

Bulletin

weekly organ of the workers league

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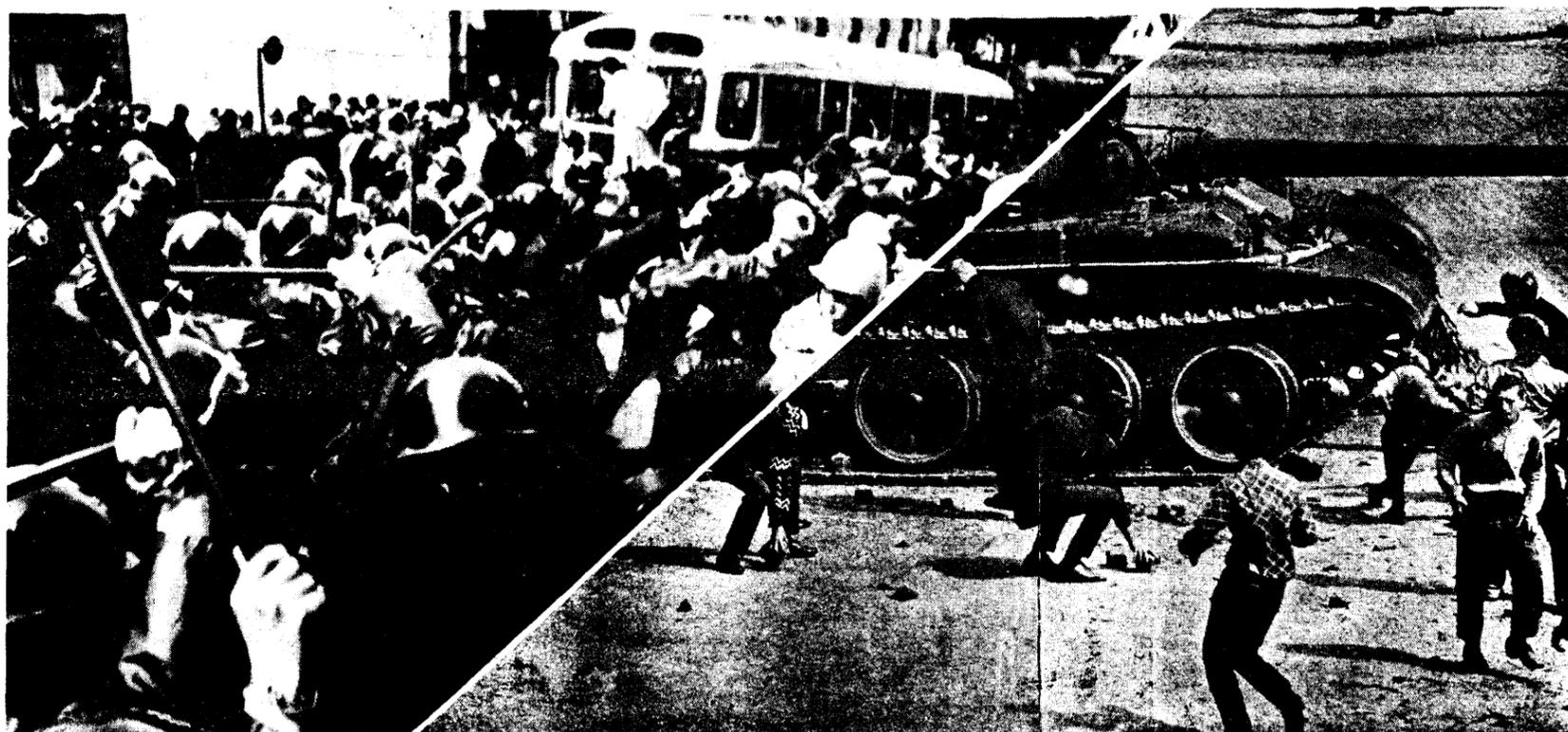
JANUARY 5, 1970

TEN CENTS

HOOVER
FLINT STRIKE AT
GENERAL MOTORS

*world crisis on
docks--pt. II*

1970's - DECADE OF WORLD REVOLUTION



**PREPARE THE FOURTH
CONGRESS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL
TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT**

**A call from the International
Committee of the Fourth International**

EDITORIAL

1970

Year of Lenin and Trotsky



BY THE EDITOR

The year 1970 marks the beginning of the decade of revolutionary struggle by the working class internationally; it marks the opening of a decade of the struggle by the working class to take state power under the leadership of the Trotskyist movement.

The 1960's brought forward the decline of capitalism internationally with the ending of the postwar boom. The deepening crisis of world imperialism has forced the capitalists to take on the working class, breaking down all the old relationships of class cooperation possible during the boom, and pitting the working class in direct struggle with the capitalist governments. The crisis of world imperialism has penetrated into the Soviet countries as the Stalinist bureaucracy seeks to preserve its collaboration with imperialism at the expense of the working class and the gains of the October Revolution.

The single most important development in this decade has been the movement of the working class into battle against a decaying world capitalist system and in opposition to its traditional Stalinist and reformist leaderships. The French General Strike in May-June 1968, the resistance of the Czech working class to the Soviet invasion and the struggles of the Vietnamese workers and peasants have opened up the era of political and social revolution. The year 1970 was ushered in on the heels of a year of class battles from England to Argentina culminating in the massive strike wave which swept Italy, bringing out more than twenty million workers.

OFFENSIVE

In the U.S. the last part of 1969 saw the mobilization of thousands of youth and trade unionists in Washington and San Francisco against the war. At the same time the G.E. workers shut down the opera-

tions of one of the biggest giants of American capitalism in defiance of not only the employers but the Nixon government and its recessionary policies. This growing confrontation within the U.S. is a reflection of the offensive of the working class internationally.

This deepening political and economic crisis has created deep instability within the capitalist ruling circles as they seek a solution to save their system. The movement of the working class beyond its traditional methods of struggle is similarly ripping apart the revisionist movement as it becomes less and less possible to limit the struggles to reformism. These tendencies seek to find a middle road between capitalism and the struggle for socialist revolution, in the attempt to avoid the independent mobilization of the working class for power.

The Communist Party in the U.S. seeks to impose on the working class the perspective of the Popular Front which led the working class to bloody defeat in the 1930's.

The Progressive Labor Party attempts to give a left cover to its version of the Popular Front in the form of the Worker-Student Alliance, the perspective of which is to tie

the working class to the middle class and to reformism and to actually form an alliance with the bourgeoisie.

The most criminal role of all is being played by the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance which claims to speak for Trotskyism but has betrayed every tenet of Trotskyism. It has entered into an unprincipled alliance with the CP and a section of the ruling class in its loudly proclaimed "anti-war movement."

At the YSA's recent convention in Minneapolis what was completely missing was the perspective of the working class. The YSA put forward a program for the 1970's based on Third World Struggles, Women's Liberation Movement and the Anti-War Movement. The working class was viewed merely as something to add "social weight" to the struggles of the middle class. The YSA was even forced to throw off its left cover when it called off its planned march to commemorate the struggles of

the American working class under Trotskyist leadership at the Battle of Deputies Run.

The point is that the decade of the 1970's is the decade of Deputies Run, of the fight by the working class under the leadership of the Trotskyist movement. This is the period of the Transitional Program and the formation of mass Trotskyist parties to carry forward the fruition of this program. This is the meaning of the publication of the first Trotskyist daily paper by the Socialist Labour League, the British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International. We say that 1970 marks the year of Lenin and Trotsky, the year of the advent of the socialist revolution, the implementation of the strategy developed by the Third International in its Leninist period and carried forward by Trotsky.

INTERNATIONAL

The central question posed to the working class in this period is the question of leadership, of the construction of an International capable of leading this struggle to victory. The International Committee of the Fourth International goes forward in this task. This is the meaning of its call for the Fourth Congress.

The Workers League says that the central task of the American working class in this struggle is the fight in 1970 for the construction of a labor party. It is through this struggle that the American working class will join its brothers in Europe and the colonial countries in the fight for socialism. This struggle is an urgent one because it is in the next decade that the question of socialism or barbarism will be posed.

RENAULT WORKERS IN MAY-JUNE 1968 GENERAL STRIKE



STRUGGLE FOR \$10,000 BULLETIN FUND MOVES FORWARD

BY DAN FRIED

As reported in the Bulletin of Nov. 10, 1969, we went over the top in the first stage of the Weekly Bulletin Fund Drive, receiving a total of \$7,294.02 on our goal of \$7000 by Nov. 1st.

We also announced that it was necessary to extend the fund drive until Jan. 31st, raising the goal to \$10,000. This was in order to complete the installation of new modern and efficient photocomposition equipment.

Together with improving the appearance and the production of the weekly Bulletin, the fund drive is enabling us to develop the Bulletin on a solid foundation as the only Trotskyist weekly in the United States. In 1970--the year of Lenin and Trotsky--the Bulletin will become a decisive instrument in the building of a revolutionary working class party, carrying forward both the theory and the practice of Lenin and Trotsky in today's struggles. This is why the Workers League is holding an Eastern Regional Educational Conference in New York City, Jan 2-4, 1970.

In 1970--the year of Lenin and Trotsky--the Bulletin will pose more

sharply than ever before the opportunity and urgency of building the international Trotskyist movement. In this issue of the Bulletin, we print the call from the International Committee of the Fourth International, "Prepare the Fourth Congress of the International Trotskyist Movement." As we announced last

week, on Jan. 26th, the Bulletin will begin publication of a series of five articles, "Documents of the Soviet Opposition."

The development and the plans for the weekly Bulletin are dependent on the success of the Fund Drive. Since Nov. 1st, we have gotten another \$1,176.42 in contributions, making a

total of \$8,470.44. Far from resting on our laurels, we realize that the big fight to go WAY OVER THE TOP on our \$10,000 goal is still ahead. Once again we ask each and every reader to help us toward this goal by sending in contributions or pledges to the Bulletin, 243 E. 10th St., New York, N.Y. 10003.

ITALIAN ANARCHIST, VALPREDÀ, HELD IN FRAME-UP

BY A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

It now seems possible that the arrest of the anarchist Pietro Valpreda for complicity in the Milan bomb explosion which killed 14 on December 12 is part of a frame-up.

According to his aunt, Valpreda was in bed with influenza at her Milan home at the time when he is alleged to have planted the bomb.

Mystery also surrounds the death of another anarchist allegedly implicated in the bomb plot, who fell from the fourth floor of the Milan police headquarters while being interrogated.

Police have denied legal rights to the accused and their lawyers have lodged a protest against their treatment by the police after arrest.

Use of third-degree methods by the

police is common in such cases.

The political tension which prevails in Italy at the moment encourages the police to resort to such measures.

