

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

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Jackson: Razing Hopes

At the October 1987 convention of the Rainbow Coalition, Jesse Jackson made the expected announcement that he was again running for the U.S. Presidency. This time around he is emerging as a "serious" contender for the Democratic Party nomination. He retains a solid base of support among blacks, and he is also gaining a small but significant following among other oppressed groups, white workers, liberals and family farmers.

What he lacks in campaign funds he makes up in charisma, the devoted adherence of blacks and the activism and support of left militants. This cadre makes him a real alternative among a cast of candidates whose chief claim to fame is their tenacious pursuit of mediocrity.

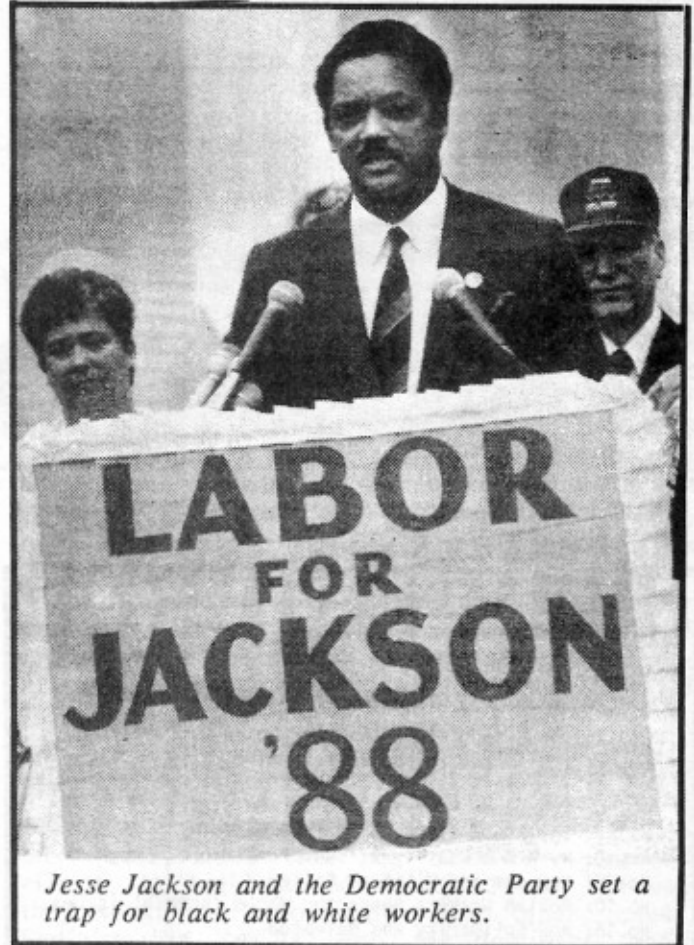
Now as in 1984, the left sees him as building a popular movement capable of undermining racism and reaction. But there is discomfort around the new, improved Jackson.

Retreat on Black Rights

Probably the stickiest issue has been his reaction to growing racist violence. Given the hopes that black people have vested in him, Jackson's increasing attempts to throw cold water on protest actions have startled those who see him as the herald of a movement.

Last year, for example, in response to the lynch-mob murder of a black youth in Howard

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Jesse Jackson and the Democratic Party set a trap for black and white workers.

After The Crash

The worldwide stock market crash triggered by Wall Street in October revealed the diseases eating away at post-World War II capitalism. High-flying overvalued ownership certificates were brought to earth when mounting international financial pressures forced capitalist investors to realize that fictitious capital cannot balloon forever. By early December the total

value of shares on the New York stock exchange alone had fallen by a third from its August peak -- a loss of over a trillion dollars.

The crash was unprecedented both in scope and in depth. Not even in 1929 did a quake in New York reverberate so loudly and rapidly

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NYC: Mass Action, Not Racists' Law

Anger against racist violence continues to mount in New York City. From the kidnapping and gang rape of 15-year-old Tawana Brawley in upstate New York by several Ku Klux Klansmen -- at least one of whom apparently was a cop -- to the cop murders of Alfred Sanders and Yvonne Smallwood, deadly racial attacks are on the rise. The killing of Michael Griffith in Howard Beach was by no means an isolated incident. Despite the attempt to use the Howard Beach trial and convictions to diffuse black anger, the 3000-strong demonstration on January 18 testifies to the growing sentiment for real action against racist violence.

In the face of massive black outrage, the punks who killed Michael Griffith are being sent to jail because they are expendable in the eyes of the capitalist rulers. (Of course, they were convicted of the lesser charge of manslaughter and were found "innocent" of murder.) But the cops, the main perpetrators of violence against blacks, are not expendable. They got away with killing Michael Stewart, Eleanor Bumpers and countless others. Workers and oppressed are already groaning under deepening exploitation and injustice. As the economy teeters on the edge of crash, the role of the cops in protecting the system grows more vital.

Capitalism, as Karl Marx observed, gave birth to its own gravediggers, the working class. This class produces the great wealth of modern society, while a handful of capitalists expropriate

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Imperialist "Peace" Means War

When the leaders speak of peace
The common folk know
That war is coming.

When the leaders curse war
The mobilization order is already written out.
--Bertolt Brecht

This past December the top leaders of the world's two superpowers staged a week-long lovefest in Washington. Despite the hoopla, Ronald Reagan has not become a flower child or even a "useful idiot" for the Russians, as some disillusioned right-wingers contend. Nor has Mikhail Gorbachev become a benevolent champion of the oppressed.

As Lenin observed of similar diplomatic affairs in his day, the imperialists' alternative to open conflict is imperialist peace, which is only a preparatory stage for imperialist war. Fooling people into believing that their respective rulers are devoted to achieving peace and freedom is an essential step in mobilizing the masses for war.

There were good reasons for the summit spectacle. Both leaders sought to bolster their positions with their respective ruling classes. Reagan has lost political credit because of the Iran/contra fiasco and needed a showy triumph. Faced with a weakened economy highlighted by the stock market crash, he was under pressure to reduce the growth rate of military spending. Further, U.S. imperialism had to take

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SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION RATE
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Free Moses Mayekiso!

To Our Readers:

The International Metalworkers' Federation, to which NUMSA is affiliated, has called on supporters of the campaign to free Moses Mayekiso to do the following:

1. Send protests to: President P.W. Botha (Union Building, Pretoria 001, South Africa) and to the South African ambassador in your country, calling for the release of Moses Mayekiso and all imprisoned trade unionists, detainees and other victims of apartheid.

2. Send a message of support to: Moses Mayekiso, Block C, Johannesburg Prison, Mondeor, Johannesburg, South Africa.

3. Send a message of solidarity to: NUMSA, P.O. Box 25 241, Ferreirasdorp, Tvl. 2048, South Africa.

Proletarian Revolution urges its readers to join the struggle to free Mayekiso and all South African political prisoners. The LRP is currently distributing petitions demanding Mayekiso's release. For further information concerning local campaign committees and LRP work in defense of Mayekiso, write to: LRP, 170 Broadway, Room 201, New York, New York 10038, USA.



Moses Mayekiso, General Secretary of the 130,000-strong National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and four of his comrades are fighting for their lives. The five are leaders of the Alexandra Action Committee (AAC) in this largely working-class township, the second largest in Johannesburg.

They are charged with treason: their crime was to organize the oppressed to fight back against the white ruling class's repression. The AAC organized people's courts, unemployed cooperatives and street, block and area committees. Under apartheid justice, such "crimes" are punishable by hanging.

What really frightened the apartheid rulers was that the AAC stands for linking the powerful South African trade unions to the struggle in the townships. Mayekiso's leadership of the AAC symbolizes the necessity for the working class to lead the struggle against apartheid capitalism.

We support the efforts to build an international campaign to free Moses Mayekiso and urge all working-class organizations and anti-apartheid activists to participate. In the U.S. it is necessary to mobilize the power and resources of the trade unions behind the campaign and work with all who defend Mayekiso.

Importance of the Mayekiso Case

Moses Mayekiso is the first major black union leader indicted under sedition and treason statutes during the state of emergency; his trial is a major threat to the existence of the growing

union movement in South Africa. Aron Pemba, head of the International Department of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), said that about 8000 unionists were under detention. Pemba added that the Mayekiso trial is part of a larger campaign against the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) and the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Pemba's support of Mayekiso's case is significant. Previously the Communist Party-dominated SACTU had given a cold shoulder to the Mayekiso campaign. Reports from the British left press show that the Stalinists opposed efforts to highlight Mayekiso's case; instead they sought to subordinate it to other issues. Stalinists in SACTU and the dominant anti-apartheid group, the petty-bourgeois nationalist African National Congress (ANC), are not thrilled that Mayekiso represents the more radical workerist wing of the black union movement. Nevertheless, they have apparently shifted gears and have decided that to undermine the Mayekiso campaign would make it easier for the Botha regime to crack down on COSATU and the UDF. Their instinct for self-preservation seems to have overcome their sectarian hostility to forces on their left.

Mayekiso's Politics

Mayekiso is not only to the left of the ANC; his stature as the leader of the second largest union in South Africa makes him a formidable opponent. He and other independent working-class elements are a counterweight to the ANC's

efforts to establish hegemony over the anti-apartheid struggle. Despite its pretensions to be the movement, the ANC has shown its fangs to those on its left. In the U.S., the ANC and its left supporters have tried to exclude AZAPO and other fighters from sharing the platform at anti-apartheid rallies.

Mayekiso has openly voiced objections to the principal ANC platform, the Freedom Charter:

"The Charter is a capitalist document. We need a workers' charter that will say clearly who will control the farms, presently owned by the capitalists, who will control the factories, the mines and so on. There must be a change of the whole society."

"Through the shop steward councils people are opposed to this idea that there will be two stages towards liberation: that we must clean up capitalism first, then socialism. It's a waste of time, a waste of energy and a waste of people's blood."

"Apartheid is just an appendage, a branch of the whole thing -- the tree of oppression of capitalism. Then if you chop the branch the tree will still grow. You have to chop the stem, straight, once and for all. South Africa's economy is at an advanced stage, where the workers can take over and direct the whole thing." (Socialist Review, October 1985.)

Mayekiso stated his difference with the ANC strategy even more sharply in a speech in Britain prior to his arrest. As he concluded, "A black capitalist government could be worse than the one we have now. Our fight is for socialism." (*Workers Press*, December 5.)

Indeed, the choice is between a leadership committed to capitalism or proletarian communism. Only the permanent revolution, the seizure of power by the working class, can carry out the democratic revolution against apartheid in the course of the struggle against capitalism. A genuine working-class program comes directly into conflict with the program of the ANC, which rests on hopes for an alliance between white capitalists and the black middle-class leaders to run a new integrated South Africa.

If the workers and their unions follow the ANC road, their efforts will be channeled to pressure the regime and its allies in Washington and London to form a new government with black participation on a capitalist basis. The workers' struggle, diverted from its anti-capitalist focus, will dissipate; then the black movement would be contained in the residential townships. Without access to industrial strength it would be smashed or would gradually subside in frustration.

The Campaign in the U.S.

In the U.S., the reformist program of the ANC is reflected in the domination of the anti-apartheid movement by petty-bourgeois supporters of the Democratic Party and its strategy of divestment and governmental sanctions. The liberal imperialist Democratic Party always aims to prevent any mass movements from

challenging the capitalist system. The actual divestments made by U.S. companies prove that the capitalists divest only their corporate names while they continue to digest super-profits by other means. According to Pemba, foreign investment, mainly British, has actually increased since the divestment campaign began. The revolutionary program is not divestment but the expropriation of South African industry by working-class revolution.

When the Mayekiso defense campaign gets rolling, the liberal labor bureaucrats who feel forced to join it will nevertheless try to avoid any serious mass action in his defense. They fear to confront the dominant AFL-CIO bureaucracy that supports U.S. imperialist interests

WORKERS' CHARTER

In opposition to the ANC's Freedom Charter, Moses Mayekiso and the NUMSA have fought inside COSATU for adoption of the Workers Charter. Whereas the Freedom Charter confines the anti-apartheid revolution to a bourgeois-democratic strategy, the Workers Charter calls for working-class leadership to smash capitalism. It states:

1. that only the working-class masses, under the leadership of organized industrial workers, can truly liberate our country from the chains of capitalist exploitation and apartheid oppression;

2. that organized workers and their allies have a common interest in the creation of a worker-controlled, socialist society where there will be no exploitation, oppression or discrimination of any form;

3. that the national democratic struggle against apartheid oppression and the socialist struggle against capitalist exploitation are complementary parts of the uninterrupted struggle of organized workers for control over the industry and government of a liberated South Africa;

4. that only under the leadership of organized workers over the mass democratic struggle of today and the government of tomorrow, will the demands of the Freedom Charter be fully and completely exercised in the lives of the working masses of our country.

in South Africa and throughout the world. Radical political fighters like Mayekiso and his comrades are a threat to the AFL-CIO's attempt to build a pro-U.S. reformist labor movement in South Africa.

Mayekiso is not a revolutionary Trotskyist. To the extent of our information, he has not led any efforts to build a revolutionary vanguard party in South Africa. He appears to have a syndicalist strategy of first building the mass trade-union movement and only later organizing a revolutionary party. Yet he reflects a growing revolutionary sentiment among a layer of black workers who recognize that a revolution against apartheid means a struggle to

overthrow capitalism in South Africa.

Because Mayekiso symbolizes the struggle for working class leadership in the South African revolution, his case has a special meaning to those of us fighting to build a revolutionary international. A victory for proletarian consciousness in the South African revolution, the most significant of those that have shaken the ex-colonial world since World War II, would

Racism

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it for their own interests. Vastly outnumbered by the workers, these parasites must of necessity keep the masses at each others' throats. Racism is a useful weapon, since it viciously pits sections of white workers and petty bourgeois against worse-off blacks.

Blacks, however, are not simply victims; they have a long history of struggle. And black workers have enormous social power because of their concentration in jobs which control the lifeblood of urban America, way out of proportion to their numbers. The potential for black workers to overcome the prejudices of white workers and lead the class struggle was demonstrated by the wildcat strikes of the early 1970s. There is no reason why it can't happen again.

But the middle-class black leadership follows a different course. Mainstream leaders like Congressman Charles Rangel and the NAACP deplore any fighting response. Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins, a prize catch of the Democratic Socialists of America, favors a state commission to study racism -- a big help! As C. Vernon Mason pointed out, "Black folks have been studied literally to death. Now it's time for action."

