

# Young Spartacus

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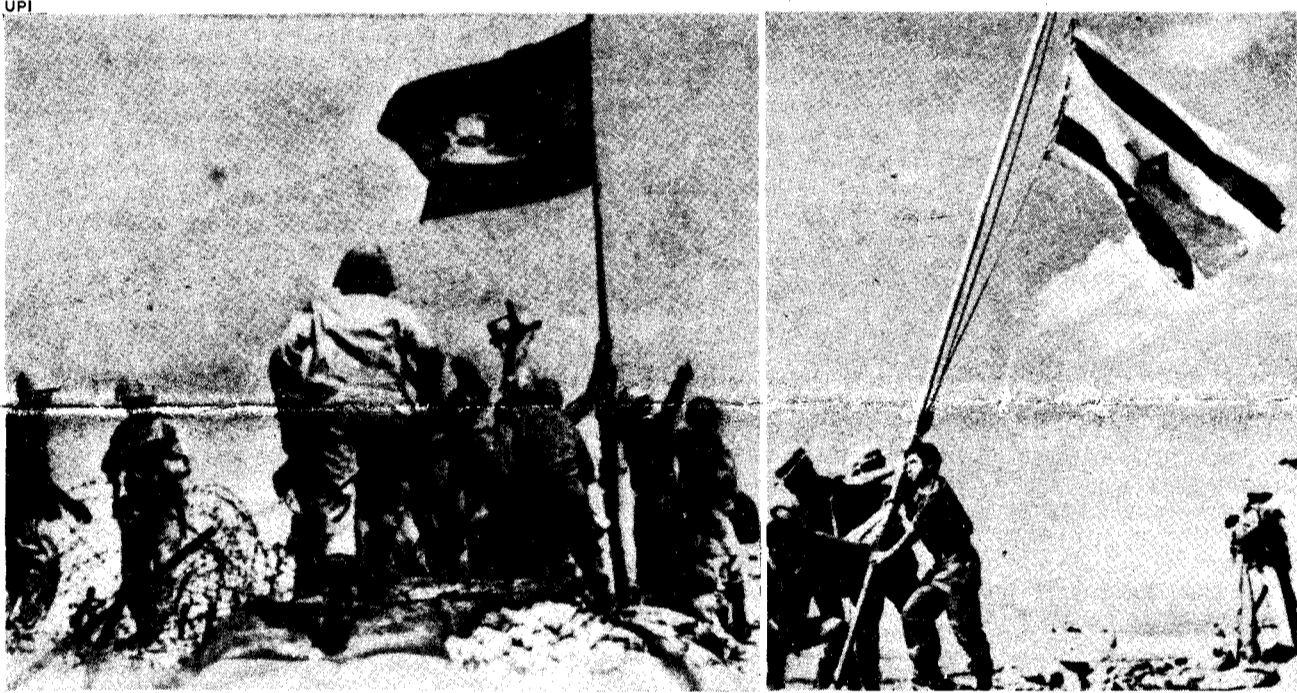
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November-December 1973

## Near East—

# Not Jew Against Arab, But Class Against Class!



Egyptian soldiers raise flag on Bar-Lev Line east of Suez Canal.

Israeli soldiers raise flag in Syria.

The present military confrontation in the Near East only confirms once again the bankruptcy of the Zionist claim that every Arab village razed, every Palestinian driven into exile, every Egyptian or Syrian murdered somehow enhances the security of the Jewish people in the Near East. The "spoils" of the 1967 victory are the lives of Israeli youth squandered on the "road to Damascus" or on the sands of the Sinai. It is the same Zionist "Old Guard" who sends these youth into battle who collaborated with the Nazis during WWII to load the bulk of European Jewry into the boxcars for the gas chambers in order that a handful of Jews with enough money and the "right" connections could escape. It is the same "Old Guard" who went to the capitals of the major "Allied powers" and lobbied these countries to shut their borders to Jewish immigration so that the refugees from Hitler's "final solution" would be forced into the "Promised Land." It is the same Zionist "Old Guard" who echoed the fascist slogan of "Lebensraum" ("living space") as they turned an entire people into a nation of refugees in order to create a "Jewish state." For them six million Jews and the plight of the Palestinian refugees was not too high a price to pay for the state they rule.

Indeed, the horror of Hitler's "final solution" combined with the closing of borders to Jewish immigration during WWII has created, as one of the by-products of this historic defeat for mankind, a Hebrew-speaking nation in the Near East. And it is this same Zionist "Old Guard" whose treachery played no little part in the present plight of the Jewish people in the Near East that is leading them to destruction.

On the other side of the barricades, the Arab regimes do not even claim to fight in the name of the liberation of the Arab masses from the yoke of imperialism or the restoration of the Palestinian people to their homeland. Only the vicarious Arab nationalists that are to be found in such abundance on the American left—the Workers League, Workers World, The Socialist Workers Party and the various sordid Stalinists of both the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking variety—are so cynical as to make this claim for them. Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon have all responded to Israeli terrorist attacks by launching their own terrorist attacks on the desperate Palestinian refugees they ever so reluctantly play host to. Prior to the launching of the present war, for the six years since the Six-Day War, these regimes have taken

## For Class-Struggle Defense of the UFW!

The liquidation of the UFW strike into consumer boycott activity is a despicable act on the part of Chavez, Meany and other "leaders" of labor who have been associated with the strike (see "Meany/Chavez Abandon Strike, Turn to Boycott," *Workers Vanguard* No. 30, 12 Oct.). The SL/RCY has consistently pointed out that what is necessary for a farm workers' victory is militant strike action that includes armed workers' self-defense, a call for a general strike in support of the UFW and a campaign directed at the Teamster rank and file for workers' unity against the Teamster bureaucracy's strikebreaking activity. Instead the UFW leadership has pursued a policy of erratic picketing, advocated pacifism and opened up the ranks for physical attacks and defeat. They then accepted the defeats they had paved the way for and abandoned the strike, presuming to continue the struggle with the consumer boycott as a cover.

We do not stand opposed to use of  
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SL/RCY participates in UFW-support demonstration, San Francisco, July 1973.

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

### SDS Outdoes Itself

BOSTON—In its increasingly earnest attempt to disappear into the broad mass of students and identify itself with the least politically conscious layers, Progressive Labor's SDS has taken its idealist/reformist anti-racist textbook campaign one step further into irrelevance. In a recent anti-Herrnstein demonstration at Harvard, it was noticed that SDS had dropped its demand that Prof. Herrnstein's textbooks be banned from all courses and was instead agitating around the demand that his textbooks not be required reading!

While making itself a laughingstock at Harvard by virtue of its scaredy-cat right-reformism, at Boston University SDS has been showing its flip side of wooden sectarianism in its attitude toward the defense of five students (all but one of whom are members of either SDS or the Attica Brigade) being tried by an Administration-picked campus jury for participation in demonstrations against Marine recruiting on campus last spring. Both SDS and the Attica Brigade have initiated separate defense campaigns and separate demonstrations, coming together later in a rightist bloc with the Young Socialist Alliance and the liberal student government in a committee called "Students for Action" whose main activity has been the production of a series of leaflets calling for a return to a free "university community" in the best traditions of academic ivory towerism.

The RCY stands for the unconditional defense of the five students and is opposed to any Administration restrictions on speech, written propaganda or demonstrations. At the same time, the RCY in its propaganda has drawn the connection between opposition to Marine recruitment and the U.S.'s role in Vietnam; has fought to overcome the limitations of student struggles isolated from the working class; and has always used such struggles to try to win students to communism through discussion and propaganda. For this reason, the RCY has been banned by "Students for Action" from speaking at any defense demonstrations. SDS, the YSA and the Attica Brigade have no trouble hobnobbing with Democratic Party supporters and academic idealists, but continue to get very nervous around revolutionary communists.

### Attica Brigade, SDS "Fight Back" for Pacifism

BUFFALO—Duplicating their political behavior in Boston (see above), the Attica Brigade and Progressive Labor (PL)/SDS have formed a bloc based on liberal politics excluding communist propaganda over the issue of the arming of campus cops here.

An open hearing held by the University of Buffalo Administration on 25 September to discuss guidelines for "selective" arming was heavily attended by left groups, notably the RCY, the Attica Brigade and PL/SDS. The Administration announced that a decision had already been made to arm campus cops, while angry students persistently reminded them that a referendum of the student body held last December had voted overwhelmingly (4 to 1) against arming. The Attica Brigade, followed by the RCY, PL/SDS and a group of sympathetic students, walked out of the meeting in protest of the Administration's announcement and convened their own meeting in another room. The RCY proposed a united front rally to protest the arming of campus "security" around the slogan, "No Guns for Cops." Basic to the con-

ception of the united front is that all participating organizations retain the right to put forth their own additional slogans or to express their political differences with other groups in the front, while uniting around a common demand. The Attica Brigade and PL/SDS rejected this proposal and decided to form a front group called "Students Against Armed Security" (SAAS), which would operate in that name only and not allow participating organizations to put out their own propaganda on the issue.

Having disguised themselves as liberal "concerned students" to avoid "alienating the masses of students," the "revolutionaries" in the Attica Brigade and PL/SDS issued a call for a rally opposing arming of the cops on the basis of pure pacifism: "Regardless of their intentions, it [arming campus security] will increase the possibility of violence on campus" (SAAS leaflet, 3 Oct.).

The RCY was refused a speaker at the rally on the grounds that communists would alienate the "mass student movement." Of course the Attica Brigade and PL/SDS had no qualms about liquidating themselves into a propaganda bloc with liberal students, including the Student Association.

What the Brigade and PL/SDS did choose to argue about with students was the importance of staying and getting arrested during a sit-in at the President's office, behaving no differently than the moral-witness, radical-pacifist draft resisters of the 1960's. The group of sit-inners was not won to this masochistic line and left.

The RCY, on the other hand, reacted to the ferment on this issue by relating police repression to capitalist society, remaining impervious to red-baiting remarks about how communists seek to "use" such struggles for their own ends. The RCY is committed to the struggle for disarming the cops, as we understand the role of the police in holding down mass discontent and otherwise serving bourgeois interests. However, such campus struggles have little effect unless they result in the participants' understanding of the social issues involved and what to do about them.

### "Here Comes the RCY —Help! Call the Cops!"

NEW HAVEN—One more incident in the string of violations against workers democracy being accumulated by the Workers League/Young Socialists (WL/YS) occurred here in October when Tim Wohlforth, WL National Secretary, came to speak. RCY members and supporters came to what was advertised as a public meeting on constructing a labor party but, upon entering, were told it was not public and that they would have to leave. When an RCYer asked about the basis for this decision, a New Haven WLer informed him that this was a WL/YS meeting and if the RCY supporters did not leave, the WL would have to call the cops. Wohlforth sat silent in the presence of this exchange. The RCYers pointed out the violation of workers democracy and left.

After the meeting, Wohlforth tried to cover for the incident, implying it had been a joke and that the RCY was not "worth the police." The three or four WL members also treated the incident as a joke. The several non-WLers who had come to hear Wohlforth, however, did not think it was so funny, and engaged in discussion later with RCY supporters over the events that had taken place.

## LETTERS

### Ceylon

19 October 1973

Dear Comrades,

The article "The 'Anti-Imperialist United Front' in Ceylon" in *Young Spartacus* No. 19 [Sept.-Oct.], while primarily concerned with describing the counterrevolutionary role of the Chinese bureaucracy, contains an unfortunate omission that may be misleading to readers unfamiliar with the SL/RCY attitude towards the youth uprising of April 1971 and the Jamata Vimukhti Peramuna (JVP) [People's Liberation Army]. While the article correctly states that "support is unconditional in terms of military defense," it does not detail our political criticisms of the JVP.

