

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

The Workers' Advocate Supplement



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June 15, 1985

On the Black Panther Party

Speech at the Second National Conference
of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA

In this issue we continue the series of articles reporting on the speeches of last fall's Second National Conference of the Marxist-Leninist Party. The conference was held under the slogans "Deeper among the masses — Build the Marxist-Leninist Party!" and "Carry forward the struggle against racism and national oppression — Work for proletarian leadership!"

The following speech was among those that dealt with the nature of the trends in the black movement in the 1960's and early 70's. This is important for the study of how revolutionary ferment develops and manifests itself among the masses and for the question of how the proletarian party should deal with different trends. It will be reprinted in two parts.

Part One

Comrades, one of the more important phenomena of the black people's struggle of the 1960s was the Black Panther Party. In preparation for the conference, a group of comrades has done extensive work researching the history of the Black Panther Party, its rise and its fall. In this speech we will begin to address some of this history and, together with it, some questions of the conditions in which the Black Panther Party arose, and also, very importantly, how the American Communist Workers Movement (ML) in its first years viewed the Black Panther Party and attempted to deal with it. [The discussion of the relationship of the left to the Black Panther Party, including an overview of the tactics of the ACWM(ML), a predecessor of the MLP, towards the Panthers, is in the second part of the speech that will appear in a future issue of The Supplement.]

Before going into the speech, I want to offer a quotation from Lenin which has some relevance to certain of the issues at stake when we talk about this period of history — issues which arose regard-

ing our discussion of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, [see the speech reproduced in the Jan. 15 issue of The Supplement] and are relevant again to the Black Panther Party, and generally, to this stage of the movement.

In 1916, in the middle of the imperialist world war, the Easter Rebellion for Irish independence took place. Karl Radek, in the organ of the Zimmerwald group, published an article which held that the Easter Rebellion in Ireland was not a genuine revolutionary attempt, but rather a putsch. It was so not only because it was made by a relatively small band of armed men, but because it arose from the national movement, which according to Radek was

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On Reagan's plans for a "winnable nuclear war":
"JOINING THE NUCLEAR SWORD WITH THE ANTI-NUCLEAR SHIELD"

The following article was written by The Workers' Advocate staff.

The Reagan administration is arming like mad in the belief that it will be able to fight and win a nuclear war. The expensive "Star Wars" system, or "Strategic Defense Initiative", is one part of this plan. Its role is to prevent the U.S. from being hit by nuclear weapons while the Pentagon devastates the Soviet Union or other opponents.

Reagan, always the liar, has promoted the "Star Wars" system as simply being for defense, as being allegedly the humane way to prepare for war. But this type of defense is an integral part of offense. In order to fight a nuclear war and survive, the Pentagon wants to believe that the U.S. could shield itself from enemy nuclear weapons.

What the Pentagon Told its Canadian Allies

Now it turns out that the Reagan administration has already talked to Canadian officials about integrating the "Star Wars" system with offensive nuclear weapons. The distinction between the "offensive" Trident submarines, cruise missiles, B-1 bombers and "defensive" the Star Wars system is simply one of terminology to fool the naive.

This follows from what was revealed by Richard Halloran in a special report to The New York Times published on May 29. He writes that:

"The Defense Department is devising a nuclear war plan and command structure that would integrate offensive nuclear forces with the projected

anti-missile shield, according to United States and Canadian officials.

"In the most extensive review of nuclear strategy in more than 10 years, the officials said, the plan was aimed at **joining the nuclear sword with the anti-missile shield** in what one Reagan Administration official called a 'good, coherent posture,' possibly under the control of a new nuclear war-fighting command." (Emphasis added.)

Hence today, well before the Star Wars system has even seen the light of day as an experimental system, to say nothing of as an operational system, it is already being integrated into plans of U.S. imperialism for fighting and winning a future nuclear war. It is no different from any of the other weapons of mass destruction ordered by the Reaganites in their war buildup. And this is no surprise. Consider the tank. It is marked by its heavy armor plating. But precisely this "defensive" armor plating makes it one of the most fearsome weapons of offense. Similarly the Star Wars system is designed to be, figuratively speaking, the armor plating that would protect the U.S. nuclear forces and turn them into a usable force for "limited nuclear wars" or for first-strike capability.

The Pentagon Presents the "Winnable Nuclear War" as "Defense"

Of course, the Pentagon still keeps up the cyni-

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cal farce that the Star Wars system is for "defense", and the officials talked to Halloran about "the transition from offense to defense in the 1990's." But this is just the typical Reaganite lie, according to which the entire war buildup is defensive and designed to save lives, since, after all, won't it cost less lives to win than to lose? By this Reaganite logic, of course, there hasn't been a single warmonger on earth who wasn't concerned primarily with saving lives, since they all certainly planned to win.

The Pentagon Has Been Planning for Nuclear Aggression for Decades

Halloran points out that the Star Wars plans are simply the latest phase in a continual process of the U.S. military planning for winnable nuclear wars, although he doesn't use that phrase. He points to former President Carter's Directive 59

and, in fact, to the entire evolution of U.S. nuclear policy since 1960. (Actually, the Pentagon has had a bloodthirsty nuclear policy since it dropped two atomic bombs on already defeated Japan in 1945 in order to intimidate the then-socialist Soviet Union and the other revolutionary forces.) Both liberal and conservative administrations have taken part in these plans to enhance the nuclear war machine for its more effective use in pursuit of U.S. imperialist objectives.

The integration of the plans for Star Wars into the plans for all the other nuclear forces proves the deadly serious drive of the American bourgeoisie towards new and more destructive wars in the future. It is arming to the teeth precisely in order to start wars when it thinks it can win. It is up to the working class and all progressive people to foil these plans by developing the revolutionary movement to overthrow the warmongering capitalist fiends once and for all. <>

THE BOMBING OF A BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD IN PHILADELPHIA: A RACIST ATROCITY

The following leaflet was issued by the New York Metro Branch of the MLP on May 28, 1985.

At 7 p.m. on Mother's Day, May 12th, hundreds of police moved in and occupied a black working class neighborhood in west Philadelphia. The residents of 6220 Ossage Avenue, members of a group called MOVE, were being evicted due to violations of the sanitary code, unpaid utility bills and complaints from neighbors. At 6 a.m. Monday morning, supposedly police met armed resistance to the eviction. Twelve hours later, with the approval of Mayor Wilson Goode, the police bombed the house and sparked the largest inferno and one of the most outrageous racist atrocities in Philadelphia's history. As one neighborhood resident said, it was like "something you see on television. like Vietnam." Indeed the whole racist assault was directly parallel to U.S. aggression in Vietnam, where the imperialists frequently declared: "In order to save this village we had to destroy it."

When the smoke had cleared 61 homes had been burnt to the ground. 250 people had been left homeless. And while firefighters waited one hour and 40 minutes to fight the blaze which the bomb started, seven black adults and four young black children were brutally burned to death.

The Lies Unravel

Today the charred rubble has been sorted through by police lab experts. No trace has been found of

the automatic and semi-automatic weapons police insisted had been fired from the house Monday morning. In a 90 minutes gun battle at 6 a.m. the police had fired over 10,000 rounds at the house. yet only one rifle, two shot guns and three pistols have been found. No trace has been found of the network of tunnels supposedly dug under the house as escape routes. Monday night Mayor Goode had said information showed MOVE had enough explosive material in the house to blow up the entire block. (Goode refused to answer directly why then police had bombed the house.) But in fact, no trace of explosives has been found.

Goode and city officials have tried to claim that MOVE members themselves set the fire after the bombing, despite TV footage which shows clearly that the house was engulfed with flames immediately after the bomb fell. Then officials tried to claim that flammable material had been spread on the roof. But to this day, according to Fire Commission Richmond, no trace of flammable liquid has been confirmed.

No trace of any of these supposed justifications for the bombing and subsequent fire have been found. No. Aside from a handful of guns, the only things found have been eleven bodies, including four children, burnt beyond recognition.

Not an Accident, But a Premeditated Blood-Bath

The blatant lies and cover-ups only confirm that this racist outrage was no "tragic accident", as Goode had claimed. (And even then Goode's sympathies extend only to the 61 houses that were de-

stroyed, not to the eleven people burned alive.) Goode declared the whole operation as "perfect — except for the fire." Yet it is clear from the extensive prior preparations that the police were looking for a blood-bath.

Sunday night police had evacuated hundreds of residents of the 6200 block of Ossage Avenue threatening them with arrest if they refused to leave. Hardly a routine eviction plan. Goode declared before the bombing that he was ready for a confrontation and that "We intend to evict them ... by any means necessary." Which included the torching of an entire black neighborhood. And on this the Mayor, the Police Commissioner and the Fire Commissioner cannot even get their lies straight. While all day Monday over 640,000 gallons of water were poured on the MOVE house by water cannons, these were not used when the police bomb set off the fire. While Goode dodges the issue, Police Commissioner Sambor admits: "A decision was made to let the fire burn."

The Racist Police Were Out for Revenge

Was such callous and brutal disregard for eleven lives and an entire black community motivated simply by an overzealous attempt to enforce the sanitary code? No. The notoriously racist Philadelphia police were out for revenge.

The MOVE group has been widely promoted as "radical militants" preaching a "revolutionary doctrine." In fact, they are only a small cult with hopelessly confused and muddled ideas and posed little real threat to the Philadelphia authorities or to the capitalist system. Except for one point. They happened to believe in self-defense against the racist assaults of the police and Philadelphia city government. In 1978, the openly racist Mayor Frank Rizzo put another MOVE house under a 50-day siege and then sent 300 police to storm and bulldoze the house. One policeman was killed and nine MOVE members are in prison as a result. Seven years later the Philadelphia police were still looking for and have now gotten their revenge.

But Also More Than Bloody Revenge

But revenge was not the only motive. With this racist atrocity, Wilson Goode and the Philadelphia police have sent a chilling message to all who would dare to resist racist assaults. They have sent a message, aimed not at the MOVE cult but to all real revolutionaries, to all progressives, to all black activists and the entire black community. As Sambor declared over a bullhorn before the assault Monday morning, "You have to abide by the laws of the United States." The message is not that you must abide by the sanitary code. The message is that all must abide by the racist dictates of the police and government. And woe to all who dare to resist.

In the context of the Reaganite racist offensive against the black masses, Goode's tactics have been hailed across the country. Right-wing Los Angeles

Police Commissioner Gates declared Goode "an inspiration to the nation." Reactionary Attorney General Edwin Meese called Goode's handling of the situation "a good example for us all to take note of." In a period of increasing racist attacks and police terror, the monopoly capitalists remember the powerful black rebellions of the 1960's and are terrified of even a hint of active resistance to the new racist onslaught. The message is clear — any who dare to stand up to the racist attacks of the police, who dare to stand for revolution, or who even dare to oppose forced evictions — you will be dealt with by "any means necessary."

The Hypocrisy of New York Mayor Koch

This same message has been driven home recently in New York with the wave of racist police murders, beatings and even torture. Yet Mayor Koch had the audacity to criticize Wilson Goode for his handling of the MOVE eviction. Koch claimed he would have dealt with it differently. Perhaps Koch is referring to the recent eviction of an elderly black grandmother, Eleanor Bumpurs, as a model! A squadron of shotgun toting cops blew away an old woman who dared to resist an eviction over two months back rent. Koch can claim we only killed a 68-year-old black woman, but at least we didn't use a bomb!

