

May 16-29, 1974

No. 9

by Chris Hudson

The overthrow of the brutal Caetano regime signals the start of the Portuguese revolution. The working class is already mobilizing behind its own demands.

To defend and expand their newfound political freedoms and to win for themselves the economic and social gains they so desperately need, the Portuguese proletariat must overthrow their new rulers. Thus, the future of the revolution now hinges on the creation of a new leadership for the working class.

## BACKGROUND OF COUP

The April coup stemmed from the increasing disintegration of Portuguese capitalism. The general world economic crisis and the inflation which it brought were brutal stabs at the poorest-paid working class in Europe, which for the last year has been fighting back with strikes in major industries.

The costs of the war of suppression in Portugal's African colonies, always a drain on the state budget, now threatened to sink Portugal altogether. The semi-fascist Caetano regime, the heir to the 40-year dictatorship of Antonio Salazar, was so weak that when an unsuccessful military uprising occurred in March, Caetano could not

even punish the rebels for fear of a new revolt.

Given the instability of the Caetano regime, the Portuguese bourgeoisie—and the British, German and American firms which control over 20 per cent of Portugal's total capital—no longer saw any way for this regime to deal with the rising working class unrest.

The coup by General Antonio Spínola aimed to sweep aside the discredited Caetano dictatorship and create a more stable capitalist regime which could deal with the workers' unrest.

A second aim was to save the Portuguese empire by setting up a "federation"—another name for continued colonialism. As Spínola put it the day after the coup, he would defend Portugal "in its multicontinental aspect."

Spínola's excellent pedigree—he was a volunteer on the Fascist side in the 1936-39 Spanish Civil War and an "observer" with Hitler's army in World War II—made him acceptable to the leading families who control Portuguese industry, banking and commerce.

## CLASS CONFLICT

Spínola's reactionary aims and the weakness of Portuguese capitalism—its inability to raise the workers' living

Cont'd. p. 11

# PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION BEGINS



Crowd in Lisbon traps three members of the hated Portuguese secret police (PIDE) in a tank.

## Prices: Make the Bosses Pay

by Jack Gregory

The American working class is facing the stiffest assault in decades as the domestic economy plunges into full-scale recession. Rampant inflation is soaring out of control, slashing workers' living standards. In the first quarter of this year the Consumer Price Index (cost of living) climbed 14.5 per cent and wholesale prices shot up 18 per cent. American workers, shackled with inadequate cost of living protection, now find their real wages eroding at more than 5 per cent a year.

At the same time, production is being cut back and unemployment is on the rise. The Gross National Product

fell 5.8 per cent in the first quarter (the sharpest drop in sixteen years), and produc-

tivity dropped 5.5 per cent. Unemployment is now over 5 per cent by government figures, an official increase of close to one million jobless since last October.

## TROUBLE AHEAD

Worse is coming. No relief is in sight for the unemployment picture—in fact, it may well increase to at least 6 per cent this year. Meanwhile, the lifting of wage-price controls

on May 1 was the signal to corporations to boost prices at a rate that threatens to launch inflation into orbit. Basic metal, the heart of industrial production, paved the way. By May 2, copper cathode prices were up 18 per cent, cold rolled steel 9.7 per cent and tin mill products 9.5 per cent.

These aren't annual rates of increase, just first increases. More price hikes are due in

these and most other areas this year, as virtually every major industry has stated that with controls lifted prices are going to jump. The current high inflation rate may be dwarfed by what's on the way.

Bourgeois economists are at a loss to explain this combination of stagnation in production and price inflation. Up until last month, they were

Cont'd. p. 9

# Union Heads Jailed in India

by Chris Hudson

The arrest of more than 3,000 union members in India signals a new stage in the bloody rule of the Congress Party. The arrests began on May 2 in an effort by Indira Gandhi's thinly-veiled police state regime to prevent a rail strike scheduled for May 8.

Among those arrested were George Fernandes, a prominent social democrat and an organizer of the strike, as well as dozens of top railroad union leaders. One union leader died of a heart attack in jail.

## HUNDREDS DEAD

The rail workers' anger over their leaders' arrests sparked walkouts at Bombay, Bhopal, Lucknow and other key rail centers even before the scheduled national strike began on May 8.

The political and economic paralysis of Indian capitalism lies behind the Government's violent opposition to the strike. Since the events described in Torch No. 7 riots have spread from Gujarat State in Western India to Bihar in the East. Hundreds have been killed.

Now the 1.5 million rail workers, one of the strongest sections of the Indian proletariat, are in a position to paralyze the government.

The strike demands are minimal—equity in wages and bonuses with other public-sector workers. Rail workers' wages are now only 60 per cent of those of other government employees, and they are paid no bonuses.

But Indian capitalism is already strained to its limit. Even moderate but real gains by the rail workers cannot be met by the capitalist government.

Gandhi's government is therefore prepared to grind the proletariat into the dirt to save capitalism. And as Gandhi moves to more violent suppression of democracy under a parliamentary cover, the door is also opened to the semi-fascist right.

## JAN SANGH

In April, eight right-wing parties merged in a new rightist coalition. The largest right-wing party, Jan Sangh, which supports the new coalition, voted in April to use violent means if necessary to overthrow the Congress Government. Jan Sangh's paramilitary arm, the RSS, has already been named as a major force in the rioting in several states.

For the present, the Indian bourgeoisie is divided between supporting Congress—its traditional policy—supporting the Right, or supporting a my coup. This hesitation cannot long continue.

## WORKERS LEADERLESS

The working class is virtually leaderless in the growing confrontation. The rail leaders continue to hope for some token concession from Gandhi.

The Communist Party has appealed to the butcher Gandhi to intervene to avert a "national calamity"—a workers' strike!—as if Gandhi's Railway Minister, Lalit Narayan Mishra, were not already doing his master's bidding.

## WORLD REVOLUTION

The rail workers and the Indian proletariat as a whole cannot gain victory without a revolutionary leadership. The proletariat must fight for the living standards of all the working masses and for the democratic rights of the peasants, "untouchables" and minorities. It must arm itself to defend the people against the Government and semi-fascist-communal violence.

To gain these ends requires the conquering of state power by the proletariat and the complete reconstruction of Indian society through world revolution.



Militant rail workers demonstrate in New Delhi, India.

# L.A. County Strike Aborted

by Sandy Young

Union tops representing 60,000 Los Angeles County workers called off their planned mass strike and are trying to push a totally inadequate 7.9 per cent settlement onto the angry ranks. Despite sizeable "vote No" sentiment, this sell-out by the union "leaders" and the lack of any real rank-and-file organization or leadership has broken the workers momentum and spells defeat for the county employees. Even the expected wave of wildcats by dissident workers failed to materialize.

Amid the union hacks' cries of "this is the best settlement we ever got," and "we got more than San Francisco" (See "S.F. Mass Strike," Torch No. 6), the bald reality of 10-15 per cent official inflation rates means the county workers are being asked to take a cut in real wages by the end of the year. Reaction to the much-lauded \$50 a month flat rate increase for the 6,000 lowest paid workers was summed up by one laundry worker in talking to The Torch. She said, "by the time they take out the extra taxes and you consider what food and gasoline costs now, what part of that \$50 am I going to see? Nothing. We've been sold out pure and simple."

## INSPIRED BY S.F.

The specter of the San Francisco strike surrounded the entire L.A. scene. Workers began to realize their own

power, and, as one bureaucrat put it, "became interested in what we were negotiating." The ranks of all unions involved voted overwhelmingly to strike, demanding a \$140a month across the board increase, lowering of workloads, and many other issues. At a meeting of over 800 hospital workers on April 26 at the County Medical Center, union negotiators were driven from the stage when they tried to sell their compromise.

The mass upsurge from the ranks made the union bureaucrats realize they had to come up with a settlement at least as good as what the S.F. workers got, or face the loss of control of the membership. Hence, the Coalition of County Unions was formed, representing six unions and 36 bargaining units, chiefly AFSCME and SEIU. The Coalition agreed to negotiate together and not to settle until all units had reached agreements with the county.

The Coalition, the first in county workers history, could have been an important first step in organizing a united and powerful struggle by county workers. Even county officials admitted that a strike of all the coalition members would have shut down a major portion of the city. It was an important first step in combatting the traditional strategy of the County supervisors, a strategy which consists of playing off the various unions against each other, keeping the bargaining units isolated, and threatening them with disciplinary action if they attempt to resist. Instead, it was used by the bureaucrats to arrange a minimum acceptable sell-out and foist it on the workers.

## DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Only the fear of mass walkouts inspired by the San Francisco mass strike and nothing that the bureaucrats did won even the minimal gains that were achieved. The first offer by the Board of Supervisors was for a rotten two per cent pay increase, right in line with what they have been able to get self-styled "militant" Elinore

Cont'd. next page

## LITTLE ROCK CONVENTION

## Black Politicians Chase Democratic Party

by Brent Davis  
and Darryl Clark

1,700 Black politicians met in Little Rock, Arkansas, March 14-17 at the second National Black Political Convention. The convention met as the minds of Black people were on the great issues shaping our lives—the inflation that is taking the food off our tables, unemployment, the energy crisis, and racist repression in the rotting cities. The convention met while the President of the United States stood exposed as a crook and would-be dictator, responsible for a thousand outrages against Black and working people.

What did this assembly, supposedly the grand gathering of the leadership of Black Americans, do about these issues? Nothing. It didn't even have the guts to call for the impeachment of the most visible and most vulnerable enemy of Black people, Richard Nixon.

## EMPTY WORDS

Instead, the convention consisted of empty rhetoric and workshops on the "nuts and bolts" of capitalist electoral politics. Precinct organizations, financing local campaigns, what to do on election day, how to get more Black delegates to the Democratic Convention—this was all these "leaders" wanted to talk about, when

## L.A. COUNTY STRIKE

Cont'd. from p. 2

Glenn (head of Local 434 hospital workers) and her ilk to accept in the past.

The Board tried a divide and conquer strategy to isolate county workers from the rest of the L.A. working class, arguing that the wage hikes they demanded could only be paid for by increasing property taxes. This method is being used against all public employees—city governments plead poverty and counterpose pay raises for municipal employees to taxes on working people.