Politically the JVP was dominated by both youth- and peasant-vanguardist conceptions. Rather than the political preparation and mobilisation of the masses, it relied on its own clandestine organisation. In many respects the JVP had not broken politically with the Bandaranaike coalition, whose election it supported.

Above all, the JVP was marred by Sinhalese nationalism. In his valuable exposé of the perfidious role of the United Secretariat and Bala Tampoe (the U.Sec.'s Ceylonese section leader), Edmund Samarakkody, the Ceylonese Trotskyist, points out:

"There is abundance of evidence... that the JVP had completely discounted the plantation workers (largely of Indian Tamil origin) and that it did not have any position on the burning question of the Tamil minority—their language and other rights. On the contrary, it will not be an over-statement to say that Sinhalese chauvinism was clearly evident in their politics."

—*Politics of Deceit*, pamphlet published by Samarakkody, Oct. 1971

As Samarakkody emphasizes:

"Courage and self-sacrifice often calls for admiration. But such qualities cannot be a substitute for the need for political preparation of the working class and toilers for struggle, and for a correct strategy and tactics that are indispensable for the successful carrying out of the revolutionary struggle against capitalist class rule. Above all, responsible revolutionaries cannot be blinded by mere heroism to support what amounts to adventurist actions."

—*Politics of Deceit*

Thus the correct Leninist policy was to extend unconditional defense to the JVP militants (many of whom are still imprisoned), but no programmatic support.

Comradely,  
David Stone  
[Spartacist League of  
Australia and New  
Zealand]

### Plante Wants "Grass- Roots Campaign

Berkeley  
2 October 1973

I found your recent editorial concerning Rockefeller's new drug laws [see *YSp* No. 19, Sept.-Oct.] to be rather informative and I applaud your views regarding non-victim crimes. Rockefeller is certainly not interested in the big-time drug pushers, because their tracks lead to his door. The drug laws in this country are generally geared toward suppressing Third World and counter-culture activists who pose a threat to the sweet profits of ITT, Thieu, Nixon and, eventually, Rockefeller himself.

We in California are once again organizing a grass-roots campaign to decriminalize cultivation and possession of marijuana for adult-personal use. As an organizer for the Decriminalization of Marijuana Act of 1974, I appreciate your speaking out against

## Young Spartacus

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*Young Spartacus* is published by the Revolutionary Communist Youth, youth section of the Spartacist League. We seek to build a revolutionary socialist youth organization which can intervene in all social struggles armed with a working-class program, based on the politics of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

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repressive measures such as New York's new drug statutes and hope you will continue to do so in future issues. With a concerted effort on many fronts, I am confident that we can enlighten the public regarding drug use and effect humanitarian policies locally and federally regarding non-victim "crime."

Clusters of peace,  
Tom Plante

[Editor's reply:

We oppose Rockefeller's new drug law and steeper penalties for "crimes against persons" attached to this law because it is part of the state government's reactionary "law and order" rightward motion which will most heavily affect blacks and other minorities, leftists and the labor movement. We do not, however, oppose the laws because we see drugs or "counter-culture activism" (or peace clusters) as posing any threat to capitalist profits or bourgeois state power. It is neither chemicals taken into the body nor life-style fads that can fundamentally change society. Only international socialist revolution can lay the basis for human liberation.]

## CORRECTIONS

"Fight Special Oppression of Young Workers!" (*YSp* No. 19, September-October) contained several factual errors on page 6. The article reported that the NLRB ruling which changed some of the aspects of the Group system in the National Maritime Union took effect in February 1972; in fact, the NLRB ruling took effect in October 1971. The article also incorrectly reported that, in order to advance from Group II to Group I status, a seaman had to have 800 days shipping time within a five-year period and that failure to spend at least 220 days per year at sea meant loss of Group I status. The correct fact is that it was necessary to spend 300 days within a three-year period at sea in order to retain Group I status. The sentence reading, "This along with the terrible conditions, the pay (less than \$100 a week) and a day's work often spread out over a period of twelve hours caused widespread discontent," should have read, "This along with the terrible conditions, the pay (only with the 1972 contract did the pay of many seaman exceed \$100 a week) and a day's work often spread out over a period of twelve hours caused widespread discontent." The article notes that the Militant-Solidarity Caucus calls for "rotational shipping (7 months at sea, 7 months on shore with unemployment and vacation pay)"; this should have read "6 months at sea, 6 months on shore with full pay while ashore."

"Introducing *Young Spartacus*" (*YSp* No. 19, p. 1) contained a paragraph listing RCY activities that will be reported on in future issues of *YSp* and omitted to mention work among students, a major aspect of RCY work in this period. In *Youth, Class and Party* (Basic Documents of the RCY), we placed the relationship of the communist movement toward students in the

continued on next page

# "Youth Opportunities" at McDonald's— NIXON'S SUBMINIMUM WAGE

President Nixon's veto of the already inadequate minimum wage bill, coming in the face of a sharp decline in real wages and an increase in working-class militancy, is one more signal to the American working class that in order to maintain profits the capitalists will block even the most minimal reforms and continue to assault the standard of living of millions of workers. The veto is a direct attack on inexperienced, untrained workers, particularly youth and blacks in low-paying marginal sections of industry, for whom existing minimums mean continued sub-poverty-level existence.

The new wage bill would have increased the hourly minimum wage rate from the present \$1.60 to \$2.00 this year and \$2.20 by July 1974. The bill extended minimum wage and overtime coverage to over seven million agricultural, domestic, service and public workers. For the first time agricultural workers would have received the same minimum as industrial workers by July 1976. These inadequate reforms barely cover the effects of inflation on minimum pay. \$1.60 now buys less than \$1.25 did in 1966 when the current minimum went into effect. Had the bill passed, wages for most workers covered would have still remained below official poverty levels. Yet President Nixon vetoed even this meager increase as "inflationary"! In other words, farm workers, domestics and youth must pay for inflation by living in abject poverty.

## "Youth Opportunity" to Increase McDonald's Profits

A major reason for Nixon's veto was that Congress' bill did not sufficiently discriminate against young workers by including the "Youth Opportunities Amendment" which would give teenagers and college students the "opportunity" to work at subminimum wages. More accurately dubbed the "McDonald's Amendment" (fast-food services are among the chief beneficiaries of cheap youth labor), the rider allowed employers to hire young workers (under 21) at \$1.60 an hour for a six-month period. As part of the Watergate scandals it

was revealed that McDonald's contributed \$225,000 to the Nixon campaign fund.

Supporters of the Administration amendment argued with Malthusian logic that a subminimum wage preserves jobs for youths. As one congressman put it:

"Increases in the minimum wage decrease the opportunity to work. With the subminimum wage there will be opportunities for teenagers for work consistent with their talents. . . . When

It provides incentives and motivates them to move ahead."

—Congressman McClory, *Congressional Record*, Vol. 119, No. 86, p. H4359, 6 June 1973

From this proposition that lower wages provide more jobs it follows that re-institution of slave labor would solve the problem of youth unemployment. But even at current poverty wages youth unemployment is at least three times the national average, with 35% unemployment for black youth, over

ing changes in teenage unemployment has been general business conditions as measured by the adult unemployment rate" ("Youth and Minimum Wages," Labor Department Special Study, 1970). The few jobs that might be created by lowering wages would be at the expense of jobs of older workers. The capitalists' "offer" to the workers—reduction of unemployment through wage cuts—is a rotten deal solely in the interests of capitalism. Workers must fight unemployment through shortening the work week, not reducing wages!

In effect Nixon's veto admits that capitalist production must maintain high unemployment while driving down wages to subsistence levels with the least organized young and black workers hit hardest. Unemployed working-class youth must fight these reactionary wage cuts by uniting with the entire working class in a common struggle for a shorter work week with no loss in pay to create full employment.

## Subminimum Increases Divisions In Working Class

The six-month subminimum, like discount wages in apprenticeship programs in industry, is especially oppressive to young workers. The subminimum was defended by Nixon as necessary because it "allows teenagers who do not have the competence now to carry on useful employment and to receive on-the-job training." In addition to allowing companies to pay lower wages for equal work, the six-month "training" period actually becomes a revolving door for hiring and firing teenage workers. Youth are to drop out of school to get jobs while still eligible for the minimum and then after six months they are laid off and replaced by new drop-outs entering the work force. This practice, once known as child labor, lately goes by the name of "youth opportunities."

By depressing minimum wages below industry-wide levels, the ruling class is able to further exacerbate divisions in the class between organized and unorganized workers. The

*continued on page 5*



Nixon's proposed subminimum would keep young workers' wages below poverty level while creating more unemployed older workers. AFL-CIO ran above cartoon in its paper, but has consistently supported anti-working-class government policies like wage freeze.

we increase the minimum wage, we deprive these black youths of many jobs which otherwise would be offered to them. I am just saying that partial employment and part-time jobs encourage these young people to become part of our private economic system.

seven times the national average. Youth unemployment has not been below 10% since the Korean War regardless of changes in the minimum wage. Even the Labor Department acknowledged that "the most important factor explain-

following general social and historical context:

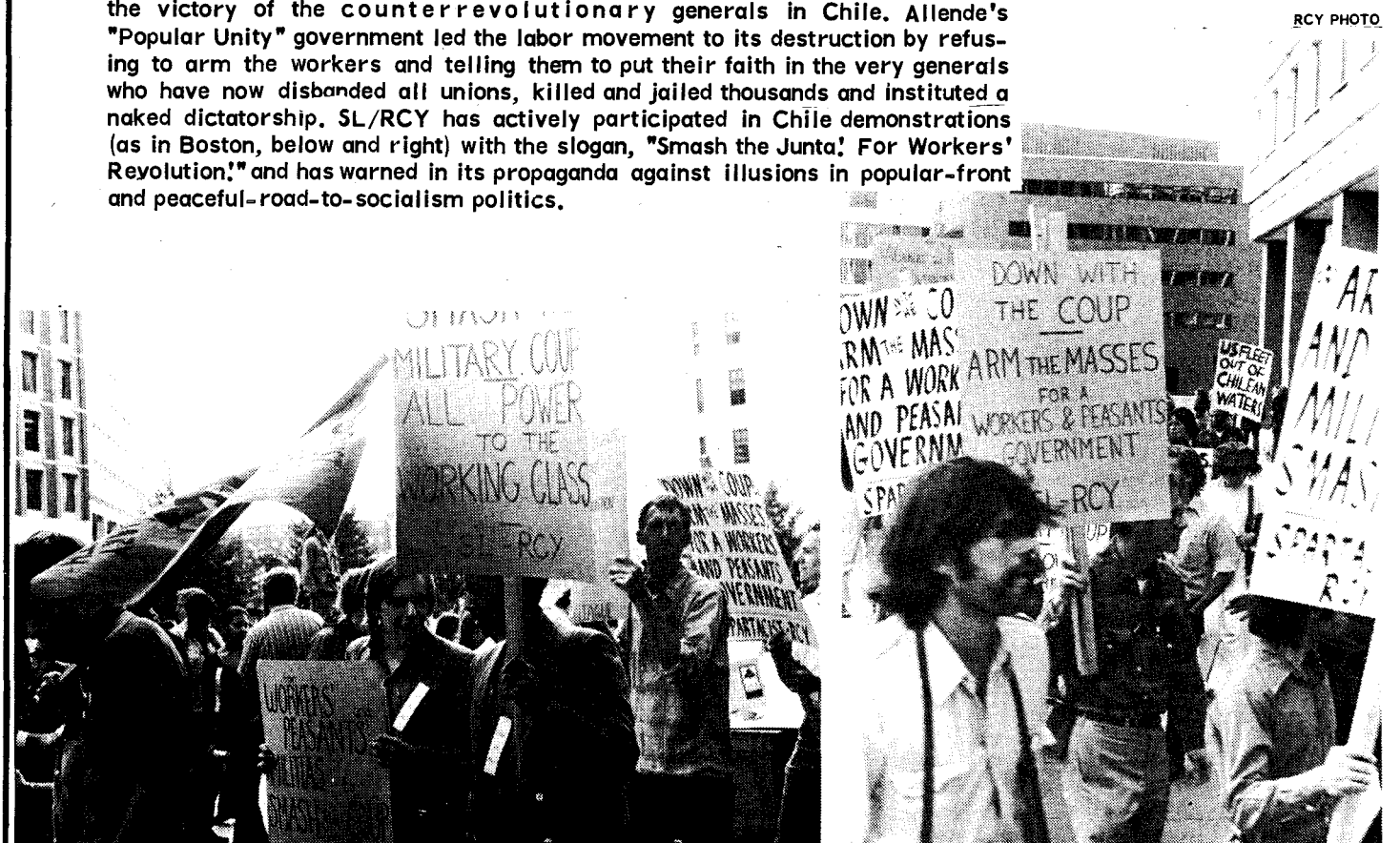
"The student population constitutes the younger elements of the American, non-property-owning petty bourgeoisie. The universities are the training ground for the administrative, technical and cultural personnel needed by the capitalist system. To maintain that students are revolutionary is to maintain that students are the vanguard of the entire petty bourgeoisie, which is considered a revolutionary class. This is obvious nonsense. The petty bourgeoisie is the most heterogeneous class in capitalist society, which in periods of great social crisis will split, one section going over to the working-class movement and the other consciously identifying with the bourgeoisie. . . .