Mason and the Rev. Al Sharpton helped organize the Day of Outrage in which hundreds of demonstrators blocked subway and bridge traffic. Such small-scale actions are frequently necessary, but a strategy made up of them reveals a sense of weakness and distance from the mass of black workers. In fact, the strategy of Mason, Sharpton, Alton Maddox, Rev. Lawrence Lucas and other militant-sounding leaders is based upon action in the streets -- as a way of getting justice through reform of the legal system. Some, like Lucas and the Revs. Calvin Butts and Herbert Daughtry, joined with the New York City Police Department in an ad campaign to recruit new cops. Today they urge a full-time special prosecutor to handle a legal response to racist violence.

It is of course necessary to support this call, which recognizes that the present legal structure is weighted against blacks. But the legal system, no matter how reformed, can provide only temporary benefits -- while it serves as a detour from the only road to racial justice. The net effect of the decision won by Charles Hynes, the special prosecutor in the Howard Beach case, is to take the edge off of growing mass anger while raising illusions in courtroom

lead to victory over capitalism everywhere. A defeat of the black masses would mean fascist oppression that would make Botha's rule look playful. The efforts to free Moses Mayekiso are an essential part of the struggle for the survival of the South African black working class. We call on every class conscious worker to come to the defense of Brother Mayekiso and the South African working class. ■

justice. This passive legalistic strategy is counterposed to militancy based on the might of self-active masses. Soon after the Howard Beach murder, when blacks were seriously discussing armed self-defense, Mason sought to cool them down, saying "Listen, we're going to try this case differently."

Armed self-defense is only one way of asserting the mass black response to racist violence. It is needed right now, but we can't have illusions about the difficulties involved. When organized on a community basis, defense-guard formations tend to be short-lived. On the other hand, demands that the trade unions mobilize such units could lead to sustained military organizations. However, any plan for the unions to play such a role, even the heavily black unions, must be part of a larger strategy if it is to have any hope of success.

At times, the more radical black leaders have called for a general strike to stop racist attacks. This has been merely talk that neither they nor anyone else took seriously. Nevertheless, it is key to a serious anti-racist fight. It is time to begin to propagandize for a one day general strike against racism in New York. Support for the idea must be systematically built among black workers first and foremost. Many union leaders who say they deplore racist violence must be publicly challenged: put up or shut up.

Black workers must take the lead: it requires a determined fight against the racism of many labor bureaucrats as well as prejudice among white workers. The fight must be waged, and now is the time. Even if the strike were to be overwhelmingly black, it could still shut the city down.

A general strike would have an added benefit. It would teach all workers, white as well as black, the power that they actually have, as mere words never do. It would enable the working class to take the question of racism seriously. It would point the way to a powerful nationwide general strike in response to the capitalist assault on the working class.

Such a strategy is a working-class strategy, alien to the lawyers and ministers who have put themselves forward as the leadership in the struggle. Fighting for such a strategy is a means to build an internationalist and interracial proletarian party to lead the masses against the true source of racist murders, the capitalist system. ■

Jackson

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Beach, New York and the Klan attack on civil rights protesters in Forsyth County, Georgia, mass demonstrations were held in both communities to assert the right of blacks to exist there. But Jackson insisted: "Let's not confront each other at Howard Beach or in Forsyth County."

On Howard Beach he went even further, lauding the role of New York Mayor Ed Koch, who is rightfully hated by every defender of black rights. Jitu Weusi, vice chairperson of the National Black United Front (NBUF) and a leading Jackson supporter in New York, observed bitingly that Jackson, who "has never needed to be approached to come anywhere," was extremely equivocal about coming to New York to play a role in response to the Howard Beach murder. Jackson not only vacillated in supporting the militant protest marches but even kept his distance from the impotent boycott efforts called by black radicals.

While the recent spate of murderous attacks in New York has met with justified outrage by blacks, Jackson turned a cold shoulder to the protestors. He stated he would "challenge those who say racial violence is the dominant issue in New York City" (*New York Times*, January 26). The *Times* added that his "call for conciliation" has dominated his recent activities in New York. This line is a precise echo of Koch's claims that black militants are exaggerating the problem in order to stir up trouble.

Regarding Jackson's retreat on black rights, NBUF Chairman Conrad Worrill commented, "We work inside the Rainbow, as an independent formation to make sure the issues of concern to African Americans stay alive. ... I see some tactical changes -- I mean, he's going to talk 'President!' But, it's also the reason why we have to stay in this Rainbow room: We are the ones who have to make sure that that's the only change there." (*Guardian*, January 13, 1988)

Obviously Worrill is worried. He has reason to be. Jackson's real function is above all to hold back black struggle. That is why he's working within the Democratic Party. It isn't some flaw

in an otherwise progressive agenda, which is the way leftists waiting for him to go "independent" see it. Rather Democratic Party politics is the essence of Jackson, and Jackson's conciliation on black rights is not just an isolated presidential maneuver.

The Democratic Party Trap

We have demonstrated the historical role of the Democratic Party as a deathtrap for popular movements and causes. (see *Proletarian Revolution* Nos. 20 and 21.) It acts to divert potential rebellion and self-activity of the masses into passive support to bourgeois politicians. Nowhere is this more true than regarding the radical black struggles of the 1960s which were destroyed by the Democrats.

Thus by 1984 Jackson could run as a radical but as a radical power broker. He hardly hid his role: trading the growing black voter registration for a piece of the action. This role did



New York: Blacks protest racist violence while Jackson conciliates.

not alienate him from his black base. His supporters had already begun to reverse past patterns of rejecting the vote as meaningless. They had begun registering in large numbers prior to Jackson's efforts, precisely because more militant struggle seemed to have come to a dead-end, given the limits of crisis-wracked capital-

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ism. Blacks supporting Jackson understood that the Democratic Party was a world of quid pro quo (although each class had different expectations as to the quid they expected to receive.)

But at the 1984 Democratic Convention Jackson did not even get crumbs, despite the impressive numbers of blacks who supported him in the primaries and the big percentage of the total Democratic vote that blacks represent. He was publicly humiliated, forced to eat crow rather than a piece of the pie. Afterward his dutiful support for the party nominee helped secure the pivotal black vote, thus enabling Mondale to move even further to the right -- and lose the election anyway.

The Democrats gave the black masses nothing because they had their votes in their hip pocket anyway. While the Democrats want black support, they want to avoid at all costs the idea that they back radical demands or confrontations (which they claim will alienate whites.) Clearly Jackson learned a big lesson from his 1984 campaign and its humiliating consequences: cut back on his already modest demands for blacks and adopt "a more traditional mode." (*New York Times*, September 8.)

The '88 Model Jackson

In 1984 Jackson loudly decried the fact that blacks were systematically denied the representation at the convention warranted by the votes they cast in the primaries. He emphasized party rules as a way to underemphasize the issues really disturbing the mass of exploited and oppressed blacks; but he did raise them in an effort to show black power and rock the Democratic boat a bit. Today he keeps the boat on even keel. This has provoked complaints from southern Rainbow activists, who hoped to use the Jackson campaign to make further inroads against the white power structure that rules the Democratic Party.

Maintaining black support while aborting black struggle is the common policy of all sectors of the Democratic Party except the most overt racists. Jesse Jackson, like Harold Washington in Chicago, came to prominence because of an upsurge reflecting the power of the black masses. At the same time, it was already being derailed into an electoral dead-end. The threat of confrontational upheaval had enabled black politicians to expand their numbers in government and the Democratic Party, but at the same time it was exactly this confrontational upheaval that the bourgeois power structure told the black politicians they must end. If the black leaders wanted their party to win they had to become statesmen.

The pro-Mondale black Democrats agreed. While they would upon occasion use the threat of "the black underclass" to warn white colleagues not to go too far, their own ability to exist in the world of bourgeois politics -- to play the angles in order to get the sops to pass on to their voting bases -- depended on their ties to the white-dominated power structure. They all needed the Democratic Party to win.

They all viewed the demands of outraged blacks as a threat to racial stability, their stability as operators within the system.

In 1984 the moderates did not want to hook up with Jackson, despite his popularity, because it harmed their ties with other sections of the party. In the present campaign, without a domi-



Democratic Party politicians Jackson and arch-racist George Wallace. All in the family.

nant frontrunner, they have more leeway. They also know that the question is no longer whether to be a Jackson delegate to the convention, but who controls the Jackson delegations. There is room for them to maneuver and broker their own deals at the convention when Jackson inevitably loses. Having embraced so many differing political power centers among black politicians, Jackson can't keep as tight a grip on his delegates as last time.

Under the Rainbow

Accompanying the downplaying of black demands has been a concerted effort to expand Jackson's constituency beyond his black base. This reflects a second big lesson he learned from 1984: how to get the Democratic Party to take him more seriously. In 1984 the Rainbow was a real myth: Jackson represented blacks -- a problem to a party that wants black votes but doesn't want to be identified as pro-black. Now he still must broker for blacks but must also try to put "the rainbow" in effect, that is attempt to increase his clout with other sectors as well. This is often called his appeal to whites, but it is necessarily more complex because here again the class question invades.

First, Jackson is under no illusion that he can

win the more racist and reactionary elements among these groups. But he can offset their hostility and establish himself in the eyes of their leaders as a suitable broker they can deal with. The main effort in this direction is shown by Jackson's increased promotion of ethnic coalitions and all that implies.

Ethnic Coalitions Aid Conservatism

In the 1970s and '80s the ruling class has attempted to shift popular consciousness to the right. They beat the drums for God, family, country and every conservative institution. By trumpeting the wonders of ethnic identification and roots, they attempt to play upon deep-seated needs for community, solidarity and support in a society based on human alienation. Ethnic manipulation serves to destroy working-class consciousness and promote identification with parochial petty-bourgeois misleaders. Inevitably, given the inherent racism of American capitalism, in times of economic crisis the ethnic honchos play upon mass prejudices to the detriment of the oppressed. ("Our" ancestors came here without speaking English and "we" didn't complain; "our" people made it without welfare so why can't "they?" etc., etc.) As long as capitalism exists, the idea that it's a war for sops, jobs and income between whites, blacks and other minorities seems more and more real.

This mechanism at the heart of the Democratic Party works to make the oppressed black (and Latino) masses view themselves as simply one of many ethnic groups and to tie themselves to leaders who will produce for them if they play by the rules of the game. This destroys the real strength of black workers, whose unique history of militant struggle against oppression and whose concentration in the major bastions of capitalist industry has put them into a potentially powerful leadership position within the working class as a whole.

Congressman William Lipinski, a Democrat from Chicago's Southwest Side and Co-chairman of the Ethnic American Council of the Democratic National Committee, is a clear spokesman for the view to which Jackson has tried to adapt. According to the September 16 *New York Times*, Lipinski said that the party

"must make more room for conservative and moderate views, especially on social issues. The ethnic voters are most unhappy ... with the prevailing views in the Democratic Party about abortion, school prayer, defense spending and affirmative action programs for minorities. To retain the working-class voter ... the party must stress its pro-labor stand on the pocketbook issues.

"We're trying to remind these people -- the plumbers, the carpenters, the bricklayers -- that they wouldn't have unions and good wages if it weren't for the Democratic Party."

If he can deal with General Motors and Burger King for black franchises, Jackson can deal with ethnic politicians. They all have a vested

interest, he (falsely) believes, in stabilizing tense relations between ethnics and blacks. He hopes that the more moderate elements among the ethnic politicians can be brought into a new coalition that will accept black leaders as senior participants based upon voting clout.

It is not that Jackson can really support Lipinski's conservative social program. He can't do that and retain his base among radical activists; after all, his successful attempt to bury the abortion issue at the first Rainbow convention noticeably chilled the militants. But he can try to emerge as a conciliator between the conservative ethnic leaders and popular forces, blacks and others, who threaten their positions and their world views. Still, he must go further than the Lipinskis in taking a "pro-labor stand on the pocketbook issues."

This strategy leads to fudging on social questions, particularly on women's rights, because that is an area where traditionalist ethnic leaders have their strongest base of support. It leads to emphasis on questions of the family, God and pulling oneself up by one's own bootstraps. And Jackson can go further than Lipinski in stressing a "pro-labor stand on pocketbook issues."

Jackson's Labor Appeal

It has become popular to say that Jackson is joining the "mainstream," but that is only a surface explanation. Jackson is in essence an opportunist, and a brilliant one at that. Before pundits, pollsters and even revolutionaries can, Jackson is able to sense the direction of the masses he seeks to win. After all, his very political existence depends upon his ability to tail popular consciousness and adapt to it. Therefore he was way out in front in recognizing that "mainstream" attitudes in America today weren't the epitome of moderation and economic conservatism that other political observers claimed. For years he sensed the growing anger and frustration of workers and petty-bourgeois elements in American society. Seeing the anger beneath the surface, Jackson began to appeal to the growing class antagonism earlier than others.

His basic speech in the Iowa campaign reflects his radical approach to workers and small farmers. It is dotted with phrases like "We're caught between cheap labor at home and slave labor abroad"; "If we can bail out Chrysler...we can bail out the family farm"; and "Workers united will never be defeated." (*New York Times*, January 18). Heady stuff.

However, the labor bureaucracy has withheld its support. One obvious reason is racism: many a white bureaucrat will simply not support a black candidate. Related to this is the racist-tinged pragmatism of which the bureaucracy has such a bountiful supply; as the argument goes, Jackson can't win so let's find a more realistic candidate, meaning a white. And many bureaucrats find Jackson too radical. His increasing moderation on foreign policy is hardly enough to satisfy an AFL-CIO leadership which embraces the CIA and the

contras and loves Israel, oppression and all.

Even more appalling to the bureaucrats, Jackson voiced support for militant actions like the Hormel strike at a time when the AFL-CIO leadership was actively trying to destroy that struggle. It's a sad commentary that a bourgeois politician can come across as a better champion of struggling workers than the alleged leadership of the working class.

Bureaucrats Soft on Jackson?

Nonetheless, the bureaucracy is giving Jackson more leeway than in the last election. He is a welcome guest at labor gatherings. His picture is in union newspapers alongside the appropriate bureaucrats. He even received a warm ovation at the ultra-conservative Teamsters' convention.

