

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

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Our Views on the Nicaraguan Elections

In July 1979, the poor and trampled people of Nicaragua overthrew the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship. With this revolution they took the first steps towards a new life. They stood up to everything the U.S. bully threw against them. They fanned the fire of struggle across Central America.

Ten years later, on February 25, the Sandinistas lost the elections to the US-backed, pro-contra opposition candidate Violeta Chamorro, 55% to 40%. Bush, the politicians in Washington, and the capitalist news media are ecstatic. They are proclaiming a great victory for "democracy." But there is little joy among the working people of Nicaragua, who are bracing themselves for hard days to come. So what is going on here? Why did Chamorro win?

Chamorro won for two reasons. First was massive US pressure on the people to vote for her. And second was the Sandinista policy of giving away the gains of the revolution in order to win over the rich.

Bleeding the people

The Nicaraguan people have lost proportionally more people to the US-backed contra war than the US lost in World War II and Viet Nam combined. They have suffered tremendous economic hardship from the US economic blockade. Bush made it clear that if the Nicaraguan people voted for Chamorro he would call off the contra war and lift the economic blockade. If they voted for Ortega, these would continue. A sizable section of the people in Nicaragua voted for Chamorro as a result of this blackmail.

Failure of Sandinista policy

And there is another factor, and that is the policies of the Sandinistas themselves. Contrary to George Bush, the Sandinista leaders really aren't communists. They do not believe that the working masses should rule or control the economy. The Sandinistas instead wanted to balance between the working people and the wealthy entrepreneurs and landlords.

When Somoza fell, the Sandinistas could have called for a government of the working masses. Instead they entered a coalition government with Violeta Chamorro, Robelo, and some other capitalist figures who had fallen out with deposed Somoza dictatorship. To keep the capitalists happy,

they sent troops to stop the workers and peasants from seizing control of the factories of the capitalists and land needed by the peasants. They shut down *El Pueblo*, the third largest paper in the country, which was put out by the actual communists of MAP(ML). But still Chamorro and Robelo were not happy. So the coalition government fell apart, and Chamorro worked with Reagan and the CIA as the "democratic" front for Reagan's contra war on Nicaragua.

While the Sandinistas did wage a military battle against the contras, they tried to buy peace by selling off the revolution piece by piece to Reagan and the Nicaraguan capitalists. But each time they gave up something Reagan, Bush and the contra leaders demanded more.

They preserved the old Sandinista labor code to reassure the capitalists, and called them the "patriotic" capitalists. But these patriots of exploitation "decapitalized" the factories anyway and sabotaged production. So the Sandinistas offered them more subsidies and "incentives", much

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of which promptly found its way to the Miami exile community.

The revolution was step by step dismantled. The popular reforms were undermined. The workers and peasants were called on to sacrifice again and again. This could only be endured if the whole country bore the sacrifice, and if the resources were really used to help production and self-defense. But the masses could see the subsidies given to the rich, the increasing stagnation of production, and the cars and comfortable dwellings given to the new Sandinista officialdom. Meanwhile free medical care and educational improvements and other fruits of the revolution were taken away. Wages were controlled while prices soared.

The workers and peasants were disorganized and disarmed. When it came to elections, whether this year's or the previous ones, the Sandinistas only carried them out as a concession to the right-wing, instead of using them to give a voice to the workers and peasants. The working masses and their rights were given a back seat to the negotiations between the Sandinistas and the reactionaries.

And so, over the years, the working masses were worn out and grew discouraged, while the Sandinistas drew closer and closer to the right-wing. Even if the Sandinistas had won the February 25 elections, there was talk in the air of a deal with Chamorro and another attempt at bringing her and other right-wing figures into the government.

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The time will come when the Nicaraguan toilers have their say

The tragedy of Nicaragua was the toilers, who grew restless and discontented with the Sandinista policy, did not rise en masse to get organized. They became cynical, but not active. This has let the dance of Sandinistas with the right-wing take center stage.

But the passivity of the toilers will not last forever. There is already a conscious section that has continued to stand in favor of class struggle and class organization throughout the 80s. In the middle of this section is the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua, formerly called MAP(ML).

The time will come when the Nicaraguan toilers will have their say. Let us ensure that the militant workers, youth, and activists in the U.S. are ready to render them support. We must keep up the struggle against U.S. imperialism's dirty role in Nicaragua, and we must give support for the Nicaraguan class struggle! ■

What now for Nicaragua?

The elections of February 25 mark the end of the revolutionary wave that began with the overthrow of Somoza. A harsh period is to come, in which the right-wing takes its revenge and the masses are squeezed to repay the bourgeoisie for the inconvenience it suffered in suppressing the revolution. The liberation movement in Nicaragua is not dead, but it can only rebound in a new form.

For now, everyone has questions: What will happen to the lands the peasants seized from the big land owners? What protection will the peasants have from the contras and other armed gangs of the owners? What will happen to the workers in the state enterprises that UNO wants to dismantle? What about the remaining health care, education and other reforms that the right wing has no use for?

The question is, who will stand up for the concerns of the masses? Where is the force that will raise the banner of class struggle?

Junior partners?

The Sandinistas? Even now, the Sandinistas are still pursuing the path of coming to a deal with the right-wing. Indeed, for the time being it looks like some type of compromise may well take place. The Sandinistas could not get the right-wing to accept the position of junior partner, and now they are asking for the position of junior partner to the right-wing. They are trying to establish a niche as the loyal opposition.

To accomplish this, the FSLN leaders are trying to

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What does the setback in Nicaragua mean for Central America?

The real shame of the February 25 elections would be if we failed to learn from them. But what are the lessons?

There are some who say that revolution has failed, and so the people must go all out to make a deal with the right-wing, whether in Nicaragua or El Salvador or elsewhere. But it was precisely years of such deals that resulted in the victory of Chamorro. Not revolution, but the policy of wheeling and dealing with the right-wing is responsible for this fiasco.

The Sandinistas believed that they had the workers and peasants in the bag, so they could concentrate on conciliating the right-wing. But you can't turn a mass movement on and off at will. Any revolutionary organization worthy of the name must pay constant attention to encouraging the initiative and organization of the workers and peasants. It must more and more merge with the masses, and not take them for granted.

February 25 also shows that the Bush is not going to let up in the war against Central America. Despite years of Arias peace plan maneuvers, the contras were still around during the voting, and haven't disbanded yet. And only the victory of Chamorro convinced Bush that the

elections were fair.

February 25 shows that Congress, as well as Bush, is a bitter enemy of all progress in Central America. Democratic congressmen joined with Republican warmongers to join in a chorus of praise for the Nicaraguan right-wing, and to debate among themselves who had the honor of strangling the Nicaraguan revolution. Ever since the Arias plan began, the demonstrations against U.S. intervention have dwindled to almost nothing, in order not to embarrass the Democrats. Let this policy be banished, never to return.

The lesson of February 25 is that only the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants can bring progress to Central America. Let us build solidarity with the insurgent workers and peasants in Central America! This is the force that is shaking the ground under the rulers in El Salvador and Guatemala. This is the force in Nicaragua that today faces a difficult struggle against the U.S.-organized Chamorro government! This is the force that bears the burden of exploitation from imperialism and the local exploiters, and it is the force that is destined to overturn the old world of injustice and tyranny. ■

That was some election campaign!

The Sandinista election campaign left even some of their most ardent boosters in the solidarity movement shaking their heads. Many felt uncomfortable with Daniel Ortega trying to out-glitz the made-in-America competition. They noted that the FSLN neglected the rank-and-file in favor of Madison Avenue hype and sex appeal.

But the problem goes much deeper than election tactics. The elections showed how far the FSLN had become privileged and bureaucratic, how divorced from the workers and peasants. It was just a symptom of years of smothering the revolutionary initiative of the worker and small farmer.

The draft

Take the question of the military draft. It was a real grievance among the people. The right wing played on this grievance, and UNO promised to abolish the draft if elected.

The FSLN was too arrogant with power to see what was going on. It said nothing definite about the draft, which they have looked on as a military necessity.

Was the draft really necessary? In fact, there have been no lack of men and women willing to fight the CIA's mercenaries. In the early days of the revolution they poured into the factory and village militias. To this day, the peasants in the war zones still raise cries for arms to defend themselves.

But the armed workers and peasants scared the capitalists and landlords to death, and the FSLN wanted above all a deal with them. The disarming of the people was a top demand of the right-wing and its U.S. sponsors. So the FSLN disbanded the militias and staked everything on a regular army organized on the usual bureaucratic pattern. Last year even the peasants in war zones had their weapons taken away.

But the regular army called for conscription, which cost the FSLN dearly in support. Most importantly, the Sandinistas undermined the mobilization of the working people and their confidence in their revolutionary ability.

Land reform

Or take the grievances of the small farmers. To meet their demands meant stepping on the toes of the wealthy farmers and landowners. It meant shifting state subsidies away from the rich and carrying through the promised agrarian reform.

But what happened? The capitalist opposition raged against the land reform. And the FSLN slowed it way down, and finally called a final halt to it over a year ago.

With the initiative of the working people frustrated and broken, the FSLN had nothing to offer but vague promises, T-shirts and caps. ■

What now in Nicaragua?

Continued from page two

convince Chamorro and UNO of the usefulness of dealing with them. As Carlos Carrion, a FSLN leader, put it, the Sandinista Front is the only force that can "guarantee political stability even as an opposition." (*Barricada*, Feb.27) Guardians of stability, order, and reconciliation—this is how the FSLN would like their role to be under the Chamorro government. Militant words to the masses, and assurances to the capitalist rulers

At this time, Violeta Chamorro's advisors like Alfredor Cesar (and Jimmy Carter) are also pushing for a deal. They think that good working relations with the FSLN are needed to stabilize the new capitalist regime.

The flirtation may or may not last. The UNO coalition itself may splinter. Surely some UNO leaders and contra commanders will just be waiting for the OK from Washington for a crackdown to settle old scores. Some may even go it on their own. But for now UNO-FSLN "understanding" is in the air.

The Marxist-Leninists call for class solidarity

The working class party, the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua, has another view of what should be done. It has called on the masses to prepare for struggle. It calls for class solidarity to protect the gains won during the years of revolution. It appeals against surrendering weapons and for the reorganization of worker and peasant militias.

The MLPN communique also deals with economic issues.

It demands linking wages to the cost of living as protection from the hyperinflation. It also calls for struggle against any lay offs from the factories and offices.

