

## A Look at Our Record

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issue

# Physical Violence and Political Struggle

The ugly phenomenon of political gangsterism has recently reappeared on the American Left. Last fall, members of SF were intimidated by the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP). This spring, the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) launched a series of attacks, first on the Communist Party (CP) and then against the SWP. Below appear press releases and letters prepared by SF in relation to these incidents. We are also publishing an addendum which incorporates the latest developments.

### PRESS RELEASE

New York, Nov. 8 -- Members and sympathizers of the Socialist Forum (SF) organization were physically barred, threatened, and assaulted by the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) at an election rally of that tendency held Saturday night, November 4, at the Hunter College Playhouse.

The SF adherents were attempting to distribute a leaflet calling for critical support of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) in the November 7th national elections. The flyer was distributed and SF literature offered for sale in a quiet, unobtrusive, and non-disruptive manner in the lobby of the building.

When SWP cadre realized that the DeLeonist material was being circulated, they moved quickly to evict the SF supporters. A goon squad, headed by an individual who identified himself as the "campaign organizer for New York" ("and you can quote me") approached the SFers. "There are two ways you can leave the building," announced the SWP campaign manager, clearly indicating that the failure of SF to leave "voluntarily" would lead to physical violence against an opposing socialist tendency ("by whatever means necessary," to borrow from the SWP's political vocabulary). As Malcolm Kaufman, Corresponding Secretary for SF and a delegate in the Social Service Employees Union Local 371, began to verbally protest, the SWP's hooligans grabbed members of the SF contingent. Further violence was averted only when Kaufman made it perfectly and immediately clear that SF would vacate the premises under protest, but would widely publicize the criminal act of the SWP. Also evicted within minutes were two salesmen for the Bulletin, publication of the Workers League (WL), an organization which itself has employed gangster-style tactics. As SF continued to distribute its literature outside the building, SWP members defended the exclusion on the grounds of bourgeois property rights ("it's our rally").

The leaflet found so objectionable by the SWP criticized the liberal campaign of George McGovern and discussed

the anti-labor nature of his politics. The leaflet went on to call for the construction of a rank and file based workers' party. A transitional program was outlined for the party. Readers were encouraged to cast a vote of critical support for the SLP as an indication of agreement with the SF perspective.

Hooligan actions on the left usually accompany a political shift to the right. The most graphic example of this phenomenon, historically, of course, is the development of the Stalinist movement (which the SWP is supposedly opposed to).

In the October 9th Intercontinental Press, an SWP publication, Fred Feldman and Joseph Hansen make the following observations about the SLP and DeLeonism,

...The DeLeonist Socialist Labor Party is running a presidential candidate. Virtually the only activity of the SLP from decade to decade is to run a presidential slate every four years. In the U.S. left, this fossilized formation plays no role whatsoever.

Apparently, however, it is a different case for DeLeonists outside the SLP. For SF, which has consistently opposed the anti-working class opportunism and social-democratic politics (Trotskyist pretense aside) of the SWP, is playing enough of a role in the left that the SWP must go to the extreme exercised Nov. 4th to protect its periphery and membership from DeLeonist criticism.

### PUBLIC STATEMENT

New York, May 7 -- The American left has been plunged into a serious crisis with a series of attacks launched against the Communist Party (CP) by the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC). The NCLC has further threatened any organization coming to the assistance of the CP and, in this regard, has already beaten several members of the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) in at least one incident here in New York. It is also our understanding that the Workers League (WL) has been threatened with imminent assault. The CP has responded by bringing the police into the conflict, swearing out complaints against NCLC members, and has asked at least one trade union to support federal prosecution. Meanwhile, charges are flying fast and furious with both the CP and NCLC denouncing each other as "fascist."

SOCIALIST FORUM, consistent with its DeLeonist principles, denounces the criminal acts of the NCLC. We have informed the NCLC that we are withdrawing immediately from a joint defense committee established last summer, largely on their initiative, to defend socialist political organizations against attacks

like those the NCLC was experiencing at the time from the CP. It is clear that the NCLC has completely broken with the principles on which the committee was founded.

The actions of the NCLC hold grave danger for every organization on the left. By reducing political differences to the level of pitched battles, the door is thrown wide open to police agents and agents provocateurs. Large numbers of workers who are beginning to examine socialist alternatives will be needlessly alienated and will either lose all political interest or reluctantly return to the camp of bourgeois politics. Should a fatal injury or similarly serious incident occur at any of the ongoing confrontations, the bourgeois state can be expected to use the event as a pretext for a general pogrom against the left. At the CP's invitation, the cops are already involved to a large extent and questions that should be resolved within the socialist and workers' movement are now in the hands of the bourgeois courts.

But while we condemn the actions of the NCLC, we wish to make it clear that the condemnations being mouthed by the CP, the SWP, and the WL have a very hollow ring. Anyone familiar with the CP knows all too well that its history is one of political butchery. The CP today may express its concern for "the right of assembly and political freedom" but where was this concern when street hawkers of the Militant (SWP organ) were beaten up in the thirties and forties, when meetings and street rallies of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) were likewise attacked during the same period, when NCLCers were hospitalized by the CP last year, or when an SWP candidate for a municipal election in Philadelphia was recently assaulted by his CP opponent? The simple fact is that the CP has no interest whatsoever in political freedom within the socialist movement. When this present sordid chapter in the history of the American left draws to a close, the CP will no doubt return to its old ways. If anything, it can be said that the current rampage of the NCLC has been provoked by the CP. The apparent decision of the NCLC to physically annihilate the CP, while not defensible is understandable. What is surprising is that it has taken over forty years for an organization to say "enough."

