

For Workers Revolution In Iran!

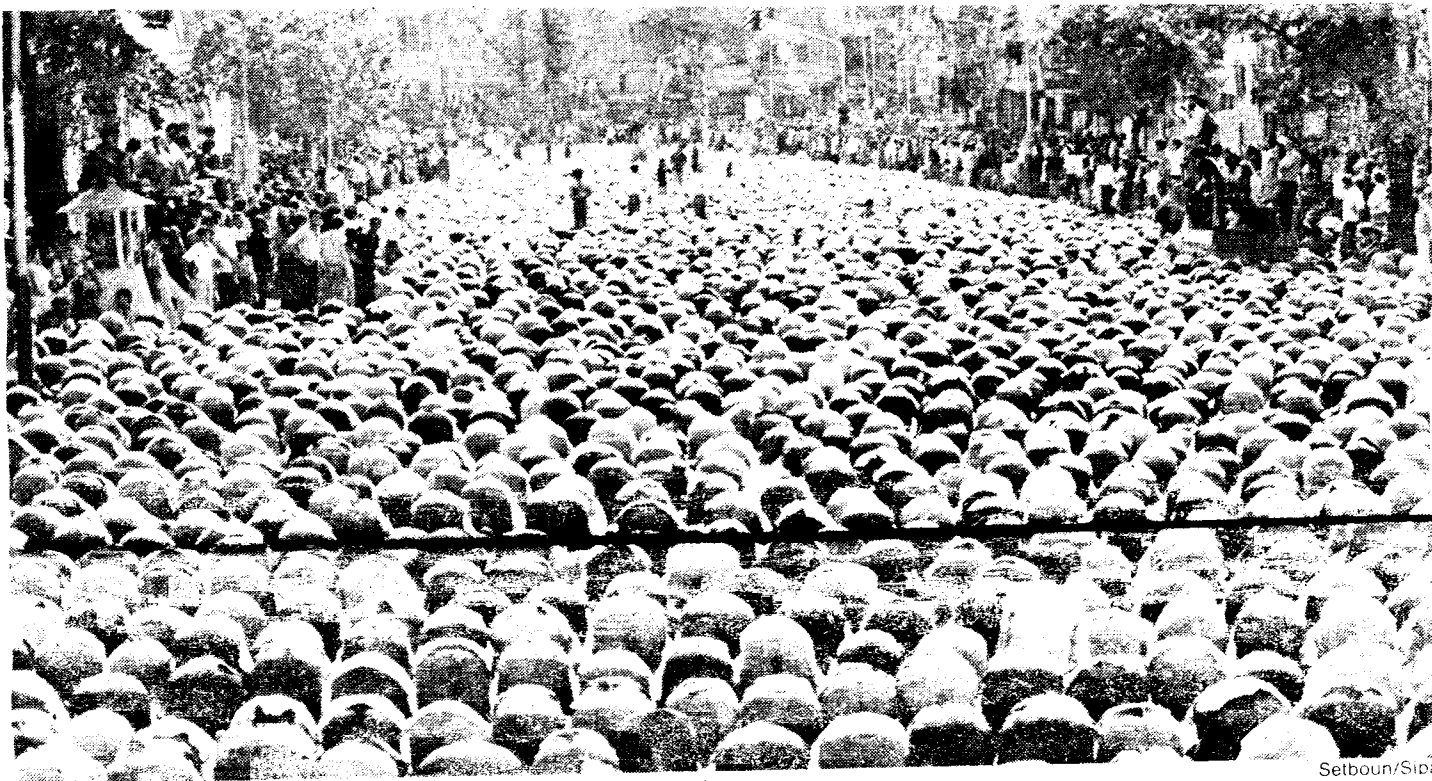
Down with the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini!

DECEMBER 13—A million Iranians streamed into the streets of Teheran on December 10 and 11 in a mammoth display of opposition to the bloody dictatorship of Reza Shah Pahlavi. Two days earlier the regime had reluctantly abandoned its attempt to ban all demonstrations in the capital during the Shi'ite Muslim holy month of Muharram. Elsewhere in Iran, however, troops clashed with demonstrators, and a number of protesters were killed in Isfahan.

Opposition leaders had turned Muharram and especially the holiday of Ashura (the 11th) into a test of strength with the shah. The lifting of the demonstration ban in Teheran was a sharp setback to the military government headed by General Gholam Reza Azhari, which has unsuccessfully attempted to stamp out the massive anti-shah revolt that has rocked Iran for more than a year. The next few weeks may well see the end of the shah's 25-year reign.

Muharram is a commemoration of the death of Hussein (the legitimate successor of Muhammed according to the Shi'ites) during the 7th century civil wars which divided Islam into the two great camps of Shia and Sunni. The linkage of this period of ritual mourning, which includes acts of self-flagellation, to the drive against the shah is another indication of the Islamic fundamentalism which dominates the current wave of demonstrations against the shah. For the past year Muslim preachers (mullahs) headed by Ayatollah (religious chief) Khomeini have constituted the political leadership of the opposition movement.

The streets of Teheran, bedecked with funereal black flags and plunged into darkness as a result of a power workers' strike, witnessed the chilling spectacle of protesters clad in ceremonial white robes and chanting "allah akbar" ("god is great") being mowed down by machine guns. Equally grotesque was the shah's claim on December 2, the first day of protests, that several hours of this slaughter had produced only seven deaths. The actual casualties from the demonstrators' suicidal advances on the



Setboun/Sipa

Off your knees, for workers revolution. Anti-shah demonstrators pray during mullah-led demonstration in Teheran.

shah's troops ran to nearly a thousand by December 4.

On December 8 the government gave in. The demonstrations had not ceased and the city remained shut down by a general strike. Striking bank clerks and government workers had been joined by the oil workers who thus deprived the regime of vitally needed revenue. The shah not only allowed the mass marches to take place but renounced any attempt to force the oil strikers back to work. Karim Sanjabi, leader of the bourgeois liberal National Front, had already been released from jail two days earlier.

The two mass marches provided dramatic evidence of the organizational control of the religious hierarchy. On the 10th, contingents reportedly sat down, stood up, stopped and started at the direction of the parade marshals. Nearly all of the women participants wore the *chador*, the head-to-foot black cloak/veil prescribed by Islam. On the following day the marchers, once again numbering a million or more, were less well drilled. But this was because some

had abandoned themselves to religious hysteria, performing the traditional self-flagellation. The anti-shah movement is not some spontaneous outburst which just happens to have religious spokesmen; rather, Khomeini relies on the organizational network provided by the thousands of preachers subsidized by levies on the bazaar's merchants.

Khomeini continues to press his call for the replacement of the Pahlavi monarchy by an "Islamic republic" from exile in France. The bourgeois liberal National Front, the mullahs' junior partner, has reiterated its refusal to join any coalition government with the shah. As a result his abdication is now widely seen as the only alternative to bloody chaos. The bourgeois press is filled with speculation about possible "transitional governments," a regency or rule by a military junta.

Breakdown of Military Rule

In mid-November it seemed for a moment as if the turn to direct rule by the general staff might save the butcher

shah. Despite sporadic street demonstrations, the economically strategic oil workers had been forced to end their strike. But the military government's authority was badly damaged by a renewal of protests sparked by soldiers intruding into a religious shrine in Mashhad. After pursuing demonstrators into the building, the troops opened fire, killing and wounding several persons. Three ayatollahs then issued a call for a national general strike on November 26 because, "The holy shrine has been damaged and subjected to sacrilege and its holy courtyard made the scene of shooting" (UPI dispatch, November 25). As many as a million people reportedly turned out in Mashhad to heed the ayatollahs' call.

By the end of November it was clear that the working-class strike wave had been only temporarily slowed, not crushed. Strikes by bank and government employees alternate with work slowdowns. The battered Iranian economy now suffers from a currency

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Why a
Revolutionary
Constituent
Assembly?



Spartacist
League
Gets
SWP's Goat



Teng's China
Appeals to
Imperialist
Bankers

Election of Bob Mandel Confirmed

ILWU Ranks Stop Bureaucrats' Dirty Tricks

OAKLAND, December 7—An attempt to oust Militant Caucus leader Bob Mandel from the General Executive Board of Local 6 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) collapsed today, under the pressure of an aroused union membership. The official Balloting Committee completed a hotly contested recount and confirmed that Mandel had indeed been re-elected for a third term to the warehouse local's executive board in an election held November 16.

The fact that an honest recount took place was testimony to the authority which Mandel and the Militant Caucus have won in the ranks of the union, and to a show of support that headed off the real threat of bureaucratic "dirty tricks" in the recount process. The background to the disputed recount made it clear that a section of the union bureaucracy was once again attempting to rid itself of class-struggle opposition in the union's leading body.

According to the account in the latest "Warehouse Militant" (4 December), published by the Militant Caucus, Mandel had won the tenth and last spot in the East Bay division of Local 6 in the November 16 balloting, with 295 votes, edging out local leadership loyalist Louise Dalton by one vote.

Mandel told *WV* that he approached Dalton and Local 6 secretary-treasurer LeRoy King on the afternoon the ballots were counted, stating his willingness to have a recount on the spot. But King declined the offer, ruling that there were no constitutional grounds for a GEB recount. Hence, the local's Balloting Committee correctly certified the elections and then turned the ballot boxes over to King. On Monday, December 20, the official Local 6 election bulletin came out listing Mandel as one of those elected. Then came a sudden switch:

"...on Tuesday our original suspicions were confirmed. King informed Mandel that Dalton was demanding a recount and he was now granting the request, completely reversing his initial ruling! Checking with various union members on both sides of the Bay, it became clear that the motivation behind the recount move was purely political. We were told that various groups within the leadership want Mandel off the GEB, and have reportedly urged Dalton to pursue her challenge. We were told that these leadership groupings included the Figueroa/Ramos/Mercado circle who had led the unsuccessful attempt to have Mandel 'censured' in 1975. Dalton is a supporter of the leadership who earlier this year was appointed by the International as overseas delegate."
—"Warehouse Militant,"
4 December

This line-up of bureaucrats was not accidental—it was virtually the same group which pushed to censure Mandel at a GEB meeting in February 1975 because of Mandel's role in initiating mass picketing tactics in the KNC Glass strike of that year. When Mandel, then a newly elected GEB member, and other ILWU militants helped mobilize hundreds of union members to man the picket lines at KNC to turn back mass scabbing, the do-nothing ILWU tops and their fake-left lapdogs went into a frenzy. Well-known Communist Party (CP) supporter Joe Figueroa, a Local 6 business agent, insinuated that Mandel was a "provocateur," while then-regional organizer LeRoy King demanded Mandel's expulsion from the union. But the GEB censure motion was quickly overturned by an outraged

membership at the following local meeting, with every Local 6 worker at KNC signing a statement opposing the censure and supporting the militant tactics used in the strike.

There were thus grounds for concern when it was learned that it was the same LeRoy King who now held the keys to the ballot box, stored for some days at the union hall. Even Vern Bown—a well-known supporter of the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party and a bitter foe of the Militant Caucus—later admitted in his capacity as head of the Balloting Committee that after the original count no real steps were taken to secure the ballots. But in slightly more than two days the Caucus got about 150 Local 6 members, including at least 13 stewards and three GEB members, to sign a petition which read: "Because of the dubious circumstances surrounding the Mandel/Dalton recount and in order to protect the integrity of the Local 6 election process, we call on Sister Dalton to withdraw her challenge and on the Secretary-Treasurer and Election Board to certify the already published totals as final."

In an interview with *WV*, Mandel described the wave of support that developed:

"We know that members from more than 20 ILWU-organized houses protested to the union leadership once they heard about the planned recount. I've been told that even many of Louise Dalton's coworkers, including the chief steward at her plant, told her she should withdraw. On the day of the recount, King complained to me, 'My phone didn't stop ringing all Wednesday afternoon!'"

"The center of support came from houses where the Caucus has played a significant role in helping the membership make gains. Fourteen members from KNC including the chief steward led off the fight with a telegram to the officers flatly opposing the recount. Right behind them came a petition of support from approximately 30 members at Owens Illinois, circulated by the chief steward and his closest collaborator, who were the top vote getters in the election for the new GEB in the East Bay. Owens was the site of the critical fight over a year ago, where the membership in collaboration with the Militant Caucus successfully defended Local 6's historic tradition of never



Bob Mandel

WV Photo

crossing another union's picket lines despite the leadership's order to scab. "Support also came from the chief steward from Safeway Preserves and at Rathjen Liquors, who had worked with the Caucus to stop ILWU shipments during the recent IBT grocery strike. In an impressive outpouring of support representing much more than simply anger at the leadership's dirty tricks, the response was from members who understood that the Caucus's class-struggle program can defend the union and win victories and demanded that these policies be represented on the GEB."

The abortive attempt to bump Mandel was the attempt of a shaky bureaucracy to tighten its control over the union's apparatus in the face of upcoming negotiations for the union's master contract, which expires next June. The

Local 6 leadership has seen its authority severely eroded since a bitter defeat in the 1976 contract strike. The failure of Local 6 president Keith Eickman to honor all Teamster picket lines during the recently defeated supermarket strike—despite demands from ILWU members who were honoring the lines—was an ominous sign to the membership as the union faces its own contract struggle. It is widely perceived in the local that the bosses will wage the same kind of frontal offensive against ILWU warehousemen that was mounted against the Teamsters and that a hard-fought strike may be required even to preserve existing union standards.

Many local leaders have responded to this situation by simply jumping ship. Twelve out of 19 GEB members in the San Francisco and East Bay division of the warehousemen's section of the union chose not to even run for re-election. Also symptomatic of the collapse at the top was the recent resignation of well-entrenched business agent Evelyn Johnson, who left the union and went directly over to the companies, taking a management job at a company she previously bargained with.

Faced with this shakiness at the top of their union at a time when hard-fought battles are on the agenda, the local ranks responded in a generally conservative fashion in the recent election. Three fifths of the local members did not even vote. Though those incumbents who did seek re-election were returned to office, the membership voted for many new faces largely along ethnic lines, in a local that is divided almost equally between blacks, whites and Chicanos.

In the balloting, Mandel's own percentage of the vote was reduced (in 1976 he came in second, with 398 votes). But the mobilization of the membership in the recount fight, as well as the votes for other, lesser-known Militant Caucus GEB candidates, shows that the Caucus has a sizable base of support in the local. Caucus candidate Pete Farrugio got 252 votes, Peter Woolston 196, and Jack Dow 187.

Summing up his view of the elections, *continued on page 15*

Letter

Editorial Board
Workers Vanguard

Dear Comrades,

I want to correct an error in *WV*'s otherwise adequate recent reply to the "rat groups'" anti-SL barrage ("Hate the Truth, Hate the Spartacist League," *WV* No. 217, 20 October). In quoting from the Landyites' polemic against my January 1977 speech, *WV* repeated their misquotation: "The Greek population exists by selling its children or selling Swiss watches to one another." Even according to the dishonest Communist Cadre pamphlet, my phrase was "exporting its children." Thus a protest against the civil war's devastation of the country—which outside the cities of Athens and Salonika has been hideously depopulated as economic necessity compels the young people to emigrate, ultimately calling into question Greece's survival as a nation—and the destruction of a people has been transformed into gibberish.

May I also suggest that a valuable adjunct to *WV*'s response to these

attacks—which, as you pointed out, delete much of the political material in the talk—would be to republish that section of *WV*'s original article which presented the forum's central conclusion, the SL's regroupment program for left Pabloites.

Comradely,
Jim Robertson

WV replies: The following outline of key points of a draft declaration by Trotskyists driven out of the United Secretariat who now support the international Spartacist tendency is reprinted from "New York Spartacist Forum—Reforge the Fourth International!," *WV* No. 143, 4 February 1977:

- No political or electoral support to popular fronts; for conditional opposition to workers parties in open or implicit class-collaborationist coalitions;
- Uphold the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution; for proletarian leadership of the national/social struggle;
- For military support to petty-

bourgeois nationalist forces fighting imperialism, but absolutely no political support to such forces; for Trotskyist parties in every country;

- For unconditional defense of all the deformed/degenerated workers states against imperialism; for political revolution against the bureaucracies; no political support to competing Stalinist cliques and factions;

- Against violence within the workers movement;

- For communist fractions in the unions, based on the Transitional Program;

- For the communist tactic of the united front from above; for the tactic of regroupment to unite subjective revolutionists in the vanguard party; for intransigent exposure of centrism;

- Rejection of the claims of ostensibly Trotskyist Internationals to speak for the Fourth International, destroyed by Pabloism in 1951-53;

- For the reforging of a democratic-centralist Fourth International which will stop at nothing short of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Blacks Fight Klan Terror in Tupelo

Tupelo, Mississippi has become the center of a fight by blacks seeking equality against the racist terror of the Ku Klux Klan. On November 25 an estimated 2,500 people from northern Mississippi and some cities in the North—many wearing "Justice for All" T-shirts—marched in this city of 25,000 under the banners of the United League (UL) of Northern Mississippi, demanding an end to police brutality and Klan terror and calling for jobs for blacks under "affirmative action" quota plans.

Continuing a months-long pattern of provocation, about 40 hooded terrorists of the KKK, brandishing their artillery, stationed themselves outside the FBI offices and the local police station where they could be assured of vigorous protection. The Klan has made Tupelo a target for its special brand of genocidal vigilante actions. Given the go-ahead by Jimmy Carter's "human rights" Supreme Court and with the legal backing of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Klan has organized its race terror on the streets of Tupelo in broad daylight and has stepped up its night-riding cross burnings throughout this rural area of the Deep South.

Vowing to "counter-demonstrate" every time the blacks of Tupelo march down the streets, the KKK poses a direct threat to the lives of any and all blacks who assert their democratic rights. In August United League leader Howard Gunn reported that he narrowly escaped death when Klansmen fired 17 bullets into his car; other UL members have been chased by the KKK killers as well.

The Klan has a long and murderous history in this region. It was near Philadelphia, Mississippi that the three civil rights workers Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner were killed at the start of "Freedom Summer" in 1964. And Medgar Evers of the NAACP was shot dead outside his home in Jackson in



Klan provocation on the streets of Tupelo, June 10.

and that the Tupelo merchants and city government hire blacks until their overall employment equaled their proportion (30 percent) of the city population.

The boycotts were explosive. By April Cruber and Sandefer had been fired, but then the Klansmen rode into the picture as the self-appointed champions of racist police brutality and as vigilantes for whites "victimized" by blacks and "carpetbaggers." The Klan held rallies with Cruber and Sandefer as featured speakers. And while crosses burned in northern Mississippi, the city reinstated the two vicious cops.

