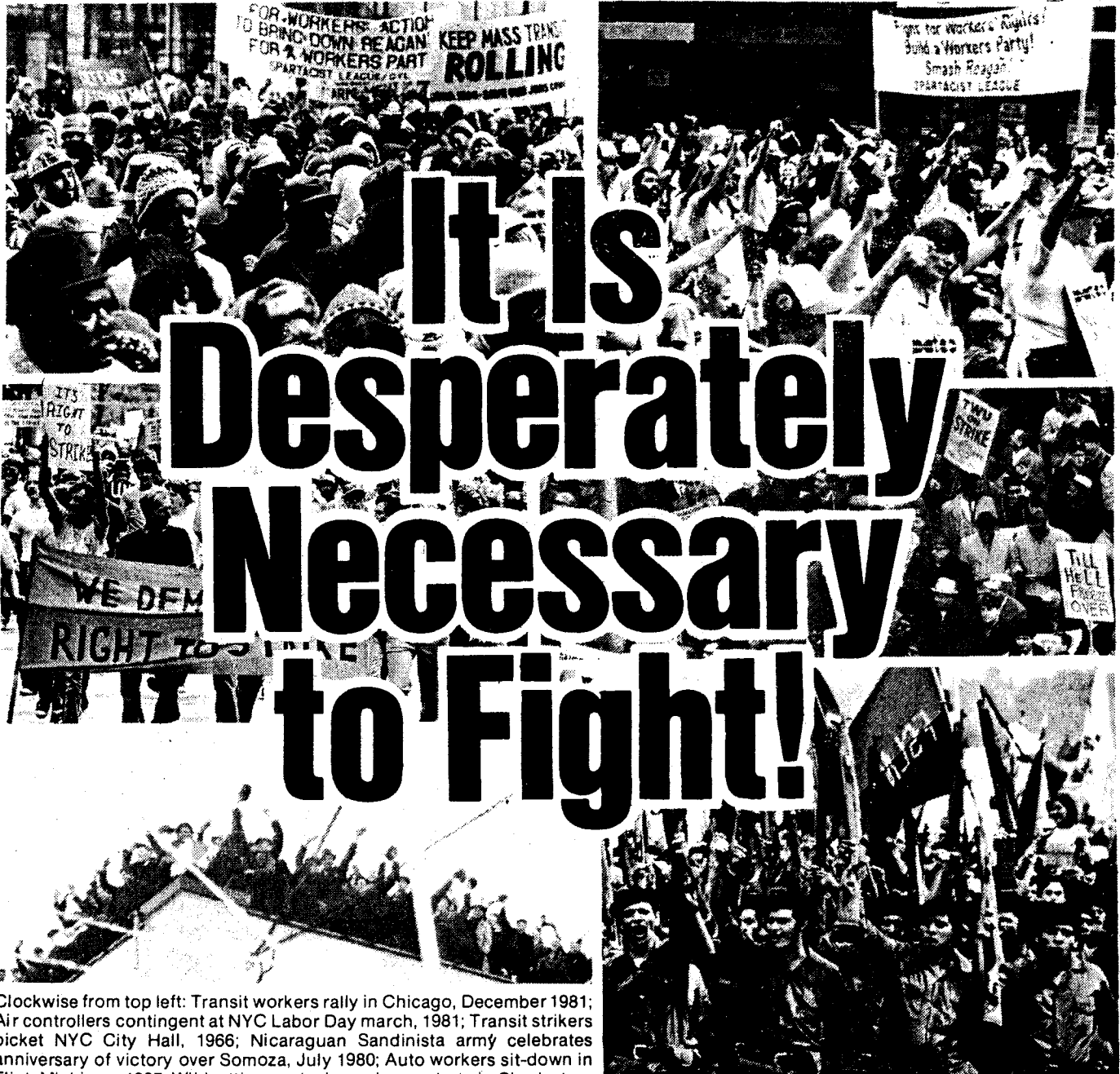




## From El Salvador to Detroit:



# It is Desperately Necessary to Fight!

Clockwise from top left: Transit workers rally in Chicago, December 1981; Air controllers contingent at NYC Labor Day march, 1981; Transit strikers picket NYC City Hall, 1966; Nicaraguan Sandinista army celebrates anniversary of victory over Somoza, July 1980; Auto workers sit-down in Flint, Michigan, 1937; Wildcatting coal miners demonstrate in Charleston, West Virginia, 1975.

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## *From El Salvador to Detroit:*

# It Is Desperately Necessary to Fight!

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NO. 301, 19 MARCH 1982

**From El Salvador to Detroit, the choice is militant class struggle or bitter defeat.**

As the murderous Salvadoran junta totters and left-wing rebels advance, this is sending shock waves through the United States. Reagan and Haig dig in their heels, still trying to convince themselves that they can get a victory on the cheap in their global war on Communism. The liberals respond with empty talk of a compromise "political solution" in El Salvador and "butter plus guns" economic programs at home. The reformists merely tail after the Democrats, but the revolutionaries of the Spartacist League have a fundamentally different aim: we fight for military victory to the Salvadoran leftist insurgents, for defense of Cuba and the USSR, for U.S. labor to take the offensive against Reagan reaction's assault on workers and blacks. We want to sweep away the bankrupt capitalist system that spells poverty and oppression for millions while threatening to plunge the planet into a nuclear third world war.

Reagan/Haig's "Big Lie" campaign of recent weeks has made it clear to all that the U.S. government seeks nothing but a savage military solution in Central America, if necessary creating opponents out of those who had wanted only to conciliate them. When the Nicaraguan Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) toppled the Somoza dictatorship in 1979, it was possible to envision a (utopian) middle way. But in El Salvador today there is no middle ground. The *New York Times* reports that the leading candidate in the March "elections" is a psychotic mass murderer, who assassinated the archbishop primate, attempted to kill the U.S. ambassador and now calls for indiscriminate napalming of the peasantry. Soon Christian Democrat Duarte, who has served as a wormy fig leaf for the most hideous massacres, may be on the run. At the same time, as guerrillas of the Salvadoran Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) are able to withstand an all-out offensive by the junta's elite U.S.-trained kill-crazy battalion within 20 miles of the capital, the call for leftist military victory is urgently posed. And the reformists who call for a negotiated settlement look increasingly like fools...or saboteurs. This creates a tremendous opening for revolutionary propaganda.

Today the call for the rebels to take the capital city, San Salvador, is on the agenda. Yet the dissident bourgeois politicians of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) are necessarily opposed to a working-class uprising sweeping away the bloodthirsty junta. This would destroy their dreams of a reformed capitalist government by posing a profound social revolution. The Salvadoran guerrilla leaders also join the FDR in calling for a "political solution" which would leave the junta army and the structure of landlord capitalist rule intact. This was made

explicit in their letter to Ronald Reagan pleading for a deal with U.S. imperialism. Leftist leader Cayetano Carpio reaffirmed that the goal of the FMLN/FDR was *not* a socialist government but "pluralism" and a "mixed economy"—that is, capitalist reform.

But even if such statements were merely a smokescreen, as the guerrillas' leftist American cheerleaders eagerly maintain, what the Salvadoran rebels with their nationalist program seek at best can be nothing more than another Cuba, a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The last thing they have in mind is the creation of the Bolshevik soviet democracy of Lenin and Trotsky. This is not merely a reflection of Stalinist ideology, but also of the social reality of populist guerrilla war. Nevertheless, the overthrow of capitalism in Nicaragua or El Salvador would set Central America aflame, above all threatening to ignite Mexico with its sizable industrial base and proletariat.

