



U.S. sends huge military force to seize Persian Gulf oil so it can dictate supply to its economically more dynamic imperialist rivals Germany and Japan. Hosefros/NY Times

## Bankrupt U.S. Empire Goes for War

For the new year world capitalism openly promises war and depression. As the imperialists trumpet the "death of Communism," the U.S. economy is heading into another of the kind of tailspins foreseen by Karl Marx and others over a century ago. And while Gorbachev & Co. rush to join the Western bourgeoisie in stomping on the grave of Lenin, Bush's White House is calling forth a major imperialist military adventure in a desperate attempt to rescue the American empire from the dustbin of history, confirming Lenin's insistence that imperialism continually produces war. In the place of Jimmy Carter's nemesis Khomeini and Reagan's fixation on Qaddafi, Bush's former ally Saddam Hussein of Iraq is now the bugaboo, and you are supposed to shudder at the idea of Saddam getting control of the world's oil. But the real worry is: what will happen to humanity when *George Bush & Co.* tighten their grip on the world's oil?

The war drums get louder: the heavy U.S. tank battalions from the NATO/German theater are now arriving and getting a sand-color paint job; the second wave of aircraft carriers (*America* and *Roosevelt*) just left the East Coast and will reportedly be on station by January 12. Britain and France have filled out their expeditionary corps. To add more tension to the war atmosphere, the Pentagon announced it will begin vaccinating (some of) its troops against germ warfare (though there's no evidence that Iraq has biological weapons, and no one has ever used them). Meanwhile, Christmas and Hanukkah celebrations had to be carried out clandestinely under camouflage tents for fear of "offending" the Muslim state-religious authorities of the Saudi monarchy which U.S. troops are supposed to die for. Bob Hope's showgirls couldn't even get into the country, and his jokes were censored out of the media.

The bottom line is that *Bush wants war* for reasons that have little to do with Saddam Hussein and of course nothing to do with high moral principle. As columnist James McCartney notes (*Miami*

### Defend Iraq! Defeat U.S. Imperialism!

*Herald*, 12 November 1990), "some Middle East experts believe that the U.S. Government has had a secret agenda in the Persian Gulf—a long-term master plan to establish American military control over the world's richest oil fields," and "Saddam Hussein handed them a golden opportunity." The accelerating slide of the U.S. economy into a bottomless pit has only led to a more frenzied escalation of the military mobilization despite the mounting costs. (War as a "solution" to economic crises...Karl Marx right again!) But the burnt-out Stalinists in Moscow and the liberal

Democrats are still pipe-dreaming of a "peace dividend" and want to believe that Bush's war is just an anomaly that will go away, perhaps through some kind of deal.

On November 29, the U.S. rammed its war resolution No. 678 through the UN Security Council, twisting arms, crassly buying votes and summoning all the foreign ministers to New York to sign on. Yet when Bush announced a "peace" sop the next day, namely that he would send Secretary of State Baker to Baghdad to meet with Hussein "at a mutually convenient time between December 15 and

January 15," oil prices starting dropping and everyone saw doves flying. Hussein released all the hostages as a good will gesture, and even floated dates for the meeting. But when he put out feelers suggesting Iraq might withdraw from almost all of Kuwait, suddenly Bush changed the terms—January 12 was now too late (only three days before his D-Day for Armageddon). Since the White House is determined that *the war over Kuwait must take place*, they can't have their *casus belli* reduced to such a ridiculous issue as sovereignty over a couple of uninhabited islands.

It's not as if the Iraqi strongman is unwilling to deal. As his information minister, Naji Al-Hadithi, pointedly told a journalist for the *Village Voice* (1 January):

"So we do control 20 per cent of the world's oil. Until August 2 we were exporting one-third of it to the U.S., even though we knew you had a hostile policy toward us. You know we cannot irrigate the desert with our oil. We cannot drink it. All we can do is sell it."

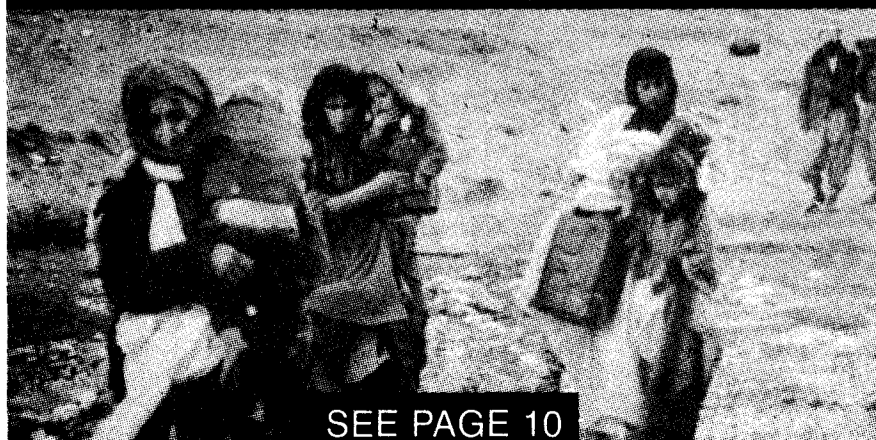
Al-Hadithi pointed out how the U.S. uses its control of the grain market and technology as a club with which to beat foes and allies over the head—"you are always using food and know-how as political weapons in the Third World"—and added: "As far as Kuwait is concerned, it seems that all the Emir is interested in is his 70 wives. He still has all his money, even without Kuwait. You want to make the Kuwaitis happy? Then why not have the U.S. rent him another 70 rooms over at the Taif Sheraton where he's staying."

Establishment "foreign policy experts" have mooted terms for a deal, in which Hussein withdraws from Kuwait, and then after a "decent interval" the restored emir of Kuwait grants Hussein a lease on the islands he needs to give Iraq an outlet to the sea beyond artillery range from Iran, and perhaps more control over the disputed Rumaila oil field. So that Hussein can save face, and Bush can show he's got *cojones*, perhaps they would start

*continued on page 12*

#### Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Reign

### Saddam Hussein's War on Kurds, Leftists



SEE PAGE 10

Siamand Bana

# Bring Down Özal with Workers Revolution!

## Heroic Coal Miners Strike Shakes Turkey

BERLIN, December 30—For more than a month, 48,000 coal miners have waged a heroic strike that has galvanized the Black Sea town of Zonguldak, Turkey. Their strike has inspired the combative and restless working class, Kurdish and Turkish, throughout Turkey, fed up with the repressive Turgot Özal dictatorship. Solidarity strikes have occurred in Kurdish eastern Anatolia as well as among Turkish workers. On December 26, over 100,000 metal workers went on strike for better wages. Thousands of textile workers have also been on strike for more than a week. The strike movement is already the largest union action in Turkey since 1980. Turkey's largest trade-union federation, Türk-İŞ representing two million workers, has called a general strike for January 3.

The strike comes as the right-wing Özal government has aggressively committed Turkey to the imperialist war against Iraq. In response, the Zonguldak strikers have also made one of their demands: No to the war! Turkey is NATO's front line in the Near East. Özal has not only turned off the pipeline for Iraqi oil exports but invited U.S. forces and the German Luftwaffe to use Turkey as a staging area for an invasion of Iraq. The massively unpopular war drive has also meant stepped-up repression at home. A 16-year-old female student who hung a sign "No to War" in her school bathroom was immediately arrested and is threatened with a 24-year prison sentence.

Thus the strike is clearly not just over economic demands. As the popular Zon-

guldak union and strike leader Şemsi Denizler told a reporter: "We want Özal's head" (*tageszeitung*, 15 December 1990). Children and women parade through the town chanting, "The fat president in Ankara is a workers enemy, Zonguldak will be the grave of the regime," and call "workers hand in hand to the general strike." By declaring the January 3 general strike "illegal," Özal has indeed put his regime on a direct collision course with organized labor.

The miners were once among the best-paid workers in Turkey. But ten years of military and bonapartist dictatorship following the NATO army coup, combined with 200 percent inflation, has caused a catastrophic drop in their living standards and working conditions as well as those of other workers in Turkey. Miners average \$165 a month, less than a superexploited black miner in racist South Africa. Average life expectancy in Turkey is 67 years, in Zonguldak 57, and for underground miners 47. In the last ten years, 3,164 have died in the Zonguldak mines, where there has been no investment since 1956.

The just demands of the Zonguldak miners for a 450 percent wage increase and safer working conditions have mobilized the entire town. Mine occupations are accompanied by daily rallies and demonstrations, signs supporting the strike hang in every shop, the entire political spectrum from leftists to the social democrats and even the right-wing Dogruyol Party have announced support for the strike. No doubt the popular-frontist opposition wants to channel workers' combativity into getting a more "democratic" façade on vicious Turkish capitalism than the widely hated Özal dictatorship. A special military unit is stationed nearby at Kilimli to keep the miners in line. When they proved inadequate to stop the Zonguldak strike, Özal, who massacred dozens of workers during this year's May Day demonstrations, bused in 10,000 heavily armed police and soldiers. But support for the strike in the region is so solid that they have been relegated to directing traffic.

The Zonguldak strike has also inspired Turkish and Kurdish immigrant workers, particularly in Germany where they are a militant strategic component of the industrial proletariat. The strike received official backing from IG Metall and IG Bergbau (miners) and from the German DGB trade-union federation after Turkish and Kurdish union officials and workers staged a short occupation of DGB offices

in Hamburg. Miners in the Ruhr, a large number of whom are Turkish and Kurdish, staged a one-hour solidarity strike this past week. Solidarity demonstrations are scheduled in Köln, Hamburg and Berlin to coincide with the January 3 general strike in Turkey.

Strike supporters have called on the German union movement to "hot cargo" (refuse to handle) any coal being shipped to Turkey. The DGB has stated that no coal is being sent, but they said the same during the 1984-85 British coal miners strike when German coal in fact was being shipped from Duisburg via Rotterdam. Supporters of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) have called on Hamburg dock workers and other trade unionists to back the Zonguldak strikers with monetary support and by vigilantly looking to stop strike-breaking shipments of coal to Turkey.

The solidarity actions take place at a time when the workers movement in Germany must fight assaults by the Bonn bourgeoisie on their immigrant co-workers as new racist anti-immigrant laws go into effect in 1991. Recently local authorities ordered the expulsion of a Turkish family on "ecological" grounds: overpopulation! Moreover, in a number of factories in the Berlin area, workers from the former DDR (East Germany) are being hired at wages substantially below those being paid to the Turkish workers. The SpAD calls for equal wages East and West, and demands "Full citizenship rights for immigrant workers." During the recent Bundestag (parliament) election campaign the Spartakist program was also published in Turkish (as well as Portuguese and Polish). Immigrant workers can play a key role in working-class resistance to the Fourth Reich of German imperialism.

In Turkey, the German army is active in training Turkish military units used to savagely suppress the more than ten million Kurds of eastern Anatolia. To this must be added the thousands of Kurdish refugees driven out of Iraq by Saddam Hussein in 1988, suffering yet another winter on the Turkish side of the border in tents. Turkish and Kurdish militants active in building support in Germany for the Zonguldak strike have told us that the miners have also raised the demand for the right of Kurds to use their own language. The Kurdish nation is balkanized between Syria and Iran as well as Turkey and Iraq; fighting Kurdish national oppression is key to proletarian unity in the Near East: For a socialist republic of united Kurdistan!

The Zonguldak strike and the rising tide of class struggle in Turkey, the imperialist war mobilization against Iraq and the dramatic collapse of Stalinism in East Europe and the Soviet Union create a rich opportunity to win Turkish and Kurdish leftists and workers to the genuine communism of Lenin and Trotsky. Desperately needed is an internationalist workers party that fights all forms of oppression, especially of women and the Kurdish nation, and fights uncompromisingly for working-class political power. Victory to the heroic Zonguldak miners! For the internationalist unity of Kurdish and Turkish workers! Bring down Özal with workers revolution! ■



TROTSKY

### Imperialism and War

With the collapse of the Stalinist regimes of East Europe and the crisis in the Soviet Union, Western capitalist rulers proclaimed "victory" in the Cold War. Liberals spoke of a "peace dividend." Yet at this very moment Washington launched a new imperialist war in the Persian Gulf, targeting Iraq and seeking to reassert U.S. military dominance as it trumpeted a New World Order. This reaffirms Lenin's dictum that imperialism inevitably engenders wars for markets, plunder, subju-

gation of small nations and world domination. In 1917, as he politically armed the Bolsheviks to undertake the fight for power to the soviets, Lenin submitted this thesis as part of the party program.

World capitalism has at the present time, i.e., about the beginning of the twentieth century, reached the stage of imperialism. Imperialism, or the epoch of finance capital, is a high stage of development of the capitalist economic system, one in which monopolist associations of capitalists—syndicates, cartels, and trusts—have assumed decisive importance; in which enormously concentrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital; in which the export of capital to foreign countries has assumed vast dimensions; in which the whole world has been divided up territorially among the richer countries, and the economic carve-up of the world among international trusts has begun.

Imperialist wars, i.e., wars for world domination, for markets for banking capital and for the subjugation of small and weaker nations, are inevitable under such a state of affairs. The first great imperialist war, the war of 1914-17, is precisely such a war.

The extremely high level of development which world capitalism in general has attained, the replacement of free competition by monopoly capitalism, the fact that the banks and the capitalist associations have prepared the machinery for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the rise in the cost of living and increased oppression of the working class by the syndicates due to the growth of capitalist monopolies, the tremendous obstacles standing in the way of the proletariat's economic and political struggle, the horrors, misery, ruin, and brutalisation caused by the imperialist war—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

That era has dawned.

Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the impasse which imperialism and imperialist wars have created.

—V.I. Lenin, "Revision of the Party Programme" (May 1917)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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4 January 1991



Mass meeting of striking coal miners in Zonguldak, Turkey. Sparked by low wages and repressive dictatorship, strike wave is largest union action since 1980 coup.

# The Truth About Aptheker

Used to be, the Communist Party USA saw itself as having the Soviet franchise. Khrushchev or Brezhnev would at least hold occasional international confabs in the Kremlin where Gus Hall could represent the U.S., while they pursued their quest of "peaceful coexistence" with the White House. And CPers who spent their waking hours building the local Democratic club could go to sleep secretly believing they were somehow defending socialism in the Soviet Union. But Hall is out of step with Gorbachev's "new thinking," which explicitly rules out international class struggle and in any

Aptheker, it turns out, saw it all coming years ago. "Permit me to note," says the esteemed Dr. Aptheker, "that in a book published...thirty-three years ago, I called attention to 'a general underestimation of the strength and persistence of nationality feelings, not least in the era of Socialism'." "In that same source," Professor Aptheker continues, "is excoriated the 'rigidity, bureaucracy, resort to illegal methods' which besmirched Socialist states." Moreover, "I went on to affirm in this work, published in 1957: 'What is required is the institutionalizing of the right to dissent'." And that's not



Mally/Philadelphia Inquirer

**1989: When CP leader Gus Hall could still get his picture taken with Gorbachev.**

case has no place for a Communist Party in Bush's America, not even the reformist caricature of one which the CP has been for so long. The crumbling of Stalinist bureaucratic rule has left the CPUSA a demoralized and increasingly irrelevant mess.

But all is not lost, says resident party "theoretician" Herbert Aptheker in a pamphlet entitled *Marxism: Demise or Renewal?* An expanded version of an article by the same name earlier printed in *Political Affairs* (December 1989), this pamphlet graces their lit tables along with South African CP leader Joe Slovo's *Has Socialism Failed?* (see *Workers Vanguard* No. 504, 15 June 1990) to show that the party really is with it. Aptheker holds out a glimmer of hope to the dwindling CP ranks: "This is a time not for despair but renewed dedication." Preaching that history is full of "setbacks and new starts," he points to the new starts of this era: "perestroika and glasnost. Their chief engineer comes out of Soviet society, out of its Communist Party." Well, so did Stalin, who replaced Lenin's internationalism with the lie of "socialism in one country," which meant no socialism in the USSR and no revolution anywhere else. And now Gorbachev is taking this to its conclusion by opening the doors to capitalism in the Soviet Union itself.

