



# REVOLUTION

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## Capitalist Economy

# Deeper Crisis, Not Recovery

The ruling class is beating the drums for what they call the certainty that the deep recession of the last two years has "bottomed out." But the recovery the bourgeoisie is talking about is nothing more than a temporary slowdown in the deepening crisis of the capitalists' system. Their own economists admit to an 8.4% unemployment rate and production remains at only 70-75% of capacity. While there may be brief spurts of life from a decaying system, there will be no recovery.

But while the recovery they are touting is as fragile as a thin sheet of ice, the whip on the back of the working class cuts deep. We are supposed to believe that "hard times" are behind us and "good times" are ahead while millions remain unemployed and for those that are working, wages at the end of the week barely pay the bills. (According to government figures, the cost of living for a family of four has gone up \$4,600 in the last four years.)

### Recovery Talk Used As Attack

The capitalists claim that it is the working class itself that is the main danger to this recovery. They warn that any demand for increased wages, cost of living allowances or job security will accelerate inflation, cut into corporate profits necessary for economic expansion and short-circuit recovery. The message coming down from the corporate boardrooms is relayed by everyone from the media and the international union hacks to the line foremen: work faster, produce more and ask for less—and we'll roll out of this latest recession into a new level of prosperity for all.

In auto, for example, the companies say that if UAW members get too much in this year's contract they will be forced to raise the price of cars, which will put a damper on sales and result in further slowdown in production and more layoffs. Meanwhile, auto production and profits are up somewhat, but with a lot fewer workers. The result: auto workers are maimed and injured every day as the lines are sped up and run with less repair. Millions pound the pavement looking for work at the same time the employed in auto are driven at backbreaking speed and forced to work overtime. This is the pattern all over.

It is to auto sales, retail department store sales and a few other areas that the capitalists point, as proof that the last two years were just the regularly occurring downturns in the ups and downs of the business cycle, even if just a little more severe. Increased sales in these few areas are pointed to as evidence of the current turnaround towards new prosperity. Consumer spending is up, they point out, with the result that a number of businesses are selling off much of the goods that have been sitting on their shelves and in their showrooms and are planning new orders to replenish their stocks.

As a result, production has cranked up a bit and a

few people have been put to work, even while layoffs continue elsewhere. And most important, in their view, corporate profits are up. In fact, "recovery" for the capitalists means recovery of profits. But none of this reflects a real "boom" in the economy.

### Highly-Touted Gains Not Much

First of all, the gains they are pointing to are a lot less substantial than they are made out to be. The two million or so jobs that have been added since the low point of 1974 are less than the number needed to employ the new people who enter the work force every year, let alone absorb the millions laid off as the capitalists slowed or stopped production in '74 and '75.

The majority of new hires are accounted for by women forced to take low paying jobs, often while their husbands remain unemployed or working for lower real wages. The overall employment rate for men has not increased significantly and the unemployment rate for youth and minorities remains in double digits.

As for the level of production of consumer goods, it is up in the first three months of 1976 compared to '74 and '75, but it is still 25% below previous peaks. The auto companies are predicting production increases from 7 million to 9 or 10 million units in 1976, but even their predictions are still below the 11.7 million units produced in '73. The construction of housing units started in March is up to 196,000 but nowhere

near the 300,000 level of March '72.

How significant is this increase in production in certain consumer goods? While it is not exactly the same situation, the development of the great depression of the '30s is worth recalling.

### Consumer Spending Not Key

As the wheels of production ground to a halt following the stock market crash of 1929, there was a slight, abortive recovery in the beginning of 1930, marked by an upturn in automobile production and some improvement in construction. But this rise in auto production proved short-lived and a deepening of the depression continued.

Again in the early months of 1931 the capitalists proclaimed a budding recovery. Production expanded in some areas and the decline in retail sales leveled off. At this point, in the late spring of 1931, the international financial structure collapsed completely.

Then once more in the late summer of 1932 production and sales picked up due to the need to replace depleted inventories. This upturn was struck a severe blow in early 1933 by a wave of bank closings.

The point is that in the early years of the depression there were at least three false starts towards recovery and several more until World War 2. And in most of these cases, short-lived recovery was associated with replenishing of inventories and some spurts in consumer spending. Then as now the capitalists were enmeshed in a major breakdown of their system, not simply a "downturn of the business cycle." The temporary and partial surges of consumer spending and production of consumer goods are not remedies for the basic crisis.

Of course the capitalists hope it is the beginning of the upswing. As the *Wall Street Journal* put it, "Consumers are carrying the business recovery on their backs, and so far they show no inclination to drop it."

But the fact that people are going out and buying a new car after putting it off for a couple of years while their old car ran down, or are going deeper in debt in

Continued on page 16

# Auto Contract Battle Lines Drawn

On March 18-20, the UAW held its Special Bargaining Convention at Cobo Hall in Detroit. This gathering of delegates from UAW locals around the country was supposed to be the final word on what goes to the bargaining table for the 850,000 workers in the auto and agricultural implements industries whose contracts expire this fall. As one daily paper in Detroit put it "... (the) convention is pretty much the last round of 'spring training' for union negotiators," meaning it's time to stop playing games pretending to gather the ideas of the rank and file and get down to the serious business of union-management talks aimed at selling the contract out.

But Auto Workers United to Fight in '76, a rank and file organization of UAW members, sees the situation differently. They organized a spirited demonstration for the first day of the convention. Although it was a working day, close to 40 UAW rank and file militants showed up to serve notice on the companies and the International that the rank and file is getting ready to fight in '76. While Leonard Woodcock, president of the UAW, ended his opening "militant" speech by saying how the UAW should not go to the bargaining table with a "chip on its shoulders" against the companies, rank and file workers were outside chanting, "Woodcock says give up—the rank and file says

Continued on page 10



## Teamos Shut Down Trucking Nationwide - p. 7



# Forces Gather For July 4th Demo

July 4th organizing conferences were held in Philadelphia on March 13-14 for the East Coast and in Cincinnati on March 20-21 for the Midwest. Another conference is planned for the South in the near future. These meetings were important steps forward in building for the demonstrations in Philadelphia—demonstrations in which workers and other people in the struggle will assemble on the day the high and mighty celebrate their rule. These demonstrations will challenge their lies about the past and the future they hold up to the masses—"more of the same." And it will be a concrete step in building a movement that fights the capitalists and their rule.

Over 500 people participated in the first two conferences. They came from the struggles of vets, of youth, from the growing fight for jobs and from the struggles going on in plants and shops all over the East and Midwest, from the garment shops of Reading and Pottstown to the coalfields of West Virginia, the auto plants and steel mills of the Midwest and the meatcutters strike lines in Milwaukee.

Both conferences were a powerful example of the spirit and unity of the revolutionary workers movement that is being built. Chants of "We've carried the rich for 200 years—Let's get them off our backs!" rang out with one voice from everyone there.

"I feel as though I've had the wool over my eyes and a heavy yoke on my back all my life—and just being at this conference I feel it lifting," one worker said after the first day in Philadelphia. "I really do believe the working class will be united," said a meatcutter in Cincinnati. And a younger worker in an unemployed workshop brought out, "You know, I've been thinking about those Bicentennial minutes they show on TV. And they always end up, 'and that's the way it was.' That's all they can say. But we're going to Philly to say, 'This is the way it is!'"

In Philadelphia, a speaker from the New York-New Jersey Worker summed up the thousands of outrages we see around us every day and all the explanations the ruling class gives for them: "Things are a little off the track, they say. Let's go back to the pure spirit of '76. But the founding fathers would have been proud of the guys selling red, white, and blue desk sets and the bosses offering us Bicentennial wages—200 pennies an hour. That is the spirit of '76!"

"They say it's a mistake, a mystery: something's wrong, but they don't know what. They say there's

some dark forces out there messing things up. Well, we say it's time to shine a light on those dark forces. There's a reason for all these abuses—we've carried the rich for 200 years—that's why!

"We're going to Philly to strip away the lies, point the finger of blame straight at the capitalist class and indict them for their crimes."

## Power to Break Through

At both conferences, the opening speeches summed up and crystallized the understanding that workers brought to the conference, drawing out what it means for us to carry them, bringing out that only the working class has the potential power to break through their system whose crisis is daily making them a heavier burden on our backs. In Cincinnati, the opening speaker summed up the growing strength of the workers' movement that was evident at the conference:

"We have people here from the meatcutters' strike, from the mines, from all kinds of industries, unemployed workers, all nationalities, old and young—we have all different kinds of ordinary people here and the common thing between us is, we want them off our backs.

"And our strength is growing. For example, last summer when 80,000 miners went out, they didn't just face the mineowners, they faced the union leaders and the courts too. They waged a fierce fight and the rest of the working class rallied around them. I bet a lot of people here in this room gave money, sent solidarity letters, and so forth.

"Now, how come when the bosses say, 'this strike is going to cause you to be laid off,' how come those same workers rallied round? Because we saw it as a class fight. Some of our brothers against the enemy. And we stick with our brothers."

And people did come to the conferences with a sense that, as one worker put it, "we are beginning to unite as one." From the various battles and cities, people came to the conferences to take up the task of organizing a powerful statement for the working class and the people in Philadelphia. The very conditions of our class force us daily in a thousand ways to fight back or be crushed, but these fights must be welded together into a conscious movement of the working class against capital, a movement that not only fights against the attacks we face, but challenges the capitalists' actual rule.

The July 4th demonstration is one way to do that, to weld our battles together into one powerful fist aimed straight at the capitalists and their system. As the opening speaker at the East Coast conference said, July 4th is an opportunity to make a leap forward in building our working class movement.

"What will July 4th do? Think about it. We'll be standing up—the working class, united, saying No!—saying that the rule of the rich doesn't cut it—saying 'Get off our backs!' We'll be speaking out with one voice loud and clear across the whole country, thousands strong. . . .

"Our workers' movement is young," he concluded. "But look around—it's growing, it's for real. We're putting it together for the first time this way, this time in this young movement. This unity is just the start, but it's for real. We're on the right road. We've reached a point where we have to make a leap, jump over a wall to reach the next straightaway. It's not the last wall,

there'll be others after that, but it's an important one and we can jump over it."

The conferences themselves were living proof that it's possible and necessary to make this leap—a step forward nationwide in building a conscious movement of the working class which fights all abuses, all the effects of this system, to get at the cause—the rule of the capitalists. As the ruling class gathers to celebrate its birthday, the advanced working class forces have the potential to organize a powerful demonstration that will be a beacon to the rest of the class, throwing the bourgeoisie's lies of "common interests" back in their faces and focusing on the questions of jobs and war, which are both running sores that expose the bankruptcy of the system and important battles that the working class movement is taking up.

After the opening sessions people broke up into workshops to discuss how to organize for the demonstrations among employed workers, unemployed workers, vets and youth.

At the workshops and at the conferences generally the question came up: what is the relationship between the July 4th demonstration, its demands and its thrust, and the main struggles the masses of workers are now engaged in? This is crucial to building the July 4th demonstration and advancing the revolutionary workers movement, a question that faces many of the participants of the conferences as they return to their plants and shops to struggle with other workers to join in the July 4th demonstrations.

Each of the battles that workers are waging daily, the fight against wage cuts, layoffs, for better working conditions, etc., contain the seeds of the revolutionary workers movement. That is, all the struggles of the workers and all of the oppressed grow out of the contradictions of the capitalist system and the rule of the bourgeoisie, and all of these bring workers into struggle against the bourgeoisie. For communists and advanced workers it is important to expose the class relationships underneath all the fights the workers are waging, and build off the understanding workers are gaining in these battles.

The revolutionary workers movement, and actions like July 4th, cannot be seen as something entirely separate and detached from the struggles millions of workers are waging; in other words, not simply as demonstrations of the convictions of a handful of the advanced forces.

Nor will it do to make the flip side of the same error and pretend that the struggle of the masses of workers, as it is now, is the same thing as the revolutionary workers movement that is only beginning to take on a conscious form. Communists and the advanced forces must be in the thick of all the struggles against exploitation and oppression "developing this into an all-round battle against the capitalist system." (*Programme of the RCP, USA*)

In the day to day struggles the advanced forces must bring out the need to go beyond fighting simply to protect ourselves, but to build precisely such a movement. And the July 4th demonstration will be an expression of the development of this revolutionary movement, as well as a real blow to the exploiters' Bicentennial plans.

In this context, the importance of the demands of the July 4th demonstration stand out. For the revo-

Continued on page 6

## April 1975 DC Jobs Rally

# Using Mass Line To Sum Up Struggle

*This article was submitted on the basis of some comrades' discussion of the Dec. 15, 1975 and March 15, 1976 articles in Revolution on the mass line—Ed.*

In the last six months two articles have appeared in *Revolution* on the mass line. They have given rise to tremendous discussion and enthusiasm throughout the Party and among the advanced workers and others. Comrades are trying to study and grasp the principles summed up in them and use them as a guide in forging even stronger links with the masses and in leading the struggle to transform the world through class struggle. Some of us began to use them to sum up past practice, too, not so much from the point of view of going over everything we ever did, but from looking at errors in the past to illuminate the path of the future. This article reflects some of this discussion. As communists we have nothing to fear from the truth and we should learn from past mistakes in order to prevent them in the future.

April 26, a year ago, 40,000 workers, mainly employed, rallied in Washington, DC, demanding jobs. Shortly after the rally began, some advanced workers led a demonstration of about 2,000 out of the stands and onto the field.

At the time, the Revolutionary Union [a national communist organization which played a key role in the formation of the RCP—Ed.] was not united on how to sum it up. An ambiguous article was printed in *Revolution*, summing up the rally and the action on the field. It was summed up, in some places, with advanced workers who had been involved, that the communists and advanced workers shouldn't have taken the field because it just isolated the advanced, while in some other areas of the country it was put forward as a vanguard action and an inspiration to the masses.

What brings this struggle to the fore now is the current mobilizations the Party has entered into, particularly for July 4th. What does it mean for communists to "create favorable new conditions through struggle?" How do communists do this without isolating the advanced from the rest of the class? How does advanced activity, whether in Philadelphia or on the shop floor, strengthen and develop our movement?

These questions are crucial in our work overall and we can learn something about them by summing up what was right and what was wrong with April 26.

The jobs rally had been called by the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO. These same bureaucrats, who sabotage on a daily basis any struggle against layoffs that breaks out in the plants, were going to mobilize the workers to petition Congress for what the bureaucrats refused to fight for on the shop floor. To this end, they organized the rally in RFK Stadium, carefully tried to keep a lid on it, and planned to parade before the workers "their own" leaders—themselves and political puppets like Hubert Humphrey.

### Angry and Frustrated

Barely ten minutes into the rally people in the stadium were angry and frustrated. They had come to Washington to demand jobs, in part carrying hopes for the political clout of the AFL-CIO leaders, and even more so, to unite with thousands of other workers to demonstrate their demands.

But the leadership of the event refused to organize it, fearing what might be unleashed if they spoke to the real situation. They kept the masses inactive, with no recourse but to listen to endless speeches about what these people were going "to do for them." In addition, District 65 of the Distributive Workers union (DWA) and AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) had tried to pull a march in the morning to the stadium, which was dispirited and disorganized and left the masses discouraged and down.

At the rally itself the lack of organization, spirit, and discipline, as well as the overall line which robbed the workers of any initiative in carrying out their own struggle, was a slap in the face to people who had traveled as long as 8-10 hours to get to the event. So about 20 minutes into the rally, one or two youths ran across the field, not so much to make a particular political point as to slap them back, to do something out-of-bounds and get away with it.

The great majority of workers there took it up in just this way, cheering the people running around the field and booing the security guards who were chasing after them in Keystone Cop fashion. Initially it wasn't much of a serious thing but, like spitting in the master's soup and winking at the other slaves, it was an

expression of rebellion and breaking out—even if in a joking way—of the bounds the union officials and politicians put on the struggle.

This little spark of resistance and the mood of frustration among the masses was picked up on by the activist workers there—workers from UWOC, United May Day Committee in New York/New Jersey, and other organized rank and file groups in the shops, many of whose members look to communists for leadership. A few workers ran on the field with banners from organized groups demanding Jobs or Income. This began to focus the general outrage around the political demand for jobs and the anger people felt at a rally which was going nowhere.

The trickle turned into a torrent and ten minutes later the field was covered by hundreds of workers who, though somewhat disorganized, were walking around with their banners, surrounding the speakers' platform and generally causing a ruckus. In some places and intermittently, workers still up in the stands along with those on the field, took up the chant for "Jobs Now!" to the point where Humphrey, who was in the middle of one of his orations, was forced to squeak along—"Yes. Jobs. That's what we want. Jobs. That's right."

### Back Into the Stands

After some attempts to organize a march around the field with a clearer political focus, communists tried to lead people to display their banners to those still up in the bleachers and then to go back into the

stands to organize the rebellion on a broader basis and give it a more focused and organized character. We succeeded in leading most of the workers back into the stands, leaving the field to assorted Trotskyites and other weirdos, who continued to parade around, making a spectacle of themselves. At one point some Trots seized the mike and shortly thereafter the rally was called off by the sponsors.

It was clear that the activity on the field was going to be attacked by the union bureaucrats, by the revisionists (who had promoted the whole affair, including, of course, the bourgeois politicians from Humphrey to Bella Abzug) and by every other bourgeois force who had the opportunity to say anything about it. It was especially clear that they would blame the cancellation of the rally on the workers who took the field.

While on one level the communists involved knew the activity on the field had to be defended, there were still questions: Should the advanced forces have led the masses onto the field in the first place? Was it right to lead people back into the stands? And how much should the advanced promote the activity on the field as an example and inspiration to other workers?

### Careful in Preparation

When the rally was announced in March members of the RU tried to assess the forces involved, under what conditions the call was being put out, and what the whole thing represented. Some things were clear. There was widespread outrage among the masses around the unemployment situation, not only among the unemployed, but far into the ranks of the employed workers as well. It was on the basis of this sentiment that the hacks were going to mobilize the workers—as a pressure group on Congress, as political capital for their own careers, to maintain the appearance within their own unions that they were "serious" and "sincere" about doing something and as weapons in the infighting for power within the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. The demonstration was originally called by top hacks in AFSCME, Hospital Local 1199 and similar "progressive"-talking unions to build their reputations as leaders of the masses. The leaders of the industrial unions stepped in to "co-sponsor" the rally and to undercut it by not mobilizing

Continued on page 14

# Party Must Answer Questions Of Masses On War

*The following article was written based on discussions among people in a Party branch. We hope it will kick off still more discussion, taking the article "On the World Situation, War and Revolutionary Struggle" from the November 15, 1975 Revolution as a framework—Ed.*

The November 15, 1975 *Revolution* article, "On the World Situation, War and Revolutionary Struggle" has started more than one discussion over the past months. Talking about it again recently, we began to get a hold of some of the ways our practice and experience have shown its importance.