The Black Bourgeoisie — Willing Tool of the Reaganites in Attacks on the Black Masses

There is a final point on the bombing of Philadelphia — Wilson Goode. The first black Mayor of Philadelphia has "accept(ed) full responsibility" for the bombing atrocity. And well he should. But Goode is counting on his blackness to cover over the racist nature of this assault. He is trying to cover for the Philadelphia police who have a nationally known history of brutal racism. If the openly racist and fascist Rizzo had carried out the fire bombing, the racist nature would have been clear to all. The fact that Goode is black can't change the racist nature of this assault.

As the flames turned to ashes and rubble, Wilson Goode summed up: "People want a strong leader." Such words and his actions expose him as a worthy heir to fascist Rizzo. Goode is a black bourgeois traitor to the black working masses, and a willing tool of the Reaganite racist offensive against the ordinary black masses. Whether led by a white racist or by a black traitor, the Philadelphia police remain a brutal racist force out to implement the dictates of the rich against the black working masses.

The bombing of Philadelphia, along with the racist police murders, beating and terror attacks across the nation are aimed at terrorizing the working masses and stopping them from rising up against their oppression. But these tactics will certainly backfire as each new atrocity kindles the sparks of outrage and rebellion. <>

Militant MIT students denounce the embargo U.S., HANDS OFF NICARAGUA!

The following article is reprinted from the May 13, 1985 issue of The Student, a newspaper published by progressive students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

On May 1 Reagan declared an embargo on trade between the U.S. and Nicaragua. However, Reagan has exempted from the embargo the "organized democratic resistance," so that the contras, the former Somoza National Guard, can continue receiving American arms and goods to help them terrorize the people of Nicaragua. This brutal act against the Nicaraguan people marks the latest attack by the Reagan Administration in its undeclared war against Nicaragua.

Using the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, Reagan was able to impose this embargo by declaring a state of emergency, because "...the Government of Nicaragua constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the U.S. ..." In his statement to Congress, Reagan again called for concessions [from the Nicaraguan government] which would force the Nicaraguan government to rearrange its internal policies and foreign policies in line with the wishes of Washington.

Continuation of Reagan's Lies

The justifications of the Reagan administration that a small and poor country like Nicaragua, with 3.2 million people and twelve airplanes, is a threat to U.S. national security are the same lies Reagan has been spouting for the last several months. These include: Nicaragua's continuing efforts to "export" revolution beyond its borders and to train terrorists; Nicaragua's rapid and destabilizing military buildup; that Nicaragua is a Soviet base; and that the revolution has been betrayed.

When we look at these lies about Nicaragua, we see that they better describe what the U.S. is doing. It is U.S. imperialism which has gone outside U.S. borders to seek to control half the globe, it is the CIA which wrote a manual training the contras in terrorism, it is the U.S. which is funding and building military bases in Honduras and the U.S. army who is training the army of El Salvador to crush the Salvadorean people's revolution. It was the national security of Nicaragua which was violated by the U.S. when the harbors of Nicaragua were mined and oil facilities blown up. And according to an U.S. intelligence report, the arms buildup in Nicaragua followed, rather than preceded, contra attacks (New York Times, May 9, 1985).

It was not the Soviets who overthrew Somoza and demanded an end to U.S.-backed dictatorship; it was the Nicaraguan workers and peasants. It is Reagan who is trying to crush their revolution. Since the turn of the century, the U.S. has denied Nicaragua

the right of self-determination with U.S.-backed dictatorships, Marine invasions, military threats, funds to the contras and now the embargo. These actions of U.S. imperialism bring profits and domination of regions of the globe to serve the interests of the rich in the U.S. The position of Reagan and Congress is that the U.S. should continue to dictate to the Nicaraguans. But the Nicaraguan people have the right to choose their own form of government and their way of life free of the treats of imperialism.

The Democrats Go Along With the Lies of Reagan

The Democrats have always agreed with the Reaganite position that the U.S. government has the right to "heavily" influence the government of Nicaragua; they only disagree on how to go about it. Besides, we must remember that it was Mondale who originally proposed an embargo against Nicaragua in October. Instead of opposing Reagan's lies about Nicaragua, the Democrats have praised or denounced the contra funding and the embargo according to their ideas of the best tactics to take in forcing Nicaragua to make concessions to U.S. imperialism. Tip O'Neill said that the embargo was "premature" (New York Times, May 4, 1985). The liberal congressman Markey said that the effect of the embargo might be "to push the Nicaraguans so far from us that U.S. military action becomes more likely" (New York Times, May 2, 1985). And Sen. John Kerry, another liberal, said, "I don't want people to believe the Sandinistas shouldn't be put to the test. They should." (Boston Globe, May 1, 1985).

The Democrats have gone one step further. On May 8, twenty moderate and conservative House Democrats "revived" the bill for \$14 million in "humanitarian" aid to the contras. This "humanitarian" aid could include trucks, jeeps and communication equipment, according to congressional sources (Boston Globe, May 9, 1985). In reality, any aid to the contras will free funds for the contras to buy more military equipment. Clearly, the Democrats, like Reagan, want to dictate from Washington what sort of government Nicaragua should have.

The Embargo on Nicaragua Demonstrates the Nature of U.S. Imperialism

Using his executive power, Reagan has imposed an embargo against Nicaragua yet Reagan practices "constructive engagement" with the racist rulers of South Africa. Mr. Djerejian, spokesperson for the State Department, explained this by saying "each case needs to be decided on its own merits" (New York Times, May 4, 1985).

These "merits" are clearly judged on the basis of which government satisfies the demands of U.S. imperialism: these merits are not judged on the basis

of voting rights, freedom to move freely in your own country, etc. The Botha white minority government of South Africa welcomes U.S. capital to help in the exploitation and suppression of the black workers, and U.S. corporations profit very nicely from this as well. The Nicaraguan waged and won a war against the U.S.-backed Somoza and virtually kicked out U.S. imperialism.

Reagan lends support to the Botha racist government and is trying to economically isolate the people of Nicaragua. This is the nature of U.S. imperialism: to oppose revolutionary movements and to prop up reactionary governments who crush revolution in their own countries. This is because U.S. imperialism is best served by those governments who oppress and exploit their own people.

Build the Movement to Oppose Reagan's Embargo

To oppose U.S. imperialism and Reagan's secret war against Nicaragua we must build a mass movement in support of the revolution of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants. We cannot depend on the Democrats or the Republicans, both parties of the rich and of imperialism, to bring bills before Congress. Demonstrations, other types of mass actions and distribution of revolutionary literature are the best ways to organize the workers and students into a mass movement. The Student therefore calls on all workers, students and progressive people to come out for demonstrations, to denounce Reagan's embargo and U.S. imperialism and to support the revolution waged in Nicaragua by the workers and peasants. <>

MIT STUDENTS IN STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID

The following appeal to take part in a demonstration against MIT's investments in companies which profit from South African racism appeared in the May 13, 1985 issue of The Student, a newspaper published by activist students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass.

Black workers staged a national strike last Friday against the South African police's brutal murders of a union leader, a black student activist and many other liberation fighters. The political strike by the workers is among the most powerful weapons of the black people against apartheid, and last Friday's action shows that the black people's revolutionary struggle against South African apartheid continues to strengthen. While both the racist Botha regime and the Reaganite government are searching desperately for ways to head off the growing movement, students and progressive activists across the United States are mobilizing demonstrations, building takeovers and sit-ins in support of the black people's struggle.

The Botha government has begun to utilize the South African army after finding that its police forces are no match against the black masses. The army has placed various black townships in the Eastern Cape under martial law and is conducting house-to-house searches for anti-apartheid activists. In a feeble attempt to smash international solidarity, the racists have resorted to censorship and news blackouts of the unrest in black townships and cities.

In the meantime the U.S. government is advising the racists to implement various reforms to simmer down the unrest. Reagan recently hailed South Africa's legalization of black-and-white marriages as proof that the apartheid government is improving the human rights situation. To convince the black masses that U.S. imperialism is really on their

side, the prince of liberals Ted Kennedy was dispatched to South Africa to urge the black people to quit their fighting and enter negotiations for "power-sharing" with the racist apartheid government.

But neither the black people of South Africa nor the honest activists in the U.S. have fallen for either of these imperialist schemes. Last month throughout the U.S., the movement against apartheid grew significantly. On over 70 campuses students staged sit-ins, rallies and building takeovers demanding that universities divest from South Africa. Many workers joined the anti-apartheid actions.

MIT Students Mobilize Against Apartheid

The MIT community has taken its place among the national movement against apartheid by sponsoring and participating in a variety of mass actions. Approximately 20 students staged an anti-apartheid march last December which was warmly received by the community. Many students came out and supported the April 3 city-wide student march and cheered the burning of the South African flag as the march passed MIT. On April 24, 250 students demonstrated on the Student Center steps against apartheid, and 50 marched to President Paul Gray's office to denounce MIT investments in corporations which do business in South Africa.

Also, many MIT students participated in the national demonstration on April 20 in Washington, D.C., which drew 50,000. Thousands of participants took up militant slogans such as "Death to Apartheid!", "Apartheid in South Africa, Burn It to the Ground!" Over 20,000 copies of revolutionary anti-apartheid literature were distributed among the activists.

**Why the Divestiture Movement
Scares the Imperialists**

The U.S. imperialists are very afraid of the divestiture movement. Even though some university presidents quibble about divestment's effect on changing the government of South Africa, they are really distorting reality. For example, MIT President Gray recently told an angry crowd of 50 students and workers that he doesn't support apartheid because even if MIT removes its money from U.S. corporations which do business in South Africa, other capitalists would merely buy MIT's financial interests. Gray went on to state that even if the U.S. pulled out altogether from South Africa, other imperialist powers such as Italy or France would step in.

Now there is a grain of truth in what this sly fox has to say. Yes, if MIT were to sell its apartheid stock, obviously some other corporation would purchase it. But Gray is evading the essential point of the divestiture movement: the American people's demand that the U.S. government and corporations quit supporting the racists of South Africa is of great inspiration and solidarity to the black people's struggle. By directing our anti-apartheid movement against the U.S. capitalists through demands for divestiture, we are confirming to the black people that they've correctly targeted their fight against their worst enemies: the South African racists and their supporter, U.S. imperialism.

U.S. imperialism stands to lose severely by the intensification of the black people's struggle and the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. The United States is South Africa's largest trading partner, buying about 15% of South Africa's exports and supplying 19% of its imports in 1983. And U.S. businesses are a major source of capital, accounting for about 15% of all foreign investment in South Africa.

About 280 U.S. firms do business in South Africa, including 57 of Fortune magazine's 100 largest U.S. companies, such as Xerox and Coca-Cola.

U.S. firms invested more than \$2.3 billion directly in South Africa in 1983. As of mid-1984, U.S. banks' lending to all South African borrowers totaled \$4.54 billion. Total U.S. investment, including U.S. shares in South African companies, could top \$14 billion, by some estimates.

U.S. investment is especially strong in some strategic sectors. One-half of South Africa's oil industry, 70% of its computer industry and 1/3 of its automobile industry are controlled by U.S. firms.

U.S. lending to South African banks jumped nearly six times to \$3.1 billion in the last six years and loans to private borrowers increased to more than \$1 billion since 1978.

Although South Africa supplies only about 1% of all U.S. imports, it is the main U.S. source of some strategic minerals used in items ranging from weapons to jet engines to auto pollution control devices. The U.S. must import nearly all of such South African minerals as vanadium, manganese, platinum and antimony oxide. U.S. imperialism fears the loss of these supplies if black miners strike or

overthrow apartheid.

The Tech Smears the Movement

While students everywhere have been protesting U.S. support for the South African racists, reactionaries everywhere went into a complete frenzy trying to discredit the movement. As the Tufts students' takeover of a building gained mass support there, Tufts rightwingers circulated a petition demanding that the police evict the students, claiming that the occupation was violating their "right" to entrance.