### Whose "Political Solution"?

Currently attention in the El Salvador protests is focused on plans for a negotiated settlement in Central America, particularly the French-Mexican initiative. For right-wing "hawks" this is the product of lily-livered liberals who are "soft on Communism." For imperialist "doves" it is a means of avoiding the catastrophe of "another Vietnam"—i.e., a *losing* military adventure. For the Nicaraguan Sandinistas it means sidetracking a rebel military victory that would threaten capitalist rule, and therefore their delicate balancing act, throughout the region. For the workers and peasants of El Salvador, such a treacherous "political solution" leaving the landlord-puppet army and oligarchical rule intact means the greatest bloodbath in the

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EDITORIAL BOARD: Joseph Seymour (editor), Helene Brosius, Elizabeth Gordon, Jan Norden, James Robertson, Reuben Samuels, John Sharpe, David Strachan

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Noah Wilner

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Linda Jarreau

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Angry auto workers protest Fraser's givebacks at Detroit's Cobo Hall on February 20.

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bloody history of their oppression.

So what's in it for the French and Mexicans? What we are witnessing here is some big-power and middle-power rivalries within the framework of imperialism. Mitterrand, the French Socialist president, is manifestly as virulently anti-Soviet as the Cold Warriors in Washington, and pro-Israel besides. But the French have their own visions of national glory going back to the Emperor Maximilian, and consequently a semi-adversary relationship with the Americans. Thus Paris has decided to cultivate some friends in Central America, delivering a few million dollars of inoffensive trucks and band-aids to the Nicaraguans. (Lest anyone think they've gone pinko, however, the French are supplying the military strongmen in neighboring Honduras with advanced Mirage jets.)

Mexico, meanwhile, is the most populous Latin American country next to Brazil, and for 150 years it has seen Central America as part of its natural sphere of influence (annexation currently being out of fashion). Despite occasional rhetorical flourishes and bear hugs for Fidel Castro, Mexico is a capitalist country with a large, wealthy and very conscious bourgeoisie. And lately it has discovered vast new oil reserves which greatly improve its bargaining power with the *yanqui* colossus to the north. Far from being even slightly favorable to revolution, Mexican president López Portillo has just created an elite army unit to keep the Central American insurgents from spilling across the border. And in proposing a "political solution" in El Salvador, the Mexicans explicitly offered guarantees against a Marxist government. Whether they can deliver will be another matter.

### Sandinista Nicaragua with its Back to the Wall

Ever since he got into office Ronald Reagan has been going after the Sandinistas with a vengeance. (The Republican platform declared Nicaragua already lost to Communism, and the UN ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick labeled former dictator Somoza, the jackal of Managua, a benevolent "authoritarian.") Starting with cancellation of U.S. aid agreements, Washington has now escalated to more military forms of "destabilizing" the radical national-

ist FSLN regime. There have been mounting border raids by ex-Somoza National Guardsmen operating out of Honduras with evident CIA support. Then came the threats of a Caribbean blockade directed against Nicaragua. And now it has been confirmed that the U.S. is spending \$19 million to train a force of counterrevolutionary mercenaries to overthrow the Sandinistas. Reagan seems determined to force Nicaragua onto the "Cuban road," finally to forcibly create the evidence of their "communism."

The FSLN comandantes are petty-bourgeois nationalists, not communist internationalists. Immediately after taking power in 1979 they expelled several score Latin American radicals in an international brigade which organized a demonstration demanding workers to power. The Sandinistas have periodically arrested leftists, broken strikes and currently hold several leaders of the pro-Moscow Communist Party in jail. They have channeled the bulk of government investment funds into the private sector. They claim, evidently correctly, not to be providing arms to the Salvadoran insurgents and right now are whining that FMLN plans to disrupt the junta's phony "elections" could have adverse effects on Nicaragua. This is treacherous, repulsive, petty nationalism with a vengeance! They have given ample proof of their desire to uphold national capitalism. But when threatened with a challenge to their own state power, the Sandinistas occasionally threaten to hand out rifles to every militant in Central America. And they are certainly threatened now.

Faced with the overt declaration that the CIA is pouring in huge sums of money to prop up their domestic enemies and mobilize counterrevolutionary military forces in a campaign of terror and sabotage, the Sandinistas will have to act. They cannot tolerate an internal and external enemy at the same time, and with Washington set on its present course this will oblige the Sandinistas to liquidate the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. (This is clear to the local capitalists themselves, who have been bitterly complaining about Reagan/Haig's counterproductive policies.) While they're at it, a deep-going purge of the Sandinista junta, to get rid of the worst "moderates" who have repeatedly

*continued on next page*

blocked the road to social revolution, would be an indicated step. Then we'd like to see Reagan shove his *gusano* mercenaries into Nicaragua—"they check in, but they don't check out," as they advertise about "Roach Motels."

What makes Reagan and Haig do it? Have they decided that with their repeated failure to produce evidence of Nicaraguan-sponsored revolutionary subversion they're just going to have to make them Communists, like it or not? These failed Big Liars, who make Idi Amin and Dr. Goebbels look rational in comparison, seem determined to create a truth behind the lies.

### Class Struggle at Home

El Salvador is not just an isolated "foreign policy" issue but the reflection of a global program to remove every obstacle to the rearming of American imperialism in order to "roll back" Communism. As the *New York Times* (14 March) reported: "A senior Administration official said today that the problem in El Salvador was global in nature and that the United States should involve the Soviet Union, Cuba and other Latin American nations in the search for a solution." The anti-Soviet war drive is a bipartisan policy uniting all wings of the American bourgeoisie. Thus while Democratic liberals differ with Republican conservatives over Central America, they all join hands over Poland (along with most of the reformist left). And this program of war preparations with selective, substantively trivial, mini-austerity is necessarily a war against the American working class, minorities and poor. With the economy collapsing, union givebacks and savage budget cuts are demanded as "necessary sacrifices" for the "national defense." The domestic program of the pro-imperialist "doves" who call for a "political solution" in El Salvador is for higher, not lower taxes to finance the war budget, i.e., the sanity of Adolf Hitler in 1938 as opposed to Reagan's 1945 version.

Yet important sections of the U.S. ruling class sense and fear the growing economic desperation of the working people and their deepening hatred for the political rulers of American capitalism. Liberal and not-so-liberal bourgeois forces would like to offer some social amelioration, not just naked reaction on all fronts. The haughty *New York Times*, which hasn't shed a tear for the masses in 100 years, now runs interviews in practically every issue exposing the growth of truly desperate poverty among large sections of the population. But the liberals have no policy except being against Reagan. They can't admit, even to themselves, that the arms budget is really a war budget because they support the basic aim of that war—the destruction of the Soviet Union.

At the same time the Reaganite far right is openly bridling at the restraints of bourgeois democracy, from sniping at the liberal media to the objections of Congressional budget committees. A Republican California state senator was recently expelled from the John Birch Society for openly advocating a coup d'état to do away with the parliamentary process and Jewish lesbians. And further to the right of the Birch Society the Klan and Nazis are growing and becoming more active as the fascist fringe of Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive. This gives increasing urgency to efforts by the Spartacist League and class-struggle union militants to stop the race terrorists in their

tracks through labor/black mobilization.

The Reagan policy aims at destroying Russia in a war that they think will be painless for middle-class Americans. There is to be no drafting of white college boys or heavily taxing the upper layers of the American population. Instead there are to be Buck Rogers weapons, laser beams in space and the like, which probably won't work at all, and certainly not with the high school dropouts who form the bulk of the present volunteer army. But this does not mean that they don't intend to nuke Russia. The \$2.3 trillion scheduled to be spent in Reagan's arms budget is not *simply* waste as many liberals contend (although Admiral Hyman Rickover has demonstrated that there is plenty of that). The gang in Washington is dead serious about launching the war for which they are preparing.

Meanwhile, the crushing burden of this military budget is enormously intensifying all of the contradictions of American capitalism. The country is now in a deep recession which prominent bourgeois economists fear could plunge into a full-scale depression comparable to the 1930s. General Motors, for example, the symbol of American industry, is now operating on the margins of profitability. GM management doesn't *want* to lay off workers; it prefers to make money off those workers through exploiting their labor power. But this corporate giant is also subject to the capitalist business cycle, aggravated by the irrationality of Reaganomics, and thus throws hundreds of thousands of auto workers into the streets.

