

survive without a national voice of opposition to Carter's policies.

The following is a selection of local press opinion which represents American patriotic opposition to war-mongering as a national policy, distinct from the usual Kissinger-type "loyal opposition" flight forward into thermonuclear war. The statements and signatures presented here, are a sampling of a building public mandate for peace — a mobilization that national network media has refused to report.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer editorial, Feb. 20: ... Peking's claim that its "punitive" military strike against Vietnam is retaliation for Vietnamese border provocations is patently false. It is the classic excuse for aggression ... By playing the American card, the Chinese communist leaders undoubtedly hoped it would deter Russia from attacking China when Peking invaded Vietnam ... This situation carries in it the germs of a world conflict.

Buffalo Evening News editorial, Feb. 20: ... Indeed, if one were sitting suspiciously in Taiwan, it would not be difficult to conclude, as an official government spokesman does, that everything that has happened in Southeast Asia in the past two months is part of a chain reaction touched off by the U.S. recognition of China ... yesterday's inconceivable pipedream; today's ominous reality.

Philadelphia Inquirer editorial, Feb. 19: The Chinese took a calculated risk that the Soviets would not intervene militarily ... but starting a fight is easier than stopping it — considering the immediate stakes in the struggle ... The Chinese leaders should withdraw their troops without delay. There has already been too much bloodshed and the lesson should be for the Chinese, the Soviets, the Vietnamese and for all people that armed invasion, for whatever reason, carries no guarantee that the fighting will not spread and escalate with the danger of the ultimate horror — nuclear war — ever present.

Baltimore Evening Sun editorial, Feb. 20: ... One American embarrassment so far is nevertheless troublesome. This is the fact that the Chinese attack, well advertised while Teng Hsiao-ping visited the U.S., shot forward within days after his return to China — suggesting Teng carried home in his pocket a U.S. go ahead card

In addition, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Bulletin, and the Scranton Times all ran a letter to the editor from U.S. Labor Party Chairman Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr. urging the concerned citizens of the United States to extricate the nation from "the war danger created by the abandonment of the principles of the Founding Fathers" by reorienting U.S. policy toward the European Monetary System.

Teamsters grope for

The negotiations between the trucking industry and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters for a new national master freight agreement are reportedly going "nowhere fast." Sources close to the talks in Washington indicate that there have been almost no substantive discussions of basic issues in over three months of negotiations.

Trucking industry officials are said to be sitting back, waiting for the Teamsters to make the first move. They are supremely confident that the combination of pressure from the Carter Administration and their own "tough" bargaining position will eventually wear the Teamsters down and force them to agree to a contract somewhere within the Administration's "7 percent wage-price guidelines."

With the media and Administration figures like "inflation czar" Alfred Kahn rightly terming the MFA the key "pacesetter" contract for 1979, a Teamster capitulation to the wage-price guidelines would severely cripple labor's ability to resist new austerity demands.

Such a capitulation would also set into motion internal destabilization scenarios gravitating around the activities of the two small countergangs within the Union, PROD, Inc. and the Teamsters for a Democratic Union. Wildcat strikes and the disintegration of the centralized national leadership would quickly follow, breaking the over 2 million member union into semiautonomous local fiefdoms.

TDU-PROD leaders, many of whom experienced major setbacks in recent local union elections, are known to be counting on the Teamster national leadership to stumble into this trap; so are their controllers in the Kennedy machine.

In recent weeks the media has gone overboard to portray the Teamsters as "ready to deal." Many of these claims are leaks from Carter Administration sources. The normal form of these leaks has the Teamsters trading off any number of things — from trucking deregulation to criminal prosecutions of Teamster leaders by the Justice Department — in exchange for a contract that Kahn could say "falls within the guidelines." The media has seized upon Teamster President Frank Fitzsimmons' recent cautious approval of the Administration's "wage insurance" program as further evidence that the Teamsters will "deal."