At MIT, an editorial in The Tech [the official student paper] smeared the anti-apartheid movement by claiming that students who confront President Gray and demand that MIT divest from South Africa are only "rude" and "childish." More importantly, The Tech claimed that divestment, not the evils of apartheid, is the vital issue. But rather than calling for a mere rearrangement of stock portfolios, the divestiture movement has targeted the evils of apartheid to build the mass movement against U.S. corporate support for apartheid, and this is what upsets The Tech.

The Tech further claimed that "students cannot effect change ... if they are rude to the very people they expect to make the changes." But this is dead-end for the movement. We do not expect Reagan or Gray to "make the changes." We plan to make the changes ourselves by mobilizing and organizing the broad masses of students and workers to such an extent that the two-faced "opponents" of apartheid either drop their material alliance with the apartheid ruling class, or fall. Our movement does not seek to change the minds of the racists — we seek their destruction.

Of course there are forces in the movement who aim to change the minds of the racists. These are the liberals. They are busy pleading with the apartheid racists that they must make some changes or there will be a popular revolution which will threaten the "strategic interests of the U.S."

But these liberals, who are never "rude" toward the ruling class, have repeatedly bared their fangs against the mass solidarity movement. The liberal university presidents were the ones who called in the police to arrest the anti-apartheid students at Rutgers, Berkeley, Columbia, Cornell, etc. The Rutgers president even had himself symbolically arrested ... before returning to his school to smash the real struggle against apartheid.

At the Columbia protests Jesse Jackson, after having conferred with President Sovern, told the demonstrators that it was not realistic to expect the university to divest any time soon. He went on to say that the real struggle is to be waged at the polls in 1986, 1988, etc. His message is nothing new. Jackson seeks to translate whatever motion there is against racism into votes for the Democratic Party. During the 1984 campaign, he stabbed the mass movement in the back repeatedly by stating that

"we must move from demonstration to registration." But the intensification of the struggle at Columbia and across the nation shows that when the masses take matters into their hands, not even the liberals can cool them out.

Which Way Forward?

The growth of the anti-apartheid movement at MIT and across the nation is excellent and necessary to stay the hand of the U.S. imperialists in their actions against the South African black people or the people of Central America. The participants and their sympathetic supporters in these actions have acquired the essential points on building the movement:

First, to build the movement against apartheid, the people need to take matters into their own hands. We cannot rely on the big-wig liberals of the Democratic Party to build the movement.

Secondly, it's important for all of the different political trends to give their views of what's necessary. If not, the movement will run into a dead end. The liberals have the "party line" that different ideas, regarding tactics, strategies, etc., upset coalitions and therefore should not be discussed. But this weakens the movement because it doesn't let people sort out for themselves what direction needs to be taken to build the movement.

Thirdly, the movement needs to take on more forms of struggle which draw the masses into it. It needs to be organized independently of the line of the left-wing of the Democratic Party, so that the liberals cannot turn the movement on or off at will.

Finally, the movement in the U.S. has come into being because of the revolutionary struggle of the

black workers and youth of South Africa, and for no other reason. On campus after campus the students demanded not only divestment but also proclaimed their support for the black people's revolutionary struggle against the racists and their protectors -- the U.S. government and corporations. The support of the revolution in South Africa is a very healthy and necessary development for the movement; our movement's actual support for the black people's revolution weakens imperialism's ability to side-track the mass struggle by giving apartheid a quick facelift. All along, the liberal imperialists, such as Sen. Ted Kennedy, have preached reform and power-sharing with the racists as the solution for the black people. But the black people flatly rejected this dead end during his opportunist trip to South Africa last January, and so should we.

Demonstrate Against's Apartheid Holdings

Students, workers and friends! The struggle continues in South Africa, and now is the time to give the black people of South Africa practical assistance and public solidarity. There will be a demonstration against MIT's investments in U.S. corporations which profit from South African slave-labor on Monday, May 13, at 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. at 77 Mass. Ave. The demonstration, which has been called by the MIT Coalition Against Apartheid, should be supported by all progressive people.

Death to Apartheid!

MIT, Divest Now!

U.S. Corporations, Out of South Africa!

Victory to the Black Workers and Youth of South Africa! <>

HOW THE SOUTH AFRICAN RACISTS HONOR THEIR AGREEMENTS WITH THE BLACK PEOPLE

The following article was written by The Workers' Advocate Staff.

Today there is no shortage of liberal Democrats telling the South African people to abandon the revolutionary struggle and trust in negotiations with the South African racists. Were the black masses to do this, they would be condemning themselves to permanent slavery.

There is abundant evidence that one cannot trust in the good will of the South African racists. Take the example of the so-called "front line" black African states that border South Africa. The bourgeois governments in these states have tried to come to accommodation with South Africa and one by one they have signed agreements. And what has been the result?

South Africa "Withdrawal" from Angola: Sending Commandos to Blow Up Oil Facilities

Recently, at the end of May, the South African racists gave a vivid example of how much they respect such agreements. They had agreed to withdraw their troops from Angola. But a commando squad of theirs was captured in northern Angola just a few hundred yards away from valuable oil facilities. Its mission was to sabotage these facilities.

The South African racists reacted just as "our own" CIA and Reagan administration do -- they lied. Oh no, they vowed, they would never think of sending commandos in to do such a vile deed. But barely were the words out of their mouths before the head of the commando squad, a prisoner inside Angola, came out with the whole sordid story.

Mozambique Also Finds that the Racists are Liars

Nor is this treachery unusual in the slightest. Mozambique had the same experience. It signed a shameful agreement with South Africa in exchange for assurances, contained in the agreement, that South Africa would stop organizing the bombing and sabotage and murder inside Mozambique that it fosters through its puppet, the MNR (the Mozambique National Resistance). Mozambique lived up to each disgusting provision of the agreement, but South Africa contin-

ued on its merry way, backing the disruption of Mozambique.

The black and other oppressed masses in South Africa can expect no better treatment from the racist overlords who oppress them. There is only one way for them to remove the oppressor's foot from their necks -- that is by overthrowing the entire racist system in a popular revolution. <>

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**Against the Reagan agenda for the public schools:
NO TO THE TEACHER LAYOFFS AND EDUCATION BUDGET CUTS IN SEATTLE!**

The following leaflet was issued by the Seattle Branch of the MLP on June 5, 1985.

The decision of the Seattle School Board and Superintendent Robert Nelson to cut back funding for teachers, classified staff and school programs for next year has outraged teachers, parents and students. Many teachers and parents are demanding that these cuts be completely rescinded and have said they are determined to fight for this. Seventy-five high school students protested the teacher layoffs at the School Board meeting on May 22, and a protest has been set for the June 5 meeting of the board. These protests are entirely just.

In this situation, the School Board suddenly "discovered" a few million dollars and announced it would rehire a minority of the teachers who had been RIFed. But the struggle is far from over. In fact, the school board's determination to stick with its unjustified cutbacks reflects their plans to continue with the Reagan agenda for the school system -- an agenda which has already seen massive cutbacks with disastrous effects on the education of the children of working people.

The demand to rescind the cutbacks must be pressed by developing mass actions and protests. The fight must be built against the Reaganite cutbacks and for a real improvement in the public education for the children of working people and the poor.

**Teacher Layoffs Mean Accelerating
the Deterioration of the Schools**

Despite the school board's rehiring of 80 RIFed teachers, 141 teachers remain laid-off (41 with continuing contracts and 100 with one year contracts) and even more will be reduced through retirement, etc. Added to this were the 130 teacher aids and clerical staff laid off Tuesday, June 4. Teachers with as much as 12 years seniority face uncertainty about their livelihood and that of their families. The board is discriminating against minority teachers with proportionately higher layoffs and has adjusted its percentage of minority teachers to a minimal level.

The impact of teacher as well as school staff layoffs would be to further corrode the schools. Average class size in the district would increase 1.5 students per teacher. Remaining staff would face even more overwork, more class assignments and more duties. The lack of teachers would wipe out many extracurricular activities, gut certain basic skills areas such as language arts and social studies, and reduce remedial work with students, as well as other special programs. Other cutbacks would bring more deterioration of the facilities and equipment. The scramble for classroom supplies and the shortage of textbooks has already become critical and would be intensified. And the layoffs in support staff adds another burden onto the overworked teachers. In sum, these cuts would mean the further stripping of teachers, materials, books and everything else that makes a school a school.

No teacher can properly teach when class loads swell to unbearable sizes. No teacher can properly teach when they are continually harassed by job insecurity, worries over building assignment or instructional duties. Nor can they properly teach when essential supplies and materials are cut to the bone. The vital interests of both teachers and their students demand a fight against the cutbacks and layoffs.

"Effective Schools" -- Reagan Style

Two years ago, Reagan barnstormed the country with his "agenda for education". He claimed alarm at the "rising tide of mediocrity" in the educational system and shouted that he wanted to restore "excellence in education". Fine words. But it seems that Reagan suddenly discovered the long festering decay of public education only to make matters worse.

Reagan's own "National Commission on Excellence in Education" noted that a lack of funding is at the root of the educational crisis -- a conclusion with which anyone on the conscious side of rigor mortis would readily agree. Reagan, however, replied to this sorry state of affairs with, "You can't solve the problem by throwing money at it." Instead, Reagan's educational agenda includes massive cut-

backs for public schools, handouts for private schools, a "Moral Majority" curriculum for all schools, racial segregation -- in short, a program of ignorance for the majority and education for a fortunate few. Nothing short of the strangulation of public education is Reagan's plan.

In this situation, the Seattle School Board has been preaching from Reagan's bible. For example, the board is full of talk about its magnificent "Effective Schools program", its alleged concern to provide equal education to youth from oppressed nationalities, etc., etc. The practice of the School Board, however, is just the opposite.

Their planned teacher layoffs will continue the trend of increasing class sizes. Washington state currently ranks third highest in the nation for student-teacher ratio. Teachers at the secondary level now may carry a student load of 150, while at the elementary level they may carry as many as 30 students. The board wants to increase this. Their program cuts mean more students who have language and other learning problems will be assigned into regular classrooms, thus increasing an already severely strained workload. Apparently, the Seattle School Board believes that overcrowded classrooms, especially for those students who suffer the effects of racial discrimination and economic exploitation, are a foundation of an "Effective Schools program".

Teacher Boycott of the Hypocritical PRI Program

Another example of the complete hypocrisy of the "Effective Schools" propaganda is the current fight over the infamous Prescriptive Reading Inventory (PRI). On one side, stand the teachers who have organized a near-total boycott of PRI. On the other, Supt. Nelson, Asst. Supt. Alice Houston (who considers it her pet project) and the School Board, who are fighting tooth and nail to keep PRI.

The PRI is a \$4 million computerized system of district-wide reading/testing/evaluation/instruction. This system, directly orchestrated from district offices, was foisted onto elementary and secondary language arts teachers two years ago. Teachers have found the project to amount to little more than overwork without extra pay, and lacking in educational merit necessary for such effort. Adding insult to injury, the PRI materials suffer from the racist, anti-woman, and anti-working class biases typical of student testing programs in the U.S. For all of these reasons, the majority of teachers are currently boycotting it.

How did district administrators respond to the concerns of the teachers? By launching a campaign of harassment against the teachers. Charges of illegality were leveled at the boycott, and threats or reprimands were issued in the media. Administrators, school board members and their friends hurled incredible epithets, calling boycotting teachers "lazy", "old and tired", and even "racist" (implying they were against educating minority children). "PRI is an effective system for frequent monitoring

of student progress," was their refrain. As far as teachers are concerned, PRI is a tool of the district which is mainly aimed at "monitoring" teachers, in order to further harass and scapegoat them for the problems in educating youth in the decaying public schools.