The top leadership of the AFL-CIO still hasn't recovered from the humiliating defeat of "their

pisinger of the Machinists and leaders of the CWA are known Jackson allies who have shied away from pushing for open endorsement of their unions -- in much the way they operated during the Hormel strike.

Then there are locally prominent black labor leaders like Stanley Hill, head of the large AFSCME section in New York, DC 37, who publicly supports Jackson. Together they constitute a significant portion of the leftish labor bureaucrats, many of whom are members of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).

Jackson's support of the Hormel strikers was of course accompanied by his offer to mediate the strike and an open attempt to pacify it. Even the local sheriff who led the assaults on P-9 praised Jackson's role. While the strike was anathema to the dominant AFL-CIO leadership, it was supported sub rosa by much of the left bureaucracy as part of the shadow war they are



man," Fritz Mondale. As a result of the 1984 fiasco, the lesson they learned was that labor can't be too quick or too prominent in supporting a nominee lest he be castigated as a prisoner of "special interests." Besides, who in the current field of candidates can command their support like Mondale?

One factor in the receptivity to Jackson is the strong support he enjoys among many black workers, who comprise almost a third of the AFL-CIO membership; the bureaucrats are being careful not to appear to discriminate against Jackson. Polls among the Communications Workers (CWA) and the Federal, State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) found Jackson to be their favorite candidate. Jackson has the overwhelming support of blacks in other unions as well. Added to that is the active sympathy he has among hard-hit white workers in the Midwest and elsewhere.

This doesn't make Jackson a champion of the ranks against the bureaucracy. It does make him an ally of the more left bureaucrats. The only national official who so far has openly bucked the AFL-CIO decision to delay all endorsements is Henry Nicholas, head of the National Union of Hospital and Healthcare Workers. Others, like Kenneth Blaylock of the Government Employees (AFGE), William Win-

waging with Kirkland and Co.

Of course, like Jackson they avoid any open break with the AFL-CIO-CIA leaders. They are simply fearful of the growing trend towards union-busting. They welcome limited rank and file actions as a pressure on Kirkland to do something, but always within the context of not forcing an open fight in which the ranks might get out of hand. Some -- not all -- talk about an eventual mass movement to pressure the Democrats. Because they, like Jackson, anticipate the coming upsurge, they want to be sure it is under their control. The last thing they want is an independent movement of workers.

The left bureaucrats, like their more right-wing colleagues, have for many years tried to channel workers' anger and frustration into electoral support of the Democrats. They differ with the Kirklands in that while they will inevitably back any Democrat, they want to push for a more populist nominee. Jan Pierce, National Vice-President of the CWA, writing in the DSA press in defense of the union's "Jobs with Justice" campaign, expressed his hopes that the campaign would

"convey an important message to labor and its supporters as more and more organizational resources are devoted to electing a Democrat -- any Democrat -- to the presi-



March in Wappingers Falls, NY protests attack on Tawana Brawley. Confrontation, yes; conciliation, no!

gency next year. I believe that the changes organized labor needs to survive -- much less revive -- are not likely to occur solely as a result of ending Republican rule in 1988. And if we look to the Democratic Party (as currently constituted) to be our automatic saviour, we are in for some serious disappointments akin to those experienced by trade unionists during the Carter era." (*Democratic Left*, September-October 1987.)

If you remember that the Vice President during the "Carter era" was the AFL-CIO's candidate in 1984, you see the hidden barb aimed at Kirkland. Pierce and his friends want a candidate who will go further to defend the unions and workers' aspirations. Jackson is a fitting Democrat in that respect. His electoral program is as ephemeral as the program of "Jobs with Justice."

Naturally, Jackson's stance on labor contains vague talk about supporting workers "in all kinds of struggles" but no mention of encouraging self-action or unifying the isolated strikes that break out in this period -- and certainly no advocacy of the mass strikes, sit-downs and social rebellions, actions labor undertook when it was indeed a movement in the 1930s. It was the mass movement from below threatening to destroy capitalism that forced Franklin Roosevelt to grant reforms. Jackson's reform promises today serve only to pre-empt and prevent such a social movement.

The only sort of "movement" planned for the rank and file is the movement to the polling places. Contrary to the illusions of the Rainbow activists, Jackson is not using the vote to encourage mass action but to detour it into passive electoralism. As he proclaimed to Iowa workers and farmers, "Now the time has come. I've stood with you, day in and day out. Stand with me, just one night: February 8."

Sectoralism and the Left

Jackson's overture to white workers is based on stressing the pocketbook while pushing socially conservative issues and downplaying black responses to racial attacks. It is simply the flip side of his approach to black workers. His message to whites tells them to adhere to their petty-bourgeois ethnic power brokers and the labor bureaucrats. After all, his immediate base has always been in the black small business community, adroit at riding the movement tide to secure new positions in corporate society.

As Jackson has moved toward playing by the rules of the Democratic power brokers, some nationalist black radicals have objected. Weusi is a good example of those Rainbow activists whose criticism of Jackson's line on Howard Beach was dictated by opposition to his overtures to white workers. Weusi stated (in the previously cited article):

"Many of us would like the opportunity to discuss problems we had with his sermons, in particular some of the analogies he made comparing Harlem and Howard Beach as 'different sides of the same coin.' ... I disagree with the analysis of Jesse Jackson when he tries to place Howard Beach in some kind of class context that downplays the traditional white racist character of this community."

Weusi, as a radical petty-bourgeois black nationalist, sees black defense and working-class defense as counterposed interests, with Jackson capitulating to the latter. In this Weusi and other sectoral leftists mirror the outlook of Jackson and most Democratic politicians: they equate white workers with the racist Howard Beach murderers. To appeal to such workers, they imagine, you have to sacrifice militant black protest. The mainstream Democrats are

willing to do so; Weusi is not, not yet.

Separatists like Weusi once adored Jackson because he seemed to push independent black power. But the ethnic brokerage game always features leaders who initially build a mass following by stressing group power -- as a means to position themselves better for bargaining. Because it is impossible for any oppressed group in American society to go it alone, all sectoralists, even nationalists, inevitably end up dealing away the interests of their mass base.

Jackson Defends Imperialism ...

Jackson has submerged his previously radical rhetoric in favor of a more open imperialist stance. That was the third lesson he learned from 1984: the Democrats demand proofs of loyalty to U.S. imperialism. So for example, when hawkish Senator Al Gore criticized his primary opponents for not being militant enough cold warriors, Jackson responded as a defender of the Democratic Party's moderate but entirely imperialist line:

"Mr. Jackson suggested that Gore was outside the Democratic 'mainstream' on military issues. 'The antics and the tactics are attention getters,' Mr. Jackson said of Mr. Gore. 'But they do not represent good tactics or sound leadership.'" (*New York Times*, October 8.)

A far cry from his anti-imperialist rhetoric of 1984.

In a recent debate over Reagan's policies in the Persian Gulf, Jackson said that he did not favor an immediate end to the reflagging of Kuwaiti oil tankers (the excuse for the U.S. naval intervention). Thus his position on the Gulf is to the right of other Democratic candidates in the "mainstream." The militant Jackson of yore who blisteringly attacked the U.S. military now equivocates over Reagan's "Star Wars" scheme for a massive military build-up.

Even such a Jackson well-wisher as journalist Alexander Cockburn has had to comment on his blatant defense of imperialism. In his December 23 column in *In These Times*, Cockburn

noted that during a nationally televised debate, Jackson was asked whether the presence of a "Soviet satellite in Central America" would bother him. Jackson's response was revealing: "If we support self-determination and aid economic development ... we can win Nicaragua." Cockburn was prepared to swallow this crap -- "Excepting the unattractive conceptual connotation of 'win,' this is all right" -- but he went on to quote the rest of what Jackson said:

"Yes, we should negotiate bilaterally with Ortega. No foreign military advisers. No Soviet base. And if they, in their self-determination, choose to relate to the Soviets in that way, they must know the alternative. If they are with us, there are tremendous benefits. If they are not with us, there are tremendous consequences. If we are clear ... the response will be clear."

This overt defense of U.S. imperialism was too much. Cockburn commented: "In other words, if you are not with us, you are against us -- and in case you are wondering what this means, read up on the history of Guatemala." As Cockburn understands, Jackson not only defends U.S. imperialism and the cold war with the USSR but is prepared to invade Nicaragua to do it. Cockburn is more honest than the rest of his playmates on the left but he too has no alternative to the "progressive" thrust of Jesse Jackson.

... And Loves Capitalism

Cockburn and Weusi are hardly alone in trying to understand what Jackson is up to. At the same time that the bulk of the left has been issuing clarion calls for "economic justice," jobs, and an end to plant closings and corporation bailouts, Jackson is reassuring the ruling class that his aim is to save the capitalist system, not destroy it. In response to the Wall Street crash Jackson preached:

"We are all in the economic trenches now, even if, on Wall Street, the trenches are mahogany-lined. Layoffs, farm foreclosures, bank failures, rising debt and falling wealth



Jackson, keeper of the imperial seal, chastizes fellow candidate Al Gore for not being in the Democratic "mainstream" on foreign policy.

are our common ground. Wall Street and LaSalle Street [Chicago's financial center] cannot escape Main Street and Rural Route 3. We are one." (*New York Times*, November 1.)

Jackson called for an "economic Camp David" -- bringing together business, labor, Wall Street and politicians -- to find a way to cut budget deficits and restore economic health. This has nothing in common with defending the masses; instead it lays the basis for a capitalist austerity program: "Let's all share the burden just as we've all shared the wealth." This garbage is meant to convince working people to accept cutbacks, under the illusion that the rich will suffer too. We've all heard this "equality of sacrifice" line before.

Jackson's remarks can't be dismissed as "acting Presidential." When he reassures business of his loyalty to capitalism, it is no act. In a letter to *Business Week* (June 1), Jackson proclaimed:

"I wish to make clear the positive aspects of my position on economic policy: a realistic concern about the practices of American businesses that tend to place short-term profits ahead of the well-being of their employees, their communities, the nation, and their own future financial health.

"To point out these problems and to call for their correction is not 'business bashing.' A strong, healthy private economy is essential to our national well-being and our hopes for social progress. The future of the business Establishment and of the nation itself are dependent upon attention to the long-range effects of current American business policies.

"The long-term interests of American business and the American people are mutual and inseparable."

Whereas Jackson laments that present policies weaken "our ability to compete in international markets," the reality of American capitalism is that in times of trouble big business always has always said to blacks and working people, what are "we" going to do? But contrary to Jackson it isn't "our" country nor "our" system -- not until the socialist revolution sweeps away racist capitalism.

Jackson's working-class appeal is a dangerous trap, but it reflects a correct perception that the working masses are on the road to a new upsurge of class power. The rest of the motley crew of Democratic aspirants also see this; following Jackson, their rhetoric has shifted noticeably to the left to capture workers' dissatisfaction. In his letter to *Business Week*, Jackson concurred with the magazine's earlier comment which "correctly suggests that my attack on economic violence is setting a tone being echoed by other Democratic Presidential candidates."

What Jackson sensed is now confirmed; the rest of the crew has finally smelled the same scent. "The Rev. Jesse Jackson's attack on 'big corporations' has been picked up by Mr. Gep-

hardt especially." And Gephardt is not alone. Even former Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt, who set the troops on striking copper workers at Phelps Dodge, now calls for "workplace democracy." (*New York Times*, January 17.) Babbitt has even attacked on Iowa's large meatpacking company, IBP Inc., for its union-busting activities.

The impact of class anger has surfaced even in the Republican Party. Senator Bob Dole, of all people, has been doling out attacks on "Preppie" George Bush and his "country club followers" from the vantage point of one who "started at the bottom."

A new movement is nearing, but the left overlooks that the electoral "leaders" -- even the Democrats, even Jesse Jackson -- aren't trying to build it. They are desperately working to detour it so that it doesn't endanger the capitalist system they all worship.

The Black Struggle

The pro-Jackson leftists who are nervous about his ethnic-sectoralist coalition-building inside the Democratic Party want to do the same thing outside. The result would be disastrous either way. Both strategies rely on divisions within the working class necessary for capitalism's divide-and-conquer methods. Bargaining for crumbs at the top inevitably masks the growing reality of crisis-ridden capitalism below, where one group is turned against the other in pursuit of survival.

For blacks to weaken their struggle against racist violence means feeding fuel to the fire. Blacks are not simply another ethnic group that can follow the mythical path to integration and prosperity. They are a huge minority to which decadent capitalism cannot grant equality, economic or social. They are the scapegoat U.S. capitalism needs to save its skin, cast to the bottom of the economic ladder and consequently painted as a permanent threat to other workers. Waving a flag of retreat now would be the signal for an assault on all gains blacks have made and the system can no longer afford.

Black workers are critical for the coming upsurge in class struggle. They cannot win jobs without leading a fight for employment for all; they won't achieve a decent standard of living unless all workers do; they can't defeat racism except by demonstrating that class struggle is infinitely preferable to racist idiocy for white workers as well as blacks. In their own interest they need to lead the working class to smash racism and poverty by overthrowing capitalism. And they have the power to take the lead.

Workers will create their own movement, not condescending bourgeois saviors or even well intentioned left organizers. In doing so they will re-create their own revolutionary party, a party which will not say that what is good for General Motors is good for workers. Our class is learning in practice that salvation lies not in chasing rainbows but in proletarian socialist revolution. ■

Left Jabs

This occasional column aims to puncture the pretensions -- to wisdom, honesty, antisectarianism and/or Marxism -- of the numerous charlatans of the left.

Contributions from readers are welcome.

From the Cliffite SWP (Socialist Workers Party) of Britain, describing a socialist conference that took place in October (*Socialist Review*, November 1987):

"At the conference itself the revolutionary left, and especially the SWP, were treated as interlopers rather than as an integral part of the proceedings. And afterwards at least some of the organizers tried to blame the conference's failings on 'ultra-left disruption.' It is clear that some of them regard any political disagreement as disruption."

Tears of sympathy well up in our eyes for a group whose U.S. affiliate, the cowardly International Socialist Organization (ISO), routinely bans from its public meetings in New York all groups to its left. In the case of the LRP, the ISO has spread the lie that it does so because we have disrupted their meetings. Apparently political disagreement equals disruption only when somebody else does it.