Not only are the capitalists gearing up the machinery of war, the bourgeois media is trying to gear us up for war. News reports are full of scare stories about the size and strength of the Soviet military machine. And they have used the Soviet intervention in Angola to try to line people up behind U.S. imperialism.

It's certainly true that some of the ruling class' propaganda is getting over, based partly on peoples' opposition to Soviet aggression and on the fact that people feel caught in a position where there seems to be no way out but to fight for them. But every day we see the hatred people have for war, and the feelings that this is a hell of a way to live.

Recently we ran into a veteran at the unemployment office who had been looking for a job without much luck. He said he hoped there would be another war because war means jobs. Just then an older man came out of the office and, hearing what the veteran said, replied, "Not me. If that's their solution, I'm not going—that won't solve their problems. I served in Korea and I'm not going to fight for them again."

The war in Vietnam shook up this country. Shook it up because some things about the ruling class be-

came clearer. They talked about democracy, but supported dictatorship; talked about foreign aid but protected their own profits; talked about the aggressive North Vietnamese while they tried to bomb the country "back to the Stone Age" when it became clear that the Vietnamese people would never accept the yoke of U.S. imperialism and were inspiring others around the world to oppose them.

For many—brother after brother came home in a box—being against the war was a question of life and death. The great majority of American people came to oppose the war—and for the working class it taught many of us that we had *no* interests in common with the war makers. The war in Vietnam raised questions for many more about the nature of a system which depends on war, but the questions remain unanswered for large numbers of workers.

The ruling class today is preparing like crazy to come up with a "cause" that will convince the working class to fight for them. If we fail to build a conscious working class movement now, we will be unprepared. We must find a thousand ways to build a movement that will show that our only recourse is to fight against them, even in the event of war.

### New War Raises New Questions

Some of the questions raised by the threat of war are the same as before—because in fact war *is* an inevitable law of capitalism. But, as the possibility of a world war between the two superpowers becomes more likely, it raises up a number of questions we never faced before.

1) Who is the "aggressor"? A simplistic rule of thumb about wars is to be against the aggressor. But this could lead us into supporting a U.S. war against Soviet aggression. Lenin attacked such thinking during WW1 when Germany attacked Belgium and occupied it and various other powers declared war on Germany. He pointed out that when these imperialist countries attacked Germany it was not for defense or the "liberation and indemnification of Belgium." Each country sought to defeat Germany and grab up some of the spoils of the German Empire.

He said that it was impossible to side with the other powers (England, Russia, Italy, France) against Germany because the effect would not be to help Belgium but to help strangle Austria-Hungary or Turkey and any other area these powers sought to grab. "Herein, precisely, lies the specific feature of imperialist war, war between reactionary-bourgeois, historically obsolete governments, waged for the purpose of oppressing other nations. Whoever justifies participation in the present war perpetuates imperialist oppression of nations." (Lenin, "Socialism and War," *Lenin on War and Peace, Three Articles*)

Our movement has to say that it is not a question

Continued on page 17

# Gert Alexander

## A Great Loss, A Great Example

The Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party announces with deep grief the death of comrade Gert Alexander, who died early April 17 at the age of 60.

Gert Alexander had been militant in the revolutionary struggle of the working class for 40 years and more. Her death is a great loss to the working class and its cause of communism.

As a youth, she joined the Young Communist League at the time of the last great depression and later joined the Communist Party. When the Communist Party betrayed the struggle of the working class and gave up the goal of revolution, she continued to organize and give leadership to the ongoing struggle of the working class and to work toward the formation of a new Party that would represent its revolutionary interests. She was a founding member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, a leading member of the Central Committee and headed its work among unemployed workers.

Twice in the last six years, comrade Alexander suffered heart attacks, but she refused to allow that to stand in the way of her contribution to the struggle and, in fact, each time threw herself even more vigorously into the thick of the growing battle.

In this militant revolutionary attitude, as well as in all her life, comrade Alexander is an inspiring example for us to learn from:



A determination to learn from the masses, without being a condescending savior.

A burning desire to master Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, the revolutionary science of our class, to return it to the workers to guide the struggle forward, and a deep belief that the workers can grasp this science and on this basis change the world. A hatred for revisionism and all other forms of betraying the working class, seared deep through years of fighting them.

A fierce determination always to advance the struggle toward its revolutionary goal, and an unshakable belief that the cause of communism will eventually triumph.

Never wavering or fearful in the face of hardship or difficulty, but instead persevering in fighting to break a way through; never complacent or smug with any gain in the struggle, but always determined to build on it to make further advances.

Always putting the interests of the working class as a whole and of its Party above narrow or personal interests.

It is for these qualities that the working class and the Revolutionary Communist Party will always cherish the life and memory of comrade Gert Alexander, and which fire us with even greater dedication to fight for the great goals to which she dedicated her very life.

## First Anniversary of Liberation

# Vietnam: Struggle Continues

The great victories of the liberation struggles in Vietnam and Cambodia, followed quickly by the same in Laos, are now just one year old. In April, 1975 the Vietnamese liberation forces staged a series of uprisings and military offensives sweeping from North to South, driving the U.S. imperialists and their puppets before them. Who can forget the sight of U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin scuttling for safety, the embassy flag under his arm, as Saigon was liberated or the joyous crowds waving flags and throwing flowers to the NLF troops entering the city?

These revolutionary victories of the Indochinese people and their progress in rebuilding their countries are a source of great inspiration and encouragement to all those who struggle for liberation—including the growing revolutionary working class movement in this country. The victories in Indochina were victories for all the world's people.

These victories, especially in Vietnam, where the revolution went on for over thirty years and where the U.S. had concentrated massive military forces including half a million troops at one time, were a turning point and signalled a great advance in the struggle against imperialism. After World War 2 the U.S. was the undisputed number one imperialist power—the chief exploiter and oppressor of the world's people. The Vietnam War and the victory of the National Liberation Front not only symbolized the crumbling of the arrogant might of the U.S. ruling class, but made a key material contribution to that crumbling.

People fighting imperialism the world over still draw lessons and inspiration from the Vietnamese resistance.

One reason the Vietnam War seems so long ago is that the world is very different from what it was at the height of the U.S. aggression in the 1960s. The struggle of the Vietnamese people in fact helped push forward this rapid change and sharpen up the current situation where the factors for both war and revolution are on the rise.

Aggression in Vietnam weakened the U.S. capitalists' hold on their international empire and wreaked havoc with the imperialist economy, fueling inflation

and accelerating the development of the economic crisis which grips them today. This economic weakness and being tied up militarily in Vietnam gave other imperialist powers, particularly the New Tsars of the Soviet Union, a fine opportunity to step up competition with their U.S. rivals over control of the imperialist world. Economic crisis and increased imperialist competition—these are the factors fueling the drive to world war by the two superpowers today, and imperialist aggression and defeat in Vietnam marked a stage in the sharpening of all this.

More importantly the Vietnamese struggle was a spark that spread revolutionary flames everywhere. Similar revolutionary struggles for national liberation in Africa, Asia and Latin America are only part of the picture. Even the rulers of many Third World countries challenged the extent of U.S. control over their governments and economies. Vietnam exposed more than anything previous the grasping and vicious reality behind the imperialist "defender of freedom" act.

This was true in the United States as well, and the capitalist countries of Europe. A giant mass movement against the war and U.S. aggression in Indochina grew up, especially among the youth. This movement played an important role in rekindling the revolutionary spirit in large sections of the American people and still cripples the ability of the government to carry out its aggressive adventures elsewhere in the world.

As distant in time as the victory in Vietnam seems to us, it must seem even longer ago to the Vietnamese people. In the last year, led by the Vietnam Workers' Party, they have advanced from their historic triumph into a new stage in the history of the country.

After more than 20 years of division enforced by imperialist arms, the Vietnamese are moving to reunify their country. This spring, nationwide elections are scheduled to choose a National Assembly which will establish a new government and write a new constitution for one united Vietnam.

The Vietnamese people have also shouldered the task of rebuilding society and the economy in the South on a new basis, aiming toward a socialist system in the whole of Vietnam.

The ravages of war and the distortions of imperialist occupation left a legacy of massive unemployment, urban slums, starvation, and underdevelopment, but already the mobilization of the masses of workers, peasants and other Vietnamese in their millions is starting to make these evils a thing of the past. Peasants are returning to their land and, with government help, setting up labor exchange teams to pool tools and labor. By next year's harvest the South should be self-sufficient in rice again for the first time in over a decade. Most of the few factories left by the old order are running full steam ahead, many of them run by workers' councils. The new government will draw up longer term plans for new industry and the overall development of the country, North and South.

The seizure of power from the Vietnamese big bourgeoisie and landlords and their imperialist backers and the first steps of building socialism do not mean the end of the struggle in Vietnam. National independence must still be safeguarded. In Cambodia, the U.S. government was responsible for the recent bombing of the city of Siem Reap. The U.S. imperialists are still trying to sponsor counterrevolutionary activity in Vietnam among former puppet troops, criminals and certain religious sects. The Soviet social-imperialists, too, are casting greedy glances at Vietnam's wealth and particularly its militarily strategic location, on the sea routes between the Pacific and Indian Oceans and on the southern flank of People's China.

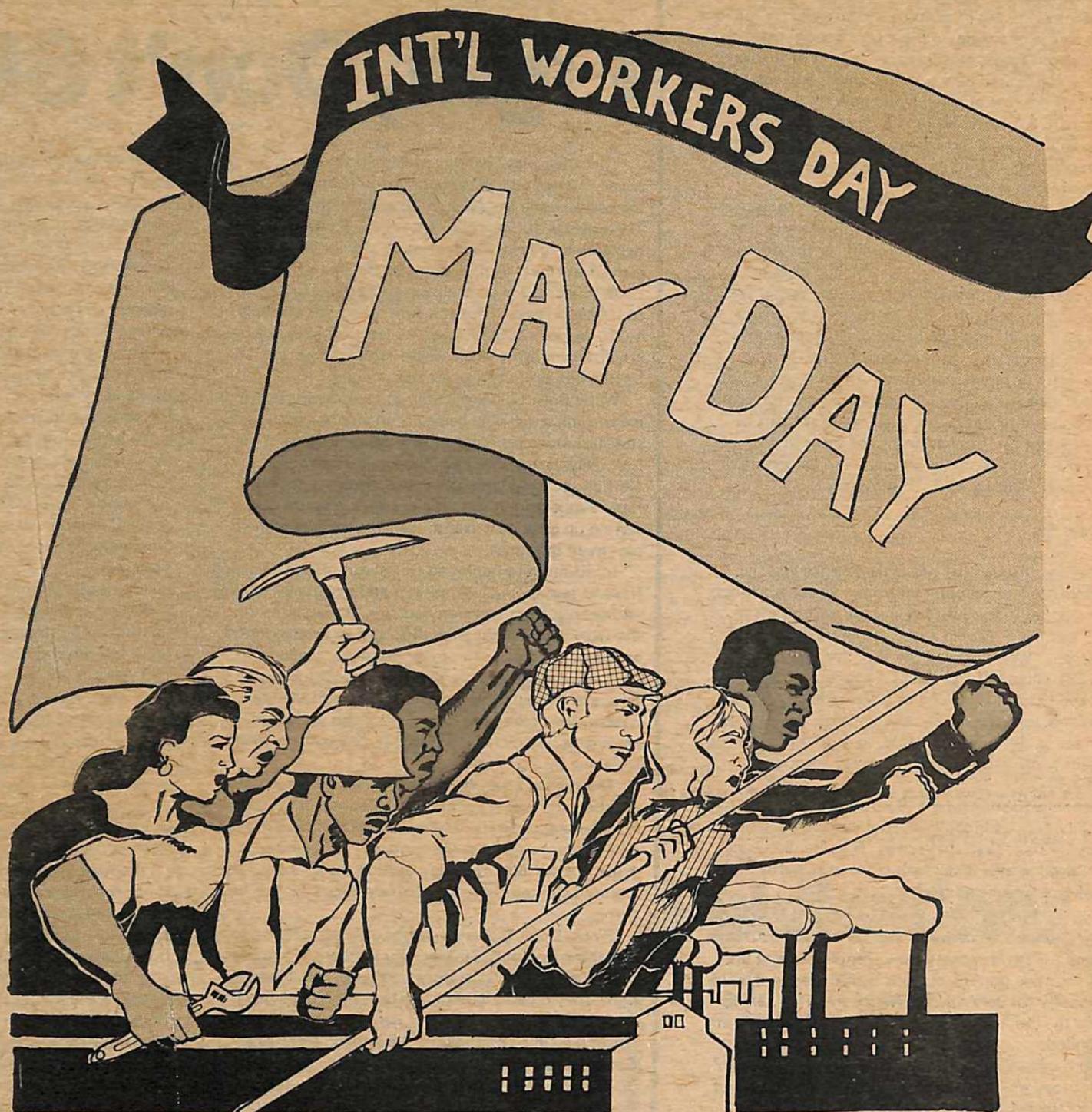
More important still, the revolution and class struggle within Vietnam must and will continue. The experience of all socialist countries, China for example, shows that the struggle between two classes, between the capitalist and socialist roads continues and rages with fierce intensity during the building of socialism. The Vietnamese revolution has made great contributions to advancing the struggle of the world's people against U.S. imperialism and the Vietnamese people, like all the people of Indochina, will undoubtedly continue to resist imperialist aggression and to build a bright future for Vietnam and make still more contributions to the struggle for socialism and communism worldwide. ■

## Revolution

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# All Out for May Day!

- Atlanta**  
Saturday May 1, Perkerson Park.
- Baltimore/  
Washington, DC**  
Saturday, May 1. Call 563-1315.
- Birmingham**  
Saturday, May 1.
- Boston/  
New England Area**  
Statehouse steps, Park and Beacon,  
Boston, 1:00.
- Buffalo/  
Rochester**  
Meet at Wellington St. and Arnett Blvd.,  
Rochester, 12:30.
- Chicago/  
Gary**  
Sheridan School, 90th and Escanaba,  
Chicago, 1:00.
- Cincinnati/  
Dayton**  
Longfellow School, Salem and Superior,  
Dayton, 7:00 PM.
- Cleveland**  
West Side Community House,  
300 Bridge St., 7:30 PM.
- Denver**  
Chaffe Park, 44th and Tejon, 12:00.
- Detroit**  
Trinity Methodist Church,  
13100 Woodward, Highland Park, 7:00 PM.
- Honolulu**  
Kaiulani Elementary School, N. King St.,  
6:00 PM.
- Houston**  
Saturday, May 1.
- Los Angeles**  
Southgate Park, Southgate, 1:00.
- Milwaukee**  
Concordia and Holten, 12:15.
- New York City/  
Northern New Jersey**  
Union Square, New York City, 11:30.
- Philadelphia**  
March to City Hall, Call GA 3-7720.
- Portland, Ore.**  
Columbia Park, N. Woolsey and  
N. Lombard, 1:00.
- Salinas**  
Sherwood School, Wood St., 7:00 PM.
- San Francisco  
Bay Area**  
San Antonio Park, Foothill and 16th Ave.,  
Oakland, 10:30 AM.
- Seattle/  
Tacoma**  
Westlake Mall, 4th and Pine,  
Seattle, 12:00.
- Trenton**  
Caff St. across from American Bridge, 12:00.



**FIGHT, DON'T STARVE!**

**WORKERS UNITE TO LEAD THE FIGHT  
AGAINST ALL OPPRESSION!**

**DOWN WITH THE SYSTEM OF WAGE SLAVERY!**

**Jobs or Income Now—No Layoffs**  
**We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War**  
**Fight Wage Cuts and Speedup**  
**No Cutbacks in Public Services**

**Sat. May 1**

**JOIN US!**

**UNITED MAY DAY COMMITTEES**  
**REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY**

## July 4th...

Continued from page 2

lutionary movement of the class can only develop in the course of real battles, flowing from real contradictions of the capitalists' system. Both demands of the July 4th action, Jobs or Income Now! and We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War! are key focuses for the struggle of the working class.

Both unemployment and war are among the ugliest, and most revealing, products of the capitalist system and become focuses of concern and struggle for millions. In the course of taking up these broad social questions, the advanced forces must help the masses of fellow workers understand how unemployment and war are a result of the rule of capital, and how the fight against them is a battle we can and must fight and is crucial to building a movement that, in the words of the *Programme*, "fights exploitation and all oppression in order to end wage-slavery."

By its very nature as the two hundredth anniversary of the capitalist political system in this country, the Bicentennial becomes a battleground for the different class forces to contend. For the working class the Bicentennial is an opportunity to, as the *Programme* also says, "infuse its strength, discipline and revolutionary outlook" into two of the major social movements in the country. It is an opportunity to ally masses from different classes and different strata (for example veterans and young people) around its revolutionary class interests. This is an important part of what is meant by "strengthening the proletarian pole" in society—building up the strength and leadership of a conscious, fighting workers movement.

### "Build it Big"

Running through the whole conference was the determination, as one sum-up from a youth workshop put it, "to build for July 4th and the best way is to take it out big." People at the conferences felt that the slogan, "We've Carried the Rich for 200 Years—Let's Get Them Off Our Backs!" expresses the feeling and experiences of millions of workers and that the slogan and demands of the demonstration have to be taken out as broadly as possible, to raise the questions and set off discussion and controversy throughout society.

As one workshop report summed up, "We have to take July 4th out broadly—even if everyone doesn't agree with us at first, that's okay, because discussing and struggling over it can help move us towards the day when everyone *does* agree."

The workshops focused on discussion of the overall slogan and the two demands and also touched on how to build for the demonstration. People brought up ideas for using posters, buttons and stickers and building broadly for July 4th. "Give me some stickers to put on the red, white and blue forklifts," one worker demanded.