The Militants of April 27 and May 4 feature extensive articles on the NCLC attacks and editorial columns denouncing them. The reader is led to believe that "... the SWP ... [has] ... a consistent record ... in defending democratic rights within the radical and labor movements." No doubt, this explains the exclusion of members of this organization from a lobby at the Hunter College Playhouse in Manhattan last November 4 when we sought to distribute leaflets and sell our journal in a non-disruptive and unobtrusive fashion at an SWP election rally. Members of Socialist Forum were forced to leave after being clearly threatened by

an individual identifying himself as the "campaign organizer for New York." This staunch defender of "workers' democracy" told the DeLeonists, "there are two ways you can leave the building," and then, in a cocky manner, challenged us to quote him.

Like the Militant, the pages of the Bulletin (WL organ) ring with condemnations of the NCLC. But never appearing in those same pages has been accounts exposing the thin veneer of the WL's very qualified support of "workers' democracy." Members of SF and Vanguard Newsletter (VNL) were physically harassed and threatened at a rally of the WL's youth auxiliary, the Young Socialists, held at Foley Square in New York in March, 1972. SF and other organizations have been barred from supposedly "public" meetings of the WL. And last year, a member of the Student Socialist Alliance (an organization of DeLeonist youth activists), who had the audacity to attend YS meetings and dare criticize WL politics was warned not to return or face the wrath of ghetto toughs who, or so he was told, "knew no fear." Considering that the YS and WL are now begging other organizations for help against the NCLC, these intimidatory actions and verbal threats have a particular irony about them.

International Socialists (IS) and the Spartacist League (SL) have both condemned NCLC attacks, but both organizations, along with the SWP, were quick to grab at technicalities to foreclose participation in the NCLC defense committee, back when the NCLC was at least sane.

Clearly, the plague of political hooliganism must be brought to a halt before it leads to the self-destruction of the American left. We are quite aware that this entails the organization of defense squads prepared to stop any efforts of political gangsterism. And our record indicates, as with the NCLC defense committee, that this is not mere idle chatter on our part. But political hooliganism will not be stopped by blocking with a certain crowd of thugs, who in consideration for the peculiarities of a particular situations, have gotten the old-time "workers' democracy" religion. We are willing to assist in the defense of any organization which has taken a consistent position against hooliganism, which permits literature distribution and sales from opposing tendencies outside its public meetings and criticism from the floor during question and answer or discussion periods at the conclusion of public lectures, and which has not employed violence against opposing currents.

We say to the NCLC: Stop this idiocy before you set off a reaction that will set the socialist movement back decades. To the CP, we assert: You have made political gangsterism part and parcel of your political methodology. You have cultivated the very cancerous virus that is now consuming you. To the SWP and WL, we declare: If as you claim, you are committed to free and open political struggle, unhindered by blood-

shed and threats or intimidations, then you will not object to apologizing for the transgressions you have committed against DeLeonists. Then and only then, will we sit down with you and discuss joint defense strategy.

SOCIALIST FORUM to  
National Caucus of Labor Committees  
8 May 1973

We are writing your organization to inform you that we consider our participation in the joint defense committee founded last August terminated herewith. At the time we joined with the NCLC and Vanguard Newsletter in an honest response to the cancer of political hooliganism that has infected the American left. And, as you know, this was no idle commitment. We walked picket lines with you at CP meetings in defense of political rights.

NCLC's actions of late, specifically the April 11 attack on the Young Workers Liberation League office at Temple University and the physical disruption of a mayoralty forum at Columbia University on April 23rd — to mention but a few incidents, leaves no doubt as to your complete abandonment of the principles outlined in last summer's founding document of the joint defense committee.

It seems that NCLC has yet to learn the lessons of years of experience on the part of the working class movement. Political hooliganism is always self-defeating. Not only does it alienate workers from the socialist movement, but it also opens the door to agents provocateurs and sets the stage for a pogrom against the left by the bourgeois courts and police. Violence as a tool in the settlement of political disputes plays right into the hands of the ruling class and must be understood as nothing less.

In the struggle you are supposedly waging at this time against the CP, it is obvious that you completely fail to understand the critical difference between political struggle and struggle in its crudest, most literal sense. The CP will not be broken physically, it can only be broken by aggressive political struggle. In the final analysis, your adoption of Stalinist methodology only indicates the impact the CP has had on you, and not vice versa.

Far from being original, the latest attacks by the NCLC on the CP appear to be nothing more than a revival of terrorist Weatherman tactics. Conjecturely, your attacks will convince those CP members and periphery worth salvaging politically that NCLC is a "force" to be dealt with. A familiar echo of the Weatherman's attacks on working class youth in Detroit in the late '60's designed to demonstrate their "seriousness," "dedication," and "sincerity." Welcome to the political swamp.

For workers' democracy,  
Malcolm Kaufman  
Corresponding Secretary

SOCIALIST FORUM to  
Socialist Workers Party  
8 May 1973

"... never compromise truth to make a friend, never withhold a blow at error lest it make an enemy." — DeLeon

It is with a great deal of cynicism that we read your articles and editorials in the Militants of April 27th and May 4th, concerning the recent attacks by the National Caucus of Labor Committees on the CP and their threats against your own organization.

We agree with you on the need for "all groups and individuals who support democratic rights to unite in a common effort to repudiate the hooligan attacks of the NCLC, to organize to stop the breaking up of movement meetings, and to defend organizations under attack."

However, as we point out in the enclosed statement, the problem of political hooliganism cannot be remedied by blocking with one gang of political hooligans against another. It is becoming standard practice for organizations like the SWP and WL to use this question of democratic rights for cheap organizational advantages when it suits them and as something to be just as quickly discarded when it doesn't.