From Ernest Mandel, prominent "Trotskyist" theorist and leader of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (*International Viewpoint*, November 23):

"The tragic irony is that at the very moment when imperialism is going into one of the deepest, if not the deepest, crises in its history and when confidence in the market economy has been profoundly shaken in the West, not to mention third world countries, the virtues of market mechanisms are now being extolled in the Soviet Union. Expanding market mechanisms is presented as the only recourse and only solution to the grave systemic crisis gripping the USSR and its satellite countries. This systemic crisis is so undeniable that it is now acknowledged openly and frankly by the leaders themselves."

The miracle is that it is acknowledged even by Mandel, whose voluminous writings on what he calls the "post-capitalist" Soviet system have for years ignored the possibility of serious systemic crises. Ernest he may be, but he sure isn't frank.

December 1987 Summit



"Peace on Earth...
Good will to men"

Proletarian Revolution

From the Spartacist League, breaking the "Sheilagate" scandal -- wherein Sheila Jordan, a prominent supporter of Solidarity, the group based on the former International Socialists, was found to be running in a California school board election as a Democrat (*Workers Vanguard*, October 16):

"The reptilian sensibilities of the creatures that lurk in the anti-Soviet cesspool are vibrating over their dirty little secret of Sheilagate. Even long-time denizen of the 'Third Camp' swamp, the wizened gnome Sy Landy, is said to be worried about *WV* breaking the scandal."

That this purple passage has more words than lies is pure accident. Sy Landy "is said" to be worried about revealing Solidarity's dirty secret? Said by whom? In truth, the source for the story told *Workers Vanguard* that Sy Landy was angry the information was given to the Spartacists for publication rather than to *Proletarian Revolution* and the LRP. Now that the source has seen how the Spartacists knowingly lie, he deeply regrets his mistake. Unfortunately, this won't nullify the boost given the notoriously corrupt SL. Nor will it undo the fact that many leftists will now only half believe the story of

the shameful capitulation perpetrated by Jordan & Co. -- because of where it appeared.

From the Stalinist magazine *International Correspondence* (December 1987), issued by people formerly associated with the defunct Bolshevik League:

"Today in the Soviet Union the New York Times reports that there 'are several secretive, reputedly popular ... neo-Stalinist groups like ... Pamyat, which means 'memory.' It is our task today to keep the *pamyat* of socialism alive against the *perestroika* of Gorbachev. We call on forces remaining loyal to socialism and the October Revolution to rally around *International Correspondence* and once again take up the glorious path of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin."

Pamyat means memory, but it also means a neo-fascist group in the USSR that operates under the cover of a patriotic organization dedicated to the preservation of churches and monuments. Our Stalinist enthusiasts quote the *Times* report, but they omit to mention its citation of a Pamyat leader's diatribe against "insidious Jews" and their imagined infiltration of the Orthodox Church. For Stalinists to promote religious obscurantism and racism is nothing

new. As Trotsky observed, Stalinism and fascism are symmetrical forces. That this miserable Stalinist outfit can't tell the difference only nails the point.

Capitalism adds insult to injury when it not only devastates the environment but also saddles us with the Greenish middle-class ecology "movement." We are tired of being berated by do-good reformers who insist that revolutionaries are too "far out." So we were interested in a blurb we received from *Rain*, one of their journals, which noted that

"... RAIN staff have gone boldly ... to places where few men (or women) have gone before; talking about biodegradable coffins, burnout, energy slaves, firch piles, floral clocks, ... dishwasher tea, edible cities, ... mental maps, neighborhood composting, one-straw revolutions, owner-builder homes, simple-minded refrigerators, peanut butter power, servants as leaders, socially responsible investing, tensed social networks, survivalism, slug ranching, solar ponds, source separation of waste, and the legal rights of trees."

We have written them asking if a tree has to be 18 years old to vote. When we hear we will let you know. ■

PEACE

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measures to defend its shaky leadership over the restive Western capitalist powers. Last but not least, the U.S. wants closer assistance from the USSR in helping quell the rising tide of popular revolts breaking out across the globe.

Gorbachev likewise needed a victorious display. His faction of the ruling Soviet bureaucracy is desperate to find more capital for non-military production. His reform program threatens to undermine many bureaucrats as well as the living standards of Soviet workers. He desperately needs technology and capital from the West to restructure his collapsing economy on more efficiently exploitative lines. He also needs to be able to dole out more aid to the debt-ridden East European satellites if Russia is to maintain control and avoid proletarian revolution at its doorstep.

While hard-core conservatives howled in protest, Reagan's most enthusiastic support for the summit deal came from the Democrats. These "peaceniks" want an accommodation with the Soviets in order to pursue the U.S.'s imperialist rivalry with Japan and West Germany. As Wall Street financier Felix Rohatyn put it recently,

"Here we and the Soviets are spending so much money on defense and nuclear weapons while the Japanese are winning World War III without one nuclear warhead. We are becoming a second-rate economic power and the Soviets a third-rate economic power, and the two countries that are first rate,

Japan and West Germany, are without any real military strength. That is absurd."

Leave it to an imperialist realist like Rohatyn to discuss World War III amidst the "peace" celebrations. That Japan may replace the USSR as the U.S.'s cold war rival, an alternative foreseen long ago by this magazine, now looms as a growing possibility. Rohatyn is only one of many leaders of the U.S. ruling class who realize that their most dangerous enemy is not the stagnant statified capitalism of the USSR but the more dynamic and economically threatening Japan.

There are already protectionist wings in Congress and the trade union bureaucracy; most of the Democratic presidential contenders are contributing to that chauvinist and inherently racist mood. A new orientation of U.S. foreign policy would not be unprecedented; after all, a Soviet alliance was part of the line-up in World War II, and the most likely war opponent of the U.S. in the period after World War I was Great Britain.

That a few missiles will be dismantled, so that the world risks destruction 40 times over instead of 50, means only slight relief. That masses of people are bamboozled by diplomatic glitter into believing that peace is at hand is a great danger. It will be a monumental tragedy if the asses on the left who currently bray about peace through beneficent super-power negotiations succeed in fooling workers, whose only hope lies in storming the summits of power. Class war is the only way to prevent imperialist war, whether it be with the USSR, Japan or Germany. ■

Crash

continued from page 1

around the world. "The vaporization of values in such a short period of time is something that none of us have ever seen," according to a stock trader quoted in the *New York Times*. And there are other balloons yet to burst: the third-world debt burden is resurging, with many countries unable to even pay interest on their loans. The U.S. dollar is still overvalued compared to its declining relative productivity and has been collapsing along with the stock markets. At a time of feeble economic growth in both East and West, deepening threats of world trade slowdowns, and rising unemployment of both labor and resources, the danger of a new Great Depression has become very, very real.

The working class desperately needs to learn two lessons from the crisis. One, despite all the wishful thinking in the press that the market crash was an aberration and will have little effect on the economy of goods and services, workers will be severely affected: they are about to face a stepped-up austerity attack to make them pay for the bourgeoisie's profit losses. Second: the workers can turn to the science of Marxism to understand why capitalism acts as it does and to prepare for action to overturn the system that inevitably oppresses them.

Planning Austerity

The first lesson has been made clear by leading capitalist spokesmen, although often in disguised form. The endless negotiations about balancing the federal budget and cutting the deficit are aimed at one thing: reducing the already slashed benefits that the government pays back to working people out of the taxes extracted from them.

They are not even considering the alternatives. Capitalist politicians are not interested in reducing the military forces that defend imperialist property around the world. Yes, some increases that the "Defense" establishment has demanded will be reduced, but no major cut-back in the immense waste spending that caused Ronald Reagan's super-unbalanced budgets is contemplated -- not even by the most liberal Democratic bourgeois spokesmen like Jesse Jackson.

As for raising taxes, no one is talking about restoring the business taxes that Reagan and his Democratic partners handed back to their capitalist friends in the heady years of voodoo economics. New taxes will hit goods that workers have to live on, not the speculative profiteering that brought Wall Street down and contributes nothing productive to the economy.

A better projection can be gleaned from some of the bourgeoisie's own leaders when they are speaking more openly than usual. We should pay attention to Felix Rohatyn, the main architect of service-slashing cutbacks when New



GM Fisher Body plant in Flint, Michigan closes. What are the jobs of 3000 workers compared to a good profit rate?

York City's finances collapsed under pressure from the banks in 1975 (and one of the few bourgeois experts to confidently foresee the danger of financial disarray). Rohatyn keys his proposal to the 1988 presidential elections, figuring that the current administration is too discredited to take any major steps. He advocates a kind of bipartisan Bonapartism, aimed at getting the two parties to agree behind the scenes on an austerity plan that won't be presented to the voters but will simply be carried out afterwards by some hoped-for hero-on-horseback, when candidates no longer have to risk losing votes. He told *New York Newsday* on November 12:

"The only thing the next president can be sure about is that he won't be able to govern without the opposition. Secondly, he won't be able in the campaign to discuss rationally the things he will have to do [as president] because if he does, he is going to get killed. The real options he is going to have to deal with should be presented by, as much as possible, a depoliticized, bipartisan group that is prestigious enough that its recommendations right after the election will prepare the president to take action the

moment he is sworn in.

"This country's standard of living is going to have to be lowered. How it is lowered and for whom it is lowered and whether it will be accepted socially -- these are open questions."

Of course, the question of whose living standards are to be reduced is not really open, not to Rohatyn and the bourgeoisie. True, the bourgeoisie cannot solve its crisis by attacking *only* the workers: some capitalists will have to go to the wall too. That is part of the reason for the congressional haggling over how to reduce a few billion dollars from the budget.

But clearly the workers will get hit by most of the cuts. Congressmen are disturbed by the budget-cutting task, which could cost them workers' votes. They prefer that the dirty job of taking on the working class be handled by business directly. Rohatyn is warning his fellow bourgeois that crucial decisions have to be made and that a capitalist united front is vital, given the potential danger of mass resistance. Obviously the bourgeois battle-plan should be settled privately, out of sight of the masses.

A Capitalist Manifesto

Rohatyn was not just dreaming when he spoke of a prestigious bipartisan group to make the necessary preparations for the new president. He had already joined in drafting of a "bipartisan budget plan" printed as an expensive two-page ad in major ruling-class newspapers across the country on November 9 under the heading, "Time for Decisive Action." Signed by dozens of pillars of the establishment -- ex-cabinet members, bankers, corporate presidents and chairmen, without even one sellout labor leader for window dressing -- this capitalist manifesto intoned piously: "The burdens of deficit reductions should be shared fairly among all of us who can afford them."

But not quite all. The plan specified that defense spending be "restrained" but that social programs be *cut*. Taxes (disguised as "revenue increases") should "discourage consumption and encourage savings and investment" -- bourgeois babble for gouging the workers (those who have no choice but to consume with what they earn) and coddling the capitalists -- those who invest if the profit climate is right. Pious wordage to cover exploitation as usual.

The manifesto's implications were spelled out by one of its main architects, former Nixon Commerce Secretary Peter Peterson (*Newsweek*, November 2). Peterson denounced the U.S.'s "unprecedented consumption and borrowing binge," citing a "\$3,100 increase in real consumption per worker during this decade." But there has been no such increase *by* workers: working-class real incomes have *declined*, on the average, steadily since the late 1960s. Peterson's deceptive wording has the obvious aim of setting up workers for serious cutbacks. He then turns on the "middle class" -- workers by another name. Social security, Medicare and civil-service pensions will have to be slashed.

"Politics aside," he intones, it's "pure and simple arithmetic."

But working people can count, too; they will be hard to convince that, alongside the financiers and runaway bosses who have been pigging out under Reagan, it is they whose "unprecedented consumption" is at fault. When Peterson says politics is not the issue he means that forcing the workers to pay for the capitalists' crisis is an unavoidable fact of life, not a matter of choice. Indeed, it is a fact of capitalism, not of life. The pity of it is that the working class is still tied to wings of the bourgeoisie and doesn't have its own proletarian party to dispute that pure and simple "fact."

Marxism and Value

While the bourgeois spokesmen are agreed that the workers have to pay for the crisis, they are divided over what to blame. The right-wing monetarists and supply-siders who think that an unfettered market is the answer to all problems are now exposed as apologists for unfettered greed. But the liberal alternative that government stimulation can keep the economy moving is also disproved: Reagan's "military Keynesianism" (deficit spending) was the direct cause of the collapse of market values.

The only scientific analysis of bourgeois economy is Marxism, which strips away the surface harmony of bourgeois economics to lay bare the true nature of capitalism. It sheds a powerful light on the conditions that brought about the present crisis.

Marx explained that under the law of value that governs capitalism, the value of a commodity, even an entire factory, is based on the amount of labor time needed to produce that commodity at the most up-to-date methods of production. This value underlies the day-to-day stock market swings and haggings that make or break the fortunes of financial swindlers. Of course, few capitalists accept or care that labor is the basis of value; for them, the value of a stock is the amount of profit it is likely to bring. Individual stocks may temporarily achieve capitalist values far removed from the labor time embodied in them. But the overall value of stocks stays tied to that material base.

Over a century ago, in the first volume of *Capital*, his main scientific work on political economy, Karl Marx captured the essence of speculative crashes:

"In the midst of all the accidental and ever-fluctuating exchange relations between the products, the labor time socially necessary for their production forcibly asserts itself like an overriding law of Nature. The law of gravity thus asserts itself when a house falls about our ears."