On June 10 about 1,000 UL protesters were met by 300 Klansmen and hangers-on in the streets of Tupelo. The KKK was protected by the Tupelo cops, who were heavily armed with shotguns and rifles. The open mutual aggression pact between the cops and the KKK made public what every black in Tupelo has always known—under the white sheets

front of an automobile. We think that there are people who are waiting for us to lie down.

"We will have to protect ourselves because the law enforcement's not going to do it. The Justice Department's not going to do it. The FBI—you know, it came out that they were really working with the Klan in the '60's. They're still doing it. When we need a man to investigate a crime, they end up investigating us. They work completely with your local law enforcement agencies and from there, with the Klan. So we have to protect ourselves. Because we're non-violent, we're not cowards...we can't be fools."

—*Southern Struggle*, September-October 1978

Old Racism in the "New" South

The United League boycott has spread to other northern Mississippi towns, such as Okolona and Lexington, and the organization claims upwards of 60,000 members in 39 counties. Not surprisingly, the "New" South liberal establishment has become rather alarmed about Skip Robinson and his UL, viewing it as a potential threat to the passive liberalism of the NAACP and more established black leadership. A columnist in the Jackson *Capitol Reporter* (September 14) described Robinson's group as "rolling like a black cloud out of the northeast part of the state." And the same newspaper editorialized against the UL, reminding whites to be "thankful" for the "more rational, stable blacks whose objectives and methods are not radical" organizations like the NAACP, the Urban League and the "black ministers and school teacher community." A *McComb Enterprise-Journal* (September 14) editorial entitled "Same Mistakes?" wailed that the "bad" old days of the civil rights movement seemed to be returning, and they were "too divisive, too violent, too self-defeating" to repeat.

It is interesting to note that the boycott tactics used by Robinson's group were also employed by the NAACP (of which Robinson is a member) in Port Gibson. But there a state judge ordered the NAACP to pay \$1.25 million in damages to Port Gibson merchants for violating the laws governing "secondary boycotts." This attempt to bankrupt the NAACP was not lost on the United League, which hooked its boycott to demands for affirmative action in the stores it was boycotting, thus avoiding the charge of "secondary boycott."

But the UL's demands also grew out of the dead end experienced by the liberal-led civil rights movement of the 1960's. The liberals codified their reliance on the federal government into "affirmative action," which was used as a union-busting scheme, disastrously pitting black workers against white unionists. So while it is not surprising that the UL has adopted affirmative action demands, it should be under-

stood that Tupelo, Mississippi is not New York or Detroit. And Robinson's demand to have the lily-white workforce integrated is the urgent necessity and basic democratic right of the Tupelo blacks. This is not the Nixon administration's "Philadelphia Plan" to bust the construction trades unions. The central fact of Tupelo is that there are virtually no unions in the area. The "affirmative action" demands of the United League reflect at bottom the just aspirations of Southern black people, so long forced to live as economic outcasts at the bottom of a racist caste system.

We support the drive to break the racist status quo in Tupelo. But the United League's quota scheme is not enough. The UL wants blacks to "be employed in business according to a percentage of black trade," or "that banks employ at least 50 percent Black employees until the ratio is equal." We want to harness the power of labor to bring down the whole racist structure. Quota schemes relying on the bosses' government will not make a significant dent in the high unemployment, low wage conditions of Mississippi. It will take a militant, labor-led fight for jobs and union organizing to begin to realize the needs and aspirations of the blacks marching in the streets of Tupelo.

Break with the Democrats!

A massive black equality/union organizing drive in the South is what is desperately needed. But the United League continues the most dangerous thread of the civil rights movement—the tie to the Democratic Party. And it does so through one of the more sinister and reactionary politicians of the state—Charles Evers, Evers, brother of slain civil rights activist Medgar Evers, rules as the tinpot mayor of Fayette. It was Evers who came to Tupelo as the "great compromiser." He appeared with Robinson and Tupelo mayor Clyde Whitaker on October 4, when Robinson credited Evers with working out a deal in which a few token jobs would be offered to blacks in the city government along with an "investigation" of the police force in exchange for calling off the boycott. Robinson then urged his organization to vote for Evers in the November senatorial contest (won by Eastland).

Evers "hates welfare with a passion," opposes union organizing, has "never believed in busing all the way cross town" and wants "a strong defense" of America (*Capitol Reporter*, 7 September). He supported George Wallace in Alabama and Richard Nixon in his final days. It will be a terrible repetition, indeed, if the early militancy in the ranks of the UL is turned into political capital

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The Democratic Party connection: Skip Robinson (right) urged his United League to support reactionary Charles Evers, (left).

Jackson Advocate

1963. In fact, the Klan and the White Citizens Councils have been getting away with murder for years, and the local residents know that police departments are riddled with these shock troops of white supremacy.

The Tupelo Boycott and the KKK

The November 25 march was the latest action in an ongoing struggle in Tupelo that began in March when the UL organized a black boycott of white-owned stores, followed by nearly weekly "Marches for Justice" and "Silent Vigils." The black protests were sparked by the cop beating of a black man, Eugene Pasto, who drove through town with a white woman in 1976. The police captains poured salt in his eyes and beat a confession out of him for check forging, as well as forcing him to sign a waiver of his rights. The federal court overturned his conviction in 1978 but merely fined cops Dale Cruber and Roy Sandefer. The United League demanded that these racist sadists be fired

are blue uniforms. When five Klansmen unmasked proudly before national TV cameras at a KKK rally, four of them turned out to be cops. The mayor of Tupelo had promised that there would be no more Klansmen on the police force "by November 21." It was a false promise, notable only for what it admitted about the reality of the Tupelo police force.

Blacks have refused to be intimidated by the Klan, and the Tupelo boycott has gone beyond the intentions of its leadership in tapping the justified hatred of the black masses for the racist terrorists. The prayerful pacifism of the Martin Luther King marches carries very little weight these days with the Tupelo blacks who have to face the KKK. And while the UL has its share of preachers and describes itself as "non-violent," it has come to the Klan-filled streets of Tupelo prepared to defend its people against racist violence. League leader "Skip" Robinson says:

"We are not going to get out on the street and demonstrate by lying down in

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Why a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly?

In recent articles on Chile and Nicaragua we have raised the demand for a "revolutionary constituent assembly." This demand has provoked a number of inquiries from our readers. Do we believe that a constituent assembly can be a possible organizational basis for proletarian socialist revolution? If not, what exactly do we mean by a revolutionary constituent assembly?

The parliamentary form of government, based on an atomized electorate and giving equal weight to petty-bourgeois and working-class voters, cannot be the representative organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, the proletariat seeks to rally the petty-bourgeois masses around it by being the best defender of democratic rights and aspirations. In backward countries under autocratic or military bonapartist rule, the struggle for a representative, democratic government—a sovereign constituent assembly based on universal suffrage—can therefore in certain circumstances be key in uniting the toiling masses behind the proletarian vanguard.

On the other hand, the demand for a constituent assembly in the mouths of various anti-revolutionary fakery can easily be given a very different meaning. A timid bourgeois opposition may seek a peaceful transition through negotiating a compromise with the old regime, which could result in a temporary legislative body going under the name of a constituent assembly. Or a hard-pressed bonapartist regime seeking to forestall a popular uprising might convoke its own phony "constituent assembly." Even where the forms of universal suffrage and freedom for all parties are employed, the government in power can strongly influence, if not determine, the composition and role of such an assembly.

The call for a constituent assembly in Marxist programs has nothing to do with such conciliationist measures, just as the communist slogan of agrarian *revolution* in the backward capitalist countries differs fundamentally from liberal bourgeois plans for agrarian *reform*. Our call for a constituent assembly is one of a series of revolutionary democratic demands, raised in the context of a program for proletarian revolution, which can only be realized through the simultaneous or prior overthrow of bonapartist dictatorships. A "constituent assembly" under the aegis of a military junta or autocratic caudillo is a contradiction in terms. Where such schemes are put forward, Leninists must make explicit that their call is for a *revolutionary* constituent assembly, to be convoked by a revolutionary provisional government arising from victorious popular insurrection.

In the Nicaraguan case, some of the more conservative elements of the anti-Somoza opposition, frightened at the prospect and then the reality of a massive popular revolt, have tried to arrange a deal removing the ruling clan from political power while leaving their properties and private army (the National Guard) intact. Some time later "free elections" would be held for a new legislative body to replace the present puppet "Congress." In the face of these plans to ease out the hated dictator through deals at the top, we raised the demand for a revolutionary constituent assembly, in order to mobilize the

peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie behind a proletarian vanguard in the struggle to smash the Somoza regime. At the same time we called for a workers and peasants government based on soviets (see "Nicaragua in Flames," *WV* No. 215, 22 September, and "Mass Graves in Nicaragua," *WV* No. 216, 6 October 1978).

Are these demands contradictory? What would happen if a petty-bourgeois electorate were mobilized by the right, resulting in an anti-revolutionary majority in a constituent assembly which confronted organs of workers power? Would revolutionists then simply bow to the "democratic will of the majority?"



In summer of 1975 Portuguese Socialist Party demonstrated for sovereignty of right-dominated Constituent Assembly (left), while leftist soldiers demanded its dissolution. SL called for generating workers commissions into soviets.

and dissolve their soviets? In the German revolution of 1918-19, where the proletariat was under the leadership of the majority and "independent" social democrats, something quite similar happened. A national congress of workers and soldiers councils was held in December 1918 in the first flush of the proclamation of a "socialist republic" following the overthrow of Kaiser Wilhelm on November 9. But the workers councils (under reformist leadership) voted to abdicate to the national assembly, which was elected a month later with a bourgeois majority. And the "democracy" which this organ of capitalist rule embodied was none too liberal: it was built on the bones of thousands of workers killed in the January 1919 "Spartacist uprising" in Berlin (among them revolutionary leaders Luxemburg and Liebknecht).

But this was not the program of the Bolsheviks, who fought for the qualitatively higher democracy of soviet power, representing the *class* interests of the working people. The same conflict between institutions of bourgeois and proletarian rule was posed even after October 1917, as the Socialist Revolutionaries, Kadets and Mensheviks achieved a majority in a constituent

assembly elected shortly after the victory of the soviets in Moscow and Petrograd. The Bolsheviks had fought throughout the spring and summer of 1917 for elections to a constituent assembly at a time when the bourgeois provisional government refused to hold them out of fear that this would lead to an uncontrollable peasant uprising. But now this stage had been passed as the workers had seized power in the capitals.

The Bolsheviks did not simply call off the elections, for a pro-soviet majority might well have emerged in the wake of the peasant land seizures. This in turn could have reinforced the authority of

whopping foreign debt was run up through purchases of the latest weaponry. The overthrow of Velasco in 1975 by a more right-wing general, Morales Bermúdez, further tarnished the junta's "progressive" image. So when, in July 1977, the Peruvian government attempted to implement a savage austerity program dictated by the imperialist bankers of the International Monetary Fund, it was answered by a massive general strike.

Morales' response was to order the firing of strike "agitators" and call for a "constituent assembly" to give the military regime an appearance of



the revolutionary government in Petrograd and greatly reduced the bloodshed of a civil war initiated by White generals counting on the peasants' religiosity and tsar-worship to aid their cause. So instead they demanded that the constituent assembly recognize the victorious soviet power as its first act. Only when the Kadet/Menshevik/SR majority refused to do so did Red Army soldiers disperse the body.

If the Nicaraguan bourgeois opposition has not (yet?) struck a deal with Washington and Somoza for a peaceful transition from puppet dictatorship to OAS-"supervised" democracy, the Peruvian military junta has already convoked its fraudulent "constituent assembly."

In the first years after its 1968 takeover, the nationalistic regime of General Juan Velasco Alvarado had enjoyed wide support among the masses due to its land reform policy and some initial nationalizations. However, the military's class loyalties soon led to bloody clashes with striking workers. As the generals became ensconced in the administrative apparatus, corruption mushroomed on a grand scale, while a

popular support. The basis for the convocation was a gentlemen's agreement with the main bourgeois parties and pro-Moscow Stalinists that the generals would stay in power until elections in 1980 or 1981. It was presumed that a victory of the "moderate civilian opposition" was guaranteed by the traditional Peruvian electoral law which excludes illiterates, who make up a large part of the peasantry and urban poor. And following the vote the junta would then have free rein to restore its credit worthiness with the Pentagon and Wall Street by imposing the IMF plans to slash workers' living standards.

However, everything did not work out as planned. Two "far left" dominated coalitions managed to surmount the registration barriers and presented slates of candidates headed by well-known personalities. And when in mid-May, a few weeks before the scheduled elections, the government again tried to decree the austerity program, the masses responded with the most militant strike action in Peruvian history. When Morales thereupon exiled 13 opposition leaders, mainly would-be Trotskyists, Maoists and union leaders, this further enraged the workers. So when the

voting took place on June 18, although the right scored a predictable victory, the combined left vote totalled 25 percent, more than double any previous score. Of that, 13 percent went to the FOCEP led by the self-proclaimed Trotskyist peasant leader Hugo Blanco, far outdistancing the pro-junta Moscow-line CP.

Confronted with Morales Bermúdez' plans for a window-dressing "constituent assembly," which would have no real powers and would simply be empowered to draw up a constitution enshrining various reforms (as well as the military's bonapartist role as "guardian of democracy"), Marxists would have sought to boycott the elections, mobilizing the masses in struggle to prevent this sham vote from taking place or else utterly discredit it. If this were not possible due to the reformists' stranglehold, small communist propaganda groups would have attempted to present candidates denouncing the junta's plans to erect a *duma* (i.e., the bogus parliament set up by tsar Nicholas in response to the 1905 Russian Revolution), and calling instead for a revolutionary constituent assembly which would be convened over the ashes of the military dictatorship.

Blanco's FOCEP originally included as one of its four programmatic points the slogan "no submission to the government's regimented and antidemocratic constituent assembly" (*Intercontinental Press*, 3 July). However, after it did so well in the June 18 elections, the heterogeneous "far left" electoral bloc did a sudden turnabout and began calling on the "regimented and anti-democratic constituent assembly" to satisfy the demands of the working masses. On July 27, at the opening session of the constituent assembly, Blanco and seven other FOCEP deputies put forward a motion calling on the body to declare itself the government:

"Considering...

"That the sovereign mandate of the people requires that the Assembly confront and resolve the problem of liberation from the imperialist yoke and that it accomplish the unresolved democratic and social tasks....

"The Constituent Assembly assumes all legislative and executive powers of the nation in order to apply an emergency plan...."

—*Informations Ouvrières*.

9-23 August 1978

In the first place, the bourgeois majority of the assembly—headed by the pseudo-populist, violently anti-communist, CIA-connected APRA of Haya de la Torre—is not at all opposed to the government. APRA goons have recently made a habit of beating up left-wing demonstrators and strikers outside the assembly meetings. The well-informed *Latin American Political Report* (28 August) summarized APRA's tactics as, "keeping alive the hopes of the *aprista* masses that the assembly will actually do something for them, while enabling the party in practice to avoid causing the government too much embarrassment."

As for the other major capitalist party in the assembly, the right-wing Popular

Christian Party (PPC), it blames the country's economic crises on deficits run up by the nationalized industries and calls for their return to the previous owners. PPC leader Bedoya is an open admirer of Chilean dictator Pinochet, moreover. Thus, the bourgeois majority of this bogus "constituent assembly" is, if anything, to the right even of the present Morales Bermúdez government, not to mention the military junta under Velasco Alvarado. Yet this is the body that the FOCEP calls upon to replace the generals and "resolve the problem of liberation from the imperialist yoke!"

Our call for a revolutionary constituent assembly in Nicaragua, Chile and Peru today takes as a historic precedent Trotsky's position in the first phase of the Spanish revolution in the 1930's. Hoping to still revolutionary discontent, the monarchy had moved to convene a Cortes (parliament) in early 1931. Trotsky advocated boycotting this body and wrote:

"But even while boycotting [Prime Minister] Berenguer's Cortes, the advanced workers would have to counterpose to it the slogan of a *revolutionary constituent Cortes*. We must relentlessly disclose the fraudulence of the slogan of the *constituent Cortes* in the mouth of the 'left' bourgeoisie, which in reality, wants a *conciliationist Cortes* by the good graces of the king.... A genuine constituent assembly can be convoked only by a revolutionary government, as a result of a victorious insurrection of workers, soldiers and peasants." [emphasis in original]

In Chile, we raised the call for a revolutionary constituent assembly beginning earlier this year as the Christian Democrats began talking of removing Pinochet and replacing him with a reformed military junta. We pointed out that the demand for a constituent assembly is not an essential element of the Marxist program in countries with a bourgeois-democratic tradition, but rather a device to exploit the ruling class' fear of unleashing the working masses in the streets; and that it in no way negated or conditioned our call for workers revolution to smash the junta:

"Counterposed to reformist adaptations to the bourgeoisie's program, as Trotskyists we raise the demand for a constituent assembly with full powers, directly and secretly elected by universal suffrage. A genuine constituent assembly by definition could only be convoked under conditions of full democratic liberties, permitting the participation of all the parties of the working class. Thus it requires as a precondition the revolutionary overthrow of the junta, something which the DC [Christian Democrats] and the reformists, despite their lengthy list of democratic demands, fail to mention....

"In countries with a bourgeois-democratic tradition and a politically advanced working class, such as Chile, the demand for a constituent assembly is not a fundamental part of the proletarian program. Thus following the junta takeover, the iSt [international Spartacist tendency] did not raise this slogan. We raise it tactically at present against the bourgeoisie's efforts, aided by their agents in the workers movement, to make a pact with sectors of the military. Our purpose is to expose the



Bulloz

Parisian masses disperse reactionary National Assembly, May 1848.

bourgeoisie's fear of revolutionary democracy."

—Organización Trotskista Revolucionaria de Chile, "Condemn Pinochet Plebiscite!" *WV* No. 190, 27 January 1978

Another qualification to the constituent assembly slogan arises out of the current crisis in Iran, where we call for a sovereign, *secular* constituent assembly. The powerful Muslim fundamentalist opposition led by Ayatollah Khomeini is demanding the restoration of the Constitution of 1906, which includes a 1907 amendment establishing a board of Islamic notables to insure that the laws passed by the majlis (parliament) conform to the Islamic legal code, the *shariyat*. Such a theocratic constituent assembly would in effect outlaw working-class, ostensibly Marxist parties as infidels and would constitutionalize the barbaric oppression of women in Muslim culture.

The entire rest of the American and European (not to mention Iranian) left, however, has simply tailed after the mullahs, covering up their reactionary program of Muslim clericalism in order to be with the masses. Thus they also adopt Khomeini's program, including the call for a return to the 1906-07 constitution. This is particularly true of the ostensibly Trotskyist American Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which has lately become the champion of constituent assemblies anywhere and everywhere as the universal "consistent democratic" solution to the oppression of the masses.