But echoing Reagan's hypocrisy on "excellence in education" is not the only way the school district is implementing the Reaganite agenda.

The Crisis of Funding for Education

In the course of the last several months, the charge has been made that the School board actually has millions of dollars in reserve it could use to rehire the teachers if it wanted to. The board itself admitted that it had kept \$12 million "for emergencies". Following the initial uproar over the teacher layoffs and cutbacks, the School Board has allowed some miserly funding restorations. But the School Board has refused to budge any further.

Is this simply a case of "senseless" management on the part of bumbling administrators? Despite all their outward appearances of ineptness, the answer is no. In fact, by withholding millions in reserve, the School Board is marching right in step with the Reaganite assault on school funding. This assault is proceeding from the federal, state and down to the local level.

The School Board declared that its cutbacks were in order to anticipate a funding crisis in the state budget. In fact, under the Reagan regime there has been a steady erosion of state funding for education. For example, most predictions are that funding levels for education will essentially be frozen when the Washington legislature approves a '85-'87 budget in the next several weeks.

This has been due in large part to huge cutbacks in federal funds to the states. These are projected for \$150 million for the '85-'87 biennium alone; they have already totally hundreds of millions in the past four years. These funds have been poured into Reagan's trillion dollar war buildup as well as other handouts to the rich.

At the state level as well, tax relief for the rich and big corporations, combined with high unemployment and poverty among the workers in Washington state have caused a steady erosion of local and state revenues for education.

Some Democratic ("friend of education") legislators, as well as Democratic Governor Booth Gardner, hold out the option of massive new taxes on the working masses as a possible solution to the school funding crisis. In last spring's session of the Legislature, such measures as an increase in the already high gasoline and sales taxes were talked about; it is sure to be a topic in the upcoming special session. But in practice, the tax burden continues to grow on the working masses while funding increases for education never materialize.

The stand of the working class is opposed to both the cutbacks and the tax hikes on the working peo-

ple. Instead, the only real solution can come by putting the burden of financing education onto the rich and the corporations by means of a heavy tax. Only the fiercest struggle of the working masses can bring about such measures.

Build the Struggle Against Cutbacks and Layoffs

The fight against layoffs and other cuts in education are important battles against the Reaganite assault on teachers and public education. Unfortunately, the bureaucrats of the Seattle Teachers' Union/Washington Education Association (STA/WEA) have presented obstacles to the development of the struggle. Despite the support the STA has given the June 5 action against the School Board, the fact remains that the leadership has continually dragged its feet when it comes to organizing a fight against the layoffs. The STA leaders jumped to the head of the organizing for the demonstration only after rank and file teachers had already initiated it.

When Supt. Nelson announced the RIFs in March, the STA leadership, instead of mobilizing the teachers into action, took the course of impotent pleading and lobbying of the School Board and the Legislature to change their larcenous ways. This, of course, is the same Legislature which has passed cut after Reaganite cut in the last few years in school funding. Even the one action that was called by the STA leadership, the one-day boycott that was to occur on April 16, had as its focus not a militant demand to rehire the RIFed teachers, but instead a

wishy-washy request to the Legislature that they not freeze education funding. No wonder the response of teachers was lukewarm — after all, who could get inspired to lose a day's pay for this?

When the RIFs proceeded in early May, it was all the STA leaders could do to organize a meeting of laid-off teachers to show them how to fill out their unemployment forms. But the bureaucrats were dead wrong if they thought there was no fighting spirit amongst the teachers. Rank-and-file teachers turned this meeting into a platform to call for a fight against the RIFs, and it was there that the June 5 demonstration was called.

Now the STA leaders have assumed a "fighting" pose, hoping few will notice their previous prostrate position. But cringing is a hard habit to break. Instead of a stern fight against the School Board and the budget slashers in Olympia, STA leaders are calling for a "legislative investigation" of the Seattle School District. Talk about seeking a cure from the gods of plague! Maybe the legislators can come up with a few more cuts that the district administration has not thought of yet!

The instinct of the teachers and students to take matters into their own hands and organize mass actions is correct and essential to building the struggle. This is the only path toward standing up to the Reaganite offensive. Teachers, classified workers, parents and students, close ranks and demand **no layoffs, no budget cuts!**

No! to the Reaganite onslaught against the Seattle public schools!

THE SLAVEDRIVER IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE SLAVEDRIVER

The following satirical leaflet concerns the death from natural causes of Ronald Davis, chief slavedriver of the transit workers at the 207th Street shop in New York. Davis was well hated by the workers for his role in harassing them and implementing speedup and job elimination. (See the article "New York City Transit Workers Take Action Against Management Harassment" in The Workers' Advocate, June 10, 1984.) This leaflet was issued under the title "**Passing the Baton at 207 St.**" by the New York Metro Branch of the MLP on May 28, 1985.

Obit That Failed To Appear in New York City Dailies

Dead, Ronald Davis, of 207 Street notoriety, suddenly at 44. Last seen alive polishing bullwhip. Mourned by MTA [Transit Authority] brass, Kiley and Gunn: "Ron had his problems; but, remember, it took Mussolini a few years to get the trains running on time." Eulogized John Lawe [trade union hack, head

of the local union] of the "loyal opposition": "He gave it all he had, but he hadn't the heart for the job."

In lieu of flowers, MTA requests contributions be sent to R. Davis Memorial Fellowship for Management Training in Psychological Class Warfare. 207 Street workers are asked to place contributions in a coffee pot on Main Street. It will be confiscated tomorrow.

Also Cut from Recent Editions:

Help wanted: General Superintendent, 207 Street Shop. No railroad experience necessary; we will train. Psychotic or criminal background no obstacle. Must implement orders from above without hesitation. Willingness to sneak around at all hours of the day and night. Knowledge of bullwhip and fear tactics desirable. Speed-up and harassment skills a plus. Racists okay. Moral scruples a definite detriment in this job. Big salary, company car for

the right man. 5 bonus points for Bitburg veterans.

Words of Warning

Davis is gone and no transit worker is shedding any tears. Not surprisingly, a collective sigh of relief could be heard throughout the 207 Street shop. This is fine. But it is not time to relax our vigilance, either.

Davis may be gone, but someone else will take his place. And whether he brandishes a bullwhip or offers a carrot, Davis' program will remain: job combinations, speed-up, and breaking the resistance

of 207 Street workers to the takeback offensive of the capitalists. Because this is not just Davis' program for 207 Street, but the program of the MTA and city government as a whole. The proof is in the systemwide attacks on transit workers over the past few years -- especially since the arbitrated 1982 contract -- and in the MTA's demand for unlimited concessions in the new contract.

207 Street workers should remain vigilant towards future developments. It is time to turn the contempt for Davis into conscious class hatred, into organization and resistance to the MTA's takeback offensive. <>

MAGNESIUM CASTING WORKERS IN BOSTON OPEN SHOP FIGHT UNION BREAKING AND PRODUCTIVITY DRIVE

The following article is reprinted from an issue in late May of the Boston Worker, newspaper of the Boston Branch of the MLP.

In the past few weeks, workers at the Magnesium Casting Co. have defeated an underhanded campaign of the company owners to decertify their union.

The company had mobilized its stooges among the workers to distribute decertification petitions. At the same time the company held a series of "quality meetings" in which the owners and management tried to cozy up to the workers and to do propaganda that the workers and the company had common interests in improving quality. So while the capitalists were putting on their friendly face, they used their flunkies to spread stories that the union wasn't doing anything for them and that if the workers got rid of the union the company would improve their conditions and wages. What lies!

If the Berman family, which owns Magnesium Casting, wanted to improve the workers wages and conditions they had decades to do so before the workers ever even organized a union. But the Berman capitalists made a fortune by keeping wages extremely low and driving the workers like slaves. In fact, things were so bad that despite the raises the company has been forced into giving since the workers first started to get organized in 1978, wages at Magnesium are still \$2 an hour below the average manufacturing wage for the Boston area.

Workers Fight Sweatshop Conditions

It is not a do nothing union that bothers the Berman capitalists, that would be fine with them. What has them worried is that the workers in the plant are starting to organize on their own mass resistance to the abuses of the company. In recent months workers in the plant have organized struggles

against short timing, forced overtime, racist harassment and suspensions. These struggles have been particularly strong in the die-cast department which forms the core of the union membership in this open shop. And the spirit of resistance is spreading to other departments.

The Berman capitalists launched the decertification drive to try to disorganize and crush the workers resistance, but they failed miserably. The company flunkies are so isolated that many now deny having anything to do with it. But the company continues to try to break the workers' resistance. It continues to harass and unjustly fire workers who express union sympathies, especially in the assembly departments.

The Capitalists Want to Break All Resistance and Organization of the Workers

The Berman family has never reconciled itself to a union or any other form of organization of "their" workers; but now they have a special interest in breaking the workers. The union contract expires in August and they would like either to break the union or to weaken the workers so much that they will accept whatever terms the company dictates.

Presently the company is engaged in a major modernization program. They are introducing a lot of robots and automated machines in die-cast, and when the bugs are worked out they will spread this automation to other departments. The company would like to use the automation to eliminate a lot of machine operator jobs and to turn the majority of workers into low-paid material handlers, inspectors or breakers who have to work at a pace set by robot-operated machines.

Demands of the Workers

The workers, however, are not bowing down before

this offensive. More workers than ever are joining the union and the spirit of resistance is growing as the contract date approaches. Some of the major demands of the workers are :

- 1) No job elimination or pay cuts due to robots and other automation. One man, one machine.
- 2) One paid sickday per month. Currently they have only one paid "personal day" a year!
- 3) Higher wages and the abolition of the "merit pay" system. The workers want regular automatic pay raises throughout the year.

- 4) Shorter probation period.

These are important demands to protect and improve their jobs and livelihood. All workers at Magnesium Casting, both those who have joined the union and those who haven't, should rally together for a determined fight over the contract.

The Magnesium Casting workers deserve the support of the whole working class in their fight against the company's plans to push them back to the worst sweatshop wages and conditions. <>

A MISTAKEN ASSESSMENT OF GREEK SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

The following article was written by The Workers' Advocate staff.

The article "Our Differences with the Party of Labor of Albania" in The Workers' Advocate (March 20, 1984) points out that true friendship for the Albanian workers, peasants and communists requires combining militant solidarity with socialism with criticism of the present deep weaknesses in the stands of the Party of Labor of Albania. It pointed out that, in the difficult world situation at present, the PLA seems to have lost its bearings. The Albanian press, for example, does not exploit the revolutionary events that do take place, while it looks outside the revolutionary struggle for other forces to promote.

This can be seen once again in a recent article of "Zeri i popullit," newspaper of the Central Committee of the PLA, lauding Greek social-democracy. How to handle social-democracy is a major question facing the revolutionary working class movement. In many countries of Europe social-democracy has either come to power or is a major opposition party — in either case, it serves to deflect the working masses from a true struggle and pave over the various crises facing the ruling capitalist class. With its praise of Greek social-democracy, the PLA is setting a bad example for how to handle social-democracy.

On the Reelection of Papandreou

The article in question was reported on in the June 2-4, 1985 issue of ATA, bulletin of the Albanian Telegraphic Agency. ATA summarizes the article and hails the election victory of the social-democratic PASOK party headed by Papandreou, who will again be the premier of Greece. It claims,

among other things, the following:

- 1) that Papandreou is carrying out "an independent policy" for Greece, that is, it implies that Papandreou is carrying out a policy that is anti-U.S. imperialist or, at least, outside the sphere of U.S. imperialism;
- 2) that Papandreou is fighting against U.S. military bases on Greek territory and other NATO plans; and
- 3) that the U.S. was extremely upset over the victory of the progressive Papandreou.