"The Marxist attitude toward the petty bourgeois population is not one of hostility. Rather, we seek to win as large a section of the petty bourgeois as possible to identify their interests with those of the proletariat."

We have elsewhere documented the fact that students are the most volatile section of the petty bourgeoisie, e.g., in the heyday of the New Left probably a majority of the student population had left-wing sympathies or was active in some way in New Left politics, while in Germany in the period of Hitler's rise, 90% of the students were pro-fascist and 10% were pro-communist. We have also repeatedly pointed out the importance of recruiting even (or especially) that 10%, in accordance with the Leninist conception that the recruitment of declassed revolutionary intellectuals is essential to the construction of the vanguard party. ■

## Defend Class-War Prisoners in Chile!

The Chilean and international working class has been dealt a severe blow with the victory of the counterrevolutionary generals in Chile. Allende's "Popular Unity" government led the labor movement to its destruction by refusing to arm the workers and telling them to put their faith in the very generals who have now disbanded all unions, killed and jailed thousands and instituted a naked dictatorship. SL/RCY has actively participated in Chile demonstrations (as in Boston, below and right) with the slogan, "Smash the Junta! For Workers' Revolution!" and has warned in its propaganda against illusions in popular-front and peaceful-road-to-socialism politics.



# City University Threatened by Budget Cuts— Black Nationalists Oppose United Struggle

NEW YORK—The nationalist-led Black Studies Department at the City College campus of the City University of New York (CUNY) became the target of threatened educational cutbacks this month. On 4 October, a meeting was called to form a black students' collective on campus, ostensibly in response to the threats. Several white Revolutionary Communist Youth (RCY) supporters were asked to leave the meeting after RCY members stated they were opposed to the cutbacks, disagreed with black nationalist politics, had been given to understand that the meeting was open and, furthermore, were opposed to racial exclusion. Two supporters of the Maoist Attica Brigade stood by and made no comment on the expulsions. A black RCYer left the room in solidarity with those who were expelled and the nationalist leadership of the meeting patronizing-

## Protests Against Cutbacks at Antioch, Madison

The continuing threats of cutbacks at CUNY accompany a series of cuts and tuition hikes on campuses throughout the country, most notably the Antioch Financial Aid crisis which produced a seven-week student strike, and more recently, large demonstrations at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. At Madison there have been mass protests specifically over the threatened closure of the Afro-American and Native American Cultural Centers and a cut in funding for the proposed centers for Latino and Asian-American students.

While pretending to be fighting for the interests of black students, the black nationalists at CUNY have actually pursued policies that block any

dispersed this heavy barrage of right-wing nationalism with counsel against over-reaction, advising a policy of cool-headed diplomacy, demonstrating that he was most interested in keeping his own privileged position and whipping up anti-white, black-nationalist fervor that might be used as a lever against the Administration. This cynical abuse of the just desires of the black students for quality education is to be severely condemned.

The conception that eventually the Harlem "community" should seize CCNY and turn it into a black university, is essentially a reactionary-utopian demand (implicitly a call for race war), akin to proposals for "community control" in Harlem which would presumably end poverty, unemployment and crime. Where are the resources within Harlem to transform it into a paradise within a capitalist state? Harlem is socially a heterogeneous community of workers, petty-bourgeois and poor whose great material and social needs require the working class' expropriation of U.S. Steel, of General Motors, of all the means of production, so that the vast profits that have been concentrated in the hands of a few can be used rationally for the benefit of all members of society. "Community control" at best can only give some Harlem residents temporary illusions; very often, such campaigns become reactionary tools of bourgeois financial interests to break unions, refuse state or federal aid to social welfare programs and set up Potemkin Village offices which attempt to cover over Harlem's misery with the illusion that local, "self-help" programs are showing the way forward. The RCY supports the establishment

dedicated to the cause of the oppressed, there are those who may draw from their studies lessons that will lead them to revolutionary Marxism. But at the same time that we are in favor of such courses, we are opposed to that kind of academic ethnic power politics that sees a black, women's or Puerto Rican studies department as a sort of ivory-tower Tammany Hall for a particular race, sex or nationality, and from which everyone else is excluded. This kind of exclusionism carries the reactionary corollary that whites have nothing to learn from black history, that men have nothing to learn from women's studies, and that "gringos" have nothing to learn from Puerto Rican studies. Further, exclusionary courses and departments often produce a kind of Yeshiva or seminary mentality of obscurantism and parochialism which is as stultifying as the atmosphere in a religious school or in a college open only to men, or only to women. Black or Puerto Rican nationalists who think the "conquest" of a department or even an entire college represents a blow against racial or national oppression should look at the all-black school systems in the South which represent not the rewards of victorious struggle but the vicious legacy of Jim Crow reaction.

In addition to blocking the formation of a militant and broad opposition through the advocacy of pressuring tactics and racial exclusionism, the black nationalists have insisted on strictly limiting any discussion and action to the question of cutbacks and especially insofar as it affects black studies. The more important and immediate question facing black students is the prospect of unemployment after fin-



RCY participates in "No Tuition at SUNY and CUNY" demonstration, March 1973. Later, cops pulled RCYers out at request of liberals who opposed socialist slogans. Attica Brigade, YSA joined cop-protected picket line while communists marched separately (see "Stalinists, Nationalists Seek to Exclude Communists," RCY Newsletter No. 17, May-June 1973).

ly informed the RCYers that they would be "called on when needed."

The black students' collective was apparently short-lived due to differences within it over everything except the exclusion of whites. It was rapidly followed by the emergence of the Attica Brigade-led and Young Socialist Alliance-supported Black Anti-Imperialist Student Caucus (BASC) which offered nothing new to the reformism of the earlier collective, confining itself to ludicrous tactical discussion about how best to pester, pressure, embarrass and coax the Administration into opposing the cutbacks. BASC has fizzled out—at least for the time being; in the eyes of the Black Studies Department, the struggle has ended. The lead article of the 17 October *Observation Post* (a "progressive" CCNY newspaper) began caustically:

"The Black Studies Department was preparing to fight the Administration for its 'survival' in a tense and angry dispute three weeks ago.

"The dispute has been settled now with both sides appearing to agree that nothing more than 'an administrative slip-up' was to blame."

Nevertheless, the future of the department and other ethnic studies departments, like Puerto Rican Studies, is in question. More importantly, the Administration reports a one-third cutback in the traditional Financial Aid programs of the student body as a whole. Both New York State and out-of-state tuition went up this semester, while the tuition-free program for city residents has also been in jeopardy since last year.

struggle to save the Black Studies Department, prevent cutbacks and prepare black students for the more serious problem that will soon face them—unemployment. Rather than mounting a united, broad-based and militant student-teacher-campus worker fight against the cutbacks (which will affect minority students the most), the black nationalist collectives have chosen to pressure and maneuver with the Administration and, through the policy of racial exclusion, have divided and weakened the potential movement against the threatened cutbacks.

## Should Harlem "Seize" the CCNY Campus?

The first meeting of the initial black students' collective was redolent with right-wing nationalism. The head of the Black Studies Department, Professor Jeffries, talked about the "racist, white nationalist" assault on black people, making anti-Semitic comments about the role that "Jewish nationalism" no doubt had in all this. This attitude is consistent with black nationalism's bourgeois ideology; for these nationalists, the class struggle does not exist, only the race struggle. Jeffries characterized the Black Studies Department as black people's foothold on the CCNY campus and a launching pad for the eventual seizure of the campus by the black community. He pledged to help rally the entire black "community" around this issue and to help bring the full force of the black masses in Harlem to bear on the university Administration. He inter-



Beams New York City mayoral campaign propaganda last year sought to exploit CUNY protests. Politics of nationalists serve to strengthen ties with such treacherous "allies."

of black studies, just as we support women's, Puerto Rican, Chicano and other studies of the oppressed and the labor movement. We realize that the struggle for these courses often represents the aspirations of the oppressed and exploited to recapture their history which has been obscured, slandered and distorted by bourgeois scholasticism, and to understand the mechanics of the society which engenders their oppression and exploitation. Among those who are the most

ishing school. That the nationalist emphasis "culture" over the material needs of blacks underlines the essentially bourgeois character of black nationalist ideology. It is not abstract rhetoric to emphasize, as the RCY does, the link between the budget cuts and the economic and political struggles of the working class—it is these questions that many black students will face this year after they leave school. ■

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**Women and Revolution**

# Near East: Not Arab Against Jew!

Continued from page 1

over from Dayan-Meir-Begin the primary responsibility for policing and then liquidating the Palestinian guerrilla groups. In the 1948 war the "Arab League" in which these regimes participated was constructed for the purpose of dismantling Palestine, in alliance with Golda Meir (then Myerson) when the Hashemite throne could secure her cooperation, or against her when they could not.

The 1967 war was simply the continuation of the squabble over the spoils of the dismembered Palestinian nation. In neither 1948 nor 1967 would the victory of the Arab League or the former "United Arab Republic" have meant a return of the Palestinians to their homeland. And in preparation for the present conflict the Arab regimes eliminated the Palestinian commandoes as an independent political or military force. In the present conflict the Arab regimes do not demand what the Palestinians lost in 1948, but only what they themselves lost in 1967.

## For Revolutionary Defeatism on Both Sides!

Neither the Hebrew nor Arab-speaking masses have anything to gain from the present war. The long-term survival of the Hebrew-speaking nation requires the smashing of the racist, capitalist Zionist regime. The restoration of the Palestinians to their homeland requires the overthrow of the Arab regimes, both "progressive" and reactionary, which kill their militants and terrorize their villages. Only a bi-national framework can provide a just solution to the conflicting national claims of Hebrew and Arab. Not the "socialism" of bonapartist demagogues and the Zionist "Old Guard," but only the socialism of Lenin and Trotsky can provide the program to liberate the

Near East from imperialist exploitation and nationalist conflict. The struggle for a multi-national socialist federation of the Near and Middle East requires the organization of Jewish and Arab workers in a common revolutionary party, as a section of a reborn Fourth International.