The attempt to discredit the left is part of a deliberate plan to sow confusion in the working class and to break up the magnificent solidarity it has shown in recent weeks.

The real plotters are in big business and right-wing circles where moves are being prepared to establish some form of dictatorship, probably based on the army.

The dangers are rendered still more acute by the treacherous policy of the Italian Communist Party.

Instead of giving a fighting lead to the working class, it prepares to find its way into a coalition with

the "progressive" bourgeois parties.

This gives the ruling class valuable time to work out its plans, divide and demoralize the working class and victimize left-wingers.

Unless the policy of the Italian Communist Party is resisted by the working class, it faces the prospect of terrible defeats.

Such defeats are entirely unnecessary.

The Italian ruling class is a weak and divided class, discredited by its fascist past and the role it has played in the post-war period.

The Italian working class has demonstrated its power and determination.

It has established its right to rule. It lacks only the revolutionary leadership to take it forward to power.

Reuther tries for deal in Flint strike

BY OUR DETROIT CORRESPONDENT

DETROIT--UAW President Walter Reuther and James Roche, GM Board Chairman met to resolve the 88 day strike at Flint Local 598. Reuther requested the meeting. Such requests are not unusual. Unions quite often make such "requests" at the company's private urging.

This meeting, itself, is unusual. The heads of millionmen unions and the heads of the world's largest corporation don't usually notice, let alone concern themselves with a strike of 2,000 workers. This little strike reveals the tremendous power of the working class.

The first meeting lasted three hours. Progress was reported. Another, of one and a half hours, shortly followed. The following day, Pat Patterson, Regional Director, reported to a membership meeting of Local 598 that the corporation agreed to the union's demand, the key issue in the strike, that the comparison principle would be used in establishing work loads. If this report is correct, then the strike is practically over. The Regional Director said to the press that this would not end the strike.

Something is obviously wrong. If GM agreed to the comparison prin-

ciple, the strike is practically over; if the strike is not over, it only means that GM did not agree to the principle. The union, therefore, is frauding the workers. If this is so, it won't be the first time. It is doubtful if Reuther ever sold a contract to the auto workers in which he did not exaggerate, distort or deliberately lie.

GM did not call in Reuther to concede that which local management refused. This could have better been done locally. For Roche to make any concessions would only weaken local management. It would encourage local unions to go over the heads of their plant managers.

GM called Reuther in to get him to force a local settlement. Why this corporation concern over one local? There is a fundamental issue involved: how and by whom are the production standards determined? GM thought it had settled the matter with the 1948 contract. They are right in thinking so. Reuther ceded them this right in unmistakably clear contract language.

The present strike is not the first to challenge this right. It is the first to seriously threaten it. This is GM's concern. If Local 598 succeeds, this success is sure to spread. These



STRIKING WORKERS BURN LETTERS FROM MANAGEMENT AT GATE OF FLINT FISHER BODY

struggles over work standards will resume and repeat those of the thirties and ever since. GM is no longer in a position to buy that which Reuther would be willing to barter for money as he did in 1948.

If this strike fails, it does not make the '48 contract secure. It only means that the issue will be raised again and again. This perspective is guaranteed.

LEADERS SABOTAGE PANTHER DEFENSE

BY STEVE SCHULTZ

CHICAGO-- In the aftermath of the assassination of Fred Hampton, chairman of the Illinois Black Panther Party, has occurred one of the greatest class betrayals in recent history.

This murder posed a crisis for the Daley regime which, in many respects, was far more serious than the disorders during the Democratic Party convention last year.

The working class knows all too well the significance of these murders. Hampton is but one of a score or so of political opponents of Daley who have come to a violent death through their political activities--usually at the hands of the police, but sometime under even more bizarre circumstances.

News of the killing sent shock waves throughout the working class, but the response of black youth was particularly militant and uncompromising. Throughout Chicago students turned classrooms into discussion meetings on the killing. Illegal demonstrations and rallies were held in most of the high schools. The city was forced to close several of these and one junior college because of the disorders.

BETRAYAL

On the day of the killing 50 black organizations formed a coalition to determine what action to take, led by Jesse Jackson of Operation Breadbasket and SCLC. Their first action was to declare a "moratorium on killing." A few days later they declared an official period of mourning for the slain Panthers. As the days and weeks passed by the only other substantive proposal they could come up with was a curfew for white workers in black areas.

Yet it is quite obvious that had these fake lefts called a funeral march or demonstration in support of the Panthers it is certain that tens of thousands would have responded, and not inconceivably, hundreds of thousands. This would have been an extreme embarrassment to the regime.

But there is a catch in this situation. Had they called such a demonstration, and had it been attacked by the police (a likely development), it could easily trigger another uprising in the ghettos.

This leadership would have everything to lose by such a development, most of them being property owners, and a few being millionaires. They stand to lose far more directly from an uprising than the McCormicks and Fields who really run the city.

The Socialist Workers Party in Chicago officially saw no betrayal.

A leading member explained that he was pleased with the developments because the SCLC was now forced to recognize the existence of the Panthers and defend them. This, he explained, represented a shift to the left. These fake Trotskyists are blind to the social reality around them. This black coalition defended the Panthers by sabotaging their defense.

At a small rally for the Panthers a spokesman of the coalition appealed to those present to "emulate revolutionaries like John F. Kennedy." This is where the black bourgeoisie is at in Chicago.

Dissidents Oppose T.C. Transit Pact

BY MICHAEL ROSS

MINNEAPOLIS -- Amalgamated Transit Union Division 1005 ended a 25 day strike against Twin City Lines on Dec. 11th after ratifying a three-way agreement between itself, the company and the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC).

A brief glance at this agreement shows it to be a complete sellout. The drivers and mechanics are to get a six month agreement with an eleven cent pay hike. But this was nothing more than the discredited "final offer" of the company.

How then did President Emmett Cushing of 1005 get a reported 447-150 vote for it? By adding on some promises from MTC.

If, and only if, MTC buys the bus company from Twin City Lines within six months, the drivers will receive a twenty-nine cent an hour hike retroactive to December 11, plus another 31¢ to be added on October 31, 1970 for one year.

That six months is the catch. Purchase of the company can be stalled for as long as Twin City Lines and MTC want it to be, through such maneuvers as extensive court proceedings.

And the members of Division 1005? They face the prospect of another strike next May if their leadership's deal with MTC falls through. Many of them realize this already, even more than the reported 150 who voted against the contract settlement. As one driver expressed it: "There were way more than 150 voting against. But if you hold to one side of an argument, another guy holds to another, and you put it to a vote--with him counting the ballots..."

Bolivian Trotskyist Leader Answers Mandel and Frank

The attacks launched by No. 41 of "Rouge" (Paris, December 1, 1969) against the Bolivian POR (Revolutionary Workers' Party) and against myself in particular leave me cold, but it is perhaps necessary to put things straight once again for the benefit of European militants.

1. I am in complete agreement with the communique issued by my party to unmask those adventurers who have made participation in the revolutionary movement a means to further their own ends.

I also take responsibility for the accusation that in the ranks of the Bolivian friends of Frank, Krivine, and company there are people who are well-known as police agents... I am ready to go before any jury or tribunal to prove it.

2. The text published by "Rouge" tries to make out that there took place in Bolivia a unification between the POR and the supporters of Frank and Mandel on the line supported by the self-styled "Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International" whose organ in French is called "Quatrieme Internationale." This is a further falsification.

The Bolivian supporters of Frank and Mandel adhered to our program, recognized our paper "Masas" as the organ of the party and the unification finally gave rise to a formal declaration that the POR did not belong to the so-called International of Frank and Mandel.

It rapidly proved impossible afterwards to gain any advantage whatsoever from this total capitulation of Bolivian Pabloism before the revolutionary proletarian line of the POR, for the simple reason that the militants of our party soon found out that the Pabloite group whose adhesion we had accepted was full of police agents, many of whom had been known as such since the period of the MNR government (this was true, to give only one example, of

one of the national Pabloite leaders called Silva.)

It was the militants of the POR in their entirety who decided that it was necessary to break once and for all with the Bolivian friends of Mr. Frank, in view of the advanced degree of political and moral de-



G. LORA, POR SECRETARY

generation reached by the members of this Pabloite group.

This split took place while I was in deportation in the Amazonian jungle.

3. "Rouge" is furious for the good reason that the information we have provided shows that its Bolivian agency is nothing but a party of self-seeking adventurers.

It is for this reason that it feels obliged to counterattack by treating us as a small group alienated from the masses.

If this is so, why do they take so much pains to attack us?

The history of the POR is inseparable from the history of the victories and defeats of the Bolivian people, as those who are with us as well as those who are not, our enemies as well as our friends, well know.

In order to struggle and to impose itself as the vanguard of the masses, the POR has no need for the blessing of Pierre Frank, Mandel or any other charlatan.

Guillermo Lora

LOCAL 1199 VOTES DEMONSTRATION TO DEFEND PANTHERS

BY AN 1199 MEMBER

NEW YORK -- The Guild Delegates Assembly of Local 1199 at its monthly meeting Dec. 11th, voted unanimously a recommendation to the union's Executive Council to call a demonstration to oppose the murder of the Chicago Panther leaders. The union had previously denounced the systematic frame-up and repression of the Panthers at the time Bobby Seale was on trial but had never proposed any specific action.

The motion to call the demonstration was made from the floor by a member of the Rank and File Committee of 1199. He expressed the overwhelming feeling of the delegates when he said that the attack on the Panthers was not a singling out of one organization but represented an attack on the entire trade union movement and had to be fought by all workers. "We hear a lot about racism in the labor movement but now we have an opportunity to concretely fight it."

That this was not an isolated attack was brought home earlier in the meeting in a speech by a representative of the striking G.E. workers. He explained that the G.E. workers were taking on not just General Electric but the Nixon Administration. If Nixon's policy of making the workers pay for inflation was successful at G.E., he said: "They will do the same to the rubber workers, the auto workers, the railroad workers." The G.E. strikers have been continually under attack by the cops.

Many delegates spoke in favor of the motion to the increasing discomfort of the chairman, Vice-President William Taylor. Many said that a resolution was not enough and urged more concrete action. Another delegate said that the murder of the Panthers was like the massacre at Song My in Vietnam. A delegate of South American origin told the delegates that he had seen similar repression in Latin America and that it was the task of American workers to fight back.

The 1199 leadership saw the attack as limited to civil rights and black groups, but this was clearly not the question. The vast majority of the delegates saw the attacks on the Panthers as a class attack on all workers and saw the strength of the labor movement was needed to fight them.

