

## Bush's Little Coup That Failed

### U.S. Get Out of Panama!

Gabriel García Márquez might have called it the chronicle of a pre-announced coup. For the last couple of years, Panama's strongman General Manuel Noriega has replaced Libya's Muammar Qaddafi as tops on the hit list of Third World rulers the White House loves to hate. Already last May, President Bush called on the Panamanian military to "do everything they can to get Mr. Noriega out of there." In August, the U.S. military staged practice runs for a kidnapping, even dropping helicopter-borne "vertical insertion teams" into the American embassy in Panama City. But in this opening shot of his "war on drugs," President Bush shot himself in the foot, bungling the attempted overthrow of Noriega. Then Bush put his foot in his mouth, claiming this was not "some sort of an American opera-



Der Spiegel

**"Big Stick" arrogance in the White House. Strictly Bush league attempt by ex-CIA chief to remove his former Panamanian "asset" leaves Noriega (right) grinning.**



Cambio 16

tion." The failed October 3 putsch was among the wildest fiascos in the history of Yankee interventionism. Yet behind the comic opera farce was U.S. imperialism's drive to throw its weight around militarily in Latin America.

The Bush team desperately wants a

Grenada-style "win" in order to intimidate nationalist opposition in its Latin American "back yard." Reagan's surrogates, the Nicaraguan contras, failed miserably against the radical-nationalist Sandinista regime, despite sowing bloody terror in the

countryside. So far, Bush's only success at striking a "tough" posture was in sending military police to patrol the heavily black U.S.-held Caribbean island of St. Croix following the devastating Hurricane Hugo. But his *continued on page 14*

## Perestroika Strike Ban

"Democracy is against perestroika." Thus declared two Gorbachev supporters, I. Kliamkin and A. Migranian, recently in the prestigious Soviet journal *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. Early this month Gorbachev, evidently reaching the same conclusion, called for a ban on all strikes for a year and a half. In a "compromise" measure the Supreme Soviet on October 3 outlawed strikes completely in energy, transportation and other strategically vital sectors, and insisted on mandatory arbitration in other areas before legal strikes could take place. Gorbachev linked the strike ban with authorizing the use of Soviet troops to end the railway blockade of Armenia by nationalist forces in Azerbaijan. However, the upsurge of murderous nationalism throughout the USSR has been fueled by Gorbachev's perestroika with its reliance on economic competition and degradation of social equality and proletarian solidarity.

The strike ban is directed above all at the strategic heart of the Soviet proletariat. The miners strikes in the Siberian Kuznetsk Basin and Ukrain-

ian Donets Basin last July marked the greatest challenge yet to the authority of the Gorbachev regime. In addition to shutting down the mines, strike committees took over entire coal-producing regions. The Kremlin tops quickly dispatched high-level delegations to negotiate with the Kuzbass and Donbass strike committees. The miners went back after the government promised sweeping concessions, including importing large quantities of consumer goods from the West. Gorbachev attempted, with a certain degree of success, to co-opt the strikes by declaring the miners' grievances were just, blaming the bad conditions on backward local apparatchiks and identifying the strikers' demands with perestroika.

But the workers' illusions in Gorbachev—already rubbed raw over the past year by increasing shortages—have rapidly dissipated as conditions of life become ever worse. In appealing for the strike ban, Gorbachev warned: "We are faced with the disruption of all our plans for the coming year if we don't react



Dimitryev/Argumenty i Fakty

**Soviet miners strike in July shook the country, challenged Gorbachev's anti-working-class "market reforms."**

now." Among those plans are five draft laws designed to "develop market relations within a socialist economy," whose central plank aims "to denationalise the

economy and make it really mixed."

Significantly, one of the most vocal supporters of the strike ban in the *continued on page 12*

**Soviet Workers—Fight for the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!**

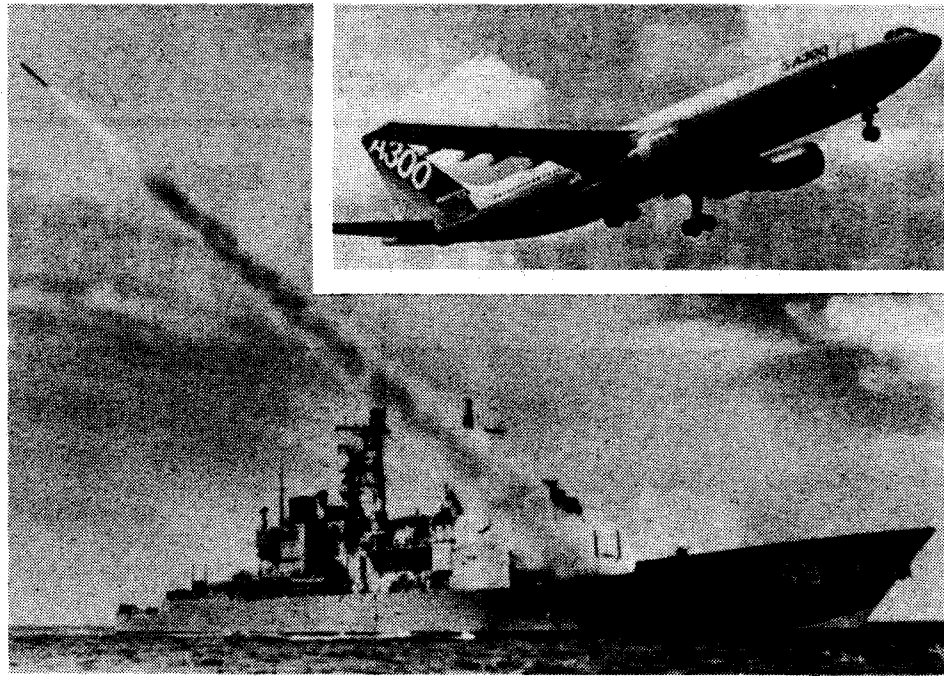
**Behind the Crisis of Stalinism...8**

# The Crime of the Vincennes

On 3 July 1988 the U.S. guided missile cruiser *Vincennes*, armed with the high-tech Aegis weapon system, fired on and destroyed an Iranian commercial jetliner which was flying its normal assigned air route over the Persian Gulf. In one fiery instant 66 children, 52 women, all 290 people on Iran Air Flight 655 were murdered, the pieces floating in the Gulf.

That original incident was soon buried by the servile U.S. media. But recently the truth appeared in a scathing letter printed in the September 1989 issue of the U.S. Naval *Proceedings* by Commander David R. Carlson, U.S. Navy, commanding officer of the frigate USS *Sides*, which had accompanied the *Vincennes* in the Gulf that day. Commander Carlson reveals that even before the murderous shootdown, other Navy ships in the area referred to the trigger-happy *Vincennes*, commanded by Captain Will Rogers III, as "Robo Cruiser."

*WV* readers will recall that at the time there was not even an apology from the U.S. government. Whipping up another wave of chauvinist hysteria, President Reagan claimed it was "proper defensive action." Vice President Bush praised the American sailors as "heroic." A Defense Department whitewash "investigation" concocted a story about the "stress of combat"—the *Vincennes* was allegedly battling some small Iranian gunboats—to explain how the data from the ship's sophisticated computer was completely misread, portraying the Iranian jetliner as an attacking



U.S. cruiser *Vincennes* blasted an Iranian civilian jetliner out of the sky, murdering 290 men, women and children.

F-14 fighter. No officer or member of the crew was charged with any error, let alone any crime, and the U.S. refused to pay compensation.

A few months later, Pan Am Flight 103 was blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland. Imperialist security agencies (who had some prior knowledge that a Pan Am plane would be bombed) now leapt to allege that those who felt the need for revenge for the earlier murderous air assault were behind the second one. Was this a case of "an eye for an

eye"? But it's not the passengers over Lockerbie who should have paid innocent blood for innocent blood. No, it is those in charge of the USS *Vincennes* who should be brought before a suitable tribunal. As we said in "Massacre in the Persian Gulf" (*WV* No. 457, 15 July 1988): "By any standard of decency and morality, the captain and responsible officers of the *Vincennes* should be facing a court-martial." Yet this is impossible in America so long as bourgeois state power is sovereign. The criminals escaped punishment.

Sovereignty comes out of the barrel of a gun. But we must at least declare that these are the criminals. Out of incompetence, cowardice and panic, with a bloodthirsty desire to kill some Iranians and operating under hair-trigger rules of engagement ordered by Reagan himself, the command of the *Vincennes* gratuitously murdered an entire plane-load of passengers. Bush made it clear that these criminals are the pride of the U.S. Navy, and let us not forget it. As the American fleet, guided by the Reaganite "forward strategy," provocatively violates Soviet territorial waters and bumps Soviet nuclear subs, they are playing with blowing up the world.

We print below excerpts from Commander Carlson's devastating letter, answering an earlier cover-up article by "analyst" Norman Friedman.

I cannot bear to read yet another apologia for the *Vincennes* (CG-49) incident without commenting. Nearly a year after the incident we have learned little. Many people still believe that the entire affair was precipitated by the Iranians themselves, or that the *Vincennes* defended herself against an attack. Almost immediately after the event, the media were full of stories speculating about the number of naked bodies in the water, conjuring up visions of an Iranian F-14 using an airliner as cover for an attack, insinuating that the plane that was shot down was too small to be an Airbus, or... The number of gunboats actually involved in the surface action grew, like Pinocchio's nose, to a record of 13 or so. Contents of a *Sides*'s message sent only to the *Vincennes*, USS *Elmer Montgomery* (FF-1082), and Commander Joint Task Force Middle East on 3 July began to appear, in bits and pieces, in the news within a few days. (The *Sides* remained at sea until the investigation team arrived in Bahrain.) Information began to blur. A *New York Times* article reported falsely that the *Sides* was "not in the electronic link." This was not true, but no one ever bothered to ask us about it. In fact, despite the numerous articles written on

the subject, to date, not one request for information has come our way.

A review of the facts is in order. When the decision was made to shoot down the Airbus, the airliner was climbing, not diving; it was showing the proper identification friend or foe—IFF (Mode III); and it was in the correct flight corridor from Bandar Abbas to Dubai. The *Vincennes* was never under attack by Iranian aircraft. There was no targeting being done by the Iranian P-3. There was no coordinated attack involving the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) boats and Iranian military forces. Iran Air Flight 655, also known as track number (TN) 4131, was mistakenly classified by the *Vincennes* as an Iranian F-14 diving at the ship. This "incomplete" information, as Dr. Friedman chooses to call it, was responsible for the regrettable decision which led to the needless loss of hundreds of lives. Captain Will Rogers III, no doubt, did what he *thought* he had to do, but he was wrong.

Dr. Friedman attempts to show that events in the Gulf leading up to the incident combined with the misinformation generated in the "fog of war" somehow made the killing inevitable. I don't buy it....

My experience was that the conduct of Iranian military forces in the month preceding the incident was pointedly non-threatening. They were direct and professional in their communications, and in each instance left no doubt concerning their intentions....

Having watched the performance of the *Vincennes* for a month before the incident, my impression was clearly that an atmosphere of restraint was not her long suit. Her actions appeared to be consistently aggressive, and had become a topic of wardroom conversation. "Who's driving the problem in the *Vincennes*?" was a question asked on numerous occasions prior to 3 July. "Robo Cruiser" was the unamusing nickname that someone jokingly came up with for her, and it stuck. My guess was that the crew of the *Vincennes* felt a need to prove the viability of Aegis in the Persian Gulf, and that they hankered for an opportunity to show their stuff. This, I believe, was the climate that aided in generating the "fog"....

Spare us more fog. I'd be willing to bet that either the correct identification of TN 4131 as a commercial airliner or the accurate altitude information would have caused question enough for re-assessment of the threat. Both pieces of information would certainly be sufficient to justify a decision not to shoot. The information was available in the *Vincennes* and was mishandled....

No profit has come from the pathetic postincident attempts to place the blame on the victims. View it as you will, Iran Air Flight 655 was shot down for no good reason....

Dr. Friedman tells us that on the morning of 3 July the *Vincennes* launched her helicopter to investigate a report of small Iranian gunboats, and that the helicopter had been fired at....

Was the *Vincennes* attacked? Stating that the speedboats did not leave the area after the cruiser began to fire is a curious way indeed to describe an attack. It just does not add up. The harder you look at it, the more absurd the concept seems that a few speedboats would be taking on the *Vincennes* and the *Elmer Montgomery* with any notion of success. In any event, they would surely not want to alert the *Vincennes* by shooting at the helicopter. I hold a minority view: The helicopter drew fire because it was a nuisance to the IRGC boats. The *Vincennes* saw an opportunity for action, and pressed hard for Commander Middle East Force to give permission to fire. Deescalation went out the window. Equipment failed. The "fog" rolled in....

This tragedy was avoidable, and we must learn from it. ■



TROTSKY

## Trotskyism and the Soviet Workers

As the Soviet workers today begin to move onto the stage of independent struggle, the key task confronting them is the forging of an internationalist vanguard party committed to proletarian political revolution. In its 1938 founding document, the Transitional Program, written at the time of Stalin's blood purges, Leon Trotsky stressed that the Fourth International was the organic expression of the

fight to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and return the Soviet Union to the road of Lenin's Bolshevism.

Petty-bourgeois democrats of the West, having but yesterday assayed the Moscow Trials as unalloyed gold, today repeat insistently that there is "neither Trotskyism nor Trotskyists within the USSR." They fail to explain, however, why all the purges are conducted under the banner of a struggle with precisely this danger. If we are to examine "Trotskyism" as a finished program, and, even more to the point, as an organization, then unquestionably "Trotskyism" is extremely weak in the USSR. However, its indestructible force stems from the fact that it expresses not only revolutionary tradition but also today's actual opposition of the Russian working class. The social hatred stored up by the workers against the bureaucracy—this is precisely what from the viewpoint of the Kremlin clique constitutes "Trotskyism." It fears with a deathly and thoroughly well-grounded fear the bond between the deep but inarticulate indignation of the workers and the organization of the Fourth International.

—Leon Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International* (September 1938)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

*Workers Vanguard* (USPS 098-770) published biweekly, except 2nd issue August and with 3-week interval December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. Domestic subscriptions: \$7.00/24 issues. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

No. 487

13 October 1989



# Congress Bigots Spearhead Anti-Gay Censorship Forbidden Art?

The flag-waving yahoos in Washington, D.C. have launched a campaign, spearheaded by North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms, to impose state censorship on art. What they want to keep us from seeing are works that touch some of the most taboo subjects in this racist, capitalist society: interracial sex and homosexuality, the themes of some photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe, as well as anything that might offend the fundamentalist religious bigots. On October 7 the Senate passed a House-approved bill banning federal funds for "obscene" art. Though rejecting Helms' more sweeping censorship motions, Congress also punitively cut the National Endowment for the Arts budget by \$45,000, while setting up a new bureaucratic commission to keep the NEA from getting too "permissive" in its grant making.

The chilling effects of this attempted suppression reach beyond the art world. This Congressional campaign continues the past decade's sordid spectacle of fundamentalist crusaders seeking to impose sexual repression and conformity on the American people. The intent of these would-be ayatollahs of repression is not fundamentally different from that of former Iranian dictator Khomeini and his cohorts, whose death contract against author Salman Rushdie for "blasphemy" in his novel *The Satanic Verses* still stands.

Posters at protests said "Heil Helms!" And there is in Helms' bombast a sinister echo of the demagogic threats of Adolf Hitler, who said: "It is not the function of art to wallow in dirt for dirt's sake, never its task to paint men only in states of decay, to draw cretins as the symbol of motherhood.... Art must be the handmaiden of sublimity and beauty.... If art does not do this, then any money spent on it is squandered" (*New York Times*, 28 July). Helms' idea of "sublimity" in art, like Hitler's, is "moral uplift" banalities, the better to cloak the monstrous terror of real-life reaction. Arch-segregationist Helms is an enthusiast of Chile's bloody dictator Pinochet and El Salvador's terrorist Robert ("Blowtorch Bob") D'Aubuisson. As Mapplethorpe's New York dealer, Robert Miller, noted, "When one thinks of the terrors that Washington generates and sends out into the world, the thought that the depiction of the naked human body might be disturbing to Washington seems ludicrous."

This current wave of suppression was set off in Congress early this summer, when Helms' fellow bigot from Long Island Alfonse D'Amato ripped up a catalogue of photographs by Andres Serrano on the Senate floor. In fact, the Serrano show, which included the artist's photographic image of a small crucifix mistily immersed in urine, had run without incident in North Carolina for months. It was only after the Mississippi-based fundamentalist and anti-Semitic bigot Rev. Don Wildmon of the "National Federation for Decency" and televangelist Pat Robertson launched a write-in campaign protesting this "bigotry against Christ" that Congress got involved.