## Danger of WWII

The military hardware so desperately needed by the North Vietnamese and National Liberation Front in their head-on collision with U.S. imperialism was instead lavishly squandered by the So-



SL/RCY demonstrates at Brandeis University against repression of Israeli left during Meir's visit, March 1973.

viet Union on anti-communist bonapartist regimes whose "progressiveness" consists in the fact that their oil revenue (either from wells or pipelines) is not sufficient to buy off their armies, which are their sole social base, and therefore they are forced to go begging to Moscow every now and then, while Saudi Arabia and others can pay hard cash for the weapons their bloated officer corps demands. In the capital of the October Revolution, the "revolutionary" colonels and gener-

als make the appropriate anti-imperialist dinner speeches while in their own countries they use weapons obtained in Moscow to wipe out the local communists and other working-class organizations, or use them to strafe Palestinian refugee camps in retaliation for Israeli attacks. Now that the "progressive" Arab regimes have temporarily turned their "Made in the USSR" military hardware away from persecuting the local communists and toward the Zionist army, the USSR hardly seems more happy. For all the SAMs, MIGs and tanks that were given

in the cause of "peaceful coexistence," the present conflict threatens to sweep both the USSR and U.S. into a direct military confrontation which could very well escalate into a nuclear war. Should such a confrontation develop we stand for the unconditional military defense of the USSR—for the defense of the historic gains for the working class made by the October Revolution.

China, while ironically blocking with the "Soviet social imperialists" in at

least giving verbal support to the "progressive" nationalists, has nonetheless devoted most of her energy in the Near East since the Six-Day War to keeping poor vulnerable "progressive" nationalists out of the clutches of the insidious Soviets by cementing an alliance with the principal gendarme of U.S. imperialism in the region, the Shah of Iran. Thus, while the Shah tortures and massacres Persian Maoists in Teheran, the Chinese foreign minister, in Mao suit and button, toasts his good health as the Shah is recruited to the Maoist "anti-Soviet united front" which stretches around the globe from the White House and NATO to Teheran, Rawalpindi and Peking. The reactionary role of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies in the Near East reaffirms the need for political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers states, and the restoration of genuine workers democracy and internationalism.

## No U.S. Aid or Troops to Israel!

U.S. imperialism, which in the past has completely equipped the armies of both Israel and Jordan, in the present conflict is backing Israel to the hilt. The U.S. government has made it quite clear with the dispatch of marines and additional aircraft carriers to the Mediterranean that it is prepared to intervene directly in the Near East chancing direct global confrontation with the Soviet Union and nuclear holocaust in order to prevent a decisive Israeli defeat. Further, Israel is known to have its own nuclear arsenal and this too could touch off a global confrontation. It is the responsibility of revolutionaries to struggle against U.S. military intervention into the Near East conflict, whether it takes the present form of supplying and equipping Israel or the form of direct intervention. A call for a trade-union boycott of all arms shipments to the Near East must be taken to the American working class. ■

# — NIXON'S SUBMINIMUM WAGE

Continued from page 3

workers directly affected by minimum wages are usually those with least training and those most difficult to organize—domestics, inexperienced and ghetto youth, seasonal and agricultural workers. The subminimum would further isolate young workers from the rest of the class by enforcing upon them a continued dependence on the family and tending to encourage robbery and drug dealing, i.e., facilitating their assimilation into the lumpenproletariat. It would reinforce the present obstacles to working-class and minority youth obtaining a college education. In addition to demanding a living wage for all, the Revolutionary Communist Youth (RCY), youth section of the Spartacist League, calls for nationalization of the universities under teacher-student-worker control, open admissions, an end to tuition and a stipend for all youth attending school.

The gap between better paid workers and the working poor tends to increase as inflation drives down wages of unorganized workers who have no union to make even a minimal defense of their living standards but must rely on Congress and the President as their bargaining agents. The minimum wage which represented 56% of industry wages in 1966 now amounts to 42% of the average industrial wage. In 1956, 3.7 youths were unemployed for every unemployed adult worker while today there are 5.2 idle youths for every adult looking for a job.

Thus youth, and particularly black youth, make up an increasing component of the reserve army of the unemployed—a source of cheap labor at the disposal of the capitalists to be absorbed into the work force in times of expansion and first fired in times of industrial stagnation. Generally such youth are used as an economic pressure to keep

all wages down. Young workers receiving subminimum wages are used to take the jobs of older workers.

It is in the interests of all workers to build a workers party based on the trade unions—the most organized and powerful section of the working class—that will defend youth against special oppression as part of the effort to unite the working class in political struggle for a workers government. The trade unions can be made to defend workers' interests only by replacing the existing bureaucracy with a militant class-struggle leadership. George Meany may have been "shocked" and "outraged" by Nixon's veto of the minimum wage bill but only because he expected at least a few scraps from the bourgeoisie for his services in policing the workers in the interests of capitalist profits. As for the so-called "progressive" bureaucrats, like Woodcock, his attitude toward the minimum wage can be observed in the new sell-out auto contract, notably the section which provides for the reduction of wages for probationary workers (workers in their first three months of employment). The Nixon veto, despite a strong labor lobby, demonstrates that in the epoch of imperialist decay the fawning attempts of the bureaucrats to seek favor with the bourgeois state are unlikely to win even the minimal reforms.

## YS, Guardian, YWLL Tail Bureaucrats

The various would-be revolutionary organizations are unable to provide an alternative to the trade-union bureaucracy. The Workers League and its youth group, the Young Socialists (YS), call on the bureaucrats to form a labor party while imploring the state to provide more training programs for youth,

thus encouraging illusions about both the state and the bureaucrats.

The SL/RCY calls upon the unions to construct programs to organize the unorganized, set up special training programs and fight unemployment by struggling for the shorter work week with no loss in pay. We stand always for the independence of the trade unions from the state and fight for union-controlled programs to end youth unemployment, recognizing that this goes hand in hand with the struggle to oust the bureaucrats whose sell-out policies facilitate capitalist attempts to amalgamate the unions into the state. The YS demonstrated its opaqueness to the special oppression of young workers in its lead editorial in the October *Young Socialist* (p. 2) which, while attacking Nixon's veto of the minimum wage bill, failed to so much as mention the subminimum "McDonald's Amendment" Nixon has been pushing. The failure of Congress to include this amendment in the bill was a major motivation for Nixon's veto. The YS is infamous for its "youth vanguard" deviation and pretensions to be building a "mass" socialist youth organization (see, for example, *Young Socialist*, October 1973) but, given an instance of genuine special oppression of young workers like the "Youth Opportunities Amendment," is blind to it and sees the answer to youth unemployment in more phony government Youth Corps programs (see *Young Socialist*, April 1973):

The Maoist-New Left *Guardian* uses the minimum wage veto as yet another occasion to uncritically flatter the trade-union bureaucracies in the UAW, UE, AFSCME and the UFW, complimenting George Meany for "blasting" the veto and I.W. Abel for "deploring" it but never once mentioning the failure of these bureaucrats to go beyond reformism or even to fight the special

oppression of youth in their own industries (*Guardian*, 26 September 1973, p.6).

The Communist Party and its youth group, the Young Workers Liberation League, in keeping with their role as legislative pressure groups, "urged" Congress to pass the bill, "urged" the President not to veto and when that failed, "urged" labor to "urge" Congress to "stiffen its spine," thus projecting their historic role as props for one or another branch of the bourgeois state apparatus (see, for example, *Daily World*, 7 September 1973, pp. 1, 11).

Moreover, these pseudo-revolutionary groups rely on the trade-union bureaucrats or the bourgeois state only to reform various symptoms of the capitalist system. The RCY supports even limited reforms like the minimum wage bill, while pointing out its enormous inadequacies (e.g., its failure to cover the costs of inflation or bring minimum-wage workers above official poverty levels). To do otherwise would disqualify the RCY from initiating struggles which go beyond minimum wage demands to a workers government and the abolition of the wage system. The RCY recognizes that the fight for reforms must go beyond parliamentarianism or militant economic struggles, and must be an integral part of an anti-capitalist, class-struggle program. Thus, the demand for a minimum wage for all workers young and old, those in agriculture and the services as well as in industry, must be linked to demands for a full cost-of-living escalator clause, a shorter work week with no loss in pay to open up jobs for the unemployed, union organization of the unorganized, for a workers party and a workers government. The alternative to the bourgeois program of unemployment and poverty wages is the program of class struggle and socialist revolution! ■

# PUERTO RICO:

Because Puerto Rico is the principal remaining direct colony of the United States, it is a special duty of the U.S. workers movement to give clear and unconditional support to self-determination for the island nation. While defending Puerto Rico's right to national independence, even under bourgeois leadership, it is likewise the duty of internationalists to raise a revolutionary strategy which can take the struggle to its logical conclusion, the establishment of a workers republic, rather than simply preparing the way for a domestic version of the same capitalist exploitation the country has suffered under its colonial masters, first Spain and after 1898 the U.S.

The key to this strategy must be the struggle for the independence of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie and the struggle for its own class objectives. But two of the parties which today claim to represent the interests of the Puerto Rican workers, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) and the Puerto Rican Socialist League (LSP), call for a unity of all pro-independence forces, even such bourgeois nationalists as the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP). While the workers movement must demonstrate military solidarity with the militant bourgeois nationalist parties against U.S. imperialism and its direct agents in Puerto Rico, defending for instance the prisoners such as Lolita Lebrón and Oscar Collazo who continue to languish in U.S. jails as a result of the Nationalist Party's unsuccessful 1950 attack on President Truman and 1954 raid on the House of Representatives, to call for an ongoing "united front" with bourgeois independentistas implies a stages theory of revolution, where the first



Lolita Lebrón.

stage is some kind of bourgeois independence.

The strong nationalist overtones of the PSP and LSP are the result of the past betrayals of the ostensibly socialist parties in Puerto Rico, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, both of which in practice abandoned the struggle for independence at crucial periods. (The SP joined the colonial

government during the 1930's, and the CP dissolved into the autonomist party during the early 1940's.) What is less often stressed is that their abandonment of the struggle for national independence was the result of their overall reformist policies, which also led to selling out major strikes and preparing the way for the breakup of the once strong General Confederation of Labor (CGT) in the late 1940's. It is not the combination of reformist nationalism with reformist "socialism" that points the way forward for Puerto Rican workers, but the struggle for a program of permanent revolution which holds that genuine national independence cannot occur without a proletarian dictatorship. Formal statehood did not, for example, mean real national independence for Cuba from 1900 to 1959-60 and does not mean national independence for the Dominican Republic today. In order to successfully wage the fight for a workers dictatorship it is first necessary to absorb the lessons of the past defeats of the Puerto Rican workers movement.

## The Development of the Labor Movement

The earliest organization of the working class in Puerto Rico was the Free Federation of Workers (FLT), formed in 1898 under the leadership of a Spanish immigrant worker, Santiago Iglesias Pantín. This was a labor union federation allied with the AFL of the U.S. that organized workers in sugar, longshore and other industries. In 1915 the FLT was instrumental in the founding of the Socialist Party, built in the image of the reformist parties of the Second International. The political leadership was in the hands of the opportunist wing of the FLT, most prominently Iglesias and others closely associated with the Gompers leadership in the AFL.