Ideas came up for holding demonstrations at historic places, going out in May and June to hold street corner rallies, car convoys and so forth. An unemployed workshop talked about making billboards to take to the unemployment centers. In the vets' workshops the idea of organizing Memorial Day demonstrations was brought up.

In the employed workers' workshops, people talked about bringing the demonstration up in unions, fighting for endorsements, raising the issues and finding ways for workers who can't go to Philadelphia to unite with the demonstration and make their support a real force.

Going back to the different cities and areas, people agreed to form local July 4th Coalitions, made up of the sponsoring organizations and other groups or individuals who agree with the slogan and demands of the demonstration and want to join in building it. These local coalitions will take up the task of specifically planning how to build and organize for the demonstrations in the next few months.

### Conferences a Success

Much was accomplished at the two conferences. Not only was understanding deepened of the importance of the demonstration and how to build for it, but also both conferences agreed that it's important to organize as many people as possible to be in Philadelphia from July 1 through July 4th.

The National Planning Committee of the July 4th Coalition (consisting of representatives from the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC), the Revolutionary Student Brigade (RSB) and the RCP) proposed to the conferences that demonstrations should be organized for all four days in Philadelphia, to bring forward the demands more sharply and to build up to the final demonstration on the Fourth.

People agreed, as one vets' workshop summed up, that "we've got so much to say we need more than a one day march" and that earlier demonstrations will

be an important way to build momentum for the 4th.

The conferences also helped to lay the basis for further advances in building UWOC as a national organization and in building up organization and struggle among youth. Unemployed workers and UWOC members from many different cities came together in the workshops for the first time and could see that struggle and organization is growing among unemployed workers.

Participants in the youth workshops, both on the East Coast and in the Midwest, summed up that com-

ing together from different cities for the first time, learning about common problems and struggles was an important step ahead—inspiring people to go out in the next few months and try to make some real advances.

People left the conferences with a better grasp of the tasks that face us in building the campaign around July 4th and with a deeper and stronger determination not only to build the demonstration but to build all our battles and weld them together into a conscious movement of the working class against capital. ■

## Portland UWOC Defends Workers

# Fight, Don't Starve!

The ruling class' windy proclamations about "recovery" have reached typhoon proportions, but reading between the lies shows quite a different story. Their claims of "improvement on the jobs front" are being used to justify wide-ranging attacks on unemployed workers. Arthur Burns of the Federal Reserve Bank is calling for unemployment benefits to be cut to thirteen weeks. This at a time when, for example, 4,000 workers in New Jersey exhaust 65 weeks of unemployment every single week! The "recovery" may be just hot air, but these attacks are real.

While Burn's scheme is still on the drawing board, extensions are already being cut in almost two dozen states, slashing benefits in many cases to 39 weeks or less. New laws are being proposed in Rhode Island, New Jersey and several other state legislatures, with rabid support from various capitalists, all aimed at setting up great obstacles to workers collecting unemployment insurance.

In addition to hoping to cancel out insurance benefits and save themselves millions and eventually billions, and get out from under any and all responsibility to the working class, the capitalists and their government are coming up with minute by minute schemes as to how fast and completely they can cut off food, welfare, everything! Under cover of their so-called recovery, they plot to do this. Under this system of wage slavery they hope not to pay unless the worker is slaving for them on a job.

The ranks of the unemployed organizing and fighting their schemes are swelling. All over more workers respond and understand better. UWOC is having more demonstrations, picket lines and will have contingents in every May Day rally around the country. The working class on the job and off demands Jobs or Income.

Fight, Don't Starve! and Jobs or Income! are one and the same fight. Striking city workers in San Francisco signed UWOC petitions and said, "You're damn right, they'd better give us our benefits." The determined demonstrations against unemployment benefit cutoffs in Ohio, Washington, New York, New Jersey, Georgia and Hawaii all put it clearly—the movement is on the rise. At planning conferences in March, delegations of unemployed made it clear they will respond in a big way to the July 4th Bicentennial demonstration in Philadelphia.

A story which illustrates what is taking place in this

so-called recovery is the fight going on now in Portland, Oregon. Chanting "Free Tom Bornson, Fight—Don't Starve!" a picket line called by the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC) marched in front of the Multnomah County Courthouse in Portland. The April 5 action began a campaign to free Tom Bornson and Lonnie Davis, two unemployed workers recently convicted of taking over a food stamp office to feed Tom's starving family.

The Bornsons had traveled all over the West in search of work when they ran out of money near Portland. Without a job or money, the family was forced to live in an old school bus. They ate one meal a day which Tom paid for by selling his blood. Soon their baby fell sick and the situation became desperate.

Tom refused to let his family starve to death. He and Lonnie Davis took over a food stamp office and demanded food and medical care for his family. When these demands were met, the pair surrendered. As Tom said, "I'm no criminal, but I'll do what I must to take care of my family."

Knowing that there are millions of us out there fighting in the struggle to survive, the bosses threw the book at Tom and Lonnie, threatening each with over 120 years in prison. In convicting them the court said what the system says to us every day, "You can starve but you better starve quietly."

Tom's lawyer, a former state prosecutor (!), claimed that Tom shouldn't be convicted because at the time of the holdup he was suffering from a "mental defect." He refused to let his family starve! What frightens the capitalists is that the whole working class has this same "defect"—we won't be ground into the dirt!

A couple of guys taking over a food stamp office is not the way we choose to fight. We build the strength and united action of the working class. But we've got to put the responsibility for the whole situation where it belongs, on the backs of the capitalists.

And as we organize in our millions to fight the bosses, we won't let them lock up Tom and Lonnie. It's a criminal system that takes away our means to live and then tries to lock us up when we refuse to starve. UWOC is requesting telegrams and mailgrams of support for them from all workers and workers' organizations: messages that demand their freedom. Please send them to Portland UWOC, PO Box 14452, Portland, Or. 97214. Free Bornson and Davis! ■

AVAILABLE MAY 1

# Our Class Will Free Itself And All Mankind

*Our Class Will Free Itself And All Mankind.*  
Speech on the Celebration of the Founding  
of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA  
by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Com-  
mittee of the RCP, USA, October 1975. 30  
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Publications, Inc.

## Fitzsimmons Takes Bosses' Stand, But...

# Truckers Force National Strike

At the beginning of April truck drivers and warehousemen staged the first nationwide Teamsters strike in history. Despite an early settlement, wildcat strikes continued in Detroit, Gary, Indiana and parts of Ohio afterwards.

The fact that nearly 400,000 truck drivers and warehousemen struck on March 31, even if for only a short while, is very significant not only for the Teamsters but for the working class all over the country. With major contracts expiring in coming months in rubber, electrical, construction, garment, and auto, just to name some, the capitalists are really worried about keeping the lid on the struggles of the working class. They have been counting heavily on their labor lieutenants heading up the major unions—officials like Fitzsimmons and the other top leaders of the Teamsters—as their main way to keep the handcuffs on the rank and file throughout this period.

Up to a few weeks before the contract expired the ruling class thought it had the Teamsters contract tied up, saying the contract they are really worried about and one where it will be hard for them to head off a strike is in rubber, due to expire on April 21. Their spokesmen, like William McIntyre, President of the Trucking Employers Inc. (TEI), were making statements like, "The mood of the people is very conducive to a settlement, possibly before the expiration of the agreement." Fitzsimmons himself had said, "We have never had a national strike in this union and I will do anything possible to ward off any work stoppage."

Fitzsimmons, the companies and the government, all working together, were finally able to impose a settlement which didn't deal with most of the important demands of the Teamsters. But the drivers won some gains, especially in wages and cost of living allowances.

But the real importance of this strike to Teamsters and other workers went beyond the terms of this contract. The fact that the rank and file Teamsters forced Fitzsimmons to call a strike, no matter how short, and the fact that striking continued after the official settlement, were both blows to this class collaboration between the top union officials and the capitalists and can strengthen the Teamster rank and file and all the upcoming contract battles of the working class.

### All-Out Efforts to Prevent Strike

Leading up to the expiration of the contract the ruling class put tremendous pressure on the Teamsters in an effort to both strengthen the stranglehold of the top officials and to hold the struggle of the rank and file in check. For the trucking companies the current economic crisis has meant a loss of profits for many. With competition between the companies increasing, and larger monopolies moving in to buy out smaller ones, all trucking companies have been putting the screws to their drivers and warehousemen, laying some off, increasing the number of casual or part-time truck drivers, and trying in various ways to get more work out of those remaining. They especially wanted a settlement in this contract that would allow them to continue these attacks in a big way.

That is why throughout the negotiations the trucking associations bargained "tough," offering next to nothing and claiming that for them to give anything



Teamsters walk picket line in Houston, Texas.

more would drive even more companies out of business leaving even more truck drivers without their jobs—as if they cared about these workers in the first place. They also tried to divide the drivers from the rest of the working class by saying a strike would mean up to one million layoffs throughout industry and a decent settlement would mean increased prices for groceries.

Besides the trucking companies "crying broke," the rest of the ruling class both built Fitzsimmons up and leveled a number of threats at the top Teamster officials in an effort to strengthen their collaborationist role. For example one Ford Administration official talked about Fitzsimmons saying, "I think 'Fitz' holds the key to whether there will be a wage-price spiral."

### "Mob" Exposures and Taft-Hartley Threat

At the same time they opened up even more with their exposures of corruption within the Teamster union. NBC's nationally televised nightly news ran a special five-part series on Mafia infiltration within the Teamsters just a few days before the contract expired. This was in addition to the ongoing FBI and Justice Department investigations and the threat of a full-scale Senate investigation into underworld activity within the Teamsters and the disappearance of Jimmy Hoffa. Everyone knows the Teamster leadership, along with many government officials and capitalists, are connected with the Mob. But the purpose of these exposures and investigations is not to clean the crooks out, although some of the other capitalists wouldn't mind weakening the Mafia businesses, connected with the

Teamster pension fund, which have grown to massive proportions and compete with other capitalist enterprises. The primary aim of the government and press is to use these threats to hold the top Teamster leadership in line and to attack the strength of the union and the membership itself.

The government also held the threat of the Taft-Hartley Act over the heads of the truck drivers, in effect saying to them "even if you do strike, we will declare it illegal." The Taft-Hartley Act, among other things, allows the President to declare an 80 day "cooling off" period in strikes like those involving truck drivers. In addition, highway patrolmen and state troopers were put on alert in several states with "special squads" trained to attack the workers.

Partly because of the threat of being thrown in jail, on top of their constant aim of riding high and comfortable in their position of wealth and power, the Teamster leadership was intent on stopping a strike and holding any rank and file struggle to a minimum. These top officials not only don't stand with the rank and file but they are capitalists in their own right, making big returns—in kickbacks, payoffs and other ways—from investments of the Teamster pension fund, making a profit from "their" capital in much the same way that a large banker or corporate executive would. To keep the rank and file in line and protect the big boys at the top, Teamster goons have often threatened, beaten up and even killed Teamster membership.

### Rank and File Forced Strike

It is in this context that the Teamster strike took place. Up against the trucking associations, the government, the press and their own union officials, the rank and file said "We've had it," voted overwhelmingly for a strike and walked out across the country when the old contract expired. Fitzsimmons moaned, "unfortunately there is a strike . . . our people have walked off." As one striking driver summed it up afterwards, "The only reason they [Fitzsimmons & Co.] sanctioned the strike is because they know we were staying out. We're all fed up and this time we're beginning to stick together."

The possibility of wildcat strikes in the event of a national sellout was very real. In previous contracts, especially in 1967 and 1970, there were wildcats around the country after the contract was sold out. In 1970 there were wildcat strikes in 37 cities after the contract expired without a settlement and walkouts continued in most major trucking centers even after a tentative settlement was reached. In Chicago that year, 50,000 drivers overwhelmingly rejected the contract and staged a 12 week strike, which was accompanied by continued sporadic wildcats in other parts of the country and a strike of Teamster steelhaulers for 7 weeks, shutting down several steel mills. Things got so bad for the ruling class that they had to call up the National Guard in Ohio and put them on alert in Pennsylvania. This rank and file struggle forced the Teamster officials to reopen the contract and renegotiate it higher.

Leading up to the expiration of this contract the rank and file had begun to organize against a sellout. A petition putting forward many of the basic demands of the drivers was circulated throughout the country and signed by 25,000 Teamsters. There were several demonstrations demanding a good contract. For example, in Local 299 in Detroit, the local Hoffa once headed, 600 Teamsters met before the contract expired and vowed to strike if Fitzsimmons sold out.

### Opportunists Try to Cash In

This organizing was complicated by a number of opportunist forces who tried to attach themselves at the front of the rank and file movement and use it to promote their own careers as bureaucrats. In Detroit, the old Hoffa officials are still trying to make a comeback and gain more power for themselves, although their influence has diminished since their leader was murdered.

Along with the old Hoffa forces was another group which attracted a number of honest rank and file fighters across the country, the Teamsters for a Decent Contract (TDC). Among the leadership of TDC is the International Socialists (IS), a so-called socialist group following in the footsteps of Leon Trotsky, a counter-revolutionary, anti-working class scum, although this fact is kept well hidden from even the membership of the TDC. The TDC was able to organize some rank and file movement around the contract, but its leaders made a principle of confining the struggle to pressuring Fitzsimmons and promoting their own careers as up-and-coming bureaucrats and did not mobilize the rank and file drivers to seize the initiative and rely on their own strength to fight the contract battle. As a result, at the same time they criticized the Teamster officials, they actually played right into their hands, allowing them to get away with calling only a short strike "to let off steam."

When the strike was settled at the top the leaders of the TDC weren't about to lead the rank and file in continuing the struggle, despite widespread dissatisfaction with the settlement and the fact that they had



Teamsters rank and file block Branch Motor Express in Atlanta, Ga. Union hacks' efforts to sabotage effective strike action contrasted sharply with the militant activity of the rank and file.

# Truckers...

Continued from page 7

enough strength in some places to do so. In urging people to return to work, one leader of the TDC put it this way while on the radio in Detroit, "We've been recognized by the union. They've talked to us. There's a court injunction so we're going back to work. We're non-violent." In other words getting the union "leadership" to listen to them was their big victory—not how much the rank and file had advanced in its struggle but how far they had advanced their careers.

## Strike Showed Workers' Strength

The strike, once Fitzsimmons had been forced to call it, showed the tremendous potential strength of the truckers, despite the fact that the union officials did all they could to undermine it and as a result it was very disorganized. This was partly due to the strategic importance of trucking in the overall economy but mainly because a strike, as in other industries, begins to unleash the initiative and strength of the rank and file. In Ohio, the striking drivers got on the CB radio to appeal to independent (owner-operated) truckers to stop driving and support the strike. The Ohio Turnpike was cleared of trucks.

By the time a tentative agreement was reached, GM had been forced to close plants in Pontiac and Flint, Michigan. American Motors was ready to shut down its entire North American operation in two more days. U.S. Steel, which does 50% of its shipping by truck, was affected immediately. As a spokesman from Republic Steel in South Chicago explained, if the Teamster strike became widespread, "we'd be severely crippled very quickly." One Teamster on the West Coast summed up the determination of the rank and file saying, "Out here in the street we got the power to bring business to its knees. And there isn't anything that's going to move those trucks if we don't say so."

However, even though they were forced to sanction the strike, the Teamster leadership did everything they could to cut its heart out. During the strike they signed interim agreements first with local trucking companies and then two of the smaller national trucking associations. These tactics were highly touted in the press.

## Officials' Divide and Conquer Schemes

But to rank and file truckers they were "divide and conquer" schemes—not directed at dividing the companies but at breaking the strike. "Right now," said one Detroit driver, "they're signing contracts separately and telling some of us to go back to work. That's ridiculous. We're one union. Nobody should go back until the whole contract is ratified by everybody." Given the particularity of the trucking industry, for a strike to be really effective not only do trucks have to be stopped at plant gates but on the open road, too. Truckers have developed a whole set of tactics to halt over-the-road trucking. By allowing some truck companies to continue operating while the strike continued at others, the Teamster leadership tried to pit one driver against another and undermine the ability of the rank and file to wage a strong strike.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the fact that the agreements were signed and some of their provisions so rankled the rank and file that they organized themselves at a local union meeting and went out the next day to picket and re-close some of the trucking terminals that the union officials had allowed to continue operating.

Another example of this kind of sabotage was in Chicago, where the Teamster leadership didn't even call a strike vote and then kept the membership working throughout the strike. As these leaders rationalized it, "We were out in 1967 and 1970 and won a better settlement for everyone else, so let them go out for us this time." But this kind of action by these officials only created disunity and helped to further weaken the strike. As one of the Chicago drivers summed up the question on the minds of many Chicago drivers, "What are we doing working when everyone else is on strike?"

But despite this sabotage the strike did twist some concessions out of the trucking companies in the tentative agreement. For example, the contract included the removal of the 11 cent cap on the Cost of Living Allowance which had been imposed in 1973 and which was partly responsible for almost \$1 an hour loss in pay due to inflation since then. This concession was qualified since it doesn't go into effect until the second year of the contract and, combined with only a moderate wage increase, nowhere near covers the true loss of pay due to inflation. But removing the cap can help push forward the upcoming struggles, especially in rubber where the 1973 contract included no COLA and in electrical where the COLA is limited.

Overall, though, the companies and union officials looked at these concessions as a way of getting the drivers back to work, dividing the ranks and selling out



## 10,000 NY Students Protest

Ten thousand students marched on the state capitol of Albany, New York March 16 to demonstrate their anger against cutbacks in the State University (SUNY) and the City University of New York. Fed up with months of heavier and heavier cuts covered by false promises and secret plans, over 2,000 of the students stormed into the Statehouse and took it over for several hours.

This militant action, led by the CUNY Fight Back contingent (which was organized by the Revolutionary Student Brigade) was the high point of student protests which have been rocking college campuses in the state. In the State University system the state is trying to raise tuition by \$100 and dorm fees by another \$100. The City University of New York system is being threatened with the end of the Open Admission policy which allows any city high school graduate to enter a

city college—a policy won by student struggle in 1969.

Within a few weeks after the Albany demonstration, the student struggle against cutbacks led to building takeovers at seven N.Y. state university campuses, and demonstrations and student strikes at several others. Two takeovers broke out in New York City.