Throughout the past decade, the MLPN has worked perseveringly to organize the workers at the factories, the masses in the communities, and the poor peasants in the fields. It has revived the working class press, after its initial suppression by the Sandinistas. It has led the Frente Obrero to forward the workers' interests, and it has developed Committees of Struggle among the masses. This gives it experience in the struggle to organize the working masses in their own rights.

The main thing

The working people of Nicaragua face a stiff fight. The main thing is that they no longer bear the injustices passively, but convert dissatisfaction into struggle and organization. This is not an easy task.

But it was not an easy task to overthrow Somoza either, and the Nicaraguan workers and peasants accomplished that. It was not an easy task to frustrate for a whole decade the dirty war backed by the huge American super-power, and the Nicaraguans accomplished that too. The Nicaraguan masses have not yet accomplished independent class organization against the capitalists. This is why the Feb. 25 elections had such a dreary outcome. But in the 90's, this is the task that they face. Let those beware, whose profits depend on keeping the Nicaraguan workers and peasants disorganized. ■

Resolutions for the National Clinic Defense Conference Detroit--March 1990

Proposed by the Detroit Branch of
the Marxist-Leninist Party

Combat the Right-wing Anti-abortion Movement

Whereas:

1) The right-wing "pro-life" movement has come into being to attack the abortion rights of working and poor women. It has been encouraged by the Reagan and Bush governments, and by the Carter Administration before that.

2) "Right-to-life" organizations have bombed abortion clinics, blockaded the clinics, and driven women away with pickets, intimidation, and lies. They have also gotten the support of the Supreme Court in a drive to overturn and restrict abortion-rights laws, on the road to outlawing abortions outright.

3) These reactionary groups seek to draw ordinary people into their movement through lying appeals to unreasoning passions about "life" and religion. Their aim is not only to create foot soldiers against abortion rights. They also seek to use the anti-abortion movement as a bridge to drag people into other right-wing causes—such as a general crusade against the rights and conditions of

working women and support for imperialist wars, racism, and attacks on the workers and poor.

4) The militant clinic defenses and the other mass protests by pro-choice forces have dealt harsh blows to the right-wing anti-abortion movement. They have suffered some setbacks, and their leaders complain about demoralization in their own ranks.

5) Nevertheless, the right-wing anti-abortion movement is based on and supported by sections of the capitalist class, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, the "moral majority" bigots, and the government. This reactionary movement will not simply fade away, it must be defeated by a militant movement of the masses. In state after state it continues to introduce bills restricting abortion rights, which are passed in some cases. It continues to receive wide promotion in the capitalist media. And in one form or another it continues its efforts to intimidate and harass working and poor women.

Therefore, this clinic defense conference resolves to combat the right-wing anti-abortion movement in every way.

1) To continue the militant defense of abortion clinics. By relying on our own efforts to shove aside the anti-abortion crusaders when they blockade clinics. And even in those cases where the "right-to-life" bigots are unable to mount blockades by confronting them whenever possible with militant tactics such as picket lines, slogan shouting, and denunciations of their reactionary anti-women, racist, pro-war and pro-capitalist character.

2) To take initiative to also confront the right-wing anti-abortion movement away from the clinics through mass protests against such things as "pro-life" fake clinics, against their major capitalist backers like Tom Monaghan, against major "pro-life" figures and "pro-life" headquarters and meeting places.

3) To conduct vigorous leafleting, meetings, discussions and other agitation to expose the "right-to-life" demagoguery and the reactionary aims of the anti-abortion movement. And also to target and expose its basis in sections of the capitalist class, "moral majority" and Catholic church leaders, and the Bush government.

Mobilize the Working Masses

Whereas:

1) The crusade against abortion rights is most of all an attack on the working class and poor masses. Many states have already banned publicly-funded abortions, such as

those through Medicaid. It is poor and working women who have suffered this attack. As well, many of the other legal restrictions being put on abortions greatly increase the costs of the procedures, costs that the working masses can hardly afford. If abortions are completely banned, the rich will still find ways to get safe abortions. But the working class and poor will be forced back into the dangers of death and mutilation through back-alley abortions.

2) The anti-abortion crusade is part of the general assault on poor and working class women. The Federal government has cut social benefit programs to the bone—such as child care, health care, housing and welfare. The turn to "workfare" aims at creating a super-cheap labor force out of a section of poor women. The capitalists are also carrying out a concessions drive to cut pay, health insurance and other benefits. Meanwhile, they are forcing women workers into the lowest-paid industries, rotten part-time work, and unequal pay. And they are confronting women workers with injurious speed up, discrimination and sexual harassment.

3) The working masses provide an essential basis and backbone for the pro-choice movement. They are the most harmed by the right-wing anti-abortion crusade. And they have the most interest in a fight against the capitalists and the government, who stand behind the anti-abortion crusade.

4) But while many working women already sympathize with the pro-choice struggle, and some have become active in it, the trade union leaders are standing in the way of bringing the masses of working people into the movement. The union bureaucrats in this country are notorious for their pro-capitalist stands, their corruption, and their sellout of the working masses. The AFL-CIO Executive Council has not yet even adopted a pro-choice position. And individual union leaders who do claim to be pro-choice have done little or nothing to fight for abortion rights. As a whole, the union bureaucracy is obstructing the fight for abortion rights.

5) Consequently, mobilizing the working people into the pro-choice movement cannot be made into a matter of linking up with the union bureaucrats and other such reformist "leaders" who are tied to the Democratic Party. Rather, it requires going directly to the masses themselves, organizing them to take up their fight, and encouraging them to defy the obstructions of their "official" leaders.

Therefore, this clinic defense conference resolves:

1) To go all out to mobilize the working class into the pro-choice movement.

2) To actively combat the anti-abortion bigots at the factories and other work places. And to draw working

people out of the work places into clinic defenses and other pro-choice actions. Every appropriate means should be used such as leafleting, postering, and sticker campaigns. As well, leafleting campaigns should be conducted in working class neighborhoods, including communities surrounding abortion clinics where confrontations take place, and in various schools.

3) Besides work to draw working people into clinic defenses, to also organize other pro-choice actions at times when working people are more likely to be able to attend. And to hold pro-choice demonstrations in working class neighborhoods.

4) To carry out leafleting, meetings, discussions and so forth against other attacks on working class and poor women and to actively support their struggles. To work to link the pro-choice struggle together with these other struggles to draw together a general movement in defense of the rights and conditions of working class women.

Build the Movement Independently from the Republican and Democratic Parties

Whereas:

1) The Republican Party has been one of the key founders and staunchest defenders of the right-wing anti-abortion movement. It has denounced abortion rights as part of its official program. In the states, it is usually the Republicans who have sponsored most anti-abortion legislation. In Washington, the Republican administrations of Reagan and Bush have spearheaded anti-abortion laws and pushed the Supreme Court to an anti-abortion stance. Meanwhile, both Reagan and Bush have directly addressed "right-to-life" rallies to encourage the building up of the right-wing movement. This has been part of their over-all offensive of cut backs, right-wing "morality," and racism that have brought special harm to working class and poor women.

2) Democratic President Jimmy Carter was an opponent of abortions. Under his administration the Hyde Amendment was passed. This banned Federally-funded abortions for poor and working women. And it gave a green light to the right-wing anti-abortion movement.

For years following that the Democratic Party hardly uttered a peep in support of abortion rights. It passively allowed the Reaganites a free hand to build up the anti-abortion crusade. And the House of Representatives, with its heavy Democratic Party majorities, was for years on end the most anti-abortion chamber of Congress. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party has supported other attacks on

poor and working women, even authoring some legislation like "workfare."

Only recently, after the masses have come out in protests and militant clinic defenses, have some Democrats begun again to posture about abortion rights. But even those Democrats (and a few Republicans) who have made noise against the anti-abortion crusade have supported the cutbacks on social programs and other attacks on poor and working women. And on the whole the Democrats have proved quite reluctant to fight for abortion rights, mainly concerning themselves in an effort to win votes. The Democrats are capitalist politicians, just like the Republicans. They are no champions of women's rights.

3) The pro-choice movement cannot be built up by relying on the Democrats or Republicans. Nor can it grow strong on the basis of linking up with the union bureaucrats, "respectable" black leaders, and other reformists who are tied to the capitalist parties. Rather it must be built by going directly to the masses and organizing them independently from the Democrats and Republicans and their hangers-on. It should put out its own leaflets and statements that combat the official news media, a media that promotes the anti-abortion movement and is subservient to the capitalist parties. It should unite the masses into militant organizations. And it must continue to launch militant mass actions.

Therefore, this clinic defense conference resolves:

1) To build up the pro-choice movement independently from the capitalist politicians, the union bureaucrats, and reformist bigwigs.

2) To condemn all attacks on the movement from the Republicans and Democrats, and to speak openly to the masses of supporters of women's rights about the real role of the capitalist parties.

3) To strengthen the confidence of the clinic defenders and women's rights activists in their own ability to appeal to the working majority of this country, and to raise their consciousness of the damage done to the movement by the shackles that the bourgeois politicians would put on it.

Oppose the Sabotaging Role of the Leadership of NOW

Whereas:

1) The National Organization for Women (NOW), while having many members who are ordinary people, is led and dominated by well-off women. Their aim is to get into the

corporate board rooms, the halls of government, and the union bureaucracies. It is for this reason that they want to keep the women's movement "respectable," and to limit it to mainly the narrow concerns of well-off women. Thus, for example, they campaign for pregnancy leave, but without pay. They forget about the needs of working class women, and sell them out in the interests of women from the upper crust.

While NOW's activities differ in various cities depending on the level of the movement, they were formed as a liberal bourgeois women's organization nationally, and remain so today. The following characterization of the NOW leaders reflects the experience of the clinic defense movement in a number of cities across the country.

2) The NOW leadership has tried to tone down the clinic defenses and turn them into passive escort services for patients. They have opposed the shouting of militant slogans, and raising banners and placards, which give a conscious political character to the actions against "right-to-life" and Bush's anti-abortion crusade. They are opposed to militant action because they want to show the capitalist ruling class that they can hold in bounds the militancy and anti-establishment class feelings of the poor and working masses.

3) The NOW leadership calls on the pro-choice movement to give up its own actions and, instead, become a cheering squad for the police. It is even pioneering in the use of reactionary laws like RICO against demonstrations, in the name of fighting anti-abortion fanatics. But calling for reliance on the police whitewashes the police harassment of pro-choice activists and clinic patients, and covers up for the police's kid-glove treatment of the anti-abortion fanatics. It is undermining to the militant movement.