The Coalition did not take this on directly and expose it for the lie it is. The funds needed can be obtained easily without increasing taxes on working people by taxing bank and corporate profits, the first step towards nationalizing the banks and corporations. The funding crisis of major cities is just part of the

very survival of blacks is threatened. This "practical" convention ignored the real crisis facing Blacks, and spent its time chasing the dream of "making the two-party system work."

In contrast, the first National Convention, held in Gary in 1972, was laced with invective directed at the Democrats and Republicans. That conference was dominated by big names (like Richard Hatcher, Gary's Democratic mayor, and Imamu Baraka) who were seeking a power base to exploit in the presidential year.

8,000 blacks attended that meeting, including hundreds of militants. After filling the air with rhetorical threats to form an independent black party, the "leaders" showed their real intent by quashing all moves to break with the capitalist parties. Their militant talk had been hot air directed with two goals: to coopt black radicals away from struggle and into a base for themselves, and to use this base to pressure the Democrats to make concessions to black politicians.

## THREATS PAID OFF

Both aims were accomplished. Many of the militants who were at the Gary Convention got discouraged and drifted away. Meanwhile, the pressure tactics reaped dividends: black mayors Coleman Young in Detroit,

Tom Bradley in L.A., and Maynard Jackson in Atlanta now preside over capitalism's attacks on black workers and unemployed.

Gary rots under Hatcher. Bradley slashes social service budgets in L.A., while Baraka teams with Newark's black mayor Kenneth Gibson in a union-busting drive against the Newark Federation of Teachers.

Now that they've gotten a piece of the action, black politicians snicker at their 1972 verbal flourishes. The National Black Agenda for the 1972 Gary conference had trumpeted, "Both parties

didn't feel they needed the militant smokescreen right now as they did two years ago.

The delegates who went through the motions at Little Rock were no different. The formation of an independent black party was quietly put in storage for another two years—it may come in handy for posturing during the next presidential race.

Even if it had been launched, what would an independent black party have meant? Blacks cannot destroy the capitalist system alone—a class-wide fight that embraces the working class unified across race lines is

## FIGHT BACK!

There is a way out. The racist oppression of blacks takes sharpest form in the ravages of unemployment and inflation, attacks which are directed at the entire proletariat while hitting blacks the hardest. The Zebra police terror in San Francisco (see Editorial) is likewise a preview of repression that will be aimed at the trade unions and other institutions of the working class. These attacks must be repelled with a class-wide response—blacks must move to the forefront in the fight to construct a revolutionary labor party that champions the interests of the oppressed in the context of aggressively fighting for the needs of all workers.

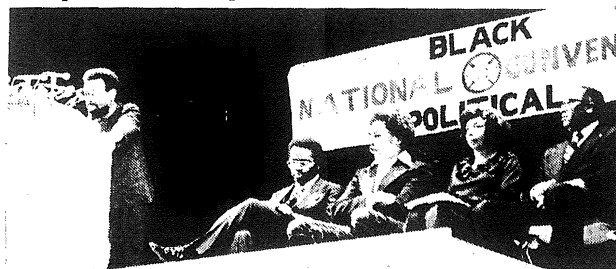
A fighting strategy to defend the lives and living standards of black workers could rouse the hopes of the many millions who do see that voting for the Hatchers is a waste of time. Such a campaign should begin by attacking the weakest point in the capitalist system—Richard Nixon. A national campaign to drive Nixon out of the White House could be brought to every trade union, to the unemployed youth, to every community fighting for better schools.

All these forces could be united in a Congress of Labor and Oppressed Peoples, which would take up the fight against inflation, unemployment, and the general attacks on blacks and all workers by calling a general strike to bring down the Nixon government and force new elections.

It would launch a revolutionary labor party to lead the working class to power.

Such a fight, mobilizing the strength of a unified working class, would provide the muscle to wrest tremendous victories for black people from the bourgeoisie. Unemployment, inflation, housing, education, medical care and the other vital areas now being hammered would be the points of first priority for a revolutionary labor party. This is the road to victory.

But the National Black Political Convention, dominated by Hatcher and would-be Hatchers, preferred right-wing pipe-dreams of giving the Democrats one more chance, while the hopes and futures of the black masses go up in smoke.



Cynical politicians [above] herd black masses into dead-end Democratic Party [below: voting lines in Mississippi].

have betrayed us whenever their interests conflicted with ours" and "The American system does not work for the masses of our people and it cannot be made to work without fundamental change."

Today Charles Diggs (who chaired the 1972 convention) sneers, "All the talk of forging a third party, of giving America a last chance," that circulated at the first convention "has proved to be just rhetoric." Diggs didn't even bother to attend this year's meeting. Neither did Gibson or Bradley. They

essential. A black party would be used by a demagogue like Baraka to pose white workers as the enemy of blacks, making it easier for the bourgeoisie to attack all workers.

The black politicians threw up the black party slogan precisely because they don't want to fight capitalism—they're tied lock, stock and barrel to the bourgeoisie. If they do go through with their threats to form one at some point, it will just be a more dramatic way to coopt militancy and build a base for themselves to use in pressure politics.

ported

dition, the first in  
kers history, could  
an important first  
ganizing a united  
ful struggle by  
kers. Even county  
nitted that a strike  
coalition members  
shut down a major  
he city. It was an  
first step in com-  
traditional strat-  
county supervisors,  
which consists of  
he various unions  
h other, keeping  
ng units isolated,  
ening them with  
action if they  
resist. Instead, it  
the bureaucrats  
minimum accept-  
and foist it on the

ND CONQUER

feared by the San  
mass strike and  
the bureaucrats  
ven the minimal  
ere achieved. The  
y the Board of  
was for a rotten  
at pay increase,  
with what they  
able to get self-  
litant" Elinore  
nt'd. next page

# Editorial

## NO POPULAR FRONT!

As *The Torch* has repeatedly warned, one of the chief weapons of the bourgeoisie is the Popular Front, a political coalition of bourgeois and workers' parties. Under the guise of "unity of the nation" or "unity of all the progressive forces," the Popular Front politically binds the working class to capitalism.

The need to maintain this coalition between executioners and victims requires that the workers abandon not merely their struggle for socialism but even the struggle for their most immediate needs. In order not to frighten off the so-called "progressive elements" of the bourgeoisie, the working class—the only force capable of rescuing society from its headlong pitch toward fascism and war—is handed over to its enemies, blinded, bound and gagged.

This is the lesson of Spain in the 1930's. It is the lesson of Chile in 1973. It is the danger now facing the Portuguese proletariat.

### FRANCE

This is also the significance of the recent French Presidential elections. Socialist Party candidate Francois Mitterrand, front-runner with over 43 per cent of the vote in the first round of May 5, will now face conservative Valery Giscard d'Estaing in the second round run-off.

Mitterrand represents the French Socialist Party, which—along with the Commu-

nist Party, and the Radicals of the Left (a left bourgeois party)—constitute the Union of the Left.

Despite radical-sounding rhetoric and program (such as the call for the nationalization of nine basic monopolies), the real program of this "Union" is a program for the preservation of capitalism, and the "Union" is a classical Popular Front.

The presence of the Left Radicals in the Union is only the most vivid symbol of the real program and intentions of the "Communist" and "Socialist" betrayers of the working class: to blunt the class struggle and to prevent at all costs the development of the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat.

A vote for Mitterrand, no matter how it is explained, no matter how "critical," is a vote against the class struggle. It is a vote for class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, a vote for capitalism. In the second round, the working class can vote for no candidate.

This was not the case in the first round. In this round, Arlette Laguiller, the candidate supported by the centrist group *Lutte Ouvriere* (Workers' Struggle) and a leader of the recent bank employees' strike, won a surprising 2.5 per cent of the vote.

Despite its claims and its rhetoric, *Lutte Ouvriere* is not a revolutionary organization. Comrade Laguiller, despite her undoubted courage and militancy, does not represent French Bolshevism. Her cam-

## RACIST DRAGNET IN S.F.

On April 17 San Francisco police, under the personal direction of Mayor Joe Alioto, began a massive stop-and-search campaign aimed at all "thin young black men." In the course of this outright exercise in racist intimidation, the ruling class demonstrated its complete contempt for the democratic rights of San Francisco's black population.

For a full week the police openly conducted themselves as an army of occupation in the black community. Over 600 black men were stopped at random and hauled into police cars.

### RACIST SEARCH

The excuse presented for this racist campaign was a search for the so-called "Zebra" killers, two to four black men who have allegedly murdered twelve whites since last November. This was a disgusting and cynical charade used to cloak a systematic campaign of harassment and intimidation against the working class in San Francisco.

This racist terror campaign follows in the wake of the San Francisco mass strike. Two months ago, when 12,000 public service workers shut the city down for several days, only the sell-out policies of the trade union bureaucracy prevented a general strike that would have rocked the bourgeoisie and sparked similar upsurges elsewhere.

The bourgeoisie has launched an offensive against San Francisco workers to abort repetitions of these events. The "Zebra" charade must be understood as a continuation of attacks that began as soon as the

strike ended, beginning with a barrage of court suits and union-busting proposals.

This new police violence is an attempt to terrorize the black proletariat while isolating it from the rest of its class through the filthiest forms of racist demagoguery. It is a warning: that the bourgeoisie will not hesitate to resort to terror tactics to aid its attacks on workers' jobs and incomes.

By betraying the San Francisco strike, by allying with Alioto against the militant workers' movement, the labor hacks gave Alioto the green light for his current repressive maneuvers. They guaranteed that the workers would be left unarmed and defenseless against the ruling-class offensive which followed.

The reformist defenders of capitalism within the trade unions and the black community have no stomach for meeting this offensive. They remained totally silent in the face of this offensive.

### NATIONAL OFFENSIVE

*The Torch* has continually warned that in the deepening capitalist crisis the bourgeoisie will use any methods necessary to break the working class. The anti-terrorist campaigns—the SLA in California, the Black Liberation Army trials in New York, and now the "Zebra" case—are part of a general offensive smoothing the way for increasingly open attacks which won't confine themselves to individual militants, but will be directed at the working class as a whole.

Black workers and the working class as a

paigned almost exclusively around the fact that she was a worker and a woman. It did not advance the struggle to build a revolutionary party on a Marxist program to lead the socialist revolution, the only way out of France's crisis.