Papandreou's Attitude to the U.S.

All these claims are sheer prettification of the treacherous role of Greek social-democracy, which is undermining the struggle of the Greek people. Far from seeking "independent policy", Papandreou, after his election, stated that Washington must grasp that "whatever positions we take have to do with this country and in no sense supposed to be offensive or inimical to the United States."

It should not be thought that Papandreou was distinguishing between the American people and the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, Papandreou also cooed that he had been sent a "very warm" telegram of congratulations on his election victory by Reagan.

Papandreou and the American Bases

As for the American bases, it can be recalled that the Greek social-democrats won the last election with pledges against these bases. But in power they passed legislation renewing the bases for years and merely held that in 1988, long after another election, they might do something.

This election has come, and it was marked, in fact, by a toning down of PASOK's rhetoric against the U.S. military. And, after the election, the

bourgeois press in the U.S. reported that senior aides to Papandreou explained that the threat to remove bases in 1988 is designed simply to force the United States to change its policy towards Cyprus and the Greek disputes with Turkey.

Of course, removing the American bases is not the same thing as leaving the Western imperialist alliance. But, for the Greek social-democrats, they have no objection even to American bases, if they can get better terms from Washington. They sometimes parade before the Greek people as almost anti-imperialists, but their policy is simply to extract better terms from Washington and Turkey for the Greek bourgeoisie.

Washington's Attitude Towards Papandreou

Nor is it true that the American bourgeoisie was remarkably scared of Papandreou. True, the present Reagan government would prefer, not liberals and social-democrats, but reactionaries in power everywhere. Just as it prefers Republicans win this or that election in the U.S. or that creationists are hired as teachers in the public schools, it prefers conservatives over liberals in foreign elections. But just as the election of a Democrat in the U.S. doesn't even phase the Reaganite offensive, and the teaching of evolution hardly threatens to bring down U.S. imperialism, so too the American bourgeoisie as a whole had no irreconcilable objection to Papandreou.

Indeed, after Papandreou's reelection, a number of bourgeois commentators reasoned that this was actually the best outcome for U.S. interests. His strong victory would insulate him from popular pressure, according to their ideas, and thus ensure that he could be more pro-American than ever.

For Resolute Struggle Against Social-Democracy

True, Papandreou's government is not that of open reaction. The bourgeoisie has both liberal and conservative faces, and Papandreou is the liberal face of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat takes account of the differences between liberals and open reactionaries, but it preserves its class independence from both.

In order to rise up as a serious revolutionary force that can determine the destiny of Greece, the Greek proletariat must emancipate itself from PASOK. It is the task of the worldwide comrades of the Greek toilers to help the Greek people in this task. To close one's eyes and prettify Greek social-democracy amounts to losing sight of the revolutionary elements of Greek society and to engaging in the bankrupt "practical politics" of wheeling and dealing with whatever is currently fashionable.

This article by ATA thus shows that the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists around the world must give support to the PLA by fraternally criticizing such grave errors as that accommodation with Greek social-democracy, or with the hangman Khomeini-IRP

regime in Iran, or the reactionary regime in Turkey. As well, they must give aid to the PLA by making revolution in their own countries, and this is impossible without having an irreconcilably hostile stand towards social-democracy.

Below we reprint the mistaken article from ATA under the title that ATA gave it:

The Newspaper "Zeri i Popullit" Writes About the Victory of Pasok at the Parliamentary Elections

On Sunday, on June 2, 1985, the parliamentary elections took place in Greece, the newspaper "Zeri i Popullit" writes in an article. The news agencies which refer to a report by the Greek ministry of Home Affairs on June 3 report that the party of premier Andreas Papandreou, PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) occupied the first place with 45.82 per cent of votes, ensuring 161 seats at the Greek parliament with 300 seats, the party "new democracy" [the conservative party] held second place with 40.84 per cent of the votes, the PKG [revisionist Communist Party of Greece] has 9.89 per cent, etc. Winning the majority, the PASOK party has the right to form the new government. The new government will swear the oath before the President of Greece, Hristos Sarcetaqis, on Wednesday. On Monday, speaking of the results of elections, Premier Papandreou appreciated too [very] much the victory of his party for the future development of Greece.

In the election campaign of the PASOK party, the problems of the foreign policy held a special place. At the speech held at the rally of the closing of the election campaign on Friday, Premier Andreas Papandreou pointed out the aim of his government to pursue an independent policy of his country. He declared that the U.S. bases in Greece will be abolished, if his party PASOK wins in the elections.

As elements of the independent policy to be pursued, the Premier said that he will demand the withdrawal of the U.S. military bases and nuclear weapons from the Greek territory. He declared that he will oppose the plans for the establishment of a general headquarters of NATO in Larisa city, in the center of Greece and will also oppose the participation of Greece in the military maneuvers of the North Atlantic pact.

The Premier pointed out that concerning the internal life [of Greece], he will pursue the policy of democratization and of the new social programs, such as complete equality for women, civil marriage, etc.

The different observers stress that as never before the U.S., assisting the right, tried to influence the results of the elections. Washington does not see with a good eye the efforts made in Greece for an independent policy in the internal affairs.

Taking a second for year mandate, more possibilities are created to PASOK to carry into effect its internal and external programs. <>

THE STRUGGLE OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE PUNCTURED THE MYTH OF U.S. IMPERIALIST INVINCIBILITY

May Day Speech

The following was excerpted from one of the two speeches delivered at the MLP May Day meeting in Seattle on May 4, 1985. Three other speeches from May Day meetings in Chicago and New York can be found in the May 25, 1985 issue of The Workers' Advocate Supplement.

Today, in addition to our observation of International Working Class Day, we are also celebrating a particularly glorious anniversary. Ten years ago this week, on April 30, 1975, the heroic Vietnamese people crowned 30 years of armed struggle with the liberation of Ho Chi Minh City and the reunification of Vietnam. For the imperialists, the "fall of Saigon" (as they refer to these events) is among the darkest days in recent history, a nightmare they would rather blot out from their minds forever.

Internationally, the Vietnamese national liberation struggle is among the most important events of recent decades. First and foremost, it punctured the myth of American invincibility. It demonstrated to the people of the world that the great imperialist war machine was not the decisive factor in world politics. True, the B-52's, aircraft carriers and helicopter gunships displayed their immense destructive capabilities. Nevertheless, they proved incapable of defeating a people intent on waging a just war of national liberation against imperialist despoilation and slavery.

Domestically, the legacy of Vietnam continues to shape the entire bourgeois political debate over foreign policy and hangs like a specter over the current U.S. imperialist intervention in Central America. Quite frankly, the inverse hoopla surrounding the lurid news coverage of the "fall of Saigon" is designed to wipe out the bloodstains of the Vietnamese people from the Pentagon — and to channel the memories of Vietnam into some confused, or even reactionary, direction. If the bourgeois historians can agree about anything concerning the Vietnam war, they all admit that the war ranks with the most major political events, with the Great Depression of the '30's even, in its effects on American political life.

The Mass Anti-War Movement

To understand this fact there is no need to romanticize the anti-war movement, as the struggle against the U.S. war of aggression in Vietnam came to be known. This was a movement marked by very limited goals, inconsistent motivations and, quite frankly, terribly confused ideology. Nevertheless, it was a popular movement of unprecedented dimensions, embracing literally millions on the campuses and in the factories, in the oppressed nationality

communities and in the U.S. war machine itself. It was a movement which changed the "cold war" political climate of the country, fueled and merged with other popular struggles at home, and molded the world outlook of an entire generation. And most fundamentally for the prospects of the organization of the American working class, this movement resulted in a regeneration of communism right here in the belly of world imperialism, it was a movement which contributed to the founding of our own Marxist-Leninist Party of the USA.

The Pentagon Lost its Aggressive War, But Wants to Win the Rewriting of the War

It is impossible in even a long speech to give a complete summation of the war. The imperialist bourgeoisie, for example, has spent literally millions of dollars over the last few months on newsprint, television programs, books, parades and what have you — yet they can't even figure out who won the war!

[The speech proceeded to show how the bourgeoisie, under cover of tear-jerking presentations of the last American helicopters to leave Saigon, has tried to obscure why the Pentagon lost, the unjust nature of the American aggression, and the corrupt nature of the U.S. puppet regime.]

On the Slogan "No More Viet Nams!"

Any discussion over such an issue as Viet Nam is bound to stir up controversy among the bourgeoisie. One striking feature of the current debate among bourgeois spokesmen over Viet Nam, however, is the relative lack of sharply differentiated schools of thought. Almost the entire bourgeoisie has accepted the slogan "No More Viet Nams!" as their own. This is not entirely surprising when one considers the various public opinion polls on Viet Nam which demonstrate that opposition to the war is at an all-time high. (For example, see L.A. Times poll data.) Clearly the bottom line of the current debate is acceptance of the slogan "No More viet Nams!" — a slogan which unites liberal and conservative alike.

[The speech then pointed out that this slogan, which is designed to appear vaguely anti-war to the masses, is, however, used by the bourgeoisie in a quite different sense. On one hand, this slogan is used by some activists to mean no more wars of aggression. But when the bourgeoisie uses it, they have quite a different meaning in mind. The bourgeoisie means that everything must be done to strengthen the Pentagon and insure that it wins all future wars, thus avoiding any more defeats, such as in Viet Nam.

To this end, they have even resurrected such discredited old vampires as Richard Nixon to rewrite history in a book with this slogan as its title, to

claim that the U.S. actually won the war, and that the only problem was that at the last minute the liberals in Congress stabbed the noble warriors for U.S. imperialism in the back. The liberals naturally have a somewhat different slant on things, but it amounts simply to a debate over how best to strengthen the Pentagon, with the liberals just as enthusiastic as the conservatives to raise such slogans as "we must never commit forces to a war which we don't intend to go all-out to win."

Nixon's New Book: He's Still a Warmonger

[The speech went on to analyze Nixon's lies in his recent book about the Viet Nam war. Nixon jumped up and down claiming that the war had been won by the Pentagon and that the Vietnamese liberation fighters treacherously violated the 1973 treaty. The speech refuted this, showing that the treaty itself recognized not the defeat of the popular struggle, but its strength, and was regarded by no one as the final outcome of the struggle.]

The so-called "fall of Saigon" begins in January 1973 with the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty. As we know, the Paris treaty negotiated by Le Duc Tho and the cynical, blood-crazed Henry Kissinger called for the withdrawal of all U.S. ground and air forces from the South and a cessation of the bombing of the North in exchange for the return of the American prisoners of war. The treaty did not cover either Laos or Cambodia where the war raged on as usual.

The Treaty recognized the National Liberation Front as a sovereign power for 25% of the territory of South Vietnam. It also established an armistice commission charged with maintaining the ceasefire, exchanging prisoners and concluding a political solution to the war. This latter provision remained pretty much a dead letter, since neither Nixon, Thieu nor the liberation forces considered the treaty to be anything but an interlude in the ongoing war.

The U.S. Puppet Forces Try Again

Before the ink on the treaty had even dried, Thieu ordered his army to violate the ceasefire by seizing as much NLF territory as possible. ... Meanwhile, the U.S. continued its ferocious B-52 carpet-bombing of Cambodia. Against this backdrop of events, Nixon made a number of lying, bellicose statements about "communist ceasefire violations" and broadly hinted through his Secretary of Defense Elliot Richardson that the U.S. was considering the possibility of reintroducing U.S. forces in the South or resuming the bombing of the North in order to enforce the ceasefire.