Meanwhile, an exhibit of works by Robert Mapplethorpe (who tragically died of AIDS this March) was due

to open at Washington's Corcoran Gallery. Mapplethorpe's work is well known in fashionable avant-garde circles (he had a major show at New York's Whitney Museum last year). But in the American tradition of bombing Vietnamese villages in order to save them, the Corcoran abruptly canceled the show, claiming it wanted to "protect" Mapplethorpe's works from Congressional outrage. Predictably, the Corcoran's cowardly self-censorship set off a firestorm of renewed reaction as well as protest, while torching its own reputation.

Then Jesse Helms struck, forcing through a motion by voice vote on the nearly deserted floor of the Senate, to ban federal funds from being used to "promote, disseminate or produce obscene or indecent materials, including...depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts"



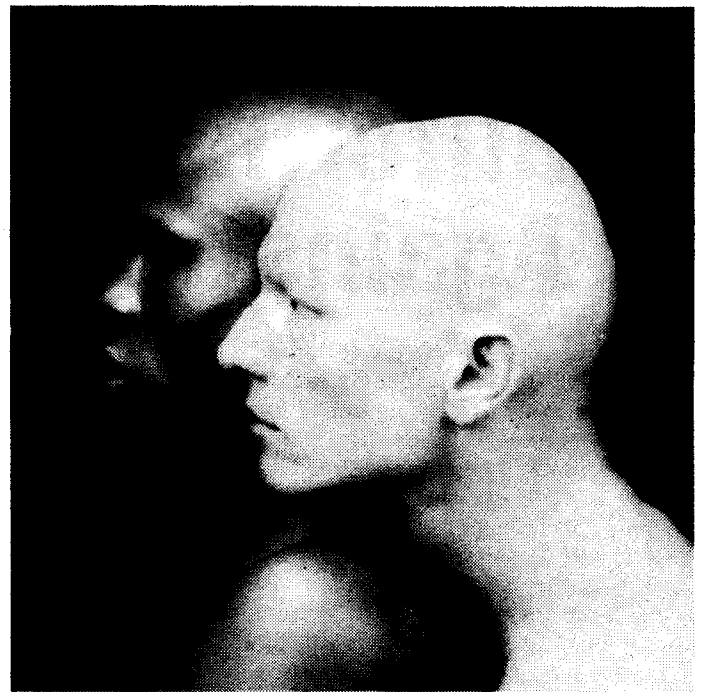
Anti-censorship protesters march in New York City, August 29.

or anything that might upset "the adherents of a particular religion or non-religion" (*New York Times*, 27 July). Helms' July "empty floor" coup embarrassed more suave Congressmen. But the Democratic-dominated House of Representatives earlier made its own move to suppress art, when it slashed the National Endowment for the Arts budget by \$45,000, the amount used to partially fund the Mapplethorpe and Serrano shows. Although this cut is relatively trivial in terms of the amount of money involved (military bands get more bucks than the entire appropriation for "the fine arts"), the point is political repression.

## Sex, Race and the "Sacred Family"

Last week Helms called on "all the pages and all the ladies to leave the chamber" as he reintroduced his motion on the Senate floor. So much for the vote for women! Dragging out "the little woman," the classic ploy of patriarchal bigots, Helms earlier quoted his wife Dorothy as saying after he allowed her a quick peek at the Mapplethorpe catalogue: "Lord have mercy, Jesse, I'm not believing this." Well, she certainly wasn't in Kansas anymore. Amidst Mapplethorpe's flowers and fashionable faces, there were photographs of black and white men in explicit gay

"Ken Moody and Robert Sherman," 1984 work by Robert Mapplethorpe.



Robert Mapplethorpe

scenes. For aggressive male chauvinists, accustomed to treating women as sex objects for centuries, no doubt the role reversal of seeing naked men in openly sexual poses was shocking. And in this racist society, one of the deepest, most murderous taboos is that against interracial sex.

As Gore Vidal once noted in reference to some rather tame photos in *Playgirl*, the pictures were "in a sense, blowing the minds of a lot of middle-class women who never thought they'd ever get to see a photograph of a cock. Now they're getting a look at some very famous ones and this must make them fairly...well, thoughtful." The gay and

Indiana has noted, for pompous art critics like Hilton Kramer and his *New Criterion* crowd, "the only good art is dead art, preferably the kind he and his Heritage Foundation cronies easily recognize from years of drooling over portraits of royalty" (*Artforum*, September 1989). But let's look at some of the great art of the past. No "erotic rituals involving coercion": how about "The Rape of the Sabines" by the French classicist David? Strange sex? All those paintings of Zeus in swan's and bull's clothing impregnating human females had better go. And what about Hieronymus Bosch? Admittedly Serrano's "Piss Christ" photograph was bound to outrage the pious. But the gloomy masochism combined with meticulous renditions of violent death one finds in much religious art along dusty museum halls is enough to give susceptible children nightmares.

One man's art is another's obscenity. Under Reagan, Meese's sex police unleashed the vice squad against "pornographers"; the extension of this reactionary hysteria from the local 7-Eleven selling *Penthouse* to all publicly funded institutions of art and culture in this society comes naturally to these book-burners. The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee wrote in an *amici curiae* brief in the U.S. Supreme Court last year, defending Indiana booksellers against RICO "obscenity" charges: "People have the right to read or look at whatever they want, to write, paint or film it too, and to engage in whatever sexual practices (or none at all) they choose, so long as they're consensual. The point is neither to proscribe, nor prescribe, what kind of sex people 'should' have."

Political, sexual and artistic repression run together. During the post-WWII Cold War, hundreds of Hollywood stars, writers and directors were witchhunted and blacklisted for Communist sympathies. Actress Ingrid Bergman was denounced on the Senate

*continued on page 12*

## Spartacist Forum

Democrats, Republicans Wage War on Abortion Rights

## Women's Liberation: What Strategy to Win?

- Free Abortion on Demand! Free, Quality Health Care for All!
- Government Out of the Bedroom!
- For Separation of Church and State!
- For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

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Returned to San Quentin, Transfer Threatened Again

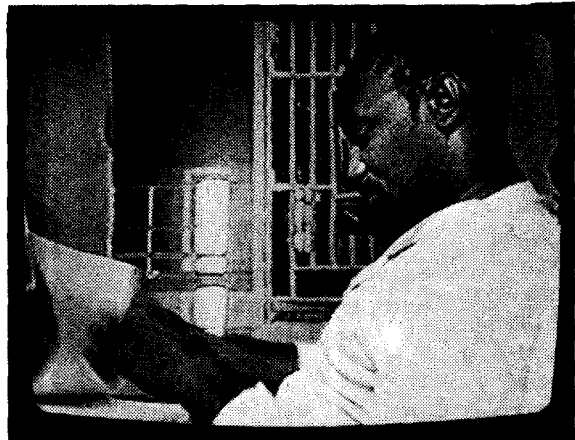
# California Prison Vendetta Against Pratt Continues

OCTOBER 10—As we go to press, former Black Panther leader Geronimo Pratt awaits a court hearing tomorrow morning to prevent a life-threatening transfer from San Quentin prison. This hearing is the latest round in a lawsuit filed on Pratt's behalf by Partisan Defense Committee counsel Valerie West and by attorney Stuart Hanlon, initially to challenge Pratt's transfer to Folsom prison. The suit charges that Pratt's life is in danger at the hands of prison guards due to false charges in his prison files that Pratt is a "cop killer" and "escape risk." It demands these lies be removed.

In an opening-round victory, Pratt was returned to San Quentin from Folsom by a court order issued by U.S. District Judge Stanley Weigel on September 28. Tomorrow's hearing is to consider a motion by Pratt's attorneys to forestall the state's plans to now ship Pratt off to the Tehachapi state prison maximum security hellhole and bury him there alive. Pratt's papers charge that "the wild allegations attested to create fear and hatred by prison guards. It is only at San Quentin that his life is not threatened in the same way—because after eight uninterrupted years at San Quentin it is universally known that these charges are indeed false."

Judge Weigel ruled that Pratt's transfer to Folsom was an unlawful retaliation for his exercise of First Amendment rights, noting that Pratt was transferred one day after he returned from Puerto Rico, where he had gone to testify in the defense of Puerto Rican *independentistas* about the FBI's COINTELPRO conspiracy. The judge also cited "the recent media attention focused on the alleged injustice of plaintiff's incarceration, triggered by the denial of plaintiff's parole on August 17, 1989 and the murder of former Black Panther leader Huey Newton." He ruled the transfer to be in violation of the Eighth Amendment proscription against cruel and unusual punishment.

The court order directed that Pratt be returned to San Quentin. Barely concealing its contempt for Pratt and Judge Weigel (who since 1980 has overseen the state's compliance with conditions set for inmates on death row), the retaliation by prison authorities began the minute Pratt returned to San Quentin the following day. Pratt was immediately thrown into the hole, refused even the minimal rights accorded other prisoners in solitary. He was denied access to his legal papers and property, which are placed just 20 feet from his cell to constantly taunt him. Pratt has been denied cups with which to drink water, as well as soap, toothbrush and clean underwear. He is forced to sleep on a cold concrete slab because the mattress he was given is drenched with insect



Geronimo Pratt in San Quentin, interviewed on CBS-TV 60 Minutes. Partisan Defense Committee initiated protest outside San Francisco federal court demanding freedom for Pratt, September 28 (below).



WV Photo

repellant. And in response to Pratt's protests his jailers contemptuously scoff, "Why don't you get Judge Weigel to give you a court order to get your soap or a cup?"

On September 30, the day after Pratt's return, PDC counsel West was denied an anticipated attorney's visit with Pratt, stripped of all her papers, and permitted only a brief visit separated by a glass-partition. Hanlon too has been denied a contact visit, making preparation of this lawsuit very difficult. When Pratt was ordered returned to San Quentin, prison officials determined to then send him to Tehachapi no later than October 4. Sham Classification Committee hearings were held on October 2 and October 5 to rubber-stamp the decision. Pratt was dragged before the Committee in handcuffs, wearing only his underwear, and then verbally abused when he protested his Level IV classification that he is only fit for a maximum security prison.

Tomorrow's hearing seeks an amended injunction, necessary to prevent transfer to an institution where Pratt's life would be in danger at the hands of guards who believe the wild falsifications in his prison file. In responding to this lawsuit the government has only confirmed that where Geronimo Pratt is concerned it cannot, and will not, tell the truth. Charges already proven false that Pratt planned to kid-

nap children of prison personnel, and that he once participated in a stabbing assault on a guard, remain in his file. Also in his file is the deranged—and racist—charge that Pratt planned to kill Folsom guards by using poison darts.

The few government documents submitted to the court betray a pattern of lying and deceit. The official Corrections Department history of Pratt accuses him of association with gang members although the Classification Committee report of September 12 very

## Abu-Jamal...

(continued from page 16)

witnessed numerous atrocities and I can tell you things about this diabolical camp that will shock your senses. We are living under a system that functions in a brutish state of mind and if we don't get help real soon many of us will die, if not physically then mentally. Speaking of dying, or should I say killing, several days ago the guards here at Huntingdon encouraged an inmate, Meryl Taylor to kill himself. And after he committed suicide, they laughed and called him a dumb nigger....

"Each inmate who is locked up in DC [disciplinary closed] must wear each other's underclothes. State prisons issue clothes that are changed on shower days. We are told that it is part of security. Our mail sometimes never leaves the jail. Because these people here don't want noone to know what is going on. The letter I am writing you is being sent out by many inmates, because if we don't hear from you I would know that these people here stopped the letter from going out....

"Our food is brought to us by guards and many of us don't eat because the guards sometimes spit in our food. I can go on and on and tell you about this camp. But to do so I would have to convert this letter into a monumental book to achieve an end.

"We need help Mrs. Williamson. Before it's too late. Please help us!"

The racist death penalty is integral to U.S. capitalism's war on black America. An entire generation of ghettoized black youth face joblessness, hunger and jail. Capitalist America's only answer is

clearly states that Pratt is "not gang/TIP affiliated." The history also demonstrates conclusively that the public statement by Board of Prison Terms commissioner David Brown that Pratt was denied parole because he was a "heroin user" is a conscious and knowing slander.

For 18 years Geronimo Pratt has been in jail for a crime he did not commit, a victim of the COINTELPRO vendetta against the Black Panther Party. And for 18 years state officials have grown accustomed to acting on their belief that because he was a Panther any allegation will stick—no matter how patently false. That Pratt was "a highly ranked member of the Black Panther Party" is prominently recorded throughout the Corrections Department's records. As late as October 2 they were still ordering investigations "in order to clarify his membership in the Black Panther Party"! Years after brutal state repression destroyed the BPP, the government continues its dirty war on those surviving Panthers who refuse to recant their political views—first and foremost Geronimo Pratt.

But Geronimo Pratt is not alone. UPI and AP covered the September 28 hearing and dispatches appeared in papers from coast to coast. In 1987 CBS' 60 Minutes aired an exposé of Pratt's COINTELPRO frame-up. Congressman Ron Dellums is one of the many who have called for Pratt's release. For all who support Pratt's fight for freedom, the time to act is now, with labor taking the lead. More than 60 Pratt supporters packed the courtroom for the September 28 hearing, including Allen Perdue, president of American Federation of Government Employees Local 1457, which has called for Pratt's release. Ben Visnick, vice president of the Oakland Education Association, announced after the hearing, "Over 230,000 California Teachers Association members are on record calling for Pratt's freedom."

During the past half year Pratt has seen his appeal thrown out of court on a minor technicality and been denied parole for the ninth time. But with the present suit another hole has been driven through the wall of lies which keeps Pratt behind prison bars. The muscle of labor must be mobilized to break down those walls. Freedom now for Geronimo! ■

more racist terror, more cops, jails and executions. Thumbing his nose even at the U.S. Judicial Conference, Supreme Court Chief Justice Rehnquist steers his execution express to quicken the pace of executions by severely limiting death sentence appeals. And those condemned to "legal lynching" are treated as living dead—to whom anything can be done.

The hunger strike at Huntingdon is a protest on behalf of all those scattered on death rows across the land. Join the fight. Send letters and telegrams supporting the hunger strikers' demands to: Gov. Robert Casey, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

Mumia Abu-Jamal fights on, with his voice, his pen, whatever means are available. The fight to save Abu-Jamal is today the rallying point of opposition against the barbaric death penalty. Rally with us and all death penalty abolitionists in Philadelphia on October 14 at 3:00 p.m., at Temple University's Gladfelter Hall. March with the PDC contingent in the March Against Executions in San Francisco October 21. Take Mumia's case to your unions, civil rights, campus and community organizations. Mobilize them to pass motions in solidarity with Mumia—publicize his case in your union or organization's newsletter. Send letters of protest to Governor Casey. Save Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the death penalty! ■

**Stop the Racist "Legal" Lynchings!  
Save the Life of Mumia Abu-Jamal!**

Join the Partisan Defense Committee and  
the Labor Black League for Social Defense contingent at the

**Rally Against Executions**  
**Saturday, October 21, 1:00-4:00 p.m.**  
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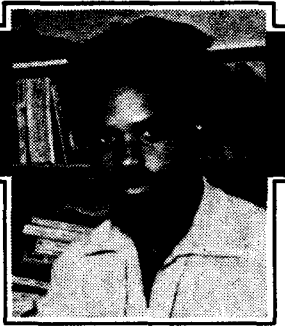
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## From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

# Death Row Hell



Harry Washington\* shrieks out of an internal orgy of psychic pain: "Niggers!! Keep my family's name outcha mouf! Ya freaks! Ya filth! Ya racist garbage! All my family believe in God! Keep your twisted Satanic filth to y'all self! Keep my family's name outch'all nasty mouf!!"

I have stopped the reflexive glance down in front of Harry's cell. For now, as in all the times in the past, I know no one is out near his ground-level cell—I know Harry is in a mouth-foaming rage because of the ceaseless noises echoing within the chambers of his tortured mind.

For Harry, and I, are among the growing numbers of Pennsylvanians on Death Row, and Harry, because of mind-snapping isolation, a bitterly racist environment, and the ironies, the auguries of fate, has begun the slide from depression, through deterioration, to dementia.

While we both share the deadening effects of isolation, and an environment straight outta the red-neck boondocks, Harry, like so many others, has slipped. Many of his tormenters here (both real and imagined) have named him, "Nut," and describe him as "on tilt." Perhaps the cruel twists of fate popped his cork—who can say? A young Black man, once a

\* Not his real name, although quotes, historical facts are quite true.

correctional officer, now a Death Row convict. Once he would wear the keys, now he hears the keys, in an agonizing wait for death.

The conditions of most of America's Death Rows create Harry Washingtons by the score.