Nevertheless, a vote for Laguiller was the only correct vote in the first round. In the absence of a truly revolutionary candidate running on the Transitional Program and the struggle for a revolutionary leadership, a vote for Comrade Laguiller represented a vote for at least formal independence from the Popular Front and for the class struggle and against capitalism and the treachery of the Stalinist and Social Democratic misleaders of the workers.

On the other hand, a vote for the candidate of the United Secretariat-affiliated Revolutionary Communist Front (FRC), Alain Krivine, did not represent such a position. Despite his often extremely "left" posture and occasional references to the

Cont'd. next page

## LEAGUE FORUM

New York

WORLD IN REVOLUTION:

LESSONS OF THE CHILEAN DEFEAT

SPEAKER:

SHELLEY KRAMER,

RSL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

AUTHOR OF THE PAMPHLET

"CHILE: NEVER AGAIN!"

7:30 P.M. FRIDAY, MAY 31

22 EAST 17TH STREET, ROOM 927

## LEAGUE DIRECTORY

NATIONAL OFFICE:

R.S.L.

13755 Woodward Ave., Rm. 200  
Highland Park, MI 48203

CHICAGO:

R.S.L.

160 No. Halsted  
Chicago, ILL 60606

CLEVELAND:

R.S.L.

P.O. Box 5162  
Cleveland, Ohio 44101

DETROIT:

R.S.L.

13755 Woodward Ave., Rm. 200  
Highland Park, MI 48203

LOS ANGELES:

R.S.L.

1910 S. Vermont  
Los Angeles, CA 90007

NEW YORK:

R.S.L.

41 Union Square W. Rm. 925  
New York, N.Y. 10003

MADISON:

(c/o Milwaukee address.)

MILWAUKEE:

R.S.L.

P.O. Box 90929  
Milwaukee, WISC 53202

THE TORCH.

No.9

c 1974 by the Revolutionary Socialist League Publishing Company

Editor - Bruce Landau

Managing Editor - Derek Hirst

Ass't Managing Editor - Linda Moore

Published monthly at 13755 Woodward Ave., Highland Park MI 48203.  
Subscriptions: 26 issues at \$3.00; supporting, \$5.00; institutional, \$5.00; foreign seairmail, \$4.50; domestic 1st class (sealed) \$6.50; foreign air mail (unsealed), \$14.00.

Domestic introductory subs - 6 issues for \$5.00, 12 issues for \$1.00.  
Bundles of 10 copies or more - \$1.00 per copy.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *The Torch* or The Revolutionary Socialist League.

Second-class Mailing Permit pending at Detroit, MI

# Demo Hits Deportations

by Rod Miller

On Saturday, April 27, 300 persons demonstrated in Brooklyn for the rights of Haitian refugees. The U.S. Immigration Department has been deporting increasing numbers of Haitians who have entered this country to escape the brutal regime of "Baby-Doc" Duvalier.

Over 400 Haitian refugees have been ordered deported to Haiti where they face torture or death. More than 100 Haitians are now in jail in Florida awaiting deportation.

Last month, Turenne Deville hung himself in a Miami jail just a few hours before his scheduled deportation. For Deville, suicide was preferable to the fate that awaited him in Haiti.

## LEAGUE CO-SPONSORS DEMONSTRATION

The Revolutionary Socialist League jointly sponsored the anti-deportation demonstration along with a coalition of eleven Haitian groups, plus the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin America, Local 1199 of the Drug and Hospital Workers' Union, Local 6 of the Hotel, Restaurant and Club Employees' Union, and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

The Revolutionary Socialist League stands ready at all

times to join with those who are fighting for an end to deportations and dictatorship. While doing so, we openly state that the only way to win and secure the democratic demands of working and oppressed people throughout the world is by linking these demands with the program of workers' revolution. The League's leaflet at this demonstration made this point strongly and clearly.

As that leaflet explained, U.S. imperialism is forced to plunder the wealth of countries like Haiti to make up for the profits it can no longer

produce at home. This plundering campaign must be policed by the most brutal, dictatorial regimes. To do away with the savagery of the "Baby Docs" throughout the world requires an uncompromising fight against capitalist imperialism itself.

In defending this program — Leon Trotsky's program of Permanent Revolution—the Revolutionary Socialist League fights for the political independence of the proletariat from the capitalists, the necessary revolutionary role of the working class in the epoch of capitalist decay.

## SWP FAKERY

The League's determined fight for the program of revolution clearly distinguishes us from the fake-Marxist (centrist) organizations like the Socialist Workers Party, who posture as socialists while in practice abandoning the revolutionary program at every turn.

A member of the Socialist Workers Party at the Brooklyn demonstration sneered that the League was "confused" to think that the fight against Haitian oppression required a fight for socialism. A speaker for the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin America (which is dominated by the SWP) told the demonstrators at the afternoon rally that "the democratic rights of the Haitian people can be won through these demonstrations." It is hard to believe that even the SWP can swallow such reformist, pacifist nonsense.

Many Haitians at the demonstration were searching for a strategy that can successfully abolish the oppressive conditions in Haiti. The Revolutionary Socialist League was able to make clear that the League is the organization fighting to build a world revolutionary party dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism's oppression in Haiti, the U.S., and throughout the world.



League members march with Haitians in New York.

## corrections

(1) In the last issue of *The Torch* (No. 8), the article entitled "Italian Capitalists Turning Right" was co-authored by Paul Benjamin and Tony Curzo. We apologize for the omission of the second name.

(2) In the same issue, the article entitled "Runaway Shops Rob Autoworkers" contained an important political confusion. The article reported on the UAW's lawsuit against the Federal-Mogul firm. The suit demands that the firm pay the pensions, health insurance premiums, and other fringe benefits which its employees in Detroit lost as a result of F-M's flight to Illinois and Alabama in search of cheaper labor.

The article incorrectly declared that "by going to the courts, the bureaucrats are appealing to the state to intervene in the labor movement," adding that this is "class collaborationist" and "helps tie the workers to the police arm of the capitalist state."

This is incorrect. Revolutionaries vigorously oppose attempts to bring the bourgeois state into the labor movement itself—for example, to decide a dispute between different groupings

within a union. This kind of action does help tie the workers to the capitalist state and opens the way for ever greater statification of the unions themselves.

But the UAW lawsuit against Federal-Mogul is of a different character. Here, the union is demanding that a particular capitalist abide by the minimum terms of even bourgeois legality—in this case, the Federal Age Discrimination Act. This lawsuit does not call on the courts to intervene in the internal affairs of the union itself.

Thus, there is nothing necessarily class-collaborationist about the lawsuit tactic in this case. The crime of the UAW bureaucracy here is that it is depending on the bourgeois courts exclusively to win these demands rather than mobilizing the organized strength of the workers themselves behind demands for a sliding scale of wages and hours, and so on, as the article explains.

The Editorial Board wishes to apologize for this political error in particular to the original author of the article, Jon Coleman. The incorrect phrases did not appear in his original draft of the article but were mistakenly inserted by the Editorial Board itself.

## No Popular Front

Cont'd. from preceding page

Transitional Program, Krivine is too compromised by the petty-bourgeois orientation of the FCR, its especially blatant capitulation to Stalinism and its shameless subordination of itself to militant trade unionists—such as Charles Piaget of the United Socialist Party (PSU) and leader of the recent Lip sit-down strike.

Predictably, the policy and stance of Krivine and the organization he represents made his candidacy incapable of attracting the best representatives of the French revolutionary workers.

Consequently, the policy of the Revolutionary Socialist League was one of critical support to Comrade Laguiller. This was a policy designed to solidarize ourselves with the aspirations of the revolutionary workers of France while exposing and warning the workers against the centrist vacillations of the organization that Cde. Laguiller represents.

## NO SUPPORT FOR MITTERRAND

The present task of the revolutionary workers is to agitate for a "No" vote against both Mitterrand and Giscard d'Estaing. We must patiently explain that votes for either of these candidates are votes for the class enemy, votes for capitalism, votes against socialism.

Given the present weakness of the revolutionary forces, the vast majority of the workers will undoubtedly vote for Mitterrand. If he is elected, the revolutionaries must then urge the workers who did vote for him to demand that Mitterrand immediately call parliamentary elections (which he has promised the bourgeoisie that he will not do). We will urge Mitterrand's working-class supporters to demand that he carry through on the promises of social reform he made to them—to nationalize the nine "basic monopolies" and the four "bankers' combines," to raise the minimum wage and to lower sales taxes, etc.

In this way, despite the fact that revolutionaries give no support whatever to Mitterrand and ceaselessly expose the phony nature of his promises, we can help the less advanced workers to overcome their own illusions in Mitterrand, their betrayer.

To make real gains, the French working class will have to mobilize its own forces, in the shop and in the streets, independently of and against a Popular Front Mitterrand regime.

## Subscribe to the TORCH

I would like to subscribe to THE TORCH.

### CHECK ONE.

- 6 issues for 50 cents.  
 12 issues for \$1.00.  
 26 issues for \$3.00.

Supporting subscription: \$5.00. ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Send to:  
 Revolutionary Socialist League  
 13755 Woodward Avenue  
 Highland Park, MI 48203

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Make all checks payable to THE TORCH.

# Spartacists Oppose Co

BY BRUCE LANDAU

As Leon Trotsky pointed out at every opportunity, the crisis of mankind in the epoch of capitalism's death agony reduces itself to the proletariat's crisis of leadership. Only the proletariat can put an end to capitalism's barbarities by overthrowing capitalism, smashing its state, and erecting a workers' state in its place (the dictatorship of the proletariat).

The proletariat can accomplish this task, however, only on condition that it is led by a revolutionary party—an organization containing within it the most advanced and dedicated workers trained in and fighting for the Marxist program of socialist revolution. The task to which the Revolutionary Socialist League is dedicated—the reconstruction of the Fourth International—is the creation of this revolutionary party on the world scale.

Today, the Fourth International which is required does not exist. Instead, the proletariat is faced with a great number of competing groups of varying sizes all claiming to be revolutionary Marxists. How can workers seeking a genuine revolutionary Marxist organization put all these conflicting claims to a test?

## TEST OF STRUGGLE

There is only one real way. An organization's claims can only be tested by examining the way in which it responds to key turning points in the class struggle. The events in Britain surrounding the recent miners' strike and the forced resignation of the Tory Heath Government formed one of these key turns and one of these tests.