In the elections of 1917, the party obtained 14 percent of the vote, winning control of seven municipalities. This figure would grow until 1936, and in 1932 the Socialists entered into a coalition government with the Republicans (an assimilationist right-wing bourgeois party, allied with the party of the same name in the U.S.). The entry into the popular-front coalition, the death of Iglesias and their betrayal of the 1934 sugar cane workers' strike were the central elements in the defeat and eventual disappearance of the Socialist Party/FLT from Puerto Rican politics.

The 1934 sugar strike provided a decisive test for the three political tendencies vying for leadership of the working class: the Socialist Party/FLT, the Nationalist Party and several Marxist groupings out of which the Communist Party would arise later in the year.

Of the role of the Socialist Party, J.A. Silén says in *We, the Puerto Rican People*: "It dug its own grave when it took the road of opportunism, of surrender to the ruling class, of betrayal. Not metaphorical betrayal, not betrayal as an emotional epithet, but real betrayal: surrender to the big sugar corporations." Preceding the strike, the leaders of the SP/FLT (who were at that time in the government) had

met with the owners of the sugar industry and arranged a contract. The deal was not accepted by the cane workers and they went out on a spontaneous wildcat strike, especially in those areas where the FLT was nominally strongest. The SP/FLT leadership tried to break the strike through, among other things, the use of state power. The strike was of short duration and inconclusive except in one respect: the leadership of the FLT in the working class was broken.

## The Nationalist Party

With the betrayal of the Socialists,

control of them immediately, placing men of stature, responsibility and patriotism in the positions of control" while also favoring "the exclusive consumption of local fruits and the patronage of Puerto Rican industries [and] native banks." The party called for the convening of a constituent assembly to establish the Republic of Puerto Rico.

At the 1930 party convention, Pedro Albizu Campos, a remarkable figure in Puerto Rican history, assumed the presidency of the party. He was a lawyer and brilliant agitator whose politics combined the strategy of armed struggle for national independence with pan-Hispanic cultural nationalism, mystical



Ponce massacre, Puerto Rico, March 1937, where police murdered 21 Nationalist dem

the Nationalists as well as the Communists stepped in to lead the strike. The Nationalists had been founded in 1922 as a split from the autonomist Unionist Party. The contradictory program of the Nationalists reflected both the desperation of the Puerto Rican working class and peasantry and the aspirations of a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie for an independent capitalist development.

The economic program of the party advocated that it "organize the workers so that they can demand from foreign interests participation in the earnings which they have a right to; assuming

Catholic idealism and a bourgeois economic and social program. It was under his leadership that the party became a significant force in Puerto Rican politics. After participation in the 1932 election (obtaining only 5,000 votes) the party made a principle out of electoral abstention, which legacy is still alive in the Puerto Rican left today, most noticeably in the Socialist League.

The closest approach of the Nationalist Party to gaining a base in the organized working class came with the 1934 cane strike. Albizu took a prominent position of leadership and support

# National Independence and the Class Struggle

for the strike, filling some of the void left by the Socialists. But while the Nationalists were able to gain the sympathy of individual workers, they abstained from any sustained struggle for leadership of the trade-union movement, preferring to involve themselves purely in the struggle for independence, while allowing the economic and trade-union struggle to develop its own leadership spontaneously.

The party turned to terrorism and preparation for the armed struggle through the quasi-military black-shirted Cadets of the Republic. In 1936, Albizu and other leaders of the party

## The Communist Party

For the Communist Party, the 1934 cane strike was its first significant entry into the labor movement, although at the time it was incapable of playing a decisive role. It was organized into a party in that year under the aegis of the Communist Party of the United States, with which it has always maintained the closest ties. The CP played a significant role in the destruction of the FLT—winning the leadership of the longshoremen's union from the SP/FLT and leading a 47-day general strike on the waterfront in 1938—and in organizing truckers, cane and some indus-

pledge, and with the official destruction of the Comintern in 1943, the CP liquidated itself into the Popular Party. By systematically capitulating to the bourgeoisie, the CP from the beginning paved the way to losing its own working-class base. In May 1945 the Populares forced a split in the CGT (whose unions had led 67 strikes in the previous two years, the Communists to the contrary notwithstanding). In 1946 the Communist Party reorganized and attempted to rebuild the CGT, but was unsuccessful. In 1954 the Popular Party government arrested and imprisoned the leadership of the CP, which by that time was too weak to mount any real opposition. Although the CP still exists, it is an aging and isolated remnant, whose popular-front niche is presently occupied by the (new) Socialist Party (PSP/MPI).

## The Populares

In 1940 a new turning point was marked in Puerto Rican history. Muñoz' Popular Party won the elections based on a radical reform program (much of it taken from the Socialists) including land redistribution, increased social welfare, and lawsuits against large U.S. companies. Though the radicalism quickly faded, the basis established for the capitalist industrial development of the island was more durable. The government made investments in transport, and set up state-owned cement and glass industries (later virtually given away to private interests). Government bureaus and banks for development were established along with a tax structure allowing corporations up to 17 years of tax-free operation. It was furthermore insured that the U.S. minimum wage law would not hold in Puerto Rico (it still does not, but with the increased attractiveness of protectionism to the U.S. Congress, this may soon change).

Politically the Populares engineered the splitting of the CGT and decided in 1945 that advocacy of independence was inconsistent with membership in the Popular Party, driving out the independentistas who formed the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) in 1946. In 1952, at the instigation of the Popular Party, the relation of Puerto Rico to the U.S. was declared by Congress to be that of a "free associated state," which did not qualitatively change the colonial nature of the relationship, though it provided for a popularly-elected governor. The main purpose of this maneuver was to take the Puerto Rican case out of the United Nations' commission on colonies—in which the U.S. was successful.

The administration of the PP (later called the PPD, the Popular-Democratic Party) also encouraged large-scale migration, first from the countryside to the city, and then for many to the large U.S. cities, especially New York. There are presently more than 1-1/2 million Puerto Ricans on the U.S. mainland, concentrated, for reasons of language and race, generally at the bottom of the working class. In New York, for example, the average income of Puerto Ricans was only about three-fourths that of blacks in 1972.

## Puerto Rican Capitalism

That the Populares' administration was able to achieve this capitalist development with considerable success for the bourgeoisie and U.S. imperialism may be seen from the following figures (obtained from A. Sanchez Tar-



Pedro Albizu Campos.

niella, *La Economía de Puerto Rico*):

Production (in millions of dollars)		
	1950	1970
Gross National Product	287	4607
Agricultural Production	180	184
Manufacturing	89	953
Construction	27	321
Financial	52	442
Government	70	618
Services	44	509

The economy illustrates the uneven development characteristic of the colonial situation. Manufacturing, the basis of the economic development, was concentrated in labor-intensive non-durable goods, such as clothing and leather; in 1950 the average manufacturing wage was one quarter that of the mainland, and by 1970 it was still only one third. The 1960's saw the development of tourism and the more capital-intensive petrochemical and pharmaceutical industries, while the agricultural sector was allowed to deteriorate. In 1970, U.S. corporations made almost \$584 million in profits from Puerto Rican investments and Puerto Rico was the fifth most significant market for U.S. goods. The average family income in Puerto Rico, though second only to Argentina in Latin America, is still only one half that of the poorest U.S. state, and three quarters of all families, by the most recent estimate, live on less than \$2,500 a year. This should be measured against roughly 15 percent higher prices in Puerto Rico than in the U.S.

At the present time about 80 percent of the Puerto Rican economy is in the hands of U.S. capital (about 85 percent of manufacturing, 60 percent of retail trade and finance, and almost 100 percent of international

*Continued on next page*



alist demonstrators and wounded 150.

were sentenced in federal court for "conspiring to overthrow the government of the United States by force and violence," and Albizu spent the next 11 years in jail. Thus began a period of extremely sharp repression of the Nationalist movement. The party never regained the strength it had in the thirties, although it instigated a suicidal armed uprising centering in Jayuya in 1950. Albizu himself died in 1965, after having spent almost his entire life from 1937 onwards in prison. Though the Nationalist Party continues to exist in Puerto Rico, its political significance is solely historical.

trial workers. The Communist Party was instrumental in founding the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) in 1940, which by 1945 would encompass 378 unions, including most of the organized working class on the island.

The party could never play a revolutionary role, however, because of its Stalinist popular-front politics. With the establishment of the liberal-bourgeois autonomist Popular Party in 1938 the Communists gave the PP leader, Luis Muñoz Marín, uncritical political support. During World War II, the Stalinists supported the no-strike

# National Independence

transport). The Puerto Rican bourgeoisie is small and often little more than a junior partner to the U.S. ruling class, but it does have a real existence. The Puerto Rican banking industry (e.g., the Carrión family's Banco Popular) was founded before the U.S. invasion and presently controls 40 percent of the business. There are notable Puerto Rican business interests in retail trade (e.g., Moscoso), manufacturing (e.g., former governor Ferré) and agriculture. This needs to be noted since significant sections of the Puerto Rican left, including the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP, formerly the MPI - Pro-Independence Movement) and the Socialist League, use the contention that there is no "national bourgeoisie" in Puerto Rico to justify a bloc of all pro-independence forces. But whether directly through alliance with a party of the big bourgeoisie or indirectly with a petty-bourgeois nationalist party, such an "independentista united front" ties the working class to the capitalists and means fighting for an illusory independence in which the power of the Carrións, the Moscosos and the Ferrés will remain intact.

## The Independentista Movement

Stimulated by the Cuban revolution, the Vietnam War and political movements in the U.S., there has been a renaissance of the Puerto Rican independence movement in recent years. The leadership is shared, for the most part, between two organizations, the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP)

invasion of the U.S. Navy's firing range on the island of Culebra. The PIP has also been strengthened by an influx of former PPD supporters reacting to the more and more openly reactionary character of the Populares in recent years. In the 1972 elections the PIP ran a relatively successful campaign, winning several seats in the legislature.

When the PSP speaks of an "independentista united front," it is primarily interested in blocking with the PIP. (The Socialists proposed during last year's elections the "joint participation of all the patriotic forces in a broad electoral front" to the PIP, but the latter turned down the proposal.) Despite its talks of "Christian socialism," the PIP remains a bourgeois rather than a workers party. Similar "Radical" or "Radical Socialist" parties have existed for decades in places like France and Chile.

Above all the PIP is not based on the independent mobilization of the working class (through the unions or organized on a class basis) in opposition to the bourgeoisie. It has electoral appeal among Puerto Rican workers, but this is no different than the workers' votes for the governing Popular-Democratic Party. Aside from the fact that an electoral front such as proposed by the PSP would involve submerging the differences between the parties by presenting a common propaganda bloc, the "independentista united front" is not a working-class united front in the Leninist sense, but a popular front whose effect is to tie the workers to a sec-



U.S. troops march through San Juan, circa 1930.

Chinese Kuomintang Party under Sun Yat-sen. It differed from the PIP in that the latter was oriented toward achieving independence through legal, peaceful means, primarily elections, and "in terms of friendship with the United States..." The MPI, on the other hand, favored militant action (demonstrations, draft resistance), was abstentionist in the colonial elections and was generally anti-American.

Beginning in 1968 the MPI began a process of transforming itself from what it termed the "patriotic vanguard"

party of the whole class, with a militant veneer of "Marxism-Leninism" and support for armed struggle.

The bourgeois nationalism of the PSP permeates its documents. Thus, the following kind of nationalist statement (not to mention blatantly male chauvinist!) can be found throughout the 1969 "Political Thesis" of the MPI:

"The most serious manifestation of the Puerto Rican problem is the identity crisis in which the Puerto Rican man finds himself... After the family, nationality is what gives man a sense of belonging."