Mix in solitary confinement, around-the-clock lock in, no-contact visits, no prison jobs, no educational programs by which to grow, psychiatric "treatment" facilities designed only to drug you into a narcoleptic coma, ladle in hostile, overtly racist prison guards & staff, add the weight of the falling away of family ties, and you have all the fixins for a stressful psychic stew designed to deteriorate, to erode one's humanity. Designed, that is, by the state, with full knowledge of its effects. Nearly a century ago, a man in Colorado was sentenced to death for killing his wife, and upon his arrival at Colorado State Penitentiary, James Medley was placed in solitary.

Medley promptly brought an original writ of habeas corpus in the U.S. Supreme Court, a court, in 1890, of 6 Republicans, and 3 Democrats. In the case, *In Re Medley*, [134 U.S. 160 (1890)] the court reached back to old English Law, to the early 1700s of King George II, to conclude that solitary confinement was "an additional punishment of the most important and painful character," and, as applied to Medley, unconstitutional.

Fast-forward nearly a century, to 1986, to the infamous federal court decision of *Peterkin v. Jeffes*, where Pennsylvania Death Row inmates sought to have solitary confinement declared unconstitutional, and one hears a judge deny relief, saying, in the immortal words of non-chief justice, Rehnquist, "Nobody promised them a rose garden," i.e., solitary's O.K.

The notion, that human "progress" is marked by "an evolving standard of decency," from the less civilized to the more civilized, from the more restrictive to the less restrictive, from tyranny to expanding freedom, dies a quick death on the rocks of today's Rehnquistian courts.

Indeed, what other court could make the Republican-controlled, Southern-Harlan-Fuller Court of the 1890s seem positively "radical" by comparison? [with today's Rehnquist-Reagan courts?]

Harry continues his howlings and mindless mutterings of rage at no one in particular.

More Harrys are on the way, thanks to torturous conditions akin to psychic pressure-cookers with the setting on "high."

It is telling about America, and America to come.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Philadelphia black journalist, is on death row at Pennsylvania's Huntingdon state prison. Framed up because of his political views, Mumia faces death for his defiance of the racist, capitalist order. His columns appear periodically in *Workers Vanguard* and other newspapers.

To get involved in the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the death penalty, contact the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, New York 10013. If you wish to correspond with Mumia, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, Drawer R, Huntingdon, PA 16652.

## Stop West German Racist Expulsion of Gypsies!

While West German media and politicians whip up a nationalist frenzy over the wave of "resettlers" from East Germany, the West German state continues its racist deportations of foreign-born workers and refugees. *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans) from Eastern Europe as well are officially welcomed by the Federal Republic—which proclaims itself the legal successor to the Third Reich—immediately granted citizenship and given material assistance (see "Anti-Communist Frenzy Over East German 'Dropouts,'" *WV* No. 486, 29 September). Meanwhile, Gypsies of the Romany and Sinti groups are persecuted and threatened with mass expulsion.

On October 2, several hundred Gypsies, among them many children, were beaten up by the Hamburg police and driven out of the former concentration camp of Neuengamme where they had set up tents for the last month protesting threatened deportations, the largest since the founding of the Federal Republic 40 years ago. Free Democrat (FDP) deputy mayor Ingo von Münch cynically justified the raid, saying "a former concentration camp must never be misused for political demands." Under the Nazis many of the Gypsies' parents were slave laborers in these same buildings.

Our comrades of the Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD) participated in an August 29 demonstration against the racist plans of the Social Democratic (SPD) dominated Hamburg city government (Senate) to expel Romanies and Sintis. On October 3, the Komitee für Soziale Verteidigung (Committee for Social Defense), a non-sectarian legal and social defense organization whose goals are in accordance with the TLD, issued a statement against the expulsion of Gypsies from Hamburg. The KfSV was joined by its fraternal organization in the U.S., the Partisan Defense Committee, which also sent an urgent protest to the Hamburg mayor.

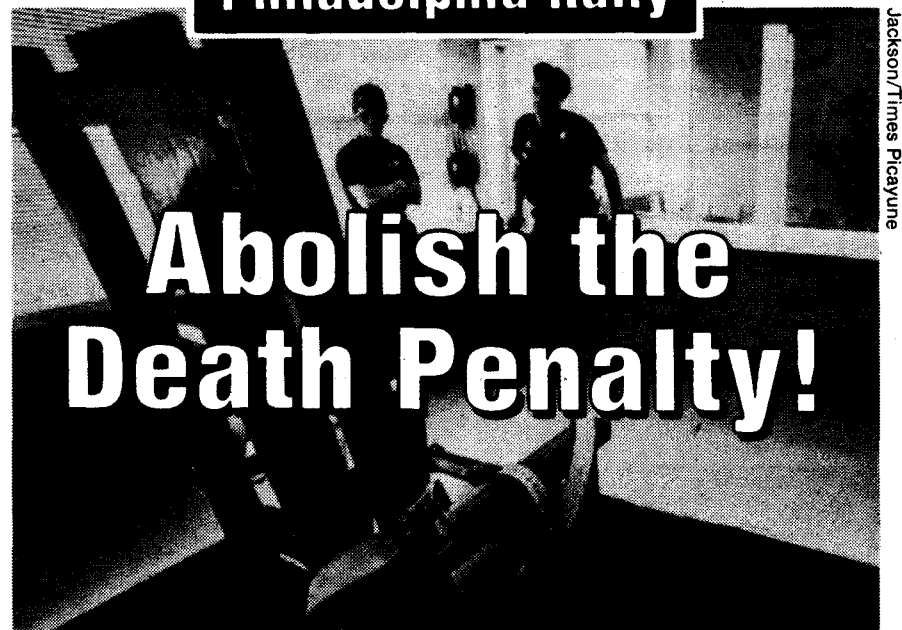
We urge readers to send letters and telegrams denouncing this outrage to: Henning Voscherau, Erster Bürgermeister, Hamburg, D-2000 Hamburg 1, West Germany. Reprinted below is the letter of protest which the KfSV sent to the Hamburg mayor the day after the police crackdown.

On October 2 Hamburg police attacked protesting Romanies and Sintis at the former concentration camp of Neuengamme. More than a thousand Romanies and Sintis—this people victimized by Hitlerite genocide, driven from country to country for centuries—are threatened with expulsion by the Hamburg SPD/FDP Senate. And now the Senate denies them even the right to protest this, even driving them out of Neuengamme. The Romany and Sinti ask no more than the right to remain in this country, which is able to take in thousands of DDR—"dropouts."

Half a million Romanies and Sintis were exterminated by the Third Reich. It is not enough to mourn the victims of Nazism when the survivors are once again persecuted! The Romany and Sinti are more than entitled to compensation from the self-proclaimed West German successor state to the Third Reich, but no such compensation can ever be enough. First and foremost we demand: Stop the expulsions!

This racist outrage takes place in the context of nationalist hysteria and the ominous rise of the fascists. This attack on a people without a homeland which has come to symbolize the persecution of the stateless is a threat to every decent person, for it can only feed the forces of murderous terror. The organized labor movement together with immigrant organizations has the strength to defend the democratic rights and the right to live of all the oppressed. It can and must be mobilized to stop the expulsion of the Romanies and Sintis! Full citizenship rights for immigrants! ■

## Philadelphia Rally



## Stop Racist "Legal" Lynchings!

### Sponsors/Speakers

William Babcock, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Prison Society

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Sister Falaka Fattah, President, House of UMOJA Boystown\*

Muriel Feelings, Director, Pan-African Studies Community Education Program of Temple University (PASCEP)

Wadiya Jamal, Wife of Mumia Abu-Jamal, MOVE supporter

Harold Jamison of the New York *Amsterdam News*\*

I Abdul Jon, Mumia Abu-Jamal supporter, MOVE supporter

Raymond Martinez, Jr., Vice President, Philadelphia Chapter, Pennsylvania Social Services Union SEIU Local 668\*

David P. Richardson, Jr., President, National Black Caucus of State Legislators,\* Pennsylvania State Representative

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\*Organization for identification purposes only.

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For information contact:

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Philadelphia, PA 19102 (215) 222-7880

# What Is the Workers League?

## Why Should Anyone Believe

### David North?

In our article "The Workers League and Mark Curtis" (*Workers Vanguard*, No. 480, 23 June) we asked: "... why should anybody believe David North? Who is the Workers League to say that Curtis is guilty, and why?" North's Workers League made an international campaign out of helping railroad Mark Curtis, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, into 25 years in prison on charges of burglary and sexual abuse. In its lame response to our article the WL's *Bulletin* (14 July) protests, "But the issue is not whether you believe the Workers League." Of course for them it can't be. Anybody the least bit familiar with David North and his minions would have to be completely deranged to believe anything they say.

To frame the rest of its lies, the *Bulletin* claims that the Spartacist League maintained a "15-month silence" over the Curtis case. On the contrary—*Workers Vanguard* publicized the Curtis case in the Partisan Defense Committee column in our 1 July 1988 issue (No. 456). Here we noted that the PDC had sent a letter demanding the charges against Curtis be dropped and had contributed \$100 to his defense. Others were urged to do the same. It is hard to imagine that the megalomaniac North missed this issue given that it also featured an article about himself entitled "Anatomy of a Healyite Russia Hater—David North: Joseph Hansen's Natural Son."

#### Who Is Whose Agent?

The *Bulletin* sneers, "Spartacist even raises its eyebrows because a 1976 FBI index of leftist groups does not list the Workers League, as though this was some sort of necessary credential." The FBI's 1971 ADEX file was not some kind of "honor roll," it was the government's hit list of those targeted as "enemies" of America. *War at Home*, a



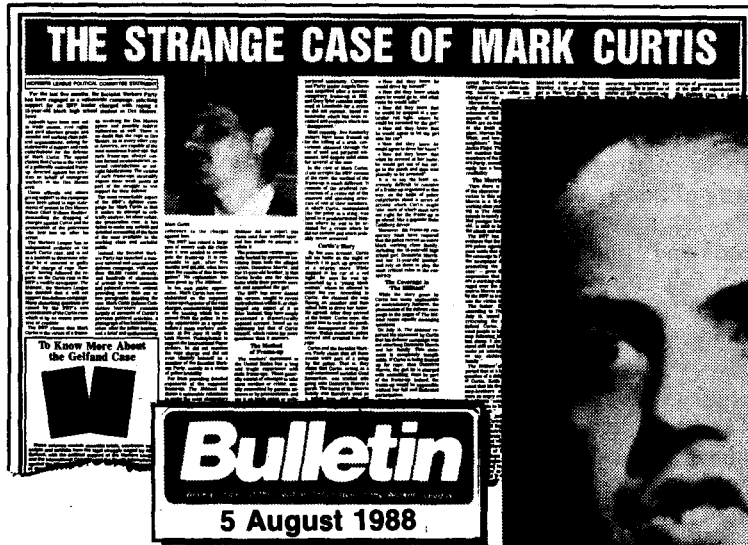
Workers News

**Australian Northite Nick Beams. His outfit got slapped for poaching on Healy's preserve in Iraq.**

recent pamphlet on "Covert Action Against U.S. Activists," details the government's dirty war against everyone from the Black Panthers to pacifist preachers and grandmothers. Yet somehow the Workers League, which advertises itself as the most proletarian, the most internationally connected, indeed the sole repository on the face of the planet of "Marxism and the struggle for socialism," didn't get included in the FBI's ADEX file—the "short list" of Americans these official hitmen had lined up in their sights.

How come? If the Workers League wasn't on that list then where were they?

This is all the more suggestive given the Northites' claim that the U.S. gov-



**David North's *Bulletin* published script for Iowa state prosecutor in frame-up trial of SWPer Mark Curtis.**

ernment took over the SWP in order to destroy... the Workers League. In "The Carleton Twelve," a demented saga retailed as "proof" that SWP leader Jack Barnes and his coterie at a Midwest college were groomed by the FBI (in league with Joseph Hansen) to infiltrate the SWP, we read that "The State Department's greatest fear was that Trotskyism, as embodied in the International Committee, would emerge as the revolutionary alternative to the Stalinist bureaucracies." Well then, how is it that the U.S. government wasn't concerned about the Workers League when it drew up the ADEX list?

In a recent scurrilous piece, "The Militant and the Miners," the *Bulletin* (29 September) names SWP members working in the coal fields and smears them as "part of an intelligence-gathering operation on behalf of the government and the coal bosses." Why? Because they were hired! The fact that SWPers get industrial jobs at all, when they are members of a self-proclaimed socialist organization, is offered as proof positive that they are police agents.

In concocting this paranoid conspiracy theory against the SWP the Workers League presents reality through the prism of the McCarthyite 1950s, i.e., when anyone with even vaguely socialist leanings was run out of their job. What about Ed Winn? He worked for the NY Transit Authority but ran as the Workers League's candidate for president. By the WL's measure this should make him a cop. And how did Mark Curtis end up getting thrown behind bars for 25 years when, according to the *Bulletin*, all SWP members are either cops or police dupes? How come Curtis got jail and Ed Winn got a presidential candidacy?

#### Witnesses for the Prosecution

Then there's the question of a state attorney from Des Moines, Iowa eagerly taking the line of argument from the *Bulletin*, a "communist" newspaper, to convict a leading member of the SWP. In our article we asked if it was simply "One More Coincidence?" that prosecuting attorney Catherine Thune used virtually the same words in her summation at the Curtis trial as those that appeared in the *Bulletin* article "The Strange Case of Mark Curtis" (5 August



Marxism Today

1988). The *Bulletin* replies: "The statement was reported by the Des Moines Register, the principal daily paper in the city, and evidently read as well by the prosecutor, who incorporated the seven questions into her closing argument on September 9." Doubtless the state's attorney reads the daily newspaper. The problem is that the seven questions raised in the Workers League's statement which were picked up by the prosecutor could not be found there.

The *Des Moines Register* did run substantial quotes from the WL's "The Strange Case of Mark Curtis." The 18 August 1988 issue featured a piece entitled "Socialist newspaper calls Curtis' claims incredible" which highlighted quotes from the *Bulletin* arguing that Curtis could not possibly have been framed up by the cops. Here was an apology for the Des Moines cops, who viciously beat Curtis, coming from a "socialist" newspaper. The question still remains as to how the prosecuting attorney got her hands on the whole text. Who gave it to her, the Workers League, or someone else?

The *Bulletin* claims it was "compelled" to write the Curtis article, which would become the script for the prosecution, because "the Workers League was seeking ballot status in Iowa for the first time... and the first question which many workers in Des Moines raised was the party's attitude to the Curtis case." This is odd. Previous to "The Strange Case of Mark Curtis," one can find no mention of the Workers League seeking ballot status in Iowa. They didn't take their election campaign to Des Moines until after the Curtis article had been published.

Besides, why are they protesting so much? This wouldn't be the first time that David North and his Workers League have used the agencies of the capitalist state to "get" the SWP. There's the matter of one Alan Gelfand. A WL agent, Gelfand was expelled from the SWP's Los Angeles branch in 1977 after filing a "friend of the court" brief in the SWP's suit against the FBI, based on the wild-eyed Healyite conspiracy theory (as told by Healy and co-authored by North) that the SWP was government-controlled.

Gelfand appealed to the courts of U.S. imperialism to reinstate him as a member, to review minutes, finances

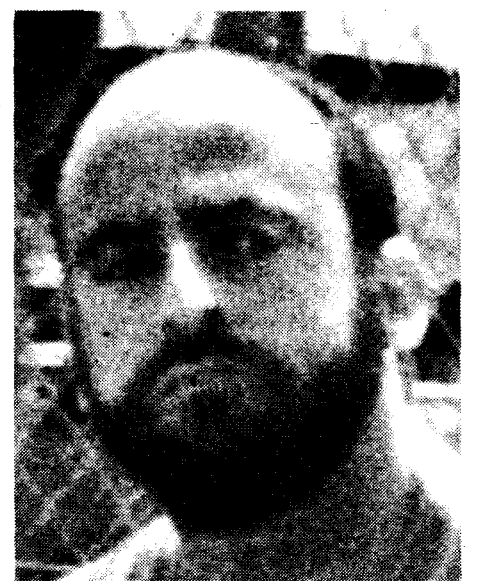
and other internal business of the SWP, and to remove members and leaders from the organization. Two of the key character witnesses in the Gelfand suit, which the Workers League boasted was a "model" in "making use of the capitalist courts," were ex-cops from the notorious LAPD red squad.

Now they retail the testimony of two Des Moines cops against Mark Curtis as unimpeachable evidence. No answer in the *Bulletin* reply to our question: "What kind of purported socialists retail the cops' story as if it were 'The Truth'?" By the Workers League's lights the cops, prosecuting attorney and court were the instruments of "workers justice" in jailing Curtis.