Aptheker wants to demonstrate that the CPUSA, deriving its strength from the American Revolution and Enlightenment humanism, was a pioneer in perestroika. In the pamphlet version (dated 30 March 1990), Aptheker tries to explain the counterrevolutionary tide sweeping East Europe in the face of bankrupt Stalinism. He points to Poland and Hungary, but conspicuously "forgets" East Germany—quite a feat, considering the Fourth Reich election victory only a few days before. Perhaps he didn't feel up to explaining how the DDR was handed over to the West German bankers by Gorbachev and the East German Stalinists.

all: he goes on to explain how this "source" holds up "inquiry and challenge" against "dogma," how "this same source" insists that "unconditional inviolability" of the "legal procedure" is key to "the fullest flowering of Socialist democracy," and so on and so forth.

Whoa there, hold on a minute! Could this be the same Herbert Aptheker whose name has become synonymous with slavish apologies for every twist and turn, every zig and zag emanating from the Kremlin? The Herbert Aptheker whose pen was ever ready to prove Stalin's aphorism that paper will take anything written on it? Comrade Aptheker must have been a little noticed prophet before his time. But where did these admonitions of socialist rectitude appear, what is this wondrous work, published in 1957? You have to rub your eyes when you finally see it in the footnote—why, it's *The Truth About Hungary!* This archetypal Stalinist hack job justifying Khrushchev's suppression of the 1956 Hungarian workers uprising is such a compendium of prevarication that its high points are half-truths, working down to quarter-truths, eighth-truths and so on down to a solid foundation of outright inventions. This piece is so notorious that it put the kibosh on any Marxist titling a new work "The Truth About...."

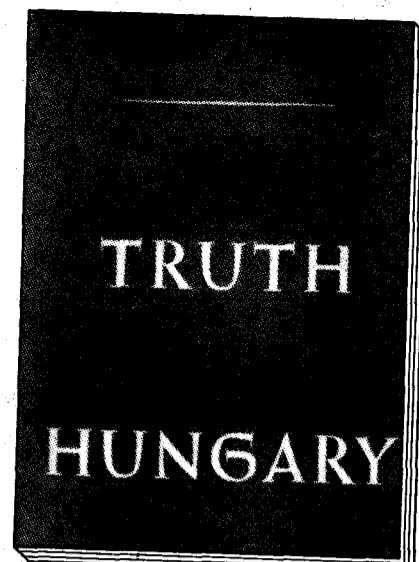
## Aptheker's "Fascist Counterrevolution" in Hungary

To be sure, every word of his that Aptheker now quotes is to be found in the book, crammed into a ten-page conclusion which is preceded by 247 pages packed with lies. In typical Stalinist fashion, and fully in line with Kremlin pronouncements, Aptheker offered up some hackneyed "criticisms" of the previous Hungarian regime headed by the tyrannical butcher Rákosi, which had been replaced by the liberal Stalinist Imre Nagy (with Khrushchev's blessings). It was the Hungarian workers' move to assert their own political power, arms in hand, that led Khrushchev to



People's Daily World

**Herbert Aptheker and his apology for Stalinist repression of the 1956 Hungarian workers uprising.**



order the tanks in. *The Truth About Hungary* was a diatribe devoted to demonstrating that the pro-socialist Hungarian workers' insurrection was a counterrevolutionary putsch controlled by the CIA and the Catholic hierarchy aimed at restoring the prewar fascist Horthyites to power.

Shane Mage, then a leading member of the Shachtmanite Young Socialist League, wrote an incisive refutation of Aptheker's account of the Hungarian Revolution called *"Truth" and Hungary—A Reply to Aptheker*. The Hungarian Revolution dramatically vindicated the analysis and program of Trotskyism—here was a workers' political revolution shattering the parasitic caste of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Largely as a result of this experience, Mage and a significant section of the YSL leadership shortly thereafter went over to the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, where they subsequently became the core of the Revolutionary Tendency, precursor of the Spartacist League.

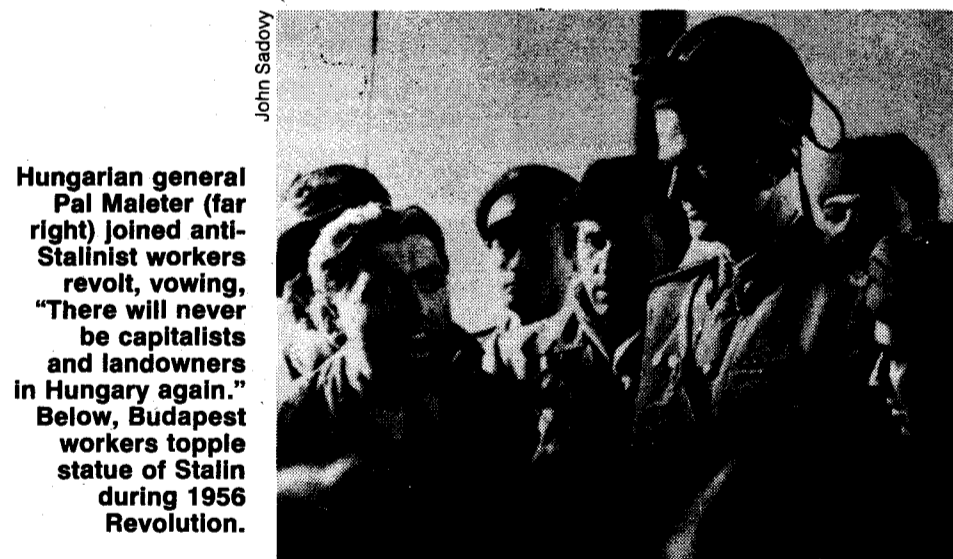
Aptheker seized on the re-emergence of Hungarian fascists to "prove" that the workers' uprising was initiated and led by fascists. The fascists did attempt to crawl out of their sewers, but it's funny how Aptheker never noticed that the workers drove them back. The workers' councils explicitly opposed the danger of capitalist restoration, and were hardly enamored of Cardinal Mindszenty. Mage notes that Aptheker's account ends on November 4, while well into the next month the work-

ers' councils continued to lead a fierce struggle against the Soviet intervention. (The Soviet troops originally in Hungary had to be pulled out because many fraternized with the workers.) As late as December 12, all Hungary was gripped by a general strike.

As to Aptheker's pronouncement that "It is a fact" that after October 30 "the Socialist fundament of Hungary is omitted" from the speeches of Nagy and other government leaders, Mage wrote succinctly: "'It is a fact' that, like so many other of Aptheker's 'facts,' this statement is simply not true." The claim that the Nagy government was pro-imperialist is given the lie by the presence and example of General Pal Maleter, who in organizing the new armed force warned against "reactionary elements, wanting to re-establish the old prewar regime" (see "The Hungarian Workers Uprising of 1956," *WV* No. 483, 4 August 1989). Nagy, Maleter and their comrades were executed by the Stalinists who crushed the '56 uprising. Aptheker's indictment of them was an ex post facto brief for the prosecution—a Vyshinsky after the fact.

Just as Aptheker today sweeps under the rug his earlier view of the Hungarian uprising as a counterrevolution, so then he swept under the rug any embarrassing holdovers from previous Stalinist twists and turns. After Rákosi was deposed, they "rehabilitated" László Rajk, charged with "Titoism" and murdered by Rákosi in 1951. As Mage points out, in 1957

*continued on page 14*



John Sadov

**Hungarian general Pal Maleter (far right) joined anti-Stalinist workers' revolt, vowing, "There will never be capitalists and landowners in Hungary again." Below, Budapest workers topple statue of Stalin during 1956 Revolution.**



# Young Spartacus

Segregated Schools in Milwaukee,  
Minority Scholarships Under Attack

## For Quality, Integrated Education for All!

Education has always been grasped as a prized weapon in the struggle for black emancipation. The black troops who turned the tide in the Civil War against the slaveowners went into battle with their spelling primers strapped to the same belt as their cartridge boxes. Knowledge—and a good musket—were recognized as the necessary artillery to combat servitude and enforced ignorance. A direct gain from the defeat of the slavocracy in the Civil War was the establishment of a public education system for all. But the defeat of Radical Reconstruction ushered in a period of Jim Crow segregation and separate and unequal schools for black people—a situation that still exists *de facto*, if not *de jure*, today.

In decaying capitalist America, public education has gone to hell and schools resemble repressive holding pens more than institutions of learning. Even at the university level, at so-called integrated, liberal college campuses “Up North” and in the South, racist attacks punctuate a reactionary move toward the resegregation of education and social relations at every level.

In December the federal Department of Education tried to cut the slippery rope minority students are forced to climb to even make it into college in this country. In an Orwellian application of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Michael Williams (a black Reaganite ideologue and point man for “education president” Bush) declared that scholarships for minority students are discriminatory and illegal! This transparent Republican



10,000 students march on Wall Street, May 1989, protesting tuition hikes that would throw poor, minority and working-class youth out of school.

appeal for a white “backlash” vote in the '92 elections provoked loud protests from students, educators and civil rights organizations. Bush's hatchet men scurried back behind closed doors to revamp their plans for racist rollback.

The normative standard for the U.S. ruling class is to offer its downtrodden and exploited black masses abstract equality: the *illusion* of formal demo-

cratic rights in a whole system of racist oppression that wipes out any economic means for achieving genuine equality. But today's rulers are so ominously intent on reversing every gain black people have won that they don't even bother with the lying promises. They revel in slick TV ads demanding “equal rights” for whites and a vote for toxic racists like Jesse Helms. Minority scholarships provide, in an entirely too limited and inadequate way, some access to education for a few blacks. The real “special admissions” programs at colleges in this country are that if you're rich and white and your daddy donates to his alma mater, you get in.

Black youth, particularly young black men, are fast becoming “missing persons” from a society that's locked them into ghettos with no exit from poverty, unemployment and cop terror. At *minimum* what's necessary is massive funding of public education, a busing program extended to the suburbs where the better schools are, and jobs for all. To really open the schoolhouse doors to minority youth, the Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for open admissions and no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for students. The elite private universities should be nationalized and open to all! Hands off minority scholarships!

As a result of *struggle* in the civil rights movement some gains were wrest-

ed from the government which decided it had better throw some money at the problems of black America lest the whole country blow up. But now they're not throwing money at anything except themselves, prisons, killer cops, and a war mobilization in the Persian Gulf. The racist rulers of this country have decided that the financial cost of black life is expendable overhead.

Segregated housing, racist cop terror, unemployment and the violence against black people in the “war on drugs” all send a straightforward message that American capitalism is no longer interested in preserving the lives of poor blacks as a “reserve army of labor.” There's less need for educated blacks in a period of economic decay. Moreover, education is dangerous—it can make people “uppity” and unwilling to serve as ignorant foot soldiers willing to spill their blood without question for the ruling class in the next bloody war.

The big lie of the civil rights movement was its preaching of reliance on the federal government as the defender and protector of the oppressed. Even a basic democratic right like equal education requires a revolutionary fight based on the power of the integrated labor movement. The bedrock of racial oppression in this society is the capitalist economic system which keeps blacks oppressed as a doubly exploited race-color caste. The



Peter Conant

American capitalism's “recreational facilities” for youth in South Bronx ghetto.

# Letter on French Student Protests

Paris  
7 December 1990

Dear Comrades,

We noted two translation errors in the *Young Spartacus* article in WV No. 515 on the high school student struggles in France (in the section which was translated from the LTF [Ligue Trotskyste de France] leaflet) which give a mistaken view of part of our program concerning questions of education.

In the second paragraph the translation of "baccalauréat" as "high school diploma" is incorrect. The *baccalauréat* is not simply a diploma which ratifies the completion of secondary school, as is the case in the U.S. It is a supplementary selective exam, given at the completion of secondary school, which eliminates slightly more than 30 percent of the candidates, not counting those who are eliminated in the two years preceding the *baccalauréat*.

Also in the second paragraph, "les systèmes de cycles à franchir dans les universités" was translated as "the obstacle course of grades and exams," which completely deforms the meaning of the sentence. Indeed, we are absolutely not for the abolition of grades and exams, and in the article in *Le Bolchévick* No. 106 (from which the leaflet was drawn), we were careful to explicitly note that "our

attack is not directed against the system of grades or the criteria of technical evaluation as such." What we are referring to is the French university system in which the passage from the first to the second cycle, in particular, is governed by de facto quotas. From 30 to 50 percent of all students, depending on the field of study and the university, are eliminated in the second year, after the strict selection for admission to university. In addition, students have only three years to successfully complete their first cycle of study. Two cycles are necessary to have a real university diploma; a flunk-out during the first cycle means that students can no longer register for university.

In conclusion, some observations on the university in France may help clarify the question. Unlike the United States, the university system is state-controlled. Therefore, class selection is determined not only by money, but through a sophisticated system of selection by flunk-outs. In fact, the French educational system is conceived from top to bottom to eliminate as many people as possible as quickly as possible. Furthermore, it seems that the directly job-oriented aim of university studies, from the moment of admission to university, has become much more pronounced in France than in the United States because of the increas-



Platiou/Reuters

Thousands of students protest school conditions in Paris demonstration last November.

ingly tight hold of employers over the universities through their financial donations. That being said, all of the current reforms tend to bring the French system more into line with the American system; for example, each university now grants its own diplomas and therefore not all diplomas have the same value.

A final note is that during the recent high school movements originating in the working-class suburbs, the demand for *quality education* was rightly placed at the center of the students' demands.

Comradely,  
Josie

class-struggle fight for socialism, for a society where those who labor rule, is the path to black freedom.

## Jim Crow's New Clothes: "Voluntary" Segregation

While the government is taking steps to further segregate colleges, at the secondary school level a dangerous move toward "voluntary segregation" is afoot. In response to the desperate conditions of inner-city youth and the government's utter failure to provide quality, integrated public education, some black politicians and educators are urging the establishment of Jim Crow schools segregated by race and sex. In Milwaukee, two "African American Immersion" schools have been designed as segregated schools for black male youth in the elementary and middle grades. Similar plans are being debated in New York, Detroit, Baltimore and elsewhere.

Two generations since the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned the doctrine of separate and unequal education, black and white children rarely attend the same schools. Busing for school integration is dead—killed by liberals in Congress abetted by violent racist mobs in the streets. White flight has left schools in most major cities with declining tax revenues, decrepit facilities and an overwhelmingly black and Hispanic student enrollment.

Black youth are routinely "tracked" out of pricier college prep programs, disproportionately disciplined, and young black males in particular are tagged as "problem learners." Meanwhile segregated housing patterns assure majority white suburban schools of hefty property taxes and facilities resembling scenic country clubs for a chosen few (although posh surroundings do not necessarily make for learning, and among rich and poor in this country there is a growing "equality" of ignorance).

What looms behind the proposal for segregated schools are the deadly and grim facts of life and death for black male youth. Nearly one out of four black men between the ages of 20 and 29 is in prison, on probation or on parole. Forty percent of black males in their 20s are unemployed. The death rate for black men in Harlem over the age of 40 is higher than that of the same population in Bangladesh! For millions of



Library of Congress

Literacy is a weapon in the struggle for freedom. Above: black Civil War soldiers with schoolteachers and spelling books. Below: civil rights activists in 1960s demonstrate for integrated education.



Ebony

black women there are no jobs, welfare is disappearing, and the government's "workfare" program threatens to rip away welfare benefits and the children of single mothers who won't take whatever subminimum job Big Brother wants them to slave at. All these social conditions reflect the vicious poverty and deprivation of basic needs endemic to capitalism, the root cause of the black American nightmare.

Ironically, the proposal for "voluntarily" segregated schools is made by turning upside down the argument advanced

for integration by NAACP attorneys Thurgood Marshall and Spottswood Robinson in the watershed *Brown v. Board of Education* battle. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote in 1954 that to separate black children from white children solely because of their race generates "a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." The advocates of the Milwaukee plan grotesquely claim that segregation is necessary for black children to understand

their own self-worth.

This is a big step backward. As Kenneth Clark, the black sociologist whose research guided the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, said, the plan makes no sense, "unless this society wants to regress." He added, "For adults to impose this nonsense on children is academic child abuse. It's outrageous. It's absurd. It's a continuation of the whole segregation nonsense" (*New York Times*, 12 November 1990).