4) The NOW leadership calls for leaving "Operation Rescue" and other "right-to-life" organizations to do their dirty work unopposed. NOW leaders have instructed activists in the movement to "ignore," "don't respond," and even "avoid eye contact" with the right-wing anti-abortion fanatics who are attempting to close down the clinics through brute force, lies and harassment of female patients. Refusing to stand up to the right-wing movement only encourages it. If this orientation were followed it would be the death of the pro-choice movement.

5) The NOW leadership embraces the "pro-choice" politicians in the Democratic and Republican Parties alike. They organize rallies—not to march through the streets and demand women's rights—only to draw the activists to quietly sit at the feet of capitalist politicians and government bureaucrats. These politicians are more interested in saving their own political careers—careers built on oppressing working and poor people at home and abroad—than in fighting for the right to choose.

6) The NOW leadership is calling for an alliance with population control forces like Zero Population Growth (ZPG). ZPG is a racist and anti-working class outfit. It has supported forced sterilization, claiming it is in the best interests of poor women. And it demands that government force be used to restrict how many children the masses may have, claiming poverty is due to "over-population" instead of capitalist exploitation.

The fact that NOW leaders seek allies with such as these, reflects their own bourgeois prejudice against the victims of poverty and the peoples of color. For example, NOW leaders have argued for Medicaid-funded abortions by claiming there would be too many poor without it.

7) The fact that the leadership of NOW, and other bourgeois women's organizations such as NARAL and Planned Parenthood, has publicly condemned militant clinic actions and issued statements denouncing those involved in them, means that it is necessary for clinic defenders and women's rights activists to respond. Since no self-respecting movement can allow such smears and slurs to go unanswered, the issues raised by NOW leaders must be aired and answered in full view of the whole country.

Therefore, this clinic defense conference resolves:

1) To condemn the political orientation and reformist tactics of the bourgeois leadership of NOW. It is not a matter that the NOW leaders are fighting in their way and we in ours. Rather, the path advocated by NOW is playing a harmful, undermining role in the entire pro-choice movement.

2) To actively oppose through leaflets, meetings, discussion and other agitation—the sabotaging tactics of the NOW leaders and expose that the reason for NOW's tactics lies in its bourgeois political orientation.

3) To draw activists who belong to NOW, but are serious about fighting for a woman's right to choose, into clinic defenses and other progressive actions.

4) At the same time, to take part in demonstrations called by NOW if they have a mass character. However, the purpose of such participation should not be to build up this pro-capitalist, bourgeois women's trend. Rather, participation in NOW actions should be carried out on an independent political basis, without abandoning criticism of NOW's bourgeois orientation and tactics.

5) To encourage the development of a working women's movement, which would be based on the participation and interests of the working majority as opposed to NOW, which is based on the aims and interests of well-off women. ■

Militant words, but a lack of faith in independent struggle On RWL's proposed resolutions for the Detroit clinic defense conference

We hope that the national clinic defense conference will provide a chance for discussion between activists from different areas. To contribute to this discussion, the Detroit Branch of the MLP has written some proposed resolutions for this conference (see pages 4-7).

Earlier, in the March 1 *Workers' Advocate* we expressed our concerns about the orientation being put forward by those organizing the conference. Since then the Revolutionary Workers' League (RWL), which is the main organization promoting the conference, has put forward its proposed resolutions (dated March 11). These include a proposed "*principles of unity and founding statement for the national women's rights organizing committee*" and several additional resolutions. We think that these resolutions show the serious problems that we were talking about.

The RWL takes part in pro-choice actions and in organizing pro-choice committees. But it is a reformist organization based on the trotskyst ideology. It denounces capitalism in general, denounces the capitalist parties a bit, puts forward long, long lists of good things, etc. But it longs to link up with the present-day unions, reformist-led women's organizations, and other reformist organizations. This prevents it from orienting the pro-choice movement towards the path of independent political activity. This even prevents it from proposing such an elementary step as that the conference reply directly to NOW's open attacks on clinic defense and clinic defenders. This prevents it from dealing with many of key tasks needed today to really link up the clinic defense movement with the working masses. And this makes the socialist phrases in its resolutions turn, in practice, into a whitewash of what one can expect from the present-day union structures and the left-liberal section of the Democratic Party. All these good things it talks about, from militancy in clinic defense to even a "workers' government" and freeing health care from the "profit system", are to be accomplished by linking with the very pro-establishment forces that influence the masses.

List-ism

RWL's proposed "principles of unity" for a national organization consist solely of a list of dozens of demands. Instead of dealing with the issues needed to move things forward, it is just a laundry list of what RWL regards as good things.

We don't think that this list is well formulated, but that isn't the main point. The main issue is that this sort of list isn't what's needed now. It seems to be part of a view that

one links up with various sections of the population by promising them the sun, the moon, and the stars. Some campus activists in the San Francisco Bay Area mock this method of organizing as "list-ism". And we think that they have a point.

It doesn't do any good to promise pie-in-the-sky. To link up with the working masses, one has to build up the confidence of the pro-choice activists in their ability to appeal to the masses. The movement must be oriented to wider agitation at the workplace, communities, and schools. The value of picket signs, leaflets, and other ways of making clinic defenses into statements to the masses should be brought out. Instead of encouraging an attitude of sighing for the trade unions or other large reformist organizations to come over to the side of the movement, the pro-choice movement itself has to become the link between the activists and the broader masses.

On the unions

RWL will, presumably, regard the statement that they orient the movement toward the left-liberal wing of the Democratic Party as absurd. Don't they include a few words against both Democrats and Republicans in their proposed resolutions? Don't they have a resolution "for a mass workers' party" based on the unions and other large organizations of the masses?

But the influence of the Democratic Party among the masses is based precisely on the very same unions and reformist-led organizations that RWL regards as the basis of a "workers' party" and a "workers' government", of the campaign for national health care, of clinic defense, etc.

In their resolutions, again and again and again RWL identifies linking up with the workers with forging links with the present-day trade unions. The idea comes across that the unions will mobilize the workers, and the other reformist-led organizations will mobilize the oppressed nationalities, etc.

But the present-day unions are run by a diehard, pro-capitalist, pro-establishment bureaucracy. They have collaborated with the employers to enforce concessions upon the workers. They have backed imperialist foreign policy. They back the capitalist parties, mainly but not exclusively the Democratic Party. And they sabotage militancy and drag their feet even when they are in a confrontation with the employers.

The role of the unions is a complex one, and as well many youth, activists, and other people in the clinic defense

movement don't have first-hand experience with it. Without collective action and organizations, the workers can't fight the employers, and the capitalists often try to break even the present tame, pro-imperialist unions. At the same time, the unions try their best to win ruling class approval, and even seats on the boards of directors of corporations, by proving their ability to keep the workers in line. The workers, thus, face not just the task of organizing in general, but of building up independent organization to oppose the union bureaucracy.

In RWL's resolutions the whole criticism of the unions is that "the current misleaders of the unions and organizations of the oppressed generally oppose the creation of a workers' party. They must be challenged and replaced with rank-and-file militants." (Resolution for a "Campaign for a mass workers' party in the U.S.", pt. 5)

That's all. Why, according to this, these misleaders only "generally" oppose the creation of a workers' party. So when some hacks do say a few words in favor of a "workers' party", then they must be OK, or at least their idea of a "workers' party" is OK. Anyway, it doesn't matter, because the resolution implies that all you have to do is replace the leaders.

This doesn't explain what these organizations are really doing. It doesn't explain how a whole system of oppression, including legal sanctions, is in place to keep the unions in line. It doesn't explain how the reformist unions and other organizations are the mechanism used in practice to keep the masses in line. And it orients one to simply running some alternative candidates in the unions, etc.

The workers have before them the task of developing truly proletarian organizations to unite them in economic and political struggles. These organizations will not be based on the current unions, but will develop in a life-and-death struggle against the current union bureaucracies. Whether the present unions are eventually transformed or actually destroyed by the workers and replaced by militant unions, depends on the course of the struggle.

Should there be a reply to NOW?

When it comes to women's organizations, the RWL has to say something about NOW in order to justify proposing the forming of a separate organization. But it says the minimum. Its statements don't go much beyond the idea that NOW fights in its way, and the clinic defenders should fight in their way.

In its paper, RWL also criticizes NOW a bit. But both in its paper, and in its resolutions, it has the attitude of expecting NOW to do something. In the resolutions, we read the remarkable statement that "the 1989 convention of the National Organization for Women (NOW) recognized the reactionary stance on women's rights of both the Republicans and the Democrats by calling for a women's political party." The problem, the resolution goes on to say, is that NOW won't do anything "to implement the call." It seems that RWL is still hoping that NOW will act, and

thus bring really large numbers to the women's movement, as the unions will bring workers.

Actually, the NOW leaders never wanted another party. They let this resolution pass only to use it as a mere means of pressure for a better deal with the bourgeois politicians. As NOW President Molly Yard put it at the time, "I think we're sending a message" to the other parties. "You better shape up or we'll ship you out."

The RWL resolution states that "Since then [1989 NOW convention] the NOW leadership has done nothing to implement the call." But the 1989 convention did not set a militant line, which the NOW leaders refused to follow. At the 1989 convention, one can recall, the line was set for defending abortion rights in the name of population control against the poor.

But RWL seems to have a stereotype. Resolutions from NOW or from the unions should be used as the vital stepping stones for any activity.

Thus RWL felt it important to put forward NOW's phrase-mongering about another party, but doesn't see any importance in having activists take note of and reply to the NOW leaders' vicious attacks on the clinic defense movement. RWL mainly says that NOW wants to limit the movement, but it is silent about the NOW leaders' direct obstruction of the movement.

Yet the NOW leaders, along with other bourgeois women's organizations, have in the past year viciously attacked the clinic defense movement. We have more than once taken it upon ourselves to reply to NOW statements and uphold the path of militant opposition against OR and the anti-abortion fanatics. We think that the NOW leaders' cursing against the movement is far more indicative of NOW's real role, and of what can be expected from bourgeois women's organizations than the idea that they would help form a workers' party.

On militant clinic defense

In the resolutions, RWL calls for militant actions. That's good, and we hope this militancy is carried out in action.

We think, however, that there are some worrisome flaws in the way RWL formulates the issue of militancy. For one thing, there has been a good deal of discussion for some time of what to do if OR does not attempt to close down a clinic, but only harasses it. The idea has been forward that one should then follow the policy of "only escorts" or even do nothing. RWL doesn't speak directly to this issue, and we think that this has allowed the idea of "only escorts" to gain a certain currency in circles around it.