#### The "Heritage" North Defends

"What is the substance of this claim that the Workers League, and David North in particular, are 'shadowy' and 'sinister'?" asks the *Bulletin*. How about this for starters. David, who calls himself "North," made his political career out of loyally serving as the American stooge of Gerry Healy. He made his way to the top by co-authoring the "Security and the Fourth International" smear that SWP leaders were government agents. He carried out Healy's orders to pursue the expensive Gelfand provocation. When Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party hailed the execution of 21 Iraqi CPers by the Ba'athist regime, North's *Bulletin* duly followed suit. The payoff for these crimes was millions in money from a variety of Middle East regimes including Iraq, Kuwait, Libya and Abu Dhabi.

This whole dirty business hit the fan following the downfall of Healy's WRP as accusations flew fast and furious between Healy's former lieutenants. A Control Commission of the International Committee delegated to attempt



WV Photo

**WL agent provocateur Alan Gelfand.**

to control the damage reported that the sum of 1,075,163 British pounds sterling had been received from an assortment of Near East colonels, sheiks and dictators.

Here it was revealed that among other services offered was an agreement with the Libyan government to provide intelligence on the "activities, names and positions held in finance, politics, business, the communications media and elsewhere" by "Zionists." Even the IC Control Commission noted the "strongly antisemitic undertones" of this agreement in which "the term Zionist could actually include every Jew in a leading position." An ex-WRP member told the

*continued on page 13*



# CIA/CBS Disinformation

## Dan Rather's Afghan Hoax

So the Big Eye got caught out pushing the Big Lie over Afghanistan. CBS News and its celebrity anchorman Dan Rather have been swirling in controversy ever since the *New York Post* (27 September) carried a front-page "exposé" that "Rather Aired Fake Afghan Battles." According to the *Post*, Rather ran faked footage provided by freelance photographer Mike Hoover. The Rambo reactionaries at the *Post* have for years been going after Rather as the voice of liberal broadcast journalism, and CBS News has been the target of right-wing attacks. This time the *Post* seems to have nailed them. When after eight days CBS News finally issued its reply, without rebutting any of the specific charges, it sounded like a limp version of "plausible deniability."

The *Post* cites a 1987 CBS News segment showing a shiny red "toy bomb" supposedly planted by Soviet troops to lure and kill Afghan children; a BBC producer says Hoover himself had the "toy bomb" manufactured. Later that year, CBS aired a news program showing what was supposed to be a Soviet jet bombing Afghan villages. But a contributing author to the authoritative Jane's aviation guides identified this as a Chinese-made Q-5 Fantan, used by the Pakistani air force. Then there was the case in November 1984 of what Rather called the "largest sabotage operation of the war," a staged performance directed by Hoover of *mujahedin* blowing up electric pylons which had already been destroyed.

Another example of CBS' "creative photojournalism" featured what were supposed to be Soviet atrocities driving people from their homes near Kabul. The shot turned out to be taken at the Pakistani border. On the 11 August 1987 CBS Evening News, Rather showed scenes of what he reported as "the biggest one-day defeat for Soviet forces since World War II." Hoover apparently got this footage from a graduate of Boston University's notorious "Afghan Media Project," financed by the U.S. Information Agency, which trains *mujahedin* to film their own propaganda lies. When CBS first aired

the item, the *BU Daily Free Press* (17 September 1987) reported that communications school dean Joachim Maitre screamed sour grapes because Rather hadn't given "appropriate acknowledgment" to his *mujahedin* CIA/USIA disinformers. Now Maitre is compelled to admit, "The trouble is, there were no Soviets there."

That Dan Rather won his journalistic spurs by riding with the CIA's Afghan cutthroats in their *jihād* (holy

went on very tightly, afterwards."

Dan Rather has been at the leading edge of CIA-inspired disinformation over Afghanistan for a decade. And Hoover, who started out directing sex fantasy flicks and continued his penchant for fantasy as a sports photographer (where he staged scenes) and then video "journalist," apparently had his personal "obsession with bringing the war home for Americans," according to the sports magazine *Outside*



Dan Rather (left) poses with *mujahedin* in Afghanistan on 1980 *60 Minutes* program pushing CIA disinformation campaign.

war) against Communism, women's rights and literacy is hardly news. In April 1980, shortly before his promotion to replace former CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite, Rather did a *60 Minutes* broadcast which categorically insisted, in the words of a Pakistani information officer Rather interviewed, that "no country is providing arms and ammunitions to Mujahadeen" (*Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 1981). Until then, there had been numerous reports in the American press of the CIA's covert supply operation to the Afghan counterrevolutionaries. Noting that Rather's "broadcast seemed to mark a watershed," the *Review* asked: "What happened?" According to Michael Getler of the *Washington Post*, who originally reported the covert operation: "The lid

(October 1985). But what's going on here is hardly the fulminations of some rogue freelancer, an obsessed anchorman or even a single television network. The entire kept American media toed the Company line that the Soviet juggernaut was being bogged down by a "popular resistance" armed with little more than coke-bottle bombs.

An earlier *Columbia Journalism Review* (July/August 1980) piece titled "Reporting for duty: the Pentagon and the press" documented how American journalists painted "the Russian military machine in Afghanistan as larger than life, or at least larger than its underfunded Pentagon counterpart"—boosting support for a massive increase in U.S. arms expenditure and, more generally, stoking the fires of Cold War II. So why the "exposé" now? Behind it

all is the fact that the CIA's cutthroats are *losing*. Washington's Afghanistan policy lies in shambles in the suburbs of Jalalabad. Last month the CIA fired the head of its Afghanistan task force. Now Rather and CBS News are on the hot seat over Afghanistan. With the Kabul regime holding strong after Gorbachev's treacherous pullout, while rival *mujahedin* groups are killing each other off, the rats are scrambling. Now the journalistic thieves are falling out just like the tribalist reactionaries they have fronted for and glorified over the past ten years. As we wrote in 1984:

"For the last four years the Western press has been inundated with the most blatant lies on Afghanistan fabricated in the disinformation mills of Langley, Virginia. Bloodthirsty tribesmen who skin Communist teachers alive for the 'crime' of teaching little girls to read and write are passed off as 'freedom fighters.' Reams of copy are produced on alleged Soviet 'yellow rain' chemical



warfare for which there is not the slightest shred of scientific evidence."

—*WV* No. 345, 6 January 1984

The imperialist press finally, partially and grudgingly, began admitting that the "yellow rain" was bee shit, that the "freedom fighters" are fundamentalist anti-woman terrorists, that "all the news that's fit to print" is a pack of lies. They lie because they uphold a lying, dying system of oppression and exploitation, just like they lied about Vietnam for years. Their Afghanistan coverage is *war propaganda*, the ground cover of grotesque imperialist lies accompanying billions of dollars in armaments delivered to the ultra-reactionary *mujahedin* cutthroats. We told the truth about Afghanistan from the start because our side is the cause of social justice. ■

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We print below an edited transcript of a speech given by Jan Norden, editor of Workers Vanguard and member of the Central Committee of the Spartacist League, at Columbia University in New York City on September 30.

From the moment of its birth, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia struck fear and loathing in the hearts of the capitalist ruling classes worldwide. There is a cartoon by Jules Feiffer that captures that spirit—many of you are familiar with it, we've printed it several times. This came at the time of the 1980 elections, after Democrat Carter launched Cold War II over Afghanistan. It shows someone who looks like what used to be called a liberal egghead asking a square-jawed general, "When did we first learn we were defenseless against the Russians? Was it in 1979 with Brezhnev?" "Earlier," he says. "'60 with Khrushchev?" "'48 with Stalin?" "Earlier." So when, then? And the general replies: "1917 with Lenin." And that's true: whether it's cold war or hot, it's been war to the death ever since. One system or the other would prevail, as Lenin recognized and kept insisting.

Winston Churchill said it bluntly, at the time that NATO was launched in 1949. He blamed the imperialists' current troubles on "the failure to strangle bolshevism at its birth and to bring Russia, then prostrate, by one means or another, into the general democratic system." But that failure was not for want of trying. Remember that as soon as World War I ended, 14 capitalist countries joined hands to invade Russia, mostly the "democratic" Allies. When that failed, they tried to set up a "cordon sanitaire" in East Europe, to contain the revolutionary bacillus. With the victory of the Soviet Red Army over Nazi fascism in World War II, this whole belt was in Stalin's hands, militarily occupied. But rather than using this as a springboard to spread social revolution to the West, Stalin sought to conciliate his imperialist erstwhile "allies." Only reluctantly, after the Western powers launched the first Cold War, did he order a social revolution from above which established the bureaucratically deformed workers states, from the Baltic to the Balkans.

Yet Stalin also saw East Europe as a "cordon sanitaire," to protect against capitalist counterrevolution. Lenin and Trotsky based themselves on the program of world socialist revolution, founding the Communist International—70 years ago this year—to spread it. Stalin, isolated and under the blows of revolutionary defeats in Europe, usurped political power as the voice of a bureaucratic layer, a caste, whose conservative and nationalist outlook was expressed in his pipe dream of building "socialism in one country." This was the program of Stalin and Bukharin, who's so much in vogue today in the Soviet Union. That meant accommodating to imperialism in the rest of the world. And that's the origins of Gorbachev's market "reforms," which today are enormously strengthening the forces of counterrevolution "at home," in the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state.

So today Stalinist rule is in crisis throughout the Soviet bloc and the other deformed workers states. In China, the Beijing massacre of June 4 was the bureaucracy's desperate response to a mass upheaval that went far beyond the student "pro-democracy" demonstrators. In Poland, the Stalinists are routed in their own rigged elections, a Catholic prime minister is installed with a cabinet dominated by Solidarność, the anti-Communist, pro-imperialist so-called union which was Ronald Reagan's baby. Then in Hungary, which is the model for Gorbachev's perestroika economic schemes, the Stalinist party is on the rocks, with the majority preparing to declare them-



**Soviet Workers—Fight for the  
Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!**

# Behind the Crisis of Stalinism



Top: huge strike meeting by Siberian coal miners in Mezhdurechensk, July 13. The awakening of Soviet proletariat threatens crisis-ridden Stalinist bureaucracy. Above (from left): "hardliner" Yegor Ligachev, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, populist demagogue Boris Yeltsin.

selves social democrats at a congress this week. Here the bulk of the pro-capitalist forces come from within the regime, as sections of the *nomenklatura*—the party bureaucracy—try to grab what they can at bargain basement prices in a "leveraged buyout" raid on the collectivized economy.

And it's not just the regimes which have gone in for market-oriented "reforms" which are in heavy seas. The hardline Stalinists in East Germany, the leader of the anti-Gorbachev "rejection front" in East Europe, have seen tens of thousands of DDR citizens leave for West Germany this summer, and now they're having weekly pro-reform demonstrations. In Romania, Ceausescu decided to—and did—pay off his debts to Western banks, which meant turning off the lights, literally, and turning off heat, and thousands fled to Hungary. In Bulgaria, a quarter million people of Turkish Muslim origin were forced out to Turkey by a forced assimilation campaign worthy of Stalin. But most importantly, the Soviet Union is

itself in deep turmoil. National antagonisms set the Caucasus and Central Asia aflame with bloody feuding, while Baltic nationalists are seeking to restore capitalism under the guise of independence. The economic situation is catastrophic, with even essential goods—sugar, soap—disappearing from store shelves. After coming back from his vacation this month, Gorbachev went on TV to denounce talk of civil war and deny that a coup d'état was pending.

## Imperialist Opium Dreams

So not surprisingly the imperialists are acting triumphant. It's interesting to look back at the Feiffer cartoon because the change in mood over this decade is so striking. The U.S. "defenseless against the Russians"—this was the aftermath of the American defeat in Indochina, an expression of the "Vietnam syndrome." In contrast, when Ronald Reagan left office, someone asked him what accomplishment he was most proud of and he

replied: "I won the Cold War." Over the last several months we have seen a barrage of this bourgeois triumphalism. Jimmy Carter's Polish Cold Warrior Zbigniew Brzezinski writes a book on *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century*. There was a lot of this "end of Communism" over the Beijing massacre. Then we get another dose over Poland. When the papal prime minister Mazowiecki was installed, the *London Guardian* (25 August) wrote of the ceremony: "It had taken 70 minutes to end 'the class struggle' and 'the dictatorship of the proletariat.'" The bourgeoisie should be so lucky.

This has gotten pretty extreme lately, so that a high-level State Department official, Francis Fukuyama, recently wrote an essay on "the triumph of the West." And this means not just "the end of the Cold War... but the end of history as such"—I'm quoting this—"and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." This talk of the "triumph



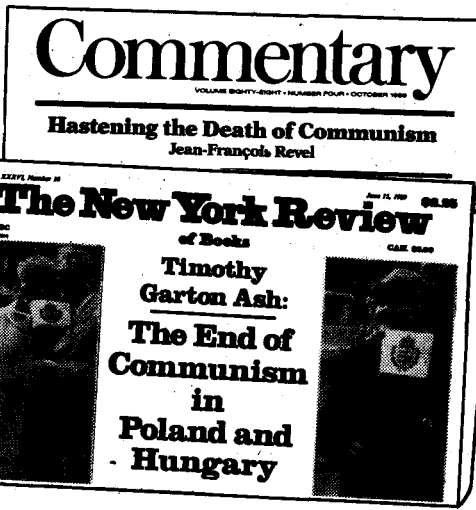
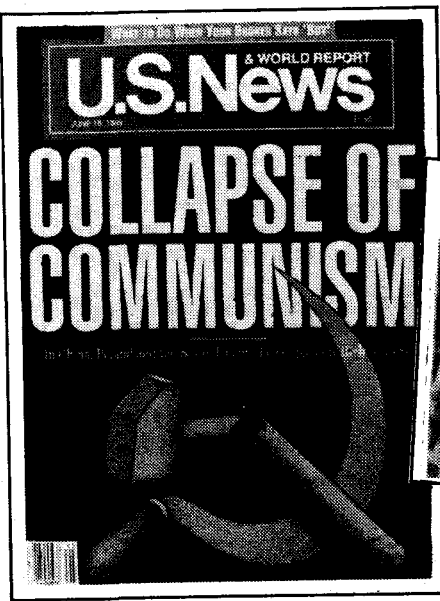
of the West" has all the bombast of Hitler's supposed "Thousand Year Reich." But we know what happened to that. The Reaganite fantasy of "the end of history" is an extreme example of bourgeois false consciousness. As Karl Marx pointed out in *The German Ideology*, the bourgeoisie, as other ruling classes before it, "will give its ideas the form of universality, and present them as the only rational, universally valid ones."

So what is this supposed "triumph of the West" based on? Fukuyama gives as his evidence the peasant markets and color televisions in Beijing, and private, or "cooperative," restaurants in Moscow! Oh, and "the rock music enjoyed alike in Prague, Rangoon, and Teheran." I'm not kidding. At least when Henry Luce proclaimed the "American century," the United States alone had the bomb and had emerged as the economically dominant imperialist power after World War II. The situation is very much different today—the October '87 stock market crash is barely two years ago, the U.S. economy is up to its neck in debt. What they're really arguing, however, is not so much the strength of imperialism, as the "total exhaustion of viable systemic alternatives to Western liberalism."

Now, what they're referring to as "the death of Communism" is really the crisis of Stalinism, which is the nationalist antithesis of the internationalist communism of October. Stalin led the bureaucratic usurpers who seized power from the Bolshevik Party in 1923-24 and then murdered the remaining cadres of 1917 during the bloody purges of the '30s. In the 1930s Trotsky wrote about the bourgeoisie proclaiming the death agony of Marxism; there was another wave after Khrushchev's speech in 1956 on the crimes of Stalin: then it was "the end of ideology." But there is a difference. Fifty years ago, Trotsky foretold the growth of internal social forces within the Soviet Union that would gravitate toward counterrevolution. In *The Revolution Betrayed* he wrote of the Soviet regime: "To the extent that, for the benefit of an upper stratum, it carries to more and more extreme expression bourgeois norms of distribution, it is preparing a capitalist restoration." He pointed to the top-level bureaucrats, technicians, administrators, directors, party secretaries and privileged upper circles.

Well, what was a tendency and a theoretical possibility in the mid-'30s is now a reality. The sizable Soviet middle layers, the technocrats and intelligentsia in particular, are yearning to be what they call a "normal" country like the capitalist West. You have all these economists who are calling for greater wage-differentiation, for unemployment. I recall an interview with Gennadi Gerasimov, the Soviet foreign ministry spokesman, on the PBS TV series *Comrades* a couple of years ago. He said he wanted Moscow, to be like New York,

## U.S. Media Hypes "Death of Communism"



Maliciously equating Stalinism with communism, capitalist press indulges in wishful thinking.

where you could get your apartment painted in a couple of days with no problems. I guess he lived in a different New York than we do. When we had our apartment painted, after waiting for months, the ceiling caved in. And I recall a Soviet newsman who refused to believe that the homeless couldn't find a job or an apartment. These are the people pushing Gorbachev's perestroika, and they're the ones imperialism is banking on.