Over the past year these students have seen one "budget crisis" after another—in the city, the state, the universities and so on—and the bankers and businessmen and their legislators have tried to "solve" them all at the expense of the jobs and public services of the masses of people, with each cutback only leading to more cutbacks and no end in sight. In actions like these and many others students are building the unity and organization to fight these attacks and developing their movement as part of the overall struggle against the capitalists. ■

on many critical issues. As one Ford Administration official remarked "I really suspected the Teamsters settlement might be higher than it was, and I think it has gotten us off to a good start for the year." For example, there is no improvement around the use of part-time or casual drivers by the trucking companies. Many companies have been increasingly using drivers for short periods of time, laying them off and rehiring others. As a result some drivers may work 5, 10, even 15 years and still get no pension (since "casual" time doesn't go towards pension time) or other benefits. The increasing use of casuals comes on top of a large number of companies farming out work to non-union drivers, something which has caused wildcat strikes in the past.

The grievance procedure was also not improved, which angered many of the rank and file truckers since a lot of grievances are just gathering dust while the companies work around certain work rules in the contract in order to drive conditions for drivers down. There is no protection against layoffs and the health plan stinks. Under the new contract there will be a 38% increase in pension, health and welfare payments over three years but, due to changes in various laws, benefits for the drivers won't increase a cent.

There is also a lot of anger around forced overtime, with working hours sometimes running up to 70 hours per week for over-the-road drivers. As one striker said, "We get worked so much overtime it's a crime. I've been gone so much for two or three days at a time that my little boy won't come to me. He screams like hell like I was a stranger." There is nothing in the new contract aimed at stopping these attacks. In fact the trucking companies came out of the negotiations talking about increasing truck sizes and using twin (tandem) trailers in every state in order to increase productivity—making it look like the Teamster officials made a back-room deal on this front, too.

In addition to this, drivers were especially angry because the contract had not been ratified by the time everyone was told to go back to work and because the ratification procedure is a farce, with a secret ballot by mail rather than a vote in an open meeting. Drivers in Detroit had already been screwed twice before on "secret" votes for dues increases and the vote for this contract was being conducted by none other than the National Labor Relations Board—and it was obvious throughout the strike how much the government didn't want a strike.

As a result of these issues drivers in Detroit, Gary, Indiana and parts of Ohio stayed out on wildcat strike for a while after the tentative agreement had been reached.

The steelhaulers wildcat stemmed from the particularities of the independents, small businessmen hiring both themselves and their own rigs out on contract. Most steelhaulers are independents. Teamster independents are paid by a complicated formula involving hours

worked, tonnage hauled and mileage. Apparently what sparked the wildcat among these drivers was a change in this formula under the new contract which would essentially amount to a pay cut, yet another divide and conquer tactic by the Teamster leadership hidden away in the new agreement.

This wildcat comes out of the growing anger of independent truck drivers throughout the country. Already it is estimated that only 10 to 30 per cent last in business. But with the economic crisis and growing competition among truck companies, they have been going bankrupt at an even faster rate. In addition, one concession granted by the federal government during the 1974 strike of independent truckers was a 6% rate surcharge for regulated trucking companies, something which allowed the owner operators to compensate for higher fuel costs. Recently the government revoked this—which amounts to yet another attack on the independents. Despite the fact that many owner operators are also Teamster members, the top officials of the Teamsters have done nothing about these special conditions and problems as the new contract shows.

## Splitting Union No Solution

One group partly responsible for the wildcat was the 5,000 member Fraternal Association of Steel Haulers (FASH). Formed out of a wildcat strike in 1967 the opportunist leaders of this group are playing on the sellout of the Teamster leadership in order to get steelhaulers to withdraw and set up their own union, something they failed to accomplish in 1970 but are attempting to do again.

Independents are small owners, not wage workers like the rest of the Teamsters, and therefore have some different demands stemming from their class position. But more important, the independents and the company-drivers alike have a common interest in fighting the big trucking companies and the Teamster top officials. Splitting the union, as FASH advocates, would only hurt all truck drivers and aid the companies in their attacks.

At the time this is written the situation following the strike remains fluid with the contract itself not yet approved. It is clear that the strength of the rank and file grew during this contract battle and that the struggle is sure to continue as the companies try to squeeze even more profits out of their workers. By forcing a strike, no matter how short, the Teamsters in their hundreds of thousands were able to win some concessions.

But a strike like this can't be judged just in terms of the immediate settlement. In striking and continuing to wildcat, the Teamster rank and file dealt a blow to the class collaboration of their union leadership and strengthened themselves and the upcoming struggles in auto, electrical, construction, garment and other industries in the process. ■

**Galilee and West Bank**

# Palestinian Risings Shake Zionist Rule

The Zionist overlords of Israel will be reeling for a long time to come from the one-two punch they received in the last two months. A massive wave of demonstrations against Israeli occupation swept the West Bank area. This then triggered a week of militant protests by Palestinian Arabs who are "citizens" of Israel in the Galilee area. This upsurge of struggle set fire to the elaborate paper-maché myths the Israeli ruling class has spent 29 years building up about equality and how "Our Arabs are happy Arabs." To further deepen the gloom of Israel's rulers, the demonstrations considerably upset the American ruling class, without whose massive aid their government would be bankrupt and militarily crippled, as even Israeli government officials admit.

The West Bank of the Jordan was seized by Israel in the 1967 "Six Day" War, and even before had been a hotbed of militant struggle against Israel. Many of the million Palestinians who live there are refugees. In 1947 and '48 when the state of Israel was set up by force and terror, close to 90% of the Palestinians who had lived there were driven from their homes. The United States government sponsored the creation of Israel, a religious settler state, a capitalist state, to serve as a loyal and easily controlled beachhead for American capital in the strategic, oil-rich Mideast. Many of the Palestinians fled to the West Bank, a part of Palestine then under the rule of Jordan, and, like Lebanon and the Gaza strip, the West Bank became a center of the struggle to liberate all of Palestine.

Since 1967, it has been clear that the Israeli capitalists and their politicians intend to expand their country by repeating the 1947-48 land grab in this occupied territory. Israel formally annexed the Old City section of Jerusalem and began bulldozing Arab families out to build high rise apartment buildings. Land was seized elsewhere on the West Bank for military outposts and farms. Thousands of West Bank residents found the only way they could eke out a living was as workers in Israeli owned and run industry, agriculture or construction. They receive as little as one quarter of Israel's minimum wage and are forbidden to join unions. Recently, Zionist land seizures, including some formally disapproved—but not stopped—by the Israeli government, have been stepped up.

**Massive Protests**

What triggered the big wave of demonstrations and strikes in the West Bank was a decision by an Israeli magistrate that Jews could worship on the Temple Mount, where Solomon's temple supposedly stood thousands of years ago, but now the site of a mosque considered important by those of Moslem faith. In protest, Arab religious students paraded through the streets in early March. Almost instantly the character of the demonstration changed from a religious issue to a broader massive protest against the crimes of the Israeli occupation and the existence of Israel itself. Students from schools and colleges, men and women in cities all over the West Bank took to the streets in the thousands, many chanting "Liberate Palestine."

By March 10 even conservative mayors of several villages resigned their positions in solidarity with the demonstrations. Israeli occupation troops declared 24-hour curfews in two towns, Ramallah and El Birah, by firing machine guns into the air. Only after three days were people permitted out of their houses—for

90 minutes to shop for food! Dozens of suspected leaders disappeared into Israeli jails.

Nevertheless, the demonstrations continued and grew. People took on the Israeli army with rocks, bottles and sticks when attacked. On March 17 a general strike was declared in Old Jerusalem, and many others joined the workers in staying home. Schools were closed and small merchants shut down their shops. A ten year old boy was machine-gunned down by a soldier in Jericho. In late March, when the daily protests were beginning to wane on the West Bank, two other Palestinians were beaten to death by soldiers.

For the Israeli capitalist class, this was a giant wrench in the cogs of their expansion plans. Original attempts to shrug off the protests as Moslem religious fanaticism fell flat as Bethlehem and other Christian Palestinian towns erupted. Before the outbreaks the Israeli government had slated local elections in 24 West Bank towns and villages to legitimize their occupation. The results of these elections, in which puppets of Israeli rule were resoundingly defeated, were further confirmation that the "legitimacy" they were supposed to confer has been left in tatters by the masses. And the spark of struggle had already spread to Galilee.

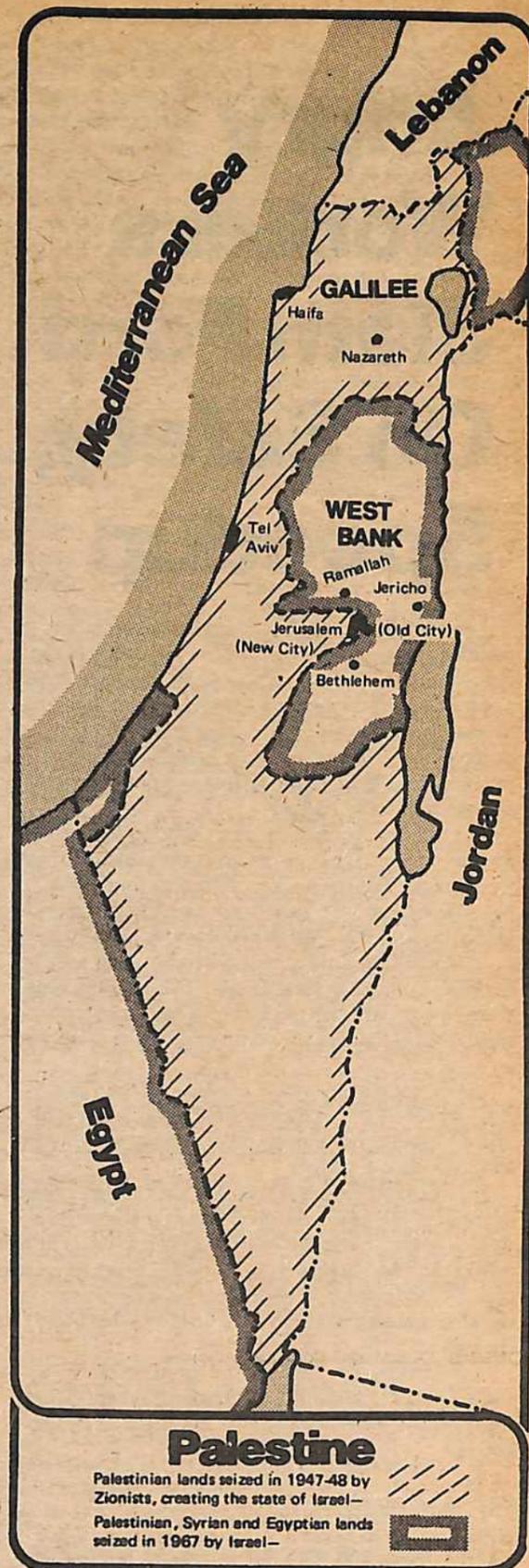
**"Citizens" Stand Up**

Israeli plans to annex Jerusalem and other West Bank areas had included eventually "integrating" the Palestinians there—some of them, anyway—into Israeli society on the same basis as the 500,000 Palestinians who live inside the pre-1967 boundaries of Israel. These Arabs are supposedly "full citizens" of Israel, but their position is startlingly different from Jewish citizens.

A majority are workers, many exploited side by side with Jewish workers. Palestinians, however, suffer significantly higher unemployment than the national average, kept as a pool of low paid labor for the hardest and most marginal jobs in the economy. Identity cards for Palestinians are specially marked for easy identification, Nazi style. Arab political parties are not permitted, so many join the Rakah, the revisionist party, as the only legal way to engage in political activity, since by definition non-Jews have no place in a Zionist party, based on belief in a Jewish state. These "full citizens" are also barred from the Israeli army and not allowed to own weapons.

The Israeli government of course does not believe its own propaganda about the "equality and good life" enjoyed by its Arab (the name Palestinian is never used) "citizens." After three decades of Zionist occupation and expulsion by terror, only 15% of Israel's population is Palestinian, excluding territories occupied in 1967. But they are recognized as a major threat to continued Zionist rule, and this threat is dealt with harshly. In the region of Galilee, the Palestinian population had slowly increased from 42% to a majority since 1948. The government decided to put a stop to this development and "Judaize" Galilee. They passed a law seizing thousands of acres from area landowners for the establishment of Jewish farming communities which also serve as military outposts.

It was this policy that was the original focus of the demonstrations which broke out in Galilean towns the last week of March and became a general strike on March 30. Like the West Bank protests, these, too, soon became broader protests against Israel and Zionist rule.



The demonstrators shouted slogans of solidarity with the West Bank demonstrations. They took up the chant "Revolution Until Victory." The Rakah (CP), which has considerable influence in Galilee (the mayor of Nazareth is a member), went all out to restrict the struggle to "full equality and better treatment" for Israeli Arabs. These treacherous demands were nothing but an attempt to hold things back, disguising the class nature of Israeli society and the inevitability of national oppression under Zionism. The revisionists sought to bury the national struggle of the Palestinians who have fought for decades, inside Israel and out, for a unified, democratic and secular (no state religion) Palestine, free of imperialist domination, a country where Jews, Moslems and Christians alike can unite in struggle together to build the future.

Panicked by this unexpected revolutionary upsurge, the Israeli government responded with vicious repression, repression which the masses met head on. Dozens of demonstrators were wounded and six were killed when soldiers and police opened up on protesting crowds during the general strike. Militant young Palestinians who were running for office in Galilean towns were deported, further exposing the sham nature of Israeli democracy. The demonstrations have ended, at least for the moment.

**Struggle Exposes Israeli Myth**

The recent explosions of mass struggle have gone a long way in destroying the myth, promoted by the Zionist leaders and the U.S. imperialists, that Israel is a haven of justice and progress. Instead, the storm of struggle highlighted the criminal history of Israel's rulers, pirates who drove millions of Palestinians from their homes and lured millions of Jews to the stolen land, all so they could have their own country to rule and their own working class to exploit.

The demonstrations focused world attention on the current problems these capitalists have in holding onto their ill-gotten gains. 40% of Israel's budget goes directly to military expenditures and another 20% to paying off debts mainly incurred in previous aggressive wars. To finance this, attacks on Israel's workers, like

Continued on page 15



Massive rebellions by Palestinians in the West Bank and inside Israel's pre-'67 boundaries have shredded the Zionists' plans to solidify their occupation under the pretense of "equality for the Arab people."

# Auto Contract

## Angry Workers Slam Ford On Safety, Speedup

The UAW National Bargaining Convention last month signalled the opening of hot air season in the auto industry. The top hacks will be striking a series of poses in months to come—responsible militant, hard-headed bargainer, far-sighted labor statesman and a dozen more. The purpose is to focus auto workers' attention on the bargaining ritual and put their fate in the hands of these traitors.

But the auto companies aren't waiting for the new contract to jack their profits up at the expense of auto workers, nor can the workers afford to follow the hacks' advice and let them "take care of everything" in the negotiations. March saw workers hit hard at the Ford Motor Company at two different plants, one in Michigan and one in New Jersey. This vigorous resistance to company attacks serves to heat things up instead of cool them as the contract deadline draws near.

Safety conditions were a key issue at the Ford Sterling Axle Plant in Sterling, Michigan, outside of Detroit. Bad conditions go hand in hand with layoffs and speedup everywhere.

Five workers have lost their lives at the Axle plant in the past few years, the most recent just months ago when a new hire was run over by a train because of bad lighting and bad brakes on his forklift. Stacked up safety violations combined with other issues—foremen working, messing with job classifications—led up to the strike.

The Sterling membership had voted before for a strike, in 1972, and the union leadership kept giving the company extensions so that the strike never happened.

### Enough is Enough

This time things went differently. A foreman on midnight shift in Dept. 16 threw a heavy metal gear housing at a worker, damaging his leg so badly that he is still on crutches. Enough is enough and when the company resorted to physical violence to get their production out, the workers had their fill. The department walked out, refusing to work for two nights. When the union bargaining committee stood by the workers taking the action they were given time off.

At the next union meeting on Feb. 29, nearly 400 workers jammed the hall. When they made clear that they were going on strike with or without the leadership's backing, the local leadership agreed to a strike vote which was held on March 9—3,461 to 441 for a strike.

A strike deadline was set at 10 A.M. Wednesday, March 24. Meanwhile International union officials stepped in to handle negotiations. Tuesday night they broke off negotiations intending to give Ford an extension.

The Ford workers had been through this movie before. They had a better idea—day shift walked out of the plant at 10 A.M. Wednesday, with the union officials running out behind them saying, "Oh, I guess we're on strike."

The rank and file had the initiative in their own hands this time.

The news media and Ford tried to say the strike was hurting other auto workers as assembly plants started to close for lack of parts. But that wasn't how the workers felt. At the Dearborn stamping plant workers said, "I hope it shuts us down too. That'll put Ford up against the wall even worse."

After six days of strike, the union leadership, which had kept the rank and file in the dark on negotiations, forced a ratification vote on a tentative agreement. A local radio station announced it had passed while workers were still voting!

Despite all the maneuvering of the International and its flunkies, the power of this strike brought results. The rank and file won some important victories, forcing Ford to agree to do a lot of things that have been needed for a long time—hire 80 new workers for production, clean-up and maintenance, including 22 skilled tradesmen to repair machinery, more frequent inspection and repair of forklifts and a new procedure for secur-



ing coils of steel to prevent their rolling.

The company has 60 days to show improvement or the union can give 5 days notice and strike again, an important clause that will have real meaning only if the rank and file keep the initiative they developed in the strike.

### Metuchen

At the Ford Pinto plant in Metuchen, N.J., things blew after Ford laid off 400 workers the last week in February. When overtime was scheduled for the first day after the layoffs, Monday, March 1, a couple dozen workers punched out after 8 hours and headed home. The next night, they spread the word and pretty much everybody was ready to walk after 8, saying "If Ford wants more production, well, hell, let them hire back the guys they laid off."

Ford backed off like the workers were a live wire—scheduled work was cut from 9 hours to 7.9. Disciplinary hearings against the people who walked out Monday night were dropped. The company agreed to stop using part-timers while full-time workers were on the unemployment lines.