In a recent article comparing the current situation in Iran to Russia in 1917, the SWP portrays the soviets as simply a *means* for obtaining democratic demands, notably the constituent assembly:

"They [the Bolsheviks] called for an end to Russian participation in the imperialist war and for the immediate division of the land among the peasants. And they campaigned for the speedy convocation of the constituent assembly to assure the replacement of the tsarist regime by a democratically chosen one.

"In order to fight for these demands the Bolsheviks called for extending the soviets, factory committees and other organs developed by the masses in their struggle throughout the country."

—*Militant*, 1 December 1978

Nowhere in the article did the SWP even mention that Lenin and Trotsky fought for the soviets to take power; instead it simply writes that workers and peasants representatives in a constituent assembly would call for a workers and peasants republic. This is a thinly disguised call for the traditional Menshevik/Stalinist perspective of "two-stage" revolution: first the constituent assembly, later for the workers and peasants government.

While the SWP chases after holy man Khomeini, forgetting about "all power to the soviets" and replacing it with "speedy convocation of a [theocratic] constituent assembly," the Spartacist League has demanded: Down with the

shah! Down with the mullahs! For a sovereign, secular constituent assembly! For a workers and peasants government based on soviets in Iran!

The most blatant example of the SWP's constituent assembly cretinism in recent years, however, was at the high point of the working-class upsurge in Portugal in the summer of 1975. At that time—when workers commissions, popular assemblies and various other localized, embryonic forms of dual power were springing up everywhere in the country—these pseudo-Trotskyists made defense of democracy against military dictatorship the axis of their program for Portugal. In particular they called for defense of the "sovereignty" of the constituent assembly against the leftist officers of the bourgeois Armed Forces Movement (MFA), allied with the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP). Yet at that very moment the international bourgeoisie was furiously mobilizing support for counterrevolutionary forces in Portugal on precisely the same theme.

In its position paper on Portugal, adopted on 30 August 1975, the SWP-led Leninist-Trotskyist Faction of the United Secretariat (USeC) wrote:

"The fundamental task is to bring the workers to break from subordination to the Armed Forces Movement and to assert their right to put a workers and peasants government in power.

"This fight at the present time centers on the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, in which the workers parties have a substantial absolute majority and which is the only national body thus far elected by the populace. This is counterposed to the sovereignty of the unelected military hierarchy which constitutes the present government."

—"The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution," *Intercontinental Press*, 20 October 1975

The call for defense of the sovereignty of the constituent assembly is repeated throughout the document. Conversely, nowhere did the SWP-led faction call for generalizing the embryonic forms of workers power and centralizing them in soviets. On the contrary, all such talk was denounced as a diversion:

"The revolutionary process has not reached the point where clear forms of workers power have emerged....

"The ultraleftist schemas of 'revolutionary councils' projected in opposition to the Constituent Assembly play into the hands of the military demagogues."

Was it really a case of military dictatorship vs. parliamentary democracy? This resolution was written at the point where counterrevolutionary mobs in northern Portugal were sacking PCP offices (something it took the *Militant* three weeks to even mention, whereupon it sought to excuse them by arguing that since the PCP was the military's main supporter "it was inevitable that such mass mobilizations would express anti-Communist feelings"), and Socialist Party (PS) leader Mário Soares was fulminating against "parallel powers"

continued on page 13



Marka

Peruvian constituent assembly last August.

Spartacist League Gets SWP's Goat

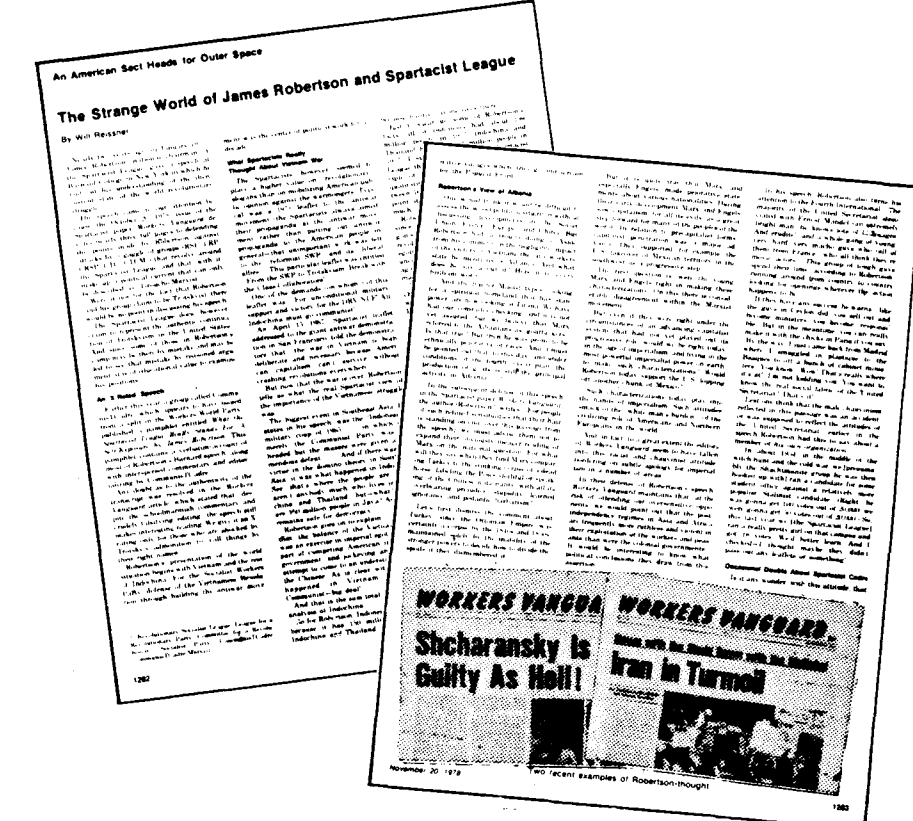
"Next Week... The Strange World of James Robertson and the Spartacist League: An American Sect Heads for Outer Space" announced a display ad in the 13 November issue of the Socialist Workers Party's (SWP) *Intercontinental Press*. Our appetites whetted, we counted the days until we could send a comrade to SWP headquarters to buy 150 copies of the 20 November *IP* with the promised article.

We were still brooding about asking for our money back when the 8 December *Militant* arrived with another SWP diatribe against the SL, this one titled "Iran: Is Struggle Against Shah's Tyranny Reactionary?" Though neither piece provides much food for thought, the very fact that the social-democratic SWP—which usually feigns total unconcern about the activities of the SL—has felt impelled to publish two lengthy articles about us in two and a half weeks indicates we must be doing something right.

IP in the Gutter

The *IP* opus by Will Reissner is an uninspired echo of a spate of attacks by several minuscule groups against an allegedly "chauvinist" speech given by SL National Chairman James Robertson in New York in 1977 (see "Hate the Truth, Hate the Spartacist League—New Left Moralists' Big Lie Campaign," *WV* No. 217, 20 October 1978). The SL has never minded polemicalizing against obscure fringe cliques when they present a useful foil, but the SWP is always ever so sensitive to questions of scale. Yet Reissner relies on what *IP* terms "a gaggle of groups that revolve around the Spartacist League" to such an extent that he can find no better way to close than by quoting CommunistCadre, a group which was already down to four members when its founding leader dropped out this fall! Why? We charged in our 20 October article that "The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), reformist big daddy of all the fake-Trotskyist apologists for 'consistent nationalism,' calls the tune." Obliging of the SWP to step forward so promptly to take the credit.

Perhaps attempting to add his own angle, Reissner tries hard to present the SL as some kind of personality cult (apparently of the L. Marcus sort—note the references to "outer space," "a universe of negative gravity," etc.). At every point, the politics of the SL are personalized into emanations of Robertson: "Robertson-thought," "would Robertson today support..." "in the Spartacist paper *Workers Vanguard* the



WV self-exposure? Our communist line isolates us from the rad-lib milieu the SWP appeals to. But Shcharansky was guilty. The mullahs are no better than the shah.

author (Robertson?)" "acres of innocent forest have been destroyed over the past decade to provide the paper to print Robertson's constant attacks on the politics of the Socialist Workers Party." This is yellow journalism of the most cynical sort. For instance, the notion that the entire SL press is actually ghostwritten by Cde. Robertson must be a subject of mirth in the inner circles of the SWP. Those in the know are surely aware that, though Cde. Robertson does write a bit for our press, he is hardly a literary *l'ider máximo* à la Tim Wohlforth. As one SL leader overstated it in an internal bulletin, "Robertson can't write ten lines." So much for the SL as a personality cult!

Because we are not a personality cult, it does not come naturally to us to complain about the vile epithets and outright slanders that have been thrown at Cde. Robertson personally by those who hate our politics. We are more likely just to note the "crudely falsifying editing" of the CommunistCadre version of the Robertson speech and leave it at that. But now that we are on the subject, we want to protest Reissner's attempt to make of Cde. Robertson a man from nowhere.

When the SWP was seeking defense

among respected socialist spokesmen against the Healyite slander campaign directed at Joseph Hansen, it had no hesitation about soliciting Robertson's signature and playing it up in the pages of *IP*. But with the exception of one parenthetical reference to Robertson's Shachtmanite days, there is no way to tell from the present article (in which Robertson's name appears some 40 times) that the SL national chairman is not some skulking creature of unmentionable origin but a former member of the SWP and co-founder of its youth organization. No, Cde. Reissner, we are not heading for "outer space," nor did we originate there; in fact, the founding Spartacist cadre were expelled in 1964 from your organization, the SWP.

When those few dozen communists were tossed out of the SWP for the crime of opposing its deepening drive toward reformism, the SWP perhaps expected we would shrivel up and die. Instead, we have become the single credible Trotskyist alternative to the social-democratic SWP. The SWP finds itself compelled to take us on in *IP* not because of any purported motion away from this planet but because the SL and the SWP continue to butt heads in the real world—in the trade unions, on the

campuses, in the international movement.

"Racist and Chauvinist"

The *IP* broadside has as its central intent isolating the Spartacist tendency from the radical/liberal milieu. The strategy is big-lie "racist"-baiting: e.g., the claim that Robertson and the SL support a line "bordering on subtle apology for imperialism." The tactic is to selectively quote paragraphs from the forum—where Cde. Robertson discussed subjects like race and sex which are taboo in liberal polite society—while ignoring, distorting or falsifying the political content of his remarks.

Naturally enough, *IP*'s Cde. Reissner begins with the comments on Albania which stirred up such a storm in the pages of the obscure publications of the Anti-Spartacist League:

"And the harder Maoist types, looking for a spiritual homeland that has state power, are now looking at Tirana. We have had our comrades checking, and it is not yet assured, but we believe that Marx referred to the Albanians as 'goatfuckers.' Is that true? But then he was prone to ethnically pejorative phrases. And it must be pointed out that, to this day, and under conditions of the fourth 5-year plan, the production of goats is still the principal activity in Albania."

Reissner goes on to bait Marx and Engels as soft-core racists, ducks the question of whether they were correct in supporting European expansionism during capitalism's progressive period, then goes on to claim that "such characterizations today... smack of the 'white man's burden.'"

We are glad *IP* has raised Albania again, since it gives us an opportunity to defend Karl Marx. In his classic nine-volume work on sex, Havelock Ellis noted that bestiality as a general social practice is common among peoples who live in primitive proximity to nature:

"Bestiality... flourishes among primitive peoples and among peasants. ... Three conditions have favored the extreme prevalence of bestiality: (1) primitive conceptions of life which built up no great barrier between man and the other animals; (2) the extreme familiarity which necessarily exists between the peasant and his beasts, often combined with separation from women; (3) various folk-lore beliefs. ... The significance of the factor of familiarity is indicated by the great frequency of bestiality among shepherds, goatherds, and others whose occupation is exclusively the care of animals."

Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1936 edition), Vol. II, Part One, pp. 79-82

Those who prefer a less scholarly source

23 January 1976

It is important to note that the FNLA and UNITA did not serve as puppets of South Africa in this imperialist invasion. Instead, it was the FNLA and UNITA that spearheaded the fighting against South Africa in June, July, and August, along with the MPLA. This is not surprising since these are areas where the local population supports the FNLA and the FNLA units led by Daniel Chipenda.

MILITANT

23 April 1976

If the basic war had been between South Africa backed by the United States on one side and the MPLA on the other, as the Stalinists all but say in print, it would be entirely different. Revolutionists would have been duty bound to defend the MPLA against the imperialist invaders.

But the South African intervention, as dangerous as it was—and this was pointed out by the SWP—was not the overriding issue in Angola; it was the civil war for state power.

The SWP concluded, as we have already seen in Tony Thomas's re-

17 September 1976

Revolutionary socialists sided with neither faction in Angola against the other. We completely opposed South African, Portuguese, U.S., and other imperialist intervention in Angola.

We sided with the Angolan liberation struggle. This means that we supported the military actions taken by the MPLA against South Africa and the imperialist-controlled mercenaries. By the same token, at an earlier stage we supported the actions by the UNITA against South Africa. And we supported the FNLA in its confrontations with the Portuguese military.

The setback South Africa suffered in Angola played a positive role in the struggle throughout southern Africa. It encouraged the masses of southern Africa—Namibia and South

SWP supported MPLA against South Africa-led forces? Not if you read the *Militant*.

WV Photo



are referred to the recent film, *Padre Padrone*, set among the peasants of Sardinia.

For those capable of looking past titillation, there is a point to the phrase attributed to Marx: a comment on the economic backwardness of Albania. It is a powerful reflection of the political bankruptcy of contemporary Maoists that they look not to the world industrial proletariat but to primitive Albania as the vanguard of human progress.

How is it that Cde. Robertson's comments on Albania so tweaked the SWP's tail? The indignation is sham. *IP* hopes its readers will be in such a state of shock from Robertson's 11-letter word that it can slip past them the absurdity of the SWP lecturing the SL on... "anti-imperialism"! It is obscene that the SWP, like the Communist Party, thinks it can get away with manipulating Marxist categories when such suits it. The SWP cut its reformist teeth in the antiwar movement in the 1960's where it was indistinguishable from the pro-imperialist, pro-Democratic Party "doves" in baiting SDS and the rest of the old New Left as "terrorists," "Stalinists," "ultraleftists" (see accompanying article). Over Portugal in 1975 the SWP hailed the CIA-funded Socialists as they burned Communist Party offices in the name of "democracy." It hid behind orthodox criticisms of the MPLA nationalists in Angola to avoid siding with the MPLA/Cuban forces against U.S./South African imperialism (until this neutralism became a scandal among black nationalist students in this country). Today it falls into step with Jimmy Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade, hailing even overtly pro-tsarist Russian dissidents as they plead with U.S. imperialism to "liberate" the USSR.

So how can *IP* hope to smear the SL as "racist and chauvinist" apologists for imperialism? It's simple—lie. For instance, the article notes that Marx and Engels supported the U.S. takeover of Mexican territory and rhetorically inquires, "Would Robertson today support the U.S. lopping off another chunk of Mexico?" The disingenuous question carries the unmistakable imputation that the SL would. But as a matter of fact, the Spartacist tendency is on record as advocating that a victorious workers government in the U.S. should "lop off a chunk" of American territory and return it to Mexico!

The method of the disingenuous lie is the constant in the *IP* polemic. Take for example what is done with *WV*'s remark that "the post-independence regimes in Asia and Africa are frequently more ruthless and violent in their exploitation of the workers and peasants than were the colonial governments." *IP* comments: "It would be interesting to know what political conclusions they draw from this assertion." Apparently not interesting enough to prompt the SWP to look at the article! For the sentences immediately preceding the one quoted are unambiguous:

"For Leninists, recognition of the right of national self-determination is not based on do-goodism, and certainly isn't necessarily a good turn for the peoples involved. The strategic purpose of Leninist support to the right of self-determination is to clarify the centrality of class oppression by eliminating foreign domination..."

Of course, *IP* never comes right out and says the SL does not support the right of nations to self-determination. It merely wonders out loud what "political conclusions" to draw from the SL's indictment of the post-independence "Third World" regimes. Those who really want to know about the Leninist "political conclusions"—military support to nationalist formations confronting imperialism, but *political confidence only in the independent mobilization of the proletariat* to overthrow national oppression and capitalist exploitation—will not find them in *IP*.

The SWP proudly supports *nationalism*. It must therefore cover up the

brutal and even genocidal reality of nationalist regimes in power. It must deny the existence of backward consciousness among oppressed strata. So when Cde. Robertson in his forum refused to pander to the national conceits of *any* people, and when he talked about such subjects as black anti-Semitism with the same frankness that he discussed the "fairly static" situation of the Spartacist League, the slanderous cries of "racist and chauvinist" were obligatory for the SWP.

We understand that the SWP, which takes national/ethnic hatreds as its starting point, has difficulty understanding our Leninist line. We would like to give them the benefit of the doubt. But it is inconceivable that even an honest reformist could do the things that *IP*'s Reissner does to Robertson's remarks. At the forum, an opponent demanded: Do you defend the morality of the Boers in South Africa? Robertson replied: "Defend the morality? The morality is the morality of nationalism." Reissner quotes only these lines and the disembodied word "Yes" which actually began the next sentence (!), hoping to leave the reader with the impression the SL supports the Boers' nationalism.

It is infuriating to have to protest that the SL, while it supports the national emancipation of oppressed peoples, supports *nobody's* nationalism, and does not call for self-determination for the white oppressor caste of South Africa. But we do maintain that the Boers have a right to exist. As Robertson explained:

"There's a theory—it's a Stalinist theory—that all the peoples on the earth... are either progressive or reactionary. If you are progressive, not only do you have the right to exist, you have the right to do *anything* to your oppressors, but if you are a reactionary people, you have no right to exist and I have the right to kill you. Now, oddly enough, the peoples of the earth—the Irish, the Biharis, the Turks, the Armenians, the Jews in Israel, the Palestinians—they all want to exist. And I think maybe you ought to start with that, as a statement that maybe capitalism is rotten ripe for a social transformation, not for a genocide..."

If that's "chauvinism," comrades of the SWP, make the most of it.

The special venom displayed by Reissner on the subject of South Africa shows that the SWP is still smarting over exposure of its own pro-FNLA tilt in Angola. Listen to *IP*:

"Robertson seems to be particularly concerned that the racist South African regime is not getting a fair break from socialists..."

"In touching concern for the survival of the Boers, Robertson seems to forget what the struggle is really about in South Africa... The Boers are not carrying out their present brutal repression of Blacks because their right to exist as a people is being threatened... [but] because their 'right' to exploit is under attack."

Oddly enough, Cde. Robertson addressed precisely this question:

"There's several million Boers in South Africa. They have no right to exploit and oppress the blacks. They have a right to live."