The Revolutionary Socialist League (U.S.A.) responded to the British events with a clear program of action. British revolutionaries, we explained, must call on the Trades Union Congress (British AFL-CIO) to support the miners' struggle and beat back the over-all Tory attack on the working class with a general strike. The fight for this general strike must be conducted inside and outside the unions. The broadest masses must be drawn into this struggle. The League called for the creation of Councils of Action to organize the fight for a general strike against the resistance of the TUC chiefs. The organizing of workers' defense guards, toward a workers' militia, is key here.

## DEFENSE AND OFFENSE

For Bolsheviks—that is, for Trotskyists—there is no firm barrier between defensive and offensive struggles. It is the task of the revolutionary party to lead the class through a defensive struggle over into a successful offense. That is the only way to secure a successful defense.

If it is conducted correctly, such a strategy can transform the revolutionaries from a small and isolated minority into the unquestioned leadership of the proletariat. This is precisely how the Russian Bolsheviks were able to make the October revolution of 1917.

This strategy requires an understanding of Leninist tactics. In Britain, we argued, revolutionaries must initially fight for a general strike of a defensive nature. But revolutionaries must be sensitive to the changing mood of the masses. They must be prepared to press for an offensive strategy if their initial campaign

meets with great success and the relationship of forces within the labor movement changes dramatically in the revolutionaries' favor.

Thus Paul Benjamin wrote in *Torch* No. 5 (February 1974):

"Should the campaign prove successful, should it tap the anger and spirit of solidarity of the mass of workers, should the Councils of Action swell and the pressure on the TUC become irresistible, a new stage will open in the class struggle."

But we did not—could not—stop there. If the TUC nevertheless continued to "resist the proletariat's demands" for a general strike, Benjamin added, this obvious obstructionism "would weaken the position of the TUC tops immeasurably. The Councils of Action would multiply in number, size and strength. Depending on the dimensions of this growth, revolutionaries would then have to judge whether to demand that the Councils themselves assume leadership of the workers' movement, bypassing the TUC tops and calling for and leading a general strike on their own."

Benjamin's article then laid out the necessary further steps which British revolutionaries would take in such favorable circumstances—up to and including armed combat with the bourgeois state and the struggle for a workers' government based on the expanded Councils of Action (soviets).

## PACIFISM

How did other groups which claim to be Trotskyist measure up during this period?

In *Torch* No. 6 we examined the role

played by the so-called Workers Revolutionary Party in Britain, the big brother of the Workers League of the United States. Throughout the months of confrontation with Heath, the WRP talked about a general strike, warned against massive repression by Heath—and steadfastly refused to call for a workers' militia nonetheless! All the WRP's oh-so-revolutionary phrases could not substitute for the needed revolutionary program. As Trotsky said in *Whither France*,

"The general strike is the generalization of the partial strike. The workers' militia is the generalization of the picket squads. Only windbags and pathetic braggarts can play with the idea of the general strike under the present conditions and refuse at the same time to carry on the stubborn work for the creation of the workers' militia!"

## THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE

A much smaller group than the WRP—the Spartacist League (U.S.A.)—has made a point of attending a series of public forums held by the Revolutionary Socialist League in the United States in order to attack our strategy for Britain as "sectarian" and "academic."

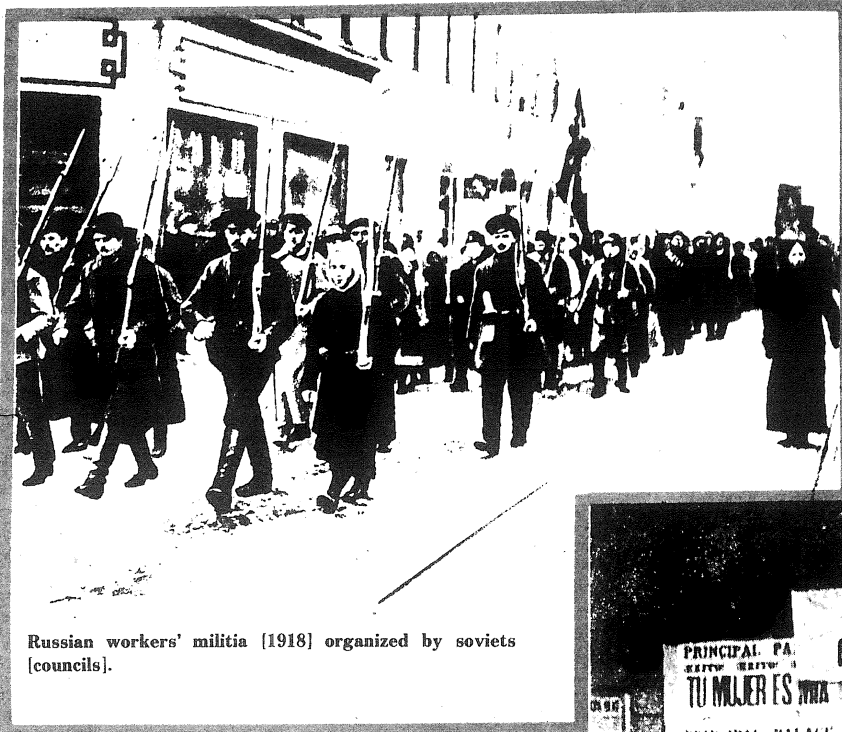
To best appreciate the nature of the Spartacists' general approach to British developments, their attitude on the burning question of workers' self-defense in Britain must be understood. One article after another has appeared in their press, *Workers Vanguard*, attacking the WRP's over-all line on Britain. But never once was the WRP attacked for its blatant

pacifism. Not once!

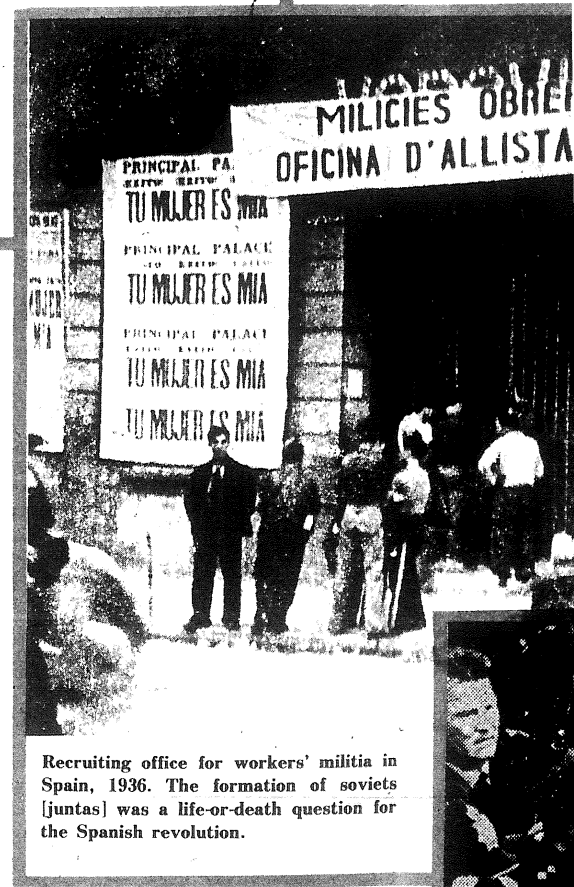
Why not? Because the SL had the exact same attitude toward the question as the one held by the WRP.

The Spartacist League never issued a clear, direct, immediate call for the organization of workers' defense guards in the British labor movement. Like the WRP, it held its peace, and also like the WRP, it could finally bring itself to address the question only in the most indirect, abstract, sometime-in-the-future-maybe manner.

One little article in one issue of their paper finally managed to eke out this



Russian workers' militia [1918] organized by soviets [councils].

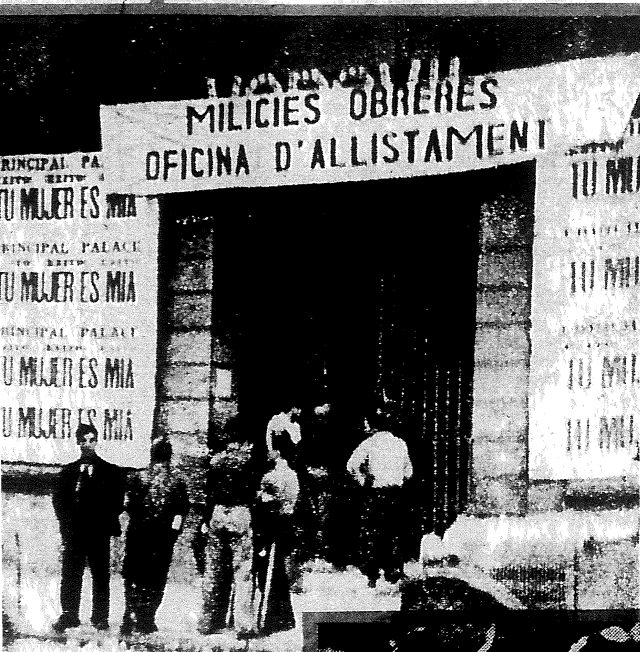


Recruiting office for workers' militia in Spain, 1936. The formation of soviets [juntas] was a life-or-death question for the Spanish revolution.



Spartacist League workers.

# se Councils of Action for Britain



office for workers' militia in 1936. The formation of soviets was a life-or-death question for the revolution.

once!  
because the SL had the attitude toward the one held by the WRP. The Spartacist League never issued an immediate call for the defense of workers' labor movement. It held its peace, and the WRP, it could finally address the question most indirect, abstract, -future-maybe

cle in one issue of their managed to eke out this

one "gripping" slogan: "Down with the Queen's Army, Only a Labor Militia Can Defend Working People!" It would be hard to imagine a slogan which sounded less like the necessary urgent call to arms.

Having finally squeaked out these words, the article hurried on to other matters without another word of explanation, emphasis, or amplification. The distasteful duty had been done! We note, finally, that even this slogan was included not in articles outlining the SL's action program for Britain but only as an after-thought in an article on solidarity demonstrations in the U.S.A.

### SAY WHAT IS!

Like the WRP, the Spartacist League's performance on this question exposed its own inability to forthrightly tell the British working class what must be done. It could not



Spartacist League attacks soviets and downplays workers' militia for British workers.

bring itself to confront the democratic-pacifist prejudices of the British masses by loudly and persistently demanding that they arm themselves.