Self-segregation of black males will only serve to reinforce and legitimize the social segregation that already exists. Just as freedom fighters in South Africa reject the program for bantustan education pushed by the apartheid racists, we denounce a plan to segregate black male youth in holding pens in the name of "African American Immersion"! In a racist society, separate is always expressly unequal—a guarantee of inferior facilities and greater social regimentation for blacks.

## Black History and Class Struggle

The Milwaukee program is packaged under the rubric of cultural nationalism and stresses the need for black teachers and a curriculum centered on African culture and the achievements of black Americans. But in America today, youth of all races are lacking the basic skills—reading, geography, mathematics—that any culture demands. At bottom, however, these segregated schools have little to do with discovering race pride as an expression of dignity, and nothing to do with race consciousness of black oppression. To reduce the fight against institutionalized racism to a question of individual self-esteem is a not-so-new twist on the old "blame the victims" theme.

Segregating black children from white, and black boys from girls, buys into the racist condemnation of all black males as incipient criminals who must be isolated and whipped into shape. This is not the militant black nationalism of the '60s, which at least expressed opposition to this whole racist system, although it lacked the program to change it. Today's move for segregated schools is a cynical cultural-nationalist withdrawal from struggle which lets the racist white ruling class off the hook and bolsters the

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# Government Spits on Vietnam Vets

It's only 15 years since the Vietnam War ended with the final military defeat of the imperialist lackeys of the brutal and corrupt Saigon government. But the new generation of American youth know very little about that war. To mobilize the country for a new war in the Persian Gulf, the warmongers in Washington seek to overcome the population's lack of appetite for another bloody imperialist adventure (the "Vietnam syndrome") by falsifying history. One of their favorites is the bald lie that antiwar activists "spit on" Vietnam vets. This war propaganda is calculated to cleave a chasm between soldiers and antiwar activists today and to mold military recruits in the spirit of blind obedience to their rulers.

The Vietnam War deeply polarized American society and almost destroyed the U.S. army. The Vietnamese workers and peasants fought a revolutionary war, despite Stalinist misleadership, to rid their country of imperialist occupiers and put an end to the rule of the landlords and capitalists. Having fought the Japanese and the French, they then took on the U.S. military machine and fought it to a standstill. Two million Vietnamese, soldiers and civilians, were killed by American bullets, napalm and bombs; the CIA's "Operation Phoenix" selectively assassinated at least 100,000 people in the deliberate attempt to deprive the Vietnamese Revolution of leaders and cadres.

American soldiers increasingly came to realize that they were fighting a war



Stuart Kiehl

**Crippled veteran speaks out against Vietnam War in 1971. Twenty years later, black antiwar veterans in October 20**



Conrad/NY Times

**Crippled veteran speaks out against Vietnam War in 1971. Twenty years later, black antiwar veterans in October 20**

Mr. President, where is your voice for peace on Christmas?"

What finally forced the Americans to make the last mad scramble from the roof of the U.S. embassy in Saigon was that the Vietnamese *won* the war on the battlefield—a victory that we Marxists hailed as a crushing defeat for U.S. imperialism. Two years earlier, U.S. rulers pulled the troops out when they realized

the cutbacks in vital medical and social services which the rulers have demanded to solve their fiscal crisis. One need only step inside any Veterans Administration (VA) hospital today to see how the government spits on the Vietnam veterans.

## The Legacy of Abuse

Vietnam is unique as the war America *lost*; therefore the Vietnam vet is ill-suited to serve as an ideological symbol of the American rulers' "Manifest Destiny" to police the planet. Yet even veterans of America's "successful" wars can hardly be assured of a hero's welcome by the rulers who send them off to kill and die, as a look at the experience of World War I vets shows.

A study conducted in Wisconsin in the early '20s showed that fully one-quarter of the state's prisoners were veterans, jailed overwhelmingly "for actions concerning money or property, mostly seizing food or funds to buy food so they could feed themselves and their families." W.E.B. Du Bois described the situation in the NAACP's journal, *The Crisis*:

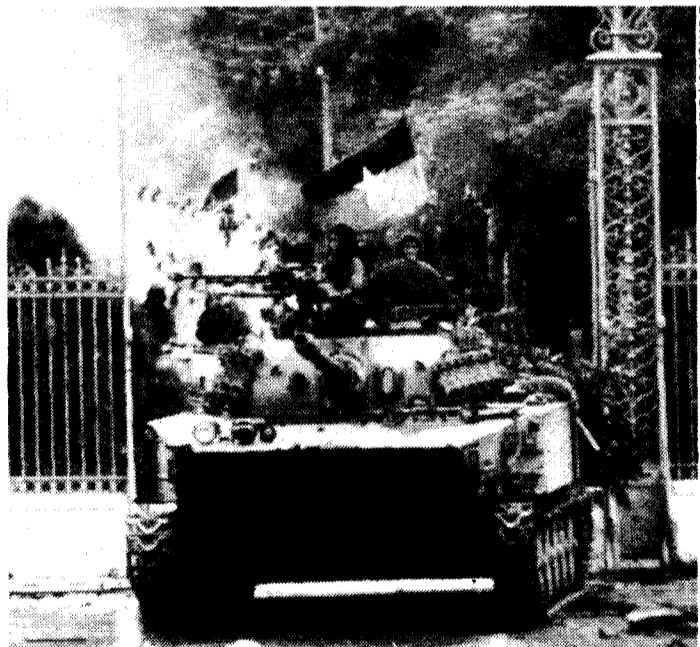
"...hungry soldiers roam the streets of the cities without money or work. They discuss the four billion dollars coined by the big business of the United States last year. They read from the Federal Income Tax reports that the millionaires have increased by 22,000 in the U.S. since the war began.... All this was done while the soldier boys were risking their lives on the fields of Flanders. And yet, there is wonder at social unrest."

Racism and Jim Crow segregation especially fueled discontent among black vets returning from Europe, who had tasted equality in France and were emboldened by military experience. One black veteran, Paul Filtron, spoke for

many when he said, "If that modern 'Ku Klux Klan' thinks that these hard fighting, straight-shooting veterans of the World War are the same timid field hands, crouching in terror, they have another 'think' coming." A parallel experience was in store for black vets returning from Vietnam and many, like Elmer Geronimo Pratt, a decorated Vietnam War veteran, joined the most militant expression of the movement for black rights, the Black Panther Party. Fighters like Pratt survived Vietnam only to come into the cross hairs of their own government's guns in the FBI's dirty COINTELPRO war against the Panthers. Framed for a murder that the FBI's own wiretaps prove he did not commit, Pratt has languished in prison for 20 years.

After World War I, the combination of domestic discontent and the example of the Russian Revolution scared the wits out of America's rulers, who went on a massive "red scare" targeting communists, anarchists, foreigners—and thousands of veterans who had the audacity to demand the relief they were due but denied. (A "bonus bill" for veterans was passed in 1924 but did not provide any benefits until 1945!) In the summer of 1932 an unusual and very integrated protest, the "Bonus March," was born. From cities and towns across the country, veterans streamed into Washington, D.C. by caravan, by rail and on foot. By June of that year, 40,000 World War I vets were camped in a ramshackle shantytown in the nation's capital and picketing the White House for relief.

President Herbert Hoover's "intelligence" reports proclaimed the Bonus Marchers an imminent Communist insurrection, while the press denounced them



Demulder/Gamma-Liaison

**Defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam: NLF tank smashes through gates of presidential palace in Saigon, April 1975.**

of mass murder against a people who would not give up. Here at home, the vast mass of American working people and minorities—whose children were doing the fighting—were growing increasingly bitter and hostile to the government. They had little opportunity to show their opposition, as the Cold War trade-union leaders like George Meany were stridently pro-war and remained so even after the bourgeoisie (or at least its more intelligent representatives) realized they'd better extricate themselves.

Meanwhile, the pro-Democratic Party spokesmen who dominated the peace parades carefully avoided building opposition to the war that could really pose a challenge to the status quo. Arguing the need to keep the movement "broad" (in other words, to keep it right-wing enough for the Democratic Party politicians), they actually cut themselves off from masses of thoughtful working people who opposed the war but were not about to enter into battle against the government under the leadership of a cringing crew whose idea of "struggle" was big ads in the *New York Times* pleading, "Please

that something "worse" than just a massive parade of antiwar students could happen: strike actions at home and wholesale mutinies among the troops in Vietnam. Returning soldiers often went directly into antiwar protests. Radical activists ran coffeehouses near army bases so that soldiers could come and talk politics; they worked to reach soldiers and vets with leaflets exposing the imperialist nature of the war and urging GIs to exercise their democratic rights as citizens to express their views.

Who really spit on Vietnam vets was the U.S. government! First it sent them off to die for imperialism while filling their ears with lies that the Vietnamese population longed to drive out the Communists and would welcome the American "liberators." Vietnam veterans hardly got a hero's welcome on their return nor could they feel like heroes—many were mentally "wasted" with fear and guilt at the war crimes they took part in or witnessed.

Today, veterans physically maimed and psychologically scarred in the Vietnam War are among the many victims of

**Decorated veteran Geronimo Pratt, imprisoned by U.S. government in war to eliminate Black Panther Party.**



CBS

# Education...

(continued from page 5)

reactionary status quo. A Memphis educator was explicit about the need to "incorporate the work ethic value and respect for property" (*Commercial Appeal*, 16 December 1990). Sounds more like one of those "boot camp" prisons for blacks they've set up under the "drug war" than a school!

Certainly the internalization by blacks—and whites—of racist stereotypes is a most pernicious and crippling effect of racism. Black history and the struggles of oppressed peoples of all races are excluded and belittled in school textbooks. The social conscience and pride that come from participation and leadership in struggles against racist oppression is not the education the bourgeoisie wants you to get. Marxists solidarize with every genuine effort to expose the racist ideology which presents oppression as "natural" and even just. The Spartacist League's *Black History and the Class Struggle* pamphlet series highlights the history of fighters like John Brown, Frederick Douglass, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Malcolm X and others because that history must be reclaimed by the working class and minorities to fight the injustices of the present.

But the idealist concept of "African American cultural values" is a bogus abstraction. There is no distinct set of values that all blacks adhere to. There's a world of difference between Angelo Herndon, a black Communist who led black and white unemployed workers during the Depression and who for his leadership was thrown into jail for leading a "slave insurrection" in Atlanta, and say, Martin Luther King Jr., whose turn-the-other-cheek pacifism and liberalism shackled blacks to the Dixiecrat Democratic Party. Moreover, any conception of the role of black people in society cannot be separated from the social mechanisms and institutions that transmit such knowledge. School textbooks today

celebrate King for his misleadership of black struggle—and omit that he was assassinated in Memphis where he went to support a sanitation workers strike, or that he opposed the Vietnam War. Black revolutionaries like Herndon are still a complete "blank space" in "official" history.

## Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

For a small "talented tenth" black elite, token gains of the civil rights movement brought more black faces in high places and a tier of black Democratic Party mayors who act as overseers of inner-city ghettos on behalf of the racist capitalist ruling class. Like Booker T. Washington, whose authority grew in the wake of a wave of racist terror that smashed Radical Reconstruction and who glorified segregation of the races, black misleaders today push cynical segregationist schemes in the face of resurgent racism. They've made their peace with the system and aren't about to lead any fight against it.

Faced with a labor movement that's done little to defend the black population

(or itself) from the bosses' attacks, and seeing no gain from gradualist liberal integrationism, ghetto youth and petty-bourgeois college students gave a hearing to the sinister demagogue Farrakhan with his message of segregation and "black capitalism." But capitalism only works for people with capital, and exhortations for blacks to "pull yourself up by your own bootstraps" are meaningless if you have no money for boots.

For a layer of petty entrepreneurs seeking to profit from pathetic "black capitalist" schemes, segregation poses a chance to exploit "their" market, "their" people, their way. This perspective is nothing new. Black business owners were the last to join the civil rights movement because they knew black access to white-owned firms would hurt their pockets.

To comprehend the futility of "black capitalism" one need only look at a list of Fortune 500 firms, or consider the fate of historically black colleges. Blacks aren't missing from the echelons of the bourgeoisie because of a lack of self-esteem, but because a small minority, the ruling class, makes the rules, writes the laws and tax codes to perpetuate the rule of the rich, owns and controls the gov-

ernment, and uses the cops and courts to "legally" terrorize ghettos and barrios. In the main, these racist rulers also control the boards of major universities and historically black colleges. The difference: black colleges get a fraction of the crumbs thrown toward education while ostensibly integrated colleges get billions.

As a haven from resurgent racism on the campuses, backward white peers and narrow-minded professors, black schools have an understandable appeal to students under attack. At the same time, protests over substandard facilities and educational opportunities at Howard, the University of the District of Columbia, Tuskegee, Morris Brown College and Fisk highlight the dilemma. What's needed is a fight for free, quality, integrated education for all!

The case for integrated schooling was argued powerfully by Frederick Douglass, who fought his way out of slavery, educated himself, and became a powerful leader of the left wing of the abolitionist movement. In 1872 he wrote:

"From our observations during a trip to the South we are convinced that the interests of the poor whites and the colored people are identical. Both are ignorant, and both are the tools of designing educated white men; and the poor whites are more particularly used to further schemes opposed to their own best interests.... The cunning ex-slaveholder sets those who should be his enemies to fighting each other and thus diverts attention from himself. Educate the colored children and white children together in your day and night schools throughout the South, and they will learn to know each other better, and be better able to cooperate for mutual benefit."

The tasks Frederick Douglass confronted after slavery was smashed still remain and the promise of black emancipation is still unfulfilled. The battles at hand require the leadership of an integrated workers party that will fight to achieve black liberation through revolutionary integration in a socialist society. Finish the Civil War! Black liberation through socialist revolution! ■



Norfolk longshoremen march for busing in 1983. Signs say, "ILA All the Way Against Segregated Schools."

as fascistic brownshirts. Hungry and ragged, the unarmed vets were militarily besieged by the government they had served. Herbert Hoover dispatched General Douglas MacArthur and his sidekick Dwight D. Eisenhower to oust the vets from the capital and burn their shanties to the ground. As MacArthur's forces advanced on them with mounted cavalry, tanks, machine guns, rifles and bayonets, the vets and their families stood and sang "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and then defended themselves as best they could with sticks and stones.

## The War At Home Against Vietnam Vets

As Clausewitz wrote, "War is the continuation of politics by other means." Military service continues the politics of race and class oppression as the sons and daughters of working people are sent to fight for the bosses' interests. About the only thing that blacks, Hispanics and the poor get first crack at in America is death, and the Vietnam War was no exception. But for them, the war didn't end with American withdrawal and the heroic Vietnamese victory.

Vietnam veterans returned home to a battle they're still fighting against a government which has no use for the maimed, ailing and desperate reminders of a war U.S. imperialism lost. And the liberal antiwar movement collapsed as soon as the threat of having their own butts sent to Vietnam disappeared. In 1979, Robert Muller, a leader of Vietnam Veterans of America, remarked bitterly:

"I'd like to take a full page ad in the newspapers and say, 'Dear Liberals: For years your slogan was Bring the Boys Home. Well, we're home. Now where are you?'"

—Paul Severo and Lewis Milford, *The Wages of War* (1989)

Today a huge number of Vietnam vets are homeless, many evicted from their

homes while still awaiting that first disability check from the VA. First established as the Veterans Bureau in 1921 under the notoriously corrupt administration of Warren Harding, the VA has always been a vehicle for political patronage and an arm of the government to limit the costs of veterans rather than provide them with necessary services and wages of war. Under the Nixon administration the VA became a political dumping ground for CREEPs (the Committee to Re-Elect the President).

The American economy was bankrupted by the Vietnam War and vets came home to spiraling inflation, mass unemployment and cuts in their benefits. The G.I. bill which actually enabled many World War II vets to go to college and pay the rent had hardly been adjusted for inflation in a generation. A lousy \$200 a month was given to Vietnam vets to cover tuition and all living expenses!

