the country, the workers won a union and a contract two years ago. Since the workers' victory, Farah has never let up their efforts to take back the gains the workers have won and bust the union.

Recently the struggle there has sharpened as the rank and file have been holding rallies in the plants and parking lots (a tactic developed during the union organizing drive) as part of their move to go on the offensive to build the union. The contract does not expire until March of 1977, but there is a reopener later this year around insurance and other benefits. Farah workers are looking forward to the reopener to build strength for the contract next year and the battles ahead.

From coast to coast, this year is certain to be a year of growing organization and struggle in the garment industry, as the workers determination deepens to build the union, break the present hold of the officials on their struggles, and build the movement against their conditions.

"There's Blood On The Tracks"

The steel mills and factories of this country are death-traps. In Cleveland *so far this year* 4 have died in the steel mills. A steelworker died between 2 railroad cars on a Blast Furnace trestle, and the rail-roader died in a similar accident down on the tracks.

At Republic Steel a worker was killed because a cement truck had no brakes. And a steelworker died in a collision on the Clark Ave. bridge because he couldn't see for the thick fog billowing out of J&L.

In all the mills in the country, the rate of disabling injuries has jumped over 25% in the last few years.

In the Iron Producing Department at J&L this month's safety sign proclaims, "Carelessness Causes Accidents." That's what all the bosses say to take the heat off them and to lay the blame for unsafe and miserable working conditions on the workers. But we know what's causing these "accidents." All the companies care about is the number of tons produced; whether steelworkers get hurt or die is of little concern to the owners of the mill.

But people are starting to band together, and get better organized to fight against *all* the rotten conditions we are facing. A workers' movement in the mills, mines and factories of America is growing and aims to turn things around. That scares pure hell out of the owners of J&L, Republic, etc. And for our brothers who have died...the greatest service we can do them is to join in and build this fight.

The following poem was written in January, 1976, in memorium to the four men killed at J&L and Republic:

*There's blood on the trestles and blood on the tracks
in the Flats at J&L—*

*There's death on the bridge coming over the ridge
and there's death at Republic as well.*

*There are many who've cried for the 4 that have died—
as into the earth they have sown them,*

*There's blood on the tracks at J&L,
and on the hands of the people that own them.*

*"Carelessness Causes Accidents" reads the safety sign
down at the mill.*

*But conditions get worse as they bring up the hearse;
and another man's signing his will.*

*And the foremen push harder, so the profits climb farther—
as they smile for the bones that are thrown them;*

*There's nothing worse than a company man—
except for the people that own them.*

*Yes there's blood on the hands of the rich in this land—
those who think they're above us, so regal.
But we never forget that they live from our sweat,
and for them even murder is legal.*

*As we work on the trestles and down on the tracks
on the furnace where iron ore's smelting,
Our anger is burning as hot as the ore,
as hot as the steel that we're melting...
And as we unite building 1 common fight—
we won't give up, or sellout, or crack.
We've carried the bosses for 200 years—
time to throw them all off of our back!*

Reprinted from *The Worker for the Cleveland-Northeast Ohio Area*.

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Cuba...

Continued from page 5

sided and forever dependent manner, according to what was most profitable. It was particularly disastrous because Cuba failed to produce the 10 million tons, but even if this goal had been surpassed the basic effect of the economy's structure—its dependence on imperialism—would have remained the same. And in this situation it is definitely more profitable to grow cane than develop industry in Cuba—otherwise the U.S. imperialists would have industrialized Cuba long ago. Even in the last few years, when very high market prices for sugar have allowed Cuba to make some profit on its foreign trade for the first time, "economics" still dictated that it be plowed back into making the sugar industry even bigger and more profitable.

Profit in Command

At the recent party congress Castro spoke as though "the profitability criterion" had been unknown in Cuba for many years. In fact, the decision to expand sugar production showed that from the start his government's strategy for building "socialism" was based on profitability. This was not a mistake—it was a class decision, a basic political step that decided what road Cuba was to take and what classes would benefit from it.

Even under socialism the working class must take into account "profitability," but profit remains an economic category reflecting the old, capitalist relations of production. Put simply this means that the working class, through the state, must consider the cost, in money, that goes into the production of things (wages, the price of raw materials, etc.) and the price at which the goods produced are sold—generally prices are expected to cover costs and produce a surplus. *But the aim of production under socialism is not profit.*

Under socialism it is the political line of the working class—its conscious decisions through its party and its state—that determines economic policy, "the plan" for what will be produced and how. Fundamentally, the plan is based on taking account of the material things in society (the workers, available machinery, raw materials etc.) to meet the needs of society—food, clothing, schools, new factories, etc. The basic purpose of the working class recognizing the criterion of profit is so that it can wage a political struggle to restrict, to limit, and eventually to do away with it completely. To base an economy on "the profitability criterion" is capitalism, not socialism.

Neither can the working class build socialism by relying on foreign aid or trade, no matter how well intended. This is because its goal, communism and classless society, is not just a matter of abundance. But that is exactly how Castro explained it to the masses, as if communism were just a pie in the sky promise of better times. For its own liberation, the working class has to lead the masses of people in transforming conditions in each country, wiping out the material and social basis of class contradictions and training the masses in the outlook of the proletariat, so that everyone becomes a worker and the workers are conscious masters of production and every aspect of society. Only on that basis will classes disappear and communism be won.