Taylor tried to dampen the militancy by practically pleading that such a demonstration would be a "disaster" and that only a few people would show up. Despite this the motion was passed.

Trade unionists in every part of the country must fight for similar motions to tell Nixon and the bosses that if they attack one section of the working class they will have to take on the entire trade union movement.

P.L. AND HOW IT 'FIGHTS RACISM'

BY MARK ROSENZWEIG

STONY BROOK, N.Y.-- In a last ditch effort to breathe life into the moribund Campus Worker-Student Alliance, Stony Brook SDS jumped at the opportunities for development afforded by the firing of a campus cafeteria worker last week for allegedly stealing food. Long awaited by SDS'er as the necessary justification for one of their adventures, the firing was doubly useful to them as the worker was black, an aspect which made this a perfect opportunity for putting their "Fight Racism" slogan into action. With no real program, however, for fighting racism, and no real reason for making this appear to be the central issue except their own opportunism, they immediately turned to the Black Students United, a strictly cultural-nationalist organization at Stony Brook, calling upon them to defend the worker on the basis of his being black.

At a meeting from which members of the Workers League were excluded, SDS and BSU decided on strategy and tactics--they would hurt the cafeteria bosses by wasting, spoiling and stealing food at lunch and dinner!

The more radical of these adventurers suggested stealing food for redistribution in the ghetto!

Despite the efforts of SDS to cover up its opportunist machinations by excluding the Workers League from the actual meeting with BSU and despite its attempts to explain BSU's activity as a sign of a new "working-class orientation," the very absurdity of the measures taken expose the true extent of the degeneration of the Campus Worker-Student Alliance. The accommodation to the black nationalism of BSU is truly indicative of how earnest Progressive Labor Party and its front, the CWSA, are in their criticism of nationalism and their sloganizing about fighting racism.

This most recent action taken by Stony Brook SDS marks a turn from their current union organizing efforts among cafeteria workers. It appears that they are not satisfied with playing the role of mere trade union organizers, which is, at least, valid work. For them the most important thing is building their own student movement. It is not in their interests, therefore, to REALLY or-

ganize the campus workers, for then the CWSA would have to compete with the unions for the workers' allegiance. This cafeteria demonstration over the firing of a worker is perhaps the most inane and ludicrous of their attempts to delude the workers into believing that they have no strength except in an alliance with the students, whose idea of struggle is the wasting of food!

UNIONS

It is in the unions that the workers strength lies. The CWSA can defend plenty of fired workers, but all their ranting and raving, all their urging students to "complain to the cafeteria bosses", all their puerile demonstrations will not save one worker's job or raise his pay one cent! It is quite telling that when confronted with the firing of a black worker they turned to BSU and not to the union in the first place. When they decided on their dramatic demonstration what they really demonstrated was their belief that the campus workers don't need a union at all when they have such "militant" student support.

It is the CWSA's lack of a consistent class fight that renders them impotent in a fight against racism and in fact forces them to make concessions to separatism. The fight against racism must be part and parcel of the struggle for socialism, whose program calls for the organization of workers on the basis of class, not on the basis of race.

STRUGGLE

The only way to fight racism and to defend the workers against attacks is through the fight to unite the workers around a common program of struggle. The struggle can not be conducted by abandoning the unions. At the same time a purely economic struggle is not sufficient, the fight by the American working class must be taken into the political arena with the fight for a labor party.

The Stony Brook branch of the Workers League counterposes to the futile food wasting adventures, the holding of a mass meeting of campus workers for a real push to get all these workers unionized. We urge the CWSA to join us in calling on 1199 which has already begun to sign up workers, to organize such a meeting.

'ACTION WEEK' ERUPTS AT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN



STUDENT POWERISM OF 1968 LIVES ON IN TODAY'S ADVENTURES

BY STEPHEN DIAMOND

MADISON, WISC., Dec. 16-- SDS at the University of Wisconsin has completed a "Week of Action" against ROTC and pro-imperialist research institutions on campus. The week was climaxed by an attack by 250 students on the ROTC building. The action was planned secretly by the steering committee. Though the students did not succeed in "ripping off" the building, after being repulsed by the police, they did smash the windows of other buildings.

Before the action and especially after it, the sense among SDS members was one of futility, and the action grew out of weakness, not strength. "Where do we go from here?" was the question member after member asked. Some advocated immediate "militant action," others wanted to wait until a majority of the students had been won over, but no one seemed to have much confidence in any course. The CWSA advocated tacking on its demand of free parking for University employees to the RYM demands. The YSA said no action should be taken until a united front of the campus radical groups had been built.

The sense of futility which the students felt was completely rational. None of the major SDS groupings were able to project a course which goes beyond student confrontation politics. Though they all use Marxist phrases, these phrases are torn out of the context of a working class movement and mechanically applied to a student movement, and a student movement on one campus at that. Whether a majority is won, whether trade unionist demands are raised, whether a "united front" is constituted, all are irrelevant when we are talking about a parochial student movement.

Purely student movements can only vacillate between insane RYM confrontation adventures, pitiful YSA protests, or moralistic CWSA social work crusades. Students must realize that their own radicalization did not occur in a social vacuum, that it is simply a symptom of growing unrest in labor. Frenzied acts of student hooliganism can only divide workers and students. The only way out for students is to become part of the working class movement by joining the party of the working class.

Bulletin

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FASCISM AND THE

GERMAN WORKING CLASS 1930-1933

PART FOUR--STALINISM BETRAYS GERMAN WORKERS

FROM AUGUST 1914, no revolutionary Marxist has placed any confidence in the ability of social democracy either to win new victories for the working class or to defend the gains of the past.

From 1919, with the founding of the Third International, the struggle for power was to be entrusted, in Germany as in the other major capitalist states, to the newly-formed communist parties.

After its fusion with the left wing of the centrist-led Independent Social-Democratic Party (USPD) in 1920, the German Communist Party (KPD) brought into its ranks the advanced guard of the German working class—some 350,000 members.

The early years of the Party nevertheless found it unprepared to lead the great revolutionary struggles unleashed by the war and its aftermath. Decapitated in 1919 by the murder of its two finest leaders—Karl Leibknecht and Rosa Luxemburg—not to speak of the thousands of nameless communist workers also done to death by the counter-revolutionary Freikorps, the Party began the long and theoretically exacting task of assembling and training a revolutionary leadership that could break the grip of social democracy on the working class.

Its first attempts to do this were sectarian and adventurist in the extreme. The KPD leadership seized on a partial, if sharp struggle of mine-workers in central Germany and attempted to convert the strike into a national uprising. The vast bulk of the working class were caught off balance by this sudden turn, made without preparation by the KPD, and ignored, with one or two exceptions, the call of the Party for revolution.

A whole theory was built around these leftist tactics, the theory of the 'offensive' whereby a minority of the working class, impelled forward by the Party, throws itself against the state power of the ruling class, thus 'galvanizing' the passive majority of the working class into action.

These suicidal tactics would, of course, have wrecked the Party's mass basis in a matter of months had not the leadership of the Communist International sounded the alarm and, after a prolonged debate at the Third Congress, won the Party for a new line.

United Front

That was the tactic of the United Front, a policy designed to break the stranglehold of social democracy on the working class through a series of united actions, party to party, for partial issues, in which the rank-and-file reformist or centrist workers could test out for themselves both the sincerity of their leaders and the respective merits of the rival organizations.

The purpose and limits of the United Front were very clearly laid down in a document issued by the Executive Committee of the Communist International in December, 1921:

'The principal conditions which are equally categorical for communist parties are the absolute independence of every communist party which

Stalin, shown here with Bukarin, was the architect of the policies of the German Communist Party which paved the way for the victory of Hitler

A series of six articles

by **ROBERT BLACK**





Eight days before Hitler came to power the Nazis held a demonstration (above) outside Communist Party's Berlin headquarters. At left is

Ernst Thaelmann, leader of the German Communist Party



reformist parties. Big inroads had been made into the ranks of social democracy, as in Germany, but these were not yet decisive. Only through **experience** of the inadequacies of their own parties could these workers be won for revolution.

Hence the United Front, hence the joint conference in Berlin on April 2, 1922, of representatives from the Third, Second and centrist internationals, which agreed to a series of demands which were to be fought for jointly by the various internationals:

- For the eight-hour day.
- For the struggle against unemployment.
- For the united action of the proletariat against the capitalist offensive.
- For the Russian Revolution, for starving Russia, for the resumption by all countries of political and economic relations with Russia.
- For the re-establishment of the united proletarian front in every country and in the International.

Not one of these demands involved a surrender on principle or demanded a merging of organizational independence. But what they did do was commit the leaders of social democracy to certain partial struggles that would draw their members into everyday action alongside revolutionary workers. Above all, it proved to the whole working class that the communists were not the opponents of class unity, while at the same time reserving for their own Party the right to independent action and criticism at all times.

It is important to bring out the history and theoretical basis of the Leninist United Front in order to contrast it with the policies pursued by the Stalin-

ist-led KPD after 1928. For in that year, the Stalinist faction began a violent turn to the left after three years of close collaboration with the pro-rich peasant faction around Bukharin, who in 1926 replaced Zinoviev as the chairman of the Communist International.

Their confidence strengthened by the rightward drift in economic policy over the previous few years, the capitalist elements in the towns linked up with the rich peasantry (kulaks) in the countryside to demand even more concessions from the Stalin-Bukharin ruling bloc.

The right-wing group led by Bukharin advocated even more economic concessions to the kulaks, concessions which put in jeopardy the conquests of the Revolution in the countryside. Stalin's faction, which had fought together with the right group against the common enemy—the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky—sensed the dangers implicit in further concession to the upper stratum in town and country. What these forces desired was nothing less than the overthrow of the bureaucracy and a return to capitalist property relations, together with a resumption of direct links with the world market.

During 1928, a bitter faction fight, partially masked, proceeded inside the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. Not even waiting for final victory, Stalin began the first of his punitive measures against the richer peasantry, forcibly confiscating their grain, often at gun point.

From 1929, the Soviet countryside was the battlefield of another civil war, a bloody struggle in which countless millions of peasants, many by no means kulaks, died as a result of the bureaucratic, planless and panicky attempts to collectivize the peasantry.

Parallel with the collectivization and industrialization in the Soviet Union (carried out at a crazy tempo that threatened to pull the entire economy apart) was the political battle in the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International. As head of the Comintern after 1926, Bukharin had assembled factions in each section which favoured his conciliatory policies. In the capitalist states, this was reflected not in a pro-kulak deviation, but in adaptation to social democracy.

After 1928 and the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, Stalin began the offensive against Bukharin's supporters.