### The Workers Enter the Scene

But there are other forces at work, and this summer we saw them dramatically as the Soviet working class entered onto the scene, playing an active role for the first time since Stalin seized power 65 years ago. In a matter of two weeks, the Siberian coal miners strikes rolled across Russia, extending to the Ukraine, to Central Asia, to the Arctic. It was striking how quickly, after all these years of quiescence, they adopted militant proletarian forms of struggle. From the very first day they had elected strike committees, recallable at any time. In coal towns of the Kuzbass, they had workers militias patrolling the streets with hardhats and red armbands. And they kept perfect order. In Vorkuta they demanded "all power to the people's soviets," recalling the famous watchword of the 1917 Revolution. Now the "soviets" these miners were referring to were the local city governments. But the workers committees they set up were only a step removed from genuine soviets, the organs for a revolutionary struggle for power. An Italian journalist who visited Prokopyevsk wrote an article on "The Miners' Soviets" in which he reported: "The miners say they don't want power, but they

already have command."

And the miners are hardly enamored of perestroika. Even after they leave the pits their faces are black with coal dust, because there is no soap. They demanded supplies of consumer goods, winter clothing, shift differentials. One of their demands was for the financial independence of individual mines, which as we pointed out is going to mean wage cuts and layoffs for many. But they also demanded limits to "cooperative" businesses, the price-gouging petty capitalists spawned by Gorbachev's "reforms." These modern "Nepmen" are hated by the Soviet working people, who have a deeply rooted sense of equality and social justice. And the coal strikes were not just the thunder and lightning of a summer storm. The workers committees are still in existence. They had a national meeting in Moscow just before an emergency session of the miners union, where they demanded equal representation.

Also, recently a Union of Russian Workers was formed in Sverdlovsk, spearheaded by one of the Kuzbass strike leaders. Now among them were certainly Russian nationalists, reacting to the wave of nationalist unrest in the non-Russian republics, and old-line Stalinists. But they are by no means dominant, and revolutionary internationalists could vie for leadership of this awakening Soviet workers movement. Among the Siberian miners, for instance, it was striking how many of the leaders had German names: they were descendants of the Volga Germans who were deported by Stalin to the nearby Altai region. And there can be little love for Stalin in Vorkuta, the site of one of the most notorious labor camps in the Gulag. In the Donbass, the strike committees included both Russian and Ukrainian miners. And earlier this month they refused to join a nationalist "Popular Front" being set up in Kiev—which was attended by delegates from Polish Solidarność—on the grounds that they didn't want to foster nationalism. In the Baltic republics, where Russian-speaking workers struck against nationalist laws which would deprive the non-Baltic population of civil rights and even the right to a job, the Internationalist Movement has been careful to phrase its demands referring explicitly to Leninist principles of equality of nations.

In short, the intervention of the working class—even without a conscious Leninist leadership as yet—has made it possible to cut across national divisions, and to counter the forces driving toward capitalist restoration. The Soviet proletariat is showing itself to be the bulwark which the imperialist propagandists of "the death of Communism" and their

willing servants in the bureaucracy must crush if they are to fulfill their counter-revolutionary appetites.

The same is true elsewhere as well. When the Beijing bureaucracy moved against student "pro-democracy" protesters in Tiananmen Square, repeatedly hundreds of thousands of working people rushed into the streets. The army was temporarily split. Only with the bloody Beijing massacre of June 4 were Deng and his subalterns able to put it down—and it took several days. The mass outpouring heralded a proletarian political revolution, we wrote. For the workers were fighting as well for an end to the privileges of nascent bourgeois layers spawned by Deng's policy of "building socialism with capitalist methods." The workers don't like those capitalist methods, which mean that they can see Japanese color TVs and VCRs in the shop windows, but they can't afford them. The students had plenty of illusions in Western-style "democracy," and past student protests had distinctly reactionary aspects, such as the racist riots against African students. But when the workers marched into Tiananmen Square, many of them carried portraits of Mao, indicating by that, even in a misdirected way, that they were looking not to imperialism but to restoring gains of the Chinese Revolution that have been eroded under Deng.

And in Poland, for the first time in years, the way is open to challenging the domination of Solidarność. This "union" not only ran on CIA dollars and orders from the Pope in Rome, but actually called for the International Monetary Fund to come in and impose an austerity program! So they asked for it, now they've got it, and they're not going

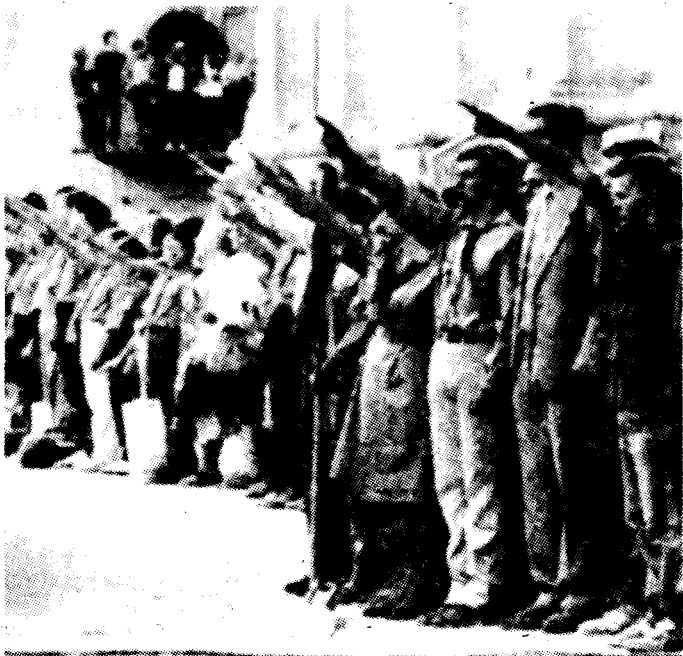


Godfrey/U.S. News & World Report

### Russian-speaking workers protest racist laws in Estonia, March 1989.

to like it. After talks with the IMF in Washington, the Mazowiecki cabinet unveiled its economic program, which involves huge price increases and the prospect of mass unemployment as "unprofitable" state industries are shut down. And Solidarność leader Lech Walesa, who has now declared explicitly that his goal is to return to capitalism, is saying, "I don't know whether we will save ourselves from civil war." There is now a basis for common proletarian struggle embracing the workers in both clerical Solidarność and the Stalinist-led unions, against a pro-capitalist "government" of Solidarność and the Stalinists who, while hardly a coalition, are united in implementing a pro-capitalist economic program. The workers' struggle would begin around

continued on page 10



Skurhinaya/Pravda

### Lithuanian "Scouts" salute nationalist drive for counterrevolution.

# A Meeting in Moscow, January 1924

Even as several million homeless roam the sidewalks of the American Babylon, the capitalist rulers gloat over an imminent "death of Communism." This obituary is based on wishful thinking and on the lie, propagated by the Stalinists and imperialists alike, that conflates Leninism with its bureaucratic and nationalist Stalinist perversion. It is true, though, that a meeting in Moscow in January 1924 badly poisoned the Communist movement.

At the Thirteenth Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, held days before Lenin's death in January 1924, the bureaucratic caste for whom Joseph Stalin was the chief spokesman signaled its takeover of the levers of power in the Soviet workers state. Though the loose "Trotskyist"

opposition obtained some 20 to 30 percent of the votes at pre-conference discussions in Moscow and Leningrad, Stalin's apparatus rigged the elections to leave them only three out of 128 delegates. In an article titled "When Was the Soviet Thermidor?" printed in English and Russian in the current *Spartacist* (No. 43-44, Summer 1989), we stressed: "After January 1924, the people who ruled the USSR, the way the USSR was ruled, and the purposes for which the USSR was ruled had all changed."

This was eloquently reaffirmed in the Soviet weekly *Argumenty i Fakty* (15 July) which carried an interview with I.Y. Vrachev, one of those three delegates to the conference. The interviewer said he was struck at reading in the stenographic record of the conference

Vrachev's statement: "Comrades, give me a chance to speak; there remains for us perhaps all of two hours of democracy." Vrachev recalled:

"Yes, I said the final hours of party democracy were passing. After me, Saponov [leader of the Democratic-Centralist Opposition] noted: 'Vrachev said that the final hours of party democracy were passing, and I am making the final democratic speech!' And thus it came to be. No further like-minded speeches were ever allowed. Anywhere. From that moment began the consolidation of Stalin's power."

Referring to the Congress of People's Deputies held this past June, Vrachev observed: "Today in the Western press, they write that this is the first time in 70 years that a parliament sits in democratic conditions. This is not true. In

the first years of Soviet power in the All-Russian Congresses of Soviets and in the All-Union Central Executive Committee, in which I sat, there existed full democracy."

To this day, Vrachev, now 91, a decorated veteran of the Civil War and World War II, is refused readmission into the CPSU for having been a Trotskyist. The CPSU got a heavy dose of syphilis at the Thirteenth Party Conference, which took a decade to fully politically wreck the Comintern. The full consequences of the revolution's degeneration have been a long time working themselves out, via Stalin/Bukharin's "socialism in one country" dogma. But this degeneration is highly reversible, through profound struggle. In the course of fighting to regain political power from the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Soviet workers will find the road to the communism of Lenin and Trotsky in a reformed Fourth International. ■

## Stalinism in Crisis...

(continued from page 9)

economic issues of survival, but it would necessarily and quickly pose the question of a fight for workers power.

So today where some sectors of the imperialists think that if they just sit there, Poland will fall into their laps like an overripe apple, there is speculation about a "peaceful" restoration of capitalism. But if you think about it for a minute, this depends on some extremely unlikely conjunctures. First, that the U.S. ruling class will for quite a few years put the entire working population of Poland on dollar subsidies the way they have done with the Cuban gusanos, while putting in the structure of capitalist exploitation. That's what Walesa was asking for when he told Bush that what happens now is up to Washington. You're talking about hundreds of billions of dollars there. Second, this presumes that the Soviet state will go along with this, which poses a direct counterrevolutionary threat on its borders. And third, it presumes that the Polish workers are just going to take it. And that doesn't seem very likely, especially since the Polish workers have fought like hell against every other attempt to drive down their standard of living.

So what is posed is the question of leadership. The possibility of struggle is there, and what's needed is the building of the nucleus of Trotskyist vanguard parties—in the Soviet Union, in China, in Poland and throughout the deformed workers states—it's more urgent now than ever. For what is posed, from Beijing to Warsaw, Budapest and East Berlin, is the prospect of civil

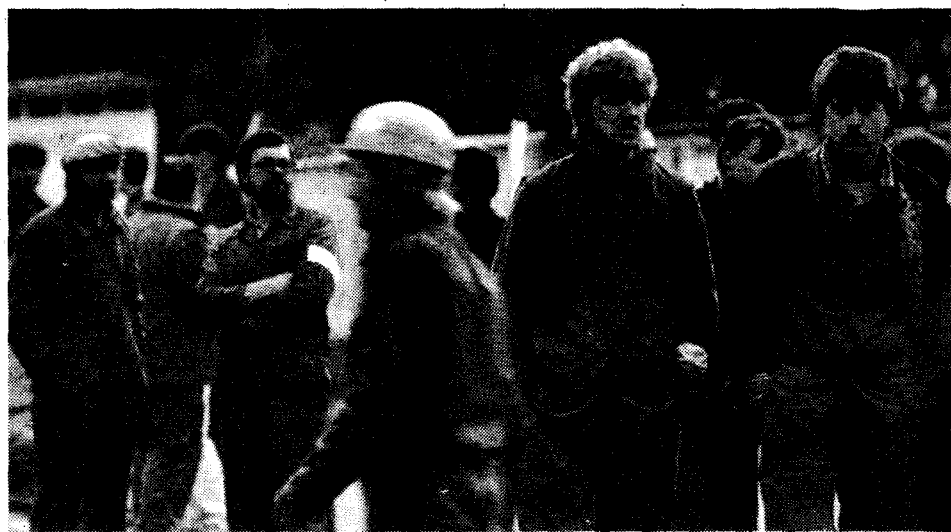


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war. The urgent need is for proletarian political revolution to defend and extend the gains of October against the threat of counterrevolution.

### The National Question in the Soviet Union

One of the most burning issues is the national question in the Soviet Union. The sheer scope and variety of the nationalist antagonisms is staggering. In the Caucasus, Armenians and Azerbaijanis are at each other's throats in murderous blood feuds with religious overtones. In Soviet Georgia there have been pogroms against Azeris and against Abkhazians, as well as anti-Russian mass demonstrations. In Soviet Central Asia, bloody assaults by unemployed Uzbeks against Meskhetian Turks who were deported there by Stalin. In the Baltic republics, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian nationalists have come up with a battery of chauvinist and downright rac-



Aubert/Sygma

**Solidarność chief Lech Walesa and Stalinist president Jaruzelski join hands to impose IMF austerity on Polish workers. Workers at Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk (right) and elsewhere now face mass layoffs, plant closings.**

ist laws, depriving people from elsewhere in the USSR of the right to vote and the right to hold government jobs, calling for a ban on immigration, to prevent "outsiders" from buying local goods. Some of this sounds like they took it over from South African apartheid. In Lithuania they're circulating a proclamation of independence that in order to sign you have to prove your grandparents lived in the interwar "republic." And, as we have said, now they're driving for counterrevolution under the guise of independence.

You can get the ugly flavor of this from an interesting article in the *New Yorker* (18 September) by David Shipper about a trip to Estonia last February. He obviously wasn't expecting what he heard. One private businessman said of Russians, "They should all be put on trains to Siberia." Later he conceded that "Russians can be useful the way Turks are useful to the Germans—as workers." Estonian nationalists uniformly presented themselves as representatives of "Western culture" as against the Russians who are considered as "dumpy, uncultured, working-class boors." An Estonian Communist Party member is quoted as saying, "It would be easier for us if these cultures were pure." This combination of extreme race and class prejudice is explained by the fact that a large majority of the workers, especially in heavy industry, as well as 40 percent of the total population, are ethnically non-Estonian, although many have lived in the republic for years.

You can see the same elsewhere, as the economically better-off republics try to advance themselves at the expense of their poorer neighbors, often with racist appeals. It's not necessarily anti-Russian. Thus in petitioning Moscow for the "return" of the mountainous enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijani administration, Armenian nationalists recalled that "Armenia was for centuries a bastion and extremely important strategic center for Russia,"

i.e., for the tsar. And while paying lip service to Leninist principles, they accuse the Azeris, "i.e., the Turks," of setting up a belt of "Muslim villages." Meanwhile, the Great Russian nationalists, the most ominous of all, are growing bolder. We've warned repeatedly about the danger of Pamyat, the fascist outfit whose leaders dress in black shirts, give the Nazi salute, and specialize in anti-Semitic diatribes reminiscent of the tsarist Black Hundreds. Pamyat is also a big supporter of Stalin, which is entirely logical since even though (or because) he was Georgian, Stalin was always a Russifier, seeking to suppress the non-Russian nationalities.

So this is bad stuff, racist, counter-revolutionary on all sides. But if you look at the ostensibly Trotskyist groups around the world, most of them are 110 percent supporters of the Armenian and Baltic nationalists. For that matter, they barely even mention Pamyat. We just printed an article in the latest *Workers Vanguard* pointing out how Ernest Mandel's outfit has embraced Estonian Nazi collaborators, even admitting that they were fascist war criminals, under the rubric of "armed struggle against Stalinism." And while the Workers Power group based in Britain now holds the tsarist/Stalinist position of "Russia, one and indivisible" (they're opposed to secession from the USSR), at the same time they have been supporting Polish "socialist" groups allied with the ultrarightist clerical-nationalist KPN and the Fighting Solidarity group, which greeted Bush at Gdansk with signs saying "A Good Communist Is a Dead Communist." Interestingly, both the Mandelites and Workers Power justify themselves with the same argument—that it's the Stalinists' fault that counter-revolutionaries are leading much of the opposition.