The Spartacists refused to follow the central demand which Trotsky made of all would-be revolutionists: Say What Is! Tell the working class what must be done! Pound away at the key tasks—not simply when the workers already agree with you but (even more urgently) when they do not. Otherwise, as Lenin put it, you stand not with the vanguard of the class but at its tail. You are a "tailist."

Spartacist tailism is also behind their attacks on the RSL's program for Britain. What the SL finds most unbearable in our program is our call for Councils of Action.

What arguments do the Spartacists marshal against the call for Councils of Action?

(a) They ask us, How can you call for Councils? They do not yet exist! "Unfortunately, although they have appeared in past general strikes, at this time they have no immediate prior existence, much less authority, in the British workers' movement."

(b) Anyway, they add, the British workers don't need Councils; they already have trade unions, "historically evolved organizational affiliations."

(c) And how can you call for Councils, insist the Spartacists, when you are only a handful? This demand is proper only for "a mass party."

(d) Instead of broad Councils of Action—which don't exist, which aren't realistic in view of the existence of unions, and which a small group of revolutionaries certainly cannot call for—the Spartacists call for an orientation to the shop stewards' committees.

What is the task of these shop steward committees? For the RSL, Councils of Action are meant to serve as vehicles for mobilizing the broadest layers of the class, ultimately developing into soviets and the basis for the workers' state itself.

This, however, is too far-sighted for the SL. For them, the shop steward committees' role is rigidly and exclusively defensive, "to check and frustrate the policies of the TUC."

(e) The Spartacists' exclusive orientation to the shop stewards' committees, however, is limited to the preparatory period leading up to the strike. Should the strike actually break out, the Spartacists will call about-face: "Should a general strike actually occur, the organization and authority of councils of action would certainly be posed...." they say.

(f) This two-stage organizational scheme matches an equally rigid two-stage programmatic scheme. The RSL program emphasizes the bond between the defensive and the offensive struggle. The SL, in contrast, is interested only in defense. They declare that "A general strike in Britain today, which can only be organized by the TUC, should have the limited, defensive aim of reversing the policies of the Tory government and bringing it down." Period. They provide no discussion of how to lead the masses over to the offense. That, like the Councils, is another stage entirely!

### SOVIETS

Thus, the essentially conservative, tailist, stage-ist, and opportunist character of the SL's program is again clear from the arguments presented in its defense.

During the unfolding of the revolutionary events in Spain during the 1930s, Trotsky time and again

insisted on the necessity to call for soviet-type bodies to involve the greatest possible numbers of workers in the class struggle. He did not do so because soviets had already been created, already had (in the SL's words) an "immediate prior existence, much less authority," but because they were necessary to the workers' struggle.

Who opposed the demand? The Spanish Mensheviks, the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (the POUM). What arguments did they advance?

As Trotsky records, the POUM insisted that "it did no good to call for soviets as the workers didn't build them." In reply, Trotsky explained that the task of the vanguard is precisely to tell the rest of the class what it does not yet know but must learn in order to save itself.

Is the revolutionary program, asked Trotsky, based on the masses' illusions or on Marxist analysis? It is only the Mensheviks who fear to speak publicly about concepts which the masses have not yet accepted. This is the essence of tailism.

### THE POUM

But this argument did not exhaust the POUM's Menshevik arsenal. Not only were soviets not springing up like weeds by themselves, they declared, but they were not really needed in Spain, either. It was one thing, they said, to call for soviets in Russia of 1917, where the trade unions were young and small. But in Spain there are two old and very large trade union confederations. As the SL would put it, the Spanish workers already had "historically evolved organizational affiliations"! Surely, said the POUM, these are adequate for the tasks at hand?

"NO!" Trotsky replied: the Bolsheviks did not champion soviets in Russia merely because the trade unions there were relatively weak. We called for soviets because no trade union anywhere offers the working class as a whole—organized and unorganized, employed and unemployed, men and women—anything like an adequate avenue of self-expression. To believe that they do is to surrender to the union bureaucracy's narrow definition of what constitutes the working class.

Thus Trotsky wrote of the Spanish anarchists, who controlled the larger of Spain's two union federations,

"The Anarchists revealed a fatal lack of understanding of the laws of the revolution and its tasks by seeking to limit themselves to their own trade unions, that is, to organizations permeated with the routine of peaceful times, and by ignoring what went on outside the framework of the trade unions, among the masses, among the political parties, and in the government apparatus. Had the Anarchists been revolutionists, they would first of all have called for the creation of soviets, which unite the representatives of all the toilers of the city and country, including the most oppressed strata, who never joined the trade unions." (Emphasis added.) Trotsky repeated and elaborated on this point in the Fourth International's basic document, the Transitional

Cont'd. next page

# Councils of Action

Cont'd. from p. 7

Program of 1938:

"...the Fourth International resolutely rejects and condemns trade union fetishism, equally characteristic of trade unionists and syndicalists....

"Trade unions, even the most powerful, embrace no more than 20 to 25 per cent of the working class, and at that, predominantly the more skilled and better paid layers. The more oppressed majority of the working class is drawn only episodically into the struggle, during a period of exceptional upsurges in the labor movement. During such moments it is necessary to create organizations *ad hoc*, embracing the whole fighting mass: strike committees, factory committees, and finally, soviets."

Did Trotsky mean by this that one ought to give up the struggle within the unions against the sell-out union leaders? Of course not. But by limiting themselves exclusively to the trade unions and the various union bodies (yes, like today's shop steward committees), revolutionists ignored "the most oppressed strata, who never joined the trade unions."

## TO BUILD A PARTY

The Spartacists have discovered the principle that a small group may not call for such things as Councils of Action. This is a demand, they declare, which must be reserved for "a mass party."

This is very revealing about the way in which the SL imagines that a mass party is born. Lenin and Trotsky were under the impression that a small group grows and grows strong precisely by always stating exactly "what is," what needs to be done, despite its initial small size.

By the mid-1930s the Trotskyists forces in Spain numbered only a tiny handful. Trotsky nevertheless instructed his few followers "to insist always on having the fighting masses form and constantly expand their committees of action (juntas, soviets)."

Trotsky was laboring under the "illusion" (shared by the Revolutionary Socialist League today) that speaking the plain truth to the workers was the only way to build "a mass party."

The main pillars of the Spartacist approach in Britain were, as we have seen, opposition to soviets, brittle separation of defensive from offensive strategies, fetishization of the trade unions, opportunist conception of party-building, pacifism. What unifies and defines the Spartacist approach? What single theme underlies these various positions?

Menshevik formalism. The Spartacists proved thoroughly incapable of understanding the dynamics, the dialectic, of class struggle.

The concept of the dialectical transition from defense to offense occurring in a brief period, even during the life of a single strike, is completely alien to the thinking of Menshevik formalists. "Today we are talking

about defense. We will talk about offense some other time, when the proper stage has finally been reached."

The rigid distinction drawn by the Spartacists between the tasks of a small group and those of "a mass party" fall into the same pattern. "Today we are too small to pose the class's urgent tasks clearly before it. Ask us again once we have grown into a mass party."

The Spartacists' pacifism reflects the same formal thinking. "Today the situation is not yet formally pre-revolutionary. Moreover, we have not yet had time to become a mass party. Why, then, should we raise an urgent call for workers' defense guards? Enough to raise a parody of the slogan once, in passing, for a small demonstration on the other side of the Atlantic."

## ABOUT FACE!

The Spartacists' attitude toward Councils of Action takes its proper place in this pattern. "Today there are no Councils of Action. How can we, therefore, be expected to call for them? Anyway, so long as we are in this purely and simply defensive stage the trade-union shop stewards' committees will do."

Of course, once the strike gets under way, once the class lines are already drawn, once the general strike already poses the possibility (in Trotsky's words) "of an open revolutionary clash...a direct struggle for power"—then the Spartacists will order an abrupt about-face and at the eleventh hour for the first time acknowledge that "the organization and authority of councils of action" has at long last been "posed."

This rigid division of the road to revolution into discrete, strictly demarcated stages is wholly alien to Trotskyism, to the theory of the Permanent Revolution, to the Leninist conception of this epoch, to the Transitional Program. In discussions with Trotsky held in Mexico in 1938, it was the future renegade Max Shachtman whose doubts about Trotsky's method most closely foreshadowed the rigid, stage-ist, tail-ist approach of today's Spartacists. Objected Shachtman:

"I believe it is not correct as you say to put forth the slogan of workers' control of production nor the other transitional slogan of workers' militia.

...(It is true that they are transitional slogans, but for that end of the road which is close to the preparation for the seizure of power. Transition implies a road either long or short. Each stage of the road requires its own slogans. For today we could use that of examination of the books of the capitalist class, for tomorrow we could use those of workers' control of production and workers' militia."

Trotsky's reply was direct and to the point. The task, he said, is not to second-guess the pace of development, spoon-feeding the proletariat first one slogan and then another according to some artificial, step-by-step pattern. The task is to train the vanguard of the class in the main tasks of the revolution. This requires frankness and boldness. In this epoch, the pace of developments always outruns the most careful predictions. It is neces-

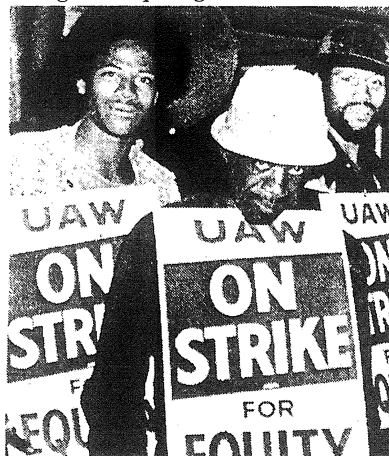
# Black Unionists Meet

by Jim Raskin

DETROIT—Nearly 1,500 black labor leaders met here on May 4-5 for the third annual convention of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) amid rumors that the conference was prepared to call for an independent party of labor.

An ominous note was sounded in the opening speech by Dr. Homer Favor of Morgan State University. Favor warned against whites who want to work with blacks to bring about change. He said, "The oppressor doesn't have the right to tell the oppressed how to get the foot off their neck."

Favor made it clear, however that he was not warning against white capitalists, just white workers. He admitted that he had a "soft spot in my heart for millionaire John Kennedy and added that Lyndon Johnson was OK except "he had the war monger whispering in his ear."



Black workers need a revolutionary labor party, not empty promises from the capitalist Democrats.

Favor made almost no mention of black workers, because he saw no place for the proletariat's struggle against its masters. Instead, he concluded, "We must learn to love."