A new line was now laid down. The 'Second Period' of capitalist 'stabilization' was over. The 'Third Period' of final downfall was at hand. It was the bureaucrat Molotov who now replaced Bukharin as head of the Stalinist-controlled International. From 1929 on, ultra-radicalism was to be the order of the day.

Social democracy was now no longer presented as an uncertain ally, as had been the case under Bukharin, but rather as a tendency completely outside the workers' movement. In the words of Stalin:

'Objectively, the social democracy is the moderate wing of fascism. . . . These two organizations are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary are mutually complementary. They are not antipodes but twins. Fascism is a shapeless bloc of these two organizations. . . .'

This gibberish, which only in the thrice-purged ranks of the Comintern leadership could pass unchallenged as Marxist theory, was to be the theoretical diet of the KPD in the vital years from 1929 to 1933, the years that saw not the coming together of the 'shapeless bloc' of social democracy and fascism, but the physical shattering of German reformism in all its aspects by the Nazi terror.

Stalin's theory of fascism and 'social fascism' (as he dubbed the reformist parties) made it impossible to achieve the type of fighting unity in the working class that had been the goal of the Leninist International from 1921. The Stalinist theory of 'social fascism', far from undermining the grip of reform-

ism in the German working class, buttressed it, as we shall prove.

The real menace of the genuine fascists, the Nazi party, was of course obscured by the absurd contention that the SPD was a mass fascist party. Once the SPD had been designated fascist, it naturally absolved the KPD leadership from any responsibility to unite with it. The task was solved quite neatly on paper:

'In countries where there are strong social-democratic parties, fascism assumes the particular form of social fascism.' (Why then the need for Hitler?)

Indeed, the leaders of the SPD were 'now through the mouth of Wells threatening the German working class with open fascist dictatorship'. Apart from this statement begging the question of what is a **concealed** fascist dictatorship, it failed to point out how these fascist leaders had for so long managed to keep the main bulk of the working class out of the KPD.

'Third-period'

Moreover, the theory of 'social fascism' was a complete break with Leninism, which had analysed the reformists as a bourgeois tendency **within** the labour movement. If the Stalinists were consistent, the KPD was the only genuine workers' party left in Germany. What need therefore of the United Front? And by the same token, if the SPD was now fascist, so too were the trade unions. And sure enough, this also was asserted by the lunatics of the 'Third Period':

'The social-fascist trade union bureaucracy is, during the period of sharpening economic battles, completely going over to the side of the big bourgeoisie.'

But did not the bureaucracy always serve the capitalist class? That was so in the time of Lenin, and even of Marx and Engels. Yet these theoreticians did not, for all the treacherous policies of their leaderships, declare these organizations to be fascist, or bodies of a non-proletarian nature.

And neither always did Stalin. As late as 1926, Stalin, through the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee, was to remain in a bloc with the 'social fascists' right through their sell-out of the British General Strike, **against** the protests of Trotsky. Now Stalin swung round to the opposite extreme—but still, in a different way, to remain the defender of social democracy.

The central task before the KPD after 1929 was to mobilize the **whole** German working class against the Nazi threat. Fascism could only be defeated and the German Revolution carried through after the split in the ranks of the workers was overcome and the grip of social democracy broken. The crisis of 1929 presented the KPD with a golden opportunity to break the grip of reformism in Germany, while at the same times drawing the entire working class into the United Front against fascism.

It was in the specific, concrete combination of these two tasks—the undermining of social democracy in the battle against fascism—that the KPD failed to carry through the task which it was set at the founding congress of the party in 1919.

Only Trotsky, in exile on the island of Prinkipo, really grasped the full significance of the 1930 elections. The KPD leader Thaelmann belittled the Nazi vote (over 6 million):

'We insist soberly and seriously that September 14 was, so to speak, Hitler's best day; and that no better will follow, rather worse.'

Grave warning

Trotsky insisted the results were a grave warning to the KPD:

'1. A deep national crisis (economy, international situation) is unquestionably ahead. There appears

to be no way out along the normal road of the bourgeois parliamentary regime.

2. The political crisis of the ruling class and its system of government is absolutely indubitable. This is not a parliamentary crisis, but a crisis of class rule.

3. The revolutionary class, however, is still deeply split by internal contradictions. The strengthening of the revolutionary party at the expense of the reformists is, as yet, at its inception and has been proceeding thus far at a tempo which is far from corresponding with the depth of the crisis.

4. The petty bourgeoisie, at the very beginning of the crisis, has already assumed a position antagonistic to the **present system** of capitalist rule, but at the same time mortally hostile to the proletarian revolution.'

Here were all the elements of the problem before the KPD: To overcome the split in the ranks of the working class, and then to weld it into a decisive force that could then break the back of the fascists, attracting to the working class all those sections of the population hostile to the old forms of capitalist rule, but side-tracked by the demagogy and racialism of the Nazis into a position hostile to revolution.

Despite the KPD's Stalinist leadership, Trotsky patiently, through the German Left Opposition's journal 'Die Permanente Revolution', worked to win the Party for a correct, Leninist line.

Trotsky hammered home again and again that the refusal of the KPD leadership to enter into United Front relations with the leaders of the SPD only prevented the rank-and-file reformist workers from putting their own leaders to the test. The theory of social fascism, Trotsky insisted, led to three mistakes.

1. It was based on the assumption that with the victory of fascism, there would be no conflict between the Nazis in power and the various reformist organizations (the SPD, the trade unions, etc.). May 1933 was to prove how wrong that assumption was.

2. 'Social fascism' insisted that there could be no United Front agreements with the leaders of the SPD. There could be only the United Front 'from below', a policy that was nothing short of an ultimatum to rank-and-file SPD workers to break the discipline of their organizations in joining with the KPD in class actions, or stand condemned as accomplices of 'social fascism'.

3. It failed to take advantage of the contradiction between fascism and the reformist organizations (revealed openly in May 1933) which daily posed the alternatives before the reformist leaders—fight or be crushed.

As Trotsky pointed out, the SPD workers remained in their party, with all their misgivings, because they trusted it more than the KPD. That false trust could not be undermined by propaganda alone, any more than it could be by abuse or a catalogue of

their leaders' crimes. Far from attracting, it repelled the rank-and-file worker, as the election figures for the entire period prove.

The Leninist tactic of the United Front had to be employed, drawing the reformist workers into struggles in which the respective merits and weaknesses of the rival parties and programmes could be tested out. Then the anti-reformist propaganda of the KPD could begin to bear fruit as it began to tie in with the real experiences of reformist vacillation and downright treachery. Common action was a desperate necessity in Germany after 1929. Guards on workers' meetings and demonstrations, the protection of printing presses, premises and the like—all were called for during the fascist offensive against the labour movement.

And they were not only felt to be necessary by workers in both parties—they demanded the type of united class action that would rapidly expose the more moderate sections of the SPD and union leadership, and create deep splits within the ranks of German reformists.

Referendum

How did the KPD react to its first opportunity to put the United Front into action after 1929?

As early as 1930, the Nazis and Nationalists had begun a campaign to unseat the Social-Democratic administration in the state of Prussia (finally achieved by the Papen coup of July 1932).

In accordance with the constitution, they began to rally support for a referendum, which, if successful, would depose the Braun government and install direct presidential rule. The first instinctive response by the KPD leadership was to denounce the referendum:

'This move of the Nazis has the sole aim of preparing the ground for the fascist dictatorship', declared a KPD deputy in the Prussian Diet [despite the fact that his party held the view that the Prussian government was **already** fascist]. 'We communists refuse to be partners in this deception.'

Even as late as April 1931 (three months before the referendum) the KPD demanded of the working class: 'Not one worker's vote for the fascist referendum'.

Then instructions came from the Communist International leadership in Moscow that far from refusing to be partners in the deception the KPD was to canvass with the Nazis for the referendum to turn out the 'social fascists'.

Now came a turn in the KPD that signified that the Kremlin had already settled for a Nazi victory. Not for the first time, the KPD press carried propaganda that was almost identical to that of the Nazis. Just before the 1930 Nazi election victory, the KPD headed its press: 'For the National and Social Liberation of the German People'. But then this nationalist line, an attempt to outbid the Nazis, was dropped.

But in 1931, it made a sickening come-back. The KPD journal 'Fanfare' for August 1 carried a picture of

Lieutenant Scheringer, a Nazi officer who had come over to the KPD. Under the picture were the Prussian officer's thoughts on why Germans should vote for the KPD-Nazi referendum:

'Whoever opposes the people's revolution [a demagogic Nazi term] and the revolutionary war of liberation, betrays the cause of the fallen who in the last war [denounced by all German Marxists as imperialist] gave their lives for a free Germany.'

As the Comintern leader Piatnitsky commented after the referendum (boycotted by the workers of both parties):

'The KPD leadership was opposed to participation in the referendum on the dissolution of the Prussian Landtag. . . . But after the central committee, in consultation with the Comintern, reached the conclusion that the Party should take part in the referendum, our German comrades managed in a few days to get the entire Party on its feet. . . . It shows that the KPD knew how to manoeuvre.'

It also showed that the gulf between the SPD workers and the KPD was wider than ever. Support for a fascist vote against their own Party was not the best way to prepare a United Front—even from below.

This was not all. Unable to rally any section of the middle class against the Nazis (because of its inability to achieve **first of all** unity within the working class) the KPD, while boycotting all united action with the SPD, invited the Nazi leaders, Goebbels and Otto Strasser, to write in a discussion supplement to its evening paper, 'Welt am Abend'. A chauvinist pamphlet 'Soviet Germany breaks the fetters of the Young Plan', apart from mimicking the Nazis' promise to smash the 'Versailles system', also made the telling point that there were no Jews on the central committee of the KPD, and only one in its Reichstag delegation.

How could the KPD fight the poison of Nazi racialism and nationalism if that very same virus was permitted to thrive inside the KPD itself?

Rift hardens

By 1932, the rift in the working class was hardening. The Papen coup in Prussia proved how small was the impact on the SPD workers and trade unionists. So thoroughly imbued were even many rank-and-file KPD members with the theory of social fascism that the news of the fall of the Braun government was greeted with cheering in KPD meetings, even while their leaders were issuing a strike call to save the Prussian 'social fascists' from Papen (whom the KPD leaders also wrongly described as a fascist).