U.S. techniques of genocide and destruction in Vietnam also posed a host of new mental and physical health problems that the VA doesn't even recognize, much less relieve. The traditional diagnoses of "combat fatigue" and "shell shock" proved inadequate to describe the mental trauma of American soldiers who couldn't forget the unspeakable outrages they were ordered to commit against Vietnamese people. A new "disease" designated "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD) had to be invented. The VA does not recognize drug addiction as a "symptom" of PTSD, which puts vets in a Catch 22: if they can cope without drugs or alcohol then they're insufficiently "stressed" and can't get help; if they hit the bottle or the needle they're spurned as filthy drug addicts and won't get benefits either. According to the Black Veterans for Social Justice, many veterans are finally healing their psychological wounds by traveling to Vietnam and offering their services to help

rebuild the country the U.S. government tried to "bomb back to the Stone Age."


The army lied to soldiers about Agent Orange, a chemical defoliant containing deadly dioxin which was dumped on the Vietnamese countryside, the Vietnamese people and an estimated 450,000 American troops. This toxin causes cancers of soft-tissue organs, rare liver afflictions, chloracne, festering sores and infertility. There is an abnormally high level of crib death and horrible birth deformities of children of veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. Of course the deadly effects of Agent Orange, napalm, and anti-personnel bombs were overwhelmingly felt by the Vietnamese.

The story on Agent Orange was first broken by a caring and courageous black woman, Maude deVictor, a VA benefits counselor who began assembling data and researching the strange health problems of the Vietnam vets who came through her Chicago office. (Her own husband died of a mysterious cancer after returning from Vietnam.) What was the response of the VA? Maude deVictor

was fired after speaking to the press about chemical poisoning. Under pressure, the VA began its own "studies" and found the veterans' complaints were "baseless." What the VA didn't make public was that the "expert" they brought on board to oversee the study, one Dr. Robert Holder, was the medical director of Dow Chemical Company—the manufacturer of Agent Orange!

Over 36,000 claims have been filed against the government for exposure to Agent Orange—not one has been settled. Uncle Sam makes it difficult for vets to sue the government: soldiers are expected either to loyally die for the ruling class on the battlefield or, if they survive, shut up and be thankful.

The canard that antiwar activists and radicals "spit on" vets is hypocrisy in the service of today's war mobilization in the Persian Gulf. Countering this lie—and showing who really spits on the vets—is part of our job as a revolutionary vanguard to provide the collective memory necessary for class struggle against the warmakers today. ■

Spartacus Youth Club  Forums

## Sink U.S. Imperialism in the Persian Gulf!

- Defend Iraq Against U.S. Attack!
- For Labor Political Strikes Against the War!
- Down with the Sheiks, Colonels, Zionist Butchers—  
For Workers Revolution!

Speaker: Ray Bishop, Spartacist League Central Committee

Friday, January 11, 8:00 p.m.

Room to be announced  
Hampshire College

AMHERST

Sunday, January 13, 3:00 p.m.

Emerson 305  
Harvard University

CAMBRIDGE

For more information call (617) 492-3928

# In Memory of T. Clay Dickinson

A memorial meeting for our comrade Clay Dickinson, who died on December 11, was held in New York City on December 14. The many friends, co-workers, comrades and family members who gathered to share memories of Clay spoke to his zest for life and commitment to struggle that was, and is, an inspiration to everyone who knew him. Particularly in the last year, as his physical strength was sapped by the AIDS virus, he poured himself into the two great passions of his life, theater and revolutionary politics, with vigor that put the healthy to shame.

One comrade recalled that not even the grimmest of hospitalization could fella Clay's spirit. Clay was a proud member of District 65/United Auto Workers and even from his hospital bed "talked union" with the hospital staff. Actors from the Sidewalks Theatre recalled Clay's attempt to organize a rehearsal for *Agamemnon*, in which he was to star, at his bedside. A lawyer at Rabinowitz, Boudin et al., the firm where Clay worked, remarked that while law firms are "not the gentlest" of workplaces, "Clay humanized us" while bringing meticulous order from commotion.

Clay was a powerful writer and speaker whose political clarity—and unsparing personal honesty—projected his convictions with great impact (see other excerpts from Clay's writings in *WV* No. 516, 14 December 1990). Coming to terms with the loss of his lover to AIDS, and the social consequences of a disease whose victims—the poor, minorities, homosexuals—are overwhelmingly people the ruling class would just as soon be rid of, Clay wrote an article for the People With AIDS Coalition *Newsline* (September 1988) which he titled "Death in Love Is the Very Song That I Sing, or Living with AIDS and Political Enlightenment" and said:

"Looking on that situation now brings me back with a jolt as to how much gay (and women's) oppression is rooted in the sex roles institutionalized in the bourgeois nuclear family. 'Gee, Officer Krupke, naturally we're a mess'.... An early gay liberationist (and sometime Maoist), I was won to the Trotskyist politics of the Spartacist League via what was originally called the Lavender & Red Union, a gay commie collective in, of all places, Hollywood, CA. With this political pedigree I had come to see myself as having worked free of internalized homophobia. Now I find large remnants of it still intact and feeding the cycles of depression. "Some who are gripped in the excruciatingly vulnerable nexus of the AIDS epidemic seek out religion, traditional or new age eclectic. Others focus on action philosophies of 'self-empowerment.' These others have been valiant in their efforts to mobilize resources among the afflicted. And in the face of the criminal inaction and institutionalized homophobia and racism of the capitalist government, they have accomplished remarkable feats of self-defense, the Community Research Initiative being particularly exemplary.

"I, on the other hand, feel all the more compelled to opt for a political program that espouses fundamental social transformation. I'm not talking utopian dreaming here, but the urgent necessity for eradicating a system in deep crisis. The AIDS epidemic starkly highlights the barbaric consequences of a social economic system fueled by the profit motive. Most of us understand, I believe, the crying need for massive scientific research and treatment efforts coordinated on an international



1946-1990



level. Yet we daily see evidence of how such efforts are blocked by the voracious profit seeking of the drug companies, the thoroughgoing bigotry and indifference of the government and the rivalries of competing nation states."

If the AIDS crisis renewed Clay's resistance to bigotry and social injustice, the development of his social conscience and his participation in social struggles began long before. Clay was very proud of what he described as his "stubborn Midwestern roots." His grandfather was a member of the Industrial Workers of the World, a "Wobbly" whose crusade against the bosses ended in a suspicious industrial accident.

In his youth, Clay studied and mastered the French language and traveled to France where, among other things, he fell in love with the food and became a gourmet cook. But his travels to France also shaped his political development. In May 1968, Clay saw the power of the working class in action, when France was brought to the brink of revolution. He returned to Chicago and participated in protests outside the Democratic Party Convention that same year. In the early '70s, Clay was active in the first gay liberation groups and also worked with a support group for the Black Panther Party.

Clay came to the Spartacist League through a fusion between our party and the Red Flag Union (formerly Lavender and Red Union). Clay and his comrades were won from the gay liberation/lifestylist milieu to Trotskyism through a hard fight on the "Russian question," the political touchstone for all who lay claim to Marxism.

Recoiling from Stalinist bigotry against homosexuals, Clay studied Trotsky's analysis of the class nature of the Soviet state and concluded that the damage done by Stalinism could only be corrected by forging an authentically Bolshevik party as a beacon of human liberation and to defend the gains of the Russian Revolution, which were atrophied and undermined by the repressive and conservative bureaucracy. Although Clay left our organization shortly after the fusion, he remained an active sympathizer and rejoined shortly before his death.

Clay lived the watchwords that a Leninist party must be a "tribune of the people"—a standard-bearer for all those oppressed under class society. The fight against racial oppression was one that Clay particularly gave himself to. The late eighties were a period of upheaval in Haiti, manifested in the Haitian diaspora in New York City in huge protest demonstrations. With Clay's capacities in the French language, he was an able agitator for the Trotskyist program in this milieu. He not only sold more newspapers and subs than most comrades but translated our press releases for the Haitian press.

In the last year of his own life, Clay devoted his time and considerable abilities to save the life of another man, Mumia Abu-Jamal, a black political prisoner and MOVE supporter on death row. Clay helped give voice again to Mumia, an eloquent journalist the government wants to silence. Clay transcribed and proofread Jamal's columns from death row for publication in newspapers around the country. He returned to France in 1989 and worked with our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France to extend the campaign for Jamal's life internationally.

Clay used his position as a member of one of the most integrated unions in New York City, District 65/UAW, to bring Jamal's case to the labor movement and bring labor's power to bear in the fight to abolish the death penalty and stop Jim Crow "legal" lynching in this country. In the last days of his life, Clay sought to meld his theatrical talents with his political convictions and wrote a song he wanted performed for Jamal at the Partisan Defense Committee's fund-raiser for class-war prisoners. From his hospital bed he scrawled verses on the back of envelopes and prescriptions and phoned singers he knew to interest them in the project.

While the bourgeoisie gloated over the so-called "death of Communism," Clay never buckled. He saw the collapse of Stalinism, an obstacle to and perversion of revolutionary Marxism, as an opening to build Trotskyist parties throughout East Europe and the Soviet Union. After the Fourth Reich swept the elections in East Germany last March, Clay doubled his monthly financial contribution to the party and our Lenin-Liebknecht-Luxemburg ("3-L's") fund drive to continue our work in the DDR and points further east. Clay wrote:

"Sure, electoral success would provide a welcome platform for revolutionary politics, but it's long been a clear tenet of our movement that the real and decisive action will be in the workplaces and in the streets. The German work underlines the 'international' in the ICL [International Communist League], and I think that's pretty exciting. The international focus was one of the main things that initially won me to the SL, and I can now see concretely how the upsurge in the DDR directly inspires abroad."

Clay enriched our understanding as a party, particularly of the AIDS crisis; he enriched the lives of individuals who worked with him. His tenacity as a communist fighter against tough odds is an inspiration, and we will honor him by continuing that struggle.

We print here Clay's application (excerpted) to rejoin the Spartacist League/U.S.



Courtesy T. Clay Dickinson

Clay Dickinson (right) on stage: politics and theater were two of his passionate interests.



November 19, 1990

Dear Comrades:

I was thrilled when some of the comrades visiting me in the hospital recently filled me in on this consultative membership business and invited me to apply on that basis. I was also pretty overwhelmed with the massive demonstration of affection and support.... I'm cranking this out the same evening I finally won my freedom from the inhuman horrors of hospitalization. The idea here is to give some indication of my evolution back home to the party over the last several years after the years spent wandering (prowling may be more accurate) in the wilderness of the gay male demimonde and the pursuit of all its hedonistic pleasures....

So this letter is intended to constitute my application for consultative membership....

There are two essential questions that have defined my recent political evolution, the AIDS epidemic and the collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe.

I find that the AIDS crisis has placed under a microscopic perspective the barbarous contradictions of a system in glittery but pernicious decline and the desperate needs of the lowest, least powerful and most abused layer of its citizenry. I recently had a long conversation with a young black woman at a dinner that the good souls at the church around the corner from my apartment prepare for AIDS patients on Saturday evenings. Dawn told a tale that almost literally chilled my blood and made me choke with rage, and I feel it's eloquently illustrative of the larger social perspective of this crisis in capitalist America.

She and her husband had struggled from backgrounds of no privilege whatsoever to get fairly decent jobs and reasonably decent housing. Then AIDS struck her husband. As soon as it was evident that he was sick, he was immediately dismissed and put out to pasture on a welfare payment of \$67 a month and Dawn struggled to support them both. Then she got sick, was fired and the two of them thrown into a welfare hotel with something around \$300 a month in welfare payments (of course the city was paying about \$1,500 a month to the despicable cockroach capitalists running the joint). Their room is about 5 by 7 feet. Just room for a bed and one of them to get up and move at a time. All personal belongings are stored in garbage bags piled to the ceiling in one corner. They're able to hang up a few things on overhead pipes. There's a small hot plate and one tiny refrigerator and that's about it. For a sink you have to go out into the unsafe hall, also for the only bathroom on the whole floor. You can imagine the difficulty in dealing with such conditions when you're fighting a disease characterized by regular bouts of the most devastating diarrhea.

The thing that keeps them alive is Dawn's remarkable courage and determination. She has ferreted out all the places in the city where free hot meals are served to people who have AIDS and places where groceries and clothing are given out free to AIDS patients. Her husband is totally bedridden with his sickness. However, the one organization that delivers free hot meals to AIDS victims in their homes won't come to their "home" because their drivers have been



Clay at July 1986 New York City protest against Supreme Court decision that upheld reactionary state laws targeting gays.

stabbed and robbed on several occasions. So Dawn feeds him by reheating the seconds she gets from the meals she's able to obtain for herself. What happens when she's not able to make the rounds on this circuit of decent church folks' charity is anybody's guess, but she's not likely to have any buddy service available to her. There was a tough looking young white woman sitting across the table who expressed total wonder at what Dawn was managing to accomplish, and Dawn quickly took her under her wing and started making a list of contacts, locations and phone numbers for the white woman, who at one point virtually broke down sobbing that this was the first time in the last 1-1/2 years since she'd been sick that she had been treated like she was a "civilized person." Her husband has already died from AIDS and she is struggling to care for herself and her two interracial children who are both infected, all with precious little help from any public agency.

I went home, turned on the TV news and saw Bush sweeping into some gala affair in Washington. In stopping to chat with the reporters gathered, he made some comment that the recently hacked together agreement to modestly raise taxes on the layer of his wealthiest billionaire and millionaire buddies somewhat more than their junior compatriots in the slightly lower bracket ran counter to all the traditions that made this country great, and it just wasn't "right." The searing contrast between these opposite poles in the declining imperialist heartland suddenly hit me like a knife in the gut and I let out a scream of rage that I'm sure left my neighbors wondering what the hell was going on, but I felt better after I did. We have to take the plight of the Dawns of this country before the organized workers movement and convince them that they must be defended and demand decent housing and medical care for all.

As to the heirs of Uncle Joe and their downfall, I initially had the knee-jerk reaction that we were seeing the historic refutation before our eyes of the Trotskyist position that neither the political revolution nor capitalist counterrevolution in the degenerated and deformed workers states could possibly be peaceful. However, as events unfolded and upon further reflection, I realized a couple of things were going on here. First the deformed workers states of East Europe in some ways were never ours since they were never led by communist parties in each country overthrowing their own bourgeoisies. But the Soviet Union, on the other hand, has always been ours and is the heartland of international workers revolution in this epoch. The emerging threats to the centralized planned economy as botched as it is by the Stalinist hacks and the collectivized ownership of productive property must be immediately defended by workers the world over, but certainly by those in the Soviet Union itself.

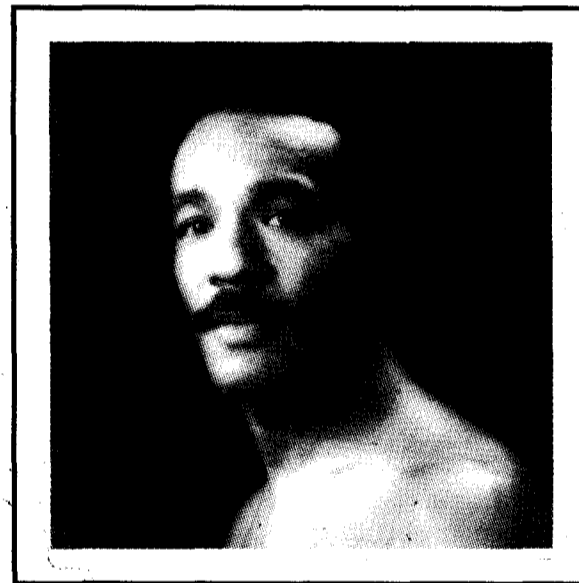
On further reflection, I realized that even in East Germany where the building of the Fourth Reich seems to have already firmly planted the institutions of the counterrevolution, the show was not over. Stick around folks. Reports indicate that it's already happening there and in the rest of East Europe that the workers are quickly becoming aware of what they lost and the lack of appeal in the newly blooming market economies with their newly blooming homelessness, bread lines, unemployment, underworld gangster operations, profiteering entrepreneurs, drug dealers and every stripe of fast buck hustler imaginable, i.e., just like the beacon across the seas in the USA.