Now, instead of a big all-out attack, Metuchen management is trying to chip away a little here and a little there. Extra work has been added to jobs continuously—one screw here, a clip there, utility work for relief men. Workers have been fighting back, too. Overloaded jobs go down the line incomplete. In one department the foreman got so desperate he stopped the line for a pep talk: "Work harder for your paycheck." He got that slammed right back in his face: "I only get one paycheck. Why the hell should I do two jobs!" Two full-timers were called back on that line.

### Another Round

But to break down this individual resistance, Ford has been using foremen on the line to fill in the gaps, pick up the slack from skipped jobs. They are counting on this to wear the workers out. In response, workers from the Auto Committee of the NY-NJ United Workers Organization have started a campaign against extra work and working foremen.

As they summed up in one of their leaflets: "It won't be very long before they start pushing hard again. Rumors are flying about more layoffs and a change in line speed. Now is like the calm before the storm. They've already laid off hundreds, but we forced them to stop short of what they needed. So, they're preparing for another round. But we're not about to give them an opening. As we tighten our ranks, become more aware in every struggle large and small, we, too, are preparing for another round."

This sums up the situation facing all auto workers as contract time comes up. There are those who say the companies can be sweet-talked out of what the rank and file needs. But the workers at Sterling and Metuchen have been talking the only language the companies understand. When they stood up, they pushed ahead the struggle, unity and strength of the rank and file. ■

Continued from page 1

STAND UP!"

As the leaflet calling for the demonstration stated: "The fact is—the big shots don't have this contract all sewn up. Right now a gang of scoundrels and sell-outs is in the driver's seat of our union. But their hold on us is slipping. Struggle against the '73 sellout broke out all over and the International—through fraud and intimidation—was just barely able to keep the lid on. We know that we cannot count on Woodcock and friends to represent our interests. We know that the rank and file of the UAW must take things into our own hands. And many auto workers are getting together, getting organized to do just that. We have formed Auto Workers United to Fight in '76 for this purpose."

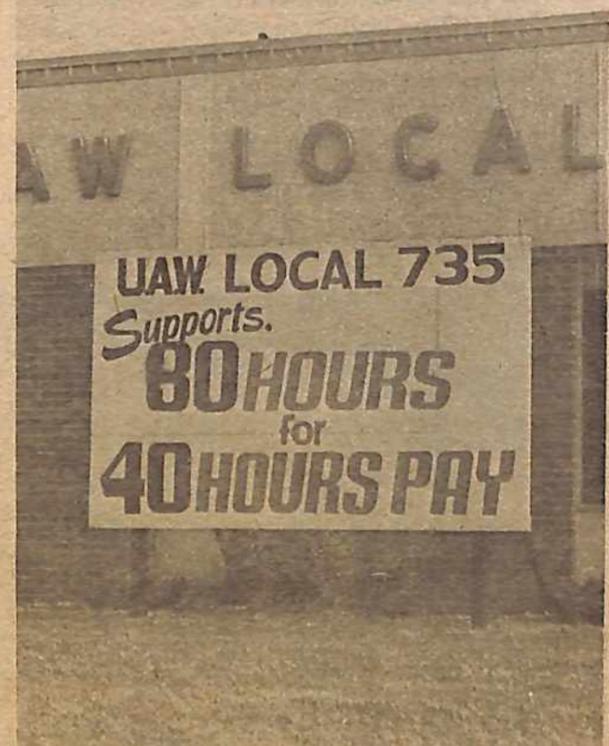
The demonstration was an important step in building the contract fight—the rank and file got out its demands and point of view and it was an event where workers came together into one common fight from various different plants. Along with workers from half a dozen Big Three plants in the Detroit area, workers from AMC in Kenosha, Wisc., GM in Rochester, N.Y., and Frigidaire in Dayton drove hundreds of miles to participate.

These workers represented and helped sum up the sentiments of thousands of auto workers around the country. This spirit is evident in the local battles which are constantly breaking out, despite the efforts of company water-boys like Woodcock to douse every spark of struggle (see the article on Sterling and Metuchen on this page). The growing determination of the rank and file not to be sold out again rang out loud and clear in messages of solidarity to the demonstration from auto workers in Atlanta, New Jersey and California. For instance, workers from GM in Fremont, California wrote about their successes in the fight to get the key demands of Auto Workers United to Fight adopted by the local union. Most demands got passed.

The obvious "we mean business" stand of the demonstration caught the attention of many delegates going into the convention. A few delegates stopped and said that they agreed with what the demonstration was trying to accomplish.

The spirit of the demonstration carried through to a meeting called by the rank and file group later that morning. Workers made plans to distribute the group's brochure, '76 Auto Contract—A Time to Fight! even more broadly in the Detroit area and around the country. Tens of thousands have been distributed already and received so enthusiastically in plant after plant, where they often get posted on the walls, that a second press run is being prepared. They unanimously decided to put out a national newsletter that would carry news about the contract fight, cover the important battles going on in the various plants, and expose the tricks and backstabbing of the top union officials and their flunkies.

Meanwhile, what was expected occurred at the Bargaining Convention—a big rubber stamp for a sell-out in '76. Woodcock made some weak references to dozens of issues facing auto workers. He singled out "job security" as the key issue in '76. To thousands



Before it was spray painted by an angry worker, this sign said "30" instead of 80. This corrected version spells out the real situation auto workers face—the outrage of forced overtime at the same time many are on lay-off. This, union officials refuse to deal with, while they blow smoke about short work week schemes.

# Battle Lines Drawn...



"Auto Workers United to Fight in '76" demonstrates to put forward the real demands of the rank and file outside the UAW Special Bargaining Convention in Detroit on March 18.

of UAW members, jobs is the burning question. Even with production up, 50,000 jobs have been permanently eliminated through speedup, job combination, and overtime. But Woodcock chose not to speak of these issues—instead, his program for "job security" turned out to be plans to spend millions to lobby Congress in support of a jobs bill written by Hubert-Humphrey and a song and dance about how the UAW has to put its muscle behind getting "good" Democrats into office.

Along with this were statements by Woodcock about the importance of the "nation's economic recovery," and how the UAW is a responsible union that won't spill the apple cart as the auto giants recover. Of course, this recovery is a profit recovery—coming out of the auto workers' backs, and Woodcock's concern over this matter only shows more clearly that behind all the vague resolutions passed at the convention—the International is determined to not push for anything substantial.

One of these vague resolutions was around "shorter work time." While the International made a lot of references to how a "shorter work time" plan would create jobs, when pinned down to specifics, their shorter work time is 30 minutes credit for every week of perfect attendance—a thinly concealed absentee control program already in the UAW agricultural implements contracts. This plan in actual fact has eliminated jobs, not created any, by cutting down on the number of men used for absentee replacement purposes.

### Rumbles at the Convention

A few convention delegates did try to jam Woodcock on the real issues facing the rank and file—like jobs, speedup, seniority rights, wages and overtime. In fact the outrage of the rank and file throughout the auto industry against the overtime being forced in plants where workers are on layoff is what forced one of the few concrete resolutions—a bargaining demand against such overtime.

But some of the biggest noisemakers at the convention itself in "opposition" to Woodcock were some local leaders who have made a career out of talking militant around contract time. Later they cave in to the International during contract ratification, and during the next three years they do the faithful bidding of the companies and the International by refusing to lift a finger to support the rank and file in their day to day struggle with the companies. Heading up this group is Frank Runnels, president of Local 22, Cadillac Main in Detroit. One of their biggest bandwagons is the "short work week" (36 for 40).

### Short Work Week

Their "short work week" plan is being heralded as a cure-all for unemployment in auto, while these same officials don't do or say anything about fighting the killing speedup, layoffs and the mandatory overtime, which are the real focus of the attacks the companies are waging. With some workers being forced to work overtime—up to 70 hours per week in some cases until recently—the 36 for 40 panacea just misses the mark. At one plant a local union leader—part of the short work week crowd—posted a billboard saying, "UAW Local 735 Supports 30 Hours for 40 Hours Pay." A

worker repainted the sign to tell the truth about this opportunist, "UAW Local 735 Supports 80 Hours for 40 Hours Pay." For years all sorts of opportunists have come forward with short work week schemes as cure-all medicine for the ills of capitalism—and as a way to steer clear of fighting the capitalists' real attacks. The Trotskyite Progressive Labor Party, for example, made a big deal about getting Berkeley, California residents to "vote in" 30 for 40 a few years ago.

Obviously no worker opposes a shorter work week in the abstract. In fact many of the most important struggles of the working class have been to limit the working day, but the demands and direction of the workers' struggle depend on the concrete nature of the enemy's attacks, and how best to fight them and avoid the ambushes. And in any case the fight for a shorter work week, or other reforms, can never do away with unemployment which is built into the capitalist system. Unemployment can only be eliminated through revolution, and revolution can never be built on the basis of, as Lenin put it, "concocting fashionable means of helping the workers," but will instead grow out of the actual struggles the working class is waging against the capitalists.

In fact the opportunists who are promoting the "36 for 40" blind alley are using it as a springboard

to promote their own careers and are playing right into the hands of Woodcock, paving the way for him to "win" his short work time absentee control plan and proclaim a victory, while selling out on the vital issues auto workers face.

But Runnels and his friends can't stake their careers only on transparent gimmicks that many of the rank and file already see through. For that reason, they've jumped on the bandwagon around a real demand of the rank and file—a pension with a cost of living escalator. Woodcock put down this demand at the convention. He said that the cost of such a demand on the companies was "prohibitive." "We do have a special problem created by inflation and we must try for a solution of that [retirees'] problem outside of the pension plan," he said. He did not elaborate further except to say that the UAW and the companies had some kind of sacred agreement around the pension plan that couldn't be touched for another three years anyhow.

But while Runnels might criticize Woodcock for his position, the rank and file can remember Runnel's behavior last contract. His baby then was the "30 and Out" retirement plan. And he jumped on it like it was the only question facing auto workers, consciously ignoring everything else. His little "one issue only" campaign aided the companies in concealing the trunkload they took away from the workers in "exchange" for 30 and out—like the continuation of mandatory overtime, no substantial wage increase, the elimination of job rights for tradesmen and other classifications and a wage cut for probationary employees!

But the rank and file has learned plenty since the '73 contract fight. No Woodcocks or even Runnels types will have an easy time with their games this contract. The rank and file is not about to settle for the pro-company bull that came out of the convention and they are not about to let their lives and livelihoods be "traded away" for some hollow victories.

As '76 Auto Contract—A Time to Fight! states:

"Layoffs, speedup, worsening conditions and deteriorating standard of living—this is the reality of what auto workers face and the situation is serious. Auto Workers United to Fight in '76 feels the contract time is no time to bow down to these attacks nor is it a time to get our hopes wound up in some gimmicks that don't mean a damn thing in the real world. The '76 contracts (both national and local) are an opportunity to BEAT BACK THESE VICIOUS ATTACKS AND TEAR AWAY THE HANDCUFFS THE UNION LEADERSHIP PUTS ON OUR STRUGGLE!"

The following are the key points of the demands which Auto Workers United to Fight in '76 sees as the main battlelines of the '76 auto contract fight:

1. Full SUB Benefits—No Cut-Offs!
2. Defend and Extend Our Right to Strike over Speed-Up & All Grievances!
3. No More Forced Overtime and No Overtime in Any Plants Where Workers Are on Layoff!
4. An Improved COLA & Across the Board Wage Increase!
5. 30 & Out Must Be Made a Reality By Having Full Cost of Living on Pensions!
6. Improved Seniority & Job Rights! ■

## Aims at Skilled Workers in UAW, URW

# ISST Out to Split Industrial Unions

More and more the top leadership of the unions in this country stand exposed and any hold they have on the rank and file is slipping. But the capitalists also find other pimps and opportunists who will do their bidding in ways the union leadership might not be able to. One of these outfits is the International Society of Skilled Tradesmen (ISST). The group is headquartered in northeast Ohio, and they are currently trying to make a big push among the workers in the skilled trades classifications in some of the major industries organized on an industrial basis. Already they are going all out in auto and rubber and making noises in electrical and steel.

The ISST's line is that "Industrial unions have been the downfall of craftsmen." In a recent issue of their paper they call for increasing the wage gap between skilled and unskilled workers, failing to specify whether they even mean a wage increase for tradesmen, or a decrease for production workers. It seems that for the ISST either would be satisfactory, just so long as the gap itself is widened. Further, the same issue carries a letter from an ISST member who states that skilled tradesmen can only advance at the expense of production workers, and vice versa. Their program boils down to one main thing—skilled tradesmen should leave the

industrial unions and join the ISST.

They couple their program with a bunch of ideological garbage. The pages of their newspaper are full of hysterical anti-communism (industrial unionism is "communist"), American chauvinism and super-patriotism. What holds it all together is the most narrow craft outlook and a petty bourgeois view that longs to turn the wheels of history backward to the days before large scale industry, glorifying the role of the individual artisan. In the spirit of the Bicentennial, 1976 is supposed to be the year to bring back the golden era of the craftsman, which of course is impossible.

The ISST is no joke though. Despite its backward ideology and its blatant "to hell with the rest of the working class" positions, they have gained somewhat of a base among tradesmen in some basic industries. Recently, they managed to gain enough pull to have an NLRB hearing about recertifying the tradesmen from the United Rubber Workers Union for the upcoming rubber contracts, although they were unsuccessful at this time in splitting the URW.

The main reason why the reactionaries in the leadership of the ISST have been getting over to the extent that they have is that they promise to fight for an

Continued on page 12

# ISST...

Continued from page 11

improved lot for the tradesmen, when the tradesmen, like other workers, have been sold down the river by the leadership of the industrial unions time and again.

These opportunists also make use of and promote the spontaneous pull on skilled workers toward "narrow craft consciousness"—the bourgeois line that says that because of the relatively higher value of the labor power of skilled workers (because of the time it takes to gain that skill) tradesmen can find a good life under capitalism by just looking after the narrow interests of their trade.

But through the history of the working class struggle, workers, including those in the skilled trades, have broken through this form of bourgeois ideology, just as the working class has broken through other forms.

Despite the ISST's nonsense about comparing skilled tradesmen to the independent craftsmen of yesteryear, the skilled tradesmen they seek to split off are wage earners, like the rest of the working class. While new skilled categories are generated, the overall tendency of capitalism and modern large-scale industry is to break down the divisions between crafts and between skilled and so-called unskilled workers. Of course in doing this the capitalists, wherever possible, drive down the wages and conditions of the skilled workers to that of the working class as a whole.

These attacks must be resisted. And the present union leadership hasn't fought them, any more than they ever lift a finger to defend any workers' interests. But in the face of this, the interests of the skilled workers do not lie in fighting against the masses of workers, or in some "every man for himself" scheme to split from them to try to preserve and build up what little real advantages they have over the rest of the working class, which capitalism constantly undermines. The pipe dreams of the ISST leadership about returning to the "good old days" of the craftsman are just that—pipe dreams and reactionary schemes that try to turn the clock back. In fact, tradesmen in industry have a long history of joining with and often initiating industry-wide battles.

## Situation in Auto Industry

The general attacks on auto workers by the auto giants' constant drive for profits have taken a particular, systematic form for the workers in the trades classifications. In many plants the capitalists refuse to stop for repairs. They try to run until the machines break down and then allow just enough repairs to get the production going again. This makes it possible to get by with fewer skilled workers—and also leads to increasingly unsafe conditions in the plants. The skilled trades classifications have the highest rate of accidental deaths, which is directly due to this speedup.

Job elimination through job combination and outside contracting and attacks on job rights are common attacks on the trades classifications. Tradesmen often work the heaviest overtime, even in periods of heavy layoffs in a particular plant. And like all auto workers, tradesmen face increased harassment on the job and receive paychecks which are harder and harder to stretch to make ends meet. The pay increases of all auto workers, over the last two contracts, have been limited to not much more than what would have been accumulated had their Cost of Living Allowance simply continued and the contracts not expired.

These types of attacks on the trades began to intensify in the late '60s. With these attacks came resistance and tradesmen rose up and developed a certain level of organization among themselves because they saw the need to fight a common attack. These struggles were aimed at the companies and the sellout stand of the International, and were supported by the majority of the production workers. But without class conscious leadership, these particular struggles and the organization that developed did not spread through all classifications and did not get linked up strongly with the struggles being waged by production workers.

An example of these struggles was the "One Dollar an Hour Now!" wage increase campaign that caught fire among the tradesmen during the '67 contract negotiations. Another was the militant and extremely visible campaign by tradesmen to reject the '73 contract sellout because of, among other things, its attack on job rights in the trades classifications.

Of course, throughout all this, the leadership of the UAW used every means at its disposal to sabotage the fight. For example, all classifications of workers voted "no" on the '73 contract at Ford Motor Co. While the union leadership had to acknowledge the "no" vote among the tradesmen because they had carried on demonstrations, etc., publicly voicing their sentiments, they pulled every trick in the book to make it seem like the production workers had voted the contract in—including holding "quickie" re-elections in some places. Their tactics to get the contract pushed

down the workers' throats even included the cold-blooded shooting of an unarmed skilled tradesman!

Now more than ever, one of the main questions for all auto workers is how to beat back the companies' attacks and break through the handcuffs the union leadership puts on the struggle. Some of the leaders of the movement in the trades in '73 have joined the swamp of the ISST as their answer to this question. The ISSTers in auto push heavily that the UAW leadership has sold out the trades, not because they are agents of the capitalists, but *because they favor production workers*.

When they can't get over with this ridiculous line, they pull back a little and claim that the trades stuck their necks out in '73 to fight the contract, and the production workers, "lacking guts," didn't back them up. So in auto, as in other industries, the ISST's main appeal is as a quick gimmick and cure-all to deal with the daily backstabbing of the union officials. And this bill of goods is sold along with the backward line of "bring back the golden days of the craftsman."

The ISST line is pure poison. Its "take from the production workers" line completely lets the companies off the hook. And at the same time, its whole goal is to widen the divisions that exist in the working class and strip the working class of the material strength it gains from being organized on an industrial basis. Its effect, whether it actually succeeds in breaking the tradesmen out of the industrial unions or not, is creating divisions that in the real world can only weaken the position of all workers, and allow the capitalists and their henchmen in union office to play sections of the working class against each other and drive the whole work force down.