On October 19 the law of value struck again, and the market fell about its worshippers' ears. Marx showed that fictitious value is not just a fluke created by a handful of greedy financiers but an inherent development in capitalism. It arises out of the very nature of value. Capitalists, on the one hand, are driven by the class struggle to expand the value of their

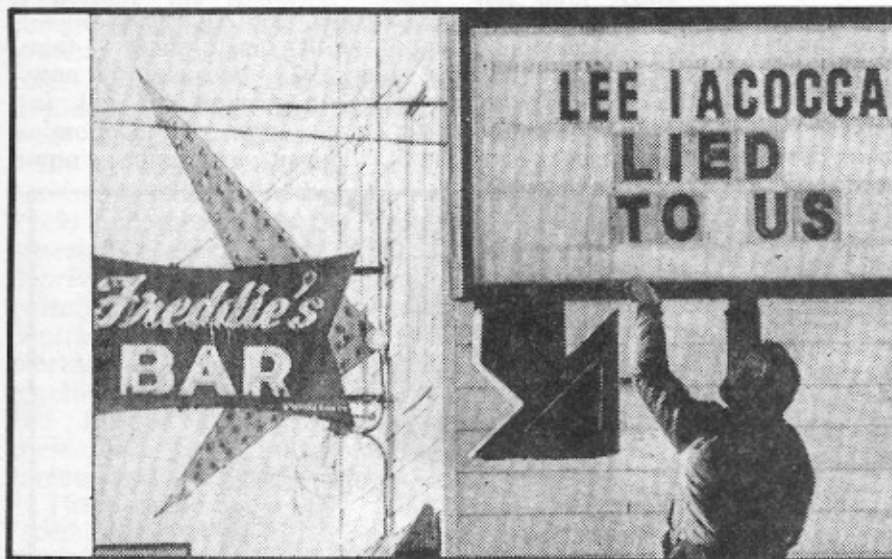
holdings by modernizing their technical equipment. But this forces down the value (the labor cost of reproduction) of the products of other capitalists. The resulting contradictions in the values of commodities are resolved through the system's periodic crises, which devalue or destroy obsolete capitals -- and also serve the bourgeoisie by weakening the workers' bargaining strength.

In the classical capitalism of the last century, business crises and depressions did their job, more or less, and the fictitious capital would tend to be wiped out in each cycle -- only to reappear in the next. In the present epoch, signified by the great concentration of capital and its international expansion -- and above all by the formation of a working class organized by collective methods of production into a powerful antagonist to capital -- the cycles do not function so smoothly, even in theory.

The system cannot afford to destroy obsolete firms if they are so large that they intertwine with the entire economy (as many do); nor do the monopoly capitalists always rush to introduce new techniques, since they may thereby undermine not just other capitals but themselves under another hat. The upshot is that fic-

and were subject to intense exploitation. War production enabled governments to take over the economic reins and centralize industrial planning; war, not the Rooseveltian service projects, was what got the U.S. (like other powers) out of the Depression. When the smoke of battle cleared, the U.S. emerged not only victorious but the unchallenged economic power: all rivals, both enemies and allies, had been defeated or weakened; two-thirds of industrial production took place in one country; the colonies of the European imperialists had been pried loose for exploitation by the hegemonic imperial power.

That's how the boom got started, with the bulk of international surplus value in the hands of the American ruling class. It continued because the bourgeoisie understood the tremendous consequences of a new depression. On the one hand, firms were so big and economic concentration so advanced that wiping out the least efficient companies and banks could bring all the rest down with them; on the other hand, they feared the re-emergence of class struggle now that the working class was regaining strength and confidence after its wartime setbacks. The Marshall Plan, whereby the U.S. pumped dollars



What's new? This billboard in Kenosha, Wisconsin previously touted Chrysler head Iacocca for president when he promised to keep the plant open. The truth is that all capitalists lie.

titious capital tends to stay in the system from cycle to cycle; and as it builds up, greater and greater collapses are threatened. The balloon of fictitious capital multiplies the bourgeois claims to surplus value and forces the overall rate of profit down. It serves as the mechanism for carrying out the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, discovered by Marx.

The Post-War Boom

Where did so much fictitious capital come from in the first place? To understand that, we have to look back at the long boom that followed World War II. For a quarter of a century, the imperialist powers enjoyed an unprecedented period of rising prosperity. The working classes of Europe, Asia and the Soviet Union had been smashed to the ground under the blows of fascism, Stalinism and imperialism

to its European allies in order to get their economies afloat, was sold to Congress as a measure for holding revolutions at bay.

Throughout the years of prosperity, there were massive strikes which regularly won higher wages and benefits. Even in the U.S., the social wage improved through unprecedented state intervention into economic life through military spending, social welfare, insurance and other "safety nets." Credited to Keynesian economic theory, it really meant that big capital was protected and the most powerful sections of industrial workers prospered -- at the cost of allowing the overall level of industry to grow increasingly obsolescent without the periodic restructuring accomplished through depressions. A significant illustration was the domestic front of the Vietnam War, where both guns and butter were provided to prevent

working-class discontent from breaking out.

As a result of such policies, regular business slumps have been replaced by the danger of an economic collapse worse than that of the 1930s. A useful example is the USSR, where out of fear of another October revolution and the actual proletarian upheavals at its doorstep in East Europe, the state has maintained full employment, subsidized housing, health and transportation (even if of low quality), and allowed no enterprise, however unprofitable, to go under. Gorbachev's *perestroika* (restructuring) is designed to change all that and re-establish methods much closer to traditional capitalist norms, including unemployment.

In the U.S. the underlying problems became starkly visible because of the international nature of capitalism. Because the American and British governments specialized in military spending, the other major Western powers and Japan had more capital for social benefits and industrial modernization. By the end of the 1960s West Germany and Japan were set to out-compete the U.S. on a world scale. Japan now has a higher per capita Gross National Product than the U.S. and became the world's largest exporter of finance capital in 1985.

But the end of the post-war boom was not just a result of foreign competition. The world capitalist system was sick. All the speculative market booms could not hide the crisis of capitalist overproduction: too many goods produced to sell at a profit necessary for bourgeois comfort. Once again it proved capitalism's irra-

foreign goods. In recent years the proliferation of junk-bond takeovers symbolized the turn from productive investment to speculation. The combination of business tax cuts, subsidies for military contractors and astronomical federal borrowing puffed up the fictitious capital balloon even further.

Some astute bourgeois economists understand that the value of paper has become less and less connected to the real value of goods. Leonard Silk in the *New York Times* (January 9, 1987) cited Peter F. Drucker, a well-known economic theorist and writer, as follows:

"There has been a basic change in the world economy. The 'real' economy of goods and services and the 'symbolic' economy of money, credit and capital are no longer bound tightly to each other, he says, and 'are moving further and further apart'."

In scientific terms, that is known as fictitious value. The October crash was the first loud puncture of the balloon. But even before that, business failures had reached rates not seen since the 1930s. What has collapsed so far is the fictional stock market values built up chiefly in the Reagan years. There is plenty of room for more: third-world debt, consumer debts, banks dependent on them, etc.

Nevertheless, since October the American public has been deluged with reassurances that 1987 means nothing like 1929, because 1) now the economy is growing, in services if not in manufacturing, and 2) all sorts of economic safeguards like bank deposit insurance now



tionality: for example, international food markets were glutted while famine stalked whole countries in Africa and Asia. The auto, steel and electronics industries are all suffering from overcapacity on a world scale. The crisis showed that a cyclical peak had already been passed and that a downturn was overdue.

The Crisis Now

Reagan's "revolution" in economics was a desperate attempt to prolong the post-war boom in the U.S. at the expense of rival powers. The bourgeoisie's hopes were buoyed by Reagan's campaign against labor and the union bureaucracy's willingness to roll over and play dead. But that was not enough. Inflated military spending and high interest rates sucked foreign capital into Wall Street -- where it was used, not for modernization and development, but largely for speculation and importing cheaper

exist. These hopes are futile. Unemployment insurance is severely limited (in the U.S. at present to six months); of the almost 40 million jobless in the advanced imperialist countries, almost half are without public benefits. Bank insurance is also limited and will be exhausted as soon as a couple of major banks fail simultaneously; for savings and loan institutions, the insurer is already insolvent.

As for the "growing economy," in fact U.S. production is stagnating, declining competitively with respect to West Europe and Japan, and can't compete in wage rates with the third world for low-skilled jobs. The wipe-out of manufacturing jobs hardly "confirms that the underlying economy remains sound," as Ronald Reagan put it, echoing Herbert Hoover in 1929. Sure, surplus value can be produced in services, but that is no solace for U.S. imperialism: many key services are linked direct-

ly to nearby productive facilities -- when these move out, the service industries go with them. Not to mention the fact that a dominant imperial power needs the manufacturing that supplies military goods.

The rate of profit, dragged under by ballooning fictitious capital claims, makes productive investment dubious. The crash has compelled a more honest assessment by elements of the bourgeoisie. Thus a Commerce Department spokesman told the New York Times that "The average company does not earn enough to comfortably finance new investment." (November 30.)

The *Times* added: "When profits are viewed in this light, the business outlook is grim, calling for belt-tightening rather than expansion, no matter how brisk sales may be." Accordingly, a Ford auto company executive noted that "We intend to keep cutting costs. The major concern in the industry is too much capacity." It is clear that if the capitalists have their way unchallenged, the future will be desperate for working people.

State Intervention Will Grow

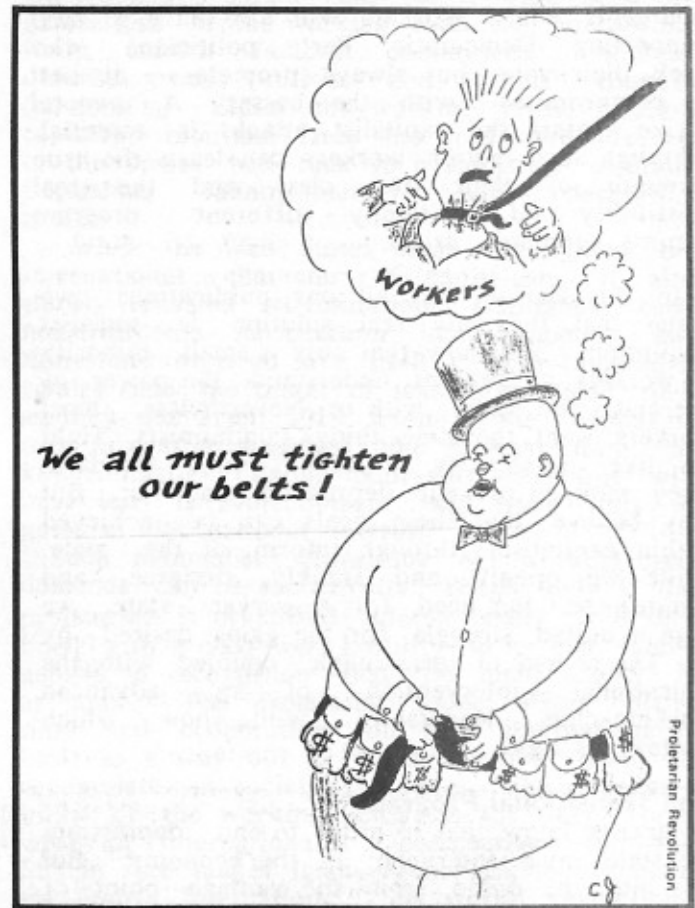
The major difference between 1987 and 1929 is neither the marginal safety net over consumer spending nor the artificial, speculative growth. It is the size of the state's economic role. After 1929, consumer goods industries declined by about one quarter; producer goods went down by three-quarters. Today, government spending amounts to a quarter of U.S. national product (it was less than 3 percent in 1929) and props up the capital goods sectors, especially the military. The market crash has deprived firms of necessary credit and investment funds; for many, government contracts will be all there is. The crash will increase demands on the military budget; together with the deepening rivalry with Japan and Europe for markets, this will intensify pressures for military tension, posturing, threats and ultimately war.

There will inevitably be another economic recession, and the market crash has made it likely sooner rather than later. It is impossible to predict whether the next recession will turn into the next great depression, although that too is now much more likely. The bourgeoisie could allow the automatic mechanisms of the system to run their course, so that the world faced another 1929 -- one way, with all its risks, to try to save capitalism. Or they could actively intervene as Rohatyn and Peterson demand, and try to set things right.

The bourgeoisie must inevitably turn away from deregulation toward greater state intervention. Long ago Marx demonstrated that national and international economy are driven toward ever greater concentration and centralization. The world cannot revert to the days of individual entrepreneurship and "free competition." Likewise, despite its ebbs and flows, state intervention and economic control grow along with the leviathan of capitalist monopoly.

Accordingly, with the glamour of "free mar-

kets" dimmed, the *Times* hoped that "reasoned and reasonable intervention by governments will get us out of this impasse." This trend will be worldwide. In West Europe it will mean at first the return of "socialist" governments. But workers must not be fooled into thinking this



will be done for their interests: reformists are the best equipped to incorporate workers' struggles within capitalism.

Reformism is also the preferred tool for demoralizing and weakening the working class. Rohatyn's bourgeois united front around an authoritative committee would not have the political weight to carry out the necessarily devastating assault on the standard of living: this requires crushing the working class and its organizations, above all the unions. For that, fascism is needed, backed as always by the big bourgeoisie. Moreover, history shows that even fascism and depression are only way stations on the road to world war -- the system's real shot in the arm.

There is only one way to rule out this inhuman perspective: international proletarian revolution to overthrow the capitalist system.

Working-Class Program

So far many workers have reacted to the market crash with a dubious "so what?" Few have any direct stake in the stock market, and there is an understandable feeling of satisfaction that the profiteers are now feeling the pinch. But that is not enough. Workers need their own program.

After the October crash, the LRP's transit

workers' fraction issued a leaflet to New York TWU members on the changing situation and the revolutionary strategy to fight the bosses' attacks. We warned that the working class will have to overcome the killing limitations of isolated strike action; strikes will have to become openly political and will have to confront the bourgeois state. Workers will also have to stop supporting Democratic Party politicians who seek their votes but always promote -- at best -- compromises with the bosses. A general strike against the capitalist attacks is essential. Through such action workers can learn the true strength of their own class and the real possibility of a totally different program against economic crises.

In this leaflet and all our publications we argue that the only real solution is socialist revolution. We know that only a small minority of workers at present understand the power of our class and agree with us. Nevertheless, most workers want the same things communists fight for, like job security, a decent living standard. They want to prevent depression and war. But they believe that these goals can be achieved within capitalism through reform of the state. While we openly and frankly disagree and counterpose the need for a *workers' state*, we urge a united struggle for the gains desired by all. The course of the struggle, coupled with the educational intervention of an advanced working-class leadership, will show which strategy is right.

The Transitional Program

Marxists know that in order to end depression, the state must intervene in the economy. But this must be posed from the vantage point of working-class needs: to safeguard and create jobs, produce goods and supply services. The culmination of decades of Marxist work on socialist programs is the Transitional Program, drafted by Leon Trotsky in 1938. Now that a severe economic crisis is on the horizon, this program will become increasingly relevant to the coming struggles of the working class. It is also perhaps the most abused document in the history of Marxism. We must therefore consider the ways it should and should not be used.