As well, RWL's resolutions seem to suggest that militancy depends on the unions and other reformist-led organizations. In point 5 of the resolution "Defeat 'Operation Rescue'" it says that "The movement must be based on the unions and the organizations of the oppressed. It must organize mass demonstrations and defense guards to drive OR away from abortion clinics and demonstrations and strikes..." And in point 9 of its proposed principles of unity,

one reads: "Organize armed self-defense committees linking the black, Latino and other minority communities to the unions." This talk of armed struggle is just militant posturing, which the proposed organization is not supposed to take seriously. But it puts forward the attitude that militancy depends, once again, on the unions. This helps promote the attitude, wait for the unions, wait for NOW, wait for someone else to really bring in the large masses. This makes militancy into an empty pose and actually demoralizes the activists about what can be done now.

Furthermore, RWL doesn't put forward the methods that could be used right away to improve the sweep and power of the pro-choice movement. These methods don't require

waiting for that wonderful 32nd day of March when the AFL-CIO has its second coming. These include bringing pro-choice agitation directly to the masses of workers, and not banking on union resolutions. These include strengthening the impact of clinic defense actions by improving the use of pickets, leaflets, and other methods of making a statement to the masses.

These are some of the serious problems in RWL's proposed resolutions for the conference. Let us not wait for the union leaders or reformist bigshots. Let us have faith in our own forces and go out and organize the working masses for women's rights. ■

Rebel warriors who long for establishment support RCP and "Refuse & Resist" are silent about NOW's attacks on the movement

The group "Refuse & Resist" takes part in clinic defenses. Last December it held a national conference on *The battle for reproductive rights—where to next? Strategies for mass resistance*. It talked about targeting government institutions, the church, etc. But it failed to say a word about the attacks of the NOW leaders and other bourgeois liberals against the militant clinic defenders. It didn't say a word about the class differences between the various forces on the pro-choice side, and what can be expected of them.

This was no accident. The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) is the most influential force within Refuse & Resist. RCP poses as great revolutionaries. It is fond of various militant slogans. But it is constantly on its knees before the bourgeois liberals as part of an effort to reach an alliance with them.

Opposition to fascism is supposed to rule out class differences

RCP carries out most of its work in the pro-choice movement through Refuse & Resist. Although Refuse & Resist contains people with various views, RCP formed it and is the most influential group within it. And RCP's view seems to be that opposition to fascist outrages will unite the workers and liberals in a common struggle. Class differences are supposed to become irrelevant.

Thus RCP and Refuse & Resist may at times appeal to "outraged youth and outraged elders", it may refer at times to poorer women, minorities, etc. But it does not bring out the different class stands of the working class and the bourgeois liberals. Instead, it may refer to different

views about the U.S. Constitution and say that some people in Refuse & Resist think that it is a guarantee of rights, while others think it is oppressive. But, Refuse & Resist stresses, everyone can unite against the current outrages. The idea seems to be that the differences between liberals and revolutionaries only refer to abstract questions, while everyone can unite on the practical struggle against fascism.

In fact, the political differences with the NOW leaders and other bourgeois leaders concern such issues as whether there should even be militant clinic defenses. And on this, both the RCP and Refuse & Resist are silent.

Refuse & Resist's plan of action

The December 18, 1989 issue of RCP's newspaper "Revolutionary Worker" promoted Refuse & Resist's *Plan of Action for the Battle for Reproductive Rights* which was presented at the December conference.

This document avoids all mention of NOW and other liberal women's organizations. Evidently it does not consider NOW's stand an important issue for the movement. But in fact NOW's leadership has directed tirades against the militant activists. They preach the dead end of working with the police and relying on the courts and any bourgeois politician who says a word about abortion rights.

RCP is silent too

And RCP is not only silent about NOW in its work in Refuse & Resist, but it also refrains from fighting NOW

in its own newspaper *Revolutionary Worker*. For example, its November 6, 1989 issue contained a special 48-page pamphlet on abortion rights (entitled *Women are not incubators!*) as a supplement. This pamphlet says nothing about the hostile stand of NOW and the bourgeois liberals towards the militants.

The pamphlet plays down class politics. Oh yes, it is full of talk about minorities. And it has militant phrases about "unleash the fury of women as a mighty force for revolution". But the only bourgeois forces it directly identifies are the "Christian fascists". Otherwise it is vague, talking at most about the "ruling class" and "mainstream politics". It doesn't even mention who this mainstream is, and it doesn't talk about the bourgeois liberals. It doesn't even refer specifically to the conservatives, just the "fascists". This presumably is an appeal to the liberals—everyone can supposedly oppose the fascists, but opposing the Democrats and Republicans, well, that's another story.

RCP apparently thinks that it is enough to say a few words against "working within the system" and carry out some actions to be a revolutionary force. They do not see the need to develop the political consciousness of the masses concerning the class basis of the capitalist offensive on the masses or concerning the differences within the pro-choice movement.

RCP on the Nov. 11 clinic defense In Washington, D.C.

Indeed, when they do mention NOW, it may turn out to be to prettify it. Consider the Nov. 11 clinic defense in Washington, D.C. This was one of the actions which the NOW leaders tried to squelch. The NOW leaders assured one and all that the police would handle everything; they formed a line to prevent the mass of activists from getting at Operation Rescue (OR); and they denounced the militants as allegedly being responsible for the clinic being closed. (See "Activists defeat 'Vets for Life'" in the December 1989 issue of the *Workers' Advocate*.) But *Revolutionary Worker* described NOW as right in the forefront of the action. (See the issue of November 20, p. 15)

And at one point, they quote a militant statement from a woman in a South Dakota NOW chapter. In fact, there were rank-and-file activists around NOW, or who had gone through NOW non-violence training schools, who sympathized with the militants anyway. But this increases the importance of dealing with the stands of the NOW leadership and explaining the debates that broke out at the action between NOW and the militants. Instead RCP hides the treachery of NOW's line from circles around NOW, and from other activists growing discontented with NOW's policies.

Thus RCP's prettifying of NOW is especially harmful considering the present situation among the pro-choice activists. Militant activists have organized actions that go beyond the bounds set by NOW, while NOW has here and

there issued open denunciations of the activists. What is needed at this time to bring consciousness and clarity to this conflict with NOW, and along with this to show how to bring the pro-choice movement closer to the working masses.

Class Analysis

RCP's friendly attitude toward the liberals prevents them from agitating on the class basis of the struggle. In theory, of course, RCP is all for class analysis. Some of their documents may say some correct things about the class forces in the abortion issue. But in their practical work in the movement they fear that too much about this will drive the liberals away.

This is reflected in the Refuse & Resist's *Plan of Action*, as it was in the RCP's pamphlet *Women are not incubators!*

Take the question of who is behind the "pro-life" movement. The *Plan* confines itself to the statement: "We will target government institutions, bodies, courts and politicians who are behind these attacks." All well and good. But it's not just a matter of this or that politician or institution. The *Plan* never explains that the capitalist class controls all these forces. It never mentions that the capitalist class is behind the anti-women crusade. It even leaves vague whether it is against all or some institutions, and if so, which ones.

Indeed the *Plan* avoids any political characterization of the forces involved in the abortion rights issue. It doesn't even mention the Bush administration. It makes a complete mystery of who is attacking women's rights, and what stands the politicians are taking.

Dodging the question of the class forces involved in the assault on women's rights makes the *Plan* more palatable to the liberals. After all, the liberals may get mad at this or that politician or court ruling. But they advocate reliance on the capitalist institutions overall.

In this light it is notable that the *Plan* fails to say a word about the "pro-choice" Democratic and Republican politicians. These politicians participate in the capitalist drive to impoverish the working people and have supported cutbacks in social benefits that affect poor women. They are incapable of a serious fight on behalf of women. Meanwhile NOW wants to convert the women's movement into a voting machine for these characters. Refuse & Resist may not be excited about campaigning for politicians. Yet the *Plan* passes over this issue in silence.

On Whose Shoulders Should the Movement Be Built?

The lack of class analysis also obscures what forces the women's movement should base itself on. Instead of centering attention on the tasks needed to mobilize the working masses, the *Plan* only specifically singles out a desire to "rally and bring forward support from the medical community and clinic owners and operators...."

But already there are a number of cases where clinic owners have shut down their clinics at the first sign of pressure from the "pro-life" forces or even threatened to arrest both sides. RCP does not explain to the activists what they should really expect from the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois sections of the medical community.

The efforts of the RCP to curry favor with the liberals is not just some minor flaw. It undermines the whole orientation of the movement. It obscures who the movement should target and the tasks necessary to strengthen the struggle. No amount of militant phrases can cover up this political cowardice. ■

Will PL support choice?

The right-wing attack on abortion rights has aroused the anger of progressive people across the country. Naturally, one would expect that groups that consider themselves progressive would support the movement to defend the right to choose an abortion—right?

Well, not every left organization. The Progressive Labor Party, the self-described "egalitarian communists," is still missing in action. They have had virtually no coverage of the movement in their newspaper, *Challenge*, no organized presence in the movement, and no explanation of their position on the question. Their self-imposed exile from the movement has even bothered some of their own followers who began to write letters to *Challenge* questioning PL's boycott. Today, while the movement forges ahead, PL is still mired in a debate amongst themselves over whether to support the pro-choice struggle.

PL Condemns the Mass Movement

What's behind PL's abstentionism is revealed in a *Challenge* article of Dec. 6, 1989 entitled "Pro-life or choice?: Where should the party stand on abortion?" This article was "offered as a kick off point for the formulation of the Party's line on abortion." Despite the headline, which makes it appear that PL isn't even sure whether they support abortion rights, so far all the articles *Challenge* has published seem to recognize them. But PL isn't sure they should have anything to do with the struggle to defend these rights. The article shows that PL's sectarian stand toward the struggle is based on the idea that the movement should be condemned because the bourgeois liberals are influential in it.

The article states: "The absence of a Party stance on the abortion question is harmful because it leaves a choice between the pro-choice movement, which is broadbased only among the middle class in the U.S. and does not address the problems of the working class, especially minorities, or the pro-life (anti-abortion) movement which has the potential of turning into a mass fascist movement." (*Challenge*, Dec. 6, 1989, p.9)

This statement demonstrates that PL equates the abortion rights movement with the bourgeois stand of the liberals such as the NOW leaders.