The editorial in the May 4 Militant entitled "Daily World Falsification" claims that, "The consistent record of the SWP in defending democratic rights within the radical and labor movements is well known." No doubt, the physical intimidation of members of our organization who attempted to distribute leaflets and sell copies of our journal at your election rally at the Hunter College Playhouse in Manhattan last November 4th is not so well known. On that occasion, members of Socialist Forum who were present in the lobby in a non-disruptive and unobtrusive way were approached by a bunch of thugs led by an individual who identified himself as the "campaign organizer for New York." "There are two ways you can leave the building," the DeLeonists were told. Hopelessly outnumbered, we decided to leave voluntarily and not give your hoods the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to "workers' democracy." We did, however, prepare a press release a few days later that I and behold, was picked up by New Solidarity, (publication of the NCLC), and which was partially reprinted in that publication. A member of their editorial staff, in preparing the article, called your national headquarters to ask for clarification and was told the SWP members involved had responded "correctly."

Yes, we are willing to participate in joint defense activities. But only after you prove, to our satisfaction, that this concern of yours for "democratic rights" is not as fleeting as a breeze. We demand a public apology for the incident of November 4th and a written assurance that this kind of behavior will not happen again. Then and only then, will we sit down with you and discuss joint defense strategy.

#### ADDENDUM

The position outlined in the preceding press release, issued last May, has been further verified by events since then. The NCLC has carried its idiocy to new and higher planes while organizations like the Workers League (WL) and Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) have again demonstrated their complete abandonment of any commitment to the principles of political (as opposed to physical) struggle within the socialist movement and the independence of socialist and workers' organizations from the bourgeois political state.

NCLC attacks on CP and SWP meetings have for the most part ceased, though a new approach of attacking individual members of these organizations has risen in their place. (More on this below). Just as alarming, however, is the NCLC's new tactic of organizing a "Revolutionary Youth Movement," based primarily on ghetto youth gangs (see New Solidarity, June 10-15). Following closely in the footsteps of Tim Wohlforth's Workers League, the recruitment of these youths will serve to primarily meet organizational needs. That is, the organization will have ready at all times a corps of ghetto toughs that can be employed to intimidate opposing political tendencies. In Marcus' (Lyn Marcus -- "grand commissar" of the Labor Committee) own words the youth movement will be "a kind of para-military organization." Marcus' grandiose schemes would have the youth organization so deeply entrenched in the ghettos that the Federal Government itself will cower in fear. Speaking at the NCLC's semi-annual conference in New York last May, Marcus told his admiring audience,

... As we begin to really organize...the government is going to say "...let's get these bastards before they get too far ahead." As that begins to become the case, the only thing that is going to defend us from being totally crushed is the government's fear that any repressive actions against us will actually cause riots.

What Marcus doesn't understand (or doesn't want to accept) is the fact that such a "riot potential," rather than serving as a deterrent against repression will actually invite a crackdown -- with the "deterrent" itself serving as the cover for the state in justifying its actions.

As mentioned in the above press release, the WL, in the pages of its organ, the Bulletin, condemned the attacks of the NCLC on the CP and SWP. Two statements to this effect appeared in the Bulletin. One, entitled "NCLC Hooliganism Attacks Trotskyism," appeared as a statement of the WL Political Committee in the issue of April 30th. An "Open Letter to All Working Class Parties: Defend Democratic Rights"

was published in the following issue. The very same editions of the paper carried an ad inviting readers to a series of lectures by Tim Wohlforth in New York on the subject of "20 Years of the International Committee" (the charade passing for the "Fourth International" -- one of many -- with which the WL is affiliated.) The ads carried the following notation:

Open to all individuals and political tendencies who will observe democratic procedures at the meeting.

Members of the Spartacist League attended accordingly and, while allowed to participate, (Wohlforth apparently wanted them there to crucify them politically and thereby fortify his own ranks) they were subjected to a series of abuses, such as being confined to one corner of the room, being herded out of the hall immediately at the conclusion of the lecture to prevent possible fraternization with WLeers, and denied even the right to use the bathroom. To Wohlforth, these must all be "democratic procedures"!

But it is the SWP that has committed the most serious transgression. Understanding the nature of the police and courts as repressive arms of the bourgeois state, socialists do not invoke these arms of the class enemy in settling disputes between workers' organizations nor engage in behavior that would tend to foster illusions as to the essence of these agencies (primarily concerning their "neutrality" or "impartiality"). In other words, you don't call the cops on the other organization. And yet, this is exactly what the SWP is doing.

As mentioned briefly above, the NCLC's terrorist attacks have reached a new stage of repugnancy with assaults on isolated individuals from opponent groups. It is one thing to make defense arrangements for a meeting. It is another matter altogether to arrange for the defense of all the individual members at all times. NCLC knows this and has decided to strike terror in the SWP and CP by random street attacks on individual members, at little or no risk to themselves. More than repugnant, this tactic is nothing less than sheer cowardice. Victims to date include Ron Tyson of the CP and Rebecca Finch, Jesse Smith, and Ken Shilman of the SWP. But as criminal as this may be, the answer is not to go running to the bourgeois courts and police demanding prosecution, as the SWP has done.

In a series of three articles appearing in the June 29, July 6, and July 13 Militants, readers learned that the SWP was launching a serious campaign to land NCLCers in jail. The June 29 article, entitled "Arrest of Thugs Demanded in N.Y." quotes SWP mayoralty candidate Norman Oliver as issuing a "demand" for

... [the] New York Police Department and the District Attorney's

office to arrest these thugs and bring full criminal charges against them in order to stop these outrageous violations of democratic rights.

The July 13 piece, "Conviction of Thugs Demanded in N.Y." (how the SWP loves to "demand") criticizes Philadelphia and New York police for inaction and asks readers to send letters of protest to New York Mayor John Lindsay and Manhattan D.A. Frank Hogan.