In the present conditions of severe capitalist economic crisis, any real labor struggle must ever more directly confront the capitalist system itself. Accepting the logic of the system means submitting to the givebacks which are gutting the unions. The union bureaucrats have absolutely no answer to the mass layoffs and concessions to the companies except nationalist economic protectionism, directed especially against the Japanese, which sows further seeds of war. Deeply complicit in imperialism's war drive, from the 1950s through the Vietnam years right up to the present, the Cold War labor officialdom cannot credibly present itself as an opponent of the domestic consequences: economic crisis, "givebacks" and cutbacks.

### It Is Desperately Necessary to Fight

El Salvador, Klan/Nazi attacks, layoffs in Detroit and all over—they are all linked, not by some kind of imposed schema but by the logic of capitalism in deep crisis. It is desperately necessary to fight, and the only successful struggles will be those on a *class* basis, with a revolutionary leadership fighting to overthrow the entire destructive boom-bust system of production for profit, not social need. Already most of the fake solutions are rapidly being excluded, openly and in the minds of thoughtful militants. The bankruptcy of trade-union reformism—which yesterday said "more" and today says "less"—is patent. What's needed is the Marxist, Trotskyist vanguard to unite all of the oppressed behind the proletariat and direct its struggle beyond piecemeal reforms (today less than marginal) to the question of power. To stop the anti-Soviet war drive, to put an end to U.S. aggression in Central America and elsewhere, it is necessary to bring Reagan down through workers action on the way to a workers state! ■

## SL/U.S. Faces the Reagan Years

# For Labor Action to Bring Down Reagan!

We publish below a condensation of "SL/U.S. Faces the Reagan Years: The Russian Question Pointblank—For Workers' Action to Bring Down Reagan! For a Workers Party!" The draft was published as SL/U.S. Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 36, November 1981 in preparation for the plenary session of the Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee. For a report on this plenum see Workers Vanguard No. 295, 18 December 1981.

In adopting the document on 28 November 1981, the plenum noted the need for two extensions, one a section on the black struggle and the other a shorter addition setting the Polish crisis more fully in its international context. These extensions were adopted by the Political Bureau on 15 April 1982. Because of the time lag between the document and the additional material, the latter appears here as bracketed sections on pages 8-10 and 12-15.

For publication at this time, the document has been substantially condensed for reasons of space. In addition to deletion of material centrally of internal interest, particularly references to specific trade-union or local problems, the lengthy section recapitulating our analysis of events in Poland prior to the imposition of martial law has been heavily excised. Readers interested in a fuller examination of the evolution of our position are referred to our pamphlet, "Polish Solidarność: Company Union for CIA and Bankers," which reprints the key line articles as they appeared in Workers Vanguard.

### I.

## A Period of Opportunities and Dangers

In late 1980 the sixth National Conference of the Spartacist League/U.S. adopted a main resolution noting the accelerating anti-Soviet war drive backed by all wings of the bourgeoisie. After a decade of "rightward drift" in the absence of significant social struggle (except the 1977-78 miners strike), we observed that "the present political climate is marked by a rightist mood." Reagan's election meant a turn further to the right on all political and social questions. But now that the Reagan administration's drastic programs have started to take effect, that mood is beginning to crack. And it is tending to crack along class lines.

The half million workers who marched in Washington September 19 showed that what has long been true for blacks is now becoming true for broad layers of working people: they know they have an enemy in the White House.

Despite widespread, but passive anti-Sovietism, a polarization is taking place. The extreme right-wing U.S. governmental regime has a narrow base which is becoming



Militant air controllers head march of half a million workers in Washington, Solidarity Day, 19 September 1981. Cowardly AFL-CIO bureaucracy allowed Reagan to bust their union, PATCO.

even narrower.

Reagan understands his mission as a return to the days of the "American Century." Pushing a foreign policy that leads straight to war, he has trouble with his European allies. He has trouble in the "colonies." And he will have trouble at home. Reagan has systematically attacked nearly every sector of the American population, starting with blacks. He has even managed to alienate wide and articulate sections of the bourgeoisie with his apocalyptic/utopian scheme to finance World War III through cutbacks in welfare and school lunch programs.

Reagan has ended the politics of sectoralism which dominated the radical opposition in the late 1960s and 1970s, when each oppressed group was urged to organize on the basis of its own oppression and often had more venom stored up for a competitor "oppressed group" than for a government defeated in war and proven utterly corrupt. Now there is a government anybody can hate.

The objective possibility exists to bring Reagan down in sharp class struggle by the proletariat leading the oppressed. We remember that despite U.S. constitutional peculiarities, Nixon was dumped one jump ahead of a jail sentence and more significantly that LBJ was effectively

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brought down after the Tet offensive of 1968, when he was forced to go on TV and tell his "fellow Americans" he was through. It was the heroism of the Vietnamese that brought Johnson down. Our perspective is a fighting labor movement to do the same to Reagan.

Unlike in the 1960s, the SL is today larger, with a small implantation in the unions and a regular and increasingly well-received press. We are known as a stable far-left organization. And we are known for our program. The main manifestation of rightism in America is anti-Sovietism, and we are the defenders of October against imperialism. We are the group that hailed the Red Army in Afghanistan as Carter launched Cold War II. We said the defense of Cuba and the USSR begins in El Salvador. Now with the threat of counterrevolution in Poland we say: "Stop Solidarność, Polish Company Union for the CIA and Bankers!" Our tendency internationally is heavily defined by the Russian question. And with Reagan's war offensive, now more than ever the Russian question is the American question.

As the entire radical milieu moved right under this anti-Soviet pressure, we stand out as the revolutionary Marxist militants of America as never before. Recently, without increasing our size, our profile and visibility have soared. We are known for standing for the ABCs of class struggle, for the militant labor traditions betrayed by the bureaucrats. From the Keith Anwar case to the PATCO strike, our defense of the picket line sets us off from the reformists and labor tops.

We are known for labor-centered anti-fascist mobilizations in Detroit and San Francisco that have shown how the strategy and tactics of class struggle can stop the race-terrorists, now larger and bolder than at any time since the 1920s.

The May 3 El Salvador protest registered how far right the left had moved. We stood alone against popular frontism as the only tendency voicing the anti-imperialist militancy that had been the common coin of a sizable left wing of American radicalism during the Vietnam War. The SL organized around a line of clear-cut and communist class struggle under the banners of the Anti-Imperialist Contingent: "Military Victory to the Leftist Insurgents! U.S./OAS Hands Off Central America! Defense of Cuba/USSR Begins in El Salvador!"

Our call for military victory to the leftist insurgents in opposition to the liberal line of "political solution" gave us a sharp cutting edge and our slogans, recognizing El Salvador as a hot spot of the Cold War, drew the line on an international basis. Our defense of the USSR against imperialism, and our class opposition to popular frontism in El Salvador and at home, distinguished us from our contemporary opponents and from the "anti-imperialist contingents" of the past.

Standing out also brings us to the attention of the government. The basis for rapid growth for our tendency can also mark us as a prime target for state repression by a frustrated right-wing regime. As we come into focus in the cross-hairs of the agencies of state repression, our Trotskyist line on the Russian question and our opposition to counterrevolutionary Solidarność will earn for us the wrath of imperialism and its social-democratic and rad-lib reflections.

After a period in which the working class, blacks and



Fisher Whitehead  
Reagan and Haig lead renewed anti-Soviet war drive.

other minorities have taken a quiet beating, the instability of the Reagan "consensus" opens up a prospect of struggle. We are entering a period of considerable opportunity and considerable danger. It is this combination which challenges our small fighting propaganda group struggling to meet the tasks of a vanguard nucleus in the changed climate of the Reagan years.

## II. Reaganism: Beating the War Drums

Building on the anti-Soviet groundwork laid by Carter, the Reagan administration is mounting a straight-line drive toward war with the USSR. The most massive arms build-up in post-WWII U.S. history (2-3 times that of the Vietnam War in real terms) is aimed first and foremost at a nuclear first strike on the USSR. Dumping the plans for a mobile MX missile system, Reagan gives up even the pretense of "defensive" weaponry.