Now it is true that the liberals only pay lip service to the demands of working class and poor women. And true again that the liberals oppose a militant fight against the anti-abortion forces.

But PL is unable to see any further than the bourgeois misleaders. Thus they falsely contend that the "pro-choice movement...does not address the problems of the working class." They ignore the fact that the working class and poor women will pay the heaviest price if abortion rights are curtailed. Moreover, the anti-abortion crusade is part of the whole capitalist offensive of war, racism and profit-grabbing.

The workers support abortion rights not because some liberal bigshot told them to, but because they know banning abortion will simply add to the cruelties capitalism heaps upon them. The PL article itself concedes "the soundness of the premise that a woman in a modern capitalist society is entitled to an abortion on demand." But then, pray tell, what is wrong with a struggle to obtain this entitlement?

Running From Politics

PL's stand reflects their inability to deal with politics, which involves the stand of all classes on how society is to be run. PL is bankrupt in face of the fact that different class forces participate in the pro-choice movement. Evidently, they feel that cursing the whole movement because of "middle class" participation is sufficient.

But different classes in society inevitably express their stand on all important issues. One would think that so-called Marxists like PL would understand this ABC of political life. After all, the women's movement is not the only one with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influences in it. The anti-racist struggle has its NAACP's and SCLC's. Bourgeois influence is carried into the workers' economic struggle by the sellout trade union bureaucrats. And the powerful movement against the Vietnam war had to contend with many liberals who sought to keep the masses from breaking with imperialism.

Following PL's logic, all political struggles would have to be dismissed as worthless while the activists sit on their hands waiting for the immaculate "pure" workers' struggle to magically appear. Of course PL isn't completely consistent, and they haven't abandoned agitation on all political

issues. But PL's inability to deal with political trends in the mass movement explains why, even when PL does decide to grace the mass movement with their presence, they are notorious for their sectarianism. For one thing, they usually boycott the general movement even on the issues they are concerned with, and typically restrict their participation to those actions which they themselves have organized or dominate.

The fact that various classes appear in a movement should not mean running away in horror. The revolutionary proletariat must take its own class stand into the movement. It should use the presence of different classes in the movement to gain experience in fighting the hostile stands of the bourgeois leaders and strata.

As well, the workers must take into account, that capitalist oppression adversely affects various non-proletarian strata and pushes them into struggle. PL implies that there is something awful about this. But class-conscious workers need experience in rallying other oppressed and exploited elements around themselves. It is necessary to gain experience in judging the stands of other sections of the masses, to learn which sections are serious and how far they will go, and to gain a picture of their vacillations in the face of the bourgeoisie. This is vital political experience, and it provides the workers an opportunity to influence whatever other elements are honest and alive in this country.

PL Undermines the Workers' Political Experience

PL cloaks their sectarianism behind the rhetoric of defending the interests of the workers. But building a revolutionary workers movement requires that in addition to fighting for their particular economic demands, the workers must learn where they stand in relation to all other classes in society. They must learn how to lead all the oppressed sections of the population to victory over the capitalists. PL's attitude actually hinders the necessary political training of the workers. It betrays a very narrow notion of the workers' movement.

This political experience is never more important than in a revolution, itself. When a revolutionary crisis matures, will the liberals and reformists and bourgeois elements magically disappear? On the contrary, all the classes will

express their political stands even more insistently. If PL can't deal with such a relatively straightforward issue as combating the bourgeois liberals while working within the pro-choice movement, then how will they deal with the far more complex questions posed during a revolution?

It seems that PL doesn't know how to fight opportunism. Sectarian screams against the movement, no matter how blood-curdling, have nothing to do with undermining bourgeois influence and fighting opportunism. It is necessary to be able to counterpose the politics of the working class on women's rights to that of the bourgeoisie.

In this light, PL's complaints that the workers are not sufficiently present in the pro-choice movement ring quite hollow. They complain that the workers' don't dominate this political conflict, instead of helping to rally them into political activity. The MLP too wishes the weight of the workers in the pro-choice movement was stronger. But we don't believe the issue is solved by stomping one's feet up and down until the other strata go home. Instead we advocate agitation among the workers to bring them into the battle, and we encourage the movement activists to orient themselves toward the workers and poor.

It should be noted that PL's statements like the pro-choice movement "is broadbased only among the middle class" creates a false impression. Numbers of workers and poor participate in the movement. And there is wide interest in defending abortion rights among the workers who are not yet active in this struggle. PL's description of the movement merely serves as another excuse for their own inaction.

PL Plays into the Hands of the bourgeois liberals

PL presents their policy as the fiercest opposition to the liberals such as NOW. But in fact their sectarian stand toward the movement plays right into the liberals' hands. If it were adopted by class-conscious workers and revolutionary activists, it would help the Democratic Party appear before the masses as the champion of women, and provide the bourgeois women's leaders a free-hand to push their rotten views against any militancy. It means doing nothing to utilize the mass interest in this struggle to organize an independent political movement of the working class separate from and against the bourgeois politicians. ■

WWP defends Ceausescu's revisionist, anti-woman tyranny as "socialism"

Reformism removes the sense of shame. The Workers World Party is a reformist organization which claims to support women's rights. Yet it defends the revisionist tyranny of Ceausescu which was overthrown this past December. It wastes its loyalty on Ceausescu, who enforced a notoriously brutal anti-abortion policy in the midst of extreme austerity conditions.

The WWP has even gone on the warpath in support of Ceausescu, and of the other unpopular, revisionist regimes which have fallen all over Eastern Europe. In issue after issue of its paper, and in its recently issued #3 of its theoretical journal *Liberation*, it defends the Ceausescu rule of a privileged few. The hatred for Ceausescu was allegedly just the work of the worst dregs of society: fascists, anti-semites, CIA agents, etc.

According to WWP, it doesn't matter that the regime took pro-imperialist stands, imposed unpopular austerity on the workers to pay back its foreign loans, oppressed the national minorities, or brought misery to women. But since the army eventually joined in overthrowing Ceausescu, WWP does condemn it. Indeed, WWP's defense of the regime consists of exaggerating how bad the Romanian army was, and accusing it of being fascist dregs from World War II. How, if Ceausescu was a socialist, Romania could have had a fascist army for almost half a century, is WWP theoretician Sam Marcy's little secret.

All that matters to WWP was that Romania had nationalized industry. It doesn't matter to WWP that the workers weren't running either the state or the state-owned industry.

Nationalization by itself does not mean that a country

is socialist, or that its economy is socialist. Nationalization means that the state runs the enterprise. The content of nationalization, therefore, depends on which class runs the state and how it runs the state. Most Western-style capitalist governments have nationalized a substantial part of their economy (most industrialized capitalist countries have, in fact, far larger state sectors than the U.S.). The revisionist-style capitalist countries have much larger state sectors, which can include basically all industry. But they also had a ruling bourgeoisie which runs the state and the economy.

The revisionist state-economy is somewhat different from Western-style economy. But the creation of Western-style economies is not the replacement of socialism by capitalism, but of one form of capitalism by another. During this replacement, throughout eastern Europe, the working class is going to be squeezed very hard. But if the path forward is not the Western-style market economy, it is not restoration of the old revisionist economy either.

Socialism and women's rights

In the February issue of the *Workers' Advocate* we contrasted the stand of the revisionism towards women's rights with the stand of communism. We showed that neither Ceausescu's anti-abortion tyranny, nor the reliance on abortion as the main birth control method which takes place in a number of revisionist countries, have anything to do with the stand taken by Bolsheviks in the days when the Soviet Union was still socialist.

Shame on WWP for whitewashing the Ceausescu tyranny! ■

From "New York Workers' Voice"

The following articles are from the March 5 issue of *New York Workers' Voice*, paper of the MLP-NY, which also contained the further article on the Nicaraguan elections "No victory for the working people of Nicaragua" and a second article on the situation facing the transit workers.

Why the Sandinistas lost the election

Sandinista supporters are at a loss to explain their defeat at the hands of the reactionary UNO coalition. But given the history of their rule, it is not so surprising.

Throughout their rule, the Sandinistas have tried to conciliate the local business elite and their American capitalist backers. Their program for developing Nicaragua always depended on their investments and goodwill. The Sandinistas wanted a middle path, a system of so-called "mixed economy." They wanted capitalism, but without the excesses, without the extreme exploitation of the poor which prevailed under Somoza.

And for a while, it worked. They prevented the workers and poor from going "too far." They stopped land seizures by poor landless peasants, and they repressed workers' attempts at achieving a measure of control over their work places. And in fact, Marxist-Leninists and other militant workers were jailed in these actions. But on the other hand they launched successful campaigns against illiteracy and to develop a wide health network serving the working people. Therefore, overall, in the early '80s, the Sandinistas remained an immensely popular force among the working people.

But the local capitalists and the U.S. government wanted to rule Nicaragua without the Sandinistas, and they did not care for any of their reforms either. A severe economic crisis hit all of Latin America during the '80s. And for Nicaragua, this was aggravated by internal economic sabotage on the part of the rich local businessmen and by an economic embargo and the contra war imposed by the U.S. government.

And from here on the Sandinistas began a long march backwards. Since funds were needed to give investment incentives to the businessmen, less and less was allotted for education, health, for the poor. While the businessmen were guaranteed labor peace, plus favorable exchange rates for importing goods, the masses of working people were asked for ever greater sacrifices and belt-tightening in order to save the revolution. In a word, the rich got richer and the poor poorer.

Today, even before the new government takes over, Nicaragua looks much like any other Central American country: the rich ride fancy new cars while the children of workers beg barefoot in the streets. Meanwhile, the

educational system is once again horrendous, and medicines are once more out of reach for the impoverished majority of the people.

Today the Sandinista experiment with a "humane" sort of capitalism has failed. They were not able to break the hold of the rich capitalists, and of imperialist domination by the U.S., without taking radical measures against these forces.

Little by little, the Sandinistas had bartered away most of the gains of the revolution. And the masses had been exhausted by years of war and economic austerity. They no longer saw light at the end of the Sandinista tunnel. And they lost their reason for supporting the Sandinistas.

The working class and poor peasantry in Nicaragua now are faced with waging their struggle under new conditions. And inevitably they must attempt to take power into their hands once more. This next time, however, they must not place their hopes on forces seeking a middle road. Today in that country, only the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua (MAP/M-L) stands for truly socialist measures, only this party is willing to break with capitalism. This is the alternative the working people must build up and fight for in Nicaragua. ■

Postal accident policy: blame the victim

Two cases, both of which received national media attention, illustrate the Postal Service's policy on accidents and safety.