Making matters worse is the support the SWP has been picking up for its latest front, following the debacle of NPAC and the meat boycott -- the Committee to Stop Terrorist Attacks. Liberal notables heading the list of sponsors include Benjamin Spock of Peace and Freedom and People's Party fame and Nat Hentoff, columnist for the Village Voice, New York's "counterculture" paper.

The International Socialists (IS) take essentially the same position, but draw a fine line by refusing to sign an SWP petition due to possible inferences that could be drawn from one particular passage. An article in the July, 1973 Workers' Power (organ of the IS) notes,

Nonetheless, attacks on individuals in the street, where no immediate organized defense is possible, must be halted. It is legitimate and correct to demand intervention by the police in such instances.

Intervention, yes, but in a limited, very limited, way. If a cop happens to be strolling by in between collections from local shopkeepers while your skull is being cracked open, there is no reason why his assistance should be refused. It should actually be solicited. But to bring charges is another matter altogether. (Yes, it is possible to request assistance without bringing charges). It will not stop the attack or future ones. But it will bring another socialist tendency before the bourgeois "bar of justice" and take a dispute that should have been kept out of the hands of the bourgeoisie right into their jurisdiction.

The SWP has carried this collaborationist activity to the point where they have fingered NCLCers in court. Steve Getzoff of the NCLC was in court June 26 for a hearing on charges made by Tyson of the CP when SWPers, present in the court room, asked officers to arrest him for the June 9th attack against Smith, Finch, and Shilman. To the SWP, this must be "community control of the police"!

These events, going back to the first NCLC attack in April, have brought out the worst in many socialist (or so they call themselves) groups. It only goes to further buttress our own position. A united front against political gangsterism, if it is to be taken seriously, must bring into its ranks only those organizations that are genuinely committed

to stopping this cancer. To do otherwise would cripple its effectiveness and destroy its credibility. We will not defend the likes of the SWP and WL today only to be attacked by them tomorrow.

The central question is not NCLC or its Operation "Mop-Up" but the absence of an atmosphere conducive to the free exchange of ideas within the left. Groups such as the CP, SWP, WL, the syndicalist Progressive Labor Party, and the Maoist Revolutionary Union, to name but a few, must accept the responsibility for this unfortunate state of affairs. Each group, in a mad scramble to conceal its past, has tried to use the NCLC as a universal scapegoat for the crimes of all left tendencies. The whole matter takes on a tragi-comical air when gangster ridden organizations actually criticize the NCLC and proceed to lecture them on the ins and outs of "workers' democracy."

SF recognizes the need for a broad left coalition to strengthen democracy within the movement. There must be a united front defense to enable the working class to choose its political orientation in a free and open manner. But until groups like the CP, SWP, and WL repudiate their past, by publicly admitting to their crimes and acting to correct them by organizing open meetings and demonstrations, they can have no role in such a coalition. One doesn't call in the fox to help deal with thefts from the chicken coop.

SF proposes that until the time comes when these criminal groups change their ways, organizations with a more democratic heritage must take the initiative in forming a united front in defense of democracy within the workers' movement. ■

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# PERSPECTIVE

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
OF  
SOCIALIST POLITICAL COMMENTARY

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Socialist Forum has not been published since the winter of 1973. It has been almost two years since we have had effective communication with our readership and those who are active in leftist politics. This lapse occurs at a time of capitalist crisis: world depression, high unemployment, reaction. We are too aware of the importance of the perspective that our organization puts forward—that of De Leon, Lenin and Trotsky—to believe that this publication schedule is adequate for today. At present, however, it is impossible for us to publish the Forum with the frequency we see as imperative for disseminating our ideas. Therefore, beginning with this issue the Forum will continue at least annually; in order to overcome the limitations that this schedule imposes we are now publishing a monthly newsletter. This newsletter will not merely be an agitational vehicle. Its aim is to provide analysis of the world situation incorporating questions of theory and history. This newsletter will present the ideas that we think are part of our heritage; ideas that are essential to evaluating the prospects for and means to revolution today. Because of its more frequent publication, our newsletter, Perspective will relate theory to immediate occurrences in a manner impossible for the Forum. Subscribers to the Forum will automatically receive the newsletter at the rate of three newsletters for each Forum remaining in the unexpired portion of their subscription. Annual subscriptions for both the Forum and the newsletter will be available at \$1.50.

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## PORTUGAL:                      REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS SET BACK

In the twenty-odd months since the military coup that overthrew the Caetano dictatorship, Portugal has become the most advanced manifestation of the international class struggle. While the capitalist class has attempted to rule through a succession of ineffectual provisional governments, workers have been exerting their authority through the expropriation of numerous factories which have been managed under a limited form of workers' control. Simultaneously, whole sectors of the media have become sounding boards for revolutionary workers and organizations and the military itself has been wracked by rank and file rebellion over the orders and politics of their officers. The Portuguese political environment had substantial potential for developing into a situation of dual power, such as existed in Russia prior to the Bolshevik Revolution.

However, the whole process suffered an extreme setback in the last week of November when the Sixth Provisional Government of Premier Jose Pinheiro de Azevedo attempted to purge and restructure the armed forces following the military's repeated failure to contain working class challenges to the Provisional Government. Leftist paratroopers in the Lisbon area occupied air bases in opposition, but failed to receive adequate support from other sectors of the military or worker-civilians. The challenge was crushed and an even deeper purge of leftists in the media and military ensued. The Sixth Provisional Government, which only weeks earlier had proven virtually incapable of governing received new life while rightist forces took advantage of the sudden change in forces to reassert themselves.