The cradle to grave security and benefits of a cen-

trally planned national economy that they all grew up with have to be looking pretty good to them right now, not to mention the sense of a collective pride in the society they were building. The opportunities offered by the new freedoms to distribute and obtain information offer a real and vital chance for the development of a revolutionary workers leadership schooled in the world historic lessons embodied in the program of Trotskyism that will make the completion or defeat of these counterrevolutions anything but peaceful, especially with the likely military intervention of Western imperialism.

The immediate need, of course, will be to inspire social revolutions in the West, particularly Germany, France, Britain and the U.S. When that happens the world is finally ours to develop in the egalitarian interests of the whole of humanity as opposed to the bulging pockets of the few. Revolutionary upsurge by workers in the East should directly inspire their class brothers and sisters in the advanced industrial West, especially when they see their own masters for the butchers that they really are, ready to blow up half the world to defend their perceived interests in the Middle East, and in the case of the U.S. throw hundreds of thousands of its unemployed workers forced to look for economic gain in military service at the rapacious appetite of the imperialist war machine and thereby restore some "health" to the seriously ailing economy. They haven't even been able to come up with the fig leaf of a moral crusade to fight some readily perceived evil.

Though nobody's exactly thrilled with the butcherin' Saddam, here again is a powerful illustration of the old Marxist principle so clearly articulated by Liebknecht that you've got to start with the main enemy who's right at home. When war breaks out the Iraqi workers must take advantage of the opportunity to take the tyrant's head and install their own government including the oppressed national minorities. So this more sober consideration stands in direct counterpoint to my brazen question at the first Iraq forum as

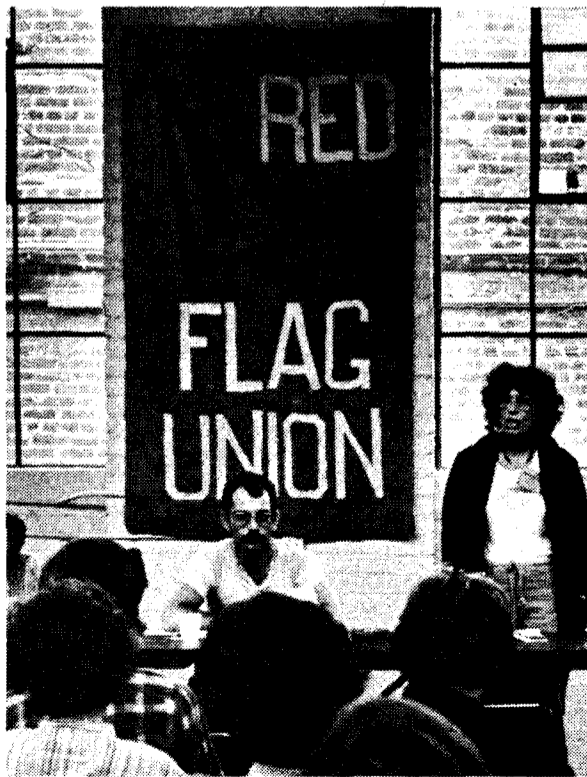


Clay's companion J.R., 1985 portrait by Robert Mapplethorpe.

to how the party could consider calling the Red Army to defend this monster. The point of course is not defending the monster but defending a small country that is being brazenly attacked by the high-tech forces of the imperialist monster, who has several times as many foul breathing heads.

Therefore, despite the great dangers to existing social gains in the East, I now feel very strongly that the collapse of Stalinism is offering revolutionaries the opportunity of a lifetime. Very soon we should no longer have to deal with the nemesis of Uncle Joe and his hideous crimes against the international workers movement and much of the general Russian population. Who's going to swallow even the most sophisticated version of the old McCarthyite "reds under the beds" crap with the likes of Boris Yeltsin at the helm? These developments should help us resist and expose the current trade-union tops and their shameful history of suppressing those very militants that were working in the interests of both their particular unions and the entire international working class. I've come to the conclusion, comrades, that the time for a healthy dose of revolutionary optimism is at hand. Though there seems to be some doubt that I'll make it until the following PB meeting, creating some pressure to get this in as soon as possible, I assure you that I have every intention of fighting this alien beast to the finish and in the process giving the party some of my best years.

Comradely,  
T. Clay Dickinson



Clay chairing session of Red Flag Union conference in Los Angeles, June 1977, where Spartacists (speaker, right) fought to win gay liberationists to revolutionary party.

# Saddam Hussein's War on Kurds, Leftists

## Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Reign

As the White House assembles the most massive American expeditionary force since the Vietnam War, the Spartacist League has marched in protest demonstrations under our banners calling to "Break the Blockade of Iraq! Defeat U.S. Imperialism!" We stand with the people of Iraq against this imperialist aggression which will take hundreds of thousands of lives to impose Bush's "New World Order." And we stand with the working people and oppressed of Iraq against their bloody rulers, Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath party, who were until recently backed by the U.S. In particular, we denounce the Ba'ath nationalists' slaughter of Iraqi Communist Party members and war against the Kurdish national minority, carried out with Washington's complicity.

A press report from more than a decade ago describes the hideous tortures which were meted out by the security police under Saddam Hussein's direction:

"For example, prisoners are beaten with hoses, burned with cigarettes, given electric shocks, beaten on the sexual organs, stomach and chest until they vomit; prisoners are hanged, their heads are plunged into toilet bowls, they are forced to perform degrading acts; others are driven outside the city and shots are fired over their heads, etc. Some of those who have undergone such treatment have been mutilated or paralyzed. Others have been tortured to death."

—*Le Monde*, 23 March 1979

Today imperialist rulers and Western media rehash stories of babies in Kuwaiti hospitals being yanked off life-support systems, but they were virtually silent about the tortures detailed above. This is because the thousands of men and women who endured that terrible ordeal, and the many who died in it, were Communists. The purpose of this repression was to liquidate the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). And as he carried out this gruesome task, Saddam Hussein had the support of U.S. imperialism.

In a previous article ("Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Road to Power," *WV* No. 511, 5 October 1990), we described how the Ba'ath party came to power in Iraq as a result of the crushing of the revolutionary upsurge which followed the 1958 coup against the British-installed monarchy. The possibility was posed of uniting the Kurds and all oppressed behind the powerful CP-led working class in overthrowing the bourgeois order, but the Iraqi Communist Party subordinated itself to the nationalist regime of General Qassem. As the CP caved in (on orders from Moscow, which wanted to facilitate Khrushchev's Camp David parley with Eisenhower), militant workers were set up for repression and Kurds were pushed into the camp of traditional chieftains. When in 1963 Qassem's nationalist rivals of the Ba'ath party brokered a military coup, the result was a nine-month reign of terror. Ba'athist goons using lists

supplied by the CIA dragged Communist militants from their homes and murdered thousands.

The ICP's suicidal capitulations in Iraq were only playing out the logic of Stalin's anti-revolutionary policies, summed up in the dogma of building "socialism in one country," the USSR. Under this nationalist watchword, which translated into opposing struggles for socialism elsewhere, the Chinese Communists were ordered to subordinate themselves to the bourgeois-nationalist Kuomintang, lead-

extinguishing his cigarette inside the eyeballs of his victims" (Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear* [1989]). Once again the nationalists' hand was strengthened by the capitulation of the Iraqi CP, which prostrated itself before the Ba'athists only to be crushed under their heel. In the first years of the regime, scores of Communists were arrested and tortured to death. Yet when the USSR signed a 1972 "friendship" treaty with Iraq, two CP leaders entered the government.

Reinforced by Soviet arms and assured



Siarmand Bana

**Tens of thousands of Kurds were driven out of Iraq by army offensive in summer of 1988.**

ing to the Shanghai massacre of 1927 under Chiang Kai-shek. Likewise the Indonesian CP was told by both Moscow and Beijing to follow the baton of nationalist leader Sukarno, resulting in the 1965 massacre of half a million leftists. A measure of the Kremlin Stalinists' betrayal of Marxism is that, for the sake of diplomatic maneuvers, they have for decades sold out to tinpot dictators like Saddam Hussein instead of mobilizing the working class to sweep them away.

### Arab Nationalism and Anti-Communist Repression

In 1968 the Ba'athists were able to return to power in another military coup. Saddam Hussein set up a vast security apparatus whose chief—like himself, a prominent torturer under the previous Ba'ath regime—"had a penchant for conducting interrogations personally and

of CP conciliation, the Ba'athists in March 1974 launched a massive military assault against the Kurds. For almost a year the Iraqi army napalmed and phosphorus-bombed Kurdish villages, driving thousands from their homes. Yet as the Kurds successfully held out, the Ba'athist regime turned for help to Washington and its ally, the shah of Iran. The U.S. imperialists, anxious to woo Iraq back into the pro-imperialist fold, were only too willing to help the Ba'athist regime smash the Kurds. So the CIA suddenly cut off their man, the feudalist "general" Mustafa Barzani. Iran agreed to close the border and cut off military aid to the Barzani-led insurgents, in return for Iraqi renunciation of its claim to the eastern bank of the Shatt al-Arab (the estuary of the river Tigris), its only outlet to the Persian Gulf.

As the Kurdish resistance collapsed, the Ba'ath launched a policy of forced "Arabization" of Kurdish regions, especially the oil-rich northern regions of Kirkuk and Mosul. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds were loaded on army trucks with what belongings they could carry and transported to the southwestern desert where some half million Kurds are today held in wretched concentration camps. Arab peasants from the south were offered a financial incentive to resettle the abandoned lands.

Having served its purpose, the Iraqi Communist Party again fell under the Ba'ath's fire. A growing number of CPers were imprisoned even as CP ministers were part of the government. Most were charged with carrying out political work in the army. In May 1978, at least 21 CP members and supporters in the army were executed, opening a new paroxysm of terror. Yet the Stalinists

would pursue the path of class collaboration to the grisly end. A conference of CPs of the Arab countries in late 1978, while condemning the wave of repression in Iraq, pleaded that "a progressive Arab front" uniting Communists and Ba'athists was "indispensable" (*Le Monde*, 7 January 1979). For a full year after the eruption of anti-Communist repression, the CP government ministers would cling helplessly to their cabinet portfolios. By the spring of 1979 what was left of the Iraqi CP was either in exile or—an estimated 15,000 of them—in prison.

The wave of repression against Iraqi Communists provoked outrage on the part of working-class organizations around the world. The Spartacist tendency noted: "This juridical murder [of the 21 CPers] was part of a major crackdown on the mass party of the Iraqi proletariat by the bourgeois-nationalist Ba'athist regime" (*WV* No. 230, 27 April 1979). The imperialists did not protest the slaughter. They understood that it was part of a turn by Iraq toward the West—resulting in closer economic ties; arms purchases and toned-down opposition to the Egypt-Israel "peace" accord. A *New York Times* (30 July 1978) dispatch, noting the massacre of ICP members, was headlined "Iraq Is Now Seeking a Moderate Image."

### For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!

In the carve-up of the Ottoman Empire following World War I, the Kurdish homeland was divided among four bourgeois states—Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria—and the Kurds were subjected to savage repression in all of them. The 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, which formalized the imperialist division of the "spoils of war," envisaged the formation of a (highly truncated) Kurdish state under U.S. mandate. Yet the British imperialists, anxious that this might undermine their control of the oil-rich province of Mosul, were quick to abandon even this caricature of "national self-determination."

In Iran, under both the shahs and the mullahs, Kurds have been denied even the most minimal national rights. In NATO Turkey they are officially designated "mountain Turks"—even speaking the Kurdish language in public can result in arrest, fines and torture. Small wonder that the U.S., as it works to combine these countries in a military alliance against Iraq, has been reluctant to press the question of the oppression of the Kurds. As an Iraqi Kurdish leader recently noted, "The West never misses an opportunity to forget about the Kurds" (*Wall Street Journal*, 3 December 1990).

In the 1980s, Kurdistan became a battlefield during the decade-long reactionary border war between Iran and Iraq. Baghdad carried out massive population transfers of hundreds of thousands designed to disperse the Kurdish national minority—20 percent of Iraq's population. During fighting in March 1988 over the border village of Halabjah, several thousand Kurds were killed in a poison gas attack, although evidence indicates that both Iraq and Iran may have used chemical weapons there. Immediately following the truce with Iran, in August of that year an Iraqi offensive drove 65,000 Kurds over the border into Turkey. An international uproar ensued over allegations of Iraqi use of nerve and mustard gas, and the U.S. Senate (eager to back off from Washington's pro-Iraq stance during the war) voted sanctions against Baghdad, but no clear evidence such as victims' bodies was produced.

It is often forgotten that, besides the four capitalist states which are inhabited by Kurds, there is a fifth country which



New York Times Map

**Kurdish homeland carved up by imperialists. Today it is divided among four capitalist states and the Soviet Union.**

# Healyites Got Blood Money

Incredibly, the anti-Communist repression in Iraq in the late 1970s was actually supported by one tendency which masquerades as Trotskyists, Gerry Healy's International Committee (IC), represented in the U.S. by David North's Workers League. They alibied the Ba'athist executioners, declaring: "This is a straight case of Moscow trying to set up cells in Iraqi armed forces for the purpose of undermining the regime. It must accept the consequences" (*Bulletin*, 16 March 1979). The Healyites' "justification" for the massacres of CPers was that "the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party of Iraq has played a hundredfold more progressive role in the Middle East than Stalinism."

The Spartacist League had long described the Healy tendency with Lenin's phrase, "political bandits." In 1967 the

Healyites became champions of a mythical "Arab Revolution," a catch phrase to justify tailing after Arab nationalist despots. By the mid-'70s, they had become press agents for Libyan strongman Qaddafi, and then shameless apologists for anti-Communist terror in Iraq (see "Healyites: Kill a Commie for Qaddafi," *WV* No. 230, 27 April 1979). The details of this sordid affair came out in 1985 following the spectacular implosion of international Healyism. Not only did Healy & Co. hail the extermination of Iraqi CPers, but they photographed protest demonstrations in Britain and turned over to the Iraqi embassy the pictures of Iraqi militants, fingering them for arrest, torture and possible death.

How was it possible for a group claiming to stand for "socialism" to support

anti-working-class terror carried out by a capitalist government? The answer can be summed up in two words: blood money. A 16 December 1985 report by an IC Control Commission documented how their "founder leader" Healy and his cohorts like the actress Vanessa Redgrave had shuttled around Libya and various Near-East countries—including both Iraq and Kuwait!—looking for and receiving subsidies to pay for their expensive daily press in Britain. (It should be noted that the implosion of Healyism didn't come about over taking the money, but only when the money ran out.) The Control Commission was only able to trace part of the money because no serious financial records were kept, but it published the amounts it was able to uncover, which were received from

various countries over a seven-year period beginning in the mid-'70s:

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

Total ..... £1,075,163  
(reprinted in *Workers News*, April 1988)

In exchange for this largesse to keep their showpiece press alive, Healy & Co. filled their pages with grotesque paeans to these very same Arab dictators. At the same time as they were alibiing the murder of Iraqi CPers, here is a sampling of what the Healyites had to say about Saddam Hussein's treatment of the Kurds:

"The Iraqis are slandered with the tale that the Ba'athists 'shot thousands' and denied Kurdish independence...."

"In a statement in [the Healyite] *News Line* the party leadership critically appraised the efforts of the Ba'ath Party to solve the Kurdish question.

"At the same time the [Healyite] WRP defended the Iraqi government from the CIA-organized forces of General Barzani."

—*Bulletin*, 20 April 1979

Today David North cynically pretends that he and others of Healy's loyal henchmen and toadies didn't know that the "IC" was on the take. Yet we and others had denounced Qaddafi's patronage of Healy for years! Moreover, in the factional blowout which followed Healy's overthrow, British WRP leader Cliff Slaughter wrote a letter (14 January 1986) revealing that Australian Healyite Nick Beams had obtained tens of thousands of dollars from Near East regimes and had passed on the information to David North, who agreed not to raise the matter within the IC (see "On Baghdad, and Bagmen," *Australasian Spartacist* No. 138, September-October 1990). *Beware of these provocateurs for hire.* ■



WV Photo

Healy's organization was bought and paid for by reactionary Near East regimes. Right: American Healyite press alibis Iraq's execution of 21 Iraqi Communists. Left: Spartacists denounce Healyite support to Arab despots, May 1979.



includes a significant Kurdish population—the Soviet Union. A conference held in Moscow last July to discuss the question of Soviet Kurds became a point of attraction bringing together Kurds internationally. In 1923, the young Soviet state created an Autonomous Republic of Kurdistan, roughly situated between Armenia and Azerbaijan—the so-called "Red Kurdistan"—which constituted "a beacon to the entire Kurdish people" (Gerard Chaliand [ed.], *People Without a Country* [1980]).