## "Left" Form of the Same Garbage

To supposedly "defeat" the influence of the ISST in the auto industry, some so-called "progressive forces" have been trying to combat a "right-wing" bourgeois alternative with a "left-wing" bourgeois alternative. Various opportunists out of office, along with members of the Communist Party, USA and members of the International Socialists, have banded together to form the "Independent Skilled Trades Council" (ISTC). They claim to be opponents of the ISST and they want to keep the trades in the UAW.

But despite the fact that they don't spout super-patriotism or blatant anti-communism, they do a great deal to promote a narrow, dead-end view of the struggle. Their whole line is: Let's stay in the UAW, since that's the best way for the trades to be better off. While the ISST prints the *Craftsman*, a newspaper designed to organize the trades back into their golden days, the ISTC puts out the *Skilled Tradesman*, a newspaper designed to pimp off the struggles the tradesmen in the auto industry have been waging—and channel it into the narrowest trade unionist outlook it can, short of the ISST's anti-industrial unionism.

The ISTC agrees with the ISST that tradesmen have different interests from production workers. While an across the board wage increase is a demand of all auto workers, the ISTC tries to make it a "pure skilled trades demand" as they call it. They call for "Wage Parity with Construction Tradesmen" as one of their main demands of the '76 contracts.

Their program goes on to emphasize that tradesmen must have the right to send *separate* representation to UAW conventions. Instead of drawing out the real class relations going on in the union and the necessity of the rank and file to take matters into their own hands, their newspaper states, "We intend to make the UAW leadership report *our* motions and to instruct *their* automatic majority to support *our* demands at the convention and in the shops." (emphasis in the original) The list goes on but it all boils down to saying tradesmen are one of several interest groups among workers that sometime scratch each other's backs (i.e., stay in the UAW) but mostly look out narrowly for themselves.

The working class has dealt with the ISST's and ISTC's type of bull before—a good example is what happened during the organizing drive in the early '30s in the rubber industry. Because of mounting rank and file struggle, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) made a half-hearted effort to organize the rubber industry before the CIO was formed. The AFL's approach was to organize *each* trade into a separate craft union and to have the bulk of production workers in one union.

Greene, president of the AFL and the bourgeois force that he was, could never quite understand why the various classifications of tradesmen simply would refuse to attend "their craft" union meetings, but would instead attend *en masse* the larger and broader production workers' meetings. But what Greene could never grasp, workers could—to stave off the fierce attacks by the rubber barons the workers had to build as much strength and unity in this common fight as they could. So much for the AFL's pleas that "It isn't proper for skilled workers to mix with the unskilled!"

## Part of One Working Class

Skilled tradesmen are part of one working class and the fight around the attacks they face are part of the struggle of the class as a whole. Struggle that begins among the tradesmen can be important sparks of struggle for the whole class. For example, the organization and unity of the trades in the '73 contract, taking their fight beyond the voting booth to the streets and union meetings in a visible, organized protest, is something all workers can learn from.

As long as labor power is a commodity, as it will always be under capitalism, differences in wages between workers cannot be totally eliminated. To say it could—to call for an "equalization" of all wages for all workers—would just be the flip side for the ISST's "take it from the production workers" schemes and would just be an ultra-"left" form of letting the bourgeoisie off the hook and would side-track the class away from the real source of its misery—the system of wage slavery. Full equality will only happen as the class struggle advances through socialism toward communism and the material well-being of all workers, together with their consciousness, is raised greatly.

The stand of the working class today must be to lessen to the degree possible the differences and competition in its ranks in order to carry on the strongest fight possible against the capitalists. This is one of the main reasons the working class organized itself into unions in the first place. And the class can and must break through any "redivide the misery" schemes and divide and conquer programs promoted by outfits like the ISST doing the bidding of the bourgeoisie.

## Trade Unionism Can Never be Enough

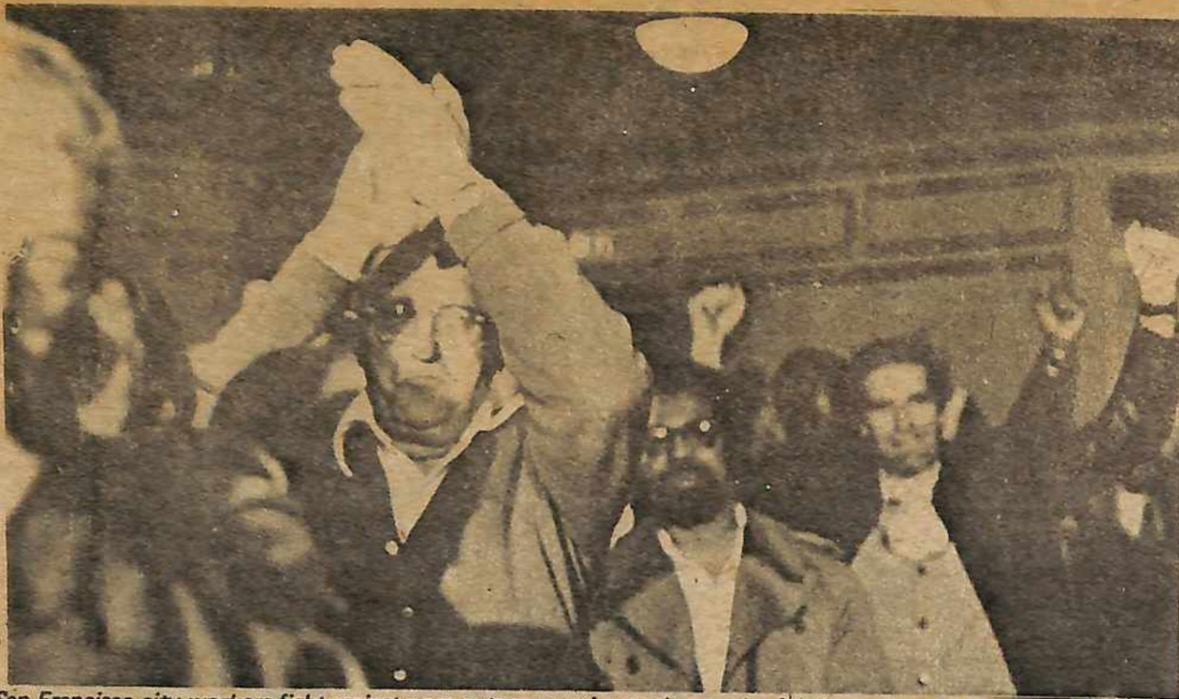
The ISST and its "progressive" counterpart, the ISTC, point to the treachery of the UAW leadership in an attempt to build themselves. The present sorry state of the UAW does hold a lesson for workers, but it is not the reactionary line of "we need good craft unionism, instead."

Close to 40 years ago, the class fought for and won industrial unions in most major industries. But like other concessions wrenched from the capitalists, the unions by themselves are not enough. Under the rule of capital all victories are temporary, and from the very days the organizing drives were going on, the bourgeoisie has stopped at nothing to try and turn these unions around and get their henchmen consolidated in top positions.

The answer does not lie in abandoning these unions to the capitalists or in turning back the clock to the days of craft unionism—but to continue to struggle to make them a weapon in the hands of the working class—not as an end in itself, but as part of building a movement of our class that will end the rule of capital once and for all. ■



Skilled trades workers demonstrate against UAW sellout contract with Ford in 1973. Many times skilled trades workers in the UAW have helped spark the struggle of all auto workers. Now, reactionary ISST leaders are trying to break skilled trades away from production workers.



San Francisco city workers fight against wage cuts amounting to thousands of dollars a year and severe restrictions on union activity.

## Big San Francisco Strike

# City Workers Fight Massive Wage Cuts

On March 31 a big strike of city workers in San Francisco broke out. As we go to press things are still developing. At stake is an all out attempt by the bourgeoisie to force through massive wage-cuts, break the strength of the city employee unions, and put the burden of the "crisis of the cities" on the backs of the city workers and the public. Faced with a final "offer" of pay cuts of \$2,000 to \$7,500 a year and elimination of the right to strike and the right to honor picket lines, 1,800 crafts workers, members of the building trades unions, hit the bricks to a man. They closed down Hetch Hetchy (a city-owned water and power supply reservoir), the city water department, all electrical, plumbing and runway maintenance in San Francisco International Airport and heating, plumbing repair, and electrical maintenance in city facilities all over town.

The striking workers went out right away to shut down the Muni, the city's extensive bus, streetcar and cablecar system that usually carries 500,000 riders a day. Hundreds of miscellaneous city workers honored picket lines at General Hospital, City Hall, the city court and police complex, city schools and elsewhere, despite orders from their own union bureaucrats to cross the lines and keep working. Pickets also moved to extend the strike. They shut down construction at the airport for a day, until the San Mateo County Labor Council ordered the pickets off. They shut down Golden Gate Transit, a commuter bus service to the city from Marin County to the north, for half a day (later these workers walked out after rejecting a lousy contract of their own). The strikers closed airport cargo terminals for a day and stopped most large truck deliveries. Despite the bluster of the Board of Supervisors (San Francisco's city council), the strike is hurting the capitalists bad. Downtown retailers alone are losing \$20 million a day.

The city officials' scheme to get Muni workers to declare a three day moratorium—to drive baseball fans to the three day Giant opening series—failed miserably. Their highly publicized "Muni Workers Back to Work Movement" failed miserably and resulted in a unanimous vote of Muni drivers to continue to support and honor the picket lines as long as the strike goes on.

For several years the capitalists in San Francisco have been waging a campaign against city workers, focusing particularly on the craft workers. In the past craft workers have won the same wages, benefits and working conditions as unionized building trades workers in private industry. Now the Board of Supervisors

are pointing to the depressed state of the construction industry and the frequent layoffs there, and saying that since the city workers work steadily they should not get the same union scale.

They are also going all out to divide craft workers from the rest of the working class. They waited until after they shoved the worst contract ever down the throats of 18,000 miscellaneous city employees to launch their attempts to bust the craft unions. Spreading story after story in the bourgeois press they have attempted to give the impression that craft workers are overpaid.

But while the wages of craft workers are slightly higher than those of most other workers, they too are striking for the basic necessities needed for a decent life. And the fact that their struggle is hitting back at the government and capitalists who are slashing out at all workers lays the basis for broad unity with the rest of the working class.

The San Francisco strike is receiving nationwide coverage by the capitalists' press, which is obviously hoping that a defeat for the workers in San Francisco, which has a reputation as a "union town" due to the history of militant struggle going back to the 1934 general strike, will help clear the way for further attacks on city workers throughout the country. San Francisco, like other cities in the country, is caught in the same quagmire of capitalist crisis that has rocked New York, Philadelphia and many other cities.

While San Francisco is not yet in immediate danger of default, New York-style, one indication of their crisis is that their debts have sky-rocketed to \$1

billion. And as in New York, the capitalists in San Francisco have the same "solution" to the crisis—make the city employees and the working people who live in the city pay.

### General Strike Talk Covers Real Treachery

For most of the craft workers, this is their first strike (most of the city craft unions have not been on strike for twenty or thirty years). Their leadership has put no resources into the organization of the strike, and has instead preferred to wage the fight in headlines rather than on the picket lines. They made a widely publicized call for a general strike of all labor in the city, and used this call as an excuse to discourage workers from going on the offensive to extend the strike "until we (the bureaucrats) get it all together. It's all or nothing."

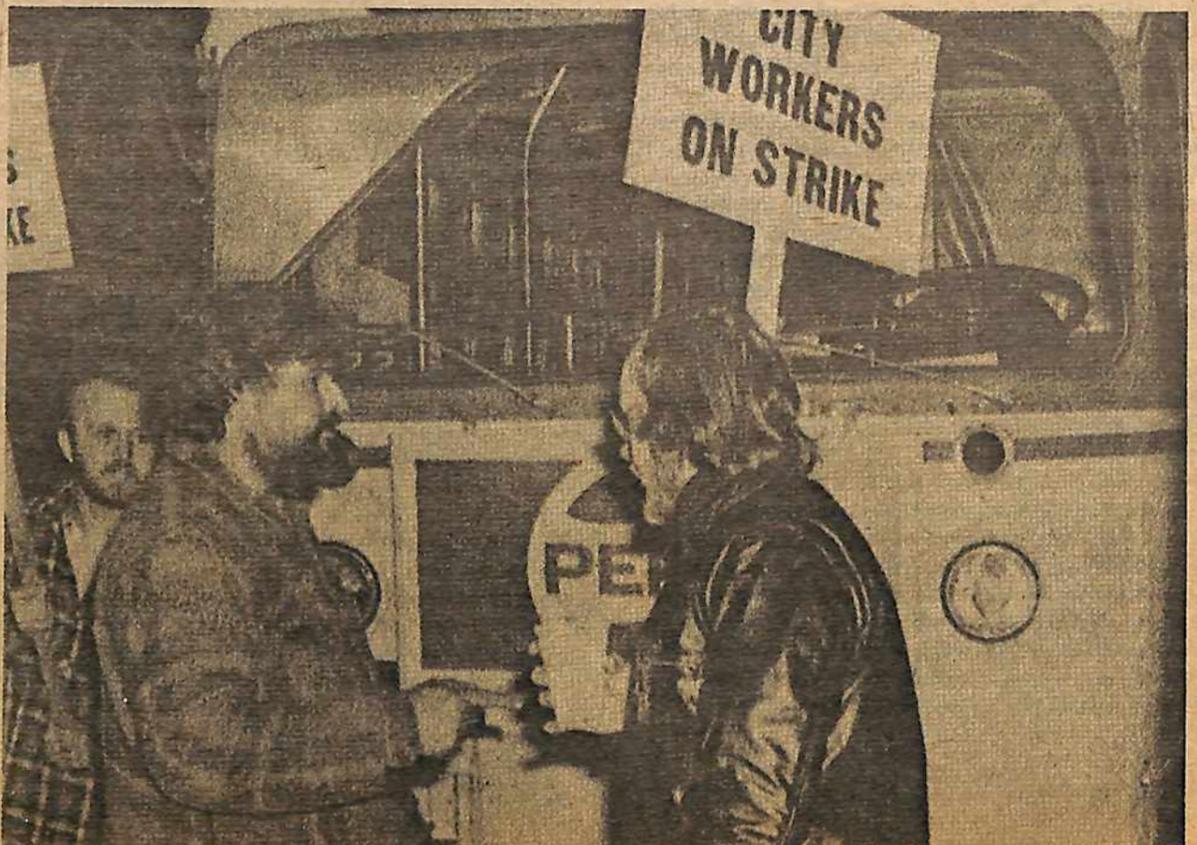
San Francisco labor "leaders" have a long tradition of talking tough, including making noises about general strikes, while, like all labor hacks, they sell the workers down the river and even the most militant talking of them (like Harry Bridges of the ILWU) sit on numerous influential, and no doubt lucrative, government boards and planning agencies. Naturally all sorts of Trotskyite and other opportunist sects went wild when the hacks made the phoney "general strike" appeal and played right along with the hoax.

Despite the "leave it up to us" appeals of the top union leadership, the militant determination of the striking craft workers has pushed the strike forward and extended it step-by-step. Repeatedly, the workers have jammed the official strike committee and forced it to sanction aggressive actions of the rank and file. But the bureaucrats still possess enough authority to confuse and discourage many of the workers, which makes it all the more important for the workers to break through this stranglehold, despite the difficulties.

### Rank and File Forces Mobilize

A committee called City Workers Fighting Back (composed of Concerned Muni Drivers, General Hospital workers and others, and supported by the May First Workers Organization and the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee) has played an active role in helping to organize, extend and build support for the strike. Their first leaflet, broadly distributed throughout the working class of the area, called on workers to "Join us and support our fight for the right to strike, no pay cuts, increases to keep up with the cost of living, end the hiring freeze, no layoffs, no cutbacks of city services of health, childcare, transportation or schools. . ."

The strike itself, and leaflets like these, are going a long way in breaking down the division the capitalists are trying to create in pitting other workers, and the public at large, against the city employees. More recently a leaflet from the Committee entitled "What's It Going to Take to Win?" pointed out that "whenever the workers have taken matters into their own hands, jammed the strike committee to do an effective job and go on the offensive, real gains have been made. We can't afford to wait for orders that don't arrive, wait for business agents, wait for a breakthrough in negotiations, wait for a general strike or wait for anything. Support is there among other workers and that support will grow if we take the offensive." As one worker at a Muni bus yard put it, "If we really organize this strike we'll shut the city down tight." ■



San Francisco bus drivers went out in support of striking city craft workers. The ruling class has made a major effort to divide craft and other workers and to pin the blame on them for the city's economic woes.

### FUND DRIVE

On May 1 a fund drive will begin to raise money to help make possible the continued growth and development of *Revolution* and other publications. Checks may be written, payable to RCP Publications.

# Mass Line...

Continued from page 3

and not organizing it, so their rivals, the "progressive" hacks, would wind up with a black eye for their efforts. All this infighting affected what went on at the rally.

Whether or not communists would unite with the masses of workers at the rally, and determining the forms for doing that, were the first questions that had to be settled. In the first article on the mass line it says:

"...in order to apply the mass line, the Party must base itself firmly on the understanding that people learn through their own experience, and not simply through 'being told' what is correct and what must be done..."

"No Party is fit to lead the masses, nor can it be in any position to determine what must be done and how to do it, unless it continually strengthens its ties with the masses and takes part, together with them, in the daily struggle against exploitation and oppression, and assists them in forging links between their struggles against the common enemy."

This is true not only of the daily battles that go on in the shops, but also of the struggle that takes the form of activity like this demonstration.

The communists' task was not to stand off to the side and say "don't demonstrate because this rally is being called by the wrong people," but to unite with the thousands of workers who were going there to demonstrate their demand for jobs, to assist them in waging this struggle, to organize it into as conscious an expression of this as possible, and especially to make the links between this rally for jobs and the overall movement of the working class and also to the struggle that was going on daily in the shops against the layoffs.

## Unfold Exposure

Against a line of going to Washington mainly to raise the demands for May Day (April 26 was a week before the May Day demonstration), the RU and advanced forces close to it (for example, the United May Day Committee in NY/NJ) united around a policy of "unfolding around a particular struggle exposure of the system of exploitation which continually gives rise to such outrages and abuses and to indicate the links between the different struggles against this system." (Mass Line article, Dec. 15, 1975) We sought to focus in on unemployment, expose the system that gives rise to it, and point the way forward.