Faction fight

Contrary to this noise and wishful thinking, the Teamsters leadership has not yet decided on an actual

a bargaining strategy

bargaining strategy. Our sources close to the Teamster leadership report that a debate is raging within the Executive Board. The austerity enforced within the Carter Administration such as Kahn and Barry Bosworth of the Council on Wage and Price Stability, have consciously opened up flanking operations against the Teamsters to box them in. The timing of moves to deregulate the trucking industry, the TDU-PROD campaigns, the threats of renewed criminal witchhunts against Teamster leaders, and the "unsolved" Hoffa murder, are all intended to deflect the Teamster leadership from their responsibility: to prepare a strategy capable of defending their membership from the austerity onslaught and to take aggressive responsibility for the health of the national economy. Kahn and Bosworth have succeeded, thus far, in preventing a coherent strategy from emerging.

The possibilities

Without a strategy, the Teamsters can be defeated.

There are three principal strategies under discussion. One, indeed, involves back-room, real-politiking to reach a compromise with "enemy forces" in the Carter Administration and the industry. Some top Teamster leaders are perfectly willing to "play ball" in exchange for favors. What represents a principal brake on such weak-kneed leaders is their own sense of survival within the union. They know that Teamster members would hold them personally responsible for such a policy. Their fear is that they could not sell it to the membership and, failing that, would be discredited. Such leaders fail to realize that the Administration's commitment to increasing levels of austerity means that "you can't make deals." It may be possible to sign a contract and have a handshake that Carter and company will go easy on deregulation. But as Carter's policies continue to destroy the economy, yet new austerity demands will be made.

A second bargaining position identifies the Carter Administration as weak and unreliable. This grouping thinks that with appropriate bluff and bluster it is possible to force the Administration and the trucking industry to back down. This group is recklessly threatening a strike which they know will shut down the U.S. economy. These individuals are feeding into the hands of their enemies — who are using a strike threat to mobilize public opinion against the union. The Teamsters' enemies who are headquartered in the City of London are at this moment planning a scenario to use

a Teamster strike to help promote a "Crash of '79" which would have among its effects the chaotic collapse of the U.S. economy and the U.S. dollar. The Teamsters would then become the perfect scapegoats.

The same elements inside the Teamsters who are promoting this "strike strategy" are cuddling up with the union's arch enemy, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass). When confronted, such individuals say they are merely recognizing "political reality" that Kennedy will likely be President in 1981. Saner elements within the union leadership, who know the history of the pro-British, anti-Teamster Kennedy family know precisely what a Kennedy presidency would mean for their union — and shudder at the thought.

If these were the only alternatives under discussion the Teamsters would have lost. But there is a third grouping of Teamster leaders who have increasingly come to recognize the need to formulate an actual winning strategy.

These leaders are coming to recognize the need to mobilize both the membership of their own union and the American population behind policies recommended by the U.S. Labor Party, calling for expanded trade and high-technology economic growth if the Teamsters are to win a decent contract. This policy recognizes the political reality.

At the moment, this is clearly a minority position within the Teamster executive. But it is important to note that several months ago, this position and group of leaders hardly existed. The Carter Administration's austerity policies have had a shattering effect on many of the old guard Teamster leaders, who were, until very recently, clinging to their ideas about horse-trading.

Our sources report that Teamster President Frank Fitzsimmons has stood on the sidelines while this debate rages. They say that Fitzsimmons is trying to straddle all three positions. He is reportedly afraid to alienate any of the participants. The Carter Administration is clearly counting on Fitzsimmons's profile as an able "horse-trader" to keep him within the austerity framework. However, Fitzsimmons is reportedly growing tired of being known as everybody's patsy.

From the Teamsters' standpoint, it is getting late. The master freight agreements expires March 31 and sources indicate that it will take several weeks to nail down an agreement, even if basic points are agreed to. The pressure on Fitzsimmons to take decisive action is expected to increase.

—L. Wolfe and M. Moriarty