Just these facts expose the lie that the U.S. expected peace to result from the treaty. Actually, all the Paris Treaty signified is that, while the U.S. had been forced to conclude its direct military

commitment to South Vietnam because of the domestic and international crises facing it, Nixon and company still hoped to prevail in Viet Nam by continuing the war under the new conditions of "peace" and escalating as necessary.

Nixon's March hints about re-introducing American troops clearly alarmed the Democrats in Congress.

[The speech pointed out that by then the U.S. bourgeoisie was coming to believe that it might have to cut its losses in Viet Nam in order to get over the severe international and domestic crises aggravated by the war. The bourgeoisie decided that it would have to attain its objectives in a somewhat different manner -- this was the overall significance of the Paris Treaty. But Nixon's antics showed that he might blow the whole strategy.]

Far from Congress stabbing the Pentagon and the aggressive war effort in the back, as Nixon claims in his book, Congress acted to prop up imperialism in its crisis.]

This is not to say that anyone in Washington -- in the White House, Pentagon or Congress -- expected the imminent collapse of Thieu's government. Far from it! Even while reigning in Nixon, Congress continued to provide hundreds of millions of dollars for the U.S. puppet regime in South Viet Nam, and it was generally expected by the bourgeoisie that this money would be sufficient to keep Thieu afloat and perhaps even allow him to win.

[The speech then outlined the accomplishments of the Vietnamese liberation forces in the face of the new U.S. strategy. Then it continued:]

The Russian and Chinese Revisionists Sabotage the Liberation War

But there's more. Both Russia and China cut off aid to Viet Nam in 1972/73. When the Vietnamese travelled to Beijing and Moscow looking for further aid against the signing of the Paris treaty, they got the cold shoulder in both capitals. Zhou Enlai even told the Vietnamese to "relax for, say, five or ten years"! While the Vietnamese, at their best, played a centrist role in the fight against modern revisionism, nevertheless they were wary enough of their erstwhile allies to have stockpiled sufficient supplies such that even this aid cutoff did not leave them in the lurch. Soviet aid only resumed in late 1974 when it was clear that the Their regime was collapsing. Contrary to Nixon's raving that Russian aid allegedly determined the course of the war, it was the Vietnamese people's struggle that defeated the Pentagon.

Business As Usual for the Pro-Imperialist Puppets — Corruption

Finally -- what of the Thieu government with its million-man army, U.S. fighter jets and cluster bombs? How did it react to the new situation ushered in by the Paris Treaty of 1973? Why, with busi-

ness as usual, of course!

For the Thieu government and South Vietnamese bourgeoisie, business as usual means only two things: first, parasitism off the Americans, and second, immense corruption. Under the Americans, Saigon was one big bordello, one big black market. As a matter of fact, it was in large part the potential to gain immense wealth off such corruption which led the Cambodian bourgeoisie to overthrow the "neutralist" Sihanouk in favor of the American horn of plenty.

The American troop pullout completed on March 29, 1973 pulled the plug on this thieves' paradise. The bloated parasitic Saigon economic of prostitutes and drug traffickers, barkeepers and taxi-drivers, shoe-shine boys and secretaries, lost its mainstay. Later that summer, the 1973 oil price explosion delivered a double-whammy. What could Thieu and company do in this dire situation but tighten their belts and concentrate all their resources on -- plundering the Saigon treasury. This resulted in such phenomena as the wholesale theft and diversion of army payrolls and supplies. It even got to the point that ARVN [U.S. puppet Vietnamese forces] commanders had to pay bribes to receive ammunition -- the money for which was raised through extortions of the Vietnamese peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie of the towns. With such a government and army as this, can there be any surprise that the first big wind blew the whole house of cards in a million directions?

The "Light at the End of the Tunnel" Goes Out

[The speech then traced the events of the final months of the war. And it pointed out that up to the very end, the very last month, the U.S. imperialists continued to see one "light at the end of the tunnel" after another. Why, the war was as good as won, they still thought, if only their latest scheme was enacted.]

The U.S. Ambassador is still optimistic and thinks \$700 million dollars will change the situation. He even refuses to let the local IBM employees leave Viet Nam because they have to process the Saigon government payroll. The CIA chief in Saigon proposes yet another coup. Meanwhile various of the ARVN generals are closeting themselves with the French Ambassador with a coup proposal of their own.

[Yet, the speech pointed out, today Nixon is again raving that the Pentagon won the war.]

Nixon maintains that the war ended with the Paris peace treaty. According to him, the Christmas bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong in 1972 smashed the military capacities of the North Vietnamese and broke the will of the liberation forces to fight. Oh, come on!

Nixon's "Wisdom" -- Bombs, Bombs and More Bombs

I should note that Nixon has a particular fondness for bombing. He prescribes it like aspirin. In his book, he declares that the French at Dien-

bienphu should have bombed more. He and Kissinger should have bombed more from January 1969 on. He should have bombed from January 1973 on (but didn't he tell us that the war was over then?). Bombs and more bombs, says Nixon. Quite an ennobling perspective Nixon offers U.S. imperialism!

[The speech then pointed out that Nixon stressed the need to win public support for U.S. aggression, to build a consensus in favor of suppressing the Vietnamese people. Nixon's book itself, of course, is part of the bourgeoisie's attempt to build a consensus for future aggressions by the Pentagon. Nixon criticizes the Democratic presidents who waged war on Viet Nam for not explaining their aims to the American people, as if they could win support for aggression by explaining its nature. The speech continues:]

Nixon spends two chapters exposing the failure of Kennedy and Johnson to build this consensus. It was, after all, LBJ who was famous for the "credibility gap" with his consistent dishonesty over the war. But Nixon fails to consider whether or not LBJ had any choice in this regard. Would the public relations men for the Pentagon have achieved more with an open escalation and declaration of war? In fact, LBJ and company attempted to do this by sending "Truth Squads" around to various campuses around 1965, and everywhere these squads were confronted by the anti-war movement.

And what about Nixon? Didn't he have a "secret plan to end the war"? And what was this plan? It was the notorious secret bombing of Cambodia which, when it became public, re-ignited the anti-war movement. And once this happened, did Nixon learn his lesson and proceed to patiently explain his aims to the American people? Not on your life! He set up the "plumbers" unit to monitor his "enemies," tried to launch the fascist "hard hat" movement, and cheered on the repression on the campuses which culminated in the massacre at Kent State 15 years ago today.

What the Heroic Liberation War Accomplished

[The speech concluded by discussing what was accomplished by the heroic victory of the Vietnamese people. It was a national liberation struggle which was not taken on to a socialist revolution. Thus it did not result in the complete emancipation of the Vietnamese people. Yet only the most jaded renegade, or the Pentagon generals in search of justification for their crimes, can write off the historic accomplishments of the struggle on this basis.]

To the credit of the Vietnamese, they took the path of armed struggle against imperialism, persevered and defeated the Pentagon despite the hostility of world imperialism and the backstabbing sabotage of international revisionism. In doing so, they also provided a powerful impetus to the world revolutionary movement in general and to the struggle of the American working people for emancipation in particular.

ON THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Continued from the front page

simply a movement of the urban petty bourgeoisie without a firm social basis. This was connected to the thinking of an entire section of the Left Zimmerwaldists, which Radek was part of, the section who believed that the national question had become irrelevant with the rise of imperialism and the coming of the world imperialist war, and that therefore the national movements had lost all substance.

[The Zimmerwald movement was an international grouping of opponents of World War I. Its majority were centrists who only postured against the war and refused to break with the would-be "socialists" who defended the imperialist slaughter and the aggression of "their own" local bourgeoisie. There was also a Zimmerwald left, led by the Bolsheviks, and among whom only the Bolsheviks took a consistently revolutionary stand.]

Lenin on Revolution

The following is from Lenin's reply:

"To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletariat and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc. -- to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution. So one army lines up in one place and says, 'We are for socialism,' and another, somewhere else and says, 'We are for imperialism,' and that will be a social revolution! ...

"Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.

"The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It consisted of a series of battles in which all the discontented classes, groups and elements of the population participated. Among these there were masses imbued with the crudest prejudices, with the vaguest and most fantastic aims of struggle; there were small groups which accepted Japanese money, speculators and adventurers, etc. But objectively, the mass movement was breaking the back of tsarism, and paving the way for democracy; for this reason the class conscious workers led it.

"The socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it -- without such participation, mass struggle is impossible, without it no revolution is possible -- and just as inevitably will

they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses, and errors. But objectively they will attack capital, and the class conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for different reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism, which, however, will by no means immediately 'purge' itself of petty-bourgeois slag." ("Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up", Collected Works, vol. 22, Section 10 "The Irish Rebellion of 1916", pp. 355-6)

Thus Lenin in a very profound way grasps the objectivity of the class struggle, sees all the forces which enter into it and which lie beneath it. At the same time comrade Lenin is also well known for not reconciling himself to the prejudices, to the reactionary fantasies, to anything backward, to anything opportunist. And comrade Lenin fought bitterly for the greatest possible clarity among the advanced section of the proletariat and for the greatest possible degree of organization in the struggle. These two basic themes -- the objective character of the struggle, and all that it throws into motion, and the need to reckon with this in order to fight to build up the advanced detachments of the class -- are very close to the questions which we have been dealing with in the course of this conference regarding the period of upsurge in the latter 1960's.

The Struggles of the 1960's Brought Millions Into Motion

With this we'll turn to the study of the Black Panther Party. This study concerns an important political phenomenon of the 1960s, and in particular the problem of how to assess and deal with such a phenomenon. We are speaking here of a political animal which is wildly erratic and which has highly contradictory features. It has revolutionary features and it wavers from side to side week by week. It wins thousands of adherents and also engages in wild purges of them. It taunts the left; but in fact it not only aligns with it, but wins the allegiance of a large part of it. It turns its back on mass struggle, and yet holds the sympathy and respect of some 25% of the black masses. The animal in question of course is a panther; this is the Black Panther Party which we're speaking of.

In the mid 1960s, the mass upsurge, the struggles of the black people, brought millions into motion, releasing tremendous force and energy. From a movement of hundreds of thousands it grew rapidly into a movement of millions. It swept past the existing organizations, and there was a spawning of

diverse struggles, diverse new organizations and activities. There was also a surge in national sentiment, a strong surge, as millions came into motion for the first time, bringing with them the tremendous resentments against generations of oppression, bringing with them all the national distrust which this had sown, bringing with them both their revolutionary sentiments and various aspects of backwardness. This basic phenomenon shaped the politics of the times.

With the Rising to their Feet of Millions, the Politics Took on a Militant Tone

With the arousal of millions the politics took on a militant tone. With the unleashing of strong national sentiments they took on as well a marked nationalist tone. The black people taking destiny into their own hands became the spirit of the times. The idea of the black people taking their destiny into their own hands marked a rupture with the conservative reformism of the past, a sign that the oppressed masses were no longer willing to politely appeal to their oppressors for salvation and were determined to liberate themselves through their own efforts.

At the same time, within the powerful social movement unleashed under this idea, the different class forces within the movement continued to pull in different directions in their own class interests. To forget the militant spirit of the times would be to blind ourselves to the real-life stirring and deep-felt sentiments of the masses; but to blind ourselves to the class distinctions within the mass currents and the real-life limitations of these currents would be to forget Marxism-Leninism.