So much for that.

We are proud to be denounced as a tendency which stands for the right of all peoples to exist. But there's more than humanitarianism at stake here. Cde. Robertson's remarks serve as a useful jumping-off point:

"If you say the Boers have no right to exist—they have a modern industrial economy and a weapons establishment—if they have no right to exist, then they have no moral limits to follow, do they? To kill every black African (which they can do in about three days if they want to), to defend their own existence..."

"There's several million Boers in South Africa... You think they have no right to live? Well then, go try and kill them!"

The question of the Boers is not an abstract moral question, but a military one. The white South Africans, including the white workers, enjoy a standard of living many times higher than the

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Phantom Antiwar Movement Still Haunts SWP

In the 13 November *IP* polemic against the Spartacist League, the SWP presents for the umpteenth time its catechism of SL abstentionism on the Vietnam war. Perhaps hoping that memories have dimmed in the ten years since the eruption of student radicalism that reached its height over the 1970 Cambodia invasion/Kent State killings, the SWP charges that our slogan "All Indochina Must Go Communist!" was just "something to throw at the SWP," and that "the Spartacists were unconcerned about building the struggle against the imperialist war." We are getting a little tired of explaining that fighting in the labor movement and among antiwar activists for *class solidarity* with the Indochinese revolution is hardly abstentionism.

But where does this much-cherished SWP myth come from? To the SWP, it is a necessary article of faith that all those who did not abide by the etiquette of respectability laid down by the "official" antiwar leadership (bourgeois politicians plus various SWP/CP front groups) just did not exist. But when the SL walked out of the Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee in 1965, refusing to submit to censorship of radical slogans (like the SL's main slogan of "Immediate Withdrawal"), perceived as a threat to the building of popular-frontist formations, we did not disappear! While the SWP was policing the "official" contingents to root out any who stood for the military victory of the Vietnamese workers and peasants, the SL—along with many thousands of New Left youth—went right on marching.

The SWP attributes its growth during this period to its involvement as the "best builders" of the peace crawls. Today as it seeks to sell itself as left cover to the NOW leaders and trade-union bureaucrats, the SWP has one and only one real credential—the donkey work which helped bring "masses" of people "into the streets"

(and into the voting booths for McCarthy in 1968 and McGovern in 1972).

And what was the SL doing? Apparently we "abstained" so well that the antiwar movement, and the associated growth of the ephemeral New Left, put us on the radical map! In fact, statistics from our 1969 and 1972 national gatherings document our *fourfold* growth in membership during those three years.

The SL did not gain these militant activists merely from marching in parades. Imperialism's losing war in Vietnam created a broad petty-bourgeois layer significantly to the left of the social-democratic SWP. When spineless SWP "loyal oppositionist" John Barzman in 1969 urged the SWP to "confront" SDS, he entirely missed the point. There was a good reason why the SWP dismissed these subjectively anti-imperialist youth for the tactical adventurism and muddle-headed pro-Maoism which accompanied their disenchantment with the reformist SWP and CP: even these impressionistic kids, utterly ignorant of a Marxist worldview, knew enough to understand that they were to the left of the SWP, which they despised for its reformist legalism and its studied refusal to demonstrate for the victory of the Vietnamese revolution. Similarly there was a reason why the SWP criticized the Black Panthers as "ultraleft" and not "consistent" enough nationalists, looking instead to the Black Muslim religious cult (and later to the NAACP). *The SWP was to the right* of the best of the New Left.

Better Red than Fred

The idea that the SL abstained from the antiwar struggle is wishful thinking. In his recent book on the antiwar movement, *Out Now!*, SWP spokesman Fred Halstead recounts the story of the

continued on page 11

Right: The Militant features the SL's "Unconditional Withdrawal" and "Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution" signs, which the SWP had tried to have excluded from the march! Below: SL response to 1970 Cambodia invasion.



WV Photo



Kaku Kurita

Der Spiegel



In the past several months Peking has signed trade and investment agreements with imperialist governments and banks many times in size anything it has ever done before. A \$20 billion trade agreement with Japan was signed earlier in the year, and last week the Nippon Steel Corporation announced a deal to build a \$2.3 billion steel plant near Shanghai. This year alone, U.S. firms have signed contracts amounting to \$1.5 billion to deliver airplanes, build hotels, develop iron mines and export computer technology to China. According to the *New York Times* (7 November):

"An American banker in Hong Kong who specializes in Chinese developments estimates that spending abroad by Peking is growing so fast that within a year China may have foreign commitments totaling \$60 billion—a staggering amount for a country whose exports this year will be about \$10 billion."

This surge in dealings with the capitalist powers is part of an overall economic policy spelled out by Prime Minister Hua Kuo-feng at the Fifth National People's Congress last February, to achieve "full modernization" by the year 2000. In contrast to the Maoist dogma of "self-reliance," a new ten-year plan (1976-1985) would be based on heavy importation of technologically advanced equipment. Meanwhile,

the more dogmatic Maoists that the Hua/Teng regime has "taken the capitalist road." One reads headlines like: "Teng Transforming China of Mao's Era—Powerful Deputy Prime Minister Purging Old Enemies as He Spurs Sluggish Economy" (*New York Times*, 6 November); "Peking Seeks Lessons in Efficiency" (*Washington Post*, 30 October); "Economic Model—China Seeks to Emulate Japan" (*Los Angeles Times*, 30 October); "Post-Mao China Has New Look—Peking Is Determined to Modernize" (*Chicago Tribune*, 2 October).

Why this sudden interest by the American bourgeois press in China's economic policy? In part it is to alert American businessmen that there are now profits to be made in China, and they should not be caught napping by their Japanese and German competitors. But fundamentally the hullabaloo about supposedly radical—or rather anti-radical—changes in Peking's economic policies is basically ideological in purpose.

Since the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Western bourgeois analysts have presented a false, simplistic picture of a fundamental conflict between radical dogmatists represented by Mao and the "Gang of Four" and

ing of the widespread notion that Mao's China was an egalitarian society, see "Radical Egalitarian Stalinism: A Post Mortem," *Spartacist* No. 25, Summer, 1978.)

Bourgeois journalists systematically exaggerate the social and economic changes which have taken place in China since Mao's death in September 1976. One of the most extreme exponents of the "deradicalization of Mao's China" thesis is the *New York Times* Hong Kong-based China watcher, Fox Butterfield. For example, in a recent article (19 November) on Chinese agriculture, he writes:

"Chinese agriculture has begun what appears to be its most extensive change since Mao Tse-tung established the people's communes 20 years ago...."

"The new policies are also likely to reduce the functions of the commune, Mao's creation, by which rural China was to make the transition to pure Communism. To guarantee greater peasant initiative, more rural authority is to devolve down to the production teams—the smallest component of the communes—based in China's villages."

Butterfield to the contrary, the commune system was in effect liquidated during the panicky retreat from the Great Leap Forward in the early 1960's. Since 1962—that is, for the last 16 years—the production team has been the basic unit of management, account and distribution in Chinese agriculture. This principle is actually enshrined in the revised 1975 constitution, which also guarantees peasants the right to a private plot. These basic facts of Chinese agricultural policy are not to be found in Butterfield's thoroughly misleading article.

Butterfield also perpetuates the fiction that the Cultural Revolution was only just ended. When the new regime formally abolished the moribund "revolutionary committees" last spring, he wrote:

"In a move to restore a stable system of administration, China will abolish the revolutionary management committees formed during the Cultural Revolution in schools, factories and farm Brigades. Prime Minister Hua Kuo-feng has disclosed.

"The committees, one of Mao Tse-tung's innovations of the late 1960's, were set up ostensibly to give students, workers and farmers a share in authority."

—*New York Times*, 7 March 1978

The revolutionary committees in Mao's China had about as much real authority as do the soviets in Brezhnev's Russia. Even French Maoist ideologue Charles Bettelheim, who does maintain that since October 1976 China has "taken the capitalist road," admits that the forms of the Cultural Revolution were de facto liquidated well before Mao died:

"When I returned to China in the autumn of 1975, there was only one factory where I heard anything about these groups [revolutionary commit-

tees] (after I had insisted on knowing whether such groups existed as I did in all the factories I visited), and what I was told left me with the impression that they were there only as ghosts, while everywhere else they seemed to have vanished completely."

—Charles Bettelheim and Neil Burton, *China Since Mao* (1978)

The changes in Chinese economic policy since Mao's death, while significant, are far less than the change in the official ideological posture and far less than the accounts of them given in the Western bourgeois press. Economic policy under Hua/Teng has been a continuation and deepening of trends which began following the end of the Cultural Revolution period in 1971 with the fall of Lin Piao. For example, the large-scale importation of technologically advanced capital equipment did not begin this year—as the bourgeois press might have one believe—but in 1973. Between 1971 and 1974 the dollar volume of China's foreign trade tripled.

The fact that many of the shifts in Peking's economic policies took place some years ago underscores the fact that the Cultural Revolution was fundamentally a clique fight within the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy. Faced with the severe economic dislocations of 1966-68, virtually the entire ruling stratum agreed upon the need to restore orderly conditions in the factories and collective farms. And the "new economic policy" of the Hua/Teng regime, labeled the "four modernizations," was first enunciated by Chou in 1975, well before the purge of the "Gang of Four."

But if the economic "policies" associated with the Cultural Revolution are almost universally recognized as a disaster, the current policy seeking modernization through massive indebtedness to the imperialists will not bring peace and prosperity to the Chinese working people. In the first place, the West's willingness to make multi-billion-dollar loans depends on Peking's increasing integration in an anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism. And the capitalists do not simply display such largesse to needy countries. Given the scope of the plans, it may not be long before Chinese workers find their living standard cut in order to pay debt service to Tokyo and Wall Street bankers.

Above all, financial dependence on the imperialists on such a scale would constitute a growing threat to the collectivist economic base of the Chinese deformed workers state, won through a bloody civil war that cost the lives of millions of peasants.

Economic Zigs and Zags of Chinese Stalinism

The great-power aspiration of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy is frustrated by the material backwardness of



Chinese chemical factory during Cultural Revolution.

Der Spiegel

bonuses to increase factory productivity (eliminated during the "Cultural Revolution" of the late 1960's) were reintroduced.

Simultaneously there has appeared in the Western media a rash of articles on the theme that in order to modernize China Peking strongman Deputy Prime Minister Teng Hsiao-p'ing has abandoned socialist policies. American bourgeois journalists seem to agree with

moderates or pragmatists represented by Liu Shao-chi, Chou En-lai and Teng Hsiao-p'ing. The bourgeois press has taken radical Maoist rhetoric at face value and generally presented the Chinese economy as governed by egalitarian and voluntarist principles. Bourgeois publicists are in their own way celebrating the fall of the "Gang of Four" as living proof that socialist principles cannot work. (For a debunk-

the country. This frustration has led to frequent radical shifts in economic policy in search of some way to achieve a "great leap forward." To understand the significance of the post-Mao economic policies, it is necessary to trace the zigzags of China's economic policy since the early 1950's.

The first Chinese Five Year Plan (1953-56) was modeled on the first Soviet five year plan with its unbalanced expansion of heavy industry. The core of this plan was a number of heavy industrial construction projects dependent upon Soviet aid and advisors. During the early 1930's Stalin's overwhelming concentration on heavy industry combined with the forced collectivization of agriculture led to a drastic cut in the food consumption of both workers and peasants.

Compared with Russia in the late 1920's, however, China in the early 1950's produced only about one half as much food per capita. A reduction in food consumption comparable to that which occurred in Russia in the 1930's would have produced mass starvation in China. The conflict between China's poverty and Soviet Stalinist-type industrialization came to a head in 1956, when expanding investment created acute shortages in the urban food supply and in agricultural raw materials. Faced with these agricultural shortages the Mao regime retreated. 1957 was a year of economic retrenchment in which urban workers were actually shipped back to the countryside.

Seeking to get around the limitation on industrial development imposed by China's very low agricultural productivity, in 1958 Mao launched the Great Leap Forward. Mammoth self-sufficient rural communes were supposed to release enormous quantities of underutilized labor, greatly increase agricultural productivity and expand industry by handicraft methods (e.g., the backyard steel furnaces). The Great Leap Forward was also conditioned by the increasing Sino-Soviet tensions. The Mao regime anticipated that the Kremlin might end or at least sharply curtail its aid, and so opted for a more nationally self-sufficient economic policy.

As is well known the Great Leap Forward led to an economic collapse unique in the history of the Sino-Soviet bureaucratically ruled workers states. It also led to Mao being edged out of real power. In the early 1960's a more conservative bureaucratic grouping, led by Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, took over the reins. The Liu/Teng regime in the early 1960's oversaw the slow recovery of industrial production and made major concessions to the individualistic interests of the peasantry. The communes were liquidated, private plots were allowed to expand and a limited free market for agricultural produce was tolerated.

In launching the Cultural Revolution in 1965-66, Mao not only sought to recapture supreme personal power but also to create the political conditions for a renewed Great Leap Forward in the economy. He used Lin Piao's army to recapture the central party leadership in mid-1966 and then mobilized the student-youth in order to purge the conservative party-state bureaucracy at the base. However, Mao was not able to carry out a mass purge of the Chinese bureaucracy, in large part because his intended victims mobilized workers against the "radical" Maoist student-based Red Guards. In 1968 the Cultural Revolution was effectively ended with the suppression of the Red Guards, most of whom were shipped off to the countryside "to learn from the peasants." The period 1968-71 was marked by an unstable equilibrium between Mao's personal group (the Chiang Ch'ing clique), the People's Liberation Army officer corps and the old-line party cadre. (For a survey of the Cultural Revolution, see "Mao's China: From Stalin to Nixon" in the Spartacus Youth League pamphlet, *Reply to the*

Guardian—The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited [1973].)

The turmoil in China's cities during 1966-68 naturally severely disrupted industrial production; the impact of the Cultural Revolution in the countryside was far less. Thus the restoration of social peace in 1968 with the liquidation of the Cultural Revolution allowed a rapid recovery and even expansion of industry. The well-respected Far Eastern Economic Review calculated that between 1968 and 1971 industrial production increased 66 percent (*Asia Yearbook*, 1975).

Agriculture, on the other hand, did not fare so well, food grain output barely keeping pace with population growth. The regional military com-

manders, the real powers in the land, pursued economic policies similar to the Great Leap Forward though much less extreme. They sought to extract a greater surplus from the peasantry in order to build up small-scale industry in their own bailiwicks. The 1968-71 period was thus characterized by the relative stagnation of agriculture and a tendency toward economic warlordism.

his speech to the National People's Congress in January 1975, Chou called for "the comprehensive modernization of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and industry before the end of the century, so that our national economy will be advancing in the front ranks of the world" (*Peking Review*, 24 January 1975).

The Chou Teng team moved to recentralize economic administration and adopted a more liberal policy toward the peasants. But the most striking change in Chinese economic policy in the early 1970's was the large-scale importation of modern technology from the advanced capitalist countries, especially Japan. Between 1971 and 1974 the dollar volume of China's

technology was *not* derived from a commitment to primitivist egalitarianism (Chiang Ch'ing's own life-style was as luxuriant as any Hollywood film star's), nor primarily from a xenophobic glorification of national isolation. Rather the bureaucrats who made it to the top through the Cultural Revolution, exemplified by ex-Red Guard leader Wang Hung-wen and polemicist Yao Wen-yuan, were individuals of little political or administrative ability. They owed their sudden rise to power *solely* to personal loyalty to Mao. Chiang Ch'ing, Yao Wen-yuan & Co. knew that the technical intellectuals were skeptical, if not outright hostile, toward the quasi-religious Mao cult and favored economic efficiency over ideological posturing. They therefore opposed those economic policies which would necessarily strengthen the technical intellectual stratum.

However, one should *not* take at face value the current regime's claim, fully endorsed by the Western bourgeois press, that the "Gang of Four" was uniquely responsible for the stagnation of the Chinese economy in recent years. No Stalinist purge is complete unless the victims are condemned for sabotaging economic construction. It's easy for Hua/Teng to scapegoat the Chiang Ch'ing clique for all of China's economic problems. After all, the latter cannot publicly defend themselves. In addition, the new regime's widening of wage differentials (efficiency bonuses were reinstated late last year) is unquestionably unpopular with many workers. To justify its individualistic wage policy, the Hua/Teng regime is claiming that labor discipline was destroyed by the supposed egalitarianism of the "Gang of Four."

One cannot measure the degree to which the Mao/Chiang Ch'ing group may have retarded economic growth in China in the past decade. However, the period 1968-76, during which the "Gang of Four" was certainly influential, was *not* one of economic stagnation. Industrial production increased each year from 1969 to 1975 at a rate of not less than 7 percent. In 1976 the industrial growth rate did fall to only 4 percent, but the major earthquakes may have accounted for this slowdown. It is true that agricultural production has stagnated in the past decade. But while the Shanghai "radicals" are commonly accused of disrupting factory life, they had little influence in the countryside.

There is, of course, no question that Teng puts a far greater priority on economic development than did the "radical" Maoist clique. But wishing does not make it so. And all of Teng's talk about modernization may have as much relation to Chinese reality as Yao Wen-yuan's talk about egalitarianism.

Modernizing China Through Imperialist Loans?

Peking is giving much fanfare to Chou En-lai's program that a modernized China will be "in the front ranks of the world" by the year 2000. And how does the present Chinese Stalinist leadership intend to achieve this economic miracle? Teng is not so naive as to believe that widening wage differentials (bonuses, piece rates) will spur Chinese workers to be as productive as those in Japanese or West German factories. The core of Peking's new "Great Leap Forward" program is the massive importation of technologically sophisticated equipment (especially complete factories) from Japan, West Europe and the U.S. In the first half of this year alone China contracted for over \$5 billion in capital equipment imports compared to a total of only \$2.8 billion for the entire 1973-77 period (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 July).

Just how do the Stalinist bureaucrats in Peking expect to pay for all this? Until recently the official Peking line was that it had no foreign debts but paid for all its imports in cash. This was a fiction for the sake of ideological purism. Peking

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Great leap backward: backyard steel furnaces in China.

Der Spiegel



Self-reliance: Chinese technology decades behind the West.

Burnett/Contact

manders, the real powers in the land, pursued economic policies similar to the Great Leap Forward though much less extreme. They sought to extract a greater surplus from the peasantry in order to build up small-scale industry in their own bailiwicks. The 1968-71 period was thus characterized by the relative stagnation of agriculture and a tendency toward economic warlordism.