William Lucy, president of the CBTU, tried to give the meeting a militant cover by crying, "Those that got power ain't never going to give it up by request." Horace Sheffield of

sary to prepare the vanguard in advance for these sharp transitions from one "stage" to another. In Trotsky's own words:

"How can we in such a critical situation as now exists in the whole world, in the U.S. measure the stage of development of the workers' movement? You say, it's the beginning and not the end. What's the distance—100, 10, 4, how can you say approximately? In the good old times the social-democrats would say: Now we have only 10,000 workers, later we'll have 100,000, then a million, and then we'll get to the power. World development to them was only an accumulation of quantities: 10,000, 100,000, etc. etc. Now we have an absolutely different situation. We are in a period of declining capitalism, of crises that become more turbulent and terrible, and approaching war... If

the UAW was more open about the real strategy when he said the delegates must "rebuild the minority-labor-liberal coalition."

This proved to be the convention's consensus—to work to shackle black workers to the Democratic Party. The workshop on political action held the first day dealt with none of the three resolutions calling for independent political action. The participants preferred to chat about voter registration under the guidance of a Democratic Party National Committee hack.

Instead of breaking with capitalism, the old game of pressure politics inside the Democratic Party was played to the hilt at the conference. The body voted to oppose anyone who supported the "racist, anti-labor, divisive, and demagogic" George Wallace, drawing lines between "good" and "bad" capitalist politicians. Similarly, without a call for a labor party the CBTU's resolution demanding Nixon's impeachment means playing for a Democratic President.

The opportunist nature of the Communist Party was thoroughly exposed in the discussions of political action. The CP has been throwing out feelers lately for a third party—alternately labeled "labor party," "people's party"—on the model of the CP-dominated Henry Wallace presidential campaign of 1948. Like the Wallace outing, this would be a third capitalist party designed to channel militant disaffection with the Democrats and Republicans onto a reformist road.

The CP obviously thought a break with the Democrats was in the air at the CBTU, and their paper (the Daily World) tested the wind with a lead article concluding, "The fight for independent political action is therefore decisive."

In the face of strong pro-Democratic Party sentiment, the CP quickly changed its tune. When a CP-sponsored labor party resolution reached the floor, its maker moved that the reference to "an independent formation or party based on labor and a coalition of the peoples" be removed!

you say, we'll wait and see and then propagate, then we'll not be the vanguard, but the rearguard." (Emphasis added.)

The Spartacists of today have never absorbed Trotsky's far-sighted warning to Shachtman. They still believe they can carefully measure out the length of the road to power, allot the first so many miles of the road to pure defense and the slogans of general strike and shop stewards' councils, and then reserve the second half of the road for offense and the demands for Councils of Action and (presumably) workers' defense guards and militia.

History never cooperates with such "best laid plans," and the Spartacist line on Britain has placed them in the appropriate position in the ranks of the British proletariat—not in the vanguard, but the rearguard.

confid  
there  
turn  
1974 v  
boom  
of the  
predic  
For  
insiste  
"trade  
and u  
ing un  
back in  
This m  
unemp  
are bot  
of the

As w  
6 (Ron  
Capita  
lization  
during  
was b  
expand  
public  
rapidly  
The in  
these p  
abroad  
position  
while  
U.S. by  
lack of

When  
dollar l  
under t  
down  
moneta  
lost its  
as gold  
geosie  
inflation  
before,  
with it

The  
same ro  
in basi  
than tw  
rotting  
panded  
introduc  
across  
outlays

The b  
acute ca  
not get  
needed.  
tion ha  
economy  
shortage  
energy t  
parts to

ATT  
To gen  
need, the  
producti  
down the  
the prole  
facing th  
and at wh  
campaign  
class.

The bo  
confusion  
is hamper  
nue the



# MAKE THE BOSSES PAY

Cont'd. from p. 1

confidently asserting that there would be a mild downturn in the first quarter of 1974 which would turn into a boom by summer. Now none of these sages stands by his predictions.

Formerly, these fakers had insisted that there was a "trade-off" between inflation and unemployment—increasing unemployment would cut back inflation and vice versa. This myth has now exploded; unemployment and inflation are both way above the levels of the 1960's.

## STABILITY OVER

As we showed in Torch No. 6 (Ron Taber, "Roots of the Capitalist Crisis"), the stabilization of world capitalism during the post-war period was based in the main on expanding credit and debt, public and private, much more rapidly than real production. The inflationary effects of these policies were transferred abroad through the privileged position of the U.S. dollar, while basic industry in the U.S. by and large decayed for lack of investment.

When the U.S. cut the dollar loose from gold in 1971 under the threat of a breakdown in the international monetary system, the dollar lost its special status as "good as gold." The American bourgeoisie no longer could export inflation to the same degree as before, and was forced to deal with it at home.

The stagnation has the same roots. Failure to invest in basic industry for more than two decades has led to a rotting industrial plant. Expanded production requires introducing new machinery across the board, but the outlays needed are staggering.

The bourgeoisie, faced with acute capital shortages, cannot generate the amount needed. As a result, production has sagged and the economy is plagued with shortages in key areas—from energy to paper to machine parts to food.

## ATTACKS ON WAY

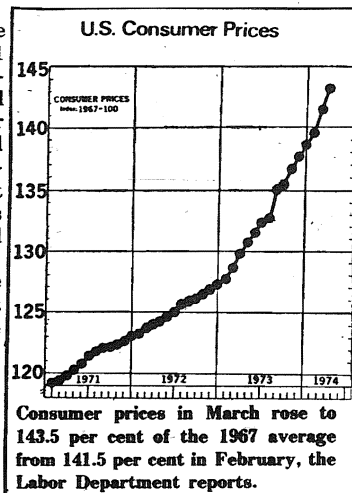
To generate the capital they need, the bourgeoisie must cut production costs by driving down the living standards of the proletariat. The question facing them is what method and at what pace to pursue the campaign against the working class.

The bourgeois economists' confusion about the economy is hampering them. To continue the present loose-credit

policy will send inflation out of control. But tightening credit to check inflation will run the risk of massive unemployment and possible depression. Either solution, unemployment or inflation, means severe attacks on the working class.

At this point, the bourgeoisie is vacillating. The Americans for Democratic Action, the "left wing" of the Democratic Party, calls for maintaining wage-price controls. *Business Week*, speaking for many corporations, praises the removal of controls and demands an easy credit policy. Arthur Burns, head of the Federal Reserve Board, has instituted a tight-credit program, while the *New York Times* typically counsels a mixture of these policies and urges restraint on all sides.

The bourgeoisie needs strong leadership to decide on a single course of action, but it finds itself without a firm hand at the controls. The Watergate crisis has destroyed Nixon's credibility, but without a strong leader the ruling class cannot chart a clear course to deal with labor and the economy.



## TIME TO ACT!

The time is ripe for the working class to intervene. While the bourgeoisie is confused, the proletariat should force through programs to decide the crisis in its own favor. Instead, the labor hacks are doing all in their power to tide the capitalists over.

Steelworkers' president I.W. Abel, who has already surrendered the right to strike in basic steel, has established himself as the bourgeoisie's key operative in the labor movement. In the three-year steel contract negotiated last month, Abel agreed to cost-of-living increases of 1 cent for every 0.3 per cent rise in the Consumer Price Index. For

the average steelworker this means that inflation will rise twice as fast as their own wages.

Abel's sell-out agreement is being hailed as a model by the rest of the labor tops. This rotten agreement will be the norm in the upcoming round of contracts if the bureaucrats have their way. For protection against the ravages of inflation, the rank and file must demand the renegotiation of contracts before their expiration dates in order to make up the real wages that are being handed away.

## NO-STRIKE SELLOUTS

While giving away the workers' living standards without a fight, the bureaucracy is standing in line to hand over all workers' right to strike. Abel's no-strike deal in steel is being loudly cheered by AFL-CIO president George Meany, who has declared that federal and state employees should not have the right to strike.

Without the strike weapon, the trade unions will be powerless against inflation and unemployment. But as we have seen, a fight with the capitalists on these matters is the last thing the labor "leaders" want.

The centerpiece of the strategy of the labor bureaucrats is to tie the trade unions hand and foot to the capitalist Democratic Party. Meany heads a host of union presidents calling for a "veto-proof Congress"—one that is more than two-thirds Democratic—as a solution to the attacks on working people. Their response to Watergate is to attack Nixon while counterposing the need for a Democratic president in 1976.

## MEANY'S FRIENDS

Pretending that the Democrats are the "friends of labor" means disarming the rank and file. The only real disagreements between Democrats and Republicans are over who will discipline the proletariat and how this will be done. It was leading Democrats like George McGovern who first advocated wage-price controls, and it was a Democratic Congress that voted Nixon the power to impose these controls even over his own initial hesitations.

And make no mistake—this program was designed from the outset to clamp down on labor. In the words of Arnold Weber, initial head of the Cost of Living Council, "Business had been leaning on Shultz

and McCracken (Nixon advisers) to do something about the economy, especially wages. The idea of the freeze and Phase II was to zap labor, and we did."

Despite this common knowledge that wage-price controls were directed at labor, George Meany and other top bureaucrats served on control boards from the beginning. Bourgeois economists have been lavish in their praise for this class collaborationist role. For example, William W. Bewley (corporate economist at Hercules, Inc.) notes that ers have gotten the short end of the stick in real take-home pay for 15 months" and concludes "labor has been one of the most responsible groups in the U.S."

Translated, this means that the labor bureaucracy has stopped at nothing in their attempts to stabilize capitalism. No sacrifice by their union members has been too great! The bourgeoisie is expressing its thanks for a job well done.

## UNION BUSTING

When the bourgeoisie once again settles on a definite economic policy, the attacks on the proletariat will be even more brutal. Inflation is already taking its toll, but far worse is in store. Federal Trade Commissioner Thompson called on May 6 for anti-trust legislation directed at the trade unions.

Such legislation would be a major stride towards breaking up the large unions and declaring all strikes illegal. More measures along this line will be proposed and adopted as the bourgeoisie girds to accumulate the capital it lacks from the proletariat.

This whole sweep of events cries out for a revolutionary proletarian leadership that will cohere the working class

around a program capable of meeting and solving the attack it faces. Instead of the bureaucrats grovelling before the Democrats, a Congress of Labor and oppressed groupings should be convened to demand Nixon's ouster and to launch a labor party to take the field against the capitalist Democrats and Republicans.