But that doesn't explain why these ostensible Trotskyists are supporting capitalist-restorationist forces, unless they have a policy of tailing after any and all "anti-Stalinist" forces—which is



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**Outpouring of workers during '89 Beijing Spring heralded proletarian political revolution in China. Banner says, "Students: The workers have arrived."**



exactly their line. But it's a far cry from Trotsky's position. In 1939-40, when he wrote a series of articles calling for an independent Soviet Ukraine, he insisted on sharply drawing the line against the bourgeois nationalists. "These gentlemen, who especially love to warm their hands in the vicinity of the national question, must not be allowed within artillery range of the labor movement," Trotsky wrote. "Not the slightest compromise with imperialism, either fascist or democratic! Not the slightest concession to the Ukrainian nationalists, either clerical-reactionary or liberal-pacifist! No 'People's Fronts'! The complete independence of the proletarian party as the vanguard of the toilers!" ("The Ukrainian Question," April 1939). Today the pseudo-Trotskyists are directly in league with the bourgeois nationalists and their imperialist backers. The Mandelites even published the Lithuanian People's Front program in the same issue where they hailed the Estonian Nazis!

To underscore this point, let me recall the Bolsheviks' attitude toward the Ukrainian national question at the time of the 1917 October Revolution, how they simultaneously recognized the national right to self-determination while steadfastly fighting counterrevolutionary forces. On December 17, a little more than a month after taking power, they sent a telegram to the Ukrainian Rada, the nationalist "government" which had seized power in Kiev. The telegram begins by "recognis[ing] the People's Ukrainian Republic, and its right to secede from Russia" as well as recognizing "without reservations everything that pertains to the Ukrainian people's national rights." But in the face of the Rada's collaboration with the tsarist general Kaledin and his White Guard troops, the Soviet regime gave the nationalists in Kiev 48 hours to break from the counterrevolutionaries or face a "state of open war with Soviet power in Russia and the Ukraine."

The Rada eventually tried to get the support of the German army, like the bourgeois nationalists in the Baltics and Caucasus looked to the British and German imperialists as their protectors, but the Kaiser's officers preferred to put in their own puppet, the *hetman*. Eventually, the Bolsheviks were able to retake the Ukraine at the end of 1919 and hold it. It's interesting that in doing so, Trotsky first raised the slogan of a "free and independent Soviet Ukraine." This was in an order of the day of 30 November 1919, issued to the Red Army by Trotsky as head of the Revolutionary War Council and People's Commissar for Military Affairs. He insisted to the Soviet soldiers that "*The Ukraine is the land of the Ukrainian workers and working peasants*. They alone have the right to rule in the Ukraine, to govern it and to build a new life in it. . . . Keep this firmly in mind: *your task is not to conquer the Ukraine but to liberate it.*"

### The International Communist League

This example of the national question underscores how vital is the need for a revolutionary internationalist leadership to the future of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states today. Because the Soviet Union is by its very nature a multinational state, and therefore nationalism, which is a hallmark of Stalinism, is inherently in contradiction with the basis of that state. With Lenin and Trotsky's support for Ukrainian national rights they were able to split the peasant-based nationalists, winning the left wing, the Borotbists, to joining the Ukrainian Communist Party and leading a Soviet Ukraine. Stalin's bureaucratic incorporation of the Baltics, in contrast, fostered nationalist resentment. And the strategic value of Baltic ports became nil as Stalin, the "gravedigger of the revolution" as Trotsky called him, instead put his trust in



Basil Blackwell Inc.

*"The Ukraine is the land of the Ukrainian workers and working peasants. . . . Keep this firmly in mind: your task is not to conquer the Ukraine but to liberate it."*

—Leon Trotsky, November 1919



Novosti Press

Trotsky addressing Red Army soldiers (left). Above: Rakovsky (center, in uniform), as head of Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars, opposed Stalin's Great Russian chauvinism at 12th CPSU Congress in April 1923.

his diplomatic pact with Hitler. He even ignored urgent warnings about the imminent Nazi attack from heroic Soviet spies such as Richard Sorge in Tokyo and the Red Orchestra working underground in Germany.

The Hitler-Stalin pact has been a subject of considerable attention in the press lately, particularly in West Germany, where the obvious intent is to put the blame for launching World War II on the Soviet Union. I mention this because there was an interesting book published recently by Wolfgang Leonhard called, in German, *The Shock of the Hitler-Stalin Pact*. A review of this book in the liberal newspaper *Die Zeit* was headlined: "Only Trotsky Foresaw

"democratic" imperialists. Trotsky, on the other hand, opposed relying on either imperialist coalition, and understood that since Stalin was dead set against a Bolshevik policy of world socialist revolution, therefore once the "democratic" powers such as England and France turned their back on him, he would automatically look to Hitler. Trotsky's critique was not that Stalin abandoned the Popular Front—which had meant beheading the Spanish Revolution and letting Franco triumph in the name of "non-intervention"—but rather that Stalin's treachery *threatened the defense of the Soviet Union*, just as did the purges of the Old Bolsheviks and of the entire general staff and

against imperialist-backed fundamentalist reaction. The Afghan government said, thanks but we don't need it at this point. But a little later they asked us to organize an international solidarity campaign to raise funds for the civilian victims in Jalalabad, the front line city which heroically resisted and then broke the *mujahedin* siege. The Partisan Defense Committee and the international Spartacist tendency carried out that campaign, raising more than \$45,000 in donations from thousands of people around the world.

We're very proud of that campaign, just as we are of earlier efforts such as a couple of years ago when we raised \$25,000 for the defense of Nicaragua, or when we raised funds for the British miners strike of 1984-85. Because for us revolutionary internationalism is not an abstract program, but the axis of our program. In part because of the recognition we have gotten for the Jalalabad campaign and also because of the crisis of Stalinism, to appeal to the many would-be communist militants who no longer recognize in any way their own revolutionary aspirations in the official "Communist" parties, we decided in May to change the name of our tendency to the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The recent issue of *Spartacist*, the organ of the ICL, includes several articles focusing on the crisis of Stalinism, including an article in both English and Russian on "When Was the Soviet Thermidor?", dealing with the key question of the Stalinist degeneration of the Russian Revolution.

Last week, when Boris Yeltsin came to Columbia, he took as his symbol the Statue of Liberty, saying the homeless were poor but happy. We had a sign, in English and Russian, saying "Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky," expressing our determination to continue that fight for revolutionary internationalism, to bring that to the Soviet working class and also to indicate that this is the path of struggle we are following here in the United States and throughout the capitalist world. We are building a world party of socialist revolution, fighting against the Pamyat fascists and also against the Ku Klux Klan fascists in the U.S. A party that builds labor/black mobilizations against racist terror, that fights in the unions for a class-struggle leadership, that fights for a workers party against the capitalist parties. In short, the program we are fighting on is the one on which Lenin and Trotsky founded the Communist International, so it's appropriate to recall its 70th anniversary here because it embodied the principles which guide our work today. ■

May 1989—  
International  
Communist  
League (Fourth  
Internationalist)  
comrades in  
France publicize  
international  
campaign:  
"No to the Veil!  
Defend Afghan  
Women! Aid to  
the Victims of  
the CIA's Killers  
in Jalalabad!"



It." And, in fact, it's quite striking as you read through the book, which consists of 75 eyewitness accounts, mostly from members of the Communist Party and the Comintern. And after endless people saying how they felt betrayed, or how they gave cynical answers, or they didn't know or were confused—Trotsky's writings stand out with crystal, Marxist clarity.

But the important thing is to understand *why* Trotsky could predict the Hitler-Stalin pact. For Leonhard and other ex-Stalinists, it's because Trotsky was very hard, unrelenting in his polemics against Stalin—which is true. But they wanted Stalin to continue the People's Front, the alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie, and were disconcerted by Stalin's abrupt turn away from the

officer corps of the Red Army.

So today we have many of the same issues posed. Today Gorbachev seeks to conciliate U.S. imperialism in the name of "human values" which supposedly take precedence over the class interests of the working class. So that in Afghanistan, Soviet troops are withdrawn while the feudalist *mujahedin* continue to receive CIA dollars and Pentagon weapons. We of the Spartacist League, who hailed the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan in 1980, condemned Gorbachev's abandonment of the Afghan people, of Afghan women who had dared to take off the veil, of Afghan leftists. We wrote to the Afghan government offering to organize international brigades to fight to the death in Afghanistan for elementary social progress

# Perestroika Strike Ban...

(continued from page 1)

Supreme Soviet was Marju Lauristin of the Estonian Popular Front: "No matter what our political orientation, I think almost all of us have concluded that we can't let strikes ruin us or terrorize us" (*Washington Post*, 4 October). The pro-capitalist Baltic Popular Fronts have been driving toward social counterrevolution under the slogan of independence from the Soviet Union. What "terrorizes" Lauristin and her cohorts is that the predominantly Russian-speaking working class of Estonia (as in Moldavia) has acted as an obstacle to their designs, using the strike weapon to defend themselves against nationalist attempts to reduce them to second-class citizenship or non-citizenship.

Gorbachevite intellectuals and their friends in the West now realize that Soviet working people intend to use the current political openness to resist perestroika, which means inflation, unemployment and greater social inequality. After a trip to Russia, conservative Harvard economist Martin Feldstein, a former head of Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers, reported:

"Popular opposition to economic reform extends not only to the policies required to prevent inflation but to the basic market reforms themselves. While most Soviet economists continue to recognize the necessity of price decontrol and movement toward a market economy, they report that these notions are not supported by the mass of Soviet people....

"With democratization, such popular opposition inevitably increases the political reluctance to act decisively."

—*Wall Street Journal*,  
14 September

So Soviet "reformers" are calling for Gorbachev to become a kind of "enlightened despot" to impose perestroika against the popular will. But the move to ban strikes, far from securing social peace, is very likely to backfire. While chief government economist Leonid Abalkin criticized the partial strike ban as "too weak to have any effect," last week several thousand workers demonstrated, at the call of the official trade unions, with signs proclaiming "Down with Abalkinism and Down with the Millionaires." Miners are complaining that the July agreements are not being fulfilled. Now tran-

sit workers in Moscow, Kharkhov and other cities have formed strike committees to press their demands.

## Trade Unions in a Workers State

Posturing as friends of the workers, "market reform" advocates have echoed Western anti-Communists in trying to pin the blame for the suppression of



Victoria Ivleva

Strikes by Russian-speaking workers in Tallinn, Estonia in August against discriminatory voting law pushed by pro-capitalist Estonian nationalists. Signs on left read "Political strike" and "We stand up for our rights!"

workers' rights under Stalinism on Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution itself. At the time of the Soviet miners strike, David Remnick wrote in the *Washington Post* (22 July):

"The official labor unions are considered a joke here. Lenin destroyed their independence and called them 'transmission belts' of the Communist Party."

Lenin wrote that the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot work without a number of "'transmission belts' running from the vanguard to the mass of the advanced class and from the latter to the mass of the working people." But that did not mean the bureaucratic subordination of the trade unions. Quite the contrary. In arguing against Trotsky during the 1920 trade-union controversy, Lenin insisted, particularly because the revolution was made in terribly backward Russia, and after the ravages of civil war and the decimation of the working class:

"... ours is a workers state with a bureaucratic twist to it.... We now have a state under which it is the business of the massively organized proletariat to protect itself, while we, for our part, must

use these workers' organisations to protect the workers from their state, and to get them to protect our state."

—"The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and Trotsky's Mistakes" (December 1920)

A corollary to the lie that Leninism equals Stalinism is the attempt to discredit Trotsky by equating him with

The December 1923 "New Course" resolution called for increasing the influence of the trade unions in selecting managerial personnel and determining the work of economic organizations. But the "bureaucratic twist" described by Lenin was soon transformed into a qualitative bureaucratic degeneration by Stalin's political counterrevolution, which robbed the workers of political power. As the bureaucracy consolidated its rule, defense of trade-union rights was part of a broader struggle by the Left Opposition against Stalin to regenerate the revolution.

## Soviet Workers: "This Is Our State"

Unlike the pro-capitalist Polish Solidarność, the Soviet workers who have begun carving out independent organs of struggle are seeking to defend the collectivist Soviet state against the new *Nepmen* and the "marketees." Last summer a middle-aged Siberian miner said he joined the Kemerovo strike committee to "fight the bureaucratic apparatus that sits on our neck—the people who don't work and live better than anyone else." And a lengthy article on the coal strikes in the weekly *Argumenty i Fakty* (29 July), titled "Ten Days That Shook the Country," quoted the deputy chairman of the regional strike committee in Prokopyevsk, Y. Rudolf, who declared, "None of us wants to let the state 'go down the tubes.' This is our state."

The Trotskyist Left Opposition directly addressed the issues which Soviet workers today confront. Thus the 1927 Platform proclaimed:

"The question of Soviet bureaucratism is not only a question of red tape and swollen staffs. At bottom it is a question of the class role played by the bureaucracy, of its social ties and sympathies, of its power and privileged position, its relation to the *Nepman* and the unskilled worker, to the intellectual and the illiterate, to the wife of a Soviet grandee and the most ignorant peasant women, etc., etc. Whose hand does the official grasp? That is the fundamental question which is daily being tested in life's experience by millions of working people."

In the struggle of the Trotskyist Left Opposition, Soviet workers will find the Bolshevik principles and program of proletarian struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Soviet proletariat must shatter the entire bureaucratic apparatus and recapture the political power which their forebears won in the Bolshevik Revolution. ■

# Censorship...

(continued from page 3)

floor in 1950 as "Hollywood's apostle of degradation," "a free-love cultist," and banned from American films for seven years for leaving her husband for Italian director Roberto Rossellini. There were the American book and movie trials of the '40s and '50s against *Tropic of Cancer* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. These are 20th century versions of the censorship of the French Second Empire in the 1850s, when the works of Baudelaire and Flaubert were impeached for offenses against morality. Conservative critics attacked painter Gustav Courbet (later a participant in the Paris Commune, banished by the triumphant counterrevolutionaries) and other "naturalist" artists as luxuriating in ugliness and vulgarity, disease and obscenity. Meanwhile, "official" art devoted acres of canvas to prurient pseudo-classical "allegories" exposing white hairless female flesh.

## No to Bureaucratic Censorship!

This summer some of the anti-censorship protesters chanted, "Not the church, not the state, we decide what art is great!" This naive plea is a takeoff on the feminist chant, "Not the church, not

the state, women will decide their fate!" Certainly women cannot withdraw from or "decide their fate" within capitalist society. And for artists the question is rather more complex. The rise of capitalism, where everything is reduced to just another commodity, shattered the old patronage system in which artists were basically household employees of the princes of the church or the aristocratic courts. Today, for every Andy Warhol-type celebrity (whose cookie jar collection alone brought thousands at auction), the operetta romanticization of the bohemian artist proudly starving in a garret is an all-too-cruel reality for hundreds of others.

In a workers state, where the profit system is abolished and social surplus is distributed according to society's needs, the arts would necessarily be publicly funded to a vastly greater extent than today. But it is not our business to prescribe or even predict what subjects or forms that art will take on. As against the perversions of Stalinist and Maoist "socialist realism," Marxists have insisted on the need to allow artistic autonomy from bureaucratic political control. As Leon Trotsky wrote in a 1938 letter to *Partisan Review*:

"... a truly revolutionary party is neither able nor willing to take upon itself the task of 'leading' and even less of

commanding art, either before or after the conquest of power. Such a pretension could only enter the head of a bureaucracy—ignorant and impudent, intoxicated with its totalitarian power—which has become the antithesis of the proletarian revolution. Art, like sci-

ence, not only does not seek orders, but by its very essence, cannot tolerate them. Artistic creation has its laws—even when it consciously serves a social movement. Truly intellectual creation is incompatible with lies, hypocrisy and the spirit of conformity. ■

Just Out!

## SPARTACIST

(in Japanese)

Published in September 1989 by the Spartacist Group Japan

- Introduction on the origins and positions of the Spartacist Group Japan. The differences between the SGJ and the rest of the Japanese left. The need for a Trotskyist party in Japan today.
- "Interim Preliminary Agreement for Common Work in Japan," 26 October 1986 (Japanese and English).
- "Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League/U.S.," adopted at the founding conference of the SL/U.S., September 1966.

Order from/make checks payable to:

Spartacist Group Japan  
PO Box 18, Chitose-Yubinkyoku  
Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 156 Japan

Spartacist Publishing Co.  
Box 1377 GPO  
New York, NY 10116 USA

SPARTACIST

創刊号  
1989.9

はじめに

SPARTACIST・日本グループ

日本に於ける共通活動に関する  
ISL・歴研の暫定的予備的合意  
原文

Interim Preliminary Agreement for  
Common Work in Japan  
ISL・歴史科学研究会

原則の宣言  
アメリカSPARTACIST同盟



SPARTACIST・日本グループ

24 pages 300¥, US\$3 (includes postage)



# David North...

(continued from page 6)

London *Sunday Times* (7 February 1988) that the Healyites had taken information from the *Jewish Yearbook* and the *Jewish Chronicle* and sent it to Libya.