Self reliance, unleashing, organizing and relying on the creative power of the masses within each country is the only way the working class can break the economic and social chains of capitalism.

Didn't Diversify Agriculture

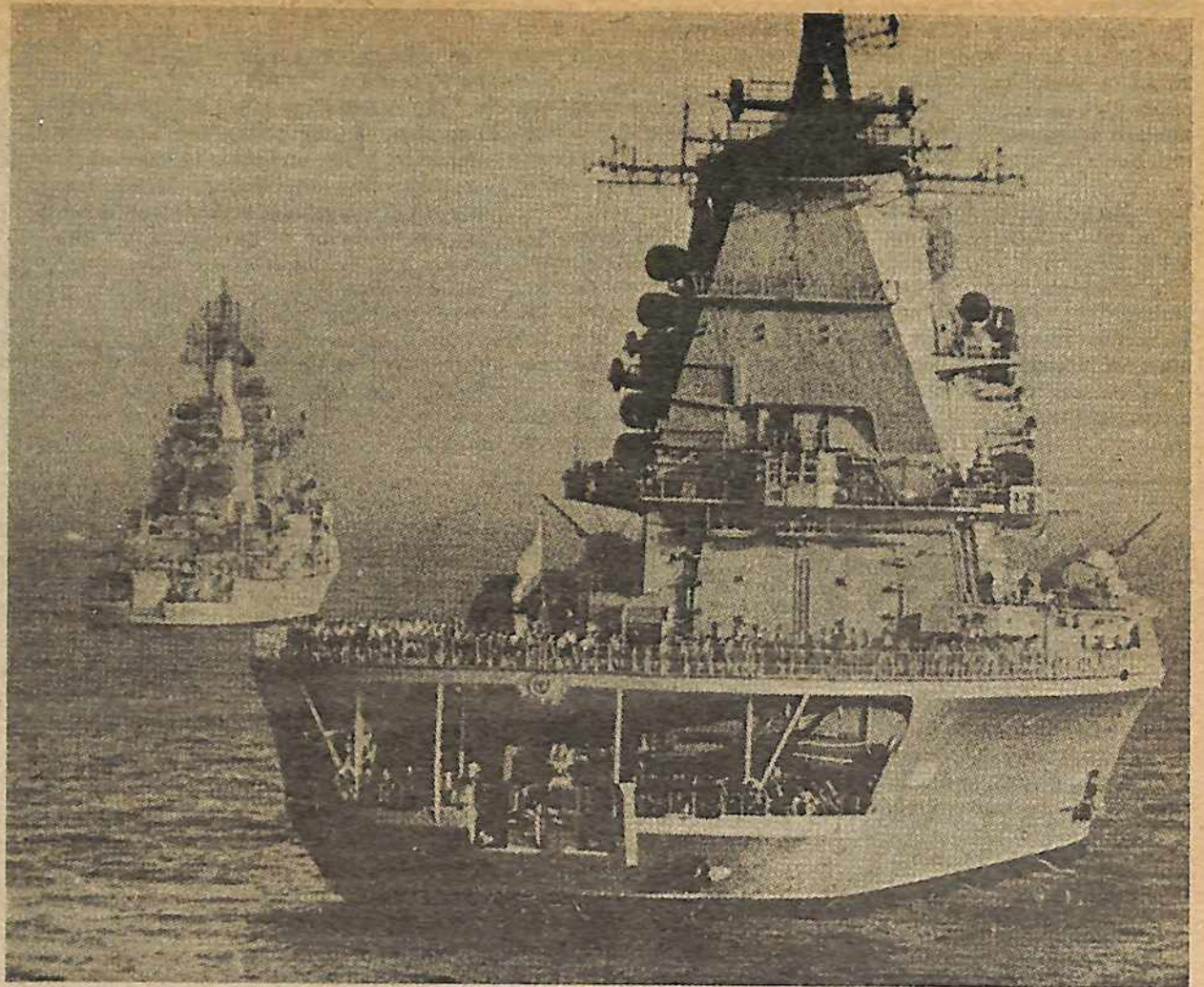
Cuba couldn't waste the sugar by letting it rot in the fields, or forget about using it to buy some imports if it could. But especially because not only Cuba's agriculture but its whole economy was dominated by sugar it had to diversify its crops as the only possible basis for breaking out of its neo-colonial structure.

In a system where the basic principle upon which all decisions are made is the needs of society and not profit, feeding the people and feeding them well is basic. The fact that the profitability of sugar has always pushed aside less profitable food crops made a lot of food staples very expensive and scarce for the masses.

Furthermore, unless agriculture was diversified and developed, Cuba would never have a basis for complete industrialization, either in raw materials from agriculture (for which Cuba still largely is dependent on imports) nor in terms of developing a market for machinery and consumer goods.

Castro argued that it was much cheaper to import tractors from the Soviet Union, where factories could churn them out by the millions, than to set up factories in Cuba, which didn't need that many tractors. But again this is capitalist economics. If Cuba didn't develop its industry, even though this might be more "efficient" in the short run, then in the long run it would always be dependent on imported manufactured goods.