## FIGHT THE ATTACKS!

Such a Labor Congress would take up the key issues facing labor. The cutting edge of inflation must be met with the fight for full cost of living, escalator clauses and contract reopeners—a sliding scale of wages, beginning now with thirty hours' work for forty hours' pay.

Massive unemployment and the threat of wholesale job loss should be met with the call for dividing all available work among all willing to work, with no loss of pay—a sliding scale of hours.

On the agenda would be calling work stoppages, building to a nation-wide general strike against the bourgeoisie's attacks and the Nixon regime, directed at forcing new elections now. The proletariat must take advantage of the bourgeoisie's leadership crisis by pressing on with a labor party that fights for a workers' government.

The crisis of society—today spearheaded by inflation and Watergate—demonstrates that only the proletariat can structure society in the interests of the vast majority. Production must be taken out of the hands of the capitalists by a workers' government that nationalizes industry under workers' control.

These are the cornerstones of a successful proletarian response. The stakes are high. Anything less, any faint-hearted vacillations, will leave workers' living and working conditions in tatters. Success will mean the emancipation of humanity.

# Racist Dragnet

Cont'd. from p. 4

whole must rid themselves of this reformist leadership in order to repel these assaults. The San Francisco bureaucrats' betrayal is only part of the general class-collaborationist policies of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, which is abandoning the proletariat's major weapon, the right to strike, just as the ruling class mobilizes.

Meanwhile, Meany and his friends plead for a "veto-proof Congress"—a Democratic Party-controlled Congress—for protection. This month, the black political "leaders" gathered in Little Rock and the black trade union hacks meeting in Detroit were likewise concerned mainly with lauding the Democrats.

The Democratic Party will be no salvation—this is Alioto's party. By boosting the Democrats, the reformists are chaining the working class to the very instrument which has already begun to unleash the most brutal offensive. A successful struggle will require a revolutionary leadership which mobilizes the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and its parties.

# 45th Anniversary of The Communist League of America

by Shelley Kramer

This month marks 45 years since the birth of the organized Trotskyist movement in the United States.

In May, 1929, the Communist League of America, Left Opposition of the Communist Party, held its founding convention in Chicago. Its members were few. The convention was attended by 31 delegates and 17 alternates representing twelve branches and approximately 100 members.

The tasks before the CLA, however, were enormous: the revolutionary revival of the Stalinized U.S. Communist Party, the spreading of the program of the Trotskyist International Left Opposition, and the preparation of the American proletariat for socialist revolution.

## FIRST U.S. TROTSKYISTS

The founding convention of the CLA was called by James Cannon, Max Shachtman, and Martin Abern, leaders of the first small Trotskyist nucleus which had been expelled from the Communist Party in 1928.

It was James Cannon, who as a delegate to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928, came into the possession of Leon Trotsky's suppressed "Critique of the Draft program of the 6th Congress."

Convinced of the fundamentals of Trotsky's program, Cannon smuggled the document out of Russia—and into the hands of his collaborators in the American CP. By 1928, to consider (let alone support) Trotsky's ideas was grounds for immediate expulsion from the CP.

The secret Trotskyist nucleus was therefore forced to run a race against time. With each secret meeting, with every attempt to make a new recruit to the Trotskyist program, they ran the risk of exposing themselves to the CP's Stalinist leadership.

They could not organize an open political faction to fight for their program. They could not even reproduce or circulate Trotsky's documents.

In only a few months their existence was uncovered, and they were bureaucratically expelled from the party on charges of "conspiracy to advocate Trotskyism."

## THE PROGRAM OF THE CLA

The CLA was founded on the program of the International Left Opposition. The education of its leadership and ranks had been fundamentally shaped by Trotsky's "Critique of the Draft Program of the 6th Congress of the Comintern" (now published in *The Third International After Lenin*, available from Haymarket Press).

The core of Trotsky's critique was his rock-hard opposition to Stalin's

plan for "socialism in one country."

"Socialism in one country" required intensified attacks on the Russian proletariat and peasantry and meant the abandonment of an international revolutionary strategy. This reactionary theory gained support in the Russian Communist Party in the mid 20's, in the wake of working-class defeats internationally and the severe economic and political setbacks in Russia caused by civil war and isolation.

Trotsky proposed to the Sixth Congress that it return the Communist International to the program of Permanent Revolution. Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution was the guiding strategy behind the October, 1917, revolution.

The two pillars of the theory of the Permanent Revolution were (1) The survival of the Russian workers state depended on the international revolution. Only the leadership of revolutionary Marxists could bring the world proletariat to power.

(2) In this epoch, the democratic and socialist tasks of the proletariat are inseparably bound together and can only be achieved through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This revolutionary strategy was explicitly counterposed to the Menshevik strategy of two-stage revolutions (first national and democratic-capitalist, only later socialist) which Stalin revived within the Comintern to accompany his revisionist scheme of "socialism in one country."

## LIES, BUREAUCRACY

Trotsky's attack on Stalin's Comintern policies focused time and time again on the need to tell the truth—"to say what is" to the working class.

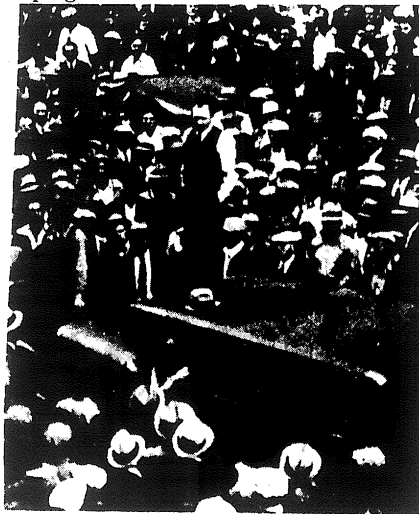
Stalin and his lackeys around the world, on the other hand, carefully covered up their errors and disguised their defeats while ruthlessly stamping out all criticism and opposition to their policies. An honest appraisal of revolutionary possibilities, a frank assessment of successes and failures, was replaced by deceitful subterfuge which called defeats "victories" and labeled retreats "advances."

The errors of the Comintern contributed to the defeat of the German proletariat in 1923, of the British proletariat in 1926, and of the Chinese proletariat and peasantry in 1926-27.

Similarly, they led to the reformist 1924 Farmer-Labor Party fiasco in the U.S.

These and a series of other setbacks for the revolutionary movement were never admitted in time to draw the appropriate lessons for the proletariat. With each crushing blow to the revolution, Stalin only initiated new "tactics"—ranging from opportunist blocs with the "progressive" bourgeoisie to ill-timed and unprepared adventurist insurrectionary uprisings.

The mounting bureaucratism and waves of purges necessary to cover Stalin's tracks weighed on the Comintern until it became totally incapable of mapping out a revolutionary strategy for the proletariat. In contrast, the Bolshevik principle of "saying what is" to the working class was boldly inscribed in the founding program of the CLA.



Teamster rally, Minneapolis, 1934. CLA-led mass strike broke back of employers' resistance.

The first years of the CLA, 1928-33—which Cannon called the "dog days of the Left Opposition"—tested the Trotskyist cadre in the U.S. severely.

Because the Left Opposition was thrown out of the CP before it had a chance to fully cohere itself politically and organizationally, the CLA was forced to undergo a painful process of sorting out its cadre and clarifying its ideas throughout this period.

As soon as the first Trotskyist militants were expelled from the CP, the Stalinists launched a campaign of disruption, intimidation, burglary, and physical assault against the Trotskyists. This terror campaign was designed to behead and demoralize the newly organized Left Opposition.

But the Stalinists never counted on the response they received. In city after city the CLA united with other left-wing groups to repel the Stalinist thugs.

Cannon describes such an incident in his *History of American Trotskyism*. In this particular case, the Trotskyists had just suffered a beating by the Stalinists at their first public meeting in Minneapolis. Cannon recalls that on the next night,

"We went down to the IWW hall with a proposal for a united front to protect free speech. Together with them, a few sympathizers and isolated individuals we formed a Workers Defense Guard.

A meeting was scheduled in the IWW hall; the handbill advertised that this meeting would be held under

the protection of the Workers Defense Guard. The Guard came there equipped with clubs, over-sized hatchet handles purchased at a hardware store, nice and handy.

The guards lined up along the walls and in front of the speaker.... The meeting went off smoothly, without any sign of disturbance.

Despite the disappointments and setbacks of its "dog days," the CLA not only survived but was able to educate and prepare itself for the first opportunities for mass work which opened up.

The change in the tempo of the class struggle in 1933-34 provided the CLA with such opportunities. Hitler's victory in 1933 disoriented the entire left and called attention to the CLA, the group which had publicized Trotsky's program for the German working class—the only program which could have saved the German working class from fascism.

For the first time, hundreds flocked to the mass meetings of the CLA to hear the truth behind the German events.

Then, in 1934, the Minneapolis branch of the CLA won the leadership of the great Teamster organizing strikes. Here, the members of the CLA demonstrated that the Trotskyists were able to put their ideas into practice and successfully lead the working class in struggle. The Minneapolis strike stands out in American labor history for its militancy, its uniquely democratic organization, and its high degree of political consciousness.

## THE CLA AND THE RSL

The Revolutionary Socialist League proudly stands on the principles and traditions of the CLA. The program of Permanent Revolution and an unfaltering commitment to "say what is" to the working class have defined our tendency since its birth.

Like the CLA, we have a difficult road ahead of us. But we have the advantage of learning the lessons paid for by those who came before us.

The international degeneration of the ex-Trotskyist movement during the 1940's calls for new revolutionary Trotskyist parties firmly committed to the founding principles of the Left Opposition and the CLA.

The Revolutionary Socialist League is the nucleus for this party in the United States. *The Torch* is the first revolutionary paper since the *Militant* of decades past to say what is to the working class and to outline what must be done for the working class to emerge out of the capitalist crisis as ruling class. It is fitting that as we celebrate the 45th anniversary of the CLA, *The Torch* embarks on biweekly publication.

Join us in renewing the fight for revolutionary Trotskyism. Build the League! Support the bi-weekly *Torch*!



Cont'd.

standards  
vestments  
ers' move  
against co  
For the mo  
muted, bu  
The sen  
tion among  
high.