While the reversal suffered by the left is a serious one, it certainly is not on the scope of that in Chile in 1973 where workers

were massacred and all trade unions and socialist political organizations were crushed. The initial restrictions imposed on civil liberties following the insurrection have in large measure already been lifted and the workers' economic and political organizations remain intact. But revolutionary workers have, to a large degree, lost their momentum. The Azevedo government has reasserted itself and the situation is becoming similar to other Western European states, notably France and Italy, where a large and active left exists but the political balance has remained somewhat stable with the possibility of dual power unlikely in the immediate future.

How was this setback to the Portuguese revolutionary process possible? Serious organizational and theoretical weaknesses were to blame; weaknesses that are shared by sections of the American left which unlike the Portuguese working class, is not confronted with a half century of fascist despotism and all which that means in terms of the ability to discuss, criticize and grow theoretically.

The paramount inadequacies confronting Portugal's workers are the absence of a revolutionary vanguard party and a structure of workers' control similar to the Russian Soviets or De Leon's model of a Socialist Industrial Union (SIU). While Portugal's working class has given birth to many socialist political tendencies and a variety of representative economic organizations, there is no one party that has the theoretical clarity or authority within the class to command the respect that, for example, the Bolsheviks had in Russia in 1917. And neither is there an all encompassing representative body which unites all sectors of the proletariat in which the various socialist currents can fight for their ideas and programs.

A major statement entitled "De Leonism and the Portuguese Struggle" appearing in the 13 December Weekly People, organ of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) incorporates many of the errors and illusions that have so critically hampered developments in Portugal.

According to the article, Portuguese workers have in fact begun to create the broadly based representative economic structures that substantially resemble the SIU. The author points to the National Congress of the Revolutionary Workers, Soldiers and Sailors (CRTSM). The Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat- Revolutionary Brigades (PRP-BR) is congratulated for helping to form these councils. However, the author fails to realize that the CRTSM does not meet the criterion De Leon saw as an essential precondition of these structures, alluded to by the author, namely that the "economic organizations should unite all workers on the basis of their class interests, not on the basis of their political affiliations." The CRTSM is largely a political reflection of the PRP and the factories represented at its meetings are largely those with a substantial PRP political influence. The unfortunate fact of contemporary Portuguese political life is that there are several embryonic Soviets masquerading as the authentic article while none are really more than political creatures of the sponsoring tendencies. What has failed as yet to materialize in Portugal is a truly broadly based Soviet or SIU structure which would represent not just some sectors of the economy, but all sectors, not just one political current, but all labor currents. Had such a vehicle existed, the events of late November might have turned out quite differently. For the decision to challenge Azevedo's schemes for tightening military discipline would have been made through a Soviet that would have proceeded only if assured of adequate support from broad sectors of the military rank and file and working class and, even more importantly, would have been capable of coordinating and directing that support.

The SLP also extends qualified approval to the United Revolutionary Front (FUR), an alliance of "far left" groups which supposedly endorses the concept of Soviets or workers' councils. In fact, the FUR was organized specifically to defend the Fifth Provisional Government of Vasco Goncalves which, like all the other provisional governments since the 1974 coup, is a Popular Front attempting to bring the irreconcilable interests of capital and labor together in one cabinet. The FUR was the principle exponent, outside the military, of a "MFA- People's Alliance" designed to establish workers' councils

only in the context of continued military political rule. This smacks more of corporatism than socialism. It engenders the most dangerous illusions in the MFA. The officers corps of bourgeois armies are traditionally pillars of the capitalist social order. Radical rhetoric from this stratum does not change this essential political fact as events in the last several years have demonstrated in Bolivia and Peru. In these countries ostensibly radical officers either refused to arm workers when challenged by more rightist elements within the military or else established military dictatorships that ruthlessly suppressed workers and peasants- all in the name of "socialist revolution."

This is not to deny that socialism is endorsed by large sections of the enlisted ranks. But it is to suggest that the army must be split with soldier- militants won over to the authority of the Soviets as the only reliable military ally of the workers. Even further, the workers themselves must take up arms as the most basic step in militarily defending their interests. (Giving due credit, the PRP does recognize this point and has actually implemented arms distribution efforts.)

The SLP, carrying over De Leon's weaknesses on the role of the party, agrees with the syndicalist PRP in denying the necessity of a revolutionary party. The SLP endorses a PRP manifesto which argues: "The existence of a large party organization is not a necessary condition for a socialist revolution. Nor is it necessary for the mass organizations of the working class."

Undoubtedly this is partially a reaction against the Popular Front tactics of the Communist Party (CP) and the Socialist Party (SP)- against the CP's bureaucratic machinations and the SP's open defense of capitalist property and political forms. But the vacuum created by the nonexistence of a legitimate revolutionary party has largely contributed both to the undeserved confidence many Portuguese workers have placed in the MFA and to the absence of authentic soviets. Composed of the most theoretically advanced sectors of the Portuguese proletariat, a genuine revolutionary vanguard party would have fought for a definitive break with the MFA and would have encouraged and assisted in the process of building truly class-wide SIU structures that are so desperately needed if the Portuguese proletariat is to recover from the reversals of November.

#### NEW YORK

##### SOCIALIST FORUM PARTICIPATES IN ANTI-SPINOLA DEMONSTRATION

An SF contingent participated in a demonstration called in New York on November 20th to protest the appearance at a meeting of the Council of Foreign Relations of former Portuguese General Antonio de Spinoia. Spinoia took power following the April 25th, 1974 coup and was later involved in rightist efforts in Sept. 1974 and March 1975 to overthrow provisional governments that, from Spinoia's point of view, weren't aggressive enough in suppressing an increasingly militant and politicized working class. Spinoia is also probably working with South Africa in its intervention in the Angolan civil war.