* Case I:

Last December, a carrier working his route in Lodi, New Jersey broke down a door to rescue two children from their burning home. In doing so, he injured his shoulder. Guess what? He was sent a form letter reprimanding him. Signed by the local postmaster, the letter states, "It is my responsibility to provide safe working conditions and to develop a safe work force. It is your responsibility to adhere to safe work practices."

Case II:

Two years earlier, this time in Satellite Beach, Florida, a carrier stopped a rolling car from hitting an elderly woman and some nearby gas pumps. Nevertheless, he injured his leg, elbow and ribs in the process. You already know what came next! He was written up for committing an "unsafe act". It took regional management to strike out this letter of warning.

Naturally, management couldn't help but be embarrassed by all the media attention and in both cases ended up apologizing. Still, both cases show something postal workers throughout the country are all too familiar with: in the Post Office, if a worker reports an accidental injury on the

job, he or she can expect harassment, intimidation and often a disciplinary write-up, for 'good' measure. Management's reaction is totally automatic.

To what end does the USPS [US Postal Service] insist on always blaming the victim? Simple. It is cheaper that way. If the injured employee is to blame, then the Post Office is blameless. And if the threat of disciplinary action hangs over the workers' heads, they will be less likely to report the accidents in the first place. Why, the Postal Service's safety record will be good! Then they can turn around and cover over problems with little "safety talks", instead of taking real, and perhaps costly, measures to correct safety problems. And they can avoid any compensation costs, including granting limited duty status to employees.

This policy exists because the Post Office is run on a capitalist basis, where minimizing costs and maximizing the productivity of the workers is the first and last principle. Cruel as this policy is, it can be found throughout capitalist society, particularly in more hazardous work places. ■

From "Boston Worker"

Below are excerpts from articles from the March 3 issue of Boston Worker, voice of the MLP-Boston. It also contained other articles. One was on the results of the Nicaraguan elections. The other denounced the Boston transit authority management for using job combinations to speed up work and eliminate jobs, and it condemned the refusal of the transit union leaders to do anything about it.

More on Drug Testing

In January a Federal Court in Washington barred the Bush administration from going ahead with random drug testing of urban transit workers around the country. But this reprieve is only partial and temporary. The court permitted the random drug testing of 4 million other transportation workers. In addition the testing of urban transit workers was barred only on a small technicality which the Washington bureaucrats are moving to fix.

Meanwhile the T is drug testing people after every accident, even after such minor things as Green Line derailments and at annual physicals, and suspending or firing people who test positive. So it is clear that drug testing as a means of intimidating the work force has not gone away as an issue.

Some workers think, "Well this really doesn't affect me, I don't use drugs anyhow." But this thinking is wrong. A

In transit

In the electric bench, CMEs turned back a Transit Authority (TA) attempt to force them to teach Car Maintainer Trainees (CMTs) to strip, repair and rebuild door operators. CMT instruction is supposed to be handled by MSIs, but the TA wanted the CMEs to do the job instead—at maintainer's wages, of course.

After vainly waiting two days for the union shop committee to come investigate, the CMEs—to a man—refused to do this training. A number of them also wrote a letter to Car Maintenance VP Moneheim threatening to notify the Inspector General. This caused the TA to back off their demand.

Notably, this victory was won in spite of the union bureaucrats. One worker's characterization was that the TWU honchos had already cut a deal with the TA on CMT instruction and were angry when CMEs dared to protest. ■

scandal that broke out last month over the drug testing program on the New York City transit system shows just how dangerous and arbitrary drug testing can be.

For several years now the New York Transit Authority has been forcing workers to submit to drug testing on the order of a supervisor, after a personal injury or when returning from work after being out sick for three weeks or more. But in January the New York State Inspector General reported that the lab that does the drug testing for the New York Transit Authority gave the wrong answers on six out of 11 undercover test samples sent to them. That's an error rate of 55 percent. And yet based on results from this lab 614 workers were suspended or fired in the last two years! But there is more. This is not the first time the New York Transit Authority's drug program has been exposed. A court had to throw out all the drug test suspensions and firings for the year of 1984 because the Transit authority's lab was only performing one of two required drug tests and showing false positives for such things as Advil. When you have inaccuracies like that you can only conclude that intimidation, not safety, is what the management and the government have in mind. And in fact *New York Worker's Voice* (paper of the NY Branch of the MLP) reports that the Transit Authority regularly uses the threat of drug testing to force track crew to work in the rain, and to intimidate workers from taking time off for personal injury accidents.

Workers, we must continue to organize for mass opposition to drug testing.

"Pro-Life" Bush's New Tax on Child Care

Any working couple with children or any single working mother who has filled out their IRS tax form is aware of a new take back by the Bush regime. Under the new regulations only child care payments for children under 13 count for the small child-care tax credit that the government allows working people. But on top of this you must now provide the social security number of the person who provides your child's day-care.

Four out five working mothers are unable to afford or get their children into licensed day care centers and must rely on relatives or neighbors to care for their children. Most of these day care providers do not declare this income to the government to be taxed because they can't afford to pay the taxes or because to do so may jeopardize their welfare payments. The new IRS rule forces parents to either turn in their day care provider to the government or pay an additional \$500 to \$800 in taxes. Could there be a more divisive way of making child care more expensive and more difficult to obtain?

Remember the presidential election campaign. Bush promised more tax credits for low income families to help with the high cost of child care. The Democrats promised subsidies to day care centers to reduce the cost. But what happened? After the elections Congress politely debated both plans and decided to give no money because they couldn't agree on either plan. And of course now we see Bush's real plan—increase the burden of childcare on working women.

Bush's new child care tax rule is a big exposure of hypocrisy of the "pro-life" anti-abortion movement of the rich. Bush claims that he is "pro-life" because he wants to take away women's right to have legal abortions. But everything he does makes life more difficult for the born children.

The child care situation in this country is a disgrace. The majority of women with even very small children are forced to work to make ends meet. And yet the rich who profit from these working women do not want to give up even a part of this profit to provide decent, organized child care for their workers' children. And so millions of people

are forced to make all kinds of ad hoc, unsatisfactory and expensive arrangements for their children. It is time for the working people of this country to say: "We demand better for our children." We must build up the mass struggle to force the employers and the government to provide low-cost day-care centers at the workplaces and in the communities. We must demand vastly expanded after-school programs for our children. This is no longer the 19th century. The vast majority of mothers work. This is a progressive development which draws women into expanded social and political life and makes them a key part of the working class. But if the capitalist economy needs women to work outside the home, ought it not be forced to provide a decent child care system for their children? ■

Support the Greyhound Strikers!

The Greyhound bus drivers are on strike. They are striking against wage offers that leave them 16 per cent behind the wages they made in 1986 (30 per cent including inflation)! They are also striking against Greyhound's plans to contract out bus lines to non-union bus companies. Already in the last 6 years over 1/3 of their jobs have been eliminated. Greyhound workers are fighting for their jobs and a livable wage.

The Greyhound capitalists have billions of dollars. But rather than pay the workers a decent wage, they are determined to break the workers. They are trying to hire and use scabs. The government is helping Greyhound by sending large forces of police to intimidate strikers so Greyhound's management can run a scab operation in the coming weeks. On the first day of the strike, [Boston Mayor] Flynn sent a whole squadron of police to the station as a show of force against a dozen picketers.

In 1983 Greyhound and the government tried to do the same thing. But at that time hundreds of angry workers from many unions gathered in every major city around the country and confronted, disrupted and often stopped the scab operation. This mass struggle is what forced Greyhound to give up its plans to Patco-ize its workforce. We must be prepared to do the same thing again. We cannot let the rich pick us off one small group of workers at a time. ■

One-third of the department's employees written up Defend our sick-leave rights!

The following leaflet was produced by a group of rank-and-file postal workers at the Richmond bulk mail facility in the San Francisco Bay Area. It was sent to us by a reader.

Since early December, the BMC [bulk mail center] managers have accelerated their vicious campaign of firings, suspensions and other disciplinary actions against the employees over the issue of attendance. In Outbound North, T-2, 10 of 30 units regulars have received suspensions or letters of warning, while over in Outbound South, T-2, over one-third have been disciplined—including firings—in the past month alone!

The recent write-ups mark a definite escalation of management's attack on our sick-leave (SL) and emergency annual-leave (EAL) rights. While before there were definite guidelines so that an employee at least knew where he stood, the last three years has seen management first encroach on the guidelines, and then trash them altogether. Now, write-ups are arbitrary, with each month seeing a new tightening of the invisible guidelines. The following examples of recent write-ups illustrate:

1) One employee was disciplined for three sick calls, two tardies, and one EAL (8 hours) over a 7-month period. Never mind that he had a clean record the preceding 5 months, this man has saved over 300 hours of SL in only 4 years! And yet, using just 24 of the 104 hours he earned in 1989, he got disciplined! They may give us 104 hours, but we're sure not allowed to use them.

2) One man was suspended for 7 days for "unscheduled absences." One of the charges was for emergency annual leave taken to sit with his dying father, and another to bury him. Apparently, the BMC bosses are so callous that they won't let you bury your parents without making you fight for your job when you return.

3) A third employee was fired for hurting his back. After spending 3½ weeks at home with a back injury, calling in twice, and fully documenting the illness, he was summarily fired, told by Tour Superintendent Don Engqvist, "Don't lie to me, Kaiser doctors will write anything you want." And this despite the fact that their own doctor had told them *he shouldn't be at work at all.*

These examples show that while our sick-leave rights are "guaranteed" in the contract, BMC management is hell-bent on eliminating them in practice. Write-ups for good records, for deaths in the family, for documented illnesses—these attacks threaten us all.

A particularly brazen example is being pioneered on OBN by Supervisor of Mails Joanne Dickens. After issuing attendance write-ups that cannot stand on their own, she has been offering a "deal", that if you promise not to

grieve the case, she will remove the action if you post 6 months of perfect attendance. First, this deal allows an illegitimate action to get a foot in your file. Then it presents you with a nearly impossible task to fulfill (and many who took this deal have had to serve their suspensions within a month following a single tardy). But, more importantly, what does this deal mean when you get sick? It means you either have to jeopardize your job to come to work sick, jeopardizing your health and that of others. **YOU HAVE LOST YOUR SICK-LEAVE RIGHTS!** Besides the patent illegality of this deal, it is the viciousness of forcing one to choose between livelihood and health which is remarkable. Perhaps Dickens wants us to end up like the postal worker in Philadelphia, Pa. who, faced with such a choice due to management harassment, came to work sick and died on the job. [This leaflet also contained an article on this.]