In "generously" providing Cuba with "aid" and encouraging it to enormously increase its production of sugar, the USSR was doing exactly as the U.S. had done—strengthening the most backward aspect of the Cuban economy—its dependence on sugar production. This meant reproducing in a new form the old content—



Soviet warships and submarines call regularly in Cuba where the Soviets maintain their only secure naval facilities in the Western Hemisphere.

export of capital to the colony, colonial dependence on the imperialist "mother country." It also meant that the Cuban leaders, by ruling Cuba under these conditions, were fast becoming sugar lords and dependent capitalists.

The decision on sugar was no mere mis-step by the Cuban leadership. The example and experience of all socialist construction, including some recent experience in China and Albania, served as unmistakable examples of the difference between the socialist and capitalist road on the question of developing the economy.

Khrushchev, who had led in the establishment of a new exploiter ruling class in the USSR after Stalin's death, had tried to overthrow working class rule in China and Albania and bring those countries under the Soviet thumb, by ripping out Soviet technicians and blueprints and cutting off important supplies without warning. They even imposed an economic blockade around Albania, while threatening still more drastic action. Despite the fact that both countries were also very poor, and the fact that China is on the Soviet border and tiny Albania is surrounded by hostile states, the working class of these countries had done their best to develop them according to the principle of self-sufficiency and self-reliance, and they were able to resist Khrushchev's offensive, although not without cost.

The Cuban leadership often claimed that the U.S. blockade, the threat of aggression, and Cuba's short supply of some key natural resources forced them to hitch their wagon to the Soviet Union. But despite whatever real obstacles that did exist to building genuine socialism in Cuba, these were certainly no greater than the conditions faced in real socialist countries. In fact, Cuba's most important resource, the working class itself, was much larger than in Albania, for exam-

ple.

In fact, the blockade, far from being a justification for reliance on the Soviets, was itself yet another reason for self-reliance: to avoid the threat of strangulation the economy could not be based on the assumption that ships would always be able to reach Cuba.

The Soviet Union, for its part, did oppose the U.S. when it suited their interests and even used Cuba to shake a few more sabers in the U.S. imperialists' faces, but as the Cuba missile crisis proved, they were quite willing to use Cuba as a pawn to be traded to the U.S. if that proved to be to their advantage. And as the development of things showed, Soviet military "protection," like Soviet "aid" and trade, meant Soviet protection of its property and the end of Cuban independence.

China-Cuba Dispute

An incident between the Cuban and Chinese governments in 1966 shows just how fast the Cuban leaders were going down the road of neo-colonial dependence, and how much, despite all their revolutionary rhetoric, their politics were increasingly dictated by the laws of capitalism. China had doubled its shipment of rice to Cuba for the year of 1965, at the Cuban government's request, but when the Cuban government demanded that China maintain that level permanently, the Chinese government responded by saying they were willing to talk about it but had some serious objections.

China's aid and trade is fundamentally different from that of the Soviet revisionists described earlier. China's aid is not an investment. Since China is ruled by the working class and not the bourgeoisie, China's aid and trade doesn't serve the "profitability criterion"—it serves proletarian politics and is based on equality and mutual benefit.

The Cuban government offered to pay for the increased rice shipments with sugar, and if the Chinese weren't interested in that, with cash that China had loaned the Cubans to help them diversify their economy. China answered that whatever the sugar might be worth in terms of money, they had no need for so much sugar, while they did need the rice. It was needed not only for their own consumption and to prepare a stockpile in case of war (China had recently been attacked by India, which was armed and backed by both the U.S. and the USSR), but also to supply Vietnam, then at war with the U.S. imperialists.

China's own bitter experience before and after its liberation had taught it well that economic dependence is a condition that revolution must end, an obstacle and a burden to the people. The Cuban people's rice ration had stayed the same even when China's rice shipments doubled because the Cuban government was ripping up rice fields to plant sugar cane—since rice was not as "convenient" as sugar according to the profitability principle. Using Chinese aid, which had been meant to help Cuba break out of sugar's chains, to buy rice would only make this situation worse.

Castro's response was to use the occasion of a Havana conference of some revolutionaries from Africa, Asia and Latin America to publicly lash out at China for "economic aggression." There he also made disgusting personal slanders on Mao Tsetung and called for his removal from office. In the context of the USSR's own attacks on China and the polemics then raging between the parties of the two countries

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1933: Cubans in Havana celebrate toppling of U.S. puppet dictator Machado after a national general strike and the armed seizure of many sugar mills, ports and a U.S. owned steel mill. The Cuban working class has a glorious tradition of revolutionary struggle against imperialism. By promising the workers socialism while continuing to chain them to the system of wage slavery, the Cuban bourgeoisie and their Soviet masters are playing with fire. The Cuban working class and people are sure to rise in revolution and overthrow the rule of their oppressors and build a genuine socialist society.

Cuba...

Continued from page 17

over the general line for the international communist movement, this attack put Castro in particularly good standing with his Soviet creditors—a truly disgusting example of how the "profitability criterion" ruled Cuba's politics.

Nationalization—For What Purpose?

Of course, this wasn't the way Castro presented it. Every step, every measure that the government took was explained to the masses as a step towards "socialism," better yet, towards "communism." But every new nationalization, every new "revolutionary offensive," every new opportunity presented to the masses to show their real revolutionary enthusiasm, was in fact guided by "the criterion of profitability" and the class interests of Cuba's rulers.