Earlier, a whole theory had been developed to justify support for open Nazi regimes rather than the 'social fascist' type:

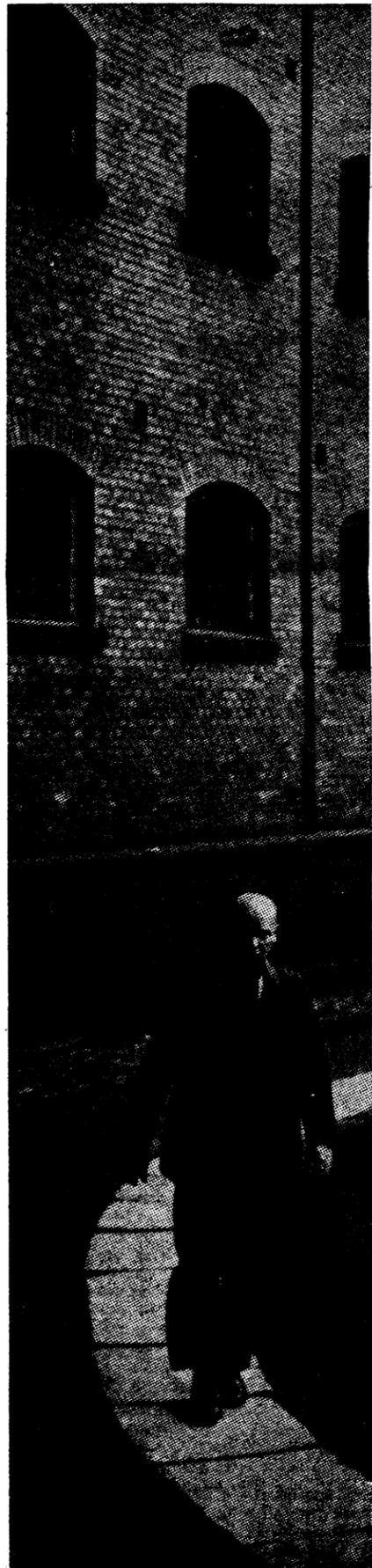
'An SPD coalition government, confronted by a proletariat that is disunited, confused and unable to struggle, would be a thousand times greater evil than an openly fascist dictatorship confronted by a class-conscious people determined to fight.'

Yet now the KPD called a strike in defence of and made united front proposals with the very party they had been condemning as fascist for the previous three years!

Small wonder that the working class remained 'disunited, confused, and unable to struggle'. The main force in keeping them in that state of weakness was the criminal policies not only of the SPD and the trade unions, but of the KPD.

Still Trotsky sought to warn the rank-and-file Party workers of the full implications of a fascist victory:

'The coming to power of the Nazis would mean above all the extermination of the flower of the German proletariat, the disruption of its organizations, the extirpation of its belief in itself and its future.



Ernst Thaelmann, German Communist Party leader in 1933 takes his daily exercise in Moabit prison, Berlin

With an uncanny premonition of the Nazi death camps, Trotsky implored the KPD to change its suicidal course:

'The hellish work of Italian fascism would probably appear as a pale and almost human experiment in comparison with the work of the German Nazis. Worker communists, you are thousands, millions, you cannot leave for any place. There are not enough passports for you. Should fascism come to power, it will ride over your skulls and spines like a terrific tank.'

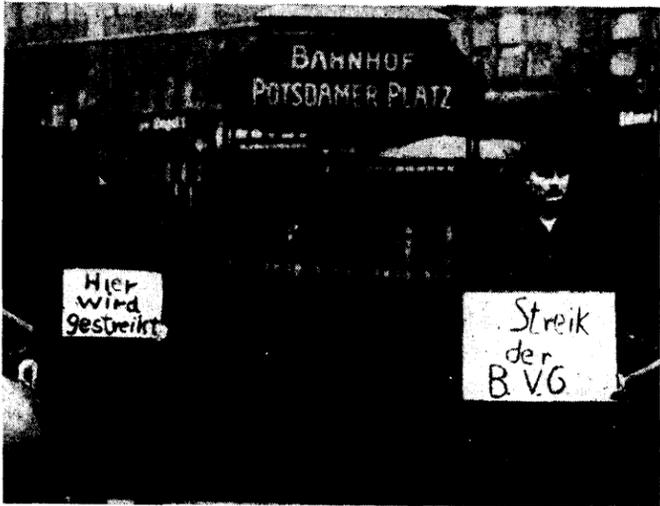
But the bureaucracy not only refused to change its course, even to save its own skin. (Like the reformist bureaucracy, they could not see their own extinction approaching even when it stared them in their faces.)

It even denounced Trotsky as a fascist:

'Trotsky always gives but one reply. "The German working class must make a bloc with the SPD." In framing this bloc, Trotsky sees the only way for completely saving the German working class against fascism. "Either the German CP will make a bloc with the SPD or the German working class is lost for 10-20 years." This is the theory of a completely ruined fascist and

SA members who were allowed to join the police force wasted no time in 1933 rounding up Communist Party members





Joint strike of Communists and Nazis in November 1932 was conducted against Berlin transit system.

counter-revolutionary. This theory is the worst theory, the most dangerous theory and the most criminal that Trotsky has constructed in the last year of his counter-revolutionary propaganda.'

In place of Trotsky's proposal for a United Front with the SPD, Thaelmann proposed that KPD workers 'chase the social fascists from their jobs in the plants and the unions', while the children of Party members were instructed to 'chase the little social fascists in the schools and the playgrounds'.

This was the contribution of the KPD leadership in the struggle for working-class unity in the last months before Hitler came to power.

At the beginning of November 1932, with negotiations reaching fever pitch amongst the clashing wings of the German ruling class as to the advisability of a Nazi regime, the KPD drove another nail into its own coffin. The Berlin transport workers had just undergone a wage cut and on a ballot had failed to reach the two-thirds majority required for strike action. The KPD then launched into an adventurist strike—with full Nazi party backing.

After several days of violent clashes with police and social-democratic workers who opposed the strike (it was obviously a Nazi pre-election stunt to rally their dwindling support amongst the working class) the strike was called off by the Nazis. Their big business backers had taken fright at this display of radicalism and were threatening to withdraw support.

But the damage had been done. Once again, adventurist actions, aimed against the SPD as its main enemy and not the Nazis, had deepened the gulf in the working class. The KPD leaders were doing Hitler's work for him.

With Hitler's appointment as Chancellor on January 30, 1933, the KPD performed another somersault. It made a United Front appeal to the 'social-fascist' leaders against the Nazis and promptly withdrew it as soon as the SPD leaders began to discuss concrete details.

Following the Reichstag fire and the terror election of March 5, Hitler's victory was converted into a KPD triumph:

'The calm (sic) that has succeeded

the triumph of fascism is only a transitory phenomenon. Despite fascist terror, the revolutionary surge in Germany will rise, the revolutionary resistance of the masses to fascism is bound to grow. The establishment of the open fascist dictatorship, which is destroying all democratic illusions among the masses and liberating them from social-democratic influence, is accelerating the rate of Germany's advance towards the proletarian revolution.' (Emphasis added.)

Heckert, one of the KPD leaders responsible for the defeat of the working class, even went so far as to dismiss the massacre of thousands of Party members as of no consequence:

'The talk about the German Communists being defeated and dead is the gossip of Philistines, of idiotic and ignorant people. The jailing (sic) of a few thousand communists cannot kill a Party with a following of five millions. Instead of those who have been arrested, the politically and culturally highly-trained German working class develops new forces and will always develop them. . . .'

But the spine of the German working class had been broken, for it found its only expression through the once great labour movement that the Nazi bands were, while Heckert wrote smugly from the safety of Switzerland, tearing to pieces in the slave camps and the

torture chambers of the Gestapo.

This was the culmination of the Stalinist line: 'After Hitler, our turn'. Yet, final irony, thousands of leading, as well as rank-and-file members of the KPD, went to their deaths side by side with members of a party they had always trained their own comrades to call 'social fascist'.

But the hollowness of Stalin's theory was evident to them too late. The damage had been done. The Nazis were in power, and used it to the full, converting the whole of Germany into one vast concentration camp for the working class. It had millions of willing jailers—the hordes of anti-communist, middle-class storm-troopers, whose frustrations with the 'system' were worked off on the tortures, beatings and lynchings of the working-class militants who, in the eyes of the Nazi-fied middle class, were agents of the 'international Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy'.

Even after the obvious collapse of the social-fascist line, the Stalinist leadership of the Comintern continued to defend its suicidal course:

'Having heard comrade Heckert's report on the situation in Germany, the Presidium of the CI [which included British Stalinists Harry Pollitt and Page Arnot, as well as Stalin, the main architect of Hitler's victory] states that the political line and the organizational policy followed by the Central Committee of the KPD . . . up to the Hitler coup and at the moment it occurred, was completely correct.'

If that be the case, then the Nazi victory was inevitable, for no communist would expect the reformists to lead a struggle against the Nazis.

4th International

Thus all had their alibis. The SPD leaders claimed that Hitler cheated by breaking the constitution (he did not) and that the KPD would not accept unity against the Nazis. For their part, the Stalinists denounced the reformists as being accomplices of Hitler (accomplices that nevertheless ended up inside Hitler's prisons) and saboteurs of the

struggle against Hitler. Trotsky summed up their dual responsibility in the following words:

'No policy of the Communist Party could, of course have transformed the Social-Democracy into a party of revolution. But neither was that the aim. It was necessary to exploit to the limit the contradiction between reformism and fascism—in order to weaken fascism, at the same time weakening reformism by exposing to the working class the incapacity of the Social-Democratic leadership. These two tasks fused into one. The policy of the Communist International bureaucracy led to the opposite result: the capitulation of the reformists served the interests of fascism and not of communism; the Social-Democratic workers remained with their leaders, the Communist workers lost faith in themselves and in the leadership.'

The KPD, as the leading section of the Communist International outside of the Soviet Union, had failed the working class just as German Social-Democrats had betrayed on the outbreak of the First World War. The capitulation of Stalinism to the Nazis, however much masked behind left phrases, proved the International to be as dead as its forerunner for the purposes of revolution.

The collapse of the KPD had but one lesson for Trotsky. He had to break from his previous policy of attempting to reform the old International through the Left Opposition. That opposition now had to proclaim, and become the nucleus of, the Fourth International.

With the Nazi victory of March 1933, both Social-Democracy and Stalinism had proved themselves counter-revolutionary agencies inside the working class.

It was and remains the task of the Fourth International to destroy their influence, thus clearing the way for the socialist revolution.

Part Five of the Robert Black series, "The Working Class in the Third Reich", will appear in next week's issue of the BULLETIN.

Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International conducted lone battle for correct policy to defeat Nazis. As a result of this experience Trotsky concluded Third International could not be reformed and Fourth International must be built



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CRISIS IN MARITIME



PART TWO

(CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE)

BY DAN FRIED

The mad race to introduce the latest equipment and technology in shipping and the docks--all designed to transport MORE cargo with ever FEWER port workers, who are to be forced onto the industrial scrapheap if private enterprise continues to operate the docks--means that in the container age, only 25 modern container ships will be needed to carry the entire U.S.-European general cargo trade. All the efforts to counteract competition and the threat of a "rate war" between container companies and consortia are doomed to break down. The present "conference system" which operates on the basis of the biggest firms meeting regularly to reach agreements on rates and prices as well as the partition of trade routes, cannot withstand the constant drive to invest and re-invest in new "modernized" equipment and facilities in order to grab a bigger share of the profits. The Times of London says that... "the experts ... forecast a competitive blow up on the North Atlantic... By the early 1970s there could well be an excess of container capacity which could lead to a rate war and a possible breakdown of the conference system."

The "competitive blow up on the North Atlantic" that is "forecast" is already here and will not be confined to the North Atlantic alone. The frantic race to corner the Australian trade between the rival European and Scandinavian consortia is just the beginning. The "container revolution," in a matter of days, has turned into a container crisis. There is no solution to this crisis under capitalist private ownership. The Workers Press, organ of the Socialist Labour League in England, asks: "Does a vicious container war break out between the two consortia or do the Scandinavians get a cut of the 14 ships? At this rate, some firms could be left controlling only part of a ship. If one firm controls the engine room while another dominates the bridge, differences over sailing dates and ports of call could well reach calamitous proportions."

WAR

The container war means that firms rushing to acquire the most modern and efficient equipment may very quickly find that their "most modern and efficient equipment" is already obsolete by the time it has been delivered. On the very same day that the Scandinavian consortium, Scanaustral, announced its order for the very "latest" ships (roll on-roll off, semi-container vessels), the British company, Vickers, announced its own plans for a nuclear-powered container ship which, it is claimed, would have a substantial economic edge over any rivals using traditional fuels. Another example of obsoles-

all over the world — dockworkers under attack

cence piled upon obsolescence, described by G. Van den Berg in his book "Containerization--A Modern Transport System", is that of one firm which got in on the ground floor in the container race and, by 1966 had acquired 18,000 containers built to its own specifications of 35 ft. x 8 ft. x 8 ft 6 inches. But they were soon left holding the bag. The container revolution passed them by as, according to Van den Berg, these containers are now "outdated by the quantity of ships on order and under construction to handle exclusively 20 ft and 40 ft containers."

The largest and most modern ships now afloat are nothing compared to the plans soon to be on the drawing boards. It is now technically possible to build one million ton bulk carriers as well as nuclear powered ships that would have to refuel only once every four years. The plans for containerized transport do not stop at the water's edge. Plans are now under way for the container revolution to go airborne. A commercial version of the U.S. Army's Lockheed C-5A, a virtual freighttrain in the sky, is projected for the early '70s. This plane will be capable of handling 157.5 million tons of cargo per year. The entire volume of the North Atlantic airborne trade could be carried by only 11 Lockheeds.

DOCK LOADING

Van den Berg draws a picture of the fully automated dock loading and unloading system which the employers are building all over the world. Here, there is no room for the docker on the dock at all, as the giant gantry cranes drop containers onto conveyor belts which carry them off to be stacked automatically in a "multitoto store" until they are shipped further by road or rail transport. Under capitalism, all these fantastic achievements of science and technology are only used for the profit of the employers and against all the port workers, merchant seamen, and other transport workers who are cast aside as "redundant." Only through the nationalization of all port facilities under control of the workers and with no compensation to the employers, can these technological achievements be used FOR the workers and the whole of society.

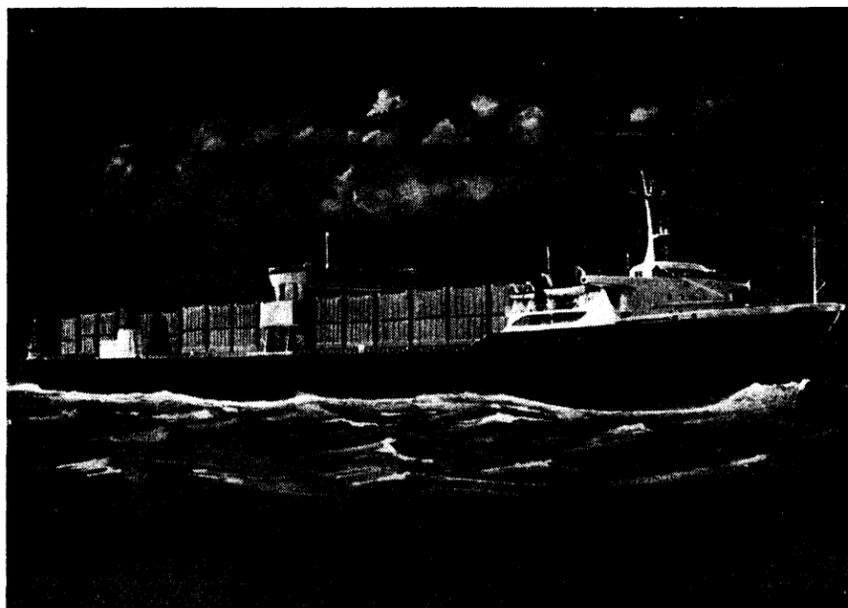
The elimination of the docker from the docks is already under way all over the world. In order to offset the huge investment costs in the new equipment, the port employers have already pushed a tremendous number of dockers out of their jobs in ports throughout the world. Where the unions are weak, the bosses have attacked directly, but where the workers are strong they have used more devious methods. The methods range from outright dismissal to severance pay and "early retirement" schemes without replacement by new men (attrition). In ports like London and New York and others where the unions are strong, "guaranteed-income" systems have been proposed or actually set up as the price the employers are prepared to pay to gain the acceptance of containerization by the unions. But once having brought containerization into being, the employers prepare plans to get around the guarantees or scrap them entirely. Even though the number of longshoremen has been cut in the Port of New York by 30% since 1959, ILA union leaders admit that the number of men on the New York docks will be cut

by another 50% in the future. Even though New York has gone further than any other port in the world with containerization (based on the container facilities in the New Jersey section of the port) an ILO (International Labor Organization) report on containerization says that "additional vessel berths for the new generation container ships are under way or planned, representing an ultimate Port Authority investment of 175 million dollars."

In Britain and Europe there is a similar development. In Rotterdam, 3,000 dockers representing 20% of the labor force are to be eliminated by 1975. In Britain, the ILO report forecasts a reduction of dockworkers by 16,500 men, or 30% by 1970. In London alone, since the spring of 1967, six docks have been closed entirely and the latest reports are that the Surrey docks are to be closed

to work shifts and keep the dock running 24 hours a day, preferably to be on call during this time." The report claims that 75% of a ship's time in port could be eliminated if the 24 hour day, 7 day week were adopted. On top of this, the employers aim for complete "flexibility" of labor where "there is no obstacle to shifting men from hatch to hatch, from one ship to another, from ship to shore and from job to job."

The aims of the shipping combines, of the transportation cartels, of the entire ruling class of every capitalist country, is clearly to "modernize" the docks at the expense of the health and welfare of the workers. But the dock workers will not be ground down and thrown onto the scrapheap without resistance and struggle by the dockers and other transport workers. This we



LASH SHIPS CARRY BARGES THAT ARE FLOATING CONTAINERS

down. In the case of one of these docks, Hays Wharf, 276 men were dismissed on its subsidiary Mark Brown dock last May. These men got only about \$120 severance pay! The remaining 1,050 men were forced to sign statements promising not to take part in industrial disputes, and to submit to so-called "modernization" plans which mean, in effect, more work from less workers using the same equipment. The closure of the Mark Brown's dock is only one example of how the employers use the fear of unemployment to get concessions out of the dock unions.

The employers try to encourage competition between ports, holding the threat of port closures and "runaway docks" over the heads of the dockers in order to destroy the working conditions of those who still have jobs. As a result, the bosses have been able to reduce the size of work gangs. In Finland, for example, they were able to reduce the gangs from 9-11 men to 4 or 5. Madras, India cut the gang size from 15 to 11, while in Singapore a 13 man gang replaced the previous gang of 17. With containerization, gangs are even smaller. Bremen has a standard gang of 13 working containers. In New York, even though there are 17 man gangs, the Shipping Association claims that gangs of only 8 men are all that are needed for containerized cargo, and there is no doubt they will do their best to reduce the gangs to this figure.

The ILO report outlines the goal of the port employers in the container age of the creation of a dock labor force composed of "a small group of highly mobile men prepared

have seen not only in the U.S., Britain and Sweden, but also in many other countries from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Venezuela and the African nations where dockers have fought back against containerization. As we said in the last issue of the Bulletin, by continuing their ban on the Tilbury container terminal, the British dockers have shown the way. With the backing of the Belgian and Dutch dockers they have struck a blow for dockers the world over.

Only the unity of portworkers in every country and with the other workers in the transport industry can stop the drive of the capitalist combines, backed by the governments, to "modernize" at the expense of the workers. The Workers League proposes as an alternative to the bosses' plans a united struggle for the nationalization of the docks and shipping under workers control and without compensation to the employers, as a fundamental part of the fight for socialism.

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PREPARE THE FOURTH CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT

A call from the International Committee of the Fourth International

THE WORLD political situation continues to be dominated by the French events of May-June 1968 and the subsequent fall of Gaullist Bonapartism and the deepening crisis of the Kremlin bureaucracy following its unsuccessful attempt to crush the Czechoslovak working class by military intervention.

On the basis of the General Strike of May-June 1968, with its consequences for all the advanced capitalist countries, and of the entry of the Czech masses on to the road of political revolution, the dominant political trend, concentrated on Europe, can be considered to be a general upsurge of the working class.

The revolutionary crisis which followed the Second World War surged through the open breaches in imperialism, notably of the old imperialist powers of Europe, whether in the camp of the 'victors' or the vanquished.

With the aid of the Kremlin bureaucracy, the world bourgeoisie, grouped behind American imperialism, was able to contain the revolutionary wave, though not without taking some heavy blows and suffering defeats.

It lost eastern Europe, which passed under the control of the Kremlin bureaucracy. It was unable to prevent the victory of the Chinese Revolution.

Important concessions had to be made to the working class in western Europe.

Revolutionary developments took place in a number of economically backward countries dominated by imperialism.

Since then no decisive defeat has been inflicted on the working class anywhere in the world.

The limits of the precarious

equilibrium established after the Second World War were defined in the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. It was nevertheless maintained, despite being constantly called into question, by the strength and resources of American imperialism and the political power of the bureaucracy.

The character of the efforts needed to maintain this equilibrium meanwhile prepared the way for its destruction.