The demonstration was organized by the Spartacist League (SL) and was attended by contingents from the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL), the Revolutionary Marxist Organizing Committee (RMOC), and the international Workers Party (IWP) in addition to SF. SF participated in keeping with its political perspectives of solidarity with Portuguese workers and principled united front action with other socialist tendencies.

The SF contingent participated under the slogans of "Break with the MFA and Bourgeois Democrats; Workers' Power in Portugal."

#### NEW HAVEN

##### TEACHERS JAILED: RIGHT TO STRIKE UNDER ATTACK.

Failing to reach agreement on a new contract after a year and a half of fruitless bargaining, members of the New Haven Federation of Teachers (NHFT) went out on strike Monday November 10. They soon had the full coercive force of the state thrown at them and by week's end the 12 members of the negotiating committee, essen-

tially comprising the local's leadership, were behind bars. Released over the weekend of Nov. 15-16 to resume negotiations, they were returned to jail the following Monday morning when no agreement was reached. Superior Court Judge George Saden further escalated the attack that Tuesday when 78 additional teachers were jailed for defying the no-strike injunction granted to the Board of Education.

The jailings result from a Connecticut law prohibiting strikes by teachers. Similar to the restrictive legislation imposed on public employees in numerous other states, it leaves the teacher with no means of defending himself against local Boards of Education. The absence of the strike threat renders negotiations meaningless and gives a virtual carte blanche to the local school administrators in determining wage levels, working conditions, and manning schedules. Legislation of this sort is virtually tantamount to a denial of the right to organize itself. For this reason, teachers and other public employees have repeatedly found it necessary to ignore the law and walk out. In New Haven alone, this has been the third strike in the last five years. The increasing militancy of teachers has been met with increasing ruthlessness by the state. While anti-strike laws have been on the books for some time, only in the last few years have large numbers of teachers been jailed in attempts to break strikes. Earlier this fall, teachers were placed under house arrest in Wilmington, Delaware and dozens have been arrested in an eight month old strike in South Point, Ohio.

Unionists cannot allow bargaining to degenerate into a farce where a gun is pointed at their heads. In dealing with such a threat it is necessary to suspend all negotiations while union leaders or members are incarcerated; only with their release can negotiations resume.

Unfortunately, the NHFT continued negotiations while close to 100 of their ranks were imprisoned. Negotiations between the board and the NHFT were carried out over the phone, with the teacher's negotiating committee bargaining from behind bars. Crippled in such a fashion it is no surprise that the final agreement offered only a 1% pay increase in the first year while the somewhat larger pay increase for the second year is expected to be locked up in a projected wage freeze.

Of course, it is impossible for an individual local like the NHFT single-handedly to take on the coercive apparatus of the state. They had every right to expect general strike support from the New Haven Central Labor Council. However Vincent Sirabella, president of the Council, waited until the last possible moment to convene a meeting of the Council to consider the question even though what he had in mind was really no more than a 24 hour protest demonstration. Even so, actual implementation was put off until the third week of the strike. Sirabella's procrastination paid off. By the time the date of the general strike rolled around, the NHFT had already settled, unable to continue taking the pressure in isolation.

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# PERSPECTIVE

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ANGOLA:

## CIVIL WAR: IMPERIALISM WINNING

There are in Angola, three rival nationalist groups battling for control. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) is fighting against an alliance of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The FNLA has been the recipient of United States support; UNITA has been assisted by South Africa; and the MPLA, although supported militarily by both Cuba and the Soviet Union, holds out the promise of investment opportunities to the West. Tragically, each of the three movements is rapidly becoming an extension of imperialist interests.

The importance of Angola to imperialism is considerable. The U.S. and Gulf Oil are seeking to avert the loss of the oil enclave of Cabinda that lies north of Angola, separated from Angola by a thin strip of Zaire's territory, but still considered an integral part of Angolan Territory. Angola proper, rich in copper and industrial diamonds, would be quite a prize for Western powers who have been starved for raw materials and now are faced with increasing prices imposed by underdeveloped countries on their mineral exports. South Africa has always depended on the Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique to serve as a buffer in any possible military confrontation with black Africa and as a "cordon sanitaire", denying nationalist guerillas a base for operations either in Namibia (S.W. Africa) or in South Africa itself. Now, she must attempt to recover, as much as possible, what has been lost in the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire.

The FNLA is headed by Holden Roberto and is rooted in the Bakongo tribes of Northern Angola which also occupy portions of Zaire (the former Belgian Congo) and the Republic of the Congo. Roberto is linked politically, and reputedly by family ties, to Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko. Mobutu is considered very close to the U.S. and has been the recipient of large amounts of U.S. aid. Both Roberto and Mobutu are known to be viciously anti-communist; Roberto has even promised, should the MPLA ever lose its military hold in Luanda and fall to the FNLA, to massacre all of the capital's radicalized proletariat.

As early as 1962, as the U.S. began to contemplate the possibility of eventual Portuguese defeat in her African colonies, the CIA contacted Roberto and established a liaison with him. The U.S. saw Roberto as the figure who could play a central role in establishing a neo-colonialist regime open to Western investment once the Portuguese had gone. Washington's concern grew out of two early 1960's uprisings staged by both the MPLA and the FNLA. As it became clear that the war of national liberation was going to prove quite protracted, with no definitive outcome possible for years, Washington lost interest in Roberto. With the April 1974 coup in Portugal and the anticipated dismantling of the Portuguese colonial empire, interest in Roberto was revived. By the beginning of 1975

the last year of Portuguese control over Angola, Roberto was already receiving an annual \$10,000 retainer from the CIA for "intelligence collection." In January of that year, this support was expanded into a \$300,000 grant (Seymour Hersh in the New York Times, 19 December 1975). Roberto has also been receiving assistance from Peking in the form of advisors and training for his soldiers. The leadership of the Chinese Communist Party was obviously motivated into assisting Roberto by the fact of Soviet backing to the MPLA. In keeping with its reactionary, anti-internationalist outlook, Peking actually blocks with pro-Western forces in order to outflank its Stalinist rivals in the Kremlin.