The administration is seeking to forge a global anti-Soviet war axis. NATO countries are pressured to increase their arsenals. The open declaration of a U.S.-China military cooperation pact was carefully prepared through three administrations and baptized with the blood of the Vietnamese (who taught the Chinese the "bloody lesson" that Deng had promised the Vietnamese).

Reagan attributes the loss of U.S. power to a liberal failure of nerve. He thinks all that's required to reverse it is to "stand up to the Russians" and write a blank check for the Pentagon. To combat "Vietnam syndrome," the administration seeks a "cheap" demonstration of renewed U.S. power in the global battle against Communism. The provocative demonstrations will not be limited to shooting down the Sukhois of the unappetizing Qaddafi. There are more immediate targets—in the "American lake" (Central America and Cuba) and, through America's South African proxy, in Angola and Namibia, as the apartheid butchers increasingly take their rightful place in the "free world" as the U.S. government shifts over from "human rights" hypocrisy to ever more overt Cold Warriorism. And let's



not forget the continual Israeli provocations in the Near East. Any one of these "demonstrations" could be the beginning of World War III.

The American bourgeoisie has displayed a special bloodlust over Afghanistan, gloating that this is the first time U.S.-supplied weapons have been used to kill not just Russian-armed or "Russian-inspired" insurgents, but actual Russian soldiers. Afghanistan, where a Russian-backed left-nationalist/modernizing regime confronted a reactionary insurgency fueled by superstition and backwardness and symbolized by bloody attacks on anyone trying to teach girls to read, became a hot spot of the Cold War. When the Soviet Union intervened militarily to support its ally against the CIA-equipped rebel tribesmen, we raised the slogan: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan Peoples!"

Every significant aspect of international politics is now conditioned by the Russian question. In the sporadic protest activism ignited over El Salvador, we have been the only current to raise the Russian question while the popular-frontists sought desperately to evade the central international questions. The recent spate of bourgeois war-mongering against El Salvador/Nicaragua/Cuba underlines our insistence that "Defense of the USSR/Cuba Begins in El Salvador." But not only there.

It is in Poland that Reagan sees the best possibility to realize his revanchist appetites toward the Soviet Union by rolling back the social and economic gains of the post-war transformation of Eastern Europe carried out as a "cold" process by the Russian army in the wake of the defeat of Nazi Germany. The Polish crisis is seen as well as a choice opportunity for the U.S. ruling class to finally slough off the effects of "Vietnam syndrome" with an aggressive propaganda campaign to refurbish the discredited slogans of the Cold War ("free trade unions") and enlist the American people in an anti-Communist crusade. The participation of the U.S. labor tops, who work hand-in-glove with the CIA from Chile to Portugal, lends "working-class" cover to this effort to galvanize popular support for the sinister plans of imperialism.

### Evolution of the Polish Crisis

With its first Congress this September, Solidarność consolidated on a counterrevolutionary program. In the face of this threat we protested: "Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution! No Capitalist Restoration in Eastern Europe!" And we warned that "the creation of a 'democratic' Poland subservient to Reagan/Haig on the Western border of the USSR would bring much closer the dreadful prospect of anti-Soviet nuclear holocaust" (*WV* No. 289, 25 September 1981).

In Poland the crisis of revolutionary leadership is registered in the disastrous circumstance that finds the bulk of the working class embarking on a counterrevolutionary course behind the clericalist/nationalist/pro-imperialist Solidarność. At bottom this agonizing situation is one of the great crimes of Stalinism. As we wrote in the introduction to our Poland pamphlet:

"Certainly it is not our job to apologize for the Stalinist rulers who have disorganized the Polish economy, capitulated to the church and smallholding peasantry, lorded it over the working class with bureaucratic



Mark Meyer

**Young Russian soldier guards Soviet World War II memorial.**

privileges which mimic the inequities of capitalist society, alienated the intelligentsia and youth, fostered nationalism and every kind of backward ideology, not least anti-Semitism, and turned 'Communism' into a curse word.... But it is very much our job to seek to rally the working class in Poland and internationally behind the defense of the historically progressive socialized property in Poland, all the more so since the discredited Stalinists, manifestly cannot. The call for 'communist unity against imperialism through political revolution,' first raised by the Spartacist tendency at the time of the Sino-Soviet split, acquires even greater urgency as the Polish crisis underlines the need for revolutionary unity of the Polish and Russian workers to defeat U.S. imperialism's bloody designs for bringing Poland into the 'free world' as a club against the USSR, military/industrial powerhouse of the deformed workers states."

From the beginning of the confrontation between Solidarność and the Polish Stalinist government we saw that it was a situation which (if not frozen by restoration of bureaucratic order by the Russian army) had to go either in the direction of political revolution or toward counterrevolution under the dominance of clerical Polish nationalism, inspired and abetted by imperialism. In the absence of a Trotskyist vanguard in Poland and given the influence of the Catholic clergy and Pilsudskiite reactionaries, we were far from sanguine about the probable outcome.

By the spring of 1981, Solidarność had enrolled the bulk of the Polish working class, including a significant portion

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of the Stalinist party, as well as numerous non-proletarian elements. We said that in this circumstance a Russian military intervention "would in the best case freeze that political differentiation necessary for the only progressive solution to the Polish crisis: workers political revolution."

By the end of the summer of near chaos and economic collapse, the clerical nationalist program of Solidarność, always implicit, came to the fore. Solidarność' first Congress issued the call for "free trade unions," the notorious battle cry of Cold War anti-Communism, throughout Eastern Europe, entering the Cold War on the imperialist side. When the union opened its office at Albert Shanker's "State Department socialist" headquarters in New York, we threw up a spirited demonstration against the threat of bloody counterrevolution.

Poland is a litmus test for the party's rightists. In this section, impulses to flinch tended to be posed as excessive worry about world reaction to a Russian invasion, with the implication that it might not be worth the popularity cost. This view elevates the strengthening of anti-Soviet moods in American petty-bourgeois rad-lib circles to the same plane as the historic defeat which restoration of capitalism in Poland would be for the international working class. In any event, the class struggle in each country has its own dynamic. British workers will not come to love Thatcher because of Poland. In fact, while our Poland line will send our immediate opponents into Stalinophobic spasms and isolate us somewhat in the U.S., there is no reason to assume its universal unpopularity. Particularly in countries with a mass Stalinist base and a traditional antagonism to the church among advanced workers (Italy and France in particular), our line may give us some dramatic opportunities for intervention.

Anti-Americanism abroad is not anti-imperialism. The renewed Cold War has produced a growing nationalist-pacifist response in Europe. The Western European "peace" movements reflect the renewed inter-imperialist rivalries and the special brand of anti-Sovietism championed by the social democrats. In this context it is particularly important for any iSt section to raise the

Russian question with particular attention to its own ruling class. As the SL/Britain put it in its national conference document: "We must at all times seek a cutting edge in our Soviet defensist propaganda against our own bourgeoisie—the main enemy is at home."

Anti-American propaganda elsewhere is pretty cheap. To say, "the defense of the USSR begins in El Salvador" in an American demonstration has an impact. To say it in Australia is easy, and can be a way of avoiding the sharpest possible angle against social-democratic patriotism. In Australia the defense of the Soviet Union begins in Alice Springs. In Germany it begins with Berlin and the revolutionary reunification of Germany. In Europe in general it begins at the Vistula.

The Russian question will be the key to revolutionary regroupments in Europe. The social democrats are on the rise, typified by Mitterrand's electoral victory in France, Papandreou's in Greece and the growth of the Benn forces in the British Labour Party. The social democratization of the Communist parties, under the banner of "Eurocommunism," parallels this growth. The European United Secretariat (Usec) has tailed these developments from the outset. Having fulsomely embraced the popular-front "Union of the Left" in France, the Usec has become a less-and-less-left tail on social democracy. The line shift from equivocation to outright anti-Sovietism on Afghanistan was certainly dictated by Usec appetites for outright liquidation into the social-democratic parties.