The enormous resources and power of US imperialism made it the pillar of world imperialism. The disproportion between this power and the decadence of the imperialist powers of Europe and Japan (victors no less than vanquished) seemed to place on the agenda the need for some form of 'super-imperialism' in which the ruling classes of Europe and Japan would sink to the level of comprador bourgeoisies. But this was not to be.

While the European ruling classes in particular were irremediably decadent, the European working class constitutes a powerful, organic unity with a rich class tradition and a high level of political consciousness.

To reduce the European bourgeoisies to comprador status, dependent upon American masters, would require, in the course of terrible class struggles, the destruction of the European working class. To avoid such struggles, which the European bourgeoisies were incapable of waging successfully, the American imperialists had to restore the European ruling class, help them reconstitute their states and rebuild their economies.

That was the alternative to the crushing of the working class.

American imperialism thus drew into itself the contradictions of decadent European capitalism and intensified its own. As the price of its own survival, American imperialism nourished the parasitism of the whole of world capitalism.

The crisis of the dollar and of the world monetary system shows that the account is now falling due for payment. Behind the 'crisis of the balance of payments' stand all the social contradictions of world capitalism.

The historical contradictions

of European capitalism remain unresolved: indeed, they are intensified as a result of the way in which it was given new shape on the old basis and aggravated by the division of Europe into two antagonistic social systems and the loss of assured outlets in the colonial empire.

There is always a 'solution' to the crises of imperialism. A 'solution' could be found by liquidating part of the fictitious accumulated capital consisting of nothing but book entries, by opening up markets and investment fields in the workers' states or by turning the arms economy into a war economy.

Such 'solutions' would require heavy class war against the working class in the advanced countries of capitalism and in the workers' states.

A more or less protracted war of extermination would be required against the Soviet Union and China.

Whole populations would have to be wiped out in the economically backward countries. European and Japanese capitalism would have to be subordinated to American imperialism.

All layers of the bourgeoisie in all countries, including the USA, would have to be subordinated to the 'strong state' embodying the general 'historic' interests of monopoly capital.

The present social and political equilibrium is intolerable for imperialism. Simply to maintain it means in the short term an unprecedented economic, social and political crisis.

The crisis of imperialism is intimately linked to the crisis of the Kremlin bureaucracy whose political power reached its high point at the time of Yalta and Potsdam and has since continuously declined.

These crises interact. The political power of the Kremlin bureaucracy stems from definite relations established before the Second World War and extended by the victory over German imperialism which cost 20 million lives, the real sacrifice of the Soviet working class.

It rests on the relations it has established with the Soviet working class, with the international working class through the Communist Party appar-

atus and with the victorious Allied powers in stemming the revolutionary upsurge which followed the imperialist war.

The instability of the relations established between the bureaucracy and the victor powers was quickly revealed. The world balance was altered by the assumption of power by the Chinese CP against Stalin's wishes.

The split with the Yugoslav Party and the development of the Cold War also indicated how unstable these relations were and how they tended to deteriorate to the detriment of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The purges in the East European countries and in the Soviet Union between 1948 and 1953 marked a worsening of the crisis. It became still more acute on Stalin's death and the revolutionary explosions in East Berlin in June, 1953.

It sharpened to a new pitch in 1956 with the denunciation of Stalin by the bureaucracy itself and the revolutionary outbreaks in Poland and Hungary.

The split between the Kremlin and the Chinese bureaucracy carried it to a new paroxysm.

Since then the whole international apparatus of Stalinism has been cracking. The crisis now rages in the highest spheres of the bureaucracy which tends to break up into its component parts.

At the base of the crisis of the bureaucracy and its international apparatus lies the impossibility of preserving the equilibrium with imperialism which it thought had been established at Yalta and Potsdam. In fact imperialism has never ceased its pressure—economic, military and political—on the USSR and the countries of Eastern Europe.

The European working class is in latent conflict with the policies of the Communist Parties as well as with the reformist bureaucracies.

The defence of the Chinese Revolution conflicts with the interests of the Chinese bureaucracy as well as more directly with those of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The extension of the social relations born of the October Revolution to eastern Europe is in conflict with the retention

of the privileges and power enjoyed by the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The development of the productive forces of the USSR and the countries of eastern Europe becomes incompatible with the bureaucratic administration of economic planning, with the 'norms' of the construction of socialism in one country.

For the plan to develop the many inter-related sectors of an increasingly complex and diversified economy it must be elaborated, controlled and applied by all the producers.

This can only be done if the working class overthrows the political power of the parasitic bureaucracy and regenerates the workers' state.

The Soviet economy must be integrated with the international division of labour, not as it is at present, conditioned by the needs of imperialism, but as part of a planned world economy.

This requires the seizure of power by the working class in all the principal countries. But the bureaucracies are tied historically to the national state soil on which they grew up and upon which their existence depends.

They are therefore violently opposed to the extension of the proletarian revolution since this would destroy the old social and political relations which gave them birth and provide their sustenance.

Such a revolution would, moreover, immediately find its echo in the countries of eastern Europe and the USSR and enable the working class to overthrow the usurpers.

The whole equilibrium described above has thus become untenable. The post-war period has ended.

Neither the working class nor imperialism can continue with the existing relative equilibrium. Each seeks to change it to its own advantage and according to radically opposed class interests.

The Kremlin bureaucracy is caught between these fundamentally opposed social forces and is cracking. All the reformist, trade union and other bureaucracies are also caught in the same vice and are being broken apart.

This crisis does not spare the Chinese bureaucracy. It too is being torn apart, as was shown in 'the cultural revolution'.

The petty-bourgeois Bonapartist leaderships such as Castro, Boumediene, Nasser, etc., cannot escape the torment. The class struggles of recent years are the prelude to the confrontation of revolution and counter-revolution in all countries.

The united struggle against imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy for the world revolution and for socialism is at the same time the struggle for the construction of the revolutionary International.

The proletarian revolution and the construction of socialism are objectively based on the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces and the old forms within which they are suffocating, i.e., private ownership of the means of production and national boundaries.

They are also based on the need for the collective appropriation of the means of production and the organization on this basis of production on a world scale in a rational way working for the satisfaction of humanity's needs.

The working class, as a world class, in which each national proletariat is a

detachment, like a midwife who delivers socialism, by its struggle as a class. This struggle culminates in the taking of political power in each country, the destruction of bourgeois states and the construction of workers' states.

But the proletarian revolution and the construction of socialism are not automatic processes. On the contrary, they proceed from consciousness raised to the highest level; for the first time humanity can control the course of its history and can consciously bring about its historic development.

The need for a revolutionary party springs from the character and from the historic meaning of the proletarian revolution and the construction of socialism. It springs from the position and conditions of the proletariat in bourgeois society and from the fact that the proletariat is subjected to the pressure of bourgeois society and the ideologies arising from it, and from the fact that, on the other hand, the proletariat reaches political consciousness in the course of struggle.

Its organization as a class to lead these struggles requires the assimilation of the Marxist method. The revolutionary party politically centralizes the proletariat, condenses, develops and puts into action the political consciousness of the proletariat.

The revolutionary party of each country is only fully effective, only totally accomplishes its functions, only attains the necessary level of consciousness and political activity, as part of the International, whose objective must be to become the world party of the proletarian revolution.

The construction of the revolutionary party in each country is inseparable from the construction of the revolutionary International.

All the setbacks of the world proletariat are setbacks for the International. All adaptations to the bourgeoisie in each country and to world imperialism are expressed in the renunciation of proletarian internationalism, which is synonymous with the struggle for the world proletarian revolution.

And likewise, each step forward by the world proletariat is a step forward in the struggle for the construction of the Fourth International.

The Second International failed on the outbreak of the imperialist war and Lenin asserted: a Third International must be built.

The Bolshevik Party took power and was the impetus behind the construction of the Third International. The rise of the Kremlin bureaucracy accompanied the destruction of the Third International which, before being finally dissolved in 1943, had become no more than an instrument of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Trotsky defended the theoretical and practical gains of the world proletariat by struggling for and founding the Fourth International.

The joint crisis of imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy, the imminence of the proletarian revolution, the need to unify the revolutionary struggles against imperialism with the revolutionary struggles against the parasitic bureaucracies; the need to unify the revolutionary struggles of the workers under the rule of the Kremlin bureaucracy; the perspective of the Socialist United States of Europe, of socialism, urgently requires the construction of the revolutionary International.

No revolutionary party can be built and accomplish its tasks without being built as part of the Fourth International.

The International Committee of the Fourth International considers that the whole situation, the course of the class struggle, poses to all organizations and revolutionary groups the construction of revolutionary parties in every country, in conjunction with the construction of the revolutionary International.

The International Committee of the Fourth International considers that the revolutionary International can only be built on the basis of the programme of the Fourth International elaborated in 1938 by Leon Trotsky.

The Second International and the Third International, the social-democratic and Stalinist parties, prove more clearly every day that they have failed in their mission. They have definitively passed over to the side of the bourgeois order.



Following the Second World War the world bourgeoisie suffered its greatest defeat in 1949 with the victory of the Chinese Revolution.

The Fourth International was proclaimed in 1938 to organize the international proletariat and for the revolutionary conquest of power in every country.

No organization in the world has suffered as much as the Fourth International from the fierce blows of the bourgeoisie and of Stalinism.

The militants who, with Lenin and Trotsky, had founded the Bolshevik Party and the Third International, the cadres of the international Trotskyist movement and Leon Trotsky himself, were hunted down and assassinated.

Stalin tried to destroy the thread of continuity that ties the programme and organization of the Fourth International to the Third International.

But Stalin did not succeed.

In 1938, in a period of severe proletarian defeats, the Fourth International, as a programme and as an organization, was founded.

'In all countries', say the statutes of the Fourth International adopted in 1938, 'the members of the Fourth International are organized into parties or leagues, which constitute the national sections of the Fourth International (World Party of the Socialist Revolution).'

'The national sections are formed on the platform and

in accordance with the organizational structure defined and established by the Founding Congress of the Fourth International (September 1938). In its platform the Fourth International concentrated the international experience of the revolutionary Marxist movement, and especially that which rises out of the socialist conquests of the October 1917 Revolution in Russia. It assimilates and bases itself upon all of humanity's progressive social experiences, which lead to the expropriation of the capitalist class and to the ultimate abolition of classes.'

But we do not wish and do not intend to conceal from the vanguard of the world proletariat or from the workers that the pressure of the forces of the bourgeoisie and Stalinism has had devastating effects on the organization of the Fourth International.

In both the ranks and in the leadership of the Fourth International the Trotskyists have had to fight against liquidationist tendencies who

are fighting for the programme of the Fourth International.

This will include a struggle by the International Committee to rally to the ranks of the Fourth International the militants and groups who are misled by the revisionist leaders of the United Secretariat.