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, headed by Jonas Savimbi, is mainly based in the Southern reaches of the country populated primarily by the Ovambundu tribe. Before the Portuguese departure, Savimbi was praised in the Western press for his moderation- largely out of consideration for his close ties to business elements within the Portuguese colonial community who were seeking to preserve their commercial privileges after independence. Savimbi identifies closely with President Kenneth Kuanda of Zambia who, more than any other black African leader, takes a conciliatory attitude towards South Africa. It appears that South African forces now intervening in Angola are working in conjunction with the UNITA army and South Africa may be granting Savimbi outright aid in supplies and funds.

Under the leadership of Agostinho Neto, the MPLA is strongest among the urbanized population of the "muceques" (slums) surrounding the larger cities such as Luanda, the capital, and Lobito, a port further down the Atlantic coast. This segment of the Angolan population transplanted to the cities has largely broken from its tribal past. It is this section of the population that is the most radicalized and politically sophisticated.

Despite this support from the embryonic Angolan proletariat, the MPLA is itself first and foremost a petty-bourgeois nationalist movement. Founded by intellectuals such as Neto in the 1950's, it has a virtual monopoly of the political support of Angola's educated and skilled blacks and mulattoes. The MPLA is fond of using leftist rhetoric and the speeches of its leaders are filled with harangues against imperialism and exploitation. It has initiated social projects, such as the establishment of schools and libraries, and uses these projects to reinforce its radical image. But behind this facade lies a political movement representing the interests of a yet-to-be-born Angolan capitalist class. The MPLA does not have a proletarian internationalist outlook. Neto's own admission sums up his movement best. In a Times dispatch of last April 21st, Neto is quoted: "I am not a communist, I am not a socialist, I am first of all a patriot." Neto looks forward to continued Western domination of the Angolan economy, stressing plans that include continued Western investment and a proscription on nationalization of property (New York Times, 17 December 1975). On more than one occasion Neto has demonstrated his reliability to Western capital in his suppression or condemnation of strikes by Angolan workers. In February, 1974 MPLA troops occupied the Lobito harbor to break a dock workers' strike. In the same month the MPLA supported a moratorium on all strikes for the remaining months of colonial rule and in May the MPLA dock union, SINTAPA, denounced a walkout of Luanda dock workers. While Roberto threatens the militants of the Angolan working class with death, Neto has already initiated his own reign of terror clamping down on trade union and political opposition criticizing him from the left.

The MPLA does receive military assistance from the Soviet Union and Cuba but this can in no way be compared with the involvement of the U.S. or South Africa. There is a qualitative difference between Soviet and American assistance. The Soviets have a history of supporting independence movements in Africa and elsewhere in the third world while American support has always been in behalf of her colonial allies. Unlike an imperialist power, the Soviets

are not motivated in their assistance by a desire to rape the Angolan economy but are, instead, responding to defense considerations and apparently are attempting to counter Western strategic influence.

Therefore, the overall situation seems to be thus: there is no substantial difference between the three nationalist groupings since each of them, in its own way, stands for the politics of capitalist nationalism. While it would appear that the threat of imperialist domination or neo-colonialism would be much greater with a victory of the FNLA/UNITA alliance, the fact remains that a MPLA triumph would leave the Angolan economy just as open to imperialist penetration and her working class just as open to foreign exploitation. The neo-colonialism that would be imposed militarily through a FNLA/UNITA conquest would just as surely follow diplomatically in the case of MPLA ascendancy. Only the means differ, not the end.

Angolan workers must unite with the peasants of the interior under the leadership of a revolutionary socialist party which will seek to dissolve tribal rivalries and to develop the economy in accordance with the needs of the populace while avoiding subjugation to imperialism. This can only be accomplished through the construction of a broader revolutionary movement that will transcend Angola's borders (which like all colonial borders have no inherent logic) and encompass all of the sub-continental South African region. Workers and peasants of the former Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique must join together with the blacks of Zambia, Rhodesia, and South Africa in order to destroy the racist regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa and to win over white workers. A socialist republic of the sub-continent would integrate South Africa's technical expertise with the fabulous wealth of Angola thus permitting a radical improvement in the standard of living of all the inhabitants of the region.

#### NEW YORK:

#### CUNY: BUDGET CUTS, OPEN ADMISSIONS AND RACISM

In the past year a devastating series of cuts have been imposed on the already limited budget of the City University of New York (CUNY). These cuts have been so severe that the possibility of tuition is imminent in the 20 colleges in the CUNY system. The Democratic Mayor Abraham Beame has recently ordered another round of cutbacks to turn an additional \$55 million from the CUNY budget (approximately 10%). This cutback will result in even further increases in class size, reduction of course offerings and, of course, massive layoffs of the instructional staff.

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has proposed to place all faculty members on a month long "furlough"; that is, simply withhold their pay checks for four weeks! In addition, all CUNY campuses were closed during Christmas and will be shut down during the spring recess, thus preventing students from using the library for study and research. Proficiency examinations are soon to be instituted, aimed at decreasing freshman enrollment by 40%. These cuts were the BHE's "alternative" to Beame's proposal to fire 7,000 of the 17,000 CUNY professors. Chancellor Kibbee was quoted as saying the firings "would just kill the university." These cutbacks would mean that thousands of NYC high school graduates would no longer be able to attain even a minimal college education, once available through CUNY.