## Poland and Cold War II

[15 April 1982 Reagan saw in the Polish crisis not only the best opportunity yet to roll back the post-war social transformation in East Europe, but also the perfect cause to win liberal opinion in the U.S. and social-democratic opinion in West Europe to a renewed crusade against "Communist totalitarianism." It is therefore important to place the Polish crisis in its global context and in particular to emphasize that Washington's support to Solidarność is an integral part of its efforts to weld into an anti-Soviet alliance the most despised and repressive forces in the world.

In the name of countering "the export of revolution" to El Salvador, American war materiel and "advisers" are propping up a kill-crazy junta, while its military cadre are being trained on U.S. bases. The racist apartheid regime of South Africa has become a central part of "the free world" in attacking Angola with weapons in part supplied by Israel. In Afghanistan the CIA is arming feudalist cutthroats who pray to Mecca five times a day to keep their women enslaved. And then there's that all-but-forgotten cause of "the free world": Pol Pot's Kampuchea—which made Stalin's Gulag look like a country club—backed by the U.S. against Soviet-allied Vietnam. Washington's support to Pol Pot is but one aspect of its alliance with the anti-Soviet fanatics ruling China, the main backers of the Khmer Rouge.

As in the 1939-40 Russo-Finnish war, for example, Western imperialist spokesmen used the Polish crisis to evoke the spectre of an aggressive "Soviet imperialism" bent on subjugating the "free peoples" of Europe. In large part because Solidarność' power bid was suppressed by the Polish army, it did not produce the anticipated outbreak of

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**"Solidarność:  
Polish Company  
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anti-Soviet agitation in West Europe. Only in France were there mass demonstrations, orchestrated by the social-democratic Mitterrand government, against General Jaruzelski's counter-coup. And even in France these anti-Soviet mobilizations were overwhelmingly petty-bourgeois in social composition.

Viewed in its international context, had the Soviet Union been forced to intervene militarily against Solidarność, this would have been the reluctant response of the Kremlin bureaucracy to endless imperialist provocations in the context of capitalist economic pressure and military encirclement. The real danger of Kremlin treachery was that the Russian bureaucrats might have sold Poland to the German bankers in a contemporary version of the Stalin-Hitler pact.

We are convinced that given a genuine revolutionary Marxist alternative, the Polish working masses can be broken from the intoxication with Pilsudski's memory, Wojtyla's Vatican and Reagan's America that marked the eruption of Solidarność. As we wrote shortly after Jaruzelski's crackdown:

"A tremendous political/psychological shakeup has taken place in Poland. Suddenly Polish society has been arrested, just plain stopped. But the repression has not gone so deep as to prevent the emergence of an underground opposition.... Now is the time to start building educational and propagandistic cells of a Trotskyist vanguard to defend and extend the historic gains of socialized property, inherited from the October Revolution, by ousting the usurpers who undermine them and crushing those who would destroy them."

—"What Next for Poland?" *Workers Vanguard*  
No. 298, 5 February

We do not, as do the Marcyites, regard Soviet military intervention always and everywhere as progressive, as if Brezhnev's armed forces carried the October Revolution in their baggage cars. Thus, we opposed Soviet military

intervention in Berlin in 1953 and Hungary in 1956 against proletarian uprisings which had the potential to institute soviet democracy. We also oppose Soviet military aid to reactionary regimes such as Sadat's Egypt formerly and Mengistu's Ethiopia presently, which use this as a means to suppress the working masses of these countries, to pursue reactionary wars of territorial aggrandizement, and in the case of Ethiopia to fight genocidal campaigns against its many national and ethnic minorities. Today munitions plants built by the Soviet Union for Sadat are being used to equip Afghan "freedom fighters" for killing Red Army soldiers (so as to pretend they are captured weapons). Further, even when the Soviet Union does intervene militarily in a progressive cause, it is often to sabotage victory over the forces of reaction in order to strangle social revolution, as was most clearly demonstrated in the Spanish Civil War.

Nevertheless, even in their stupid, conservative defense of their own narrow, nationalistic interests against imperialism, the Kremlin bureaucracy is sometimes forced to aid the liberation of the world's toiling masses. Soviet military aid to North Vietnam, although utterly niggardly, was still critical in enabling it to defeat U.S. imperialism. Another instance was the 1975 Soviet/Cuban intervention in Angola, which prevented the former Portuguese colony from being reconquered by a U.S.-backed South African invasion. Likewise, in Afghanistan we hailed the Red Army intervention as key to breaking the grip of feudal backwardness and imperialist domination over this country, laying the basis for social revolution. Here we demanded: Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!

Indicative of the continuing authority of the October Revolution is that Reagan must cast every struggle for

*continued on next page*

social justice around the world as a Soviet plot, even as in the case of El Salvador where the crime of the Moscow (and Havana) Stalinists consists in their unwillingness to arm the leftist insurgents. The economic and military power of the Soviet Union will be placed fully in the service of social liberation only when the USSR is restored once again to its rightful place as a bastion of international communism through proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy.]

### Once Again on Iran

The iSt slogan of "Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!" in Iran has been powerfully vindicated. In this country the pro-mullah Iranian students (as well as cynical American leftists), who claimed support to Khomeini was a smart "tactic," have retreated in horror now that they got what they called for and found it to be an endless succession of mass executions of their co-thinkers and relatives. Our perspective for workers revolution in Iran, based on independent proletarian mobilization against the shah and the mullah-led anti-communist, anti-woman, anti-minority "movement," noted some striking similarities between absolutist Iran and czarist Russia ("combined and uneven development," "the prison house of peoples," etc.). All those who out of the most corrupt opportunism allowed the mullahs to consolidate power unopposed as the alternative to the widely despised shah share responsibility for the present bloodbath.

### III. Reaganism: The Economy and Labor

The fingers poised over firing buttons of multi-million-dollar hardware belong to the dope-smoking high-school dropouts of the volunteer army. But what has the U.S. bourgeoisie really frightened is Reagan's plans to "finance" a \$1.5 trillion war budget by trimming domestic social programs while lowering taxes. This program is so

obviously absurd that Wall Street has been shuddering toward panic ever since it was realized that Reagan seemed more or less serious about it.

Reagan is heading for war without seriously trying to put the country on war footing: no one's son will be drafted, no one will have to sacrifice, no one will have to die. On the economic front, this is the Republican version of the "guns and butter" policy of Johnson and Nixon in Vietnam, a policy which in large measure caused the inflationary spiral of the past decade. By way of contrast, in both World War II and the Korean War the government took the necessary measures of price control, heavy taxation, maximum mobilization. The U.S. accordingly emerged relatively financially sound.

The problem for the U.S. bourgeoisie is, at bottom, political. From Wall Street to Main Street, the majority of Americans show no sign of willingness to pay for Reagan's war. Perhaps more telling, Reagan and his band of fanatics do not demand hard sacrifices for fear of explicit popular rejection.

Thus for the capitalists, the war objective is incompatible with their economic objectives. These are: (1) to reverse the collapse in the growth of industrial productivity following the 1974-75 world slump, and (2) to reduce the inflation rate, which had topped 20 percent a year in the winter/spring of 1980. Reagan's economic policies cannot work, even on their own terms. He has opted to seek military superiority at the price of inflation and overall industrial obsolescence. Despite unprecedented cuts in key social programs, the Reagan budget remains highly inflationary. This is attested to on Wall Street, not only by the stated opinions of its most intelligent spokesmen but more significantly by the exceptionally high interest rates.