Chou/Teng vs. the "Gang of Four"

The fall of Marshal Lin Piao in late 1971 marked the end of those economic policies associated with "radical" Maoism. With the military commanders pushed out of direct power, economic administration came under the control of Chou En-lai and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, who was rehabilitated in 1973 and made deputy premier. The virtues of economic development and technological modernization once again became a major theme of official Peking propaganda. In

imports jumped from \$2.3 to \$7.4 billion (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, *Asia Yearbook*, 1975 and 1978). In 1975, for the first time in its history, the People's Republic of China ran a significant balance of trade deficit.

This "economic growth through foreign trade" policy became a major focus of intra-bureaucratic conflict. One of the main substantive political accusations now being directed at the "Gang of Four" is that they opposed the importation of modern technology. There is much evidence that this was indeed the case. When in early 1976 Teng was purged for the second time as a "capitalist roader," one of the main political charges against him was that he laid "stress on things big and foreign." That China's imports remained constant in 1975 and fell significantly the following year no doubt had something to do with the ascendancy of the "Gang of Four."

Their resistance to importing modern

Iran...

(continued from page 1)

shortage as a result. On November 30 Teheran refinery workers went out. The oil workers resumed their strike on December 2; oil production had been cut in half by December 7 and the major north-south natural gas pipeline closed. The BBC reported that the oil workers had formed a national union and that the objective of their strike was abdication of the shah.

Governmental authority is also rapidly eroding in the countryside, where the peasantry is heeding Khomeini's call to refuse to pay taxes. There are reports of armed clashes in Qom and Ahwaz in which policemen and soldiers were killed. There are claims that the unrest is making inroads into the army, resulting in the arrest of some 500 soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers up to the rank of captain, as well as continual rumors of soldiers deserting or committing suicide, and even of mutinies.

In the absence of U.S. intervention, the loyalty of the army is the shah's sole remaining asset. So far the anti-shah forces have not broken, due to the combination of military discipline and material privilege (cheap food, clothing and housing, free medical care) that bind the army to the imperial throne. The shah's ultimate bastion is the 10,000-man Imperial Guard, specially trained and equipped and doubly pampered.

But the army may also turn against the "Light of the Aryans" in the wake of the failure to suppress the opposition. If the generals are too fanatically loyal or too compromised by their collaboration with the shah to oust him, their subordinates in the officer corps will likely emulate their colleagues in Pakistan by staging a coup d'état and toppling the hated monarch.

U.S. Imperialism In a Muddle

Up until last month the American community in Iran, 45,000 strong, complacently ignored the anti-shah revolt from its comfortable segregation. But as incidents of anti-foreign boycotts, vandalism and assaults escalated, and when leaflets appeared announcing that all foreigners (with the exception of the French, who are harboring Khomeini, and newsmen) remaining in Iran would be killed, American families joined Iranian capital in a panicky flight from the country.

The exodus has rapidly grown from a trickle to a flood—an estimated 20,000 have now left. American ambassador William Sullivan, who ran the covert CIA air war in Laos during his stay as U.S. proconsul there, had decreed that business would continue as usual as a gesture of confidence in the shah. It was not until December 7 that Washington agreed to subsidize the transport of families of American military personnel—whereupon three-fourths of them immediately took up the offer.

U.S. imperialism has been locked into a policy of backing the shah to the hilt. Faced with the imminent demise of the monarchy, it is not frantically assessing other options. Hardliners like former CIA chief and previous U.S. ambassador to Iran Richard Helms urge all-out support to the shah's crumbling rule. But when asked if the shah would hold out, Carter could only limply respond, "I don't know. I hope so." Complaining of the CIA's ignorance on Iran, Carter has commissioned George Ball, foreign policy advisor to both Kennedy and Johnson, to produce new policy recommendations.

The American bourgeois press continues to echo the shah's propagandists' absurd Cold War claim that Khomeini is an agent of the Kremlin. But the mullahs are vociferously asserting their anti-communist credentials. One popular religious leader in the town of Babul exclaimed, "The people are fed up with

the hypocrisy of the ruling circles of this country. The Shah says that the opposition is influenced by the Communists. But he is the one who entertains Communists, sells gas to the Russians at ridiculously low prices" (*New York Times*, 9 December).

U.S. imperialism is extremely sensitive to political instability in Iran, its military watchdog on the USSR's southern flank. But the introduction of American troops would mean an immediate, sharp confrontation—the Soviets have made their position clear—a confrontation which the U.S. seeks to avoid at this time. And contrary to the claims of most of the left, Iran is not simply a banana republic or neo-colony completely under the thumb of Uncle



Imperial riot troops in Teheran.

Sam. Sullivan probably represents the consensus in the White House:

"We ran Laos, but in Iran, which is tremendously important to us, there's not much we, or anyone else, can do. Ironically all the major powers—the U.S., Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union—are alarmed by what's going on in Iran. The Russians don't want to see an Islamic republic here. They've got 40 million Moslems just north of this country."

—*New York Times*, 13 November

The latest events have not changed this sense of limitation.

Islamic "Republic" Means Social Reaction!

Revolutionary Marxists must oppose U.S. imperialism's frantic efforts to prop up the hated shah. But they also have a duty to point out that subordinating Iran's militant proletariat to the mullahs is preparing a catastrophe. The aspirations of the Iranian masses to free themselves from the grip of the shah's tyranny are being cynically exploited by the Islamic clergy's counteroffensive against the erosion of its traditional power and privilege. Khomeini is merely the "radical" representative of a caste that sees any introduction of Western culture as threatening the age-old superstitions that are its stock in trade.

The mullahs oppose the shah's 1963 land "reform" not because of its impoverishment and expropriation of the peasantry, but because their holdings were taken away and put on the capitalist market. In fact the shah's agrarian measures were part of a drive to undercut the economic power of the aristocracy and clergy, thus strengthening the monarchy.

And the hallmark of this archaic society has always been the oppression of women and their systematic segregation from public life. This is the brutal social reality symbolized by the veil, which literally gives the power of life and death over women to husbands and fathers. While his followers cry "Death or the Veil" in the streets, Khomeini delivers urbane "explanations" of Islam's subjugation of women. "It is the Shah who is dragging women toward corruption and wishes to bring them up

as mere dolls," he says (*Le Monde*, 17 October). But when capitalism drags women out of the home and into the factory the Muslim reactionaries object to their being removed from seclusion, not to their exploitation as proletarians.

In moments of frankness, Khomeini drops his pose as a "liberal" religious fanatic to forthrightly advocate Saudi-style cultural repression: "We are against films aimed at corrupting our youth and destroying our Islamic culture" ([London] *Guardian*, 7 November). "Corrupting the youth" is, of course, the standard cry of religious bigots. No doubt the mullahs find advocating the class struggle or the equality of women particularly "pornographic" and in need of suppression.

Khomeini's call for a return to the constitution of 1907 is only a thinly disguised call for theocracy. Not only does this constitution subject all parliamentary legislation to the veto of a board of clerics, but it specifically bars non-Muslims from high government posts. As for the legalization of leftist parties, Khomeini told the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (24 November) that the Tudeh (pro-Moscow Communist) party would be outlawed for having "betrayed" the Iranian nation. This would be even more likely for those advocating genuine proletarian internationalism than for the apologists of Soviet foreign policy.

The religious opposition has been able to play on the shallow character of the shah's modernization of Iranian society, confronted with the brutal repression of his SAVAK torturers and praetorian guard army. Removal of the veil and an escape from poverty has been possible only for a small layer of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women. The wealth of oil riches goes into the pockets of a tiny elite. Tragically, for many sections of Iranian society the old pre-capitalist order is seen as the only alternative to the rapacious exploitation of Iranian capitalism dominated by foreign capital.

Iran and the Muslim Revival

As the well-known Middle Eastern scholar and ostensible Marxist Maxime Rodinson points out in a recent series of articles in *Le Monde* (6-8 December), the upsurge in Iran takes place in the context of a revival of religious fanaticism throughout the Muslim world. When Nasser-style Arab nationalism's "anti-imperialist" credentials became tarnished, he argues, the Islamic fundamentalists' opposition to all Western cultural influence seemed the only alternative to imperialist domination.

In particular, Iran's future may well be represented by its eastern neighbor, Pakistan, where a similar Muslim-led mass revolt in 1977 produced its own "Islamic republic." As in Iran, a central component in the drive against the repressive regime of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

was an attack on its "secularism." Spearheaded by the Jaamat-i Islam party, the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) called for the revival of draconian Islamic law—suppression of the use of alcohol, amputation of thieves' hands, etc.

The PNA, like the Khomeini-led forces, also had a "democratic" cover. Bhutto had combined his demagogic promises to the impoverished peasantry with an orgy of corruption and gangsterism. Just as Khomeini speaks of a popular referendum and a republic, the PNA called for the freeing of all political prisoners, Bhutto's resignation, the end of martial law and new elections. Furthermore the PNA included bourgeois liberals and was tailed by the entire

Pakistani left; like the anti-shah forces, it could pass itself off as a "democratic" united front involving virtually all sections of national politics.

When Bhutto proved incapable of quelling the revolt, the army intervened installing the self-styled "soldier of Islam," General Zia, in July 1977. Pakistan remains under martial law today. Zia has proclaimed that only truly Islamic parties will be allowed to participate in the oft-promised elections. Within a few days of coming to power he announced the "Islamization of punishment," including public whippings and hangings as well as amputation. In Zia's theocracy, all government employees must pray, all shops and factories must close during Friday prayers and there is a drive to restore the wearing of the veil by all women. And naturally all "strikes, agitation or political activity of any kind" in the schools and all trade union activity are banned.

Khomeini has made clear his hopes of following the Jaamat-i Islam party in its path to the "Islamic social order." He seeks his own "soldier of Islam" in the middle ranks of the shah's officer corps: "We have not given up on the military, and put much hope in the young officers and soldiers of the army" (*Los Angeles Times*, 26 November).

Craven Opportunism Versus Revolutionary Marxism

The victory of the Khomeini-led forces would substitute a theocratic bonapartist regime for that of the shah and offers nothing to the exploited masses. Under the rule of the ayatollahs or their

NOTICE
Workers Vanguard
skips a week in December.
Our next issue
will be dated January 5.

military "disciples," it is even doubtful that the barbaric jails would improve... for those who escape the executioners. The workers' oppression will not be lightened under the mullahs; instead they must seek the overthrow of the shah by using their social power to establish an Iranian workers and peasants government.

The international Spartacist tendency's intransigent opposition to both the butcher shah and the reactionary mullahs has provoked howls of outrage, and even physical attacks, from the Stalinist and petty-bourgeois nationalist Iranian student left in both the U.S. and Europe. Our position has also drawn a wretched mud-slinging attack from the opportunists par excellence of the Socialist Workers Party. The 8 December issue of the SWP's *Militant* carried an article entitled, "Iran: Is Struggle Against Shah's Tyranny Reactionary?" Through a host of distortions and omissions the author David Frankel concludes that the Muslims' campaign to return Iran to the days of Muhammed is not only supportable but even a model of "democratic" struggle.

What is left out of this gem would fill up an entire newspaper, not just one article. Khomeini's name does not appear once. Frankel does not seem to have heard of the custom of wearing the veil, nor of the Muslim's drive to restore its use. In fact, the word "woman" does not appear *once* in the entire article—quite an achievement considering our emphasis on the woman question in polemicizing against support to the mullahs. Even the theocratic nature of the 1907 constitution is suppressed, and the question of what Khomeini's "Islamic republic" would mean for the left and working class of Iran is totally absent.

And not by accident. It is a difficult task painting up clerical obscurantism as "democracy," and facts would only get in the way. Far better to accuse the Spartacist League of opposing democratic slogans because we oppose the mullahs' calls for freeing only *Islamic* political prisoners and the creation of an *Islamic* republic; and because we deny that this program of clerical reaction has anything to do with the most rudimentary forms of bourgeois democracy.

The SWP, which only a few short months ago opposed the demand "Down with the shah!" as "ultra-left," now cheers on the petty-bourgeois crowds attacking cinemas, banks and liquor stores in the streets of Teheran. This, Frankel assures us, is not motivated by fundamentalist Islamic puritanism, but by militant "anti-imperialism." By rights he had better put Saudi Arabia's suppression of all things contrary to the Koran at the top of his list of "anti-imperialist" victories of the "Arab Revolution."

"Dynamic" of Reaction

In the final analysis, such "trifles" as the program and political leadership of the anti-shah movement are unimportant to the SWP. The mullahs are worthy

of support simply because of the number of demonstrators they have brought into the streets. No matter that this movement stands for "Death or the Veil" and for the suppression of communists, says the SWP; the "dynamic" of the struggle is supposedly irreversible. Marching through Teheran will somehow mystically free women from their religious indoctrination, differentiate the proletariat from the obscurantist mullahs and transmute reactionary prejudice into revolutionary class consciousness.

There was an "irreversible" dynamic in Pakistan too. And the SWP mustered up the same arguments to cynically cash in on the anti-Bhutto "mass movement." The 25 April 1977 issue of the SWP's *Intercontinental Press* announced, "As the protests continued to gain momentum, women have begun to participate in them, a significant development in Pakistan, which is strongly influenced by orthodox Islam."

Then, too, the SWP considered the leadership of the struggle irrelevant: "Although the PNA leadership is dominated by rightist elements, including former military officers and Islamic religious figures, it has been able to mobilize hundreds of thousands of protesters on the basis of its opposition to the present regime" (*Intercontinental Press*, 9 May 1977). And of course, "A PNA government formed out of the present upsurge would be under strong pressure to concede democratic rights" (*IP*, 6 June 1977). Whereas now, in its shameless abasement to Khomeini, the SWP assures us that despite the mullahs' predominance the Iranian workers and peasants will not permit a return to the Middle Ages, after the Zia coup they were forced to admit that "... the whole repression is being carried out under an Islamic cover" (*IP*, 18 July 1977).

Today Bhutto rots in jail, as the Islamic despot who replaced him weighs the utility of hanging him. It will be unfortunate if Reza Shah Pahlavi suffers the same fate at the hands of Khomeini and his henchmen instead of experiencing the revolutionary justice of the victorious proletariat. The Iranian left and working class have accounts to settle with this butcher. They remember the mass executions after 1953, the grisly torture of thousands of leftists, the smashing of strikes, the famine and exploitation brought by the shah's "White Revolution." These are the shah's real crimes, not his supposed transgressions against Islam.

The strike battles now being waged by the Iranian workers could be the basis of the independent mobilization of the proletariat as a competitor for power with Khomeini, not as cannon fodder for the mullahs. In the imperialist epoch, the democratic tasks of freeing oppressed nationalities, agrarian revolution, and breaking down imperialist domination can be carried out only under the leadership of the Iranian proletariat. But these urgent democratic demands require the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship for their success, not the dissolution of the working class into the petty-bourgeois masses. Only a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party can win the proletariat to this perspective and lead it to victory.

For the right of self-determination for all oppressed nationalities in Iran!
Land to the tiller!

Full democratic rights for women! No to the veil!

No confidence in "anti-imperialist" officers—the workers must win over the ranks of the army!

Free all victims of the shah's white terror! Down with martial law! Smash SAVAK! For popular tribunals to try the SAVAK torturers!

Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs! For a sovereign, secular constituent assembly! For a workers and peasants government in Iran!

For a Trotskyist party in Iran! Reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■

Phantom Antiwar Movement...

(continued from page 7)

SL's split from what the SWP recognizes as "the antiwar movement":

"The Spartacist League walked out of the committee over this question [of censorship], carried their own slogans the day of the march, and chastised the SWP for being party to the one-slogan agreement. It is true that this was an uncomfortable compromise for those of us in the SWP, particularly since virtually every member of the Parade Committee with the exception of the SANE representative professed to be personally in favor of immediate withdrawal from Vietnam, and those who supported the 'negotiations' slogan claimed to do so only because they thought it was a better way to appeal to broader forces. This concession went against our grain because we were thoroughly convinced—and remained so—that SANE's equivocal position on the war was not only morally unacceptable but not nearly as popular an approach to the mass of the American people as the immediate withdrawal position. But we made the agreement for October 16, lived up to it scrupulously, and never regretted having done so."

Yesterday's opportunism is always today's damaging admission, so now Halstead tells his readers how the SWP experienced anguish when it chose the bourgeois pacifists of SANE over the demands of socialist (or "moral") principle. But when it counted, the SWP certainly didn't manifest much discomfort in choosing to side with SANE. When in 1966 the SL called a counter-demonstration to protest SANE's plea that the president scale down the war because it was "making a mockery of the Great Society," the SWP responded:

"ANTI-SANE—A manifesto was issued by the Spartacist League, an ultra-left grouplet, calling on people to picket the SANE Madison Square Garden rally to End the War in Vietnam Now because of defects in SANE's program. Maybe the name bugs them too."

—*Militant*, 12 December 1966

For the SWP, all those who refused to toddle along behind the *pro-imperialist* program of the "dove" Democrats became non-people. The SWP had no interest in this "phantom" antiwar movement which expressed the subjectively revolutionary aspirations of many thousands of youth. The SWP cared only for the "antiwar movement" represented by SANE. And what was SANE? An ossified social-patriotic outfit with a paper membership, a sniveling crew of pro-American pacifists who sought to speak for the "progressive" bourgeoisie. Its bloc with the SANE & Co. "moderates" against the "ultra-lefts" was the SWP's "peaceful, legal" road to its "own" ruling class.

Indonesia and Indochina

The present *IP* polemic adds only one new element to the antiwar discussion: the claim that Cde. Robertson's discussion of the Indonesian military coup of 1965 shows the SL considers the Vietnamese revolution "unimportant."

Let us look first at what Cde. Robertson said:

"The victory took place in Vietnam and all Indochina. The imperialists—headed by the Americans—learned a thing or two and have done a pretty good job, assisted in other ways, in stabilizing, for example, South America (Latin America) and have found what is reasonably described as neo-colonialism as a way to be assured of necessary limits, at least in black Africa. And the great prototype for this phenomenon in the colonial world was, of course, the Indonesian military coup of 1965... in which not merely the Communist Party was beheaded but the masses were given a tremendous defeat, with hundreds of thousands of dead among the workers, the militant landless peasants, and of course this not very good (and very Maoist) Communist Party. And if there was any virtue in a

domino theory in Southeast Asia, it was what happened in Indonesia. See, that's where the people are.... And after that the balance of the Vietnamese war was an exercise in imperialist egotism on the part of succeeding American institutions, governments, and jockeying around in an attempt to come to an understanding with the Chinese...."