Communists and other advanced workers also united against going there to "expose the hacks." That had to be done, but that was a question of summing up repeated experience on the part of the masses, not just saying "they called this rally to further their careers, so follow us."

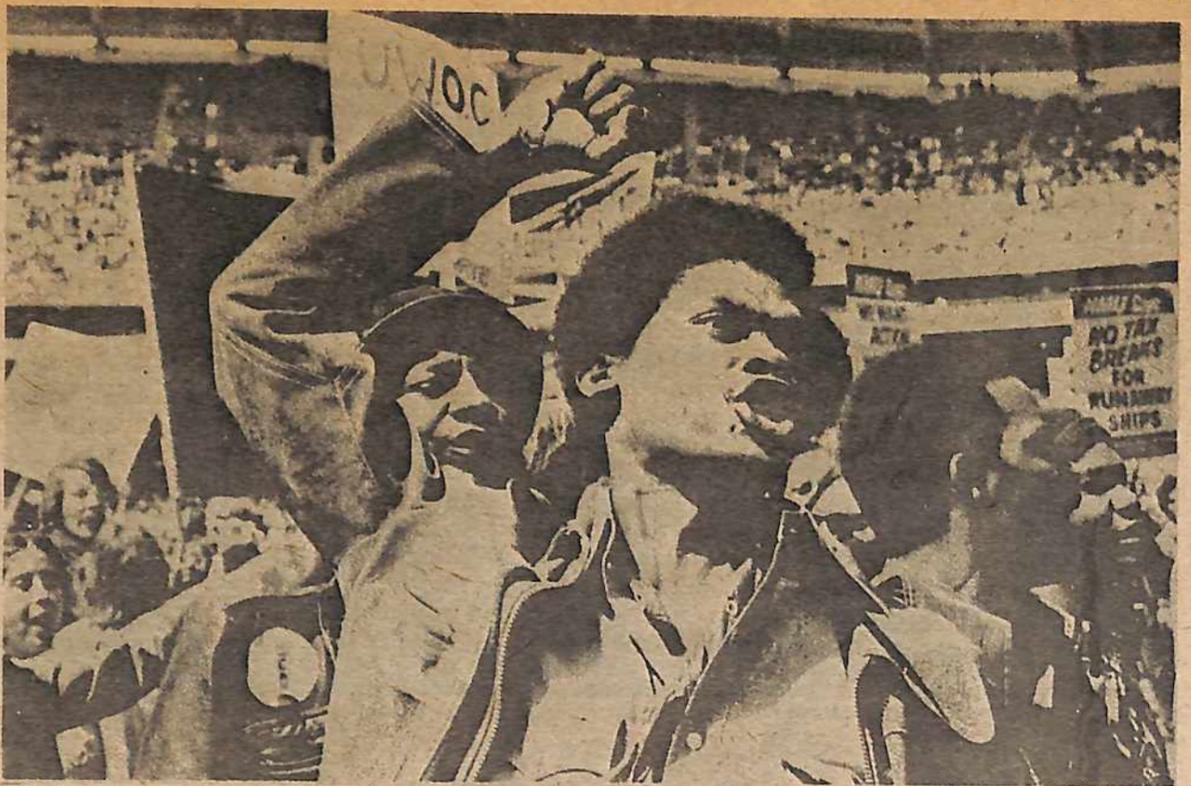
The masses had had some experience with the sabotage of the union bureaucrats in the struggle against layoffs that was already going on in the shops. However, these bourgeois agents were by no means thoroughly exposed and isolated. It was on the basis of the influence they still had among the masses, especially as the only ones who could accomplish or at least lead anything in the political arena, that they were going to be able to mobilize so many for the rally.

Given this, the method had to be to build on the experience the masses had with the bureaucrats in the shop by summing it up, continue to jam the leaders into building the rally itself, and put forward at least the direction, if not a full program, of intensifying the fight for every job in the plants. The advanced forces also wanted to put out a clear line of Employed/Unemployed, Same Crisis, Same Fight.

With this general orientation, communists and other advanced workers organized in the shops to go to the rally. Workers demanded, and won in several locals, that buses be provided to go—particularly in UAW plants where the leadership refused to organize for the demonstration at all. In the union District 65, the bureaucrats had chartered buses and trains and then gave the seats to their hack friends from the Teamsters with whom they were contemplating a merger. Workers fought, and in some cases won, to get the seats back for other workers. And the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC) organized several busloads of unemployed workers, who, of course, had been left out of the picture by the AFL-CIO officials.

Communists tried to apply this general orientation to determine tactics for the rally itself. Rather than organizing to go down to Washington separately or trying to organize some kind of separate contingent at the rally, the line was to link up tightly with the masses throughout and, on the basis of being immersed among them and not somewhere off to the side, try to organize and agitate in whatever ways possible. That is, communists had to find appropriate forms to advance the struggle, while paying careful attention to not separating off the advanced from the rest of the class.

The rumors beforehand were that the rally was going to be tight and well organized. Also, the RU mem-



Workers stormed onto the field tired of listening to endless jive from politicians during April, 1975 jobs rally at RFK Stadium in Washington, DC.

bers expected that most or at least many of the forces under their leadership wouldn't even be able to get into the stadium because so many people were going to be there. Under these conditions, they thought the best way to move things forward was to agitate on the buses and trains on the way down, sneak banners into the stadium and try to raise them, start some mass chanting of the key demands, and outside the stadium go among the masses and agitate around the line on the rally and the struggle, trying to pull together mini-allies.

Up to the point of arrival at the stadium, this line was carried out with great success. On the trains the advanced forces passed out thousands of leaflets on the jobs rally, as well as agitating (as a secondary task) and selling buttons for May Day. On the buses meetings were held using the drivers' mikes, agitating for a militant, working class line on the rally and summing up with the masses the struggle going on in the shops and within the unions.

On one bus there was lively struggle over the impending cutbacks in New York City hospitals—what role the workers had to play and how to unite with forces in the community over the question of patient care. Should the workers work harder, accept speedup and forced overtime, to provide better care? Or should they break with the bosses, demand that more workers be hired and better patient care come out of their hides, not the workers?

While it came up in a particular form here, over providing services, this same fundamental question kept coming up—Do we have to unite with the bosses to keep this society going or are our interests and theirs irreconcilable and do we advance by fighting them for our own needs and the needs of the masses?

The overall correctness of the line of merging with the struggle of the masses rather than organizing a separate contingent for the rally was being borne out in practice.

## Conditions Change

When we arrived at the rally, the conditions we had anticipated changed drastically. Due to the sabotage of the union leadership, the numbers of workers were nowhere near what was expected, so the organized advanced forces had no difficulty in getting into the stadium. There was practically no security at the rally so organized groups of workers were easily able to take in their banners. By the time the rally started the stadium was ringed with huge banners from rank and file groups demanding "Jobs or Income." And especially with all the lack of organization, discipline or any sign of real protest, the masses were in a rebellious mood. It was under these conditions that the advanced workers led the hundreds onto the field.

The line taken throughout had been to stick with the masses and especially not to isolate the advanced from the rest of the class. This would leave an opening where the bourgeoisie could jump in and attack the advanced, separating the vanguard of the movement from everyone else and paving the way for greater suppression and demoralization of the masses. In everything it is important to make our target as narrow as possible, "uniting the many to defeat the few."

At the same time, the communists tried to make the base of activity as broad as possible, so the bourgeoisie couldn't just lash out at the advanced, separating them off from everyone else as a bunch of outsiders, petty-bourgeois radicals, or opposition group out to overthrow the leadership of the unions to further their own careers. In the course of being mobilized many times over around a program representing their own interests, the working class unites its ranks even more firmly and better isolates the main enemy, as well as the enemy's

agents within their own ranks.

Fearing the way the bourgeoisie could use the cleavage between the advanced and the rest of the class, the communists tended to oppose the advanced action on the field. After trying to organize the masses on the field into a more disciplined demonstration, they led people back up into the stands.

RU members later summed up the action on the field as a "left" error, a "rash advance," which isolated the advanced forces, not only from the masses of other workers who were at the rally, but from the masses of workers around the country. There was special concern about this because those summing it up thought the masses of workers had no way of distinguishing between the honest workers on the field from the petty-bourgeois opportunist creeps there, and therefore would not take up the action as their own.

In the second article on the mass line it says:

"All that has been said, emphasizing the importance of uniting with and constantly winning over and deepening ties with ever broader numbers in struggle, does not mean that the advanced forces, led by the Party, should not take advanced actions. On the contrary, communists and advanced workers must play a vanguard role in the practical as well as the theoretical sphere."

By summing up the field action as a bad thing, what those of us involved at that time failed to see was that "linking up with the masses," being immersed in their struggle, *didn't entirely settle the questions and never can*. While, on the one hand, communists couldn't have led the masses unless they were sticking close by them and coming from *within* their ranks, on the other hand, once communists and advanced forces were within the ranks of the broad masses of workers and, to whatever extent they were within, there still remained the question of what were they going to *do*.

The situation changed, the masses were angry and frustrated at what was going on. And the communists

Continued on page 15

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## Mass Line...

Continued from page 14

were there saying that the lackeys were obstacles to our struggle, but when it came time to push ahead and roll over them—and where the advanced forces had the freedom to move on that—instead of trying to consolidate a core on the field, in effect the RU members just told people to go back into the stands and that what happened on the field wasn't very good.

In the statement from our Party's Central Committee honoring Chou En-lai (*Revolution*, Jan. 15, 1976), there is the important principle that communists must be both "conscientious in preparation and bold in execution." This is an important lesson, which was not well grasped at the time. Failing to fully seize the time for advanced political action meant not making full enough use of the opportunity that was there, based both on changed conditions and the careful and correct work done before in the shops and on the buses.

By being one-sided and formal in applying the line of "uniting with the masses," the advanced forces at that time backed off from the struggle with the bourgeoisie and failed to take advantage of what freedom there was, not only to intensify the struggle for jobs by showing there was a force capable of taking it on, but also to advance the conscious movement of the working class against capital and their lackeys, including the ones who organized the rally, by showing that such a movement actually existed.

This lays the basis for struggle at a higher, more conscious level, in the shops as well as in broader struggles like the rally. This is what it means as Mao Tsetung says, to "create favorable new conditions through struggle."

### Struggle to Sum It Up

Because this summation was one-sided, the communists were afraid of being incapable of resisting the inevitable attacks from the bourgeoisie. They were afraid that in the struggle to sum it up, which would go on broadly to the extent they gave it national TV coverage or reported it in the bourgeois press, and in any case would go on in the unions with attacks from the officials, the masses would be won to the bourgeoisie's summation because communists weren't everywhere to sum it up with them.

The RU members saw the enemy's strength, what they could put out through the media and what they would say in the unions but not their weakness, that their rotten system and the unemployment it causes was bound to give rise to widespread outrage among the masses.

They saw their own weakness, lack of links and organizations broadly in the working class, but not their strength, the deep-felt hatred among the masses of workers for a situation wherein the millions of able hands are idle and even their means of existence, their very ability to work, is ripped away from them.

The reason they summed it up wrong was that the communists at that time failed to correctly identify and rely on the sentiment of the masses around unemployment and the daily shackling of their struggle by

the trade union leaders. In fact, the advanced were sick of the whole business, including the handcuffs placed on them by the union bureaucrats, and wanted to fight.

The intermediate were also against unemployment and thought the rally might accomplish something. They didn't oppose the union leaders outright, but they didn't trust them either. Only a handful of the backward were that concerned about what was supposed to go on at the official rally and were angry or upset that the rally was disrupted.

By confusing the sentiment of the backward for that of the intermediate, communists failed to really release the initiative of the advanced and to rely on them to "raise the level of the intermediate and win over the backward," as Mao Tsetung has summed up. At the point when the RU members were leading people back into the stands there were still workers coming down onto the field.

And while it is still not clear what more could actually have been done on the field itself, just the fact that people dared to take things into their own hands and break through the bounds placed on them by the officials, although in a disorganized way, was a tremendous inspiration to the masses and could have been more so if the advanced forces had summed it up correctly.

The lesson here is that if you want others to be strong you've got to be strong yourself.

### Galvanize Broad Numbers

What the RU members missed in summing it up as a bad thing was that the question of whether an action will isolate the advanced is a question of whether the action reflects and represents the real sentiments of the masses. If it does, the masses will support it and take it up as their own, not only in the sphere of ideological struggle, but in the practical struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie as well.

"In short, it is absolutely correct, and necessary, for the advanced forces to initiate bold, determined action, when in fact it will galvanize broad numbers in struggle, will act as a spark to set them in motion and give play to their own initiative in fighting the hated enemy." (Mass Line article, March 15, 1976)

The test of this was that when the bourgeoisie did attack the field action, many workers in shops all over the country supported the action for what it was—a kick in the teeth at the two-headed monster of the capitalists and top union leadership and an inspiration to people taking things into their own hands.

This is a profound lesson which we have to grasp deeply—and dialectically—especially in the context of intensifying our work in the daily battles of the workers. Tactics are serious business. On the 26th, when the conditions had changed greatly from what had been expected and the situation was moving very quickly, decisions were not easy to make. Orientation and strategic line come into play in an even more concentrated way than in struggles which develop at a slower pace. But like it says in the March mass line article:

"...the Party, representing the outlook and interests of the working class, must be good at not only formulating general policies for a given struggle, but for developing at each decisive point the correct tactics, that indicate the next step forward, based on correctly concen-

of the Soviet Union out of the action there.

The U.S. in March was faced on the one hand with the Palestinian struggle in the West Bank, and on the other with the need to reward Egypt's President Sadat, who broke his biggest remaining tie with the New Tsars by renouncing the 1971 Soviet-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. Part of the payoff was setting up a massive arms deal with Britain, but a political concession was needed too. The result was that U.S. ambassador to the UN William Scranton was forced to state publicly that United States policy is that Israel must return all the territory it seized in the 1967 war, including Jerusalem. This represents a tactical move by the U.S. to make the best of a big defeat—in essence, it concedes that the Palestinian struggle has erected a firm roadblock to the Zionist rulers' dreams of expansion.

The rulers of the Soviet Union, who have by no means given up pursuing their exploitative interests in the Mideast, despite setbacks caused by the exposure of their treachery and by successful U.S. maneuvering, have not been able to turn the recent struggle to their advantage to any great extent. The policy of the Israeli revisionists, loyal to the Kremlin's dictates, was shown very clearly to be "fighting" only within the context of Israel's continued existence. In fact, Gus Hall, head of the revisionist CPUSA and the Kremlin's main mouthpiece in the U.S., recently proclaimed in a radio interview that "15 years ago he had predicted that Israel might have to be saved by the Soviet Union, and this, he said, seemed to be coming to pass." (from the CPUSA's paper, the *Daily World*, March 26, 1976, p.1)

But for all that both superpowers want to save Israel to advance their own interests in the Middle East, the March demonstrations on the West Bank and in Israel point out more clearly than ever that Zionist rule is rotten to the core and bound to fall. ■

trating the real needs and interests of the broad masses. Again, Mao Tsetung has summed up a very important lesson in this regard: "In a situation when the class struggle grows increasingly acute and is waged at close quarters, the proletariat has to depend for its victory entirely on the correct and firm tactics of struggle of its own party."

The work of communists in the April 26 jobs demonstration was a success to the extent that the mass line was correctly practiced. The work proceeded from the basic stand of uniting with the desire and determination of the masses to fight for jobs. Although May Day was only a week off, the demonstration was not used as an opportunity to "build" May Day by ignoring the struggle the masses were in, except to pimp off it. May Day was built for, but not in this narrow way.

Nor did the communists set up some "counter-demonstration" that would pull a handful of advanced workers out of the struggle to some "pure" position safe from the ferment of the class struggle.

But immersion in the masses, deep roots in the class struggle, have no meaning unless they are the basis for moving that struggle forward toward its historic goal. Our ties with the masses, such as they are at any given time, are deepened not as some precondition to building struggle, but precisely in the course of building struggle. Thus, uniting broadly with the masses and struggle build each other in a dialectical spiral when the mass line is practiced.

To do this we must take into account that the masses don't move as a unified bloc. In any group there are advanced, intermediate and backward. As the advanced come forward, there arises a spontaneous tendency, often among the advanced themselves, to pull away from the intermediate and backward.

Advanced activity, carried on incorrectly, can play into this tendency, isolating the advanced. But especially as the advanced themselves are armed with an understanding of the mass line, such activity can be a motor, driving forward the struggle of the broad masses. The key is in applying the mass line. If an action reflects and concentrates the needs and aspirations of the masses, it can trigger their activity and develop their understanding. Without such advanced activity to spark the struggle, the workers movement will inevitably be confined to what is narrow and bourgeois.

The April 26, 1975 jobs action by the masses made positive contributions to building the workers' sense of their struggle and their power. Given still better communist leadership, its contributions could have been still greater. In learning from this experience and in building from it to step up our work in advancing the revolutionary struggle of the working class, it is crucial to deepen our grasp and understanding of the mass line. ■

## Publications

- Programme and Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. 175 pages. \$1.00.
- Our Class Will Free Itself And All Mankind Speech by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the RCP, USA. 30 pages. 75 cents.
- CUBA: The Evaporation of a Myth. Reprinted from *Revolution*, February 15, 1976. In English and Spanish. Footnotes in English. 48 pages. 50 cents.

(The following publications were originally published by the Revolutionary Union and were adopted by the RCP, USA, Oct. 1975)

- How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union and What This Means for the World Struggle. 156 pages. \$2.50.
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## Risings...

Continued from page 9

the current wage freeze, have been escalating and increasingly are met with resistance despite "we're all in this together" appeals to the Jewish workers.

For Israel's rulers, the implications of the mass outbreaks for the future are even more frightening. During both the 1967 "Six Day" War and the 1973 "Yom Kippur" War, the Palestinians in Israel were relatively inactive. This new upsurge holds the threat that, next time war breaks out, they will be a powerful force striking at Israeli aggression from within.