In 1963, a few months after Castro's visit to the USSR and the signing of the sugar deal, Castro announced that in addition to the great estates and the property of the U.S. imperialists which had been seized before, now the land of the medium growers was to be confiscated. Those affected, growers with 160 to 990 acres—about 10,000 farmers and their families in all—were accused by Castro of "sabotaging sugar production" and aiding the CIA.

These were certainly not poor peasants, and couldn't be relied upon in the struggle to transform Cuba because they were exploiters themselves. Nevertheless, many of these farmers had supported the 1959 revolution because they had been severely restricted by the big sugar companies.

We cannot say exactly what would have been the correct policy toward these growers. The real point is not whether the particular policy toward them was a mistake or not. Mistakes need not be fatal and can be corrected, given an overall correct line. The important point is that, for the Cuban government, this policy was not at all based on how to develop socialist agriculture. It wasn't even a matter of defense of the revolution. For them, this complete expropriation was a reflection of what had become their overall policy: sacrifice everything to subordinate the maximum amount of land to the sugar mills and make the cane grow as cheaply as possible.

This exact same line—all out to turn the country into an efficient sugar producing operation—came out differently when applied to the several hundred thousand poor farmers. As the people who grew so much of Cuba's food, these peasants were potentially an important force in developing the economy along socialist lines. But the government's general policy was not to lead them in the voluntary collectivization of their land and labor.

Didn't Collectivize

Basically they just let them sit. Some went out of business and became part of the state farms, and a few grew rich. All this caused this part of the economy to stagnate in small private ownership, and Cuba still continued to have to spend 20% of its import money on food. All this was ignored by the Cuban leaders, who saw the motive force in their economy not as mobilizing the masses to break the old patterns of production and build socialism, but pushing the sugar export section of the economy, in order to "get rich quick."

The failure to lead these peasants through cooperation, collectivization and socialization ensured that this section of the people would remain stuck in the method and outlook of small private ownership, and that Cuba's agriculture would not develop in a socialist way.

The state farms formed from the old estates and the confiscated medium farms were in turn grouped together into giant *agrupaciones*, often totalling several hundred thousand acres. This was a more "efficient"—more profitable—way to grow sugar, especially with the market now expanding to include the Soviet Union. But it wasn't a higher, more socialist form of ownership than before because the relations of production—especially the role of the producers in the whole set-up—was unchanged. Instead of working for a sugar company under the eyes of a few managers, now the mill workers and field hands worked for the government under the eyes of 20 or 30 bureaucrats. And the purpose of their labor remained the production of profit.

After a few years, when the state farms needed even more manpower for sugar, the state farm employees were forbidden to have even their private plots, on which many Cuban cane cutters grew small amounts of vegetables and other crops, principally for their own use.

Under socialism the working class strives to make most efficient use of the resources of society. In the long run this means, of course, large scale, mechanized, diversified agriculture, and at all times the working class must wage a political struggle against the capitalist tendencies that small scale production engenders.

But for a long period of time in many countries, certainly in Cuba, it is neither necessary nor desirable to eliminate all side-line agricultural production, even when some of the produce is sold. It can contribute to feeding people. And if the state-farm workers could grow much of their own food in their spare time it would be a good thing, freeing up resources to be used elsewhere.

But for the Cuban government, these private plots took time away from the main business—sugar cane. In effect, the government had become the new landlords, subordinating the laborers' needs and the needs of society to the demands of King Sugar just as before.

95.1% of Hot Dog Vendors "Counter-revolutionary"?

The shortage of manpower in the cane fields caused a mania of nationalization in the late '60s. In the so-called "revolutionary offensive" of 1968, when the sugar harvest was way behind, Castro announced that "95.1%" of all hot-dog sellers, grocery store owners, bar keepers and other small proprietors had been discovered to be "counter-revolutionaries." Worse, these "able bodied men were loafing" while "women went to the fields."

All of these establishments—55,000 in all—were seized. They were either closed down permanently (without regard to whether, for instance, the workers might need a hot-dog stand in front of a factory) or else run by bureaucrats, while the ex-proprietors were sent off to cut cane. Some turned out to be old and crippled, and many joined the almost 10% of Cuba's population who had fled the country.

Castro justified this by saying that the revolution hadn't been made just so "parasites" could run a business. But his approach to the question was the opposite of the proletariat's. In revolutions led by the working class, it is an important political question to win over the maximum number of forces against the enemy at each point in the struggle and to neutralize those who can't be won over. The working class, having seized power from the big capitalists, has to gradually do away with the small proprietors in its midst who represent a capitalist element. But the working class' method in this situation is to use persuasion, not force. The working class can win the vast majority of these people to building socialism and, in the course of this, transform both their political outlook and their economic position. But Castro's capitalism turned them into wage slaves pure and simple. For the Cuban government, it was a simple matter of economics: 55,000 "able-bodied men" = 55,000 potential cane cutters.

This nationalization was the greatest fraud and had nothing to do with socialism, even though the government might pronounce it very "revolutionary" to do away with someone else's business to serve its own. Nationalization is not necessarily socialization. Nationalization means simply control of a business by the state, which the bourgeois state does all the time, from the Post Office to Penn Central in the U.S., to the steel industry and the mines in Britain.