In fact, the stabilization of Indonesia as a rightist pro-American bulwark against Communism in Asia was a crucial consideration of imperialist foreign policy. In 1953, then-president Eisenhower worried, "If we lost Vietnam and Malaysia, how would the Free World hold the rich empire of Indonesia?" (quoted in *Pacific Research and World Empire Telegraph*, August 1969). And in an article titled "Asia After Vietnam," Richard Nixon gloated: "With its 100 million people and its three thousand mile arc of islands containing the region's richest hoard of natural resources, Indonesia constitutes the greatest prize in the Southeast Asian area" (*Foreign Affairs*, October 1967). The bloody coup which made Indonesia "safe for democracy" should have enabled the U.S. to extricate itself from a *losing* military adventure without fear for the more lucrative "dominoes." Maoist China's open diplomatic alliance with the U.S. completed the quarantine of the Indochinese revolution.

Why does the SWP feel so directly affronted by an analysis which is not even particular to the SL but a commonplace? Because Cde. Robertson's description of the factors which made the Vietnam adventure superfluous to the best interests of U.S. imperialism cuts at the heart of the SWP's sometime "anti-imperialist" pretensions. *IP*'s equation—"defense of the Vietnamese Revolution through building the antiwar movement"—is central to the SWP's effort to alibi its extra-parliamentary bloc with McGovern & Co. If the SWP admits that the leaders of the bourgeois/pacifist antiwar movement opposed the war from the *standpoint of the interests of U.S. imperialism*, the equation collapses and the SWP's refusal to defend the revolutionary struggle of the Indochinese workers and peasants is revealed as a conscious overture to its "own" bourgeoisie.

For the SWP, busy running around harassing demonstrators who carried Viet Cong flags or other symbols of support for the Vietnamese revolution, the thousands of little American flags carried by the antiwar marchers were not important because anybody opposing the war became "objectively" an anti-imperialist fighter. To preserve this comfortable fiction, the SWP must deny the existence of a section of the bourgeoisie itself which opposed the Vietnam war. After the Indonesian coup, the Vietnam war became an encumbrance and more far-sighted elements among the bourgeoisie began to say so. It was this shift in *bourgeois* opinion, not the best-building efforts of the SWP, which swelled the ranks of the "mass movement."

U.S. imperialism's military debacle in Vietnam was a powerful radicalizing force for a generation of American youth. But thanks in part to the misleadership of the SWP happily marching to "Bring Our Boys Home" (*our* boys in Vietnam were not the American army!), most of the protesters remained firmly in the grip of the Democratic "doves," while the smaller subjectively anti-imperialist layer gravitated mainly toward the Maoist milieu which was the largest force opposing the SWP from the left.

Thus the SWP's proud moment of apparent mass influence was a simple sellout. The Spartacist League's principled anti-imperialist line was much more than "something to throw at the SWP," but all the same it seems to have hit its mark. ■

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SWP's Goat...

(continued from page 7)

blacks; in other words, they benefit materially from the superexploitation of black labor. As Marxists, we recognize that their immediate material interest places them in the reactionary camp and we must expect that most of them will fight against the proletarian revolution that will destroy their privileges. But as the class brothers of the black South African proletariat, we have no desire to push every last white into the trenches by a nationalist perspective of exterminating the entirety of the oppressor people. Of course such considerations are of no interest to the reformist SWP, which has about as much intention of making a proletarian revolution in South Africa as the pope has of getting an abortion.

Moreover, the apartheid system has sought as much as possible to keep technical skills in the hands of the white labor aristocracy and middle class. These skills will be of assistance to the masses of South Africa in the construction of a socialist society. The victorious Bolsheviks made use of the talents and experience of even capitalist bureaucrats and White Army officers willing to do a deal and work for the new regime. A black-centered South African workers republic will have room for whites who would rather be "race traitors" than dead reactionary heroes.

Reformists for Hire

Only in its last column does the *IP* polemic give a hint of what is really bothering the SWP, as it rails indignantly over Cde. Robertson's charge that the SWP:

... is all geared up to play the role of rendering less brittle, more elastic, more plausible, the trade union bureaucracy... And that's what the YSA is—an available 1,000 youth instantly to be hired as assistant educational directors and assistant editors of union newspapers in order to explain to the workers that black is white and this is the best of all possible worlds."

Apparently this really stung, for *IP* writes:

"In fact, all of the SWP's work in the union movement aims at building a class-struggle left wing in the unions that can defeat the class-

collaborationist policies of the current bureaucrats.

"What does it matter to Robertson that there is not one single member of the YSA or SWP who is an assistant education director or assistant editor of a union or union newspaper? These are only facts...."

What? "A class-struggle left wing" in the unions? Is the SWP kidding? Whatever happened to the "democratic labor movement" which normally accompanies the thousands of pages of turgid *Militant* prose in praise of dissident union bureaucrats? When polemicizing against opponents to its left, the arch-reformist SWP of today shamelessly borrows the language of the revolutionary SWP of the 1930's. But anyone who bothers to check will find that the SWP's idea of a "class-struggle left wing" is the liberal wing of the labor bureaucracy, such as embodied by strikebreaking Mine Workers leader Arnold Miller.

The trade-union policies of the SWP are so obviously an effort to apply for a job as left cover to the less discredited bureaucrats that to admit the SWP has not made it to "assistant education directors" is to boast of spectacular non-success. Comrades, this is perhaps not wise; Ed Sadlowski might be listening. You would not want anyone to know you are satisfied to serve merely as unpaid mimeo operators for those assistant editors. Perhaps Cde. Robertson erred in trying to quantify the present level of SWP trade-union work; perhaps we should have stuck to a more elastic formulation. How about "water-boys for the bureaucracy"?

In fact, when the SWP with appropriate hoopla made its "turn" toward trade-union implantation a couple of years ago, it explicitly justified its new "proletarian orientation" (long a dirty word in the SWP) on the basis that it discerned a change in the trade-union bureaucracy:

"It is interesting to compare what we are doing to the path followed by most of our opponents the last years. Almost without exception, they made their various 'turns to the working class,' not on the basis of real openings, but on abstract theory...."

—Mary-Alice Waters,
"Organization Report," *SWP Discussion Bulletin* Vol. 35,
No. 3, June 1977

And what were the "new political

openings" as defined in the document? They were "developments like Steelworkers Fight Back"—in other words, Ed Sadlowski.

The Spartacist League is of course the example of those who undertook systematic union work on the basis of "abstract theory," and years before the SWP "turn." But for the purposes of the present *IP* polemic, the SL exists only as

Yesterday's Opportunism

"...most of the ultraleft groups support the MPLA.

"...Still another element in the situation is the imperialist support given to the UNITA and the FNLA, including the use of South African troops. Does this automatically require us to support the MPLA?"

"...In Angola we must begin by checking the strands of the three groups in relation to imperialism. Here again we find no basic difference...."

—*Militant*,
23 January 1976

"...the Maoists raise very ultimatumistic and ultraleft demands. They demand, for instance, that all should unite on slogans like 'Down with the Shah...'"

—*Militant*,
13 January 1978

an individual named Robertson and a newspaper. Nowhere is there a hint of the things that really get the SWP's goat: the SL-supported trade-union caucuses with authority gained through years of principled struggle, something which the SWP discovered when it finally started putting its own people into industry; the recent New York election campaign which sharply highlighted the

reformist parliamentary cretinism of the SWP and Communist Party; the SL's recent success in seeking to influence local groupings breaking to the left from the Socialist Party.

The omission is necessary. *IP* cannot tell the reader about the SL's real fight for a real class-struggle alternative to the sellout bureaucracy if it wants him to believe the SL is a "sect" headed for "outer space."

In fact, the only real political substance to be found in the *IP* article is the graphic, a photo of two *WI* headlines ("Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!" and "Shcharansky Is Guilty as Hell!") whose uncompromising proletarian line does tend to isolate us from the liberals and the social-democratic left. Unfortunately, *IP* did not choose to take up its prostration before the clerical-reactionary leadership of the "movement" in Iran or its de facto abandonment of the Trotskyist policy of defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism.

We can sympathize with *IP*'s discreet silence. The 8 December *Militant*'s effort to defend the SWP's Iran line against the SL might be read as an unintentional object lesson on the better part of valor (for a reply see "Love the Mullahs—Love the SWP" in the present issue of *Young Spartacus*). And *IP*, the SWP's international factional organ, is perhaps not the best place to attempt a defense of the SWP's political solidarity with Jimmy Carter in emoting over the plight of Shcharansky, a man even the bourgeois press admits sought to pass Soviet military secrets to CIA conduits. The foreign radicals to whom *IP* presents the SWP's most "left" face are likely to be rather more sensitive than the *Militant*'s mainly domestic readership to the social-patriotism animating the SWP's "democratic" defense of the Shcharanskys and Solzhenitsyns.

For at bottom the gulf between the SWP reformists and the SL Trotskyists comes down to the SL's intransigent opposition to U.S. imperialist policy here and now. While the reformists give credence to Carter's sanctimonious "human rights" crusade—which aims at the moral and military rearmament of U.S. imperialism after Vietnam and Watergate—the SL stands with Lenin in declaring: the main enemy is at home! ■

SP Left Wingers Call for SL-SWP Debate

We reprint below a letter written by the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency (RMT, formerly the Debs Caucus of the Socialist Party [SP]) to the Guardian in response to its 15 November article "Socialist Party: What Is To Be Done?" and a subsequent letter from SPer Dave McReynolds. Both the Guardian article and the "correction" curiously failed to notice that the recent SP convention and subsequent split had anything at all to do with the question of Trotskyism. Since the Guardian follows the Stalinist tradition of distorting or suppressing anything to do with this taboo subject, we have good reason to expect that the RMT's letter will never see the light of day in their pages. We therefore undertake to publish it here.

As part of the process of investigating the ostensibly Trotskyist groups, the RMT has proposed a debate between the Spartacist League (SL) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Whereas the SL accepted the proposal enthusiastically, the SWP has been trying to duck the debate challenge. So far they have come up with three contradictory responses, all of them phony and/or cowardly:

1. We're too busy to debate.
2. Fred Halstead refuses to talk to the RMT with the SL in the room.
3. We might "debate" if the SL and SWP present their arguments on alternate weeks!

We can only conclude that the SWP,

which misses no opportunity to dismiss the SL as "ultra-left sectarians," is afraid to face a genuinely Leninist organization before the probing questions of a group moving leeward from social democracy. No doubt it remembers the political drubbing it received at the recent SWP-CP-SL debate during the New York City elections (see "Class Struggle or Race War?" *WV* No. 218, 3 November). But the price of political cowardice is high. Will the SWP be content to let a substantial number of potential revolutionaries walk on by without attempting a parting shot to save them for its brand of "left" social democracy? The SL and RMT are waiting to see.

* * * * *

Revolutionary Marxist Tendency
1824 N. Arlington Pl.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Guardian
33 West 17th St.
New York, NY 10011

Dear Guardian:

We would like to respond to a recent letter by Socialist Party member Dave McReynolds which appeared in the *Guardian* (22 November 1978) and referred to us, the former Socialist Party (Debs Caucus), now the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency (RMT).

While the left opposition which emerged at the 1978 SP Convention only took out about 40 people when it

split from the SP on 11 November, a little under half of the active membership of the SP (not the "dozen" that McReynolds states) we did frighten the right-wing SP leadership into revoking the charters of the SP's largest local, Milwaukee, as well as those of locals Manhattan and Racine (Wisconsin) and the entire Michigan state party in order to escape the political threat posed by the left-wing.

The reference in the letter to the National Caucus of Labor Committees is a slander which had its origins deep within the mind of David McReynolds, a slander which he has pushed steadily for the past two months on the theory that if you throw enough mud, some will stick. Moreover, contrary to McReynolds' allegation, the former Debs Caucus had no connection with either the Communist Cadre (CTC) or the Communist Cadre-Marxist (CTCM). The CTCM is a politically irrelevant Marcyite 1972 split from Workers World Party which entered the SP's Manhattan local after the formation of the Debs Caucus. CTCM has distinguished itself as a sect with the most rotten entry policy on the left. Prior to their intervention in the SP they were involved with the psycho-therapy cliquish International Workers Party in 1975. McReynolds' allegations concerning the CTCM's supposedly undemocratic practices, however, are complete fabrications.

To put things in their proper perspective, McReynolds' own political background needs to be examined. McReynolds, who poses as a pacifist and claims to "respectfully" disagree with Lenin has nevertheless remained "more than 25 years" in the Socialist Party of strike-breaking Frank Zeidler (former mayor of Milwaukee and present chair of the SP) and DSOC chair and Democratic Party member Mike Harrington (SP chair until 1973). The SP supported not only the Korean and Viet Nam wars throughout their durations, but also the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. McReynolds' life-long presence in this rotten fragment of the social democracy displays his cynical yet unserious attitude toward politics.

The RMT's exclusion from the SP is merely the latest in a long series of Leninist and Trotskyist splits from the hopelessly bankrupt Socialist Party going back to 1919. We are glad to be free of the stagnant political swamp which the SP has been since the historic betrayals of the Second International parties in World War I. Our future political orientation as a tendency will be toward the revolutionary Marxism of the Spartacist League which embodies the continuity of the Leninist and Trotskyist program for proletarian revolution.

Revolutionary Marxist Tendency
Milwaukee, WI
27 November 1978

WORKERS VANGUARD

Constituent Assembly...

(continued from page 5)

such as soldiers committees and workers militias. In fact what was occurring was an internationally coordinated attack on the MFA-PCP government from the right, bankrolled by U.S. imperialism (which later admitted it was pumping several million dollars a month to Soares' PS at the time), and whose real aim was to crush the first signs of dual power which were proliferating.

The SWP went right along with this anti-Communist offensive, putting forward as the central slogan All Power to the Constituent Assembly! (They object to this interpretation of their slogan, but that is what defense of the "sovereignty" of the constituent assembly actually means.) Of course, they added a fig leaf, arguing that "the concrete expression of popular sovereignty through the Constituent Assembly" would be by "establishing a workers and peasants government," or more specifically a PS-PCP government. However, in fact the operational majority in the assembly was that of Soares' PS allied with the right-wing bourgeois parties against the PCP. The SWP argued that the Socialists would be exposed when they refused to form such a government; in the meantime, however, the actual majority in this organ of bourgeois rule whose sovereignty the SWP defends would proceed with its measures directed against the gains won by the workers movement!

* * * * *

As elaborated earlier in this article, on various occasions we, following Trotsky, have been obliged to specify that our call is for a *revolutionary* constituent assembly, in order to contrast this with conciliatory maneuvers of sundry bourgeois opposition forces. One place where we did *not* call for such a body was Portugal in July-August of 1975, a fact which brought us the criticism of the Revolutionary Marxist Committee (RMC), a Shachtmanite grouping which has since gone on to the reformist big time in the SWP. In a collection of essays entitled "Problems of the Portuguese Revolution" (*Revolutionary Marxist Papers* 7, March 1976), written before its social-democratic fusion with Jack Barnes & Co., the RMC found the SWP's capitulations to Soares too much to stomach but criticized the SL for condemning the Socialists' despicable role in spearheading a reactionary mobilization (a "defacto red-brown coalition" as we called it).

The answer, said the RMC, was for Portuguese revolutionaries to center their agitation on the demand for a revolutionary constituent assembly. They devote several pages to the transcendental powers of this slogan, at one point asserting:

"If the workers' parties had consistently fought for all democratic rights—including and especially the revolutionary Constituent Assembly—then none of the CP headquarters would have been burned."

Actually, this *des ex machina* was only a cover for its real policy, identical with the SWP's, of defending the "sovereignty" of the existing constituent assembly; the RMC was only looking for a way to claim it did not limit itself to the demand of all power to the anti-Communist PS/bourgeois majority of the assembly.

In any case the issue was not one of calling for new elections for a more radical legislative body based on universal suffrage. The potential basis for revolutionary opposition to the bonapartist tutelage of the MFA was not a constituent assembly but developing and linking the potential soviet-type bodies then appearing. Thus we demanded:

"Build and unite workers councils nationwide, drawing in the workers commissions, popular vigilance committees, soldiers committees, neighborhood and agricultural workers commis-

sions for the struggle for power!"
—"Program for Workers Power in Portugal," *WV* No. 80, 10 October 1975

But for the social democrats of the RMC this was "tragically misled." Since "there are no actual soviets in existence in Portugal today," the task was to support the forces of "democratic reaction" in defense of bourgeois parliamentarism against military bonapartism. When they admit the existence of "meager embryos of future soviets" (how prosaic—as if such organs of struggle are an everyday occurrence!) it is only to argue that they should "become the organizational expression of the struggle to convene a revolutionary Constituent Assembly." It is thus not surprising the RMC eventually joined the SWP. Their marriage was consecrated on the altar of parliamentary cretinism and hostility to soviet power.

There is another, more curious aspect of the SWP's fascination with the constituent assembly demand in Portugal: the call for a workers and peasants government based on a constituent assembly. At about this time their Portuguese supporters published a little book collecting various writings by Leon Trotsky on the question of the constituent assembly. And in several articles on China, Trotsky does indeed raise the possibility of a soviet government convoking a constituent assembly:

"If the proletariat has assembled the poor peasantry under the slogans of democracy (land, national assembly, etc.) and in a united onslaught overthrows the military dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, then, when it comes into power, the proletariat will have to convoke a national assembly in order not to arouse the mistrust of the peasantry and in order not to provide an opening for bourgeois demagogues."

—"To the Chinese Left Opposition," January 1931

But Trotsky does not here, or elsewhere, postulate the constituent assembly as a possible organizational form for the dictatorship of the proletariat; this is an invention of the ex-Trotskyists who distort the Bolshevik slogan of a workers and peasants government into a call for a reform government of the bourgeois state. Trotsky speaks of a national/constituent assembly as an additional *support* to the proletarian power: "The advantage would be that the soviet system would be formally sanctioned by the national assembly...."

Moreover, this hypothetical case referred to China where a vast peasant majority could be mobilized against its warlord/landlord/comprador bourgeois rulers by a Leninist leadership that knew how to employ revolutionary democratic slogans. In Portugal, on the other hand, the bulk of the peasantry (*not* the PCP-led agricultural workers) is made up of small property owners who have been frequently mobilized by the right wing against the radical working class of the Lisbon region.

The Spartacist League called for a constituent assembly in Portugal in order to mobilize the aspirations for democracy of a population which had suffered almost half a century of Salazarist-corporatist dictatorship, and as an expression of opposition to military bonapartist rule even under the leftist rhetoric of the MFA. But in the concrete case of the rightist mobilization for "democracy" in mid-1975 we supported neither the populist captains-turned-generals nor the right-wing majority of the Constituent Assembly, instead calling for united working-class defense of left-wing offices and extension/centralization of the nascent organs of workers power (see "SWP/OCI Tail Counterrevolution in Portugal," *WV* No. 75, 29 August 1975).