The powerful and stirring idea of the black people taking their destiny into their own hands overshadowed the simple call for freedom under which years of struggle had taken place, years of struggle which had now brought about the new day. Freedom is a beautiful call, and important struggles took place under its banner; yet the struggles which took place under this banner from 1956 to 1965 were nonetheless dominated by a relatively conservative coalition of bourgeois interests, and were amenable to those class interests. With the passage of the 1964, 1965, and 1967 Civil Rights Acts, and the passing of millions of dollars in anti-poverty funds into the hands of black bourgeois strata, this already conservative trend began a slow passage to the right. For a time it was partly swept aside by a raging movement which was then still ascending to greater heights.

The Reign of Petty-Bourgeois Nationalist Politics

Now petty-bourgeois politics gained strength. Beneath the politics of the day, beneath the amorphous slogan of "Black Power", the battles for community control, etc., to a certain extent lay the aspirations of the rising petty bourgeoisie. The

petty-bourgeois politics came to the fore and was able to dominate the massive upsurge of the black working masses; this was due not to the brilliance of the political representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, but rather to the fact that these politics corresponded to the development of the movement. Millions had been thrown into motion, awakening the militant spirit and also deeply-felt national sentiments. These national sentiments of the day cut very strongly against the white slumlord, against the white businessmen, against the corporations, against the government; but they also strongly tended to recognize no differentiation among blacks and thus tended to be essentially petty bourgeois nationalist in character.

In these conditions the slogans of the radical section of the petty bourgeoisie found tremendous mass appeal. For example, with the slogan of community control certain democratic concepts and the militant spirit of the times were meshed with nationalist sentiments.

It should be noted that the ideological and political influence of the militant-sounding political organizations led by the radical section of the petty bourgeoisie went far beyond their organizational strength. The movement had a much broader scope than just these political groups. As well, these political groups frequently were marked by a tendency towards acting like sects and they tended to be highly unstable and to consume themselves.

The State of the General Working Class Movement in the 1960's

Another side of this picture, which helps to further understand why the movement took the course that it did, was the relative weakness of the revolutionary working class movement. Inevitably, a democratic mass movement against national oppression of this massive scope will bring to life among wide sections of the masses all types of non-proletarian and nationalist trends. But depending on the conditions, it is not inevitable that non-proletarian nationalist trends have predominance. When the working class is aroused and fighting the bourgeoisie in a revolutionary way this will have a profound impact on such national movements, attracting the working masses of the oppressed nationality towards the proletarian trend, turning their eyes towards the strength of the united working class as the guarantor of their national liberation.

But in the 1960's the general working class movement remained quite weak and suffered under the heel of the arch-racist liberal-labor coalition of the Democratic Party and the union bureaucracies. Moreover, the old CPUSA, which had won a number of successes for a proletarian trend within the black people's struggle earlier when it was still revolutionary and communist in deed and not just in name, had already been reduced for years to a discredited tail of the bourgeoisie and had already betrayed the black people's struggle to the tender mercies of the

capitalist liberals. And the struggle to build a new, genuinely communist party to replace the now-corrupt CPUSA was still disorganized. Under such conditions there was little possibility of proletarian hegemony in the 1960s tidal wave of the black people's struggle.

A Left Wing Moving Towards Revolutionary Positions

The surge of the movement in 1967-1968 strengthened the left wing of the national movement and pushed it toward revolutionary positions. Mass trends emerged which advocated revolution, in some cases linking this to more militant forms of struggle, and in other cases specifically to the emergence of the black workers movement. In this situation left trends came to the fore.

After the 1967-1968 storm of rebellions the political differentiation within the national movement continued to develop. From this time until the first years of the 1970's, the workers' movement rose (with the black workers playing a vital role), the student movement remained at a high level (including among the black students), and the organizations of the black movement spread wider across the country.

In this climate a section of the black activists were turning in the direction of proletarian politics. This gave rise to such phenomena as the League in Detroit becoming something of a pole of attraction, and later to black activists forming a number of groups that declared themselves Marxist-Leninist.

At the same time, the black reformists were aggressively re-grouping and refurbishing their image in order to steal the fruits of the movement. The government also saw the importance of building up the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois social base of reformism among the black people in order to keep a lid on the situation, as reflected in the Kerner Commission Report produced in the wake of the '68 rebellions.

This differentiation didn't take place in a straight line and only went so far. Unfortunately the left-wing of the national movement never fully understood the significance of clearly distinguishing between the black masses and the politics of the petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie, and therefore it repeatedly lapsed back into accommodation with the reformists.

An example of such a reconciliation was the National Black Economic Development Conference in 1969, a conference dominated by reformist politics but which also had a prominent left wing. This reconciliation went even further in 1972 with the Black Political Alternatives Conference, which at *that moment became* the umbrella for the movement, and which was co-chaired by Hatcher (reformist mayor of Gary, Ind.) and Baraka (formerly Leroi Jones, the notorious cultural nationalist and opportunist and present-day "three worldist" liquidator.)

When the movement subsided in the early 1970's, the left trends mainly fell apart or succumbed to

the reformist bourgeois politicians.

The Spread of the Idea of Armed Self-Defense

But with the big surge in the movement in 1967-1968, the left wing — a left wing which was moving into revolutionary positions — captured the attention of millions. One sign of this leftward development was the spread of the idea of armed self-defense in the movement and among the masses, and its emergence as an important issue in the late 1960s. In fact, examples of armed defense can be found at times of upsurge and strong clashes throughout more than a century of black people's struggle. Armed defense was being advocated throughout the late 50s and early 60s; it appeared in the program of Malcolm's Organization of Afro-American Unity; and it was actually carried out in the late 1950s by a local chapter of the NAACP in North Carolina led by Robert F. Williams.

But these were small and scattered groups that advocated armed defense at that point. It was at the height of the movement that the idea gained particular strength. In the 1960s the spread of the idea of armed defense signified a turning away from the attempts of Martin Luther King Jr. and company to limit the movement to less militant forms of struggle. This was also bound up to a greater or lesser degree with the breakdown of illusions about the courts and the federal government as the guardian angels of civil rights. For a decade the struggle in the South had pitted tactics of passive resistance against the dogs, clubs, waterhoses, and guns of the police and the Klan. The activists in particular and the community in general were prey to the terror of nightriding in reprisal for their struggles. By 1965-1966 the development of struggle gave rise to the taking up of arms against nightriding, etc., despite the vociferous objections of the leaders of SCLC.

In the South

At about this time, in a number of different areas of the black belt where its work was concentrated, SNCC organizers began to arm themselves. In a number of areas, demonstrations took place around 1966 accompanied with arms. At this same time, in Louisiana, was founded the Deacons for Defense and Justice, which was an organization that engaged in armed patrols of the communities against night-riders, and which also provided armed escorts for civil rights workers. At its height the Deacons for Defense and Justice claimed some 50 to 60 chapters throughout a large part of the South. We have no way of verifying this claim; we can verify, however, that it did exist in Louisiana and that CORE in its work in Louisiana was regularly protected by the Deacons. In point of fact, a polemic against the Deacons was published by one Martin Luther King Junior, indicating that this phenomenon was taken seriously by the SCLC.

In the North

In the North the idea of armed defense became strong during the period of 1967-68 when rebellions broke out in cities across the country. While these rebellions had other targets as well, fighting back against the violence of the police and other racist authorities was one of the main objectives of these mass outbursts. Among the masses this was often expressed with slogans along the line of chasing the police out of the community. Many of the fighters in these rebellions were inspired by such things as Malcolm X's call to meet the violence of the racist oppressors with the violence of the oppressed. At the same time these powerful mass struggles had the great weakness of being highly unorganized and spontaneous.

Following the Rebellions

Following the rebellions, police harassment and racist attacks in the communities continued and were often redoubled with special squads acting increasingly like occupying armies. Every police department in the country launched special tactical squads, which would go flying in on a Friday night and occupy a whole section of the black community. In these conditions, the idea of armed self-defense gripped wide sections of the masses.

In May 1967, thirty young blacks staged an armed demonstration at the California state house in protest of a gun control bill which was pending. This, needless to say, excited a certain amount of attention from the media, and it brought a national reputation to the Black Panther Party which had been founded in Oakland only half a year earlier. By the end of 1968, two years after the founding of the Black Panther Party, it had grown up from some half a dozen youth in Oakland into a national organization claiming some 10,000 members. We again cannot verify the figure of 10,000, but you can bet on at least 5,000.

On the Tactic of Armed Defense

Armed defense, and its association with some general notion of revolution, was an idea whose time had come. So I'd like to spend a minute on the tactic of armed defense. Armed defense is a legitimate tactic of the masses in the face of racist attacks; it has repeatedly been turned to by the black masses in the face of nightriding, lynchings, and pogroms. We have seen this repeatedly in the course of the past hundred years. It is a militant form of struggle against those attacks, and it can lend itself to organization.

It also has limitations, as does any single form of struggle taken in itself. Armed defense is a tactic which addresses a particular aspect of the anti-racist struggle. It is a tactic which can generally be sustained only at times of strong mass upsurge when there is a relatively high level of

mass arousal. Even then it is a tactic which frequently embraces only a minority of the active section of the masses, and must therefore be combined with other forms of struggles as well, even on the front of fighting racist attacks. And while the question of fighting violent racist attacks at times does come to the fore, it is not the only front of the anti-racist struggle.

Taken by itself, in exclusion of other political work, armed defense does not provide the necessary basis for the mobilization and political training even of the most active section of the masses. Taken as a substitute for the other tasks of organization, agitation and struggle, it reveals a certain tendency towards political narrowness, towards negating the political issues that the movement must face up to. Indeed, in the hands of various organizations the slogan became a sectarian principle counterposed to the struggles of the masses and cutting against the masses' mobilization, training, and organization.

(These points also shed light on the limitations of the slogan "Self-defense is the only way" when taken by itself as certain forces do. While self-defense is applicable in much broader situations than armed defense, taken in isolation from other political work, it has a number of similar limitations.)

The Complicated Role that the Issue of Armed Defense Played in the Struggle Between Trends in the 1960's

In the movement which gripped the masses in the 1960s, the question of armed defense played a complicated role. It was fought over as an issue in the tactics. It served as well as a symbolic issue representing a militant path of struggle in general, in opposition to the narrow reformist tactics of the SCLC. At times it served as a vague symbol for the ideas of revolution, but at times also it was used as a substitute for issues of substance, as well as a substitute for mobilizing the masses.

Armed defense is a tactic which comes up in connection with one or another political trend. During the 1960s it was in fact linked with various trends. There was a marked tendency for it to be linked with the more revolutionary trends of that time, but this tendency could not be substituted for the need to sort out the differences among the trends.

While it is not quite the same thing as armed defense, it is well worth keeping in mind that the utterly reformist and revisionist CP refloated itself on the basis that a shotgun had been bought with Angela Davis' credit card. This is not as detached from the general agitation on armed defense as it seems. The slogan of armed defense, given when the conditions for it don't exist, will inevitably degenerate into empty boasting and play-acting, or into the isolated acts of a handful.

In the 1968 CP convention, there was a floor

fight; a resolution was introduced from the floor in defense of the right to armed self defense by the black community. The resolution was introduced by the Che Lumumba Club, which happened to be Angela Davis's club in the CP. And it was brought up by Bettina Aptheker, revisionist theoretician Herbert Aptheker's daughter, and a whole section of the younger people at the CP convention. It didn't pass. But that this resolution was introduced, and that there was a fight on it in the CP, shows, firstly, how widespread this idea was at the time and how gripping it was at the time and, secondly, the fact that this tactic can be linked with a variety of political trends.