The key difference is which class holds power. When the working class runs the state, it is able to plan society increasingly to serve its own interests and all of humanity. To do this requires the increasingly con-



Despite the mask of socialism, Cuban workers, like workers in this country, are forced by the rule of capital to pour their whole life into producing profit for the exploiters. When Cuban workers win their emancipation their hard work will go to build a new society and help liberate all mankind.

scious and organized participation of the workers at all levels of society, including the enterprise level in management and administration.

The masses of workers and peasants have a great knowledge about production and about their overall and particular needs. With the leadership of the proletariat's party, their knowledge can be summed up and used to formulate a plan to run the economy in order to fill those needs and advance revolution. And the masses of producers can be organized, educated and relied upon to increasingly control and participate in the carrying out of this plan and run society. Unless all this is done, there is only one other way to make decisions—according to profit.

This is the case in Cuba. There are periodic assemblies of workers in the factories all right. But as a top government official explained them, "It is not a question of discussing all the administrative decisions. The thing is that the enthusiasm of the workers must be obtained to support the principal measures of the administration." This isn't very different from the kind of management pep talks workers in the U.S. often hear.

Cuban Economic Non-Planning

The factories, state farms, hot dog stands, etc., weren't run by a plan, in the working class sense of the word. Plans were made, but since the general lines of the economy were already decided by the production of sugar, the particular plans within that had to follow suit, to also be based on profit.

But in the '60s there was one very important difference between the management of the economy then and its present management. In the '60s the managers and bureaucrats were subject to little control or discipline regarding their particular enterprise or industry. In the name of establishing "communism" all at once (and with the freedom they thought Soviet "aid" had bought them), there was no economic accounting for their performance, and little control except for their superior's orders. This allowed the former intellectuals and professionals who were running the economy to trip out pretty much as they liked with "special projects" and so-called "miniplans," free as birds, until the bills for this "freedom" quickly came due.

All this was in the name of "socialism," of "eliminating the vile intermediary of money," as Castro explained. But in real socialist construction, when both the forces of production and the knowledge and conscious control of the producers are still relatively limited, the working class must use some economic accounting and controls over production in order to better understand what it is free to do and to help check up on its implementation. Again, this means subordinating economics to politics. Otherwise, if the plan doesn't strictly reflect reality and if it isn't strictly carried out, then the laws of capitalism will reassert themselves.

Discipline of Profit

While the new managers and bureaucrats wanted to be free of the "vile intermediary of money," they couldn't be free of the laws of capitalism and the market. The uncontrolled nature of production under this system, which created very severe economic setbacks and contributed a lot to the failure of the sugar harvest had to be brought under the discipline of profit.

At first profit commanded the economy through the direct intervention of Castro and other leaders, who ran around directing resources into sugar and other exports and industries that seemed to promise a quick return on investment. Then, in the later 1960s, the government tried to run everything with the aid of a giant Soviet computer and a set of mathematical tables prepared according to the instructions of a Harvard economist. Since these methods arranged things for maximum "efficiency" as measured in pesos and centavos, they were simply a disguised form of running things according to profit (and in fact are often used by capitalist management in the U.S. and USSR). By the early 1970s, however, even these methods turned out to be not efficient enough and piece by piece the government began reorganizing the economy according to the same principle, in form as well as content, followed by the dollar and especially the ruble.

These real relations of production, these real class relationships, were camouflaged by fast and loose use of Marxist words. And at the same time, the workers and peasants were expected to work doubletime in honor of this phoney "Marxism."

"Voluntary" Labor

In the name of "using conscience to create wealth" and "creating the New Man," workers were increasingly called upon to do great amounts of voluntary labor. This was especially true in the late 1960s, as growing numbers of cane cutters streamed out of the countryside looking for better pay and conditions, leaving the all-important sugar harvests short of manpower.

The enormous numbers of workers, students and even sometimes bureaucrats bused into the cane fields, however, had little resemblance to real socialist volun-

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ers took a pay cut in the name of building a "pure, really pure society," high school teachers, for instance, got a 60% wage hike. And on the new plan, managers will be paid for their profit performance.

Even so, people's wages were not what they seemed. Rent was cheap and even free for some, and many prices at that time were cheaper than before. But by the end of the '60s consumer goods were so scarce that the amount of money in circulation was twice the value of goods available on the market. Much of people's pay was worthless because there was nothing to spend it on. (Since then this has been "solved" by raising prices.)

Economy in Shambles

By the late 1960s the Cuban economy was in shambles. In 1964, after signing the sugar sales agreement with the Soviet Union, Castro had announced that by 1970 Cuba would harvest 10 million tons of sugar a year. This plan meant almost tripling sugar production.

A high 30% of the economy was being plowed back into capital investment, focusing on clearing land for cane, buying tractors for cane, building new mills for cane, railroads for cane, ports for cane—as well as expanding other export crops and nickel mining for export. After the first two years, sugar production began to fall farther and farther behind the targeted goals. And the more sugar fell behind, the more frantically other resources were thrown into sugar production, with workers drawn out of every other industry. Even housing was left standing half-built as the workers were snatched away to cut cane.

But this plan turned out to be a nightmare, and Cuba's rulers were in deep trouble. In their frenzied efforts to make that goal upon which Castro had very publicly staked "the honor of the revolution," they so burned out men, machines and fields that the 8.5 million tons that was achieved in 1970 came at such a cost that in the next two years cane production fell to a new low in recent Cuban history. And not only did they not get the 10 million tons, by 1970 they had fallen so far behind in sending sugar promised to the Soviet Union that they *owed* the USSR 10 million tons.