The Bolsheviks were able to cut across national divisions by offering full democratic rights to all nationalities. Lenin insisted that the USSR must be a genuinely free union of peoples. In order to accommodate the myriad peoples at different levels of national consolidation, a variety of soviet republics were established, including Union Republics for fully formed nations, Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics for nationalities, as well as Autonomous Oblasts and Nationality Okrugs for various tribes. In areas of heavy interpenetration of peoples, such as the Caucasus, this produced a complicated checkerboard of autonomous regions while setting an internationalist framework for intercourse among the peoples.

It was precisely over the national question in the Caucasus that the first decisive political fight against the developing Stalinist bureaucracy was waged by Lenin. When Stalin attempted to force the Georgian, Azerbaijani and Armenian republics into a Transcaucasian federation, Lenin broke with him in late 1922. Lenin proposed to Trotsky a bloc against Stalin's chauvinist policies on the national question, and called in his suppressed "Testament" for the removal of Stalin from his post as general secretary. Stalinist rule would become synonymous with Great Russian chauvinism, national oppression and forcible population transfers. In 1929 the Stalinist bureaucracy

put an end to the autonomous republic of "Red Kurdistan," and in the '30s many Kurds were deported from the Caucasus to Central Asia. Today this area has become the scene of communalist bloodletting as Gorbachev's policies of economic decentralization have intensified national rivalries.

The second time a Kurdish republic was established was under the military exigencies of World War II, when the occupation of northern Iran by the Soviet army led to the establishment in late 1945 of autonomous republics in Iranian Azerbaijan and in Kurdistan (the so-called Mahabad Republic). In the latter Kurdish was established as the official language of government and schools, and Kurdish periodicals appeared for the first time (including a newspaper for women). Led by a notable from the town of Mahabad, Qazi Muhammad, and supported by certain tribal leaders in the surrounding countryside (as well as the exiled Barzani clan from neighboring Iraqi Kurdistan), the short-lived republic made no real attempts in the direction of land reform. Yet it served as a rallying point for Kurdish exiles from Turkey, Iraq and

Syria who came to Mahabad, seeing it as the core of the Kurdish liberation struggle throughout the Near East.

Yet unlike East Europe, where under the pressure of imperialism's Cold War Stalin was forced to carry out a bureaucratic overturn of capitalism, the Red Army withdrew from Iran in early 1946. The Kremlin hoped thereby to obtain oil and gas concessions from the shah, and also feared that a social revolution in Iranian Azerbaijan would raise the question of unity with Soviet Azerbaijan, opening the Pandora's box of demands for genuine self-determination within the USSR. As a result of Soviet withdrawal, the republics in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan collapsed, sacrificed on the altar of Stalin's vain search for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

The failure to achieve an autonomous homeland for the Kurds has left a splintered movement of innumerable Kurdish nationalist groups from the many Kurdistan Democratic parties—the KDP of Iran, which was launched several months before the founding of the Mahabad Republic; the KDP (Iraq), which was founded by Barzani as he fled Mahabad; the

pro-government Iraqi KDP, founded in the '70s in the shadow of the ruling Ba'ath party; the KDP of Turkey, which was founded by Barzani supporters in Turkey—to a myriad of other more left-wing formations. Divided as they are, Kurdish nationalists still tend to look with favor upon the Soviet Union.

The Spartacist tendency, now the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), has energetically upheld the right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination. Several years ago, a representative of our tendency had the opportunity to address a conference of Kurdish militants held in central Europe. Our message of solidarity (*WV* No. 362, 14 September 1984) called "For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!":

"Comrades, it was the great historic example of the Russian Revolution which dramatically confirmed that in the epoch of imperialism's decline, democratic rights and principles can be fully realised only by the revolutionary proletariat in power.... That the Kurdish proletariat exists primarily in the diaspora naturally and inevitably complicates your political tasks, but it is a problem that has been faced before. Indeed it was the resolute struggle of the Bolshevik Party for the right of self-determination for even the most underdeveloped of the oppressed nationalities in the tsar's prison house of nations which facilitated the conquest of power by the proletariat in Russia."

We support the establishment of a Kurdish state, yet as the solution to Kurdish oppression means defeating four reactionary bourgeois regimes, it can scarcely be conceived independently of the struggle for socialist revolution throughout the region. The Kurdish masses must look to an alliance with the Arab, Persian and Turkish proletariat. Saddam Hussein and all the reactionary rulers of the Near East must be brought down by the working people and oppressed who have suffered under their heel. This requires the construction of working-class parties fighting for a socialist federation of the Near East. ■



Le Bolchevik

Ligue Trotskyste de France demonstrates in October against imperialist invasion of Persian Gulf. Sign (right) reads, "For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!"

# U.S. Empire...

(continued from page 1)

off with some heavy U.S. air strikes on Iraqi forces (without risking heavy U.S. casualties). And Washington would have an excuse to keep a large "peacekeeping" force permanently stationed in the region, one of its goals from the outset. Nobody can claim this is beneath the scruples of the White House. But Bush seems to have upped the ante to such a level that he is committed to driving out Hussein's forces with a large-scale ground attack. This could be bloody indeed for the U.S.

The Iraqi information minister noted that despite U.S. air superiority, "we know a conflict like this will be settled on the ground":

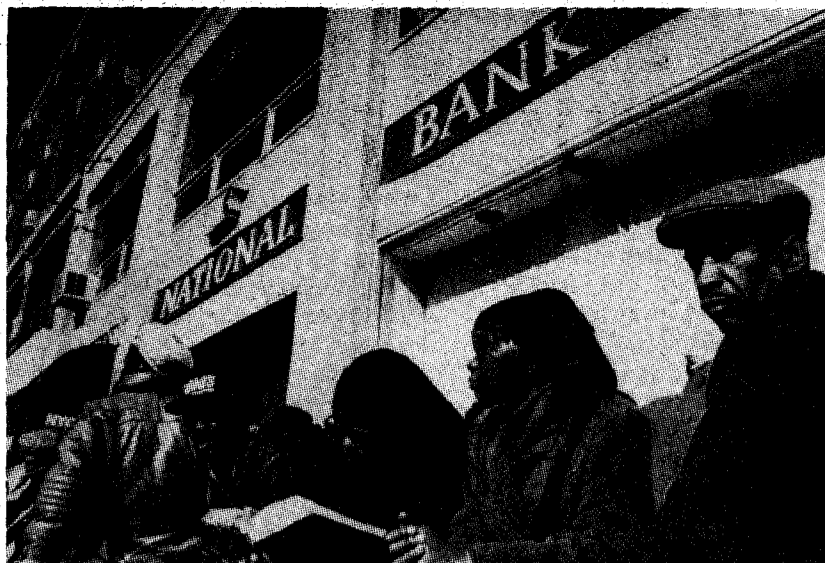
"We are the defenders. In military terms, an invader needs a three-to-one advantage. We have over a million men in arms. I don't think the entire U.S. army is that big. And here we accept sacrifice. Do you know that during the war with Iran we lost 53,000 men just to regain one small city.... Fifty-three thousand men is what you lost during the entire Vietnam War. Do you think Mr. Bush can afford to lose 53,000 men to defend some hole in the Saudi desert?"

With their battle-hardened million-man army, some pretty sophisticated Western weapons systems (bought from France or seized from Kuwait) plus the superior MIG-29 fighters, as well as tank traps filled with drums of napalm and, of course, their chemical weapons, Iraq's rulers are set to make a ground assault as costly as they can for the imperialist invaders.

The Pentagon knows all this and so every month they keep saying they need a few more weeks, a lot more tanks, more planes, more ships, more everything. So when Lt. Gen. Calvin A.H. Waller, the deputy U.S. commander in the Gulf, said that U.S. forces wouldn't be combat ready on January 15, the brickbats started flying. Even the staid *New York Times* (27 December 1990) started talking about "McClellanism," referring to Civil War general George B. McClellan, whose penchant for delay so frustrated Lincoln that he finally fired him and installed Grant. Ironically, if it were up to the Vietnam-shell-shocked Pentagon there might not be a war, but thanks to a spineless Congress it's all been left to the warmonger in the Oval Office.

As the *Los Angeles Times* (28 December 1990) reports, the word from "senior government officials" is that Bush has decided to "move quickly to launch a massive military attack" soon after the January 15 deadline. Having assembled the largest armada since World War II (with six aircraft carrier battle groups) and a troop buildup that was not reached until halfway through that imperialist war, the Americans can "prevail" militarily. The Pentagon wants to try out all of their high-tech weapons, from cruise missiles and the M1 tank to "stealth" fighters, and even if most of them miss their targets (as in Panama), with such a concentration of firepower they will eventually hit something. The Iraqis have no sources of resupply, so it's only a matter of time until they run out of tanks.

But the U.S. doesn't have unlimited time—they have to get it over with in a hurry if they want to keep their international "coalition" from breaking up, and to avoid serious turmoil at home, where opinion polls continue to show a majority opposed to military action in the Gulf. Above all, the big question will be: What has Washington won if it "wins" on the battlefield? In addition to the prospect of a bloody slog on to Baghdad, unless they get rid of Hussein (the way Reagan tried to assassinate Qaddafi with the air strike against Libya), they will have succeeded in rousing tens of millions throughout the Arab world against the imperialist crusaders who will cold-bloodedly slaughter hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, after first trying to starve them out. The fury could lead to the toppling of the narrowly based pro-Western regimes which have



Kerbs/DOI

**Collapse of Freedom National Bank in Harlem (left) hit ghetto hard. S&L crisis, bank failures, real estate collapse: U.S. capitalism in big trouble.**



Feanny/SABA

acted as front men for Bush, including in such key states as Egypt.

From the outset, the Spartacist League/U.S. and the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) have sharply opposed the U.S.-led invasion of the Persian Gulf. Between the bloody Iraqi strongman and the autocratic ruling family of Kuwait per se, the world working class has no side. We take the side of the Arab masses, calling to bring down the sheiks, the colonels, the Zionist butchers—for workers revolution throughout the Near East! While various liberals and reformists have lined up behind Bush's "United Nations" cover,

American invasion is a crass grab for control of a resource which has been at the center of imperialist aggrandizement—oil. The immediate U.S. target is Iraq, but ultimately its aim is to bring its economically more dynamic imperialist arch-rivals Germany and Japan to heel. (No wonder that those two "allies" have hung back from sending any troops to the "international" coalition force in Saudi Arabia, and have dropped only a few pfennigs and yen into the American tin cup.) In fact, with his rhetoric of a U.S.-dominated "New World Order" and his string of ultimatums, it is war criminal Bush who is acting as a Hitler.

ployment and hunger.

For while the Reaganite music of unbridled capitalism was at the top of the charts, the American empire was economically and socially rotting from within. The rich have gotten much richer while the poor became poorer, median real wages have fallen from \$8.52 in 1973 to \$7.46 today, and now even combined family incomes are below the '73 level, while an estimated three million homeless are on the streets and there were over twelve million unemployed last Christmas. And the economy has been brought to the brink of disaster. From being the world's leading creditor, the U.S. during the Reagan years became the world's largest debtor nation. A colossal \$14 trillion in foreign and domestic debt (private, corporate and government) threatens to turn the long-awaited recession (now well under way) into a deep depression as bankruptcies feed upon each other.

The potential economic collapse is the result not only of a decaying productive plant, due to long-term lack of investment by capitalists seeking to maximize profits by moving production to low-wage countries and various forms of speculation, but also of direct government policy. The "leveraged" buyouts and takeovers, financed by looting the corporations being seized (through high-yield "junk bonds"), was facilitated by the deregulation of savings and loan institutions. As the entire S&L industry collapses under the weight of bad debts, and as the collapse of property values spreads from the Northeast and Texas to the rest of the country, now insurance companies and banks are in danger, with almost all of the leading banks skating on the edge of bankruptcy. And as *Time* magazine (15 October 1990) commented:

"The problem is that the U.S. Government stands behind these institutions like a pillar of Jell-O, since it is already committed to an S&L bailout that could cost \$1 trillion and owes a national debt of \$3 trillion. If more bailouts are needed, the U.S. would have to borrow so much money from the credit markets that interest rates would be pushed upward in the midst of a recession, which would make conditions even worse."

Moreover, unlike the aftermath of the "Black Monday" October 1987 stock market crash, when infusions of Japanese yen shored up a tottering Wall Street, today Tokyo can't bail out the debt-addicted U.S. As a result of a stock market crash at home, in which the Nikkei index has fallen by close to 50 percent in the last year, wiping out more than \$3 trillion in paper value, Japan is cutting back on foreign investment. While Japanese investors bought \$26 billion in U.S. bonds in 1989, they unloaded \$9 billion in the first half of 1990. Germany, meanwhile, is facing a trillion-mark bill for the cost of annexing East Germany. Since Chancellor Kohl, like Bush, has resisted raising taxes, Bonn has borrowed instead, sending interest rates up and pulling D-marks back from New York to Frankfurt.

With two stock market crashes in three years, and now the entire financial system in jeopardy, American capitalism is in deep trouble. And as it became evident



Frans-Laurent Masereel

**In 20th century, control of oil is casus belli. Antiwar poster from World War I, "For Oil," by Belgian artist Frans-Laurent Masereel.**

supporting the UN "sanctions" which are an embargo, an act of war enforced by the U.S.-NATO fleet, we proclaimed "Break the Blockade of Iraq!" While Bush attempts to assert U.S. global hegemony at gunpoint, this time with the treacherous complicity and support of the sellout Kremlin bureaucracy, the Spartacists call to "Defend Iraq! Defeat U.S. Imperialism!"

## War-Depression

So now war is coming to the Near East, one of the few wars whose approximate starting date is known by all parties beforehand. Despite Bush's feeble talk of opposition to aggression (what about bloody U.S. aggression against Panama, Grenada, Libya, Nicaragua...?) and cynical references to the two-bit tyrant Saddam Hussein as another "Hitler," the

Dispatching "rapid deployment" forces to Saudi Arabia last summer even as Secretary of State Baker was squeezing the requisite "request" from King Fahd, the American president claimed U.S. troops were being sent in to defend "our way of life." Around the world, the Hollywood pitchman Reagan managed to sell the "American way of life" to the gullible as the road to instant prosperity. But after the Marines landed in Panama a year ago, installing a puppet president sworn in on a U.S. air base, instead of the \$1 billion in aid promised by Bush only a pittance has arrived and thousands are still homeless, living in sweltering hangars. And when U.S.-backed Solidarność took office in Poland in 1989, instead of being showered with dollars, the Polish population was subjected to brutal capitalist austerity that has meant unem-

that the Reaganite Roaring '80s were not about to be followed by the Golden '90s, that recession/depression could no longer be held off, it certainly was convenient to the White House if the scapegoat for the economic crisis could be personified by Saddam Hussein rather than Neil Bush. The Gulf war is also convenient to the "military-industrial complex," which was facing big cutbacks and is now getting new orders. But this time around, with the U.S. budget deficit already soaring before the Persian Gulf invasion, war could really sink American capitalism instead of saving it.

### Decline of the U.S. Empire

So today history repeats itself, with variations. The U.S. is no longer undisputed master of the capitalist world, and in fact its vanquished World War II enemies have now emerged with more modern and productive economic engines. Rivalries are already breaking out, such as at the trade talks in Brussels, which collapsed at the beginning of December. The U.S.' big advantage is that it still retains a war machine built in the Cold War and aimed at the Soviet Union. Now that the latter appears to be disintegrating, Bush has decided to seize the window of imperialist opportunity: before its war machine collapses on the empty shell of the American economy, he will hurl it into the Near East, seize the world's oil, and blackmail his would-be creditor-masters back into submission by threatening to turn off the spigot.

The evidence of U.S. imperialist decline is so widespread it has become the subject of heated controversy among

sent their armed forces halfway around the globe.