A national campaign

If you've been reading the "Frank Talk" letters sent to our homes by the Postmaster General [Anthony Frank], it can be seen that the recent escalation in write-ups is just a part of an over-all productivity drive being organized by the USPS [U.S. Postal Service] nationally. Like the raid on the 5-minute leeway [in clocking in, being denied despite its guarantee by the contract], like the on-going attack on the injured workers on light-duty, like the steady reduction in staff in unit after unit, the attack on our sick-leave rights is aimed at squeezing more profit out of each employee. It is also a cornerstone of the drive to achieve "attrition" through large-scale firings—with the firings aimed first and foremost at the higher-paid, high-seniority employees. Further, it seeks to saddle a large section of workers with so many suspensions that they will have little choice but to submit to every new measure of the speed-up.

Union treachery

The sad truth is that the union bureaucrats have been indispensable partners in the attack on our sick-leave rights. To smooth the way for management's productivity drive, the postal unions have entered into an agreement with management to subvert the grievance procedure as set forth in the contract. As reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on 7/9/89, at least one union has formally agreed with the USPS on a national level to "reduce the number of grievances reaching regional arbitration by at least one-half."

The results of this agreement are obvious in the BMC,

where the Mailhandlers' Union has gone from bad to worse. It is often the feeling now that there is no shop steward that can be trusted. They try every trick in the book to prevent or derail grievances. First, they try to talk you out of it—that you could lose, it would take too long, that your record's bad anyway. If that doesn't work, they don't hesitate to throw a grievance in the garbage, and then hide from the employee for weeks. During the last round of write-ups before Christmas, one enterprising shop steward collected a handful of grievances and, without telling anyone, went on a pre-planned three-week trip to Hawaii, leaving his grievants up the creek. In fact, the shop stewards have resorted to systematic lying about the progress of grievances, about step hearings, bargaining sessions, etc.

Now, going a step further, the Mailhandlers' Union, in going along with the "perfect attendance deal," is pushing deals outside of the grievance procedure entirely. These are, in effect, pre-grievance deals. As well, the "last chance deal," offered right before people are fired, includes a promise not to grieve their upcoming firing! Clearly the union is going along with and encouraging the dismantling of the grievance procedure and the recent write-ups are the fruit of this treachery.

Our defense lies in rank-and-file action

These outrageous attacks on our sick-leave rights show that the productivity drive of the USPS will not let us live and work in peace. They show that the attacks will accelerate, and that they must be fought. And they show that we cannot rely on the unions to protect our rights, as the dozens of us already fired have found out. It is going to take the action of us, the rank and file, to defend our livelihood.

The BMC workers must demand fair and consistent attendance guidelines. Denounce and spread the word about the "pre-grievance" deals. If you do receive a disciplinary action, insist on filing (in writing—get a copy) a grievance form. Demand to be present at the step 2 hearing, and be sure to get a copy of the settlement. It is worth considering the fact that when a mailhandler opposed the "perfect attendance deal" and made it clear he would fight with all available means, management gave in, rewording the deal to "acceptable attendance." After the word of this spread, several more workers demanded no "perfect attendance" clauses, and they won this point as well. ■

The Great California Malathion War

Excerpted from a leaflet by "the L.A. Supporters of the Marxist-Leninist Party", 200 of which were distributed in a protest meeting on March 4 in Burbank.

Southern California is being invaded, not by the medfly, but rather by an aerial armada of helicopters spraying the state's residents with the dangerous toxic chemical, the pesticide malathion. We, the people, are forced into the trenches to fight *The Great Malathion War* against our deadly class enemy, the chemical/agribusiness complex and their political stooges in both the Republican and Democratic parties from governor Dirty Duke on down to the local political hacks of the ruling class exploiters. The despicable ruling establishment has declared open chemical warfare on the people of California, all in the guise of wiping out that nasty ole medfly. Never mind that the people affected were not consulted or given a democratic voice or choice in these important matters. **No, hell no!** The decisions were made dictatorially and undemocratically by state bureaucrats and representatives of big agribusiness interests. The people, meanwhile, get to serve as guinea pigs for these malathion spraying experiments.

So why all the hue and cry against malathion spraying? Well, for starts, now hear this. Malathion is a toxic

pesticide-derivative of immune and nervous system poisons developed for chemical warfare by nazi Germany during World War II. Spraying malathion in a city with heavy air pollution, like L.A., is very dangerous, having yes, "killing power!" Malathion can cause cancer, birth defects and genetic changes. How many children will be born with birth defects from this repeated mass spraying? Many people reported illnesses after the sprayings. And where, oh where is "our" dear E.P.A., the Environmental Protection Agency? Really now. E.P.A. should more honestly be named Every Polluters Assistance and/or Every Pesticide Approved!

In the face of a rising tide of militant protests by the people against the toxic spraying, the political smoothies are going into action to head it off. They will try to smother these direct actions with their wet blankets of false concern and promises to conduct yet another study or to file yet another lawsuit in courts which consistently find that the public interest must take a back seat to corporate profit interests. Meanwhile, the spraying continues unabated.

We must issue a resounding **no!** to these stonewalling and delaying tactics and continue to build militant mass protests, pickets, demonstrations and other direct actions against this latest criminal poisoning of our environment.

Rallies of Boeing engineers force improvement in contract

The seven-week strike of 58,000 Boeing production workers last fall caused a stir among Boeing's office workers, technical workers and engineers.

Results of the strike

The Marxist-Leninist Party had worked diligently to prepare conditions for the strike, and to support it when it broke out. Leaflet after leaflet spoke to the workers' grievances, and rallied the workers' against the obstruction of the union bureaucrats. Some of these leaflets appeared in the Sept. 19 and Oct. 15 issues of the *Supplement*, while reports on the strike appeared in the November and December issues of the *Workers' Advocate*. The summation in the December issue pointed out how the International Association of Machinist (IAM) bureaucrats finally succeeded in stopping the strike, at a time when the strike was badly hurting Boeing's production and cash reserves and the workers were in a favorable position to win more of their demands for restoration of their pay after years of concessions, for eliminating the system of promotion by favoritism, and for an end to the barbaric overtime.

Later information showed that the workers had, however, achieved quite a bit by striking. The production workers won a pay increase, with the lower grades winning from \$.96 to \$1.15 per hours, and mandatory overtime was cut from four consecutive weekends to a still outrageous two. It also turned out that the IAM union leaders had made a secret offer to Boeing just before the contract expiration that was actually less than the overage wage/bonus settlement eventually gained and would have allowed more overtime as well. (This was revealed after the strike by *Business Week*.)

Thus, despite the premature ending of the strike through abandoning the workers' strike aims, the workers' had nevertheless achieved a partial victory.

The strike showed that there were cracks in the pro-company ideology that is heavily spread at Boeing. And it served as an example of what workers' struggle could achieve. If the workers had just sat on their hands, they would have had another concessions settlement. Instead the strike raised expectations among some other sections of the working class in Seattle.

The communist agitation before and during the strike also promoted interest in the MLP's class stands, and helped increase the circulation of communist literature. At the same time the IAM bureaucrats also gained some prestige from the strike, because they had allowed some room for the struggle, although they had acted treacherously towards it. Of course, after the strike, the IAM leaders

immediately returned to their cozy class collaboration with Boeing, and even stepped up their hand-holding with management. There are all sorts of new labor-management cooperative committees and programs in the contract, to the tune of millions of dollars. This shows the outbreak of struggle does not change the nature of the union bureaucracy, nor does it automatically solve the problem of exposing the union bureaucrats, but it is necessary to continue conscious agitation about the union hacks, as was done in the MLP leaflets.

After the strike

After the production workers' strike, Boeing didn't become civilized. It set out to cut the wages of other employees. In December, it pushed through a pay-cutting contract for the more than 13,000 technical workers. The union leaders of the SPEEA sneaked this by the techs by not mentioning there were new concessions in the deal.

In January, Boeing imposed the same wage cuts on its 15,000 general office workers. They are not in a union.

Among the engineers

But when Boeing tried the same thing on 15,000 unionized engineers, it ran into trouble. The engineers rejected the contract by 69%. Boeing then stonewalled them, claiming the original offer was fine. But rank-and-file engineers, especially from the lower paid section, protested. About 100 picketed Boeing on January 19, many calling for a strike.

Boeing jumped back into bargaining immediately and upped the pay offer. Engineers continued their protests. On January 31, over 200 rallied in front of Boeing headquarters denouncing the new offer. However, the SPEEA union leaders lavished praise on Boeing's proposal, and ordered engineers to stay away from the protesters. The contract was eventually passed, but 35% of the engineers voted against it.

The Marxist-Leninist Party was active in encouraging the ferment among office workers, technical workers and the engineers. It put out a leaflet on December 10 calling for union and nonunion employees to unite, and for production workers to support them, in a fight to force decent wage increases and cost-of-living increases out of Boeing. On January 29, it put out another leaflet calling for workers to join the demonstration at Boeing headquarters and denouncing the wage cuts imposed on the general office and technical new hires. Below we reprint excerpts from that leaflet.

Vote Down Boeing's Latest Insult! Engineers need Wage Increases and COLA

Last Wednesday, January 24, Boeing made a new contract proposal for the 15,000 engineers. The first proposal, which was rejected by 69% of the engineers who voted, contained no wage increase or bonus in the second and third years and no COLA. Now Boeing proposes to add bonuses of 5% and 4% for the second and third years, but refuses any general wage increases then and no COLA at all.

At the current inflation rate of 4.5%, and without adding any selective ("merit") raises, Boeing's new proposal would mean a 5% cut in total wage and bonus pay relative to inflation at the end of three years. What effect do the selective raises have? Over the previous three-year contract, the average engineer received three selective raises, and 44% of the engineers failed to keep up with inflation. Thus, at best, the new proposal would mean that only a small minority, chosen at the whim of supervision, would see any significant raise over inflation. Boeing wants "continuous improvement" in everything but salaries.

Engineers need general wage increases each year and COLA in order to make up for past losses and keep ahead of future inflation.... A recent survey published in Design News revealed that Boeing is the 6th largest employer of engineers in the U.S., yet its starting salaries are in the bottom half of the companies and the average salary of Boeing engineers after five years on the job ranks 98th out of the 100 largest engineering firms!

Why Did Boeing Change Its Mind?