Claiming that there is a single Puerto Rican nation, one third of which lives on the U.S. mainland (!), the document draws the parallel with Zionism by referring to "nationalities which, having lost their territorial basis, even survive the empires which decreed the diaspora." Reprinting this section of the MPI "Political Thesis," the "General Declaration" of the PSP (1972) commented:

"Our nationality is the battleground of our working class. The destruction of our nationality is the definitive triumph of the imperialist bourgeoisie over our working masses."

In the recent "Political Declarations of the U.S. Section of the PSP" (1973), we read:

"Nation and class are two different categories that do not contradict each other. As Puerto Ricans we function with a national perspective in mind. As workers we form a social class that transcends national boundaries...."

This nationalism is so open that in a recent polemic with the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRRWO, formerly the Young Lords, a Maoist organization for whom the class line exists in the works of Marx but disappears into the anti-imperialist united front in its program and practical work) the PSP wrote in answer to the PRRWO's quote from the *Communist Manifesto* ("The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got.") that this was "selectively chosen" and "by no means represents Marx's and Engels' full position on the national question," citing their support for the right of self-determination for Ireland.

At the very least the PSP completely ignores here the essential difference between recognition of the right of self-determination in order to eliminate national oppression and frictions within the international working class, and support for the bourgeois ideology of nationalism. There is no such thing as "proletarian patriotism" under capitalism, as the Stalinist Communist Parties and Maoists speak of. The goal of



First PSP Congress in U.S. sings Puerto Rican national anthem, 8 April 1973.

and the PSP. The PIP was formed in 1946 as a petty-bourgeois electoral party with a bourgeois reform program representing moderate independentistas excluded from the Populares in that year. The party lost its once considerable electoral following of the 1950's and a new leadership under Rubén Berríos took over after a split in 1968. The rejuvenated PIP has adopted a more "advanced" program of a Christian-Democratic character and even includes an occasional platonic mention of socialism. It has also attracted a certain student base on the basis of civil disobedience campaigns, such as the hunger strike by PIP militants protesting the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at the University of Puerto Rico in 1969-70, and the

tion of the bourgeoisie and to the maintenance of capitalism.

## The Puerto Rican Socialist Party

The predecessor to the PSP, the MPI, was founded in 1959 with elements formerly from the Nationalist and Communist Parties and from the student independence movement (the FUPI). It was, in the words of its Secretary-General Juan Mari Bras, "an alliance of classes, progressive ideological tendencies, and different generations. We represent national unity in embryonic form; we are the vanguard." Until 1968 it was essentially a populist bourgeois nationalist party, perhaps comparable to the early

into the "revolutionary vanguard." At the Seventh Assembly of the MPI the organization adopted "the science of Marxism-Leninism" and in 1971 became the PSP. The PSP is, like the PIP, an important political force in Puerto Rico and publishes a twice-weekly paper, *Claridad*, with a circulation of 20,000 to 40,000. It is also very active in the U.S., especially in the past year (see "PSP Nationalists Hold U.S. Conference," *Workers Vanguard* No. 19, 27 Apr. 1973).

The program of the PSP is opportunist to the core and based on a mixture of outright bourgeois nationalism and a Menshevik stages theory of the Puerto Rican revolution. The fundamental aspiration of the PSP leadership is to become a social-democratic



# and the Class Struggle



Young Lords (now called Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization) demonstration in New York carries banners depicting Campos (right) and Ramon Betances (left), 19th century Puerto Rican abolitionist.

the workers movement must *always* be the establishment of its own class rule, even when fighting to defend an oppressed bourgeois nation against imperialist aggression, and its ideology can *only* be proletarian internationalism. Any other course means acting as the agents of the bourgeoisie, and ultimately leads to the inglorious fate of the Second International, which collapsed in 1914 as the various reformist socialist parties voted war credits to "defend their nationality."

The two-stage theory of revolution espoused by the PSP is equally blatant in the "General Declaration." On the one hand the Declaration states that "our fundamental objective is the transformation of the colonial-capitalist structure existing in Puerto Rico into a Democratic and Socialist Republic of the Puerto Rican workers." Nevertheless, "within this previously stated fundamental objective, the conquest of national independence—no matter what its structural limitations—would be not only an essential objective towards the completion of our socialist goal, but also the attainment of a substantive aspiration...." In practice the "essential objective" takes precedence over the "fundamental objective," through the "patriotic electoral front," the "independentista united front," etc.

A recent example of the reformism of the PSP was last fall's appeal to the "robbers' den" of the United Nations to declare Puerto Rican independence. The PSP built a campaign in the U.S. around pressuring the U.N. (including reactionary governments like Iran and Ethiopia) to either vote for, or abstain on, the question of Puerto Rican independence. The high point of the campaign was a large demonstration in front of the U.N. on 24 September in which U.S. groups including the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, Youth Against War and Fascism, the October League, the Revolutionary Union and the Black Workers Congress joined in uncritical solidarity with the PSP's reformist demands. While Marxists would not oppose using the U.N. question as an opportunity to make some general propaganda and expose the nature of the U.N., it would be subordinate to their other work. Not only did the PSP overwhelmingly concentrate on the U.N. campaign for a period, but the content of its propaganda was to strengthen illusions about the U.N. rather than reveal its impotence and the reactionary role of member nations like Iran and Ethiopia. In addition to the absurdity of expecting to achieve real national independence by appealing to the international mediating agency of the

imperialist powers, this campaign was made doubly grotesque by the fact that the U.N. had a Puerto Rican observer until the 1950 revolt of the Nationalist Party, whereupon the observer post was simply eliminated.

Internationally the PSP has close ties with Cuba. In fact, its delegation in Havana has diplomatic status as the representative of the Puerto Rican national liberation movement. It considers the deformed workers states to be "socialist countries," and in a "non-sectarian" spirit supports them all. Naturally it does not mention the need for a workers' International but considers it necessary "that each country develop independently its own socialist revolution" ("General Declaration"). For the PSP, proletarian internationalism is no more than telegrams from fraternal bureaucracies, each fighting to "defend its nationality," rather than the international class struggle.

On the question of guerrilla struggle, the PSP gives support to the Armed Liberation Commandos (CAL), a small and not particularly effective terrorist group which has concentrated on bombing U.S. corporations and military objectives. The PSP itself, however, stays clear of such dangerous activities.

The trade-union program of the PSP reflects the same reformist appetites as the rest of its politics. It is designed to push the trade-union bureaucracy to the left, not to replace it with a revolutionary trade-union leadership. The "General Declaration" of 150 pages makes not one mention of the need to organize rank-and-file oppositionists in the unions. PSP trade-union work concentrates on building the United Workers Movement (MOU), a small confederation based on militant bread-and-butter unionism, whose chairman (Pedro Grant) is also a member of the central committee of the PSP.

The behavior of the MOU during the strike wave last July in Puerto Rico reveals the capitulatory logic of its reformism. While initially calling for a general strike, the MOU was the first to note its approval of the sell-out agreement made by the Municipal Public Employees. Along with the Congress of Industrial Unions, the MOU sent a telegram on 11 July to Carlos Romero Barcelo, the Mayor of San Juan, congratulating him for "having come to accords with the Municipal Public Employees without having to use force" (*El Diario La Prensa*, 12 Sept. 1973).

In the U.S. the PSP is attempting to organize the Puerto Rican community into the U.S. section of the party, failing to see that Puerto Rican workers in the U.S. are an integral (although doubly-

oppressed) section of the U.S. working class, as have been immigrants from other nations during the earlier part of this century. Whatever special arrangements are made to facilitate the recruitment of immigrant and minority workers, they must be organized into the single U.S. revolutionary party, not in opposition to it or parallel to it. The concept of a "dual vanguard" is completely anti-Leninist, and ultimately results in demands for separate parties for blacks, Chicanos, women, gays, students, Indians, etc.

## Puerto Rican Socialist League

The most serious left opposition to the PIP and PSP is the Puerto Rican Socialist League (LSP), led by Juan Antonio Corretjer. (Corretjer was a leading member of the Nationalist Party during the 1930's and secretary to Albizu Campos. After a term in jail he was for a while a member of the Communist Party, quitting in 1947.) The League is closely linked to the Progressive Labor Party in the U.S. and shares many of PL's views. Thus the LSP considers both China and the USSR to be capitalist countries, calls for a left-center coalition in the unions, rejects the Leninist united front, etc. However, the League does not appear to have made the turn to the right taken by PL in late 1971 which involved groveling capitulation before the popular-front National Peace Action Coalition, a liberal anti-racist campaign in the universities, blocking with left-talking bureaucrats in the unions and entering the Democratic Party. The LSP is quite small and its immediate influence on the class struggle is minimal, but with its left-centrist politics it does represent a pole of attraction for would-be revolutionaries.

The LSP considers electoral illusions to be the key stumbling block in the path toward revolution. "The link in the imperialist chain in Puerto Rico, the link that we must seize to break the chain, is the electoral system. Breaking it, we break the backbone of the colonial political mechanism" (J.A. Corretjer, *La patria radical*, 1971). Their strategy for breaking the chain is...electoral abstention! This represents a fundamentally idealist conception of politics—the key problem is a "wrong idea" in the minds of the working class, the idea of the possibility of winning real gains through elections. (This is not dissimilar to PL's anti-racism campaign which concentrates on fighting racist textbooks in the universities!)

Lenin argued against such abstentionism in *Left-Wing Communism*, pointing to the value of using bourgeois parliaments as propaganda platforms, at the same time clearly opposing reformist conceptions of pushing such state institutions in the direction of socialism. In reaction to the Communist Party's conscious and treacherous misinterpretation of *Left-Wing Communism*, the LSP, like PL, jumps

over the revolutionary Leninist position into irrelevant sectarianism. The LSP can conceive of nothing to counterpose to abstention but an electoral party, and does not begin to consider the possibility of participating in elections on the basis of a revolutionary program, not only to dispel the prejudices of parliamentarism, but also to break the working class from bourgeois political parties. The position of the LSP is inverted parliamentary cretinism.

The LSP's trade-union work reflects this same idealism, expressing it in a position of dual unionism. Where they happen to have supporters in a union (e.g., telephone) their work centers on building a rank-and-file caucus (*comités de base*) on a minimal, militant, democratic program. These committees are not formed, however, in order to organize to win the leadership of the trade unions by the revolutionaries (LSP members, in fact, will not run for union office), but instead are seen as the nucleus of new organizations, outside the existing trade-union movement:

"All the trade union apparatus mobilized by the industrial revolution and organized by the three communist internationalists [sic] have failed, as those organizations themselves have degenerated. This entire apparatus must be abandoned by the workers, thrown into the dustbin of history. It is simply of no use. What is posed is the reorganization of the working class from below, the formation of workers' committees.... Committees which cannot pay fines and therefore do not need to pay them; nor are they tied by commitments and fears to the legal regime; committees which, therefore, are capable of developing a vast and continuous program of wildcat strikes which develop and triumph despite the legal apparatus of the capitalists...."

—*El Socialista* No. 54, June 1972

Can these self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninists really be unaware that Lenin wrote his polemic *Left-Wing Communism* precisely against such childishness as this. One cannot simply abandon the trade unions—the historically-evolved institutions of the working class for defensive struggles under capitalism—simply because their leadership is composed of agents of the bourgeoisie. We must struggle within the unions to build mass support to throw out this parasitic bureaucracy and replace it with a revolutionary leadership. Of course the unions as such cannot make a revolution, formed as they are as instruments of economic defense and basing themselves only on restricted sections of the working class. In times of mass upheaval the unions will be transformed into or transcended by factory committees and soviets or similar institutions which can form the foundation for a working-class reorganization of society. The leadership of the communist vanguard party is necessary to successfully carry out a revolution. But the factory committees and soviets cannot be sucked out of one's thumb or con-

Continued on next page



Juan Antonio Corretjer (front row, third from left), Secretary General of Liga Socialista, in Canada for trial of Humberto Pagan.