The U.S. has entered a recession, now officially declared by Reagan. There is some indication that the administration, desiring to dampen inflation, welcomes this. In the longer term, the impact of military buildup (combined with cuts in nominal tax rates) is likely to produce inflationary stagnation, with extreme unevenness between sectors and regions. Certain industries (armaments, oil

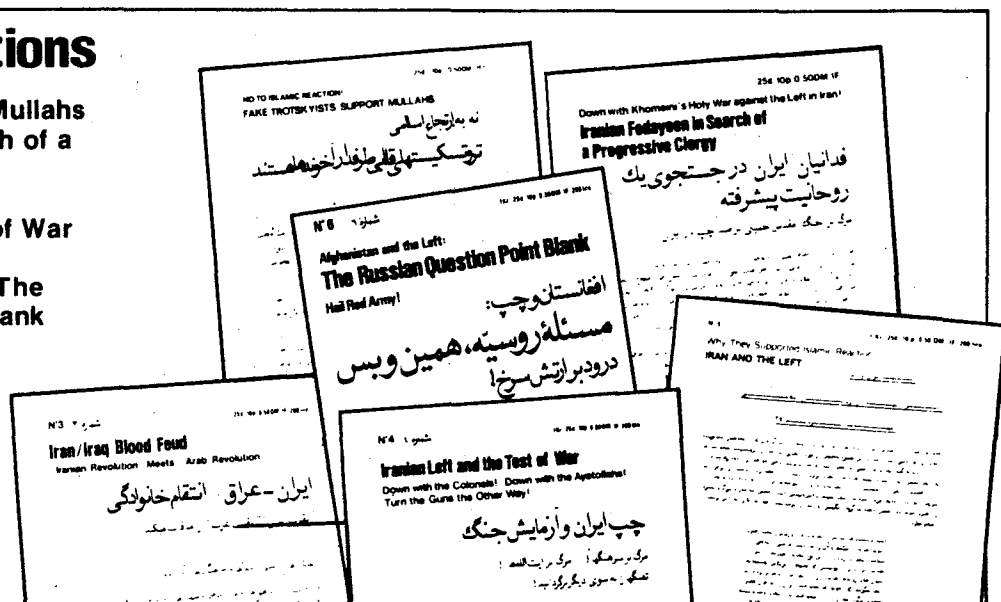
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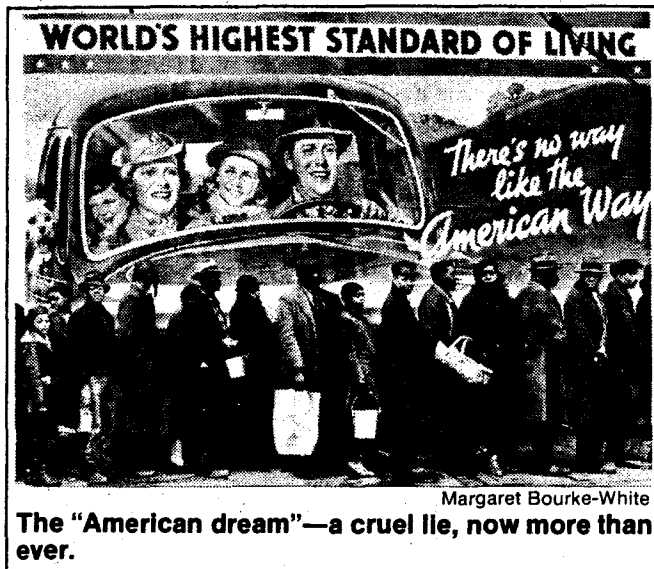
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drilling) will be or already are booming. Others (auto, housing construction) will stay at near-depression levels.

Not surprisingly, liberal Democrats and Republican "gypsy moths" are regrouping around the common-sense proposition that "Reaganomics" is ruining the economy and will cause severe social dislocation. But with all wings of the bourgeoisie committed to anti-Soviet military build-up, there is no significant "peace movement" as there is in Western Europe. Mainstream Democrats and labor leaders are still trying to push their own version of guns and butter. The AFL-CIO opposes the social spending cuts but supports the military build-up. They simply propose to finance both priorities by wildly inflationary spending tempered with wage controls, i.e., the policies of the last year of the Carter administration in spades.

The question of the Soviet Union is posed not only by Reagan's direct military threats, but also because the developing class-collaborationist anti-Reagan mood has an explicit or implicit anti-Soviet thrust as well. The defense of the USSR is the cutting edge of our propaganda against popular-frontist opposition to Reagan. It is what distinguishes us from the reformists and centrists who focus on the budget cuts alone, implicitly accepting the need for anti-Soviet military buildup, if only at a lower level. The international class line draws the class line at home.

### For Workers' Action to Bring Reagan Down!

The PATCO strike was the first major confrontation between Reagan and the labor movement. More important than this marginal craft union itself was the effect of Reagan's union-busting on labor consciousness. Our basic demand, "Labor: Shut Down the Airports!", presented the strategy to win the strike and exposed the sabotage of the bureaucrats who made not one concrete gesture to shut down the scab operations at the airports in support of the air controllers. Instead, the bureaucrats launched an empty "don't fly" campaign as an alibi, and the reformists applauded politely. But as we said in *WV*: "Any union president worth his salt would have taken the first plane home to pull his union out the day the strike began"

("Bureaucrats and Boycotts," *WV* No. 288, 11 September 1981).

The September 19 "Solidarity Day" demonstration, the largest workers demonstration in U.S. history, was called by a brittle and frightened AFL-CIO bureaucracy in an intended effort to breathe some life into the ailing Democratic Party. But efforts by the labor tops (who clearly named the demonstration in honor of the counterrevolutionary Solidarność) to hold an anti-Soviet pro-Democratic Party rally were not successful.

The 500,000 workers who showed up in Washington came to protest Reaganite union-busting and social reaction. There was a near total absence of overt anti-communist sentiment and we found real openness to leftists. Indicative of this was the sale of over 8,000 copies of *Workers Vanguard* that day, the highest one-day sales total in our history.

Attendance at the march would have been much higher except for the sabotage of the labor bureaucracy. Missing were hundreds of thousands of heavy industrial workers, largely black and urban, from the big Midwestern industrial plants. Fearing this militant, volatile and powerful layer of the labor movement, the bureaucrats were half-hearted about mobilizing these workers, providing only token numbers of buses and trains to carry them to Washington.

Intervening in this circumstance where we could, we attempted unsuccessfully to mobilize the workers to force the unions to provide more buses. However, as we noted in *WV*, a centrally-organized communist propaganda group of several thousand rooted in the unions would have organized several hundred thousand such workers to come to Washington on our buses, carrying our placards, "Fight for Workers Rights! Build a Workers Party! Smash Reagan!" thereby making ourselves felt as a force in our own right in the labor movement.

Thus, September 19 poses very sharply a number of tasks for the SL. Our massive sales at "Solidarity Day" along with greater difficulty we have recently experienced in selling our paper on campuses may indicate a return to a more class-differentiated radicalism in which workers are more open to revolutionary politics and students less so, reflecting a section of the petty bourgeoisie being pulled behind Reagan.

In areas such as Detroit and the Bay Area where we have substantial numbers of contacts in the plants and/or a significant subscription base among industrial workers, *WV* readers' clubs can serve as a useful tool for education and recruitment.

More important, we must reverse the trend toward diminished industrialization. It is necessary to strive to create the norm for communist organizations—fractions concentrated in the strategic heavy industries and in unions central to the political life of their cities. In developing industrial fractions, branches should, while concentrating on strategic industries, strive for a pattern of diversification in important unionized companies. This will protect the branch's financial base in periods of economic contraction. And it will put the party in touch with wider sectors of the proletariat and labor movement and enhance the party's ability to intersect a labor upsurge in any given region.

Our trade-union work in the coming period will be trade-

*continued on next page*



Workers Vanguard

**Detroit's blacks  
face second Great  
Depression.**

union work in the Reagan years. The American working class, hobbled by its craven union bureaucracy, is far from smashed. Even the sobering prospect of "the PATCO treatment," backed up by the recollection of demoralizing retreats of the past several years, cannot inevitably postpone a "fightback" by the powerful American working class. September 19, which showed at least an openness toward pro-union socialists, and the dramatic increase of the sales of our literature more generally over the recent months testify to the political motion at the base of the unions and especially among black workers.