* * * * *

The events in Portugal were not an isolated occurrence, nor was the conflict between something called a constituent assembly and the workers commissions/soldiers committees unique. In fact, as proletarian revolutionaries (and not bourgeois democrats) we do not

always demand the sovereignty of a particular constituent assembly. In a revolutionary upheaval, a weak provisional government may be forced to make economic concessions to the workers and to temporarily tolerate organs of dual power. A constituent assembly could then become a tool for the bourgeois derailing of the revolution. The votes of a backward rural population might produce a constituent assembly far to the right of the provisional government, which is under the direct pressure of the urban-centered, combative sections of the working class. And by claiming to represent the democratic popular will, the constituent assembly might be better able to mobilize against the proletarian vanguard than an unauthorized provisional government. This was the situation in Portugal in the summer of 1975.

Similar situations occurred in the classic French revolutions of 1789-92 and 1848. In June 1789 the National Assembly was born when the Third Estate summoned by Louis XVI refused to be dismissed by royal order and retired to the tennis court at Versailles to hold independent sessions. But this was only a gesture. The assembly was not recognized as a ruling body until following the plebeian Paris revolt which culminated in the July 14 storming of the Bastille. Thus from the time of the classic bourgeois revolutions onward, the demand for a constituent assembly has always had a popular revolutionary-democratic content, directly counterposed to all attempts to temporize with or reform the old regime.

However, by the summer of 1792 the National Assembly had become a choking fetter on the further development of the revolution and a protector of the monarchy. On August 10 of that year the representatives of the Parisian people formed a Revolutionary Commune as columns were marching on the Tuileries Palace to expel the king. The Commune under the leadership of Robespierre forced the Assembly to "suspend" the king and call elections for a new, truly democratic and revolutionary constituent assembly based on universal suffrage, the Convention. Yet the parliamentarian cretins of the SWP would no doubt have denounced the action of the Commune as the undemocratic action of an ultra-leftist minority isolated in Paris. Luckily, Robespierre was a revolutionary rather than a worshipper of bourgeois legality.

The frustrated French revolution of 1848, on the other hand, provides an example of how a constituent assembly can become an organ of "democratic counterrevolution." The provisional government set up following the February revolution was directly under the pressure of the Parisian proletariat, and was far to the left of the Constituent National Assembly elected in April. Reflecting the more backward views of the peasant majority of the nation, this body was dominated by the Party of Order and drawn mainly from the old monarchists. After the workers representatives were purged from the executive committee, in the decisive June days the reconstituted government provoked an insurrection by the Paris workers which was bloodily suppressed by the butcher Cavaignac, who executed more than 20,000 in the name of the Assembly (see "The French Revolution of 1848," *Young Spartacus* No. 50, January 1977).

Here, as in Germany in 1918-19, the working class found itself on the opposite sides of the barricades not from absolutist dictatorship but from the champions of bourgeois democracy. Marx and Engels stood on the side of the proletariat against the forces of democratic reaction, and it was the experience of 1848-49 which first formed Marx's concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin deepened the Marxist understanding of the class difference between bourgeois and proletarian democracy, while Kautsky continued to talk of abstract democra-

cy, condemning the Bolsheviks for dispersing the constituent assembly in Russia in January 1918.

As Trotskyists we hold that the constituent assembly is only one of several revolutionary democratic demands, subordinate to the overall interests of the proletarian revolution. In contrast to the social-democratic SWP we stand with Lenin in his December 1917 "Theses on the Constituent Assembly," which starkly synthesized the Marxist viewpoint on bourgeois democracy:

"1. The demand for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly was a perfectly legitimate part of the programme of revolutionary Social-Democracy, because in a bourgeois republic the Constituent Assembly represents the highest form of democracy and because, in setting up a Pre-parliament, the imperialist republic headed by Kerensky was preparing to rig the elections and violate democracy in a number of ways."
"2. While demanding the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, revolutionary Social-Democracy has ever since the beginning of the Revolution of 1917 repeatedly emphasised that a republic of Soviets is a higher form of democracy than the usual bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly."

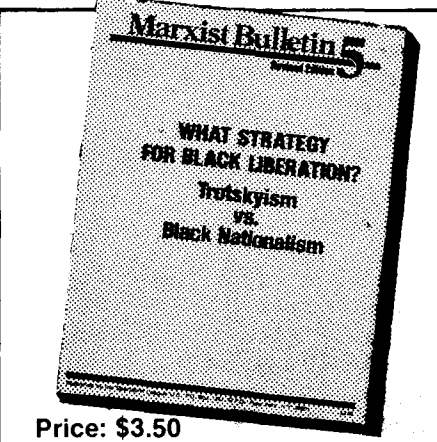
"3. For the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist system, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Republic of Soviets (of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies) is not only a higher type of democratic institution.... but is the only form capable of securing the most painless transition to socialism...."

"14. ...The course of events and the development of the class struggle in the revolution have resulted in the slogan 'All Power to the Constituent Assembly!'—which disregards the gains of the workers' and peasants' revolution, which disregards Soviet power, which disregards the decisions of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, etc.—becoming in fact the slogan of the Cadets and the Kaledinites and of their helpers...."

"16. The result of the above-mentioned circumstances taken together is that the Constituent Assembly, summoned on the basis of the election lists of the parties existing prior to the proletarian-peasant revolution under the rule of the bourgeoisie, must inevitably clash with the will and interests of the working and exploited classes which on October 25 began the socialist revolution against the bourgeoisie. Naturally, the interests of this revolution stand higher than the formal rights of the Constituent Assembly...."

"17. Every direct or indirect attempt to consider the question of the Constituent Assembly from a formal, legal point of view, within the framework of ordinary bourgeois democracy and disregarding the class struggle and civil war, would be a betrayal of the proletariat's cause, and the adoption of the bourgeois standpoint...."

This is the revolutionary program which unites our call for *revolutionary* constituent assemblies in Chile, Nicaragua and Peru; our call for a sovereign, secular constituent assembly in Iran; and our refusal to call for defense of the sovereignty of the Portuguese constituent assembly or for a "revolutionary constituent assembly" in Portugal in July-August 1975. It is the program of Marxist independence from all wings of the class enemy, and of militant devotion to the revolutionary interests of the exploited and oppressed, led by the proletarian communist vanguard. ■



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Mao Cult "Rectified"...

(continued from page 16)

Stalinization campaign. But the purposes of the two are very different. For the Kremlin bureaucrats, denunciation of Stalin was necessary to re-establish an aura of legality as opposed to Stalin's increasingly arbitrary mass terror. By the time he died the Russian population was in a state of turbulence: in fact the bureaucracy launched de-Stalinization precisely to head off the kind of mass outbreak which occurred a few months later in Hungary. The Khrushchev "revelations" were also accompanied by an increase in consumer goods and agricultural production in a direct attempt to buy off the population. In other words "de-Stalinization" was a self-amnestying by the entire bureaucracy—trying to direct the anger of the population at the "errors" or even "crimes" of one (dead) individual.

Nor was Khrushchev's attack on the "cult of the personality" aimed at any particular faction. While he found it necessary to purge the "anti-party group" in the leadership (Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov) in order to carry it out, de-Stalinization was mainly associated with the posthumous rehabilitation of those of Stalin's victims who had been part of his own faction (like Ordzhonikidze) or had not been directly involved in the inner-party struggles (Tukhachevsky). The bureaucrats did not touch the oppositionists—Bukharin, Kamenev, Zinoviev, let alone Trotsky.

The Soviet bureaucracy was able to carry out a cosmetic "de-Stalinization" relatively painlessly because it could still make a cult of *Lenin*. Stalin could be downgraded without challenging the bureaucrats' legitimacy. But Teng's Maoist Old Guard cannot disappear the cult of Mao—the principal leader of the Chinese revolution, who at one time or another backed all the cliques and factions in the CCP leadership—without calling into question the derivation of their own authority.

To publicly secure the power he had already won by behind-the-scenes manipulation of the October 1976 palace coup, Teng had to oust the remaining sometime allies of the Gang of Four and directly confront their one "argument"—namely that Chiang Ch'ing & Co. had the approval of Mao. To do this it was necessary for Teng to assert that Mao was not infallible—a proof that was particularly necessary because in the CCP central committee meetings following the 1976 Tien An Men incident it was Mao himself who personally stripped Teng of his positions and put in Hua as his successor.

Thus the Teng gang is prepared to criticize certain aspects of Mao's policies—the "Great Leap" and the "Cultural Revolution"—but it cannot dismantle the cult of Mao. Indeed, Teng

is apparently willing to leave Hua as the figurehead prime minister as long as he has no real power. Moreover if Teng really intended to go after Mao's historic role one would expect his main demand to be rehabilitation of Liu Shao-chi—dead or alive. Instead the central demand of the present campaign has been the reversal of the 1976 central committee decision on Tien An Men, a demand directed mainly at Hua.

Thus it would be false to view Teng's short-lived wall poster/interview war as the "de-Maoization" of China. Moreover, the campaign does not appear to have significant policy overtones, and seems to be mainly a settling of old scores. Of course, with Mao's chaotic policy of periodically "turning the world upside down," there are plenty of people in China with scores to settle. Thousands upon thousands of veteran party cadre were publicly humiliated in rallies during the Cultural Revolution. A generation of idealistic Red Guard youth have spent the best years of their lives shoveling cow dung in some isolated, backward village.

It is the realization of how deep-seated are the animosities generated by the Cultural Revolution that has had *New York Times* editorials nervously warning against the dangers of "revenge seeking" in China. This worry also prompted Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to directly intervene in favor of the bureaucratic status quo in Peking, via the anonymous "senior White House official" who announced that the "Hua/Teng partnership created stability" and that another unfolding power struggle would be very bad for the U.S./China alliance (*New York Times*, 27 November).

Teng also understands the danger. Above all, Chinese leaders are seeking to stabilize bureaucratic domination and certainly do not enjoy the idea of millions of people going around demanding full accountability for 30 years of arbitrary, parasitic Stalinist rule. So far the actual changes have been quite modest. The central committee has revised the formerly "correct verdict" on Tien An Men, the earlier attempt by Teng (through the supposedly spontaneous forces of Chou En-lai's mourners) to regain power in the bureaucracy.

This disguised Tengist demonstration had been foiled by the military intervention of then Peking mayor Wu Teh and by the sinister and shadowy Wang Tung-hsing. The latter (not the Wang of Gang of Four fame) was commander of the little-known PLA (People's Liberation Army) unit 8341, Chairman Mao's personal bodyguard, which was in charge of security for the Heavenly Palace compound and whose support was decisive in ousting Chiang Ch'ing.

Whatever else does or does not happen, Teng made sure that Wu Teh got his—he was dumped as mayor late in October. Wang appears to be still on the scene, but not for long. The wall posters singled him out for special treatment as the prime exponent of "whateverism": "He blindly interfered and brought disaster to the masses," one poster said. "When the situation changed, he changed with the wind.... Blast him out, this insect."

Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom, Part II?

A number of analysts have made a false analogy between the present "wall poster democracy" and the 1957 campaign to "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom, Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend." The U.S. Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), practically admitting that it is in the dark about what's up in Peking, despite holding the official Chinese franchise, wrote in a front-page editorial: "From all appearances, a great democratic movement is underway" (*Call*, 4 December). The next week they published excerpts from Mao's 12 March 1957 "Hundred Flowers" speech.

Such a comparison is simply not relevant. Initiated partly in response to the Hungarian Revolution, the "Hundred Flowers" campaign was in the main an attempt to let non-party intellectuals blow off steam in a period

Where Do Wall Posters Come From?

Scenario 3: We are in the office of Peng, Chinese Government biggie. "This is big, Wang. Really big. And you're the boy to do it."

"If it's wall posters you want, you've got the right guy," says Wang. "Just tell me what the biggies want on the wall and posters will appear there tomorrow morning."

Peng puts a fatherly arm around Wang. "You're going to criticize Old Number One himself. You're going to be the boy that goes after old Mao-baby."

Wang recoils. He has a wife and a nice prose style to live for. Peng is giving instructions. "We want you to just put the needle in a little bit. You know the kind of stuff: 'If Mao was so great, how come America still produces all the best musical comedies?' 'If Mao was such hot stuff, why don't most Chinese houses have powder rooms?' That kind of stuff."

"Not a chance, Peng," says Wang. "I know you guys too well. Let a hundred flowers bloom today—prune them all tomorrow. That's the way you work. But I'll tell you one thing. You're not going to prune Wang. I'm gonna blow the whistle. I'm gonna tell the masses what you guys are —."

Wang drops through a trapdoor in the floor, which is sprung by the push of a button on Peng's desk. No wall posters appear.

Russell Baker, "A Chinese Puzzle," *New York Times*, 5 December 1978

of economic retrenchment following the failure of China's first five-year plan. But the scope and depth of discontent which were revealed alarmed the Maoist regime. Three months after Mao's speech, the campaign was abruptly halted in mid-June 1957 with a violent counterattack in the press. The repression was extremely severe—a few months ago Peking reportedly released some 110,000 people who had been detained since that time!

What is going on in China most closely resembles the opening of the Cultural Revolution. The "GPCR" was also supposed to be the "spontaneous" and "democratic" expression of mass anger against the bureaucracy which had entered upon the capitalist road. Indeed, its initial program in 1966 called for establishing a Paris Commune-type state. But it was actually a case of Mao enlisting the support of Lin Piao, and through him the guns of the PLA, to get the Chou/Peng/Teng group, who had kept him as a mere figurehead ever since the collapse of the Great Leap Forward.

The proof of the pudding that "wall poster democracy" is not free speech is the absence of oppositional posters. Who is defending the repression of the Tien An Men demonstration? Where is there a single poster defending the Gang of Four? That the wall-posters were acting on orders of the top leadership was so obvious that it inspired Russell Baker of the *New York Times* to write a hilarious column ending with the question: "Where do the wall posters come from?" Elsewhere on this page we reprint one of his imaginary (?) scenarios. And by the way, since the CP-ML is so crazy about the "Hundred Flowers" parallel, we challenge them to explain to their readers what happened when the Maoist bureaucracy decided to nip the flowers in the bud.

Cultural Revolution Revisited

One thing that both the Tien An Men

demonstrations and last month's burst of orchestrated "democracy" did show is that Teng actually enjoys a degree of genuine, although mainly negative, popularity. Probably the one truly spontaneous element in all the rigged shows of the last decade has been the deep-seated hatred of the capricious, vengeful and wantonly repressive Chiang Ch'ing crowd. When following the October 1976 palace coup Teng compared Chiang to the Empress Dowager, the label immediately stuck.

For years there have been endless books praising the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution—from the bucolic musings of Pennsylvania dirt farmer William Hinton to the "Third World" slumming of Swedish mod photographer Jan Myrdal to the aristocratic Parisian radical economist Charles Bettelheim. But at a time when virtually the entire left was enraptured by the Red Guards, we wrote:

"The Cultural Revolution was in its origins and its essence a faction fight between two wings of the Chinese bureaucracy.... It was in 1959 as a result of being saddled with the consequences of the Great Leap that Mao lost the chairmanship of the government to Liu and was allowed to hold only the largely honorific title of Party Chairman. The Cultural Revolution was Mao's successful recapturing of the Chinese state and the Army, which incidentally included the destruction of the CCP by the Red Guard Youth."

—"Chinese Menshevism,"
Spartacist No. 15-16, April-May 1970

Today our unique analysis of the "Cultural Revolution" is being confirmed by a number of recent accounts of life in China under the GPCR. Among them are two books by the Belgian Sinologist Simon Leys, *Chinese Shadows* and *The Chairman's New Clothes*. In his major work, *The Chairman's New Clothes*, Leys powerfully shows how Mao mobilized the army and youth against the party bureaucracy. The book begins with the following capsule summary:

"The 'Cultural Revolution' had nothing revolutionary about it except the name, and nothing cultural about it except the initial tactical pretext. It was a power struggle waged at the top between a handful of men and behind the smoke-screen of a fictitious mass movement."

—*The Chairman's New Clothes*

One of the most evocative sections of this book is the description of the deep hatred of the Chinese population toward the "Gang" and the rejoicing which broke out with the downfall of Chiang Ch'ing. Leys writes:

"Such a reaction was understandable: for the people, radical Maoism meant the substitution of an austere and fanatical political mysticism for the legitimate material, intellectual and emotional demands of human nature, the imposition of a permanent state of quasi-military mobilization, the ruthless destruction of all traditional values, an all-pervasive drabness of life, the creation of a cultural desert, universal bigotry, aridity and boredom, relieved only by periodic explosions of violence and hysterical activism. For the cadres, constantly exposed to criticism, harried, scared, worn out, Maoism meant permanent menace and uncertainty, continuous struggle, tension and insecurity, and they aspired to a stabler, safer and more conventional system of government."

—*Ibid.*

As one could expect from such a description, lacking a revolutionary perspective Leys is strongly sympathetic to Teng and the bureaucratic Old Guard. This is also the view of the Western press, which wants a stable Chinese component of the grand anti-Soviet alliance. Thus the glowing newspaper accounts of "Hyde Park on Tien An Men" involuntarily recall World War II coverage of Stalin's Russia. Teng the Chinese Stalinist hack par excellence is suddenly the liberalizer, the democrat, the pragmatist with a salty sense of humor and country boy ways. Of course—for Wall Street wants to do business with him, the State Department wants an anti-Soviet alliance and the Pentagon is talking of massive arms aid to the Chinese army.

All this American "good will" is

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actually an ominous threat to the working people of China, for the Chinese deformed workers state is far less stable than the USSR, and the threat of imperialist-inspired counter-revolution correspondingly greater. With all the musical chairs in the Kremlin following Stalin's death, Moscow never saw a military coup—which is how Lin Biao was deposed in 1970 and how Teng ousted the "Gang" in October 1976. Teng's rule will be more stable, but which way will the next coup go?

The plodding Russian bureaucracy awakens immense frustrations in the Soviet population with its irrationalities and heavy-handed rule. Yet it is not about to be overthrown because Pepsi Cola licenses a bottling plant or Chase Manhattan establishes a branch office on Karl Marx Square. But if the Russian degenerated workers state is still significantly behind the leading imperialist powers economically, the gap between "People's China" and its U.S. ally is immense. The concerns which move Washington to strike a deal with Peking amount to the constant imperialist desire to reverse the social conquests gained by the overthrow of capitalism on one-third of the globe. This counterrevolutionary drive threatens China as much as the Soviet Union, and only through proletarian political revolution, throwing out the entire bureaucracy—Tengs, Chiangs, Brezhnevs and all—can the threat be averted and the road opened to socialism on a world scale. ■

Teng's China...