Seven m  
been take  
state-appe  
In five key  
left, the  
phones an  
workers h  
managem  
taken over  
in the ste  
Business a

Among  
the Lisbon  
Mario Soz  
leader retur  
after the A  
chanting,  
Station!" T  
return from  
1917 and  
Station.

But Leni  
sailors, dre  
the revolut

## PORT

los Comuni  
han evitado  
nal", el him  
clases. En  
himno naci  
tienen en  
económico  
ros".

Los prime  
parados-dur  
del 27 de a  
junta ha c  
tomarán m  
purgas de o  
de los obrer  
industriales.

La junta e  
nueva y p  
sangre de los  
se mantiene  
capitalistas  
apoya; dará  
contra los ob  
Spínola actu  
seguro de enc  
fieles para dis  
Tiene que ga  
sus aliados p  
istas del PC y  
Soares.

Pero el capi  
interés en e  
cuanto ayuda

# rica

the Workers Defense  
ward came there  
bs, over-sized hat-  
ased at a hardware  
ndy.

up along the walls  
e speaker.... The  
smoothly, without  
bance.

appointments and  
g days," the CLA  
but was able to  
e itself for the first  
mass work which

tempo of the class  
provided the CLA  
tunities. Hitler's  
oriented the entire  
ntion to the CLA,  
had publicized  
for the German  
only program  
ved the German  
fascism.

hundreds flocked  
gs of the CLA to  
ind the German

the Minneapolis  
on the leadership  
nster organizing  
members of the  
hat the Trotsky-  
their ideas into  
ssfully lead the  
ggle. The Minne-  
out in American  
s militancy, its  
organization, and  
litical conscious-

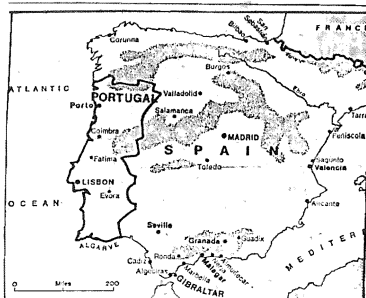
THE RSL

Socialist League  
e principles and  
The program of  
n and an unfal-  
"say what is"  
have defined our  
th.

have a difficult  
ut we have the  
he lessons paid  
e before us.  
degeneration of  
ovement during  
w revolutionary  
wly committed  
ples of the Left  
LA.

Socialist League  
s party in the  
rch is the first  
nce the Militant  
what is to the  
outline what  
orking class to  
italist crisis as  
ng that as we  
iversary of the  
ks on biweekly

the fight for  
ism. Build the  
i-weekly Torch!



Cont'd. from p. 1

standards or to give up its African investments—clash with the rising workers' movement and the sentiment against continuing the African war. For the moment, this conflict is being muted, but events are moving fast.

The sentiment for socialist revolution among the Portuguese masses is high.

Seven major unions have already been taken over by workers, their state-appointed fascist leaders ousted. In five key public services—the Post Office, the railways, electricity, telephones and the national airline—workers have thrown out the top management. One major bank has been taken over by its employees. A strike in the steel industry is threatened. Business activity is slowing down.

#### LENIN IN 1917—

Among the crowds that surged to the Lisbon railroad station to greet Mario Soares, the Socialist Party leader returning from exile three days after the April 25 coup, were those chanting, "To the Santa Apolonia Station!" The reference was to Lenin's return from exile to Russia in April, 1917 and his speech at the Finland Station.

But Lenin, speaking to a crowd of sailors, drew a line of blood between the revolutionary proletariat and the

## PORTUGAL

de la p. 12

los Comunistas como los Socialistas han evitado el cantar 'La Internacional', el himno marxista de la guerra de clases. En vez de eso han cantado el himno nacional. Pero aquellos que tienen en sus manos el poder económico no se sienten muy seguros".

Los primeros tiros ya fueron disparados durante las manifestaciones del 27 de abril y del 4 de mayo. La junta ha dado aviso de que "se tomarán medidas" si continúan las purgas de oficiales fascistas por parte de los obreros y las tomas de plantas industriales.

La junta está lista para ahogar la nueva y pasajera libertad con la sangre de los obreros. Estados Unidos se mantiene medio oculto como los capitalistas portugueses a quienes apoya; dará su respaldo a Spínola contra los obreros si hace necesario. Spínola actualmente no puede estar seguro de encontrar tropas que le sean fieles para disparar contra los obreros. Tiene que ganar tiempo. Para esto, sus aliados principales son los stalinistas del PC y los social-demócratas de Soares.

Pero el capitalismo portugués tiene interés en estos partidos sólo en cuanto ayudan a quitarle el filo al

"democratic" swindlers in the Russian provisional government.

"Comrade sailors," Lenin said in 1917, "I greet you without knowing yet whether or not you have been believing in all the promises of the Provisional Government. But I am convinced that when they talk to you sweetly, when they promise you a lot, they are deceiving you and the whole Russian people.

"The people need peace; the people need bread; the people need land. And they give you war, hunger, no bread—leave the landlords on the land. . . . We must fight for the socialist revolution, fight to the end, till the complete victory of the proletariat. Long live the world socialist revolution."

#### —VS. TODAY'S TRAITORS

In Lisbon in May, 1974, the oily Soares is angling for a post in the provisional government. The Communist Party leader, Alvaro Cunhal arrived from exile two days after Soares to an even larger demonstration, and stated, "The Communist Party is ready to assume its responsibilities in the present political juncture."

To the Russian sailors searching for a clear leadership Lenin told the simple truth—that the provisional government remained a capitalist government, a government of the workers' enemies. Today the Portuguese Communist and Socialist parties lead the masses, longing for socialism, into supporting the capitalist provisional government.

The Communist Party is the better-organized of the two groups, with disciplined fractions in factories, offices and the armed forces. The CP identifies itself with Portuguese bourgeoisie's national interests and uses democratic phraseology as a cover for

movimiento obrero. Cuando la cresta de la ola del movimiento de masas quede atrás gracias a esta ayuda, y las masas estén desorientadas y confusas, los capitalistas pasarán a la ofensiva. El PC y el PS serán las primeras víctimas.

El PC y el PS están llevando a las masas portuguesas por el mismo camino chileno de traición y sangrienta derrota.

#### ¡DESTRUIR AL CAPITALISMO!

No puede haber un capitalismo democrático en Portugal. La revolución socialista es la única manera de ganar, mantener y ampliar las libertades democráticas que han aparecido brevemente en Portugal. Las demandas claves de un programa revolucionario incluyen:

Ningún apoyo al gobierno provisional. Elección de una Asamblea Constituyente revolucionaria para establecer un gobierno obrero.

Purgar a todos los fascistas de los sindicatos y de las empresas privadas y estatales. Ninguna piedad para los asesinos de las masas portuguesas: Juicios a los fascistas y a la PIDE (policía secreta) ante tribunales obreros.

Independencia inmediata e incondicional para las colonias—Ningún fraude de "federación".

Organización de juntas obreras

its pro-capitalist program. Aided by the smaller Socialist Party, it is today the key to capitalism's survival in Portugal.

#### CRACKDOWN AHEAD

The "leading families" were described by a New York Times reporter on May 3 as "saying nothing and lying low. But according to those who know them, they are watching with increasing alarm as red banners appear on the streets. . . . Both the Communists and the Socialists have refrained from singing 'The Internationale,' the Marxist anthem of class war. Instead they have sung the national anthem. But those who hold the economic power are not reassured."

Already shots have been fired—during demonstrations on April 27 and May 4. The junta has warned that "action will be taken" if the workers' purges of fascist officials and take-overs of industrial enterprises continue.

The junta is ready to drown the new, temporary freedom in the workers' blood. The United States, presently lying as low as the Portuguese capitalists it supports, will back Spínola when necessary against the workers.

Spínola would now be unsure of finding reliable troops to fire on the workers. He must play for time. His chief allies are the Stalinist CP and Soares's Social Democrats.

But Portuguese capitalism is interested in these parites only so far as they take the edge off the workers' movement. When the crest of the mass movement is passed with their aid, and the masses become disoriented and confused, the capitalists will move over to the attack. The CP and SP will be the first to go.

The CP and SP are leading the

masses down the Chilean road of betrayal and bloody defeat.

#### SMASH CAPITALISM

There is no room for democratic capitalism in Portugal. Socialist revolution is the only way to win and maintain and expand the democratic freedoms which have briefly appeared in Portugal.

The key demands of a revolutionary program include:

No support to the provisional government. Elect a revolutionary Constituent Assembly to establish a Workers' Government.

Purge all fascists from the unions, state and private enterprises. No mercy for the butchers of the Portuguese masses: try the fascists and PIDE (secret police) in workers' courts.

... Arm the people. Form a Workers' Militia.

Expropriate the leading families and imperialist investments. Nationalize industry and the banks under the control of workers' committees.

Immediate, unconditional independence for the colonies—no "federation" fraud.

Organize workers' councils (soviets) to fight for this program!

#### REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Events are now moving toward tests of strength between the bourgeoisie and the masses led by the working class, under the cover of a "democratic" provisional government. The present democratic interlude, no matter how brief, must be used to discredit the traitor Communist and Socialist Parties and to construct a revolutionary general staff for the leaderless proletarian army—a Portuguese section of a reconstructed Fourth International.

(soviets) para luchar por este programa!

#### PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO

Los sucesos avanzan rápidamente hacia enfrentamientos entre la burguesía y las masas encabezadas por la clase obrera. Estos enfrentamientos servirán a ambas partes para medir sus fuerzas, pero el gobierno provisional "democrático" sirve sólo para disimular la lucha.

El actual periodo democrático, no

importa qué tan breve, tiene que ser usado por la clase obrera para desenmascarar a los traidores del Partido Comunista y del Partido Socialista. Urge la construcción de un Estado mayor revolucionario para el ejército proletario que hoy se encuentra sin liderato—una sección portuguesa como parte de la reconstrucción de la Cuarta Internacional.

(Traducción: AV)

**CHILE:**  
**¡Que nunca vuelva a suceder!**

CÓMO LA REVOLUCIÓN FUE TRAICIONADA

UNFOLLETO DE THE TORCH

# CHILE:

## ¡Que nunca vuelva a suceder!

Aprendámos  
las lecciones de la derrota

25¢

Pidelos a:  
Haymarket Books — 160 N. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60606