### Reagan Reaction and Black Struggle

[15 April 1982 With the election of Klan-endorsed Reagan, blacks recognized that they had a declared enemy as head of the American state. Reagan ran on a program that *promised* to finance his anti-Soviet arms buildup *principally* out of the hides of black people by cutting the social programs that they were particularly dependent upon. This was to be the racist cure-all for economic problems, although it was not for want of trying that it failed. It's idiotic to believe that enough money can be squeezed out of food stamps and Aid to Dependent Children to launch more than about one Trident submarine.

But if the cutbacks in school lunches and welfare are not enough for his purposes, the rollback of black rights *is* an integral part of Reagan's program to roll back the gains of the October Revolution. No wonder the racist terrorists in brown shirts and white sheets endorsed Reagan's program and offered to march in his inaugural spectacle. Reagan's anti-Soviet war frenzy abroad breeds racist terror at home as demonstrated by the growth of the KKK/Nazis.

Black people have never shared the Cold War anti-communist and anti-Soviet sentiment. Now Reagan has *directly* linked the defense of black rights with the defense of the social gains of October. Nowhere is this clearer internationally than over southern Africa. Reagan can hardly have a black liberal front man like Andrew Young

as he embraces the apartheid rulers of Pretoria in his efforts to forge an anti-Soviet alliance out of the most unsavory and repressive regimes in the world. Blacks especially compare Reagan's fulsome support to Polish Solidarność with his openly backing a regime which deprives the black majority of every elementary right.

That blacks are in general opposed to Washington's anti-Soviet Cold War was highlighted by the Polish crisis. While enthusiasm for the pro-Western Solidarność pervaded the white rad-lib milieu, the gut-level response of blacks to the "freedom for Poland" agitation was revulsion at the hypocrisy not only of Reagan but also the bourgeois media and ruling establishment generally. For example, the Harlem-based *Amsterdam News*, one of the most important black establishment papers, ran an editorial, "Why Cry for Poland?" Therefore we seek to generate propaganda (e.g., around southern Africa) linking the oppression of blacks to the Russian question.

Reagan's election demonstrated not only the felt bankruptcy of liberal Keynesian economics, but also the *reversibility* of the democratic gains blacks made through the civil rights struggles of the late 1950s-early 1960s. Great Society welfare programs and civil rights legislation, which left untouched the basic racist character of American society, were steadily eroded throughout the 1970s, including under the "life ain't fair" Democratic administration of Jimmy Carter. Congress is now openly ruled by Southern racists with antebellum worldviews, who dream about abolishing the 14th and 15th Amendments as well as the Voting Rights Act.

The Spartacist League has always supported democratic gains which, no matter how minimal (like busing), were steps toward black equality. We thus opposed the defeatist despair of black nationalists who accepted the segregated character of American society as unchangeable. We counterposed *revolutionary integrationism* to both liberal reformism and separatism. This perspective is based in modern times on the fact that American capitalism has not only segregated blacks as a caste at the bottom of society,

but has also integrated them into the strategic sections of the industrial proletariat, which has the power to overthrow this racist, exploitative system. As opposed to partial and reversible amelioration of racial oppression, genuine black equality requires socialist economic planning under the proletarian dictatorship.

While blacks are deeply hostile to Reagan, they continue to support, however passively and unenthusiastically, the Democratic Party. In the 1980 elections white workers split their vote about evenly between Reagan and Carter, while 90 percent of black workers who voted pressed the lever for the Democratic candidate, despite the fact that under "ethnic purity" Carter busing was virtually abolished, social programs were curtailed and fascist terrorists grew and grew bolder. In the absence of any independent proletarian socialist alternative, blacks facing the Reagan years may strengthen their view that the Democrats represent a "lesser evil" and may again be enlisted as foot soldiers in a reformed liberal/labor/minorities coalition, the American version of the popular front. But if blacks view the Democratic Party as a "lesser evil," they see it as just that—nothing more. They have *no positive belief* in liberal reformism such as existed to some extent under Roosevelt's New Deal, Kennedy's New Frontier and the beginnings of Johnson's Great Society. Breaking the most combative section of the working class, the black proletariat, from the Democrats is key to our perspective of labor action to bring down Reagan.

The prospect blacks face in Reagan's America is typified by desperate ghetto dwellers arrested for hunting rabbits in the parks and empty lots of Chicago's South Side, an unemployed black in south Michigan shot to death by a supermarket guard for stealing meat to feed his family, a black activist arrested in Mississippi by a veritable armored battalion and railroaded into jail without the right of counsel, a local college football star in Los Angeles found hanged in his prison cell after being arrested for a traffic violation. However, blacks are only getting the worst of what Reagan is meting out to *every* sector of the population save the keyholders to the Fortune 500 boardrooms (and even many of them are not faring very well). In busting a union of a section of the white labor aristocracy, the air traffic controllers, Reagan demonstrated he is going to treat any workers who "get out of line" in his terms like

black "troublemakers."

Faced with this open challenge, the union movement responded last September 19th with what was not only the largest labor demonstration in American history, but also the most racially integrated. One need only compare the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Day with the 1963 march on Washington. The mass of black workers marched proudly with their unions, not with the small contingents from the civil rights and other black organizations. We sold *WV* to a broad cross section of the march, but a majority of names to contact came from blacks, indicating the possibility of recruiting workers, especially black workers, directly to the vanguard party.

During the sectoralist 1960s the voices of ordinary black workers, who recognized in their unions the main defense against capitalist exploitation, were often drowned out by communalist and nationalist demagogues. On September 19th these workers got the chance to express their deep-felt hatred for the racist rulers. Especially given the manifest impotence of the traditional civil rights organizations, like the NAACP and Southern Christian Leadership Conference, not to speak of the out-of-work poverty hustlers around the National Black Independent Political Party, black workers will rally to the trade unions insofar as they oppose, even in a symbolic way as on September 19th, Reagan reaction. Yet faced with the wretched, racist leadership of the AFL-CIO, it is inconceivable that blacks can regard the presently constituted labor movement as a champion of democratic rights specifically for blacks (e.g., against police brutality, for school integration and voting rights). While Reagan has indeed killed sectoralism à la the 1960s, black workers still retain a race-caste plebeian political outlook. The transformation of this characteristic outlook of black working people into a proletarian socialist worldview remains a key task for the American revolutionary vanguard.

Reagan's crushing of the air controllers union turned every worker who participated in the September 19th Washington march, black and white, into a "brother." But that Reagan did so with impunity, without resistance from any other section of the American union movement, added to the demoralization of organized labor. The subsequent wave of givebacks, especially in Midwest auto, has deepened the widespread sense that nothing can be done through traditional trade-union struggle. For a black worker in depressed Detroit, right now the dictatorship of the proletariat looks a lot more realistic than a militant and effective UAW. In part this represents a growing re-examination of trade-union economism which appears particularly absurd in the face of the rubble that was Dodge Main. But it also reflects a mood of defeatism engendered by a bureaucracy that would rather die than fight.