"Great Britain was capable of a similar display of power in 1899-1900, when it got involved in its bitter conflict with South Africa's Boers, 10,000 kilometers from home. London mobilized more than 300,000 soldiers from all parts of the world. The Royal Navy ruled the waves, no other power was capable of such an effort. That seemed to give the lie to the pessimists of the late Victorian era: England was, so it seemed, still Number One in the world."

Yet even though Britain "won" the battles, the Boer War exposed the advanced corrosion of the decaying Empire, which had been living a parasitic existence off the spoils of colonial plunder: "...the declining competitiveness of industry, the falling investments and growing trade deficit. And yet it was these weaknesses, not defeats on the battlefield, which later led to the collapse of its power." It might also be noted that in launching its attack on the Boers, "perfidious Albion" proclaimed aims of exalted moral purpose. That they could thereby grab the fabulously wealthy gold mines in the Transvaal, and that the British Army could try out its new Maxim machine gun, was just, well, "convenient." Sound familiar?

Today, Germany and Japan are feeling their increased imperialist muscle. Despite Bush/Baker's attempts to strong-arm them into paying for the military buildup in the Gulf, neither has come up with more than a measly billion dollars or so. Both governments, however, have shown great interest in eliminating the "peace" provisions of their U.S.-imposed constitutions which prohibit foreign military interventions. (In Japan this has run up against widespread pacifist senti-



Nash/AP

**Coffins start coming home: one of 21 U.S. seamen killed in ferry accident off Israeli coast.**

bourgeois scholars, triggered by Paul Kennedy's 1987 book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. Kennedy's suggestion that the evident decay has all the earmarks of classical imperial decline à la "Spain around 1600 or the British Empire around 1900" ignited a hue and cry from the bought-and-paid-for intelligentsia trying to deny reality. As he wrote, the U.S.:

"is the inheritor of a vast array of strategic commitments which had been made decades earlier, when the nation's political, economic, and military capacity to influence world affairs seemed so much more assured. In consequence, the United States now runs the risk, so familiar to historians of the rise and fall of previous Great Powers, of what might roughly be called 'imperial overstretch'; that is to say, decision-makers in Washington must face the awkward and enduring fact that the sum total of the United States' global interests and obligations is nowadays far larger than the country's power to defend them all simultaneously."

And while he is no Marxist, Kennedy felt compelled to quote Engels—"nothing is more dependent on economic conditions than precisely the army and the navy"—a fact which does not augur well for America's future imperial adventures.

In an interview with the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* (3 September 1990), Kennedy drew a historical parallel to the Gulf war:

"America is in danger of suffering a national blindness which has previously afflicted many great powers, when they

ment in the population.) When the U.S. demanded that Tokyo cough up more, the Japanese parliament instead shaved its war ("self-defense") budget.

In Europe, Kohl's Fourth Reich, having swallowed up the former DDR (East German) deformed workers state into an imperialist Greater Germany, is no longer the "economic giant and political pygmy" that Social Democratic former chancellor Helmut Schmidt called it, but the proverbial 800-pound gorilla which can sit anywhere it wants. Following the collapse of Hitler's Reich in 1945, novelist Thomas Mann called for "a European Germany, not a German Europe." What we now have is indeed a German-dominated Europe, in which the Yugoslav, Danish, Austrian and Benelux currencies are formally tied to the D-mark, which is also the common currency for trade with East Europe, and Bonn has the final say in the Common Market.

For example, angered over British opposition to German reunification, epitomized by the "Ridley affair" in which one of Margaret Thatcher's cabinet ministers likened Kohl to Hitler, the new German Europe engineered the downfall of the Iron Lady. It is also noteworthy that the Persian Gulf crisis is the first international crisis since World War II where money didn't flee to the U.S. dollar. Instead the German mark and Japanese yen have become the currencies of refuge. Significantly, the Belgian,

**Decay of American capitalism: Remnants of U.S. Steel plant in Cleveland.**



British, Danish, Dutch, French, Italian and Spanish ships in the Gulf are under the command of the "West European Union," an obscure committee in London which doesn't even have secure phone lines to the Continent but was resuscitated in order that European forces not be placed under American (NATO) control.

In the 1970s, Jimmy Carter and various of his cohorts pushed the theme of "Trilateralism," in which the future would be dominated by cooperation of the three power centers of Japan, West Europe and the United States. The current power configuration is indeed triangular, but it is hardly marked by all-sided cooperation. Rather, the world is being redivided into a Pacific area dominated by the Japanese yen, a Europe dominated by the deutschmark, and the Western hemisphere controlled by the U.S. dollar. Hence Bush's push to expand the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement to include Mexico, and then the rest of Latin America. But simultaneously Washington wants to teach its obstreperous imperialist allies that this is now a "one super-power world."

### Oil and Empire

Washington wants to gain total control of Persian Gulf oil in order to once again be able to squeeze its Japanese and German rivals and be master of the capitalist world again. And in the imperialist world there is only one way to do this—war. As Joseph Nye, author of *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (1990), a latter-day invocation of Manifest Destiny, recently put it, "the gulf will be a defining point," as it will decide whether the U.S. can still "lead" (read dominate).

In the 20th century, oil is what fuels an empire—tanks cannot move without it, not to mention planes and industry. This is even more true today now that armies have been completely mechanized: the Nazi army which invaded Russia in 1941 was still dependent on 650,000 horses, more than the number of

motorized vehicles at its disposal, but it was the Panzer (tank) corps which made the difference, and they consumed vast quantities of fuel.

Hitler said he wanted *Lebensraum* when he invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, but more to the point, he was desperate to get Russian oil for his tanks. According to the postwar interrogation of German foreign ministry official Hans Kolbe, who spied for the U.S. during the war, "The German need to obtain Soviet oil was deemed the primary reason for the attack.... Since the Soviet deliveries were insufficient to satisfy German demands for bringing the war [in the west] to a conclusion, the only recourse appeared to be the seizure and exploitation by the Germans of oil resources in the Soviet Union" (see Robert Goralski and Russell Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat* [1987]).

Japan's Rising Sun empire was even more desperate for oil since it had to import it all—in 1937, for instance, Japan got 80 percent of its oil from California. So Japan sent its army and navy into Southeast Asia in June 1941 to grab the oil. U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt said that he had held off from cutting oil exports to Japan because "if we cut the oil off, they probably would have gone down to the Dutch East Indies a year ago, and you would have had war." (A year earlier, the U.S. had embargoed scrap iron exports to Japan.) With the Japanese invasion of Indochina, FDR imposed a freeze on Japanese assets in the U.S., which led to a de facto embargo on oil exports to Japan.

The Japanese war machine would now have to deplete its oil stocks and would eventually grind to a halt. Japanese foreign minister Toyoda explained in a secret message to his ambassadors to Germany and the U.S. that "the Japanese Empire, to save its very life must take measures to secure the raw materials of the South Seas." Thus it was widely

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# U.S. Empire...

(continued from page 13)

expected in U.S. government circles in 1941 that FDR's embargo would force Japanese imperialism to attack. Historian Herbert Feis wrote in *The Road to Pearl Harbor* (1950), "From now on the oil gauge and the clock stood side by side. Each fall in the level brought the hour of decision closer." Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson wrote in his diary about a meeting with FDR on 25 November 1941, less than two weeks before Pearl Harbor:

"He brought up the event that we were likely to be attacked perhaps (as soon as) next Monday, for the Japanese are notorious for making an attack without warning, and the question was how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves. It was a difficult proposition."

—William Appleman Williams, ed., *The Shaping of American Diplomacy* (1956)

Whether or not FDR knew Pearl Harbor would be the site of the Japanese attack, it was clear he expected a war with the Japanese triggered by his oil embargo.

Likewise, control over oil supplies was a major issue in the first imperialist world war. The conflict was preceded by a battle over redivision of world oil between the U.S. Rockefellers (Standard Oil), together with the Rothschild-Nobel trust which controlled Russia's Baku oil fields, and the Germans who controlled Romanian fields. At the outbreak of the war the British moved to seize the Persian Gulf oil fields around Basra. Four years later, they moved on Mosul in northern Mesopotamia in order to grab the oil reserves there. Subsequently, the Foreign Office in London drew up the artificial borders between Saudi Arabia, the British-installed monarchy of Iraq and its protectorate of Kuwait in order to secure its domination of the area.

As Lenin noted in his pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*,



Spartacist contingent marches in 20 October 1990 demonstration in New York City against U.S. invasion of Persian Gulf.

written in 1916, "The more capitalism is developed, the more strongly the shortage of raw materials is felt, the more intense the competition and the hunt for sources of raw materials throughout the whole world, the more desperate the struggle for the acquisition of colonies." All the more so today, though the colonies may be disguised as neocolonies and oil sheikdoms.

## For Class Struggle Against Imperialist War!

In the whole Gulf crisis, one of the biggest concerns of the White House and the Pentagon has been the "home front." After an initial wave of enthusiasm for Bush's "tough" stance of immediately sending in the 82nd Airborne, it has dawned on the American population that "their" president actually intends to go to war. And they're not crazy about it. One poll after another shows three-fifths

to two-thirds of the population against attacking Iraq. The Catholic Pope decried the coming war, and the Protestant National Council of Churches has called for a day of prayer and fasting against the war. But George Bush is operating on the proposition that if you hold state power, it doesn't matter a hell of a lot what the population thinks. Or, as one Hollywood executive remarked, you can fool all of the people, all of the time, "if the budget is big enough and the advertising is right."

Certainly when it comes to the vaunted "democracy" of American capitalism, he has a point. Despite popular opposition to a war, the Persian Gulf was hardly an issue in the November Congressional elections, where the Democrats kept their lips zipped on the big issue. (Two days after the vote, Bush announced the second wave of troop deployments, whose only purpose was an offensive attack on

Iraq.) There has been ample discussion of the fact that the U.S. Constitution delegates the power to declare war explicitly and exclusively to Congress, not to the executive, which was reaffirmed by the toothless War Powers Act which was supposedly designed to prevent a repeat of the Vietnam War. Yet the spineless Democratic-led Congress refuses to invoke its theoretical powers out of fear of sending the wrong "signal" to Saddam.

The ruling oligarchy of American capitalism, the Republicrats or what Gore Vidal calls the party of property, would dearly like to overcome popular opposition to another dirty (and losing) imperialist military adventure. No real opposition to the Gulf war will come from the bourgeois politicians: at most they have tactical differences over what they can get away with. But among the working people, the poor and particularly black and Hispanic minorities, who are disproportionately represented among the soldiers (including many women) who will die in Bush's war, the "Vietnam syndrome" is alive and well. Many among the troops have cried out to reporters that "this isn't our war." What's needed is a class-struggle leadership, independent of and fighting against the "bipartisan" parties of U.S. imperialism, to mobilize opposition in the streets, calling for political strikes against the war.

From the Near East to Europe and the United States, the key is to build a revolutionary, internationalist workers party fighting against the imperialist system of war and brutal exploitation. As Lenin wrote on the fourth anniversary of the Russian October Revolution, "the millions who are thinking about the causes of the recent war and of the approaching future war are more and more clearly realising the grim and inexorable truth that it is impossible to escape imperialist war, and imperialist peace... which inevitably engenders imperialist war, that it is impossible to escape that inferno, *except by a Bolshevik struggle and a Bolshevik revolution.*" ■

# Aptheker...

(continued from page 3)

Aptheker dutifully denounced Rajk's show trial as a "fearful injustice," but only the year before he still "maintained that Laszlo Rajk was an agent of the capitalist countries' secret police services."

Several years later Junius Scales, a former close friend of Aptheker's who had been a longtime CP organizer in the South and a Smith Act frame-up victim, recalled in his autobiography a meeting of CP leaders at the time of the Soviet intervention in Hungary:

"Foster was holding court, seated at a table, and I heard him say in his hard, arrogant way, something to the effect that the Red Army would soon take care of 'this CIA "revolution".' I burst out, 'those are working people the Red Army is shooting down!' Then, more quietly, through clenched teeth, I added, 'If I were in Budapest now, I'd be throwing Molotov cocktails at Soviet tanks!'"

—Cause at Heart (1987)

Scales writes of Aptheker's book, "Whatever it was intended for, The Truth

About Hungary damaged Herb's credibility with thousands of people who greatly respected him as a pioneer in the field of Negro history. At that time he began to avoid me." So did the CP, which turned its back on Scales in the face of bourgeois persecution. Unfortunately the conclusion Scales drew from the Stalinist betrayal over Hungary was to abandon any concept of communism, as he split out with the rightist Gates faction in the direction of mainstream social democracy.

## The Stalinist Art of Lying

With Aptheker as its chief "theoretician" (he headed the American Institute of Marxist Studies), the Communist Party justified any and every betrayal by the Moscow Stalinists while at home pursuing a "popular front" with the Democratic Party. Today that means hailing the mainstream black Democrats like Virginia governor Wilder, who campaigned on support of the racist death penalty. Meanwhile, Gorbachev welcomes the introduction of capitalism in the Soviet Union, and Aptheker's job is to put a good face on it.

Having denounced the pro-socialist Hungarian workers as counterrevolutionary 30 years ago, today Aptheker hails "new forms of economic ownership... not excluding individual ownership where helpful." Having then painted a proletarian political revolution as an imperialist plot to take over East Europe, today he applauds Gorbachev's "peace initiatives" handing East Europe to the imperialists on a silver platter. Aptheker cheers that the "peace forces are near full victory," only months before the war forces started piling hundreds of thousands of American troops into Saudi Arabia, with the treacherous support and complicity of Moscow. And the CPUSA openly calls for imperialist war measures in the form of United Nations "sanctions" against Iraq.

Going out of his way to prove that "Communism" is just as red-white-and-blue as any Reaganite yahoo, Aptheker snivels:

"My commitment to radicalism and my desire for a Socialist United States did not depend upon the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.... My fundamental responsibility arises out of my citizenship and I do not feel called upon in any way to offer any apologies for the endeavors that have been my life since the mid-1930's. When this country engaged in a just war, I eagerly and earnestly supported it, largely by putting my energies into servicing 155mm howitzers for over four years."

Let's just set the record straight: first of all, the last just war fought by the U.S. bourgeoisie was the Civil War that smashed the Southern slavocracy and their black chattel slave system.

In World War II, it was the Red Army which waged a progressive war to defend the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany, while the United States fought to extend the American empire into Asia and Europe. On the part of the U.S. and the other imperialist powers World War II was no "just war" but an inter-imperialist conflict which left tens of millions dead. And the CP acted like the worst social-chauvinists whom Lenin had denounced in World War I. They enforced Roosevelt's no-strike orders and sabotaged struggles for black rights at home while hailing the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, even purging CP membership lists of their Japanese American comrades as they were led off to concentration camps on the West Coast.

While the Stalinists backed U.S. imperialism to the hilt in World War II, the Trotskyists fought to defend the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, and to promote the class struggle at home. They volunteered for hazardous duty on the Murmansk run, denounced Washington's refusal to admit Jewish refugees and defended Japanese Americans. Indeed, the first Smith Act

victims, to the hurrahs of the Stalinists, were 18 Trotskyist leaders imprisoned for denouncing imperialist war and refusing to accept the bourgeoisie's *diktat* of "civil peace." More recently, as the Stalinists acquiesced to the tide of counterrevolution in East Europe, we Trotskyists were unique in fighting to mobilize opposition to capitalist reunification in Germany.

Aptheker once wrote that "controlling the past is of great consequence in determining the present and shaping the future; hence, hitherto exploitative ruling classes have gone to great pains to control that past" (*The Unfolding Drama: Studies in U.S. History*). That applies even more to the Stalinist bureaucracy which, precisely because it is not a new social class but a brittle caste resting atop proletarian property forms, requires for its rule an edifice of lies and police-state terror. And for this they need cynical practitioners of the Stalinist school of falsification like Herbert Aptheker, a quintessential exponent of what James P. Cannon described as the Stalinist "art of lying":

"The Stalinists have discovered that the human brain is a delicately sensitive organ, easily affected for good or ill, depending on what hits it first and hardest, and susceptible to befuddlement as well as to enlightenment. The brain may be knocked into malfunctioning by blows of a club; and virtually the same effect can sometimes be achieved by the steady bombardment of propaganda disguised as instruction or indoctrination. The Stalinists know this and work at it."