First of all, the Transitional Program is not "the Trotskyist program," as is often claimed. Trotsky's program was socialist revolution; the Transitional Program outlined tactics to reach that goal, utilizing demands which can be used at certain points in the class struggle. It was not an eternal prescription for every circumstance. In particular, it is not a substitute for the classical social-democratic "maximum program" of revolution (as it is normally regarded by "orthodox Trotskyists") but for the "minimum program" of reforms to be enacted under capitalism. It reworks the goals of everyday struggles, taking them to the limit of what not-yet-revolutionary workers can conceive under capitalism; it thereby points the way to the workers' state.

As both Marx and Lenin observed, the

capitalist economy itself is laying the basis for socialism as it concentrates the forces of production. The barriers to socialism are the resistance of the bourgeoisie and its lieutenants inside the working class -- as well as backward (i.e., pro-capitalist) reformist consciousness among workers. Trotsky's transitional demands are based on the transitional drives of the system itself. The program is a series of demands for overcoming reformist consciousness, thus paving the way to revolution.

Transitional demands can be achieved within the bounds of capitalism. Therefore they can be fought for by present-day working-class institutions like unions with reformist leaders. As Trotsky observed in a discussion in the Fourth International, "for us it is a transitional program; but for them it is *the program*."

Nationalization of Industry

But achievable is not the same thing as compatible. A mass struggle by the workers for transitional demands would undermine capitalist social relations. Consider the demand for nationalization of industry, which is likely to be heard more and more as firms shut down for lack of sufficient profits in the coming doldrums. This would further lead to demands for nationalizing the banks and other financial institutions that control the resources needed for rebuilding the economy. However, nationalization by the bourgeois state means declining profits for capital as a whole and would therefore lead to a weakening economy. The crisis of Stalinist capitalism is an indication: despite the bureaucracy's class rule over the workers, profitability is hampered by widespread state intervention, so that the economy loses its expansive force and motivation.

In the West, even when industry is nationalized the bourgeoisie is forced to take advantage of it, and can. The sanctity of private property is an ideology integral to the system; accordingly, capitalists are inevitably well compensated for their property, unprofitable though it has become, while the affected workers continue to suffer. Although nationalizations which cut deeply into profits will advance the centralizing tendencies, it would be disastrous to stop there. Instead of echoing the reformist calls for nationalization, Trotskyists demand expropriation without compensation to the owners. Such a demand points to the heart of the class division and would be a major step toward exposing the irreconcilability of profit-making property rights and the workers' needs.

Full Employment?

Likewise, the demand for full employment is raised by reformist union leaders, but it too is utopian under capitalism. Capitalists need to exploit workers to make profit; to keep wages from rising, they normally make use of mass joblessness to prevent employed workers from complaining too much -- through both threat and example. Capitalists maintain unemploy-

ment by constantly retooling industry to make it more "efficient"; that is, to produce as much or more with less labor. The system, in Marx's words, drives workers out of production. It also leads them to believe that new technology is their enemy.

If capitalism offered full employment, if workers were guaranteed not to lose their jobs, capitalism would lose its drive to accumulate. It would not advance toward socialism or even towards greater prosperity. Production of useful goods would decline and technological development would be retarded; thus long hours, low pay and backward working conditions would continue.

The stagnant stultified capitalism of the Stalinist countries illustrates the point. Obtaining the higher productivity demanded by Gorbachev's reforms means laying off 13 percent of the Soviet work force within 12 years, according to Igor Prostyakov, deputy chairman of the Bureau for Social Development (*Pravda*, January 21, cited in the January 22 *New York Times*).

Marxists are for full employment -- in order to defend our class's real interests. We use the demand for "a sliding scale of working hours with no loss of wages" to make clear that the necessary hours of work must be divided among the available workers. One purpose is to unite the working and unemployed workers to their common benefit: all would have jobs, and all would have to work less. Another is to show that new technology would be an asset: it would mean not the loss of jobs but instead a continuing reduction in hours for all. Clearly such a demand, necessary as it is but hostile both to capitalist relations and capitalist ideology, is compatible only with a workers' state.

A genuinely transitional program could be fulfilled honestly and consistently only under a new state, one not ruled by the capitalists. Whereas the reformists and centrists confine the workers' struggles within the limitations

imposed by capitalism, the transitional program speaks to the need for a revolutionary leadership unwilling to sacrifice workers' interests to save the system.

In addition to expropriation, the sliding scale of hours and other economic measures, the transitional program calls for fighting mass organizations of the working class that go beyond trade unions: factory committees, workers' defense groups (militias) and workers' councils (or soviets). Either the working class smashes capitalist rule and frees the productive forces, or the bosses will turn to a fascistic solution. Capitalism cannot survive with decreasing profits.

While the Wall Street crash highlighted the international character of capitalism, it also starkly revealed its limitations. Capitalism cannot overcome its division into competing nation-states even to save itself. Inter-imperialist rivalry and the threat of war loom ahead, just as they did after 1929. Even if the capitalists turn to drastic measures like nationalization of key industries, under bourgeois rule this will only lead to protectionism and trade wars in guise of the "national interest."

Such nationalist distortions of working-class demands can be successfully fought only if the proletariat is organized internationally and imbued with a class-war hostility to its own bourgeoisie, a recognition that "the main enemy is at home." The proletariat alone offers planning and cooperation on an internationalist basis as a way out of the destructive drive to accumulate at society's expense. The responsibility of the working class as the only force with an internationalist perspective for the human race makes it an urgent task to re-create the Fourth International, the world revolutionary party. Today this means building the League for the Revolutionary Party in the United States and Workers Revolution in Australia, and helping to construct our international tendency around the world. ■

Bad Marx

Karl Marx was the great revolutionary theoretician of capitalist economy. It is no surprise that bourgeois analysts have ignored his analysis of crises in trying to understand what has happened. But it might have been expected that the left press, especially that calling itself Marxist, would make some effort to use Marx's economic theory in their coverage of the stock market crash.

The surprise is that very few "Marxists" even tried; and most of those who did simply borrowed Marx's name to display their own pet anti-Marxist theories. We draw most of our examples from organizations describing themselves not just as Marxist but as Trotskyist, which ought to imply an especially firm dedication to the principles of communism. For the present we limit our survey to the U.S.

We start with a journal whose very name sug-

gests some obligation to take up Marx -- the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* issued by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. Steve Bloom's article on the crisis purports to explain "What Caused It and What It Means" -- but Bloom never once invokes Marxism either to defend or to criticize it. Instead he takes a ho-hum attitude toward the crash, observing that markets inevitably go up and down and that Wall Street could even "regain its previous strength and reach new highs." He notes that "the crash reflects an economic reality ... eating away at the roots of the capitalist system," but gives no insight into the reality beyond the market.

As for Marx's law of value, which had everything to do with the overvalued stock markets, Bloom wonders aloud whether "we could find a

way to measure equity [the value of a stock] objectively." That is a backhanded attack on Marxist theory and a blow against any scientific understanding of society.

Other "Marxist" papers whose analyses say nothing about Marxist theory include the Internationalist Workers Party's *Working Class Opposition* (Nov.-Dec.), the Revolutionary Workers League's *Fighting Worker* and the Revolutionary Socialist League's *Torch* (November 15). The International Socialist Organization's *Socialist Worker* does note Marx but forgets to mention its own permanent arms economy theory (which is supposed to explain the post-war boom and its aftermath) -- thereby exposing its true, diminished value. The Socialist Workers Party's *Militant* (November 13) hints at a bit of Marxist analysis without actually mentioning the dreaded name, preferring (like the others) to cite only certified bourgeois authorities.

Marx's Crisis Theory

Among those hiding their own unscientific notions behind Marx's name is the Spartacist League. Marx analyzed business cycles back in the 1840s, *Workers Vanguard* tells us, "and the world has not changed all that much since then." "Typically every 40 or 50 years there is a big crash." But that is not what Marx said. Marx wrote that crashes follow a 10-year cycle with an identifiable materialist dynamic. Since then capitalism has changed a great deal (as Marx foresaw): it entered its epoch of monopoly, imperialism and decay -- the key to both the immensity of depressions in this century and the longer gaps between them. The fashionable "long-wave" theory, founded by the Soviet economist Kondratiev, resurrected by Ernest Mandel and now adopted by the Spartacists, was well answered by Trotsky in 1923:

"As regards the large segments of the capitalist curve of development (fifty years) which Professor Kondratiev incautiously proposes to designate also as cycles, their character and duration are determined not by the internal interplay of capitalist forces but by those external conditions though whose channel capitalist development flows." (*Problems of Everyday Life*.)

By external conditions Trotsky meant the inherent factors of disequilibrium of capitalism in its epoch of decay: imperialist conquests, wars and revolutions. The post-World War II boom built on the working class's defeats fits his conception perfectly. But the pseudo-Trotskyist Spartacists prefer to deny that there ever was such a boom. If Marxists are to seriously prepare for what the workers will face they have to be able to account for what has happened in the past. Denying the facts -- and inventing Marx to do it -- is pure charlatany.

The Spartacists do throw in their usual explanation for all capitalist evils, Reagan's "anti-Soviet war drive." They have used this to motivate everything from Reagan's murderous raid on Libya (a target chosen carefully to avoid confrontation with the USSR) to the class

struggle in the U.S. (as if there had been no struggle before the Russian revolution). Now, "behind the Wall Street crash is the counter-revolutionary drive of American imperialism, from a weakened economic base, to roll back Soviet power ... " Of course; all it takes to make capitalism crisis-free is to return to the detente policies of the 1970s. Presumably Reagan is getting all buddy-buddy with Gorbachev because he's learned his economic lesson: lay off the Soviets.

What the Spartacists don't quite say, the Communist Party does. CP theorist Victor Perlo told the *New York Times* (November 1) that a thorough-going reform program is needed, including "the lifting of the embargo on trade with the socialist countries." This is a plea for the chimera of peaceful coexistence among imperialists, not a serious recipe for economic health. Perlo also specified the "restoring of upper-income and corporate tax rates to their 1977 levels," as if the bourgeoisie was paying its fair share in those good old days.

The worst theoretical disasters occur when centrists actually try to invoke Marx's teachings. Thus Perlo justifies his critique of capital with an attempt at a Marxist formula: "Briefly, cyclical crises occur because production gets ahead of mass purchasing power, an inevitable result of the capitalist aim of higher and higher profits." This, however has nothing in common with Marxism; it is unadulterated underconsumptionism, a left-populist notion which was trenchantly demolished by Marx in Volume 2 of *Capital*:

"It is sheer tautology to say that crises are caused by the scarcity of effective consumption ... If one were to attempt to give this tautology the semblance of a pro-founder justification by saying that the working class receives too small a portion of its own product and the evil would be remedied as soon as it receives a larger share of it and its wages increase in consequence, one could only remark that crises are always prepared by precisely a period in which wages rise generally and the working class actually gets a larger share."

A more detailed case for the same underconsumptionist argument is contributed by *Socialist Action* (November), whose centerfold highlights Marxist theory in the aftermath of the crash:

"The cause of periodic crises of overproduction derives from an economic system in which wages are necessarily less than the new values incorporated in the products produced by working people. This means that the product of society cannot be profitably absorbed. Workers cannot buy back all the goods they produce. And while capitalists certainly can buy the entire surplus product, they can eat only so many steaks, use only so many cars and live in only so many houses. Unsold surpluses must accumulate."

The multiplicity of misconceptions here requires some dissection. The surplus argument

is true only if capitalists confine themselves, like workers, to buying consumer goods. But that is precisely what differentiates capitalists from workers: they own capital and therefore they buy production goods to put their capital to use. Moreover, while the need for consumer

values incorporated in the products produced by working people. That is, the workers would get everything directly, in their paychecks -- a crude populist scheme. No matter what class ran such a society, if all surplus value went for wages nobody would have resources to buy



*Chinese "post-capitalism."
East is East and West is West,
and now the twain meet as the capitalist crisis ravages both.*

goods is limited by the size of the population (and even more, in class society, by the restricted capacity of the mass of people to buy what they need), the need for capital goods is constantly growing. As Marx put it:

"Owing to the distinctive methods of production developing in the capitalist system the same number of laborers ... operate, work up and productively consume in the same time span an ever-increasing quantity of means of labor, machinery and fixed capital of all sorts, raw and auxiliary materials -- and consequently a constant capital of an ever-increasing value." (*Capital*, Volume 3, Chapter 13.)

It is certainly true that in time of crisis, the full array of goods produced for capitalists cannot be profitably sold. The reason is not the size of the bosses' stomachs but rather the capacity of their pockets -- their profit rate. *Socialist Action's* attempt to simplify Marxism results in falsifying it -- and points to reformist political conclusions. For if only consumer goods are considered, and if workers' wages don't permit them to buy back all that is produced, the solution is obvious: just raise wages. The capitalists might become somewhat poorer, but at least their system would survive its incapacitating crises. Of course the capitalists don't do this -- not because they're too greedy for their own good, but because they know it won't save their system. They need profits to get more and better production goods. The real solution -- the elimination of class divisions in society -- requires more than squeezing higher wages out of bosses. It begins with the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class.

As for *Socialist Action's* first sentence above, it suggests the possibility of an economic system in which wages are *not* less than the new

production goods, and therefore society would quickly stagnate and collapse. It would avoid capitalist crises only at the cost of worse ones.

Marx argued in 1875 against a similar demand (by the Lassallean socialists) that the workers get the products of their labor "undiminished." Even in a workers' state, deductions would have to be made for replacing the used-up means of production, for expansion of production and for insurance against calamities. "These deductions from the 'undiminished proceeds of labor' are an economic necessity," Marx added, denouncing the Lassalleans' "high-sounding" but false words.

The absurdity of *Socialist Action's* reasoning is shown further by their own theory that the USSR and similar Stalinist societies are "post-capitalist" and supposedly free of capitalist crises. But these countries also use the wage system, and in all of them wages are less than the new values produced. By *Socialist Action's* argument on wages, crises would be inevitable there too. In fact, economic crises run rampant in the Stalinist countries and are at least as serious as those in the traditionally capitalist West. That is because their economic system is also capitalism, in stultified form; their problems are due not primarily to insufficient wages but to class division and the laws of capital discovered by Marx.