Cuba's economic statistics for this period paint a picture of disaster. The country's industrial production had risen somewhat until 1968, when sugar production began to reach a fever pitch. Then it fell sharply, according to Cuban figures. Steel and shoe production, for instance, dropped like a stone. Non-sugar agricultural production fell by a fifth. (Cuban statistics quoted by the UN). The number of cattle fell from 7 million to 5 million in three years. The number of pigs also went down. Poultry and many vegetables remained scarce.

According to the American "experts" on the subject, their statistics show that the standard of living of the masses was slowly falling throughout the late 1960s. We don't have to take their words for it, because according to the Cuban government the amount of goods people could get under rationing either stayed the same or decreased (as in the case of milk), and even the personal consumption of Cuba's two most famous products, sugar and cigars, was drastically cut—to have more left over for export—while the prices of many consumer items rose sharply. That the workers didn't care for the way things were going is shown by the admission by the Cuban Minister of Labor that absenteeism from work was 20% on the average day in 1970. He described this as "widespread passive resistance."

To the Cuban masses, the government had promised that the 10 million ton harvest would produce the abundance necessary for Cuba's economic liberation. But this drive and its failure had further enslaved the Cuban people. By 1970 the Cuban government owed the USSR over \$2 billion, and the Soviets were demanding more than a pound of flesh in return.

Soviets Bark Orders, Castro Cracks Whip

The recent Cuban party congress was a consolidation and formal ratification of many of the changes that the Cuban government has been making since the early 1970s.

First and most important, there is a new crackdown on the working class. Along with the new wage policy described at the beginning of this article, there is now less emphasis on relying on the masses' enthusiasm and more on plain old force. This was in line with a 1973 decision which revived a system of punishment familiar to workers throughout the capitalist world: for offenses ranging from absenteeism, lateness and negligence to lack of respect to supervisors, workers can be punished by docking their paycheck, being disqualified from certain posts, transferred to another job, postponement of vacations, temporary suspensions and actual firing.

Individual sugar enterprises started laying off workers several years ago to increase "productivity." Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos admitted in a 1972 speech that there was some outright unemployment in two of the largest sugar growing provinces. Now, according to the party congress, this practice is to become much more widespread in other industries.

The decisions of the congress established a formal system for running the Cuban economy along capitalist lines. Bureaucrats and managers won't be so free to damage profit with their fantasies anymore since that is one freedom even the social-imperialists' money can't buy. The whole economy is to be run more "efficiently" now, with profit to be made at every step. Workers are to be paid according to the profitability of the enterprises they work for (to make them work harder—which won't make them any less exploited). Managers are to be paid according to the profitability of the enterprises they manage (to make them work the workers harder), and those at the top are to be paid "rewards for results"—after all, don't they have the responsibility of running everything?

Role of the Cuban Party

The Cuban government has learned from the experience of the Soviet revisionists in more than just the "socialist" version of capitalist economics. The decision to finally hold a first congress of the Communist Party of Cuba ten years after its founding is a good example of that.

When the Party was founded in 1965, its role was mainly formal. Since Cuba was supposedly a "socialist" country it had to have a "communist" party. This was cooked up by amalgamating Castro's July 26th Movement, the Revolutionary Directorate (a student group which had taken up arms against Batista) and the Popular Socialist Party, the old revisionists who had long ago given up calling their party communist and opposed the armed struggle against Batista until the last minute, even going so far as to betray some of the student fighters to Batista's police. This new Party's leading bodies rarely met, few people joined it and in general it was mainly for show.

For the working class, its party is its key weapon in making revolution and building socialism. Only through the organized detachment of the most class conscious fighters can the knowledge and experience of the laboring people in their millions be summed up to formulate the line and policies that can lead the working class forward. The leaders of the Cuban revolution got a lot of

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Billboard exhorts Cubans to achieve the goal of six million tons of sugar by July 1 promising it would be a blow to Uncle Sam. Castro staked the "honor of the revolution" and, more importantly, most of Cuba's resources on the success of the 1970 10 million ton campaign. Its failure left the economy in shambles and the country further in hock to the USSR.

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tary work, which under working class rule is an important measure for developing society and transforming the working class.

Under socialism when the workers rule and are transforming society toward communism, there is a real basis for people to spend their spare time doing voluntary labor. But in Cuba, the "voluntary" labor was nothing like this. This was because the needs of sugar production meant that people's "voluntary labor" was often at the expense of their regular work, and because, although many people did take part enthusiastically and selflessly, logging a certain number of hours of "voluntary" labor was the only way to become eligible to buy durable consumer goods such as refrigerators, etc. Many workers resisted this scheme. Productivity in "voluntary" labor was often only 10% of paid labor—but it was still cheaper than paying wages.

Promises of Communism

Just as Castro had claimed that the increasing concentration of sugar was necessary "so as to fully develop the productive forces," he also claimed that the increasing emphasis on voluntary labor was also a communist measure. In fact, as many workers were becoming very sceptical about how things were going under "socialism," throughout the '60s Castro made increasing use of the promise that "communism" would come in the very near future (starting within ten years, he said) and would put an end to Cuba's growing problems.