I am here stressing the limitations of the question of armed defense. This is to guard against the limitations which were not generally recognized in the movement of the 1960s. Armed defense is a legitimate tactic under the appropriate conditions. It is a tactic which the Bolsheviks used; the Bolsheviks organized armed workers' detachments to combat the pogroms of the Black Hundreds. There are reasons why it is a tactic which tends to be associated particularly with revolutionary trends -- it is a very militant tactic. One can envision circumstances where mass militias and other armed groups are set up in preparation for revolution, or mass militias need to be organized on the basis of forming armed detachments to combat the reactionary gangs. The point here is not to throw out the idea of armed defense, but to indicate its limitations. The fact that it can come up in connection with the launching of a mass militia in preparation for an insurrection indicates that it's something which tends to be associated with a very high level of struggle; it indicates that it's something which requires a high level of struggle with the masses having come to highly militant positions, and also being able to sustain that sort of organization.

The Panthers and Armed Defense

The meteoric rise of the Black Panther Party was in large part due to the fact that the idea of armed defense was gaining extensive popularity among the masses at that time. It was also due in some measure to the vague association of this tactic with some idea of revolution. In fact, however, actually organizing armed defense was a task which the Black Panther Party largely proved incapable of. Only in Oakland, where the Panthers were the strongest, were armed patrols sustained for a period of time. And even these were quietly demobilized in 1968. Thereafter, "pick up the gun" increasingly came to signify waiting for the great day. This became a sectarian principle.

Throughout their history, the Panthers tended to counterpose their slogan of "pick up the gun" to mass struggles. In fact, at one time, even while counterposing them in theory, they tended to combine them in practice. Then, when they got very strong, they tended to look down very strongly on the mass

struggles. They were actually able to get away with this for a brief period of time because of the strength of the upsurge and the strength of the idea of armed defense. But they could not sustain themselves on this basis.

In fact they were able to carry out their conception of how to organize armed defense, the idea of organizing armed patrols in the communities, only by way of exception, only in Oakland where they were strongest. And even there they stopped after a certain period of time, in part because they experienced tremendous difficulties -- the cops went nuts -- and they had to be able to deal with that. At the same time they were a public organization, distributing their newspaper in tens of thousands of copies, with a definite view of carrying on extensive public work. It was very difficult for them to combine this with maintaining the armed patrols.

The Panthers' Early Days in Oakland

Now I would like to go on to some basic points of the history of the Black Panther Party.

The BPP was founded with its living idea being that of armed defense, an idea which within a short time gripped the masses very strongly. This was combined with nationalism and, initially, with militant-sounding but confused politics which generally did not go beyond the bounds of a militant reformism. Its original name was the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, and it built its reputation by launching armed community patrols. When they had six guys the six of them would get in the car and go patrol. And they had a view from the beginning that they actually had to carry this out to get it launched. Its program included the organizing of armed self-defense as an answer to the police harassment and terror; and this was the centerpiece of its program.

The program also included demands such as the exemption of blacks from military service, the freeing of black prisoners, and the trying of blacks by all black juries -- demands which were in fact expressions of certain essentially democratic concerns from a nationalist standpoint. As well the BPP put forward demands for full employment and decent housing, combined with the proposal that if these were not granted, "the means of production be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community," and the housing and the land "be made into cooperatives." These are expressions of the concerns of the working masses, but the solutions put forward were marked by the petty bourgeois utopian concepts of control of production through the separate communities or neighborhoods.

The BPP also put forward the demand for reparations which became a favorite of the left-wing of the petty-bourgeoisie in the years to come. And finally, it put forward the demand for a U.N.-supervised plebiscite through which blacks would be able to determine their national destiny, which is a very straightforward manifestation of nationalism.

They never indicated what this plebiscite would be about. The implication in fact was that somehow there would be a separate black nation-state with no geographical center. In fact the Panthers never pushed the question of reparations, nor the question of the plebiscite.

Thus their politics at the initial stage combined the organizing of armed defense with nationalism and with what was essentially petty-bourgeois socialism.

In this period, in its early days, the BPP combined its armed patrols and so forth with demonstrations against police brutality and with participation in some community struggles. The organization of armed patrols was thus combined with other forms of struggle, even if, to their way of thinking, these other forms of struggle were really no more than recruiting grounds for the armed patrols. This was in Oakland. The subsequent period is when the BPP went national.

The BPP Becomes a Country-wide Organization

At this point, on the one hand, the BPP developed more revolutionary features and, on the other hand, it had greater difficulty in maintaining its connections with mass struggles. The more than 200 rebellions in the week following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., in April 1968, were a high tide in the black struggle. This tidal wave of rebellions, together with the anti-war movement, the resurgence of the workers' movement, the emergence of the GI movement, and the resulting crisis in the bourgeois politics, shook the society. It impelled a section of the political movement, and also a large section of the black masses, to revolutionary conclusions. And, at this time, thousands of black youth, highly militant but politically inexperienced, poured into the ranks of the BPP, attracted by the idea of armed self-defense and by general notions of a black revolution.

Throughout the preceding decade there had always been some group of half a dozen around advocating armed defense. The BPP was the one which grew into a national organization, attracting thousands of militant youth. One of the most basic reasons for this is that the BPP came up on the eve of the highest point, the zenith, the greatest surge in the struggles. Another reason is that the BPP was identified with the left-wing of the national movement.

The objective situation pushing everything leftward, and the influx of thousands of revolutionary-minded youth resulting from this, tended to carry the BPP into revolutionary positions. This is not in its earliest days in Oakland. But once it is captured and sort of grabbed up by the movement and blown up into an important national phenomenon, it develops a number of revolutionary positions.

The Black Revolution

The BPP advocated a black revolution which would liberate black people and bring down U.S. imperial-

ism. They were clearly speaking at this time of revolution, of seizing state power, something on which they had hedged at an earlier stage. The Panther conception of a black revolution sometimes had socialist aims and was sometimes associated with something else beside the black struggle. Thus they intentionally combined the slogans "All power to the people!--Black power to the black people!" It is notable that the Panthers actually put forward the slogan "All power to the people!" as a principal slogan -- they were not opposed to the slogan of black power, but were opposed to that being the main slogan. They wanted to emphasize the people.

While the Panthers wanted to emphasize the people, and showed a certain looking toward the masses, the Panthers were generally narrower, generally more nationalist in its outlook, and generally less oriented toward the toilers, than, for example, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. The Panthers in fact put forward the slogan that the lumpen proletariat was the vanguard; this did not so much signify that they were basing themselves on the lumpen proletariat, but rather that they were strongly inclined to look away from dealing with the black workers on a class basis.

The Panthers Declared Themselves To Be Marxist-Leninists

The BPP declared itself to be Marxist-Leninist in this period. In fact it was not. But this did reflect the gravitation of a section of the movement towards Marxism-Leninism at this time.

While engaging in repeated tirades about the "white, mother country radicals", the BPP in fact aligned itself with the left and was generally known as being associated with it. This was sharply distinct from the policy of the cultural nationalists at this time which was to wage war against the left and, in particular, against Marxism-Leninism.

Internationally the BPP aligned itself with the Peoples' Republic of China, while at the same time promoting Cuba, Vietnam, Korea, and also Algeria (they had started as admirers of Frantz Fanon).

The BPP thus found itself carried into revolutionary positions. These positions however were not stable, consistent, or Marxist-Leninist. One can argue about the sincerity of Huey Newton in claiming that he was planning revolution. But when in U.S. politics you have five to ten thousand black youth organized under slogans for revolution you are in fact dealing with a revolutionary phenomenon, no matter how confused and no matter what backward features it has.

The politics of the BPP in this period smack of petty-bourgeois revolutionism. There's no political training of the membership. Indeed there are almost no objective politics in the press. There is a tendency toward abstaining from mass struggles and counterposing them to building the BPP and "picking up the gun" in the abstract, that is, waiting for the great day -- because in fact by this time the

Panthers are not actually organizing armed defense in the communities.

Bloody Repression Against the Panthers

However, its militant appeals were quite enough for the state which was determined in this period to smash the BPP. A federally coordinated drive brought a murderous wave of repression with the killing of a number of Panthers and the imprisonment of the entire leadership. This repression created tremendous difficulties for the BPP and aggravated all its problems. Caught between the severe repression and the instability of its own politics the BPP subsequently collapsed into reformism.

The BPP's Decline into Narrow Reformism

In 1969 the BPP moved to reassert its mass ties, not through objective politics and participation in mass struggle, but through "serve the people" programs: breakfast for children, health clinics, etc., programs which when placed at the center of its work oriented the BPP away from struggle. There is not necessarily anything wrong, in itself, with breakfast programs. However to make such programs the center point of the activity of a political organization is bound to incline it away from struggle. And this did become the centerpiece of the BPP program.

At the same time the Panthers concluded an alliance with the CPUSA and launched what it called "the United Front Against Fascism" to consummate it. Legal defense against repression tended to be put at the center of the program of work, along with the "serve the people" programs. The slogan of a fight against fascism was the justification used to backpeddle on the question of revolution with demagogy about "well, the immediate fight is against fascism." During the following year, during the year after consummating this alliance with the CP the BPP began to drop its claim to be Marxist-Leninist.

The Constitutional Conventions

In 1970 the Revolutionary Peoples' Constitutional Conventions, held in the summer in Philadelphia and in the fall in Washington D.C., were the last twitchings of the corpse. The Philadelphia Revolutionary Peoples' Constitutional Convention was organized by the BPP. This was a nationwide conference which they called in order to draw up a new constitution.

Now, what you were going to do with a new constitution was a mystery. They said, well, things are pretty terrible so we need a new constitution, a constitution which is not the constitution of the slaveholders. As far as the content of it, it was flagrant reformism.

It was the Philadelphia constitutional convention which begins the process of the conventions. This process was completed with the Washington Constitu-

tional Convention. The Washington constitutional Convention consists of between five and ten thousand people, about 80% black, spending two days wandering the streets of Washington D.C. because there is no convention. The Panthers had managed to organize about one meeting in the course of two days.

The Mass Membership Purges

During this time, beginning in 1969 and continuing through 1970, the BPP was also consumed by mass expulsions of the membership. By the end of 1970 it was a very small shadow of its former self. It had lost some membership due to the repression, but the mass purges inside the BPP and the consequent disorganization and disorientation also played a significant role. During the latter part of this process, their press would be full of announcements that such and such a number of members had been expelled that week.

The question of the mass expulsions -- why they were taking place and what they signified -- is a question which we are actually going to have to look into more deeply. It is true that petty-bourgeois sects commit suicide quite regularly. And it is true that this is bound up with the fact that as they go off the rails all kinds of strange things can take place. From this standpoint it is not unusual. However, it is also important that this was associated with a turn to the right.

We can say, for example, that in New Jersey it was the kids they kicked out. The handful of honchos that hung around the office--none of them got purged; they kept on hanging around the office. And the honchos kept another handful hanging around with them. They would go up in the office, and they would stack up all the furniture against the doors, and sit there and play what the Panther Party called at the time "revolutionary suicide", waiting for the man to come down and then they were going to commit revolutionary suicide, taking the man with them. Meanwhile, 150 youth, very militant youth, had been expelled.

These expulsions actually contributed in a large way to the Panthers losing their mass character and then losing their militancy as they lost their militants so to speak.

The Black Panther Party had risen meteorically because a militant nationalist mood had gripped a large section of the masses, because the idea of armed defense had captured the imagination of a section of militant youth, and because of its vague association with some idea of revolution. At its height, it took on revolutionary features, but its politics were unstable and at no time did it orient itself toward the working masses. The BPP rapidly declined from that height into the most narrow and moribund reformism, revealing the limitations and instability of its petty-bourgeois nationalist politics even at their revolutionary height.

[The second half of the speech will be published in a future issue of The Supplement.] <>