We have explained in the past that the chasm between Marxism and the left has two fundamental causes: the triumph of Stalinism over the Soviet workers' state and the smashing of its revolutionary traditions; and the vast expansion of the middle classes during the post-war boom, which swamped the extreme left and isolated it from the proletariat. Both factors are now on the wane. The reawakening of a fighting working-class movement is the crucial condition for the revival of proletarian Marxism. ■

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Election Fraud in Haiti

For a Workers Revolutionary Party!

The masses' overthrow of Francois "Baby Doc" Duvalier in 1986 opened the door for a workers' socialist revolution in Haiti, the only way to achieve a society of freedom and prosperity. But the failure to build a proletarian revolutionary party has given leadership by default to bourgeois and pro-bourgeois elements. Tragically, the November 29 massacre shows that counterrevolution is on the march.

For the moment, power rests with General Henri Namphy, the lackey of deposed "President-for-Life" Duvalier and his bosses, the U.S. imperialists. Backed by the army and Duvalier's secret police, the infamous Tontons Macoute newly crawled out of their holes,

As was expected, the U.S.'s favored candidate, a political science professor and non-entity named Leslie Manigat with lightweight anti-Duvalierist credentials, was declared the victor. Namphy expects that installation of the pro-U.S. Manigat will lead to the restoration of badly needed American aid, and he hopes to ride out the storm of opposition to his rigged election. Of course, with Manigat as president, General Namphy will continue to pull the strings behind the scene.

The response of the U.S. State Department has been to express unhappiness at the November massacre and to note that the January election was "flawed." Nonetheless, the U.S. imperialists indicated they would "work with" whatever



Soldiers patrol Haitian capital. Capitalism has trouble erecting democratic facade.

Namphy held his own elections -- under the "protection" of the army guilty of the November massacre. The election was a joke; it is estimated that less than 10 percent of eligible voters cast ballots. Many voted -- quite openly -- several times. Ballots were printed by the candidates themselves, which meant that each voter's choice was obvious. On top of this, polling officials inspected each ballot before it was cast. But why go on?

General Namphy did have his puppet election commission make one concession, no doubt to ease the U.S. government's mild discomfort about the farcical and undemocratic nature of the election: it disqualified seven of the most notorious long-term Duvalierists from running.

government emerged and bring pressure on it to change. Contrast this to the screaming condemnation by the Reagan Administration and Congress of the vastly more honest and democratic bourgeois elections held in Nicaragua in 1984. This hypocrisy is explained by the fact that despite the betrayals and vacillations of the petty-bourgeois Sandinista leadership, the Nicaraguan regime is still forced to reflect the anti-imperialist sentiment of the revolutionary workers and peasants who overthrew Somoza. Behind Namphy stand the counterrevolutionary forces of the defeated Duvalier dictatorship aiming to crush the revolution.

Though the U.S. would prefer a bit more democratic cover, the imperialists have no intention

of coming down hard on Namphy; after all, he has so far been successful in squelching the upsurge of the Haitian masses. By distancing itself from Namphy through mild criticisms, the U.S. leaves open its option of switching horses to a moderate, middle-class alternative (a Haitian Aquino), should the regime collapse in the face of mass hostility. However, during the election the U.S. military held the largest maneuvers of their kind ever in the area -- an unmistakable warning to the Haitian masses of what awaits them should they make any revolutionary attempts.

While the major responsibility for the November massacre rests with the U.S. imperialists and flunkies like Namphy, the slaughter



All doors are closed for desperate Haitian masses except proletarian revolution.

was aided by misleaders who provided a democratic cover for the sham electoral process. The workers were clearly losing sympathy for the electoral interests of the bourgeoisie. It was an act of criminal irresponsibility, considering the attacks and killings before the elections and the complete lack of defense, for petty-bourgeois politicians and clergy to urge the voters to the polls "to pull up the CNG root and branch." The bourgeois democrats used the masses' hatred for the regime to send them to slaughter by the Macoutes and the army.

The Left and the Working Class

It is not enough to blame imperialism, as many leftists do. It is also crucial to dispose of the common notion that there is a "People's Front" solution for Haiti. Despite its leftist

appearance, this slogan stands for the maintenance of capitalism. It is counterposed to the building of a working-class party and a workers' and peasants' government.

The pro-Moscow Unified Party of Haitian Communists (PUCH) overtly sided with the bourgeoisie: it condemned a general strike called by the labor unions in June to protest Namphy's control of the elections. On the other hand, the far-left organizations seem to have urged a boycott of the elections and to have opposed the politicians involved with the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP). What they didn't do was champion the need for a revolutionary party that recognizes the proletariat as the revolutionary class and fights for workers' socialist revolution. The program of socialist revolution in Haiti and throughout the Caribbean is the way forward to win over the other toilers of city and countryside for the overthrow of the junta and the "democratic" bourgeois fakers.

In contrast, the groups of the extreme left correctly say, "Only one solution: revolution!" But when asked "Who will do it?" their response is "the Haitian people." Which Haitian people, which class? To avoid the class question by talking of "the people" goes along with avoiding the question of socialism by talking of "real democracy." The net effect is to leave the working class in the hands of petty-bourgeois leadership.

The working class has shown itself to be the natural leader of the revolution. There have been frequent mass strikes in which the workers pulled the small shopkeepers along behind them; general strikes have been one of the most effective weapons in the revolution so far. One general strike forced the old Duvalierists out of the first junta; another prevented Namphy from taking control of the elections in June. But the working class is now exhausted from using this proletarian weapon under bourgeois leadership for bourgeois demands.

The classic objection of the radical middle class to the call for workers' revolution is that the Haitian working class is small. (The radical petty-bourgeoisie is smaller still, but that doesn't stop *them* from putting themselves forward for leadership!) However, the Marxist analysis of the centrality of the proletariat is based on the social weight and social role of the various classes. The urban working class is concentrated and organized in a way that makes the seizure of political power possible. The majority of Haitians live in the countryside; their hope rests on following the workers' lead.

The working class in Haiti consists not just of manufacturing workers but also freight and passenger transport workers -- natural leaders of mass strike movements. There are also warehouse workers, dockworkers, market porters and workers of the larger restaurants. These diverse blue-collar workers already constitute a sizable chunk of the urban population. Then there are office clerks in the government and private industry, who played an important role

in the general strikes. Shop clerks and a multitude of artisans (tailors, mechanics and so on) have been active, especially in the Vigilance Brigades -- mass working-class defense guards.

The Extreme Left

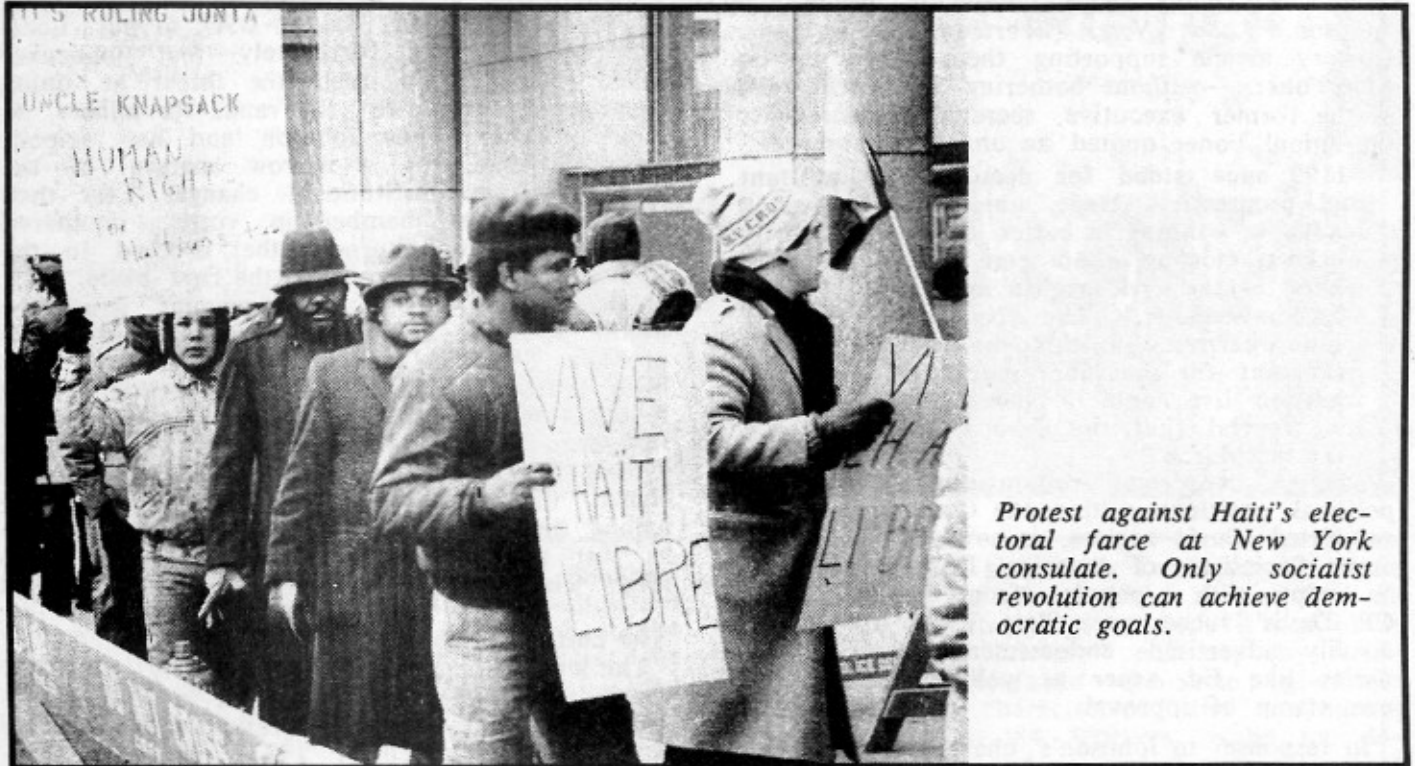
But on the far left, for example, the Assemblée Populaire Nationale (APN: People's National Assembly) calls for the "various progressive organizations" to "form a popular bloc." This, it argues, "is a very important stage of the people's struggle. The progressive forces, once turned away from the opportunist sector, must organize and form a genuine unity in order to lead the popular struggle which will lead to a qualitative change in the structure of Haiti." (*Haiti Progres*, December 9.)

In a joint declaration with the Metropolitan Area Public Transport Drivers Union and the

they desire" This too is a stagist strategy: today the workers must struggle for "freedom" only, which in reality means a non-repressive bourgeois government -- as if such a thing were possible under the desperate conditions of the country. Only later they can fight for their own class interests and for socialism.

The left newspaper *Haiti Progres* calls for a "provisional civil government" which, among other things, will disarm the Macoute. How? The CNG is a Macoute government with a monopoly of armed force; to disarm it requires defeating it through revolution. Instead, *Haiti Progres* spreads the illusion that a civilian government can walk into power and proceed at its leisure to disarm the Macoute. How does this differ from the illusions spread by petty-bourgeois opportunists about peaceful elections?

The Haitian workers know very well how to



Protest against Haiti's electoral farce at New York consulate. Only socialist revolution can achieve democratic goals.

Ligue Ouvrière Socialiste (LOS: Workers' Socialist League), the APN suggests that genuine bourgeois nationalists are defenders of the people's interests and call on "all democratic organizations to join in order to find together a single alternative to replace the CNG." This is a standard popular-frontist formula for tying the workers and oppressed masses to the limited programs of the reformist bourgeoisie.

When the LRP criticized this declaration in a leaflet addressed to a Haitian protest demonstration in New York in December, LOS supporters insisted that the document it approved had been altered before publication. Nevertheless, the LOS itself calls for "the formation of a *single front* ... which will allow the Haitian masses to engage in a final battle with the Duvalierist remnants and to uproot them from the soil to find at last the freedom

disarm the Macoute. The first order of business for the workers in the major cities after Baby Doc fled was to hunt down and kill every one they could find with whatever weapons came to hand. Some were burned to death, which bourgeois moralizers condemned as "barbarism" and (of course) "going to far." Recent events show who the real barbarians are -- and that the workers did not go far enough.

Several times the workers and poor of Port-au-Prince responded to Macoute terror by forming Vigilance Brigades and committees. Now the task is to build, centralize and *arm* these brigades. A Haitian revolutionary party would lead such a campaign as the first step in organizing a Haitian workers' revolutionary army. Those who agree with this program must use it today in order to build the nucleus of an international revolutionary party, in Haiti, the United States and everywhere. ■

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and Save Our Union) in the 1986 elections.

Slate Two stood for re-unification with Henry Nicholas's National Union of Hospital and Healthcare Workers. Key to their strategy for defeating Turner was to put forward a relatively unknown black figure, Johnson. Insiders knew that old timers from the Davis regime like Kay would be running the show. The election victory represented more a vote against Turner than a vote for Johnson and Slate Two, which made no serious effort to mobilize the ranks.

Despite the heavy tokenism added to the usual bureaucratic strategy of dependence on Democratic politicians, the left heralded in the "new" leadership slate nominally headed by Johnson. *Labor Notes* (February 1986) ran a flowery article supporting them signed by one Moe Foner -- without bothering to identify him as the former executive secretary-treasurer of the union! Foner quoted an unnamed observer:

"1199 once stood for democratic, militant and progressive trade unionism. It was a leader in winning a better life for minority workers, most of whom were women. It was a leader in the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements. The National Hospital Union carries on this tradition, but it's important for the labor movement that this tradition live again in New York. That's why it's crucial that the Save Our Union slate wins in March."

Foner, who was responsible for shaping political positions within the Communist Party-supported Davis regime, is now with the Democratic Socialists of America. DSA, of course, is as happy with a popular front strategy as the CP. Davis' successors, Slate Two, also got the heavily advertised endorsement of DSA luminaries like Ed Asner as well as Leon Davis' own stamp of approval.

In response to Johnson's charge of racist mistreatment, her fellow bureaucrats have the gall to *now* accuse her of being "unqualified," over a year and a half after the election. The pussy-footing around the charge of tokenism is obvious. In a *Guardian* article (October 28), Executive Vice-President Dennis Rivera stated, "It is very painful to be accused of trying to use [Johnson]." But he added, "My own personal feeling is that if we are going to run someone else for office, I think it should be on the merits, not on race" -- proving the truth of the accusation! As well, Rivera stated in regard to his preconception of the slate, "We all agreed, including Georgianna, that Eddie Kay should administer the staff and help in [Johnson's] growth." (*Village Voice*, October 20.)