Looking further ahead, plans are being discussed to increase state aid from 40 to 75% by 1978. While this may appear harmless, the increase in state aid would ultimately result in the State University of New York (SUNY) absorbing the CUNY system. SUNY has already announced that it will impose tuition, set even higher academic standards, require that students complete their degrees in less time, and close down "unneeded" campuses.

A focal point in the cut backs has been the plight of students enrolled in the Open Admissions program, which formerly guaranteed a college education to every graduate of the NYC high schools. The new wave of cutbacks threatens to close the program by decreased funding and the requirement that incoming freshman pass an exam to demonstrate that they have a minimum of an 8th grade reading and math level. Opponents of Open Admissions feel that this is a reasonable requirement which would help to raise the college's standards. The fact that this requirement could even exist is a powerful indictment of the educational system under capitalism. The decrease in capitalist stability since the high point of 1967-68 has had its sharpest consequences in the lumpenization of ghetto residents. This, along with massive cuts in education, has had the net effect of creating a generation of ghetto youth which is functionally illiterate but equipped with high school diplomas.

In 1968, CUNY's open doors offered these youth a last possible chance to avoid lumpenization. Now, without even an elementary reading level they will be permanently excluded from the job market. For many, college had become a preferable alternative to a life of drug dealing or numbers running.

Open Admissions, coming about in the midst of an educational collapse, gave CUNY a double purpose. Not only was it to provide a college education to the sons and daughters of workers not affluent enough to afford the tuition of private or state colleges, but now it was to provide a remedial education for students coming out of the most economically depressed areas of the city. Although most of these students would not obtain a college level education they would at least attain a level of education capable of putting them into the job market.

However, the Open Admissions program was never sufficiently funded. Instead of dealing effectively with the enormous remedial problems of students entering through the Open Admissions program, CUNY has simply given them a few perfunctory courses and then thrown them into "regular college level" courses, this effect disastrous for all CUNY students. Non-Open Admissions students were shocked to find that the academic level of the classes had dropped significantly. Open Admissions students were unable to perform at the levels expected, became discouraged and quit. Had there been proper funding of remedial courses this situation would never have existed.

Reactionaries, sensing the tense nature of the situation, have used the Open Admissions program as a wedge to divide students struggling against the cutbacks. Open Admissions is labeled as a BLACK threat to WHITE educational standards. A recent cartoon in the Queens College student newspaper portrays Open Admissions as a black monkey on a white students back.

While this is to be expected of reactionaries, many leftist organizations have pursued a line which would lead to further racial polarization. Although this line varies according to the group, it comes down to the charge that cutbacks were instituted solely as a racist maneuver against black and Puerto Rican students. Using this logic, demands are placed on the city to upgrade the educational services for minority students, while the effects of the cutbacks against non-minority students are treated as trivial. It must be remembered that non-minority students had already been deluged with the lie that minority students posed a threat to maintenance of college-level curriculum at CUNY. Now, seeing their condition virtually ignored by a parade of progressive left groups claiming to be involved in organizing against cutbacks, the effect is catastrophic.

The entire cutback struggle is viewed as a conspiracy of minority students organizing to rob other students of the last semblance of the college education they hope to acquire at CUNY. In effect, these left groups create the racially explosive situation that the reactionaries want. We are here provided with a graphic illustration of the phenomenon of opportunism.

An example of an opportunistic program is provided by the Radical Student Caucus (RSC), a City College based outfit. While the 1st point of a recent leaflet ambiguously alludes to the need to "defend CUNY against any and all cuts" the 2nd point demands, "defend all third world and womens' programs and services," and then details the point by explaining that students must specifically struggle against cuts in the SEEK program, in ethnic studies, and in womens courses. The average student is left with the feeling that cuts in his or her program mean less than those mentioned above.

Worse yet is the Progressive Labor Party (PLP)/Socialist Workers' Party contention that these cuts are racist in nature. This is a complete mis-reading of the social conditions which compelled the cutbacks. The budget cuts are the result of the decline of the capitalist economy in general and of the New York City budget deficit in particular. City services are being cut across the board for all workers, not just for minority workers.

If the cuts are analyzed as racist in nature, then it is logical to assume that the "racists" (i.e., those who oppose your program) are responsible for the cuts- not capitalism, wall street, or the banks- but a mysterious group of "racists" with, of course, the college administrators (and possibly even the professors) thrown in for good measure. The SWP and PLP have also joined with the University Student Senate (USS) the student union (completely without grassroots support in the CUNY campuses) currently working with the "liberal" wing of the Democratic Party.

In opposition to these groups, we propose that students and workers unite in a class wide struggle against all city cutbacks. This year over 8,000 school teachers have been fired and the Board of Education has announced plans to fire 3,000 more. At CUNY hundreds of workers have been fired with the possibility of yet another wave of firings imminent. Both students and teachers have exactly the same interests in the struggle against cutbacks. However, if this struggle is limited to campus politics and campus firings it will never be able to stop the city from instituting depression level cutbacks. A walkout of the CUNY faculty represented by the Professional Staff Congress could be the spark needed to ignite a general strike of all city labor. General strikes frequently need a specific issue or grievance to crystallize their fight with. Let this be the issue.

The obvious fact of racism at CUNY must not blind us from the necessity of seeing that all students are affected by the cutbacks. We propose that the CUNY struggle center around these demands:

1. STOP ALL CUTBACKS; QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL CUNY STUDENTS
2. DEFEND FREE TUITION; STIPENDS FOR ALL CUNY STUDENTS
3. EXPAND OPEN ADMISSIONS
4. JOB QUARANTEES FOR ALL CUNY STUDENTS
5. DEFEND FIRED INSTRUCTORS AND COLLEGE STAFF  
FOR A WORKER- STUDENT ALLIANCE  
FOR A GENERAL STRIKE OF CITY LABOR

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