### What the U.S. Ruling Class Is Up To

For the U.S. ruling class, the demonstrations were both an embarrassment and a spur to keep to its present Middle East policy of so-called "evenhandedness"—meaning fishing everywhere in troubled waters to enrich itself. Until the 1973 war, the U.S. government was in the position of backing Israel against the increasingly powerful and oil-rich Arab nations. The U.S. was able to break out of this bind after some Arab countries, like Egypt, found that their "ally," the Soviet Union, had betrayed them by refusing to honor its commitments to provide supplies during that war. This gave the U.S. the opportunity to defend its interests, key among them the preservation of Israel as an imperialist base, in the guise of a powerful, neutral peacemaker in the Mideast, and to ice the New Tsars

# Deeper...

Continued from page 1

order to buy Christmas presents or clothes or a television, may mean that the capitalists have a few more of our dollars in their pockets but that doesn't solve the underlying problems of the economy.

In fact, the increase in consumer spending that lies behind what small upswing in production there is has been artificially stimulated by an enormous expansion of private debt and by government tax reductions and credits. Consumer installment credit, what people owe for their cars, home improvements, furniture, etc. jumped 45% in January over December.

The capitalists read this as an expression of "confidence" that people have in the economy. What it actually means is that people are locked into debt payments that are bound to restrict spending further down the road. In auto, for example, many more people are buying cars on 42 and 48 month payments rather than the regular 36 months. Auto companies have been pushing their workers to buy new cars to "buy themselves job security."

Soaring government deficit spending is playing a major role in creating consumer demand. Twenty-three billion dollars in tax cuts and rebates were in effect in '75. But all this is merely borrowing against tomorrow and paving the way for a sharper downturn.

This current "upswing" is not a generalized increase in production and an expansion of the economy. It is a spurt of production in some areas, in the overall context of continued stagnation and contraction of markets and production.

In the key area of the production of new plants and equipment (producer goods), production has declined for three years in a row and is continuing to fall off more in the first three months of 1976. The capitalists themselves are very worried by the lack of any new spending for the expansion of the means of production.

The effect of this withering of investment in new plants and equipment can be seen in almost every major industry. Chrysler operates a plant in Detroit that is so old that it has floors of wooden blocks pounded into the dirt. The American Motors Corporation badly needs to develop new lines to compete with the Big Three and foreign competitors, but cannot do so because of the tremendous cost (estimated at one billion dollars!) of opening new lines.

American steel plants are in dire need of modernization and are inferior to steel mills built in Japan and Germany since the end of the Second World War. And while U.S. Steel Corporation has the blueprints for a plant that will greatly increase production with many fewer workers, it recently had to abandon expansion of its Burns Harbor, Indiana facility in mid-construction.

The new ConRail system in the Northeast, which is supposed to create a profitable freight train system on the bones of the Penn Central and other bankrupt railroads through government subsidy, has hundreds of miles of damaged and obsolete track and thousands of cars that must be repaired or replaced for the system to operate at a level competitive with other means of freight hauling.

With few exceptions this is the general picture of American industry. And this, not the upswing in some areas of consumer goods production, points to the real state of the capitalists' crisis.

The capitalists say that it is this upswing in consumer spending and production that will cause production of new plants and equipment to pick up. But it is just the opposite. It is the production of these producer goods that creates much of the market for this sector itself and, because of the wages paid to the workers in this sector, is crucial for any real expansion of consumer sales and production. Historically, capitalists have been driven by competition to increasingly invest in new machinery in order to produce more cheaply, to seize a greater share of the market and at the same time produce more to accumulate a greater mass of profit.

The expansion of the means of production has, in the past, been the dynamic element in the capitalist economy. It is the motor for the expansion of production in general. Development under capitalism can only take place through the accumulation of capital in the form of private profit. But the production of new machinery and plants has been very slow for a long time and the fact that it is actually decreasing now is certainly not because the need to modernize and expand is no longer a life and death question for each capitalist. So why aren't they expanding?

## Falling Rate of Profit

Mobil Oil has been running an ad on TV recently that sums up the capitalists' view of the problem. It begins with an oil company spokesman dropping pennies into a plastic bank while telling the viewer that the oil companies only make one cent on each gallon of oil products marketed last year.

Then he reminds us of the tremendous energy needs of the country and how this requires a greatly expanded drilling, refining capacity, etc. Then he ends up with the punch line: Mobil and the other companies can-

not afford to invest in such expansion if their profit rate remains so low.

Ignoring all the phoney concern about the people's energy needs, Mobil has laid it out pretty straight. Production under capitalism is for profit. If there is not adequate profit, there is no production—no matter if millions starve. And what they are talking about is not merely amassing a certain amount of profit—for surely Mobil and the other capitalist monopolies rake in a lot of money each year (how many gallons of oil products are sold?).

What they mean is that the rate of return on their investment is not adequate. And a falling rate of profit is not going to attract investment for the continued mechanization and expansion of production that is necessary for the accumulation of profits.

This doesn't mean that the capitalists don't continue to invest their capital in order to make more. But instead of investing in expanding production, each capitalist looks around for the place where he thinks he will get the most return on his investment. So instead of developing new sources of oil at a faster rate, Mobil buys Montgomery Ward in hopes of making profit in retail sales.

In the past several years major banks have sunk money into real estate developments and all sorts of speculative ventures rather than invest in the production of machine tools, steel plants, auto assembly line modernization, etc.

The tendency under capitalism is for the rate of profit to fall. The capitalists can only make profit from the unpaid labor of the working class, and not from the machinery, plants, etc. For each individual capitalist a new machine that eliminates some workers will mean a temporary edge on the competitors, a boost in profits. But as competition forces other capitalists to introduce similar plants and machinery, prices tend to fall, and the profits tend to average out.

The mass of capital invested in machines, plants, etc. continues to grow relative to the number of workers exploited by the capitalists—and it is only through their labor that profit can be created. This is the reason for the falling rate of profit.

Since the mid-sixties the rate of profit of American industry has declined sharply. The auto industry again shows how the capitalists try to deal with this: by intensifying their efforts to rip off even more from the labor of the working class through speedup, forced overtime and other measures to increase production.

## Overproduction Crisis

As production races ahead of the ability of the mass of workers exploited by capitalism to purchase things, the ability of the capitalists to sell and thereby realize a profit on the goods already produced causes production to come skidding down. Private profit causes this breakdown, and profit stands between the workers' need for a decent life and the piled up goods and idle plants.

Back in 1971-73 production was booming. The auto and steel plants were running at near capacity. But by November of '74 tens of thousands of unsold cars were jammed into every available storage lot. Around Christmas, business had warehouses filled with unsold goods and the massive layoffs began. In every major city in the country today, plants that once employed thousands of workers lie idle or are operating at a fraction of their capacity.

The only way the capitalists can dig themselves out of this breakdown is by finding new markets for their production and new sources of profitable investment. As Marx said in the *Communist Manifesto*: "on the one hand by enforced destruction of the mass of productive forces; on the other by the conquest of new markets and by more thorough exploitation of old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented."

And today the capitalists are even more in a bind. They are not able to expand, in any fundamental sense, into new areas of production, the kind of development that resulted in the rapid development of U.S. industry in an earlier period. It is not profitable and the capital is not available for such huge investment. There

are no significant new markets for their goods and investments and the markets that exist are thoroughly saturated. Under the conditions of monopoly capitalism (imperialism) the process of capitalism's rapid growth is over, the world has been divided up by the various imperialist powers, and the only way for them to expand is to start and win a war to seize the markets of other capitalists.

During the depression of the 1930s, many plants and equipment were literally left to rust and rot. And it was only the dominant position of the U.S. imperialists after World War 2 that brought about a temporary recovery. U.S. capitalists seized whole new markets for their goods and investments as well as sources of cheaper raw materials from the European and Japanese capitalists. And the rebuilding of the destroyed productive forces of Europe and Japan was a profitable outlet for U.S. capital investment.

But the very factors that allowed the American capitalists to hold their position as top dog of the imperialist world and to offset the effects of the continued stagnation of the U.S. economy are now turning against them.

The vast capital investment the U.S. capitalists made in Europe and Japan during the last 40 years has built up the productive forces of these countries. They are now competing strongly with U.S. capitalists in key markets, like auto inside the U.S. itself, as well as on a world scale.

In addition, since the U.S. capitalists found it much more profitable to invest in the development of the productive forces in these countries rather than expanding and modernizing the U.S. production, huge outlays of capital are now required to make U.S. production in steel and other basic industry competitive with Japan and West Germany.

Decades of exploitation of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America have led to fierce resistance that is now closing off or making very risky formerly secure markets for U.S. goods and investments. For instance, until the action of the oil producing countries in raising the cost of their oil in recent years, U.S. oil companies were taking oil from Saudi Arabia at a rate that was 35 times less expensive than oil production in the U.S. Now the price, while still less, is much more on a par with what it costs them to pump oil in the U.S.

Of course, the U.S. imperialists are by no means accepting these changes passively. In fact, especially in conditions of worldwide crisis, they have been able to effectively undermine or co-opt the effectiveness of many of these efforts to resist—either by economic and political action or by military blackmail. But the ability of the U.S. imperialists to maintain or reassert control is now challenged by Soviet military force which is competing for control of these same countries.

## Capital Shortage

But even if the capitalists thought the rate of profit was adequate to invest in key sections of U.S. industry, there is a real shortage of capital available for such investments. In the past, U.S. corporations generated most of the money they needed for expansion from their profits. But this is no longer the case because of the falling rate of profit. Especially since the mid-60s, U.S. industry has turned to banks, insurance companies and the securities market to borrow capital for expansion, and often to meet regular operating expenses. Corporate debt increased more than 60% between 1970 and 1975.

They are now even having trouble getting loans for capital investment in industry—even though the same handful of finance capitalists control both the banks and industries—the laws of capitalism still apply.

One important reason for this is that the tremendous costs of maintaining the imperialist empire, including the huge investment in a military machine needed to enforce U.S. domination, forces the government to borrow (through issuing bonds and other means) from these same sources to underwrite the government's budget deficits.

Secretary of Treasury Simon testified earlier this year that government borrowing in 1976 will absorb 82% of all funds available in the securities market.

Continued on page 17

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## War...

Continued from page 3

of who fires the first shot, but of what class they represent. The two superpowers represent the same class interests and are the most powerful aggressors against the rest of the world. Siding with the U.S. against the Soviet Union (or vice versa) means standing against our class.

2) The Soviet Union is not a communist country run by the working class. The question of capitalist restoration there is extremely important to understanding why the Soviet ruling class represents exactly the same class interests as the U.S. ruling class. For our movement it is extremely pressing to expose Soviet social-imperialism while at the same time putting forward communism as the goal of the working class. We cannot allow ourselves to fall into the error of promoting anti-communism in our opposition to the USSR.

3) We must oppose any attacks on any peoples by either superpower. Ours is a worldwide working class movement; and it is allied with other forces fighting imperialist oppression.

We have to be clear on who's "us" and who's "them." The sides line up fundamentally as class against class, not country against country: the working class and its allies worldwide against the class of imperialist exploiters. We cannot be put in the position of accepting or defending attacks on our class brothers and sisters around the world by any of these imperialists.

4) One of the bourgeoisie's rallying cries is "defend the fatherland"—better we should fight "over there"

## And Deeper...

Continued from page 16

Federal borrowing represents 72% of these funds, up from 57% last year.

This is what lies behind the capitalists' effort to cut back government spending in "non-essential" areas, like unemployment, city services, education, etc. But these cutbacks only restrict the consuming power of the masses even further, not to mention the fact that people will fight them.

The crisis faced by the U.S. capitalists is part of the worldwide breakdown of capitalism and every capitalist country, including the social-imperialist Soviet Union, is confronting these contradictions in varying degrees of severity. Britain is on the rocks, Italy is not in much better shape, and even star performers of the capitalist world in the last two decades, West Germany and Japan, are plagued by high inflation and overproduction crises.

All of this is only intensifying the competition between the capitalist countries for export markets and outlets for profitable investment. Old alliances are strained as the capitalist class of each country looks for the best deal for itself. But overlaying much of the competition between the U.S., Japan and the Western European countries is the fact that while the contention between all of the imperialist powers is the underlying cause of war, only the two superpowers have the economic, and especially military, strength to form blocs for waging world war.

There are measures the capitalists can take to slow down this deepening crisis but they all boil down to increased exploitation of the working class. The only way they can even temporarily boost profits is by trying to force more unpaid labor from workers. And the only limit to the extent they will try to push workers down is the limit of the workers' own resistance.

But their efforts to grind workers down through speedup, wage cuts, union busting, constant harassment and a thousand different ways is no solution for the working class. Sacrificing for the capitalists' profits will win nothing but increased misery.

All the capitalists can offer the workers is greater exploitation, deepening crisis and war. Every measure they take to prop up their decaying system only further undermines its foundations.

Capitalism has run headlong into its basic contradiction between socialized production on the one hand, and private appropriation on the other.

The capitalist system is a source of misery and it is going downhill, but the working class isn't going to go down with it. Workers can see from daily experience that all the recovery talk amounts to very little. And even though the "tighten your belt" propaganda of the capitalists is getting louder, the basic fact is that, in this situation, the working class must and will fight back.

It is not the capitalist system that is getting better. What is getting better is the growth of the struggles and the movement aimed at destroying these capitalist exploiters and their system. ■

than have to fight on our own soil. This is just another cover for using us as cannon fodder in their quest for world domination and, particularly now, control of Europe.

Our answer is unswerving—we won't fight to protect the interests of the class whose existence depends entirely upon oppressing and exploiting us and others like us worldwide. This is not defense of our lives and families—it is defense of a system we despise and plan to overthrow.

5) The danger of foreign invaders—Russians, Chinese, Martians—has long been a favorite hysterical pot-boiler of the ruling class. It is just so much patriotic hooey to get us to go kill people fighting for their national liberation or to defend the U.S. imperialists' "right" to dominate the world.

But what if it happened for real? What if the Russians did attack? Then would we join up in the U.S. army and fight the invaders? NO. If the situation had developed to the point where the U.S. ruling class was forced to fight on its own soil, it would sharpen up the question of the working class fighting to overthrow the ruling capitalists and taking state power.

### Build Our Understanding, Arm the Masses

These are complicated issues. Clarity and unity of action among the masses of workers will not be easily achieved. It requires going deeply among the masses, learning from the masses, relying on the masses. Learning from all their struggles, all their hatred for the bourgeoisie.

The working class has a great hatred for war. This is to a certain extent based on an understanding that it means great misery, suffering and sacrifice for our class, our families, our children, all on top of the daily torment of capitalism. And in many cases it is based on the awareness of workers that, while we sacrifice and die, the rich grow richer and extend their power.

The ruling class even acknowledges this hatred of the masses for war, but says "That's the way it is. We need wars to defend our interests. If you want jobs and a decent income, you'll have to join up or support our war preparations." They try to put people in a trap. For youth, and many others, the army offers "the only job around."

We must unite with this hatred of the masses for war and say, "It doesn't have to be this way! We can break through!" We unite with this sentiment of the masses and link it with the day to day struggles of the working class, in the thousand and one battles it must fight against the bourgeoisie, and build this as part of the revolutionary movement of the working class to get these parasites and exploiters off our backs once and for all.

As communists we must build our understanding of the science of Marxism-Leninism and train the advanced fighters of the working class in this science, the outlook of our class. We must study carefully the world situation and not burrow into a narrow accounting of our own shop or industry. The best way we can build the fight against war is to build the fight against the bourgeoisie, but it must be done consciously, constantly, arming the masses with a deeper understanding of the situation.

Daily we become clearer in our understanding that ideological and political line determines everything. As the November article stated, "The growing danger of world war, arising from... imperialist contention, especially of the two superpowers, makes it all the more decisive for the working class and its Party to base itself on a correct understanding of the forces involved in the international struggle. Such an understanding must, and can only be, rooted in the Marxist method, taking class analysis as the key and fundamental tool,

and with this tool digging beneath the appearance to the essence of things."

The same article points out that while the capitalist rulers of each superpower push "the line that there is no choice for people and countries in the world except to side with one superpower against the other," the stand and view of the working class is that "war is the continuation of politics by other means, and politics, in turn, is the extension and expression of economics, that is, of class relations."

The principal expression of the class relations in the U.S. comes down to the contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie which is influencing all other events. As the *Programme* of our Party says in analyzing superpower contention and danger of war arising from it: "Either the working class in the U.S. and the Soviet Union will prevent such a war by overthrowing these greatest oppressors, in conjunction with the worldwide struggle against them, or they will launch a world war before they can be overthrown.

"But even if they launch such a war with all the suffering it will bring to the people throughout the world, this will only hasten their own downfall and the end of imperialism. . . In launching a third world war, the imperialists, especially the rulers of the U.S. and the USSR, would further expose their barbarous nature, deepen the determination of the people of the world to bury them once and for all, and give rise to a revolutionary storm shaking the world as never before."

This means we must go among the masses and *deepen* struggle and understanding around class antagonisms. We must constantly educate ourselves and arm the masses with the tools to become a class for itself. *In essence the main question in opposing war is a question of opposing the bourgeoisie.*

This, as the November article points out, is the road forward:

"The more broadly the Party mobilizes the working class and the masses of people in struggle against imperialism, including its acts of aggression and war, and through the course of many battles raises their consciousness—exposing the imperialist system, as the source of the evils and sufferings in society, including war, and bringing to the fore the outlook and interests of the working class in overthrowing imperialism—the more the struggle of the working class will be able to weaken the imperialists and advance toward the point where it can overthrow them and bring an end to the misery and destruction of capitalism, even if the superpowers do launch a third world war."

There are those who would say that the threat of war *fundamentally* alters the situation for the working class. A whole host of sophisticated arguments litter an otherwise simple lie: they say our main task is to oppose the aggression of the USSR. This implies that we must unite with the U.S. ruling class. The effect of the argument is to say that our unity with the bourgeoisie is becoming principal over our contradictions with them. This, needless to say, will only lead us away from revolution.

Our understanding must become firmer that our interests and those of the bourgeoisie are fundamentally opposite.

Moreover, if we leave this understanding in the realm of theory it will be worth a subway ride if we've got a token. We must put it into practice in the real world by building a movement to beat back the bourgeoisie—we must dig into our work.

Every day at work we see the bosses' chains on us and the working class' struggle to be free of those chains. Nowhere is it clearer that the sides are lining up, class against class. We have nothing to gain from any alliance with the bourgeoisie. Our interests are with the class of the future—the international working class. ■

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