(continued from page 9)

accepted normal trade credits on its imports. In 1976 China's deferred payments owed capitalist exporters totalled \$1.3 billion, equal to over 20 percent of its hard currency earnings that year (*Current History*, October 1978). However, standard trade credit granted by the exporting firm is generally short-term and for a quite limited amount. A "Great Leap Forward" in China's capital equipment imports requires very large, long-term bank loans.

This October Peking came out of the financial closet in a big rush. It borrowed \$4 billion from West German banks to improve its coal industry, then borrowed another \$2 billion from Japan's Export-Import Bank. According to the Western business press the sky is now the limit on Peking's borrowing. Japan's trade minister Toshio Komoto estimates that by 1985 China will spend \$350 billion on capital equipment imports (*Business Week*, 6 November)! This is an absolutely fantastic figure considering that China's total imports in 1977 were only \$5 billion. But the fact that a responsible Japanese economic official is even bandying about such astronomical figures indicates that Peking plans to increase its debt to imperialist bankers many, many times over.

The change in Stalinist China's economic relationship with the imperialist world is fundamentally dependent upon the change in its political/military relationship. It was Mao's anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism which laid the basis for Teng's access to international capital markets. If in the early 1960's the Chinese bureaucracy had wanted to stimulate economic growth through large-scale loans from the Rockefellers and Japanese *zaibatsu*,

it would not have been given the money. The Chinese Stalinists openly admit that anti-Sovietism was and is the ticket for "obtaining external assistance." Teng recently told Japanese Democratic Socialist Party leader Ryosaku Sasaki: "In 1972, through the Shanghai communiqué between the United States and China and through normalization of Chinese-Japanese relations we produced the conditions for obtaining external assistance."

— *New York Times*, 27 November

The large capitalist loans being granted to China today are in one sense blood money for Peking's support to U.S. imperialism against the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet Russian workers state.

Teng's program of placing China's economy "in the front ranks of the world" by the turn of the century through massive capital imports is in its own way no less utopian than Mao's claim at the beginning of the Great Leap Forward that China would catch up with the West in 15 years. While Peking's anti-Sovietism is a condition for its present large-scale borrowing from the imperialists, Japanese and German bankers are not giving money to China to build up its industrial-military strength. If the imperialist bankers do not grant unlimited credit to their own neo-colonies like Turkey, Zaire and Peru, they certainly will not do so for People's China, a non-capitalist, deformed workers state. The large loans now being granted the Chinese Stalinist bureaucrats are expected to be repaid on time at the going rate of interest.

If the scale of Peking's borrowing reported in the bourgeois press is approximately correct, China cannot repay this amount through expanded export earnings. *Business Week* (6 November) warns that Peking's capital goods spending program appears financially unsound:

"For a nation with less than \$5 billion in foreign reserves and a foreign trade last year less than that of Hong Kong (\$14.6 billion vs. \$21 billion), the lavish spending now envisaged... seems imprudent if not downright reckless."

In a few years' time in order to meet its rapidly increasing debt service, the Chinese government will have to severely cut back investment, workers' wages or peasants' incomes. Teng's capital spending spree may prove as damaging to China's economic development as Mao's communes or the "Gang of Four's" anti-import prejudice.

How a Stalinist regime can produce an economic disaster through an ambitious importing-cum-borrowing policy is well illustrated by Poland. Following violent worker revolts in 1970, the new Gierk regime simultaneously undertook a crash industrialization program while significantly raising both industrial wages and peasant incomes. This explosion of expenditure was financed with Western loans. Between 1972 and 1976 Poland ran a balance of trade deficit with the advanced capitalist countries of \$7 billion and racked up over \$10 billion in debt to the imperialist states and bankers (*Economist*, 18 December 1976). It is estimated that this year about one half of Poland's hard currency earnings will go to pay interest and amortization on its foreign debt.

In order to meet its increasing debt service, in 1976 the Gierk regime attempted to extract a greater surplus from the workers by sharply raising consumer prices. This led to riots and strikes and the price increases were

rescinded. Since then Poland's investment plans have been scaled down, the official price freeze has led to an ever-widening black market and the regime is under continual pressure to impose a severe austerity program.

Teng's economic strategy looks rather like Gierk's in the early 1970's and could lead to even worse consequences. In meeting its foreign debt Poland has an asset that China does not. To preserve social peace in its important East European satellite, the Soviet Union is willing to subsidize the debt-ridden Polish economy.

The Stalinist doctrine of "socialist modernization in one country" must generate utopian programs of one sort or another. Neither Mao's backyard steel furnaces nor Teng's deals with the Japanese *zaibatsu* will enable China to make the great leap forward to the economic level of the advanced capitalist world. Certainly a revolutionary workers government basing itself on soviet democracy could secure a higher rate of economic growth than has the oppressive, corrupt and reckless Maoist bureaucracy. However, the fundamental transformation of China into a modern industrial society requires proletarian political revolution at home and socialist revolutions in the imperialist centers in order to establish globally integrated socialist economic planning. ■

Tupelo...

(continued from page 3)

for Evers and his Democratic Party. Yet that is the lesson of the civil rights movement: either the labor movement or the Democratic Party and defeat. It is even more obvious today when the basis for a liberal *mass* movement does not exist.

The Tupelo boycott has been praised to the skies by the left, particularly by the various Maoist groupings. But they never mention the Evers connection or the Democratic Party maneuverings. The Maoists of the CP-ML (formerly October League), in fact, have found ideological "strength" in the fundamental weakness of Tupelo's consumer boycott, estrangement from the labor movement, localism and rural setting. For these reformists, it is a basis for justification of their notion—borrowed from the Communist Party of the 1930's—that the South is a "black belt" needing national self-determination. Robinson says, "We talk about jobs but, to me, the land should be number one. Without having a place to set on, without any capital, we are just waste material" (*Southern Struggle*, September-October 1978). "Forty acres and a mule" may have been a progressive demand in 1865, but it bears little relation to real needs of the black masses today.

Mississippi still has the lowest per capita income in the nation, although in Carter's "New" South even Tupelo has seen some industrial development in recent years as companies seek cheaper

non-unionized workers. But the problems of Tupelo blacks cannot—and need not—be solved in the narrow framework of rural northern Mississippi. Next door is Memphis, which was recently rocked by a firemen's strike and ten years ago by the militant garbage-men's strike. Across the river in Louisiana are new auto plants of the Big Three, ripe for unionization. What is required is a strong and united, South-wide trade-union organizing drive as the basis of a fight for jobs and better conditions for blacks and poor whites. But it is precisely reactionaries like Evers—supported by Robinson and the UL—who most strongly oppose unions and hope to build the "New" South in a union-free environment.

The trade-union bureaucracy has largely ignored the fight to unionize the South, withholding its vast resources from a militant, all-out organizing effort. Instead it has favored northern-based consumer boycotts like that of J.P. Stevens or upper-echelon negotiations like the UAW's just concluded deal with General Motors to hire UAW workers first when it builds new plants in the South.

The development of a militant, integrated union movement can break the stranglehold of the Mississippi capitalists and their Democratic Party politicians. As part of that development labor must aggressively champion the democratic rights of black people and defend them against racist attack. Not long ago when the Nazis threatened to march in Skokie, Illinois, the home of thousands of Jewish concentration camp survivors, the labor movement responded by preparing to mobilize its ranks in protest. If Tupelo becomes a Skokie of the South, then the labor movement must go there and crush those hooded vigilantes on the streets. ■

ILWU...

(continued from page 2)

Mandel told *WV*:

"We didn't do as well as we had hoped. At the same time, during the campaign, we found substantial interest in our program. Recognizing from the IBT strike that the unemployed can be recruited as scabs unless the unions fight for jobs for all, our call for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to provide jobs for all gained more currency. In light of Carter's strike-breaking attacks on the miners, postal workers and railway workers, many members have also come to question the union's ties to the capitalist parties. Militants were particularly receptive to our proposals for strike tactics against government injunctions and police attacks.

"We have won a solid victory in turning back the leadership's attempts to throw us off the union's Executive Board, and we look toward the future with confidence. The key task for us now is to consolidate around us those militants who rallied to our support and prepare the ILWU for a real counteroffensive, in conjunction with Teamster warehousemen, against the union-busting tactics we saw in the supermarket strike and which the bosses are now aiming at us." ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Where Do Wall Posters Come From, Anyway?

Mao Cult "Rectified"

It was over before you could blink an eye. But China's carefully orchestrated "campaign for democracy" had a tremendous impact on the West. To hear the English-speaking press tell it, the last two weeks in November had been "Hyde Park on the Tien An Men." Peking's street-corner soap-boxers were advocating free speech and demanding secret-ballot elections. Wall posters (the famous *dazibao*) were taking on China's newest evil "whateverism"—those who took "whatever" Mao said as the gospel. Meanwhile, thousands of street demonstrators chanted "Long Live Teng Hsiao-p'ing and Hua Kuo-feng" but never once mentioned the Great Helmsman's name. And a 62-page wall poster, the "Manifesto of Human Rights" signed by the so-called "Democratic Forum" group of Kweichow Province declared life was better in the U.S. The U.S. imperialist press was positively rhapsodic.

"You are witnessing the greatest event in the People's Republic," *Newsweek* (11 December) quoted a street demonstrator explaining things to a foreign journalist. "Great Democratic Debate Sweeps China," echoed the newspaper of Teng's American followers. But what did it all mean? Theories were churned out in the press as fast as the analysts could think them up—almost all of them wrong. For some it was Moscow 1956 and de-Stalinization all over again. For others it was a replay of the Hundred Flowers campaign. Most incongruous of all were the versions that had the durable old Stalinist hack Teng Hsiao-p'ing cast as China's Dubček.

But for all the prattling about China's "experiment in free speech," all the Pekingologists had to agree that the "spontaneous" outpouring had been turned on and off like a spigot by none other than Teng himself. From its November 15 opening to its abrupt closing ten days later, the entire show with its well-spaced radio spots, newspaper articles, wall posters and soap-box rallies could not have been carried out without the approval of the top levels of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The closest parallel, though few made it, was to the Cultural Revolution itself. Teng was not adverse to borrowing a few pages from the "Little Red Books" of those who twice purged him as a "capitalist roader." So with wall posters and obscure literary criticism, "spontaneous" demonstrations and secret "big party meetings," Teng declared war on his clique enemies in the Chinese bureaucracy, those who had stood in the way of his second rehabilitation or threatened his status as the de facto strongman of the Forbidden City.

And then he called it off. But unlike Mao, the cautious Teng did not wait until the masses began to look like they might really "storm the headquarters" or economic chaos threatened the regime with collapse. As soon as his limited purpose was achieved, the wily "deputy" prime minister/"deputy" party chairman waived his baton and "Chinese democracy" was no more. When the posters came down, Hua was left as a

figurehead, but his few remaining allies left over from Mao's last days were either gone or about to disappear.

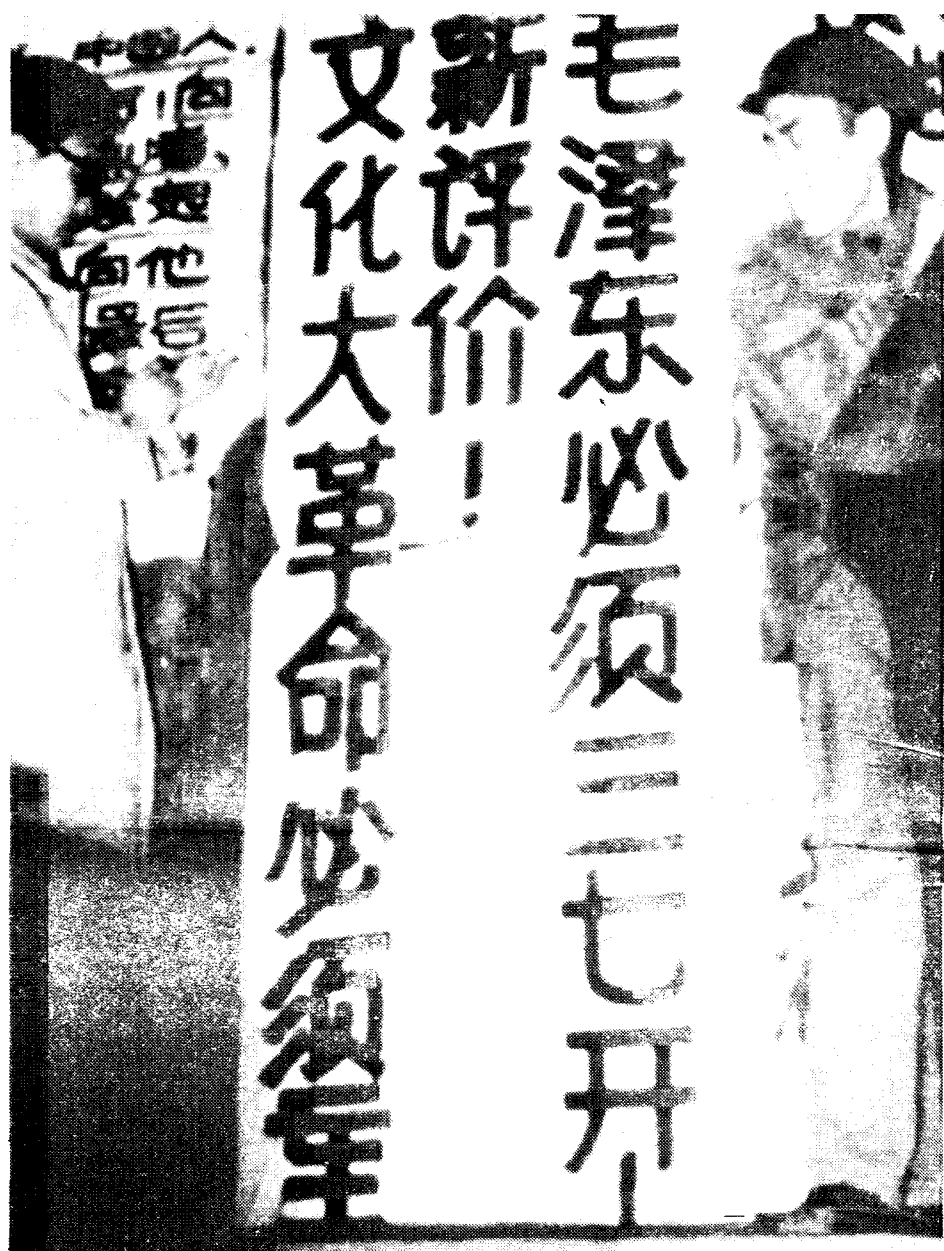
The attention of the press has focused not so much on Teng's consolidation of power, but on the appearance of open criticisms of Mao, long a sacrosanct figure in the CCP pantheon. The leading U.S. journalist-China watcher, Hong Kong-based Fox Butterfield, sees the present campaign as Teng's attempt to "Settle a Score with Mao" (*New York Times Magazine*, 10 December). And the Socialist Workers Party entitled the front-page story in its 4 December *Intercontinental Press*, "The Mao Cult Begins to Shatter." This is pure impressionism. While Mao will be transformed back from an idol into a mortal "seventy-thirty man" ("70 percent right and 30 percent wrong"), and Teng may now praise practice as "the supreme criterion of truth," there will be no burial of the Mao cult. The present bureaucratic ruling clique in Peking is the heir of Mao no less than the deposed "Gang of Four." Thus when the recent criticisms of Mao's "mistakes" threatened to get out of bounds, they were abruptly stopped by Teng.

Gang of Five

For some time Teng has been putting the finishing touches on the close of the Cultural Revolution. In late October the Red Guards were formally abolished, and a few weeks later it was announced that the policy of relocating urban youth to the countryside had earlier been substantially cut back. The short-lived "campaign for democracy" was launched on November 15. Ironically, to dot the i's and cross the t's of the Maoist Old Guard's epitaph for the Cultural Revolution, it ended as it had begun. Thus the article in the Peking *Kwangming Jih Pao* on that date carried a virulent attack on the writings of Yao Wen-yuan, the Gang of Four member whose 1965 article attacking then-Peking mayor P'eng Chen signaled the start of the Cultural Revolution. The original article, said Teng's mouthpiece, was "a reactionary signal to practice fascist dictatorship."

The article went on to announce the decision of the Central Committee reversing the official verdict on the April 1976 Tien An Men incident when 100,000 mourners of late premier Chou En-lai clashed with troops under the orders of the Gang of Four. As a result a CC plenum, under the personal direction of the ailing Mao, decided to strip Teng (whose supporters had organized the demonstration) of all party posts and to promote Hua Kuo-feng to the post of prime minister. The article announced that the Tien An Men incident would henceforth be considered "completely revolutionary" and all those who were persecuted for "honoring the memory of Premier Chou" would be rehabilitated.

A few days after the article was published the wall posters went up. They were remarkable—for the first time in China Mao was publicly linked to the Gang of Four. The posters



Wall poster proclaims Chairman Mao 30% off.

charged that Mao had been out of touch with reality in his final years, that during the fateful decision concerning Tien An Men he had been under the thumb of a "family-style fascist dictatorship." The first of the new wall posters, an extensive 14-page treatise, declared "Chairman Mao, because his thinking was metaphysical thinking during his old age and for all kinds of other reasons, supported the Gang of Four in raising their hands to strike down Comrade Teng Hsiao-p'ing."

Following these spectacular events came a scant two weeks of the "campaign for democracy." On November 19, for instance, Hsinhua, the official Chinese press agency, announced that 388 people arrested after Tien An Men had been exonerated and rehabilitated. There was soapboxing calling for free speech. Wall posters went from criticizing Mao to demanding democracy. On November 25 thousands marched in Tien An Men Square chanting "Long Live Democracy" and "Down with Feudalistic Fascism."

The posters had shattered the quarter-of-a-century myth of Mao's infallibility, accusing the Great Helmsman of making "mistakes" during the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward, in specific. The *New York Times* (28 November) reported Teng's

interview with anti-communist American journalist Robert Novak: "Asked about one wall poster that said Mao had been 70 percent right and 30 percent wrong, which was how Mao used to appraise Stalin, Teng responded, 'I myself am only 60-40.'" He added: "Every Chinese knows that without Chairman Mao there would have been no new China."

Suddenly it was all over. On November 27 Novak reported that Teng said he and Hua had "always been in complete agreement over everything." He wasn't after Hua's job as premier: "I turned down that job when I was 73 and I have no intention of taking it at 75." By November 29 soap-box speakers were calling for "democracy with discipline." The next day a scheduled rally was small and disorganized because expected party leaders did not show up. Wall posters praised Mao as the "Lenin of the Present Day" and warned that if the "bad eggs" continued to attack Mao's legacy, someone would "smash your dog heads."

De-Maoization of China?

Many have seen a precedent for this wave of officially-sponsored attacks on the cult of Mao in the 1956 Soviet de-

continued on page 14