—Notebook of an Agitator (1958)

Or as Shane Mage wrote of Aptheker over three decades ago: "he is still a Stalinist. The same mirror which showed him a counter-revolution in Hungary once showed him and many others the 'truth' of the Moscow Trials, the 'genius' of Stalin, the 'fascism' of Tito, the 'guilt' of Rajk...." And now Aptheker has discovered the "renewal of Marxism" through capitalist restoration. ■

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# Haiti...

(continued from page 16)

"Tit Eglise" (little church). As he traveled around Haiti and visited the U.S. in November, tens of thousands came out to cheer the radical priest. "Operasyon Lavalas" was supported by a coalition of more than 20 groups, including much of the left. *Haiti Progrès* published glowing campaign reports and a full-page "Homage to Titid," complete with a religious-like portrait radiating a halo of light, which began: "We salute you, comrade of the highest summits of the beautiful human adventure...." Yet far from being the "people's candidacy" touted by the left, "Lavalas" was from the start supported and financed by leading bourgeois figures. Throughout his campaign Aristide reassured the bourgeoisie that he did not intend to direct a revolution. He declared:

"We give guarantees to the bourgeoisie.... We tell them: We are with you. You have nothing to fear."

—*Haiti Progrès*,  
28 November 1990

Despite the talk of "revolution" the Aristide candidacy has from the start been tied hand and foot to the bourgeoisie. The National Front for Change and Democracy (FNCD) which presented Aristide's candidacy is an alliance of various "leftist" groups with members of Haiti's bourgeois elite, dominated by Antoine Izméry. The latter, who served as treasurer for the Aristide campaign, is a "super-rich importer" whose family financed the campaign to the tune of almost \$200,000 (*Economist*, 22 December 1990). According to *Libération* (19 December 1990) Izméry was instrumental in "conceiving, creating, and launching the Aristide candidacy." The Paris daily notes that "it is said that he is 'a repented smuggler' and that his democratic conversion dates from the day that the internal revenue service began to look into his income."

In his first address as president-elect, Aristide sought to reassure "you who have money" that "my dream is to protect your interests." He said of the mood of the demonstrators in the capital, "'Crush and break': no. *Déchouage* [rooting out]: not yet." The reason, said Aristide, was that the people feel "we have put in a government, we will surely obtain justice." Yet this illusion will be rapidly dissipated. Aristide's campaign pledge of justice for the victims of the dreaded Tontons Macoutes (the Duvalierist terror squads) intersected an explosive rage on the part of the Haitian people for vengeance against their torturers. However, in this deeply polarized and hideously oppressed land, complicity in

unspeakable crimes is pervasive at all levels of the ruling elite—and particularly within the officer corps.

In his post-election message, Aristide declared, "Peasants, workers, unemployed, your hour of deliverance has rung out." He called on the poor to organize "vigilance brigades" in an "avalanche of organizations" throughout Haiti. Yet at the same time, he scandalously addressed the Macoute terrorists as "our brothers" who he "loves," and called on them to "change" and "the army and police will help you." The army and police will indeed help these pathological killers, but not to change. While Aristide treacherously holds out a hand to these assassins, revolutionaries must translate the cry of the Haitian masses for justice into action with a call for *people's tribunals to root out the Tontons Macoutes!*

As Aristide prepares to take office on February 7, the U.S. has declared its willingness to work with him and has held out the prospect of economic aid—as long as he plays by the rules. U.S. officials who met with him found Aristide ready to "moderate much of his leftist platform" (*New York Times*, 20 December 1990). However, despite Aristide's assurances to the bourgeoisie, his room for "reform" of Haitian society is perilously narrow. Aristide will either play the role of groveling instrument of the Haitian bourgeoisie and the U.S. imperialist overlords or he will be swept away in a reactionary crackdown aimed at decisively disciplining the pitilessly oppressed population.

## Haitian Army a Mortal Threat

That the elections took place at all is certainly the work of Washington, which has been trying to clean up its image in Latin America by installing elected regimes as better able to carry out the brutal austerity programs dictated by the IMF bankers' cartel. U.S. imperialism wants to defuse the explosive tensions which have been building since a mass upsurge brought down the Duvalier regime four years ago and raised hopes among the Haitian people for an improvement in their hellish existence. The last time elections were scheduled in November 1987 they were drowned in blood, as right-wing thugs backed by the military gunned down dozens of people waiting to cast their ballots. When a popular upsurge brought down the military regime of Prosper Avril last March, the U.S. embassy brokered the formation of a "caretaker" government to prepare elections.

Yet while Washington claims there is a "new breed" of officers committed to "democracy," the complicity of military

officers with the Macoutes is pervasive. As the Council of State met last June to prepare the elections, a death squad in uniform calmly walked in and gunned down a member of the government and a union leader. As the election proceeded, Duvalierist strongmen re-emerged from the shadows. The sinister Roger Lafontant, former head of the Tontons Macoutes, flamboyantly returned from exile and was greeted at the airport by a delegation of military officers. Despite a warrant for his arrest Lafontant announced his candidacy (subsequently annulled on a technicality) and began appearing with a military escort. He flatly declared: "We will not permit [Aristide] to be president."

While centering his campaign on the Macoutes, Aristide steered away from the question of the Haitian army. The myth which Aristide is helping to propagate of a supposedly "democratic" Haitian army

in Haiti cannot be limited to its national confines, but must be conceived as a battle in a social revolution which must embrace the entire Caribbean and ultimately the imperialist heartland of the United States.

Haitian workers in the diaspora, in the working class of several Caribbean countries and concentrated in North American cities from Montreal to Miami, can be a vital bridge in this international class struggle. The Dominican Republic, where Haitian slave-labor *braceros* are vital to the sugar industry, has been shaken by three general strikes since last summer protesting austerity and calling for the resignation of perennial rightist president Balaguer. In New York City there was a virtual general strike of Haitian workers last April when over 70,000 Haitian American workers demonstrated against a racist ban on Haitians donating blood as possible "AIDS carriers." It is the role



Dreaded Tontons Macoutes brandish weapons in last days of "Baby Doc" Duvalier regime.

reinforces popular illusions which are deadly dangerous. At one point in the popular celebration of Aristide's electoral victory, hundreds of kneeling people gathered in front of the presidential palace to thank the soldiers gathered there. This did not prevent half a dozen policemen from firing on the festive crowd, killing a pregnant woman.

## For Permanent Revolution!

For the Haitian masses, who have suffered for decades under the boot of a military installed by the U.S. Marines when they occupied the country in 1915, the election of Aristide seems like a ray of hope. Many would-be leftists support Aristide, asking, what is the alternative? From a nationalist perspective, the possibility of workers revolution would appear faint in Haiti, long the most destitute country in the Western Hemisphere. The tiny proletariat is largely confined to small manufacturing and several state-owned industries such as electrical power. This underscores that the class struggle

of a revolutionary party to broaden such struggles and link up with the rest of the working class, particularly black American workers who often express a particular concern for the fate of their Haitian class brothers.

The Haitian working masses must be won to the internationalist perspective of Trotskyism, which fights for permanent revolution, raising on its banner demands such as land to the tiller and a constituent assembly—democratic tasks which, however, are impossible to achieve without a workers revolution that would sweep away the murderous army and break the yoke of Yankee imperialism. The workers in power, led by a Bolshevik party, would have to undertake socialist measures requiring international support simply in order to survive. Haitian workers elsewhere in the Caribbean and North America can provide a bridge to international class struggle. To clean out the corruption and systematic terror, to eliminate the desperate poverty, the only road for the Haitian masses is to uproot capitalism. ■

# New York...

(continued from page 16)

Times once a week!

In opposition to the policy of Hall & Co., TWU workers are working to clean the *News* out of the system. At Coney Island shops, 200 workers on their coffee break ran off a *Daily News* truck. A member of the CFTWU told *WV* that motormen, car cleaners and maintainers at the 240th Street shop cleaned out some hawkers—and the cops were there in a flash. One black woman cleaner bitterly remarked that "you know if they shot someone in my neighborhood those suckers would never show up, but they're here in two minutes to defend that scab paper."

The *News* strike is a watershed battle for NYC labor—and it is in danger, as the Central Labor Council tops have allowed the Tribune Company to continue publishing. The strike is being derailed with a useless consumer boycott and reliance on Democratic Party politicians like Mayor David Dinkins, even as the NYPD guards the Brooklyn printing plant, arrests strikers and clears the streets for the scab trucks.

The determined pressmen and drivers who have been keeping the scab papers out of the newsstands are bearing the brunt of scab assaults and arrests. On December 27, scabs on a *Daily News* truck in the Bronx framed up two strikers—and got a \$1,000 "award" from the *News*. Two New Jersey towns have dropped any pretense of "neutrality" and are being paid directly by the *News* for their police departments' strikebreaking duties. Meanwhile, the CLC traitors are allowing the best militants to be picked off, as over 100 strikers are facing charges ranging from assault to arson. All NYC labor must demand all charges be dropped against the *News* strikers!

The *Daily News* declared war on the Allied Printing Trades Unions. But the Allied misleaders are crippling the strike—they didn't want it, they didn't prepare for it and they can't win it. Strike militants must take direction out of the hands of the pro-capitalist union tops with an elected strike committee with the authority to appeal to the rest of NYC labor for solidarity in action—mass pickets outside the printing plants and hot-cargoing the ink and newsprint! Victory to the *Daily News* strike! ■

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## U.S., Bankers Hold Army in Reserve

# Haiti: Election Avalanche for Radical Priest

Long before the official announcement of the results of the December 16 Haitian elections, the desperately poor masses understood that their favored candidate, the Catholic priest Jean Bertrand Aristide, had been elected president by a landslide. Over 300,000 poured into the streets of the capital, Port-au-Prince, shouting joyously "Aristid prezidan!" and crowing like cocks, the symbol of Aristide's campaign. One reveler declared, "For us it is like a second independence." After a ham-handed attempt by globe-trotting election "observer" Jimmy Carter to get Aristide to calm the crowds in case he was declared the loser—i.e., to go along with a rigged vote—that night the U.S. officially greeted his victory. The Haitian president-elect thanked Washington for its support of the electoral process, praised the army and welcomed foreign investors.

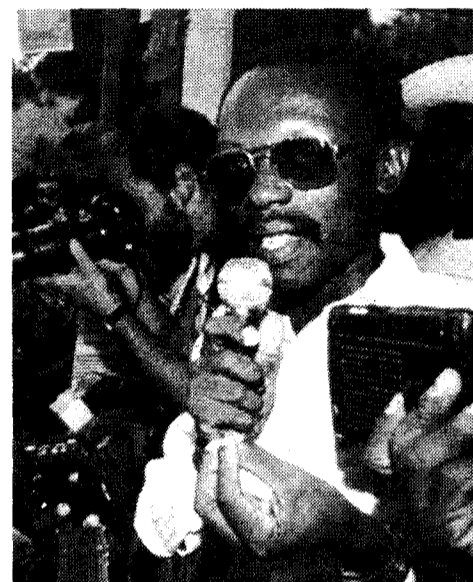
Aristide's electoral campaign, dubbed "Operasyon Lavalas" (avalanche), galvanized Haiti's poor and saved the discredited elections. The immensely popular priest became a prominent dissident under the dictatorship of François "Baby Doc" Duvalier and survived several assassination attempts as he organized



UPI

slum dwellers against the subsequent military regimes. Aristide initially called for a boycott of the elections, as did much of the Haitian left. When he declared his candidacy less than two months before the vote, voter registration

stations were suddenly swamped with over two million applications as a record 85 percent of the potential electorate registered to vote. Initial returns showed Aristide with over 67 percent of the vote, while his nearest rival, former World



Gentile/Newsweek

Haitian masses take to streets in celebration of election victory by Aristide (above).

Bank official Marc Barzin, received only 15 percent; Communist Party (PUCH) candidate René Théodore got 2 percent.

Aristide is a proponent of "liberation theology," known in the country as the  
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## NYC Subway Fire: TA Knew It Was Deathtrap

At the end of the morning rush hour on December 28, the No. 3 train was almost at the Clark Street station deep under Brooklyn, the last stop before it dips under the East River and into Manhattan, when an electrical explosion filled the tunnel with smoke. The 900 passengers on the train became increasingly panicked, as it took the Transit Authority bosses, sitting in their Jay Street offices only blocks away, 36 minutes to organize backing the train out to the Borough Hall station. Rescue workers were sent blocks away to the wrong station—there was no one to aid the victims when the train finally came out of the tunnel. Over 180 were injured, two fatally, from smoke inhalation.

But they weren't the victims of a "freak accident"—the TA knew that the giant exhaust fans which service the 85-foot-deep Clark Street Tunnel haven't been operable since 1984. They're trying to blame it all on snowfall, but a transit official described this as "a snow job. It is a bald-faced lie" (*Newsday*, 30 December 1990). A track worker told *Workers Vanguard* that there are actually small stalactites dripping salt, destroying the insulation of the cable that shorted. Many transit workers suspect the polyvinyl chloride (PVC) conduit and insulation on cables in the tunnel was responsible for the acrid and deadly smoke.

### Daily News Strike Stalls

If the fire had started in the tunnel under the East River the death toll would have been in the hundreds. Two years ago an internal TA report, ordered after the 1987 London subway inferno that killed 31 people, warned the fans "are used primarily to clear smoke from tunnels during a fire. Therefore, it is critical that they be in proper working order" (*Newsday*, 29 December 1990). Transit officials announced, "The biggest priority is the tunnel fans." But nothing was done, as the bridges, subways and other public works that were built in the period of ascendant capitalism are left to rot.

The Brooklyn fire wasn't the first time. In July 1989, 2,600 riders were trapped for hours in 115-degree heat in the subway tunnels beneath Queens, while an exhaust fan only 600 feet away wasn't turned on. Three dozen riders were injured. The day before the Clark Street fire, subway trains over the Manhattan Bridge came within a hair's breadth of derailment, as structural beams were discovered one-half inch from collapse during a safety inspection.

Last month, the TA announced the postponement or cancellation of \$500

million in capital projects, including critical track and tunnel work. Hundreds of track and structures workers have been tossed on the street, a hiring freeze was imposed and hundreds of jobs slashed. Instead, the TA budget is spent arresting turnstile jumpers and guarding hawkers of the scab *Daily News*. Now they are arming the transit cops with 9mm pistols loaded with hollow-point bullets.

The Jay Street bosses have announced an "investigation" of the fire by their own Systems Safety Department, the gang which regularly scapegoats transit workers who are maimed and killed because of a TA policy that holds cheap the lives of workers—and subway riders. Transport Workers Union (TWU) members who work the subways haven't forgotten Daniel Walsh, Robert Nicholson, Stewart Melsinker, David Davis, Frank Davila and James Byrne—all killed on the tracks in the last two years.

What happened on December 28 was no "accident." As *Newsday* columnist Jim Dwyer said, "The death was expected and predicted. The reason can be summed up in a word: Fans." We think that the victims of TA policy—both

riders and workers—should expose the TA bosses, and demand the real criminals serve some hard time in jail. After Walsh and Nicholson were killed last May, class-struggle militants in the Committee for a Fighting TWU (CFTWU) wrote that the TA bosses "substitute our blood for capital investment needed to repair this dilapidated death trap we work in.... The transit system will never be safe for workers or riders unless workers control safety."

### Shut Down the Daily News!

The TWU tops have done nothing to protect riders, and less to protect workers, from the effects of the TA's budget-cutting ax. These compliant bureaucrats roll over for the TA at every opportunity. Local 100 president Sonny Hall even handed the strikebreakers at the *Daily News* their only victory in the two-month-long strike when he allowed scab hawkers, many of them homeless blacks and other minorities cynically exploited by the *News*, in the subways (see "NYC Labor Must Shut Down the *Daily News*", *WV* No. 516, 14 December 1990). Knuckling under to the no-strike Taylor Law and a judge's injunction, the TWU tops' only response has been to compete with the hawkers by passing out free copies of the labor-hating *New York*  
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