In return the WRP demanded £50,000 from the Libyan government to buy a web offset press, and a month after the agreement was signed the WRP's daily *News Line* was launched. So much for the *Bulletin's* protests that the Workers League is neither "shad-owy" nor "sinister" because it has lots of campaigns and a weekly newspaper.

Of course, the findings of the IC Control Commission, an investigation carried out by the guilty, can only be the tip of the iceberg. Nonetheless it was too hot for the Northites to publish in their press. Could it be that North was worried that his current colleague Nick Beams, leader of the Australian Socialist Labor League, would be exposed as not only complicit but on the front lines shoveling Arab gold into his section?

And let's not forget one of North's other former collaborators, Alex Mitchell. Mitchell, who worked with North on "Security and the Fourth International," now plies his pen for the *Sydney Sun Herald* in columns attacking striking airline pilots. The Australian Healyites and the Northites call Mitchell a "literary prostitute." Nothing new here—the Healyites have long been someone's hired pen whether as PR agents for Mideast regimes or as the servants of Thatcher's redbaiting, union-busting press. The Healyites' "exposé" of British miners' leader Arthur Scargill's remark that Solidarność was "anti-socialist" was timed for maximum exposure to knife the union on the eve of the 1984-85 coal strike.

And what about North himself? When Healy was overthrown by his conniving henchmen, North, who was among this number, tried to claim that he and he alone had fought the glorious "founder-leader" over "dialectics." But the only difference North ever had with Healy was whether 2+2=4.67 or 4.83, and they compromised on 4.5. As for the oil money received from despotic Near East regimes, none of Healy's epigones objected to the vicious betrayals perpetrated by their organization to get the money when it was coming in. On the contrary, as we point out in an article in the latest *Spartacist* (No. 43-44, Summer 1989), they "moved in to depose Healy not because of the receipt of that money, but because that money dried up."

This is the only "heritage" David North defends. Nonetheless even the practiced liars who write for the *Bulletin* were incapable of squaring this history with their fulsome defense of the "integrity" of the Workers League leader. Quotes taken from our article are cut to conveniently disappear any mention of Gerry Healy. But North was nothing if not loyal to Healy. (Now he says that Healy has "placed his knowledge of the inner workings of the Fourth International at the disposal of the KGB." If North really believes this maybe he's worried that "glasnost"

might go too far and fill in the "blank spaces" that would explain the Workers League.)

How did David come to call himself "North"? When his predecessor as WL leader, Tim Wohlforth, was getting the chop he whined, "I was even attacked as being an American pragmatist for purchasing an American rather than a British web offset press." To parody the *Bulletin*, we could ask whether Healy named North after "Lord North"—the British prime minister during the American War of Independence who proclaimed that he would see "America prostrate at our feet"—to curb against further excesses of "American pragmatism." Or whether David christened himself "North" as a show of fealty to his British master.

As we noted in our article, the men North today denounces as "rene-

pily quotes the BT's self-serving attempt to smear the SL with the colors of Healyism.

Of course the BT can supply no evidence for its slanders. Here's one example of how they tried to handle it. In an article advertised as "SL and the WRP Split" (1917, Winter 1986) the BT, after noting the Healyites were notorious for beating up internal opponents, wrote, "This is something which the SL is not guilty of to our knowledge," while claiming that "intimations of such appetites are increasingly common"! This is like asking "When are you going to start beating your wife?!" The added fascination with "finances" shared by the petty criminal mentality in the BT leadership has also lent something to its lurid tales about the SL.

It says a great deal about the unscrupulousness of North & Co. that they

Pabloite revisionism that destroyed the Fourth International, the Healyites substituted their psychotic "Security and the Fourth International" campaign, centered particularly on the charge that former SWP leader Joseph Hansen was simultaneously an agent of the GPU and the FBI who recruited Jack Barnes and a bunch of other students at Carleton College to run the SWP for the U.S. government. But while one might have to look elsewhere to explain the Northites, the Barnesites have had a linear political consistency since their inception.

They started as student cheerleaders for Castro and were recruited to the SWP, where their positions found an echo. By that time the SWP was pretty much a doddering and vulnerable organization. The brutally bureaucratic Barnes regime persisted until they had cleaned out all centrist vestiges and holdovers, i.e., any nominal Trotskyism, and completely took over.

As for the role of Joseph Hansen. Far from being the tool of both the Kremlin Stalinists and the U.S. imperialists in the destruction of the SWP, Hansen played the centrist lawyer who tried to keep a cover of "Trotskyist" orthodoxy on the galloping opportunism of the SWP. And far from brain-trusting Barnes, Hansen was the last obstacle to the full-fledged emergence of the anti-Trotskyist Barnes gang.

Barnes hasn't changed his political positions since he joined and neither has the circle of people he was sufficiently able to also recruit. They have a central political core based on a radical program alien to Trotskyism—a Fidelista fan club of American agrarian-labor reformers. In contrast, the Northites have taken political positions all over the map as served their own convenient and grotesque opportunist ends.

In 1970 we recalled Lenin's term for a phenomenon like the Healyites: "political bandits" or, if you like, political pirates, i.e., who will show any flag to attack any target. For this, the CIA-inspired graduate departments of elite universities attended by those among North and his crew were a good classroom. It, at the least, taught them how to write on every side of the question, like the position papers of the State Department.

The mendacious practices and assertions of the Workers League (and the Bolshevik Tendency) say a great deal about the Stalinist-derived breakdown and perversion of the "far left" both in terms of proletarian morality and any connection with the class struggle. When it has suited their own episodic interests North, his past masters and present collaborators have turned to the capitalist courts and taken subsidies from oil-rich regimes, have served the Queen and the venal right-wing British trade-union bureaucracy by smearing the leader of desperately striking unionists, and have generally crawled before alien class forces.

Devoid of any class basis or connection to reality North and his gang can and will say or do anything. And these are the guys that did their level best to get Mark Curtis 25 years. ■

## Healy's Gold Pipeline

Libya .....	£542,267
Kuwait .....	156,500
Qatar .....	50,000
Abu Dhabi .....	25,000
PLO .....	19,997
Iraq .....	19,697
Unidentified or other sources .....	261,702
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>£1,075,163</b>



News Line [Banda]

Money received for services rendered under the reign of "founder-leader" Gerry Healy, as reported by the Healyites' own "Control Commission."

gades"—i.e., Healy, Banda, Slaughter, Wohlforth—taught him everything he knows about practicing politics with no concern for honesty, principles or consistency. The *Bulletin* chooses not to respond to any of this. But for flavor look at what North himself wrote of one of his former mentors, Cliff Slaughter:

"Slaughter, a consummate cynic and hypocrite, epitomizes in his political and personal life all that is corrupt and perverse in the British petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. He is, therefore, a specialist in gathering into his net the most degenerate human specimens produced by this decadent social milieu: from hallucinating journalists, alcoholic university professors, and aging film directors of unfulfilled promise to neurotic middle class ladies who blame Trotskyism for their unsuccessful love affairs and failed marriages."

—*Bulletin*, 9 December 1988

Yet it was Slaughter who the Northites once held up as the pre-eminent authority on "Security and the Fourth International," who Alan Gelfand included on his list of witnesses as "an expert." Now, it is the obviously twisted North who is calling Mark Curtis a "depraved rapist"!

If one were to try to match the luminaries of the Healy cult with the more notorious Stalinists it would roughly translate into Gerry Healy as Joseph Stalin, Slaughter as Mikhail Suslov, Michael Banda as Georgi Malenkov, Wohlforth as William Z. Foster, Freddy Mazelis as Earl Browder. This leaves David North as a jumped-up, creepy little Lavrenti Beria—for now the only master of "Security."

### Bandits and Renegades

It is quite ironic that the *Bulletin* retails the Bolshevik Tendency's grotesque slanders of the Spartacist League. The BT is a collection of embittered ex-members of our organization who trickled out of the SL under the early pressures of the Reagan years. Claiming political agreement with us, they needed an excuse to alibi their cowardly departure. So they "discovered" the "regime question" and their model was... Gerry Healy, a ready-made horrible example of megalomania, paranoia, gangsterism and unbridled greed. Now David North, who rode Healy's coattails and helped build the cult of the loathsome "founder-leader," hap-

would attempt to pass off parodies of their own, only too true, revolting history as the "truth" about the SL. The *Bulletin* uses the BT's lies to condemn our call to stop Solidarność counter-revolution in Poland, while now with the reins of government in its hands Solidarność has openly declared its drive to restore capitalism. They both denounce us for hailing the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan against the darkest imperialist-backed feudal reaction. They equally find repugnant our work to bring the power of labor and blacks to bear in successful mobilizations that have stopped the fascists—the BT calls it "ghetto work," the WL claims it is "an obsession with race." They both look instead to the good offices of the racist labor bureaucracy.

Despite differences in style, and insofar as one can find any political logic to either group, the Workers League and the BT have some overriding things in common: a shared hatred of Soviet Russia, an abiding hostility to the black working class in America, a blood-thirsty, vicarious enthusiasm for the death of others and a distinct smell of provocation.

### Political Struggle by "Other Means" ...

Having failed through episodic and flawed political struggle to uproot the

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## Workers Vanguard

No. 480  
23 June 1989  
25¢

## Why Should Anyone Believe David North? The Workers League and Mark Curtis



Order from/make checks payable to:  
Spartacist Publishing Company, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

# Panama...

(continued from page 1)

target of choice is Panama, where the U.S. has thousands of combat troops stationed in the former Canal Zone. What imperialist arrogance! Imagine Noriega sending troops into Washington, D.C. from Panamanian bases ringing the U.S. capital. Noriega is certainly no good in every known way. But Bush & Co. are up to their eyeballs in mass murder, like the CIA's Phoenix program that assassinated over 30,000 in Vietnam.

During the '88 American elections, Noriega claimed that he "had something" on George Bush. That wouldn't be surprising, since as CIA director in

something about Mr. Noriega." Another Congressional Democrat moaned about "a resurgence of the wimp factor." Testifying to Congress, National Security chief Scowcroft blamed congressionally ordered restrictions on assassinations for tying U.S. hands. A Panamanian analyst commented, "Twice the United States has supported a coup and this makes twice they have failed. Let's find the idiots that will do it a third time."

Despite a State Department spokesman's flat claim that "the U.S. is not involved in these events in Panama" and Bush's non-denial denial, it is now perfectly clear that the Pentagon's Southern Command knew of the forthcoming putsch two weeks in advance. According to a detailed account in the

Joint Chiefs chairman General Colin Powell told Thurman to allow the rebels to voluntarily deliver Noriega to a U.S. base, and to avoid conflict with Panamanian forces (*Washington Post*, 8 October). But meanwhile Noriega brought in his elite units—the Battalion 2000, Air Force security "Pumas" and special forces known as "Machos del Monte" (the macho men of the mountain). The coup was crushed and coup leader Giroldi shot.

After the last coup attempt, in March 1988, Noriega (whose hero is Genghis Khan) declared, "Virility is proved by remaining in power." Now he has launched a purge of his regime, promising "palos" (sticks) for waverers, "plomo" (lead) for his enemies and "plata" (silver) for his supporters. After the

vene). But having blown out potential coup plotters, and given the manifest impotence of the right-wing bourgeois civilian opposition—known as "rabi-blancos" or "white tails," both because of their white skin in this largely mulatto country and due to their tendency to turn tail and run like rabbits—Washington now has few options left to get rid of Noriega other than sending in U.S. troops.

Overall, the partner parties of American imperialism are trying to use the "war on drugs" to replace the "war on Communism" as the ideological cover for U.S. intervention. But they haven't been able to get their act together, as the Panama coup fiasco showed. White House "damage control" experts would like to blame it on bad timing, or garbled messages about whether the plotters said they "want" to or "won't" turn over Noriega. However, behind the confusion and lack of "will" are the unresolved contradictions of U.S. objectives in the region. American "policy-makers," whether in the Pentagon, the White House or on Capitol Hill, are still smarting over their humiliating defeat in Vietnam, and wary about committing U.S. forces in another losing Third World adventure. They know that Marines taking over Panama with M-16s would set off an explosion of protest around Latin America. And it won't go down at home either, where the "Vietnam syndrome" is still a factor.

The U.S. hasn't been so successful at the coup business lately. A former Marine colonel, Larry Roettinger, who worked with the CIA in engineering its 1954 overthrow of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala, remarked recently: "It was a beautiful operation, we called it 'Operation Success.' Of course, it was a disaster for Guatemala" (*Mexico Journal*, 11 September). During the next 30 years of military rule, some 100,000 Guatemalans were killed in the name of anti-Communism. Bush wants to teach more lessons in "democracy" at gunpoint, from the Latin American countryside to the ghettos and barrios of America's "inner cities." Just as Israeli mercenaries who used to train the contras now work with the drug lords and the army in Colombia, unemployed American "mercs" returned from Central America are being used by strikebreaking security companies against coal miners in the Appalachians.

In Latin America, it's a White House/CIA/NSC operation in alliance with drug traffickers, gangsters, right-wing landlords and corrupt oligarchical governments to crush left-wing insurgencies. In the U.S. it's war on blacks and labor. The American workers movement must be in the front lines of the fight to stop the bloody depredations of Yankee imperialism. U.S. get the hell out of Panama! ■



**Bush says "not an American operation" as U.S. troops block access roads in Panama City to aid abortive coup.**

1976 Bush was Noriega's employer (then the head of Panama's military intelligence, Noriega was listed as a key U.S. intelligence "asset," earning up to \$200,000 a year). During the mid-'80s, the unsavory Noriega played a role in the contra drugs-for-guns supply operations. But as this was coming unstuck in the run-up to the Iran/Contragate scandal, the Reagan administration had Noriega indicted by a Miami grand jury as an accomplice of the Medellín cocaine cartel. Suddenly, Washington's man became the man to get, the fate of more than one U.S. puppet over the years (remember Trujillo in Santo Domingo, or Diem in Vietnam). Meanwhile, the Democratic "doves" have been even more hawkish than Reagan and Bush in demanding Noriega's head.

In the aftermath of the failed coup, Washington has been seething with recriminations over "who lost Noriega." Ultrarightist Senator Jesse Helms railed that the White House blew it because they were too busy entertaining the president of Mexico. ("Defense" secretary Cheney was actually touring Soviet defense minister Yazov around the Gettysburg battlefield.) Democratic Senator Les Aspin complained that the U.S. should have been able to "use the confusion" of a coup attempt "to do

*Wall Street Journal* (6 October), Major Moisés Giroldi Vega, the coup leader and former close pal of Noriega, who had been instrumental in putting down the 1988 attempt, met with two officials of the CIA the day before his move. Giroldi requested that American forces stationed in the former Canal Zone block the main roads leading to Noriega's headquarters, so that he would be trapped inside. U.S. Army units were in fact put on Delta alert; helicopters roared over the capital at low level as ground forces cut two of the three roads, using the pretext of protecting American lives. But they never got the order to move.

On the morning of the coup, Major General Mark Cisneros, second in command of U.S. forces in Panama, met with two rebel officers who had seized the Panamanian army HQ. According to some sources, they requested that American forces take Noriega out of the compound. (Others claim they were going to let him retire in Panama.) Cisneros then passed this hot potato on to his boss, General Thurman, who in turn passed it on to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who handed it to the National Security Council. After much discussion, the NSC made the monumental decision... not to make a deci-

treachery of his top military aides (the chief of military intelligence was among the plotters arrested), Noriega is turning more to the "Dignity Battalions," paramilitary squads of government supporters headed by the president of the electrical workers union, and emphasizing nationalist appeals. The Yankees wanted to "repeat the Grenada action, when they killed Bishop in his headquarters" and then invaded, he said, "but they screwed themselves because they had a repeat of the Bay of Pigs and left dangling the people they bribed."

In Washington, Bush and the Democrats are playing the post-Contragate tune of "bipartisanship" over Latin American policy. The failed contras will live off welfare handouts like the Cuban gusanos before them. Instead, Congress is voting \$9 million to finance the anti-Sandinista opposition (plus another \$4 million via the CIA front "National Endowment for Democracy") in the upcoming Nicaraguan elections. In Panama, they would like to renegotiate the 1977 Torrijos-Carter treaties, which turn the canal over to Panamanian hands by the year 2000 (although the U.S. claims an eternal right to inter-

## STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

- 1A. Title of publication: *Workers Vanguard*.
- 1B. Publication no.: 098770.
2. Date of filing: 28 September 1989.
3. Frequency of issue: Bi-weekly (except 2nd issue in August and with 3-week interval December).
- 3A. No. of issues published annually: 24.
- 3B. Annual subscription price: \$7.00.
4. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 41 Warren St., New York, NY 10007.
5. Complete mailing address of the headquarters of general business offices of the publisher: 41 Warren St., New York, NY 10007.
6. Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editor, and managing editor: Publisher—Spartacist Publishing Company, 41 Warren St., NY, NY 10007; Editor—Jan Norden, 41 Warren St., NY, NY 10007; Managing Editor—None.
7. Owner: Spartacist Publishing Company (Unincorporated Association), 41 Warren St., NY, NY 10007.
8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None.
9. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates: Not applicable.
10. Extent and nature of circulation: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: A.