This was a very convenient misuse of what communism really means, as well as pure pie-in-the-sky, as developments quickly proved. No amount of labor, voluntary or otherwise, will change the capitalist class relations, which are the real cause of Cuba's problems. And the Cuban government was using all sorts of devices—from perverting people's real revolutionary enthusiasm, to material incentives, to outright wage cutting—to disguise this fact and squeeze more and more labor out of the people.

In industry and especially among skilled workers, wages for a great many jobs were cut, under the slogan "workers renounce gains which today constitute privileges." Many times Castro has denounced the so-called "privileges" that some workers supposedly enjoyed under Batista (as well as those supposedly enjoyed by workers in the U.S. today). But it's the capitalists who've caused inequalities among the working people, not fundamentally by favoring some, but by paying all as little as they can get away with. The socialist principle "to each according to its work" means that people do receive different pay for different work, because they contribute different amounts to society. Restricting these differences, and eventually doing away with them, must overwhelmingly be done by raising the general wage level—not by forced wage-cutting.

It's the capitalists' idea of "equality" that all workers should be equally poor, and that some workers should pay for whatever advances others make. This, too, was the Cuban government's idea of "building socialism and communism simultaneously." Meanwhile, of course, class differences widened. While work-



Cuban soldiers after their capture of Ambriz in northern Angola. Ten thousand Cuban troops under Soviet "advisors" are serving as an expeditionary force to conquer Angola for the social-imperialists—all under the guise of fighting imperialism.

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support from the masses, but since they never based themselves on the working class, they had no need for such a party.

But the experience they've had as a new dependent capitalist class has made them more "realistic" about protecting and strengthening their rule. The party they have organized and brought to center stage was created by this class and is guided by its interests and outlook. Its leaders are the rulers of the state, the army, the factories and the farms. Castro reported to the congress that 40% of its members are administrators and full time party officials, 10% are teachers and health workers. As for the rest who belong to factory and farm units, we don't know exactly how many are workers and peasants and how many are technicians and managers. We do know from a previous speech that, at least in 1970, the manager and party leader in these units were almost always the same person—and on state farms more often than not, an army officer as well.

But the way we can tell what class a party represents is not mainly by the membership, but by the policies it carries out and what class interests these policies advance. Like the present revisionist party in the Soviet Union, this is not a party of the working class, to serve the working class' rule. It is a party of the bourgeoisie, to protect and strengthen their rule over the masses.

Castro's "Self-Criticism"

Even Castro's so-called "self-criticism" serves these class interests. "Perhaps our greatest idealism," he said not too long ago, "has been to believe that a society that has scarcely left the shell of capitalism could enter, in one bound, into a society in which everyone could behave in an ethical and moral manner."

At the party congress, Castro continued this theme: "Revolutions usually have their utopian periods, in which their protagonists, dedicated to the noble tasks of turning their dreams into reality and putting their ideals into practice, assume that historical goals are much nearer and that man's will, wishes and intentions can accomplish anything."

These are truly reminiscences of a new bourgeoisie looking back on its early days. Their rise to power began with a petty bourgeois revolution. The policies of its leaders reflected the outlook of that class, with all its vacillation, subjectivism, idealism and wishful thinking, impatience for quick change and lack of patience for struggle, and all the get-rich-quick schemes and other characteristics that reflect the petty bourgeoisie's unstable position between the working class and the capitalists. Their "left" line in the '60s and its real, underlying conservatism, and their rapid changeover to open revisionism in the face of difficulties, is all testimony to that outlook.

The main idealist form that this took was certainly not, as Castro would have us believe, having too high an

estimation of the masses of people. Their real idealism was that they expected that society could be changed just because they wanted it to, without the conscious and organized efforts of the masses in their millions. This was reflected in their theory that a "small handful of resolute men" alone could topple U.S. imperialism throughout Latin America, as well as by their theory that the combination of Soviet money and their ideas could bring socialism to Cuba, instead of the struggle of the masses themselves.

It wasn't idealism that they wanted things to change, nor that they believed that things could change. What was most idealist—what was furthest from reality—was the Cuban leaders' conception that they could maintain capitalism's division of labor with themselves on top, the thinkers and planners and administrators of all, while the working people would willingly carry out their plans without struggling against this exploitation and oppression.

Full Blown Bourgeoisie

What has changed in Cuba today, reflecting this transformation of these rebels into a new bourgeoisie, is that while they still maintain the appearances of "socialism," their experience at running society in their bourgeois way has taught them the outlook and methods of all capitalist ruling classes. They haven't exchanged their old petty bourgeois idealism for the outlook and struggle of the working class, but rather for that of the bourgeoisie itself. They still use rhetoric and illusions as a prop to their rule but now rely on the "discipline of the market" to make the workers work, backed up by all the coercion and outright force at their disposal.

"They grabbed, now let me have a go to." This was how Lenin described the outlook of the petty bourgeoisie towards Russia's overthrown rulers. This applies to Cuba's petty bourgeois leaders. For them the victory over the imperialists and their Cuban overseers was not an opportunity to transform the conditions that gave rise to the neo-colonial system. Instead they increasingly became replacements, in a new form, for those they had overthrown. On the basis of their own class outlook, and with the conditions so readily supplied by the Soviet revisionists, these once petty-bourgeois rebels have become a full-blown comprador bourgeoisie—dependent on the Soviet imperialists.