Kay & Co. recently pushed through constitutional changes that give decision-making power to the executive council as a whole, with a few hand-picked "rank and file" representatives placed on the council for democratic window

dressings. The president is stripped of power and becomes a perpetual figurehead. Since it is understood that the black majority union membership will normally elect a black president, this change is indeed racist.

Democratic Facade

The democratic facade was important, however, not particularly to fool workers but to guarantee left/labor endorsement. Thus Herman Benson of the Association for Union Democracy had no trouble supporting Kay & Co.'s constitutional changes. He admitted, nevertheless, that "Local 1199 has a long history of authoritarian leadership, especially under Leon Davis." (*Newsday*, October 26.) Indeed many of the current officers like Kay and Rivera served faithfully under Davis for years -- without challenging *his* dictatorial authority.

Johnson appealed to Lenore Miller, president of the parent union, the RWDSU, to put Local 1199 in trusteeship; fortunately that maneuver failed. Kay & Co. used the threat at union meetings to convince the ranks to adhere to their program. Thus Johnson and her friends were defeated by a narrow margin in the recent vote on constitutional changes. Less than one-third of the membership voted, compared to the record-high turnout that ushered in the Johnson/Slate Two group in the first place.

While racism remains a paramount issue for union members, Johnson's campaign had a few problems, like the fact that the membership has been thoroughly demoralized by sellout after sellout (the last led by Johnson). Johnson exhibited even greater opportunism by hiring Doris Turner as a personal assistant, a move designed to gain her a thin layer of support among die-hard Turnerites. It also exposed her as just another operator to the members at large, who had already been burned by Turner.

The Left Squirms

The left has squirmed uncomfortably over the racial strife. Most stuck to their "progressive" guns. For example, *Labor Notes*, in an article by Kim Moody (November 1987), mentioned "an element of racism and/or sexism" but emphasized the fact that Johnson was aligned with all the "conservative" forces, i.e., Miller. The *Guardian* as well echoed the notion that the anti-communist motives of folks like Miller outweighed the racism question. The unstated implication is that support to Kay & Co., however reserved, was still in order. (There are of course others, like the New Alliance Party, that capitulate to Johnson by highlighting her charges of racism while downplaying the details of her political record and its deadly

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effect on the rank and file.)

Recent developments have upset the plot that sees Kay, Rivera and friends representing the left in opposition to the Johnson/Miller conservative alliance. An agreement was reached between the arch-conservative Miller and the Kay coalition, both of them now in opposition to Johnson, who refused to sign the agreement and continues a campaign against it -- even though they offered her a big fat raise!

The agreement stipulates that in case of a merger between the RWDSU and the UFCW, reportedly in the making, Local 1199 retains the right to secede. Because the agreement was

the control of the capitalist state and unleashing the massive power of the working class. Under the unions' reformist leadership, democracy is a deception that has come to mean little but schemes and maneuvers by the outs against the ins. Thanks to such "democracy," the rank and file has become further demoralized, and the remaining embers of militancy are being stamped out.

Only people with computerized scorecards could keep track of all the bureaucratic maneuvers of the past few years in 1199. And only the LRP has maintained opposition to all bureaucratic sides. We have continually warned

1199 marchers were a key contingent in January 18 anti-racist demonstration in New York. If not for regressive leadership, 1199 could lead a real fight against racist violence.



made further behind the backs of the members then usual (it even included a stipulation against any of its aspects being released to the media), it is hard to predict exactly where the next round of bureaucratic chips will fall. One thing certain is that the "progressive" or "conservative" labels don't stop the bureaucrats from working together when it suits them!

The left conveniently ignores the fact that the word "progressive" really stands for *reformist*. Use of this label also confuses the pro-capitalist role of reformist leaders with the movement of the working class. Workers participate in struggles for reforms, struggles which are progressive both for the gains they win and because they can lead to revolutionary consciousness. But for both ends the workers must overcome the barrier of reformist leadership. Marxists understand that reformism and revolution are counterposed and that reformist leadership is not progressive.

What upsets the left supporters of Slate Two is that the so-called progressives who supposedly stand for union democracy are being exposed for the phonies they really are. Real union democracy can only be based on a membership mobilized around a strategy to fight capitalism. It means freeing the unions from

that the Johnson slate was fundamentally the same old crap as Turner and Davis. By the time the 1986 contract was settled, it was obvious; the contract "victory" endorsed by Johnson, Kay *et al* continued the same givebacks policy that had characterized the outrageous Turner sellout in '84. Workers, while too demoralized to demand a real fightback, were vastly disappointed at the failure of the campaign promise of a good contract.

Now is the time to call unequivocally for building a revolutionary opposition that can dump *all* of the bureaucrats. The present factions have made 1199 a playtoy for their power games, while the union, given the concessions strategy supported by all of them, crumbles. If they continue to dominate the union it will inevitably be crushed by management.

The solution for 1199 hospital workers can not rest with any kind of "progressive" opposition that attempts to manipulate the ranks, as all these players have done. Instead it lies in the development of a workers' movement against the capitalist attacks and the building of a revolutionary party. Leftists who tail any part of this bureaucratic crap are part of the growing problem, not part of the solution. ■

Palestine

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those in the occupied territories exploded the myth of Israel's ability to live peacefully alongside those to whom it denies basic human rights. More and more, Israel reveals a striking resemblance to its reactionary ally, South Africa. Israel's dependence on cheap Arab labor points to its growing convergence with apartheid. As one Israeli said of cheap Arab labor: "Our main problem started in 1967. We got so many people for manual work that many Israelis have stopped working with their hands."

Not only Israel was caught unawares by the Palestinian upsurge. Only weeks before the explosion, an Arab summit meeting in Jordan gave the Palestinians the cold shoulder. As for the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), it has been forced to race ahead to catch up to the masses. The backbone of the rebellion is Palestinian youth outside the PLO's control. They represent a new generation that has grown up under Israeli occupation and does not carry the scars of defeat and demoralization from the 1967 war. Having only known the bitter existence of occupation, the youth are more intransigent than the older leadership. They appear to have fewer illusions in the Arab states that have repeatedly betrayed them.

The ascendancy of a new militant generation of Palestinian youth shows that the hopes of Israeli and Western imperialism to develop a moderate Arab leadership have gone up in smoke. There is no moderate solution to the Palestinian question, no answer to Palestinian self-determination compatible with the existence of the Zionist state. This recognition by the Israeli rulers led to the so-called iron-fist policy. All the agonizing by the Zionist left and its supporters over Israel's "moral dilem-

ma" is a futile attempt to find moderate sell-out Arab leaders whom the masses will follow. Thus Tzaly Reshef, a founder of the Peace Now movement, called on the Palestinians to moderate their struggle.

"What we, the peace camp, need to show the Israeli public is that there are alternatives and that there are people in the Palestinian community with whom we can come to terms and live side by side. This is the signal we are waiting for from the Palestinian leadership within the West Bank and from outside. We need to hear moderate voices on the other side that will give us, the doves, the feeling that our minimum demands for security and survival will be met." (*New York Times*, January 6.)

Shot, tortured and starved, the Palestinians are urged to send out moderate signals to improve the position of the Israeli peace movement. Only people with their heads in the sand could fail to see that the youths who bare their chests to Israeli bullets have indeed sent out a signal: not "peace now" but "freedom now!"

Palestinian Self-Determination

The Palestinian revolt has taken the form of a national struggle, a struggle for self-determination. This represents both the source of its strength and its weakness. Its strength is based on the unity and determination of a people in the face of national oppression by the Zionists, the imperialist powers and the Arab states. Its weakness is that the national form of the struggle has blurred the class issue, the key to any solution beneficial to the masses. Unless the class question is brought to the forefront, the most powerful weapon of the Palestinian masses, their leadership of the Middle Eastern socialist revolution, will be blunted.

This is most clearly revealed through the general strikes. As a consequence of Zionist rule

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since 1967, the occupied areas have been turned into virtual Bantustans where Palestinian workers are forced to toil inside Israel to earn a living. They are not only an abundant source of cheap labor but also the bulk of labor in certain industries like construction.

While daily migrant Palestinian labor plays an increasingly more significant role in the Israeli economy, it does not have the ability to directly shut down the Zionist state, as the black workers in South Africa can. Rather, the general strikes have been more an act of national resistance, combining refusal to work in Israel with commercial strikes that have brought the West Bank and Gaza to a standstill.

The strength of the general strikes has been their openly political character. They were not aimed at economic reforms; they demanded an end to Israeli occupation. Their weakness lay in the absence of a political strategy and leadership that understands the necessity to challenge the Israeli state. For this, more than just the withholding of migrant labor is needed. The task is to attack the Zionist assumption of cross-class Israeli unity through a working class-led general strike that shuts down Israel and threatens bourgeois property rights.

This strategy was in part realized by the December 21 general strike, which extended to the Arab population inside the Israeli borders. While the Arabs inside Israel were aroused to support the uprising on the West Bank and Gaza, their strike activity arose from their own oppression -- slum conditions, low paying jobs, crime and drugs. The situation was similar to that of blacks in the U.S. when open Jim Crow laws were in effect.

Thus the Israeli Arabs not only raised a challenge to the Zionists, they also raised the class question inside Israel itself. In doing so they forced the Zionist trade unions, which denounced them for endangering Israel, to nevertheless defend them as workers, even if only in the form of lip service.

Class struggle raises the possibility of a different kind of general strike from those seen so far: a proletarian-led strike that aims to split off the Jewish working class from the Zionist rulers and thereby undermines the basis of the racist state. A revolutionary party is needed to link the Palestinian struggle for self-determination to the struggle for socialist revolution in all Palestine -- a combination that would mean the beginning of the Middle Eastern socialist revolution.

Nationalism No Solution

Revolutionary Marxists do not equate defense of the Palestinian right to self-determination with support to the petty-bourgeois nationalist politics of the PLO. The call for socialist revolution is not an attempt to submerge the Palestinian question, as the nationalists claim. Events are proving that the shoe is on the other foot: it is the nationalists who are now betraying the struggle for self-determination.

It is no accident that Yasser Arafat has made clear his willingness to accept a Palestinian

state on the West Bank and Gaza in return for recognition of the Israeli state. As a bourgeois institution itself, the PLO is incapable of challenging the reactionary class structure of the Arab states; thus it cannot confront the reactionary character of Israel. Unable to threaten Israeli rule from within and lacking the forces to win militarily, the nationalists can only hope to achieve what only a short time ago was deemed unthinkable -- a deal with the Zionists.

But Arafat's new-found "realism" is a pipe dream. For the Zionists to accept a Palestinian state means to acknowledge the existence of a Palestinian nation. This would be tantamount to



Heroic Palestinian youth stoning Israeli storm-troopers. Arab worker-led general strike could maim Israel's war machine.

admitting the truth, that Israel is a colonial-settler state built on the robbery of the Palestinians. For the Zionists this would be a first step in dismantling the Jewish state. It would raise the question of the rights of the people who formed, before 1948, the majority in the present Israeli territory. If you give an inch ...

Hence the ferocity of the Israeli repression. Israel cannot tolerate any trace of a Palestinian nation; its policy is based on an attempt to eradicate any sense of Palestinian identity. Israel's unwillingness to deal with the PLO has nothing to do with the terrorism issue; after all, Israel sold arms to the Iranian "terrorists." Zionism clings to the myth, completely shattered by the uprising on the West Bank and Gaza, that if you eliminate the PLO you eliminate the Palestinian issue. In this warped notion, the PLO is not a result of the existence of a Palestinian people but rather the Palestinians are a myth, a creation of the PLO.

An international peace conference, with or without the PLO, could only serve to barter away the rights of Palestinians and undermine the heroic struggle on the West Bank and Gaza. A revolutionary party is necessary to lead the struggle because only the socialist revolution can win self-determination for the Palestinians and offer any hope of a future to all workers, Arab and Jewish, in the Middle East. ■

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Spring 1988

Defend the Palestinian Revolution!

A mighty revolt against Israeli occupation has swept from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the Arab population in Israel itself. Television cameras have captured the vivid image of heroic Palestinian youth armed only with stones standing up to the deadliest force in the region. Once again events have revealed the reactionary mission of the Zionist state.

Despite massive efforts by Israel to quell what Prime Minister Shamir calls "disturbances," the Palestinian masses show no sign of letting up. The Israeli press is full of reports of the soldiers' bewilderment in the face of continued resistance. One officer admitted the army's failure to control the situation. Acknowledging that "the residents control the main roads," he added that "the strip is a place of wildness." (*New York Times*, January 13.)

For weeks the Palestinians endured brutal repression: more than 30 killed, over 2000 arrests, countless injuries from shootings, beatings and torture and moves to deport those accused of leading the rebellion against Israeli occupation. All this having failed, the Israelis turned to "collective punishment." This means denying food and medicine to the refugee camps where Palestinians already live under barbaric con-



New York: Demonstrators protest Israeli murders at UN mission. Despite official murmurs, U.S. imperialism backs Zionist oppression.

ditions. Starvation and disease are the weapons of Israeli "democracy."

Any illusion by the Israeli oppressors that this revolt was just another "disturbance" was shattered in December by a general strike of Arabs living in Israel. That the supposedly tamed Arab people within Israel were now joining

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1199's Regressive Progressives

There is a ferocious split in the New York hospital workers' union, Local 1199, between President Georgianna Johnson and the majority of the Executive Council led by Executive Secretary-Treasurer Eddie Kay.

Last September Johnson, who is black, came out in public opposition to her fellow officers. She accused them of racism, pointing particularly to Kay, who is white. She now says they wanted her as a black figurehead, not a real leader. In response, Kay and his supporters accuse her of abandoning their "democratic/progressive" agenda and collaborating with unsa-

vory figures for self-serving aggrandizement.

This split is an echo of a long and bitter factional struggle between the union's founder and long-time president, Leon Davis, and his successor, Doris Turner. Turner's reign as President of Local 1199 was seen by many leftists as a dire turn to corruption, away from the "progressive" tradition of Davis, who had reigned as president for 26 years. After a disastrous strike in 1984, a majority of members voted Turner out and endorsed instead Johnson & Co.'s "Slate Two" (a.k.a. Unity and Progress

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