# PUERTO RICO: National Independence and the Class Struggle

jured up out of nothing; nor will they emerge during non-revolutionary and quiescent periods. To abandon the unions to the reformists is to guarantee in advance that the LSP will play no significant role in the period before a pre-revolutionary situation, and consequently, because of its isolation and proven irrelevance, not at that time either.

As Lenin wrote:

"We are waging the struggle against the opportunist and social chauvinist leaders in order to win the working class over to our side. It would be absurd to forget this most elementary and self-evident truth. Yet it is this very absurdity that the German 'Left' Communists perpetuate when, because of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the trade union *top leadership* they jump to the conclusion that...we must withdraw from the trade unions, refuse to work in them, and create new and *artificial* forms of labor organization! This is so unpardonable a blunder that it is tantamount to the greatest service Communists could render the bourgeoisie." [emphasis and ellipsis in original]

—"Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder"

This lesson is underscored by the LSP's own experience of the 1971 telephone strike. Despite the militancy of the strike and the sympathy for LSP support activities, the strike was finally "settled" by a rotten contract negotiated by the reactionary Rivas leadership, and since then demoralization has set in—all this according to the LSP's own account (*El*



Puerto Rican political prisoners in U.S. jails (top row, from left to right): Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Miranda, Andres Cordero, Irving Flores, Oscar Collazo (bottom row shows duplicates of top photos).

*Socialista* No. 56, August 1972). But the League has no alternative—except to abandon the unions! To defeat this leadership it is necessary to provide a revolutionary alternative, based on a militant rank-and-file organization in-

side the union (the caucus), with a class-struggle program that opposes the pro-capitalist program of the bureaucracy down the line and broadens the struggle into a political struggle for working-class rule.

The LSP takes a dual line regarding the national question, proclaiming on the one hand that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can mean real independence for the workers, but then calling for an "independentista united front," presumably not the opportunist variety of the PSP, but rather a *real* unity of all pro-independence forces, under working-class leadership. Like PL, the League supposedly rejects Stalin's popular front with the "democratic bourgeoisie." But again like PL, it simply turns around and calls for the popular front under a different name.

## For Puerto Rican Trotskyism!

As clearly as in Spain 1936-1938 or China 1925-1927, Puerto Rican realities confirm again the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution. The bourgeoisie cannot achieve genuine national independence, just as it has not even carried out a real agrarian reform, preferring instead to "solve" the agrarian question by forcing hundreds of thousands of peasants to migrate to the cities and the U.S. The alternative to colonial rule by the U.S. bourgeoisie should not be to simply carry out some kind of national-democratic independence struggle, which would leave the base of power of the capitalist class untouched, but the struggle for socialist revolution. This requires a policy of proletarian internationalism and the closest coordination with the struggles of the U.S. working class in the fight for the rebirth of the Fourth International. ■

## JIM CROW vs. MILITANT INTEGRATED UNIONISM

Continued from page 12

malgamate the AFL affiliate with the National Association of Machinists. However, the latter refused to drop its discriminatory policy so Gompers persuaded the National Association to transfer the color bar from its constitution to its by-laws and on that basis the two unions were amalgamated into the International Association of Machinists and granted an AFL charter. In the following year Gompers was able to get the previously excluded Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders and the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths to transfer the color bar from their constitutions to their by-laws and they were rewarded

charter of the International Association of Carworkers which was open to black members and chartered the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen which excluded blacks.

### Black Labor Purged From Skilled Jobs

Following the Civil War black labor was prominent throughout the shipping and longshore, mining, construction and railroad industries. Due to the Jim Crow job-trusting policies of the AFL, blacks were systematically purged from skilled construction, railroad and longshore work. The situation in the railroad crafts was indicative. When

Firemen sought to exclude blacks by contractual agreement with employers. In 1909 these brotherhoods fought a long bloody strike in Georgia until every black fireman was replaced by a white.

The AFL and the Railroad Brotherhoods became both the agents and the apologists for the relegation of the black worker to the unorganized and unskilled bottom of the proletariat. Gompers laid out the new AFL policy in an article he wrote for the April 1901 *American Federationist* entitled "Trade Union Attitude Toward Colored Labor." He argued that black workers were unorganizable in the main because they were unskilled, had a lower standard of living and were therefore willing to work at less than union wages and serve as strikebreakers. This was, however, the result and not the cause of AFL policy.

### UMW, IWW—Integrated, Militant Trade Unionism

The major exceptions to Jim Crow trade unionism during this period were the United Mine Workers and the Industrial Workers of the World. The UMW had organized the majority of AFL black membership—over 40,000—before WWI. The rapid expansion of coal and iron mining at the end of the century took place on a highly mechanized and therefore unskilled basis. During this period of expansion the social composition of miners underwent a transformation from Irish and English to East and South European Catholic immigrants and contained an increasing black component. Although mine owners were often able to set Slav against Italian and both against the Negro, nonetheless the dangerous, difficult and highly mechanized nature of mining produced a certain natural class solidarity. The UMW, in order to organize the mines, found it necessary to do so on a "mixed" and industrial basis. The UMW industrial

unionism represented the future of the labor movement and it is no accident that an initial impetus for the CIO came from the UMW. The IWW had a heroic if ultimately unsuccessful record of organizing immigrant labor. The *Industrial Worker* (cited in Foner, Vol. IV) said of Gompers' Asiatic Exclusion League: "If the American workers need fear any 'yellow peril' it is from the yellow socialists."

The Jim Crow policies of the AFL found their echo in the politics of the American Socialist Party (SP). It is not surprising that the leader of the SP right wing could write in the *Social Democratic Herald* of 31 May 1902:

"There can be no doubt that the negroes and mulattoes constitute a lower race and that Caucasians, and indeed Mongolians, have the start on them in civilization by many thousands of years."

But racial insensitivity was also shown by the most prominent spokesman for the SP left wing, Debs, who opposed a resolution against the special oppression of blacks with the statement,

continued on next page



Use of blacks as scab labor often provoked riots by white workers. Drawing depicts white workers attacking train bringing black labor to scab on coal miners' strike in Illinois, 1890.

with an AFL charter. Finally, beginning with the Order of Railroad Telegraphers in 1899 and the Brotherhood of Railway Truckmen in 1900 the AFL admitted unions which contained color bars in their constitutions. In 1902 the Stationary Engineers, a national union already affiliated to the AFL, added the color bar to its constitution. In 1910 the AFL cancelled the

the railroads were first built, the jobs of firemen and trainmen were considered to be hot, dirty work to be reserved for black labor. As technological improvements were made these jobs became cleaner and easier and they became stepping stones to high-status jobs such as conductor and engineer, the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen and the Brotherhood of Loco-

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**WORKERS VANGUARD**

# ... JIM CROW

"The Socialist Party has nothing special to offer the Negro." Debs had, however, in 1894 opposed a racial exclusion clause which was passed by a slim margin at the First National Convention of the American Railway Union. Later in his life, Debs became increasingly convinced of the need for integrated unionism.

## Lenin On Gompers

The national and racial chauvinism which pervaded the AFL and much of the SP corresponded to the development of U.S. imperialism. When Gompers was championing the Asiatic Exclusion League, the U.S. was conquering Hawaii and the Philippines. Gompers wrote in the 1905 *American Federationist*:

"If the colored man continues to lend himself to the work of tearing down what the white man has built up, a race hatred far worse than any ever known will result. Caucasian civilization will serve notice that its uplifting process is not to be interfered with in any way."

In this way, he was fanning the worst Klan and lynch terror blacks had ever known. Unlike the NLU and the Knights of Labor, Gompers and the AFL consciously saw themselves as the representatives of the "labor aristocracy" from which blacks and Asiatics had to be excluded. Thus, U.S. entry into the epoch of imperialism meant not only colonial expansion abroad, but the polarization of its working class into a black industrial reserve army at the bottom and a white, craft-skilled, job-trusted "aristocracy of labor" at the top, which Lenin called "the craft-union, narrow-minded, selfish, case-hardened, covetous and petty-bourgeois



Lenin attacked Gompers (left) as being a member of "craft-union, narrow-minded, selfish, case-hardened, covetous and petty-bourgeois labor aristocracy, imperialist-minded and imperialist-bribed." Eugene Debs (center), while declaring that Socialist Party had "nothing special to offer the Negro," opposed exclusion of blacks from National Railway Union. Drawing (right) depicts systematic purge of blacks from railway jobs.

labor aristocracy, imperialist-minded and imperialist-bribed" (*Left-Wing Communism*, emphasis in original). And he said of the "struggle against the Gomperses" and his like in Europe that "this struggle must be waged ruthlessly, and it must unflinchingly be brought—as we have brought it—to a point when all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social-chauvinism are completely discredited and driven out of the trade unions" (*Left-Wing Communism*).

The black question in the U.S. remains today the question of the "reserve industrial army," institutionalized by a pervasive racial oppression

both on and off the job. The struggle against the lumpenization, unemployment and under-employment of the black proletariat has as its guide the slogans of the Transitional Program: a sliding scale of wages and hours to end unemployment at capitalist expense, organize the unorganized, sweep

away all vestiges of Jim Crow from the trade-union movement, build a workers party. Such a struggle must be inseparably linked to the struggle to replace the present-day Gomperses in the unions with a militant, class-struggle leadership.

[To Be Continued]

# UFW

## Continued from page 1

the consumer boycott as a secondary form of support for an ongoing strike. At times such a boycott can be a useful tactic for mobilizing broad popular support. In the case of a hard-fought wildcat strike that becomes isolated and is forced into a tactical retreat, a boycott may be the only form of protest possible for a period. This is certainly *not* the case with the farm workers' struggle, whose leadership's policies have been geared repeatedly towards weakening the strike. Rather, the UFW bureaucracy is substituting the boycott for strike activity and we therefore regard the boycott strategy as a sop to liberal opinion, motivated by a desire to cover the bureaucracy's betrayal of the ranks. Our attitude towards current boycott activities was well articulated in *Workers Vanguard* No. 30 (12 Oct.):

"In the present situation, while the Spartacist League politically opposes the adoption of the boycott strategy in place of a militant strike strategy, it stands in solidarity with the farm workers against the capitalist retailers who continue to stock scab products in their stores."

Thus, we would not cross consumer boycott picket lines, nor would we advocate them.

As the strike becomes liquidated into the consumer boycott, the various "strike support" committees which have been set up are also being transformed into "consumer boycott support" committees. It is necessary for all those who support militant class-struggle politics to argue vehemently within such committees that the committee denounce Chavez's liquidation of the strike, advocating a course of militant strike action for the farm workers. Should the existing UFW "strike support" committees endorse the Chavez/Meany policy of substituting an endless and ineffectual consumer boycott for labor action, they will objectively contribute to the betrayal of the farm workers' struggle.

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## RACIAL OPPRESSION & WORKING-CLASS POLITICS

The December 1969 resolution submitted to the New Haven SDS National Council Meeting by the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus, predecessor of the RCY, on the need to link up a communist program with the fight against the pervasive double oppression of the black masses.