'In order to achieve the tasks before, such a Conference, the International Committee must organize an international discussion on the following subjects:

a) The building of revolutionary parties on the basis of the Programme in the context of the concrete struggle for the rebuilding of the International.

'Trotskyists, organized as sections of the Fourth International, must struggle for the construction of revolutionary parties based on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. They carry the fight for this programme and for the construction of the Party as the main basis of their work into the mass organizations and trade unions of the working class, and in particular towards the working-class youth, as the principal source of new forces for the Fourth International. All such work is subordinated to the main task of constructing the Party.

'The building of the Party necessitates the production of a newspaper able to fight constantly for the overall programme of the Party, to raise the consciousness of the working class in all spheres of the class struggle. This fight for the independent party is the only basis for the defence of the positions won in the past by the working class, and all tactical considerations are subordinated to it. In conditions where the tactic of entry into existing working-class parties is necessary, this tactic is conducted in a manner which subordinates it to the main task of the construction of the independent party.

'b) The unity of the international class struggle.

'b) Defence by revolutionary methods of the conquests of the international working class, in the capitalist countries, in the USSR, China and all the countries which have been removed from the sphere of imperialism. This discussion will be carried out on the agreed framework of the unconditional defence of these states.'

The International Committee has decided the following agenda for this Conference:

1) The construction of revolutionary parties on the basis of the Transitional Programme in the context of the practical struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

2) The task to be accomplished in the period of imminent revolution opened up by the French General Strike of May-June 1968 and the rise of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia.

This Conference will be prepared at the end of January, 1970 by the publication of political documents in the organs of each section and by the publication of an internal bulletin reserved to members of the sections.

'As against the liquidationist conclusions flowing from the revisionist "division of the world into sectors", this perspective emphasizes the urgency of building independent revolutionary proletarian parties in the countries of eastern Europe, USSR, and China, and in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

'This central task of building independent revolutionary

parties stresses yet again the essential struggle for the political independence of the working class, against the politics of the Stalinist bureaucracy and reformist leaderships. This fight for the Party implies a determined struggle against syndicalism and all ideas that a revolutionary party can be spontaneously produced from the working class.

'The International Conference stresses that the Trotskyist movement, in the course of the struggle to build the International, works towards the creation of a centralized leadership of the world revolutionary party, in a struggle organically linked to the fight in each country to rebuild revolutionary centralized parties leading the struggles of the masses.

'This building of parties and of the International must be

open to all militant groups and organizations, whatever their political origins, which are the product of the workers' movement and which, engaged in the class struggle, feel the pressing need for the construction of revolutionary parties and the International, the indispensable instruments for the victory of the proletariat in all countries and the international victory of the world working class.

The preparation of this Conference will be a political struggle, organically linked with that of each section, so that on the basis of their experience, militants and cadres still grouped around the revisionist and centrist organizations of the 'Unified Secretariat', young militants coming into battle in the context of present struggles in the advanced capitalist countries, in the countries subjected to the dictatorship of the bureaucracy and in the colonial and semi-colonial countries will organize around the International Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

This perspective, the only one orientated to the highest level, that of the International, of the construction of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, of the international unity of the class struggle, of social revolution in capitalist countries and political revolution in the USSR, China, and the eastern European countries, requires preparation.

For this reason, the International Committee is convoking a preparatory conference reserved to its sections in February 1970 which, resting upon the decisions of the Third Conference of April 1966, and drawing up the balance sheet of its activity and that of its sections since that date, confronting its orientations with the development of the class struggle, places the strategic problems of the construction of revolutionary parties in each country, within the context of the reconstruction of the Fourth International at the centre of its debate.

'The essential unity of the international class struggle, flowing from the international character of the joint crisis of imperialism and the bureaucracy, implies the direct consequence of the necessity of building Trotskyist parties in every country.

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FILMS

Adalen 31

BY TOM GORDON

Adalen 31 is set during the 1931 general strike in the Swedish mill town of Adalen. Concentrating on the human relationships, director Widerberg skilfully sets the scene of a summer idyll during a lull in the long strike. The worker father of the film's central family catches a fish to supplement their meager diet. The bosses consume a sumptuous banquet complete with wine and cigars afterward. The worker's son Kjell studies music with the boss's wife and begins an affair with her daughter. All seems calm.

But the mill owners have decided that due to lowered profits "equality of sacrifice," meaning pay cuts and the importation of strikebreakers, is to be the order of the day.

When the scabs and the troops to protect them arrive, the strikers attack and drive the scabs from the town. But Kjell's father, Harald, binds up the wounds of one of the strikebreakers. The militant strike leaders denounce him, declaring that the struggle has reached an intensity that permits no compromises.

A mass meeting is called by the strike leadership. They display the wounds of children beaten by the troops during the battle. The strikers vote to march to the next town to mobilize wider support. Kjell and Harald decide to join the march and the strikers leave town singing the Internationale.

FIRE

They are met with fire from a hidden machine gun set up by the troops. Five including Harald are killed. Kjell in a memorable scene accompanies his father's corpse home to the scream of factory whistles mourning. He seeks out his lover, the boss's daughter. She has been sent to Stockholm for an abortion. The militants were right. From now on compromise is impossible.

This film portrays the most militant willingness to struggle among youth and the working class. It finishes with Kjell ending the mourning for his father by a call to strike action, and with the general strike which toppled the Swedish Christian-Democratic government and installed the Social-Democratic government in its place. As Widerberg states, "inequality still exists in Sweden." The implication is that we must continue the battle waged by the workers at Adalen.

That battle must be carried forward and directed by the revolutionary party--which is no where in Widerberg's film--in order to end inequality not only in Sweden but everywhere on this planet.

Revolutionary socialists can give only the utmost encouragement to Mr. Widerberg's efforts towards his next film which is to be about the Webbies. Adalen 31 is a great step into the political implications of interpersonal relations, a step forward from Mr. Widerberg's visually exquisite but otherwise insipid Elvira Madigan.

Adalen 31 shows a glimpse of the stunning insight into social reality which the fusion of art with a class-conscious outlook can give. We recommend it to everyone. With the working class coming onto the political scene internationally, we can expect and work towards more films of this high quality.

EASY RIDER-- A GLORIFICATION OF BOURGEOIS 'FREEDOM'

BY LOU BELKIN

The past year has witnessed a spate of occult and "drug-culture" musicals, books, rock festivals and films. Commencing with "Rosemary's Baby" and "Head" right up to the current rage "Easy Rider", the moguls of big business in Hollywood, Paris, and Rome have sought to glorify this "culture of youth," channeling the anxiety, frustration and militancy of young people back into liberalism and capitalism.

The salient importance of film, which can reach vast numbers of working class and student youth suddenly thrown into major worldwide struggles can never be minimized. While on the one hand the crisis of capitalism finds its immediate reflection in the upsurge of student militancy, it has also led to the loss of hundreds of studio and acting jobs, and in Britain and America in particular, the closing down of major studios--Cricklewood in London and Paramount in Hollywood. Hollywood, which formerly produced 100-125 films per year (second only to Japan), has but 19 (including "B" films) in the cans and only thirteen scheduled for all of 1970. About 40 are produced with the cooperation (and subservience) of European capital, but the critical situation of the franc, lira and ultimately the dollar have resulted in the loss of thousands of European technical and acting jobs.

In other words films like "Easy Rider", produced independently for \$385,000 realize a return of millions of dollars for investors (in this case, the banks). The tendency then is for fewer mammoth productions which result in tens of millions in profits or the low-budgeted independent. The overall film employment picture grows bleaker and bleaker--indeed Hollywood is fast on the verge of collapse.

ESCAPISM

Capitalizing on the so-called "youth culture" millions of dollars are being poured into pictures like "Easy Rider", representing a new form of escapism--escapism into drugs and mysticism as substituted for the very life-like problems of war, racism, poverty and unemploy-

ment. Of course the "freckle-faced-bumpkin - meets - the -swinging-city-slicker" standard form of Hollywood and Italian cinema still have their place, but the "Easy Rider" mystique is far more important for the capitalists at this point. The absolute necessity of glorifying frenzied youth-tripping-out at Woodstock (soon to be made into no less than four separate films), the return to communal living and God, the lushness and gleam of the motorcycle cult find their most pristine expression in "Easy Rider", directed by Dennis Hopper, with Peter Fonda,

Laszlo Kovacs provides gorgeous color photography (mostly from moving vehicles) with a perspicacious eye for bits and pieces of the Southwest--from arcane mountains, rural gutter-shacks and grassy plains to hippy communes and New Orleans Mardi Gras. They encounter the youthful Southern liberal lawyer the epitome of impotence, ineptitude, naivete, superbly played by Jack Nicholson.

It is not simply a moral question of two hippies consuming far too much screen time while the world is falling apart, as Sarris, the Village Voice's



THE ILLUSIONS OF BOURGEOIS FREEDOM GOING HOG WILD

Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicholson.

The film is nothing more or less than a hymn to "bourgeois freedom" gone hog-wild. The story is elemental. Two petty-bourgeois drop-outs (Fonda and Hopper) who also double as drug-peddlers, get away from it all on two gleaming Harley Davidsons, roaming about the Southwest like Irish tinkers, selling cocaine and marijuana to depraved little rich boys, hoarding loads of money in the meantime, and finally, and expectedly, meeting death at the hands of Southern farmers. In between,

critic would have us believe. The question here is the inability of liberalism to contain any longer the upsurge of student and youth radicalization on the one hand, and the economic and political instability of world capitalism on the other. Fonda and Hopper assume, then, heroic roles; they are the new "stars" on the horizon, and every pan, every cut (the use of dissolves: images superimposed on other images), the deplorable use of current rock favorites, the low-angle tilt-ups, presenting the "heroes" as bigger than life"--all of these tricks are calculated to keep the images fast in the mind, to hang-on, so to speak.

The very glorification of their "freedom" is the foundation of this film, the real propaganda weapon in the hands of the bankers and businessmen who finance, distribute and exhibit this film. No matter that Fonda, after the lawyer is bludgeoned by the local farmers, realized his true social role: that of drug peddler, and not at all free, but dependent on the whims of his buyers for money.

The important thing as they are suddenly and swiftly gunned down, is that the film speaks to the youth, and pretends to solve the dilemma of youth through dropping-out and drug taking. It provides a screen of confusion and downright reactionary politics for youth, to keep up their faith in reformism and in the totally idealistic pose that despite everything, all will turn out "happily ever after."

Let it be said absolutely clearly that the only road to a happily ever after life is the revolutionary road to socialism--away from drugs and mysticism and with the international working class in struggle against capitalism.

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