Cuba's trade figures with the Soviet bloc for the last few years are almost the same as they once were with the U.S. Exports still make up a third of the island's production (and most of that is sugar), with the bulk of these products going to the Soviet bloc.

While fertile land is tied down in the production of sugar, food remains on the long list of things which Cuba must purchase from abroad. This fact is a constant drag on its development. The Cuban debt to the USSR is now over \$5 billion, and to pay that back it is now planning to put even greater efforts into increasing sugar production. Recently the Cubans joined COMECON, which has been the main vehicle for Soviet economic domination of East Europe. This endless cycle of dependency, debt and yet more dependency, and the one crop economy at its center, is identical to that which ties many other Latin American countries to the U.S.

Cuba's Political Role

These are the imperialist economics which dictate Cuba's present political role in the world—its role as a tool, a puppet, used by Soviet social-imperialism to advance its interests everywhere.

For the Soviets, Cuba is a long term investment with far greater profits expected than simply immediate economic benefit. It is even conceivable that the USSR could lose money, in the short run, on its investments. But this would not effect Cuba's colonial dependence on the Soviet Union. Imperialist powers often subordinate their immediate profit in any particular country to their overall policies. A good example of this is Israel, where the U.S. has poured in billions of dollars, more than it could ever hope to squeeze out of control of the Israeli economy alone. Israel's real value to the U.S. is primarily as a political and military tool with which to protect its vast holdings in the Middle East.

The Soviet imperialists certainly expect to return a monetary profit on their Cuban investment. But Cuba's real value for them now is that, dressed in the revolutionary garb of anti-U.S. imperialism, it is a key tool in the Soviets' drive to replace the world domination of U.S. imperialism with its own—all in the name of revolution and communism.

"Revolutionary" Credentials

As a country which has made a revolution against the U.S. and has consistently tried to enhance its "revolutionary" credentials, Cuba is able to advance the Soviet imperialists' cause in many areas where the USSR can't act so openly in its own name.

Part of Cuba's service is to provide a cover and to counter attack against exposure and denunciation of the Soviet imperialists: to call things their opposite and hide their real nature.

Cuba was particularly valuable for this at the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries in Algeria in 1973, when Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk denounced the USSR as an accomplice in the U.S. aggression against Cambodia. Castro stood up and launched an attack on Sihanouk and others and spouted an embittered defense of the Soviets, who he portrayed as the staunch and natural ally of the oppressed countries.

Today, the Cuban leaders are playing this theme still louder and more shamelessly than before. At the recent party congress, Castro said "no true revolutionary, in any part of the world, will ever regret that the USSR is powerful, because if that power did not exist...the people who fought for liberation in the last 30 years would have had no place from which to receive decisive help...and all the small, underdeveloped nations—of which there are many—would have been turned into colonies once more."

The message behind this is loud and clear: underdeveloped countries cannot win liberation without depending on the Soviet Union. This call for the world to follow the "Cuban model" is a very important service to the Soviet rulers who are trying to pervert the struggles of the oppressed against U.S. imperialism to serve their own purpose of replacing the U.S. as the world's biggest exploiters and oppressors.

But of course the Soviet rulers are not fundamentally counting on Castro's speeches to advance their interests. More and more, like the U.S. imperialists, they are counting on guns. And, here too, the Cuban leaders have seen the light of Soviet "realism."

Armed Intervention in Angola

These days instead of spreading the line of "guerrilla focos" to substitute for the masses own struggle for liberation, now Cuba is sending its soldiers riding in on Soviet tanks and planes.

The thousands of Cuban troops accompanying the Soviet tanks in Angola are only one of the many payments the Cuban ruling class will be expected to make to its Soviet masters on the practical front.

Not only do the social imperialists use Cuban troops to try to bring Angola under their heel. They try to sell it all as "proletarian internationalism" and they go so far as to portray Cuba as an example of what great blessings are in store for other countries if only they tie their future to the Soviet Union and its "aid." But the fact that thousands of Cuban soldiers are sent to fight and die as pawns in this counter-revolutionary crime is a tremendous exposure of Soviet imperialism, which no amount of words can hide.

The Soviet imperialists say that the working class and masses of people are destined to remain in chains unless they receive Soviet "aid" and submit to Soviet control. The U.S. imperialists, whose own economic and military aid has long been used to enslave and reinforce the bonds of oppression of many peoples, say the same thing from their angle—if the oppressed and exploited of a country dare rise up against U.S. "protection" and plunder they are sure to fall prey to the Soviet jackals.

But the most important lesson to be learned from the failure of the Cuban revolution is just the opposite of this imperialist logic. The masses of people in each country can free themselves, and advance the cause of freeing all humanity only by relying mainly on their own efforts and not the "aid" of the world's exploiters—by taking the road of proletarian revolution. ■

"The starting point for developing the strategy for revolution in any one country must be based on a correct assessment of the world situation and the general strategy for advancing proletarian revolution on a world scale. Without such a correct view, inevitably we will make errors in analyzing the particular contradictions existing in any one country, fail to fully understand the present general crisis of imperialism, and not be able to correctly prepare the working class and the masses of people for the struggles looming ahead of us.

"The transformation of the Soviet Union from the leading country in (what was then) the socialist bloc to an imperialist superpower has profoundly affected the alignment of class forces on a world scale, and hence the world-wide strategy and tactics for making revolution."

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