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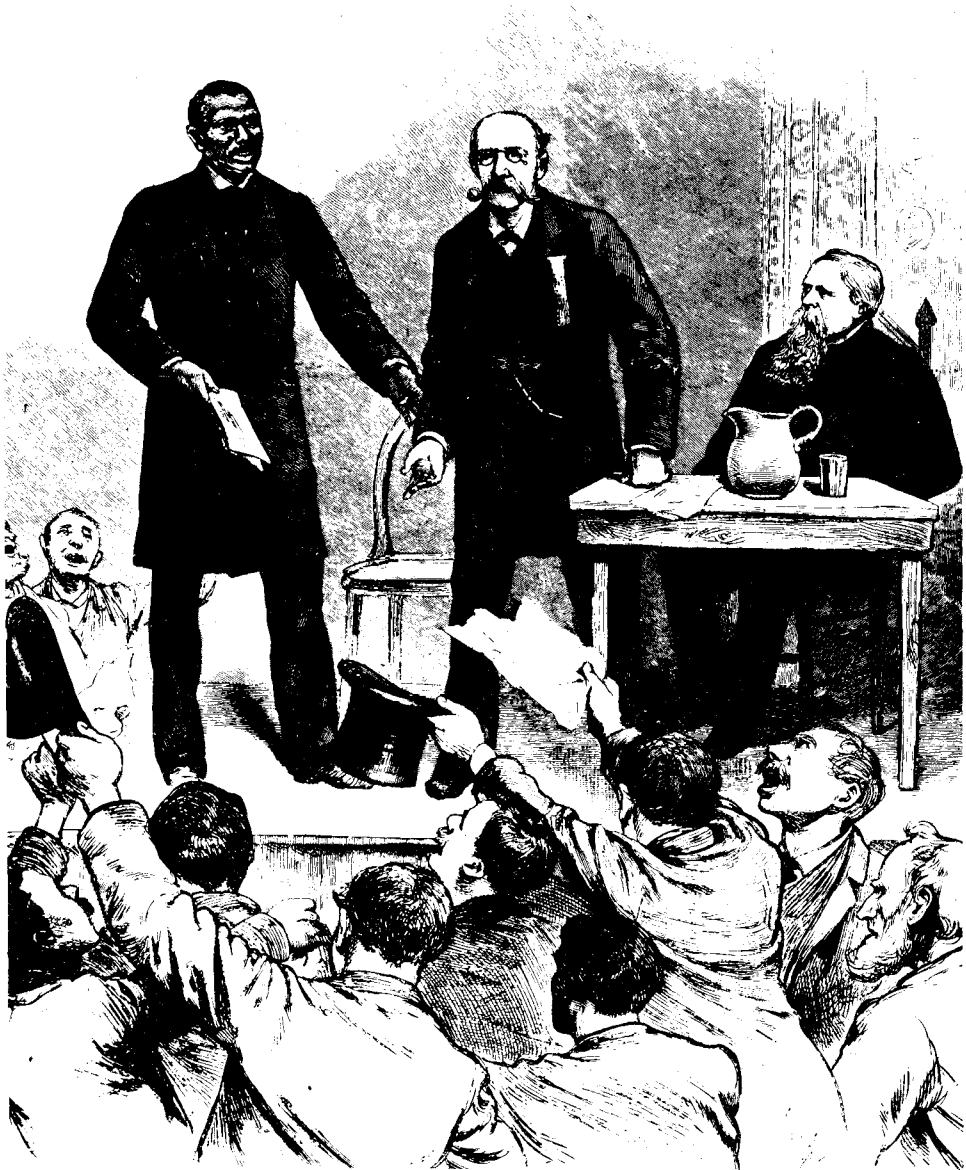
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BASIC LENINISM  
Continuing bi-weekly series covers Lenin's contribution in developing Marxism in the epoch of imperialism. Special emphasis is placed on the role of the Leninist party. First class in November takes place on Thurs., the 4th, 7:30 PM. Rm. 337, Norton Union, SUNY. For more information: (716)881-3064.
- BOSTON**  
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Weekly series begins Thurs., 25 Oct., 7:30 PM. Rm. 312, Sherman Union, Boston U. For more information: (617)492-3928.  
Class Series—  
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SL-sponsored bi-weekly series begins Mon., 29 Oct., 7 PM. Rm. 322, Sherman Union, Boston U. For more information: (617) 492-3928.
- CHICAGO**  
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- TION**  
Bi-weekly series begins Wed., 24 Oct., 7 PM. Circle Center, U. of Ill. For more information: (312) 728-2151.
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Bi-weekly series begins in early November. For more information: (213) 467-6855.
- NEW HAVEN**  
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Bi-weekly series begins Tues., 23 Oct., 7:30 PM. For more information: (203) 432-1164.
- NEW YORK**  
Class Series—  
DRAWING THE CLASS LINE  
Second part of bi-weekly Basic Marxism series begins Thurs., 15 Nov., 7:30 PM. Rm. 522, 260 W. Broadway (near Canal St.), Manhattan. For more information: (212) 925-5665.  
Class Series—  
THE STRUGGLE FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL  
Last two classes in SL-sponsored bi-weekly series take place on 8 and 22 Nov., 7:30 PM. Rm. 522, 260 W. Broadway (near Canal St.), Manhattan. For more information: (212) 925-5665.

# Black Oppression and Proletarian Revolution



Knights of Labor was racially integrated. Drawing depicts 1886 conference when Frank M. Farrell, a black Knight, presented Grand Master Powderly to delegates.

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necessary for industrialization requires what Marx calls a "surplus population" or "industrial reserve army." Prior to Emancipation, the U.S. recruited its "surplus population" from the same source as England: Irish tenants driven off their land by enclosures and famine. Later in the 19th century U.S. capitalists would recruit their "surplus population" from Eastern and Southern Europe and Asia. But Emancipation meant that in addition to immigration the American bourgeoisie had an important domestic "industrial reserve" in its black population. This domestic "industrial reserve army" became increasingly important as, in the late 19th century, U.S. capitalism entered the epoch of imperialism, the period of its decay, when it was no longer able to absorb mass immigration.

For Marx the industrial reserve army is an essential component of capitalist production. Not only is a "surplus population" necessary from which to recruit the initial proletariat, but a continuing "surplus population" is necessary in order for capitalist production to expand during periods of boom and in order to hold down wages through competition. It is from the "industrial reserve army" that capitalism recruits for those tasks which are particularly difficult, dangerous and dirty such as mining or particularly servile such as so-called "domestic work." It is also from the industrial reserve army that the capitalist class recruits its strikebreakers and union-busters.

## The Knights of Labor

Early attempts to organize national unions, the National Labor Union (NLU —see "Black Oppression and Proletarian Revolution 1/The Material Basis for Black Oppression in the U.S.," YSp No. 19, Sept.-Oct.) and the Knights of Labor, recognized the necessity to organize immigrant and black labor. Out of the Knights of Labor's total membership of 700,000 in 1886 (at the height of its influence), 60,000 were black. The Knights of Labor, like the NLU, was not able to completely overcome 250 years of white supremacy which was the inherited ideological legacy of chattel slavery. Powderly, the head of the Knights, wrote a local affiliate that

## Gompers and the AFL Support Racist Policies

From its inception in 1881 the AFL paid lip service to organizing Negro and immigrant labor. An early AFL pledge read in part: "I promise never to discriminate against a fellow worker on account of color, creed and nationality" (Foner, Vol. II). Indeed, the heritage of trade unionism, as the head of the AFL, Gompers, realized, was a product of European immigration. However, Gompers and most of the AFL leadership had a virulent hostility to Asiatic, Slavic and Italian immigration and Gompers led the movement for the Exclusion Act of 1882. By 1908 he was leading an "Asiatic Exclusion League" and in the name of that organization he co-authored a pamphlet with Herman Gutstadt. Its title is a sufficient indication of its contents: *Meat vs. Rice: American Manhood Against Asiatic Coolieism—Which Shall Survive?*

At its 1890 Convention the AFL Executive Council submitted a resolution that claimed that it "looks with disfavor upon trade unions having provisions which exclude from membership persons on account of race or color" (*Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention of the AFL*). Indeed, at this Convention the National Association of Machinists was denied a charter because its constitution barred blacks from membership. Instead the AFL organized and chartered a rival "dual" union, the National Machinists Union, which was open to blacks. Likewise in 1893 the Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders were refused a charter because they excluded black members.

But the AFL was to make a change in its own constitution at its 1890 Convention which was more indicative of where it was going on the black question than its refusal at that time to charter a Jim Crow union and its willingness to organize a competing non-discriminatory union. Article XII, Section VI, was revised to read:

"...separate charters may be issued to Central Labor Unions, local Unions or Federal Labor Unions, composed exclusively of colored members, where in the judgment of the Executive Council it appears advisable and to the best interests of the Trade Union movement to do so."

At first this was accepted by the more

## 2/ JIM CROW vs. MILITANT INTEGRATED UNIONISM

[This is the second in a series of articles on the black question in the U.S. Part 1 (YSp No. 19, Sept.-Oct.) dealt with the Civil War period. Part 3, on Pan-Africanism, will appear in YSp No. 21, Jan.-Feb. 1974.]

While the principal occupation of the plantation-slave economy was agricultural, even the relatively crude labor-intensive agriculture of cotton and tobacco-raising required a complex division of labor and development of skills of such necessary auxiliary crafts as blacksmithing, ironworking and carpentry. Given the segregation of the black working population from white workers—socially essential for the maintenance of black chattel slavery and the autarchy of the plantation economy—these skills and crafts had to be internally generated from the slave population itself. Thus, while the overwhelming majority of slaves were forced into tilling the soil, a not inconsiderable section of the slave population pursued the skilled trades. Furthermore, almost the entire free black population pursued the skilled trades or were prominent in shipping and in the services. At the time of Emancipation there were five times as many black mechanics as white in the South. James Weldon Johnson could write in his autobiography (situated in Jacksonville in the 1880's):

"All the most interesting things that came under my observation were being done by colored men. They drove the horse and mule teams, they built the houses, they laid the bricks, they

Painted the buildings and fences. When I was a child I did not know there existed such a thing as a white carpenter or bricklayer or plasterer or thinner."

After Emancipation this pool of skilled black labor was drawn on for the industrial development of both the North and the South. Black labor became prominent in mining and the railroads, as well as shipping and construction. By the end of the 19th century blacks had been systematically purged from all the skilled, higher-status and better-paid jobs, for example, from all railroad jobs except porters and from construction work outside black neighborhoods.

### Capitalism's Need for An "Industrial Reserve Army"

The rejection of the Radical Republican program of "forty acres and a mule" by the U.S. capitalist class meant that the emancipated slave was forced back to his former plantations under a form of peonage. His role was largely agricultural in what was still principally an agricultural country. By the turn of the century cotton was still the U.S. main export accounting for 25 percent of its foreign exchange. Nonetheless, the Civil War was not fought to simply replace slavery with peonage. From the standpoint of the industrial capitalist, "free" labor is more advantageous than slave labor because the "free" laborer can be fired during periods of depression in the business cycle. The rapid capitalist development

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## Regular Workingmen's Ticket, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY.



Capitalist policies towards the creation of the cheap surplus labor pool necessary for the maintenance of the capitalist system laid the basis for racist, chauvinist attitudes in the working class, as exemplified by virulently anti-Chinese propaganda of Workingmen's Party (above) and Asian Exclusion League led by Gompers.

excluded blacks: "The best plan to adopt is to organize a colored assembly in your city and turn all applications over to them, then your bylaws will be binding" (Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the U.S.*, Vol. I). Even so, the NLU and the Knights made a concerted effort to organize black and immigrant workers on an equal basis with white workers.

class-conscious membership of the AFL as a last-ditch expedient but it soon became the formula for making the Jim Crow local the norm.

A decisive turning point in AFL policy took place in 1895. Gompers had second thoughts about the "wisdom" of chartering the National Machinists Union and he hoped to a

Continued on page 10