Originally, Boeing took an arrogant attitude towards the engineer's rejection vote. It said the original offer was fine and stalled on scheduling further negotiations with SPEEA. When talks were set up in January, Boeing postponed scheduled meetings several times. Boeing also threatened to cut off payroll deductions of union dues.

While SPEEA bureaucrats were sitting around worrying about dues money, rank and file engineers organized a protest rally at plant two on January 19. One hundred engineers picketed Boeing headquarters, many holding signs calling for an engineer's strike. Lo and behold, Boeing negotiators met with SPEEA five days later.

SPEEA hack Mahoney described the bargaining session as follows: "We didn't know what to expect, and we were prepared for them to say their original position was adequate." Boeing made its improved offer "right off the bat." (Quoted in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 1-25-90)

The simple fact is that Boeing fears struggle by the masses of engineers. Coming on top of the IAM strike that caused immediate losses of millions of dollars and 58 planes, work disruption by the engineers would compound the capitalists' disaster.... It's up to the rank and file

engineers to carry through the struggle. ■

Condemn the Wage Cuts Imposed on Technical and General Office New Hires

The new contract accepted by technical workers last December eliminated the automatic progression raises for all new hires. Under the old contract, new hires received a \$600 increase in their yearly salary at the end of each of their first two years. Now these raises have been eliminated, and new hires are instead eligible for selective increases. These raises are not guaranteed but are handed out at the whim of supervision. This concession will cut the wage levels of the majority of new techs from their second year on. It will also tend to lower the total amount of selective raises given to higher seniority techs by spreading the selective pool over a large number of ultra-low paid workers.

Boeing imposed the same wage cuts on the general office workers on January 2.

Just how much money do these workers make so that Boeing finds it necessary to take away their raises? Nearly all are under \$20,000, down to as low as \$15,000 for techs and \$13,500 for general office. This is poverty level income—a family supported on these lower salaries qualifies for food stamps.

This is the outrageous face of U.S. corporate greed, 1990. Boeing is rolling in annual profits of \$1/2 billion plus, yet it schemes to rob another \$600 from working families struggling to get by. Boeing boss, Shrontz, "earns" \$17,000 a week, yet the company clips \$3.30/hr. off the starting wages of production workers. The gap between rich and poor is steadily growing in the U.S. One need look no further than the Boeing company to see why.

The top officials of SPEEA pulled a "Tom Baker" [IAM union head at Boeing in Seattle] on the techs, and snuck through this new concession without anyone noticing. Mr. Bofferding "forgot" to mention this concession at the mass meeting of techs and engineers in the Seattle Coliseum last December. These kind of dirty tricks are part and parcel of the SPEEA bureaucrats' "constructive bargaining." In response to criticism from rank and file engineers, Mahoney said the SPEEA leader did not have a "social relationship" with Boeing negotiators. (*Seattle Times*, 1-20-90) No, it seems more like a bedroom relationship.

Through this year's contract negotiations, rank and file techs and engineers have stepped forward to challenge Boeing's abuse and sought struggle and militancy more than ever before. Every step of the way they have faced the obstructions of the SPEEA bureaucracy. The union hacks have not and will not abandon their "constructive bargaining" policy because they come from and represent a particular upper section of technical workers who have management-oriented ambitions.

This is why, for example, SPEEA honchos champion the

selective increase system. Selectives benefit the upper few at the expense of the vast majority. The favoritism, prejudice and divisiveness inherent in the selective system is contrary to the most elementary principles of unions. All

this helps explain why the SPEEA bureaucracy does not represent the majority of technical workers, who must continue to take action independent of SPEEA. ■

Down with the revisionism of the 7th CI Congress!

Resolution of the Central Committee of the MLP March 1990

1) The Third congress of the Marxist-Leninist Party initiated a party-wide discussion on furthering the characterization of the line of the 7th World Congress of the Communist International, held in 1935. This discussion continued after the congress, and the common thinking of the Party on the subject is embodied in this resolution of the Central Committee.

2) At the Second Congress in the fall of 1983, the MLP launched party-wide discussion of the line of the 7th Congress. As a result of this study, in 1984 the Party unanimously condemned what the 7th CI Congress proclaimed as a "new tactical orientation" as a backward turn in the development of the CI and a harmful influence on the heroic communist work in leading the anti-fascist struggle.

The MLP has published a series of works examining this turn and its damaging consequences to the international movement. We have seen what it meant in France during the 1934-37 period. We have seen the grievous damage it did in the Spanish Civil War. We have seen how it was the source of the CPUSA's Browderite revisionism, which our Party and its predecessors have long condemned.

Condemning the line of the 7th Congress, we have so far called it a "wrong orientation", "backward turn", and an abandonment of the revolutionary perspective and of revolution Leninism. This is correct, but it is not a complete formulation. We intended to make a further characterization later, which we are now doing.

The issue we left open was whether the line of the 7th CI Congress should be labeled revisionist. Our characterizations then of the views of this congress, and of the serious damage done by it, were the same as presented in this resolution, other than not making explicit use of the term "revisionist". Our concern was, among other things, how

the characterization of the 7th Congress fit together with the history of the revisionist destruction of the proletarian character of the CI's parties, which didn't take place all at once, but over a period of time. The concrete examination of this tragedy shows both a process of degeneration and, indeed, the continuing harmfulness of 7th Congress platform.

3) The Marxist-Leninist Party holds that the line of the 7th CI Congress should indeed be called revisionist. It was a complete theoretical and political platform, which was an opportunist turning back on the Leninist orientation which, earlier, had in the main guided the CI. This new line was not some minor deviation, not simply some mistaken wrinkle in an otherwise communist platform, not a matter of tactics alone. It was a full-fledged policy which negated revolutionary Marxism.

The 7th Congress line had many essential features in common with the revisionism which had earlier come up at the end of the 19th century with Bernstein, Millerand etc. in the Second International. There is the same crusade against the Marxist principles as allegedly outdated ideas. The principles are denounced as dogmatism and the new line is promoted as a creative application of socialism to the changed circumstances, of the day. In policy, there is essentially the same concepts of class collaboration, the sacrifice of the class independence of the proletariat, the revival of nationalism, and the embracing of petty-bourgeois democratic ideas.

What Lenin said in 1914 about the views corroding the 2nd International also basically fit the platform of the 7th CI Congress:

"Advocacy of class collaboration; abandonment of the idea of socialist revolution and revolutionary methods of struggle; adaptation to bourgeois nationalism; losing sight of the fact that the borderlines of nationality and country are historically transient; making a fetish of bourgeois legality; renunciation of

the class viewpoint and the class struggle, for fear of repelling the 'broad masses of the population' (meaning the petty bourgeoisie)—such, doubtlessly, are the ideological foundations of opportunism." (Lenin, *The position and tasks of the Socialist International*)

4) There have been attempts from time to time to separate Stalin from responsibility for the line of the 7th Congress. Today again, voices within the Gorbachev leadership of the CPSU—who look to the 7th CI Congress as one of the justifications for their policy—claim that Stalin was opposed to the 7th CI Congress.

But such efforts will not wash. While it is true that Stalin did not speak at the 7th Congress and did not write much at that time on the international policy of the communist movement, there is ample evidence that Stalin bears responsibility for the 7th CI Congress platform. Stalin was the leader of the CPSU, and the CPSU leadership at that time was pivotal in developing and advocating the new policy, and imposing it on the world communist movement.

There have been various additional stages in the development of Soviet revisionism, but from 1935 on, the CPSU leadership has continuously defended and built on the basic standpoints of the 7th Congress. Through the various twists and turns of their policy, on key points of theory, outlook and orientation, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev have maintained a strong continuity with the 7th Congress.

5) While the MLP holds that the line of the 7th Congress was revisionist, the Party also holds that this does not mean that all the parties of the CI had immediately exhausted themselves, ceased to be working class parties, and become drained of all capacity for militant struggle.

History has shown that the 7th Congress marked the opening of a degenerative process but was not the culmination of that process itself. The expression of this process varied from party to party.

The new revisionist line was a tremendous turn backwards, and brought grievous harm to the CI, that great achievement of the international militant proletariat inspired by the 1917 October revolution. The revisionist nature of the line and the example of its consequences underline the deep hostility that it deserves from all communists and activists.

But history has also shown that even after the 7th CI Congress, many of the CI parties were able to perform heroic deeds on behalf of the toilers. It was the world communist movement that shouldered the brunt of the sacrifice in the anti-fascist struggle during World War II.

Some parties were even able to lead revolutions, such as those in China and Albania.

The fact that the parties were able to carry out militant struggle for a time afterwards did not mean something good about the 7th CI Congress. It was because communist traditions of struggle and organization could not be erased in a day, because the stand of the 7th CI Congress was actually gone against in practice in some cases, because of objective conditions such as the revolutionary upsurge, etc.

But the question of Marxism-Leninism or revisionism is a matter of life-and-death for the working class movement. Indeed, everywhere the opportunism introduced by the 7th CI Congress took, sooner or later, a horrible toll. Everywhere, to this or that extent, the fruits of the heroic work of the communists of that period were sabotaged. Eventually the revisionist corrosion would destroy the parties that adhered to Soviet revisionism as revolutionary working class parties altogether and turn them into the reformist and bureaucratic carcasses that we are so familiar with at present. Some other parties originally from the CI, such as those in China, Albania, and some other places, sought to break away from Soviet revisionism, or to fight it, but the traditions from the 7th CI Congress would continue to serve as one of the factors undermining these parties also.

6) Carrying through the fight against revisionism also requires keeping up the struggle against Trotskyism.

Trotskyism claims that it is the heir to the revolutionary traditions of the CI and that it represents the historic battle of communism against the treachery of the 7th CI Congress.

However, Trotskyism did not come up as a revolutionary struggle against the 7th CI Congress. It does not stand for the restoration of Leninism, but instead maintains semi-Menshevik and "left" social-democratic positions. Indeed, some of its key views are quite similar to those of the 7th Congress, and Trotskyism even preceded the 7th Congress in taking them up. And in other areas where it does differ from the 7th Congress, it also differs from Leninism and does not represent a revolutionary communist alternative. As a result of this and other failures, Trotskyism was by and large irrelevant to the revolutionary working class movement.

It has fallen upon the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists of today, to those who want to carry the fight against revisionism to the end, to build a truly revolutionary alternative to the 7th CI Congress. ■

(1) Collected Works, vol. 21, p. 35, November 1, 1914, the parenthetical remark is Lenin's. ■