Total no. copies (Net press run): 19,230; B. Paid and/or requested circulation: (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: 13,297; (2) Mail subscription: 2,653; C. Total paid and/or requested circulation (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2): 15,950; D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies: 306; E. Total distribution (Sum of C and D): 16,256; F. Copies not distributed: (1) Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 2,974; (2) Return from news agents: 0; G. Total (Sum of E, F1 and 2—should equal net press run shown in A): 19,230.

Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: A. Total no. copies (Net press run): 21,500; B. Paid and/or requested circulation: (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: 15,888; (2) Mail subscription: 2,386; C. Total paid and/or requested circulation (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2): 18,274; D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies: 316; E. Total distribution (Sum of C and D): 18,590; F. Copies not distributed: (1) Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 2,910; (2) Return from news agents: 0; G. Total (Sum of E, F1 and 2—should equal net press run shown in A): 21,500.

11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

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# Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!

## Pro-Dinkins 1199 Tops Avoid Strike

OCTOBER 11—As we go to press, New York City hospital workers, members of Hospital and Health Care Employees Local 1199, are voting on a contract with the League of Voluntary Hospitals (LVH), comprising over 40 NYC area "private" hospitals and nursing homes. 1199 president Dennis Rivera crows that "these negotiations won us something even more important than money...they earned us respect." But the 50,000 unionized hospital workers, overwhelmingly women and minorities, find it hard to live on "respect"—they remain among the lowest-paid unionized workers in New York.

The contract provides raises of 7.5 percent in each of the first two years of the contract and a 5 percent raise and \$500 bonus in its third and final year. Yet in NYC hospitals, an average worker barely makes \$18,000 per year. Even the labor-hating *New York Times* admits that "blue collar" NYC families earning far more, between \$28,000 and \$35,000 yearly, "cannot live the middle-class life that seemed within their reach a generation ago." On top of this, the League will pay *nothing* into the workers' pension plan for three years, saving themselves over \$150 million. Add it up: *that's \$3,000 from every single union member.* Hospital workers will be paying for their own wage increase!

Rivera's main concern throughout was to keep the primary election safe for liberal black Democrat David Dinkins. The *Times* (5 October) noted that Rivera "largely spared... Dinkins, the embarrassment of a disruptive and costly strike by a union whose demands might be echoed in negotiations next year by municipal employees." Local 1199 headquarters was Dinkins for Mayor headquarters, and 2,000 union members worked on Dinkins' primary campaign. The 1199 tops have worked overtime to bolster the illusion that liberal Democrats Dinkins, Jesse Jackson and Governor Mario Cuomo are on the side of the working class.

*Workers Vanguard* broke the story of former president Doris Turner's hidden 1984 contract sellout of 1199 workers. Then it was Cuomo who—despite 1199's endorsement in 1982—refused to provide the state reimbursement funds to finance Turner's infamous 5 percent raise that never was. In the years of bureaucratic warfare which tore apart the union, first under Turner and then Georgiana Johnson, we warned that 1199 workers must clean their own house as against the "reformers," including Dennis Rivera, who dragged the union into the bosses' courts seeking government-imposed "democracy." The precondition for union democracy is labor's complete independence from the capitalist state. "The lesson of the 1984 strike isn't the futility of struggle, but rather the need for a union leadership that's willing to defy the courts and that fights for a class-struggle workers party instead of looking to phony 'friend of labor' politicians like Cuomo and Dinkins" (*WV* No. 482, 21 July).

In the wake of the settlement, Rivera is being lionized by the capitalist media as the "strongest labor leader in the city" and anointed as heir to the old "progressive" 1199 leadership of Leon Davis and Moe Foner, darlings of the reformist Communist Party. After the negotiations Rivera said, "We came out of this united." After almost a decade of bitter factional warfare that ripped the union apart, that sounds pretty good to many 1199 members. But unity for what?

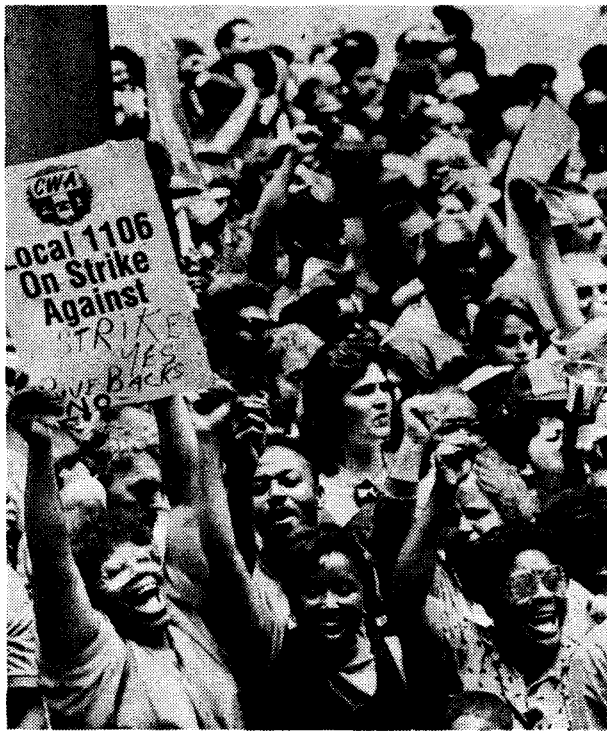
The black, white and Hispanic ranks of Local 1199 were repeatedly mobilized during the civil rights movement. Now this union can play a key role in championing the rights of city workers and desperately oppressed minority populations and the homeless. But this means breaking from the Democratic Party which has enforced the Reagan-Bush war on blacks and labor in NYC and elsewhere. In a series of mobilizations this summer, unfortunately *after* the contract had expired,

1199ers gained confidence and showed they wanted to fight. But Rivera didn't want to strike, and used this energy only as a pressure tactic and to blow off steam.

Class-conscious workers, anti-racist militants in 1199 should be in the front ranks of a fight in New York labor to build a *workers party*. Coming from the combative, integrated ranks of the hospital and transit unions, committees for a workers party could lead the fight against all wings of the labor bureaucracy, to break from the endless shell game of Democratic Party politics and lead a class-struggle fight of labor and minorities on behalf of all the oppressed.

## All Out with NYNEX Strikers!

As 60,000 members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) enter the tenth week of their strike against NYNEX (New York and



NYNEX workers' strike rally in New York City, August 10.

New England Bell), the phone company giant is hardlining it, despite raking in nearly \$4 billion in profits over the past three years. On the West Coast, Pacific Telesis workers were sent back under a tentative agreement in August. Last month they threw the contract back in the union bureaucracy's face, voting it down three-to-one. Especially galling to PacTel workers were the random drug testing and 12,000 upcoming layoffs. But the union tops have ordered West Coast workers to stay on the job.

NYNEX's hands are still wet with the blood of Gerry Horgan—a CWA steward who was run down and killed on the picket line in August by a scab. In recent weeks there have been numerous attacks on pickets by scabs and managers throughout New York. In Queens, a NYNEX van struck a picket on September 28. Along with the escalation of company violence, the phone company has taken out full-page ads offering \$100,000 rewards for information on the "sabotage" of phone cables. On October 3 they announced that 500 scabs (christened "replacement workers" by the Supreme Court) will be hired to do new installations. But the only response of the CWA tops is to tell strikers to get down on their knees and petition capitalist politicians to tell NYNEX to bargain "in good faith."

When the capitalists split up Ma Bell they sliced up the unions. The CWA bureaucrats are the cops who

enforce these divisions. Two months of their "electronic picketing" and consumer boycott has run the NYNEX strike into the ground. To *win* against the super-profitable and highly automated phone companies, CWA militants must take the strike out of the hands of the traitorous CWA bureaucracy with a *solid national strike* against AT&T and all the Baby Bells. Mass actions of *thousands* of phone workers at company garages and other key locations are vital to winning this strike: occupy the phone company offices, pull the billing tapes and give the public free phone service! That will bring the phone bosses to their knees.

## Attempted Murder on Philly Picket Line

"They just mowed us over. They just drove through like we weren't there," Robert Fiskey told *WV*. Fiskey was one of several strikers, members of Teamsters Local 623, who were picketing early Friday morning, September 30, outside the Silo company warehouse in southwest Philadelphia. Suddenly several cars driven by Silo bosses roared off the bridge and into the pickets, knocking them over like bowling pins. Four were injured. Over a week after the assault, not a single one of the hit-and-run bosses has been charged. Instead, local sheriffs harass strikers, enforcing an injunction limiting the union to four pickets per gate.

The 50 members of Local 623 struck the Silo appliance chain the previous day, after working almost two months without a contract. Silo is out to replace union members with part-time workers and slash medical benefits. Local 623 secretary-treasurer Richard Opalesky said of Silo, "This is the first time in 12 years that they're playing hardball, trying to get the union out." Silo has imported dozens of guards dressed in combat gear from Anthony Security, a union-busting outfit in Cincinnati.

*Labor's got to play hardball!* When the NFL Players Association struck two years ago, Philly labor, especially the Teamsters locals, virtually shut down the scab game at Veterans Stadium. That's the power that must be brought out now—ring the warehouse with pickets and teach Silo's rent-a-thugs a lesson they won't forget!

## Send Philadelphia Post Office Boss Packing!

Postmaster Charles James must think the Philadelphia Post Office is his private plantation. In the nine months since he came in from Cincinnati, James has angered Philly postal workers with racist insults, arbitrary transfers and a murderous absentee policy.

On September 27, 1,500 members of three postal unions, the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the Letter Carriers and the Mailhandlers, demonstrated outside Philadelphia General Post Office on 30th Street. They were angry over the death last month of 36-year-old Michael Armstrong, an APWU member at the Philly P.O. Armstrong suffered a fatal heart attack after coming to work sick in order to avoid being disciplined under the vicious "absentee control" policy James introduced in June. This is the third death on the job since the new policy began.

Earlier this year, James made scarcely veiled racist insults toward the workforce, calling for reducing the percentage of black workers in the Philly P.O. Cincinnati postal workers were glad to get rid of James. A labor/black mobilization last November 5 stopped the Klan and Nazi skinheads from holding a racist provocation at Independence Mall. Now postal workers should give overseer James the boot. ■

## Boeing...

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putting those multimillion-dollar aircraft in union hands!

And strikers need to do some house cleaning in IAM District Lodge 751. At the Kingdome meeting, there was racist poison directed at Hispanic and black workers. A group of open racists entered the stadium carrying a Confederate flag and chanting "KKK." After the strike vote a group of Hispanic IAM

members were subjected to racist taunts. This poisonous crap must be burned out of the labor movement with a hot iron—it is deadly dangerous to the cause of united labor struggle.

The Seattle-Tacoma area, with a small minority population, has been the site of racist cop and vigilante attacks. On September 23, Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood exploded in gunfire, as an "anti-drug block-watch" party organized by a white U.S. Army Ranger opened up with semi-automatic weapons on blacks. In Seattle, a racist "Save Our Schools" group is sponsoring bal-

lot Initiative 34 to kill even a partial busing plan. The IAM at Boeing has the muscle to smash this racist reaction and fight for social equality in education, housing and jobs. What is needed is the class-struggle leadership willing to use workers' social power and wage that fight.

The *Wall Street Journal* (5 October) notes that "It isn't often these days... that a union has such an opportunity to bend a strong company into granting some of its demands." But the IAM tops also had the "opportunity" to inflict a crushing defeat on union-buster Frank

Lorenzo when rail and airline unionists across the country were poised to strike in solidarity with the Machinists at Eastern. The IAM tops folded in the face of the threats of the capitalist courts and politicians.

Every worker at the Kingdome meeting could feel the class power assembled there. Boeing strikers need an elected strike committee which won't cave in to the capitalist courts and Democratic Party politicians, a leadership which isn't afraid to *use* labor's muscle to champion the cause of all the oppressed. ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Boeing Strike Takes Off

SEATTLE, Washington—The Kingdome stadium reverberated with chants of "Strike, strike, strike!" October 3 as 40,000 members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) met to consider Boeing's "final" contract "offer." Workers chanted "B.S. to O.T.," angry at the massive amount of overtime Boeing has forced them to work. When the local union president recommended rejection, there was a roar of yells and chants. The Machinists voted by a six-to-one margin to strike, and the next day 58,000 Boeing workers from Seattle, Portland and Wichita, Kansas walked out, shutting down the giant aircraft manufacturer. In the Mojave Desert, another 300 Machinists working on the first-strike "Stealth" bomber set up picket lines. After months of grueling overtime, and six years without an increase in basic wages, aircraft workers struck Boeing for the first time since 1977.

The stakes are high. Noting that steel and phone unions had settled for less than the miserable 10 percent over three years that Boeing is offering, the *New York Times* (4 October) speaks for the capitalist class when they worry, "More than any other labor dispute this year, a strike at Boeing would challenge the prevailing pattern of wage settlements in the United States." Boeing is dripping in profits—over \$614 million last year alone—and the Machinists have the power to win big.

The Boeing strike could be the spark that ignites a labor offensive. The Machinists must link up with their union brothers battling Eastern Airlines. Here is the chance to reverse the disaster that the union tops have inflicted on Machinists, flight atten-



Seattle, October 3: 40,000 IAM workers at giant Kingdome rally reject company offer, chant "Strike, strike, strike!"

dants and pilots battling union-buster Frank Lorenzo. A sharp class battle at Boeing could crack things open for labor, from coal miners now in the sixth month of class war with Pittston, to 60,000 NYNEX phone workers left to go it alone in a battle to defend their medical benefits.

The Boeing strike is the opening shot in the aerospace industry this fall. Over 18,000 Lockheed workers will vote this month on massive givebacks the military contractor is demanding. United Auto Workers members at McDonnell Douglas in Los Angeles face a January 1 contract expiration. Extend the

Boeing strike to Lockheed and McDonnell Douglas—for a *national aerospace strike*.

Some Wall Street-analysts are claiming that a short strike will be welcomed by Boeing, which has been short of parts and unable to meet production deadlines. With back orders for 1,603 planes worth over \$80 billion, Boeing has been running its plants flat out, requiring Machinists to work almost 70 hours of overtime a month. Many are forced to work 30 days at a stretch. In the first days of the strike, workers who brought their children to the picket line said that this was their first chance

to be together in months.

Boeing is counting on being able to use bosses to finish and deliver over 40 planes already in final assembly. On October 6, Boeing rolled a 747-400 and a 757 off the assembly lines. Strikers have already swamped the picket lines, ignoring the bureaucrats' limits of only 15 pickets per gate. Teamsters have pledged to honor the lines and refuse to deliver into Boeing's plants. The engineers union must stop crossing the IAM's lines—they will be next. Machinists can guarantee Boeing doesn't move a single plane by *occupying the plants*.

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## Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

# Death Row Hunger Strike

Since the age of 14, Mumia Abu-Jamal has fought for the rights of blacks, Hispanics, the poor and all the oppressed. Today, as a death row political prisoner, Abu-Jamal fights on. We have recently learned from Lois Williamson, Executive Director of Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants, that since October 1 Abu-Jamal and nine other inmates at Huntingdon, Pennsylvania have been on a hunger strike to protest the despicable conditions on death row.

Driven to this desperate act by the wholesale denial of even the most minimal norms of human decency, the hunger strikers are calling for the prison administration simply to adhere to guidelines set down by the Pennsylvania governor's 1987 Interdepartmental Task Force on Corrections Report: more reasonable visiting procedures, an immediate end to prison interference with outgoing mail, more phone access to contact families and implementation of better educational opportunities.

Today death row inmates are routinely subjected to strip searches and body cavity searches, and still denied contact visits! Family visits are arbitrarily denied. One inmate's wife traveled 3,000 miles from California only to be denied a visit, although the prison had given clearance before she started her journey.

During the past two months Huntingdon's sadistic guards have been given stun guns to torture prisoners. No regulations limit their use. Look cross-eyed at a guard, hesitate in hopping to on command, or just catch the guard in the mood—you get zapped. One inmate stated, "I'm tired of being treated like a dead man. I live. I breathe. I feel. I'm still a man."

Another inmate wrote Williamson on September 30, asking her to "understand my cry and help us to fight the bureaucratic struggle." He continued:

"I have been here since Dec 8, 1988 and in such seemingly short time I have

*continued on page 4*



Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die! Supporters join in December 1988 march in Philadelphia to commemorate victims of 1985 MOVE massacre.