The wrecker's ball knocking down Dodge Main also signified the slow destruction of the black proletariat of Detroit with its militant tradition of labor and black struggle. Where the bourgeoisie cannot cripple the working class economically, it hopes to terrorize it into submission. In the depressed Midwest the fascists have been able to raise their banner provocatively. Our strategy of labor/black mobilizations to crush the fascists seeks to interdict them in urban, industrial centers where our modest forces

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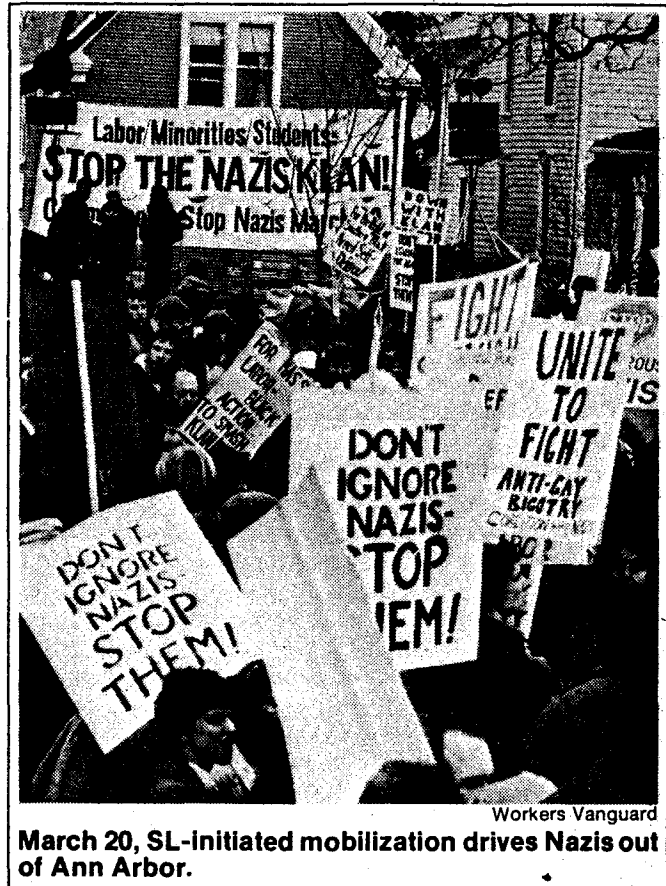
Blacks' deep subjective hostility to Reagan combined with increasingly desperate economic conditions is creating enormous pressures for explosive ghetto struggles around issues such as police brutality, Klan/Nazi provocations, evictions and cutbacks in minimal social services and welfare programs. We have already seen struggles on the order of the 1980 sit-in to prevent the closing of Harlem's Sydenham Hospital. For 11 days militant blacks occupied the hospital, supported at times by as many as 2,000 outside, until the action was broken by an army of racist mayor Koch's cops. The present period could easily see a wave of similar actions, perhaps of far greater magnitude, throwing up new black organizations and leading to a new black "movement."

The class differentiation that Reagan reaction has generated in American society as a whole has expressed itself in a certain racial differentiation among petty-bourgeois student youth. On the campuses we have witnessed a certain revival of black nationalism in its utopian-sectarian forms (e.g., pan-Africanism), a development conditioned by the absence of significant black struggle. This is not the militant nationalism of Malcolm X and the Panthers, which however misguided involved a commitment to anti-racist struggle. Rather it is an academic nationalism which serves as an ideological escapism from the harsh realities of racist America. In part this kind of hermetic nationalism also reflects a fear of the growing climate of racist terror (e.g., the 1979 Greensboro massacre). However, an upsurge in black social struggle will certainly evoke the sympathy of many black students, radicalizing them and opening for us the prospect of significant recruitment from this stratum.

Our main competitor for recruiting black activists in this period will not be the campus-based nationalists but rather the Communist Party with its depth and breadth of black cadre, its roots in the trade unions and its continuous involvement in black community work. A particular cutting edge against the CP's reformism is our line on labor/black defense against the fascists counterposed to the Stalinists' traditional call to "ban the Klan," a demand which appears simply ludicrous in Reagan's America. The CP has preferred to concentrate its black work on lobbying against Reagan's budget cuts, where it can make common cause with liberal Democrats and local bourgeois politicians concerned with preserving their federally financed pork barrels.

Conversely, our most important successes in what can be broadly defined as black work have been through the application of our policy of labor/black defense against the fascists (Detroit, November 1979; San Francisco, April 1980; Ann Arbor, March 1982). We have also taken the lead in seeking to oust the racist editor of Detroit's Wayne State campus paper and have been the principal socialist organization involved in the protests against the Ron Settles killing in Los Angeles and the police killing of Robert Guy, Jr., a black militant who headed up the Battle Creek, Michigan Coalition to End Police Brutality.

Our greatest opportunity to recruit black workers has centered in Detroit. Yet this opportunity has not been exploited due in large part to almost a decade of our trade-union work there often failing to fight sharply against economism and tailism. This trade-union work tended



March 20, SL-initiated mobilization drives Nazis out of Ann Arbor.

toward a "two-stage" conception of recruitment: first to narrow shop-floor issues, and only later to the full program. In reality it was the KKK, a matter of life and death for blacks in Detroit, which won us a hearing among a layer of older black workers in the plants who had gone through the civil rights movement, the nationalist League of Revolutionary Black Workers and various black-bureaucrat-led formations.

Our initiative in driving two Klan-hooded foremen out of the key plant was followed by the successful labor/black mobilization in the aftermath of Greensboro against the threatened Klan "celebration," an action in which we stood down the liberal black mayor. The first mass labor mobilization against the Klan in decades, this created considerable political capital for us in Detroit. However, a politically passive branch managed to dissipate much of that authority. Indicative that our political capital has been only partially dissipated was the warm response our campaign to oust the racist editor of Wayne State's *South End* received in the plant. The Wayne State campaign was carried out in the face of attempts at sabotage by the anti-Spartacists of the Revolutionary Workers League, which blocked with anti-communist black nationalists. This capitulation to black nationalist anti-communism was of a piece with these centrists' support, at the same time, to imperialist anti-Communism over Poland. The spectacular success of the March 20th Stop the Nazis mobilization in Ann Arbor, when 2,000 militant protesters almost got the fascists and did drive them out of town, should greatly enhance our political authority among advanced black workers in the Detroit area. Our commitment to reinforce



the Midwest in general and Detroit in particular is an expression of our commitment to win over this layer of advanced black workers, a section of whom must be integrated into the revolutionary vanguard party.

Of the four major tasks posed in the 1971 "Transformation Memorandum," the development of a black cadre has proved to be the most lengthy and difficult to achieve. Yet today in almost all areas of party work—trade-union fractions, the youth organization, branch executives—black comrades are playing leading roles. This represents a qualitative transformation. To be sure, our black cadre is quite thin and the racial composition of our leadership still does not correspond to the exceptional and strategic weight blacks will have in the American socialist revolution.

One particular weakness remains the development of black writers, a task directly linked to the perspective of a black journal as a step toward a black section of the party. In part this is a reflection of the non-existence of a black movement for which such propaganda would be a tool of intervention. The absence of a distinct black movement also accounts for the only episodic functioning of black fractions in those branches where we have concentrations of black comrades. At present black work is by and large organizationally integrated into the other main forms of party work (trade-union and campus fractions, opponent work). This situation could, however, change very rapidly. In any case, we must generate more propaganda around the black question and must develop black propagandists who will be regular contributors to our existing press as well as the future writers and editors of a party black journal.

All of the manifold contradictions of Reagan's America bear most heavily and nakedly on the black working class and poor, pointing toward a new upsurge of black struggle. Our intransigent hostility to U.S. militarism and imperialism, our line of labor/black defense against the fascists, our consistent and militant defense of democratic rights for blacks and our perspective of revolutionary integrationism should make us a powerful pole of attraction in a period of black radicalization.]

### Recruiting Against the Popular Front

When Reagan took office we projected a resurgence of pro-Democratic Party popular-frontism. Yet September 19 shows that despite the urgings of the reformists and centrists the labor bureaucracy has been unable to accomplish this shift yet. Carter and his party remain discredited. Moreover, to compete with Reagan the Democratic Party has shifted far to the right. Further, the Democratic Party and its labor-faker supporters are every bit as anti-Soviet as Reagan, making it impossible for them to mount a credible opposition.

This is their point of vulnerability and our political opening. Reagan's austerity drive, his union-busting, his program of social reaction and racism are integral to his preparations for a third world war aimed at the USSR.

The American labor bureaucracy is brittle. Since the end of the McCarthy period its main tactic has been to suppress outbursts of class militancy. Given its close ties with the Democratic Party, the labor bureaucracy cannot easily play the role of a safety valve to relieve the pressures of class struggle. At present there is an enormous political vacuum

in the labor movement between ourselves and the mainline bureaucracy and its social-democratic hangers-on. The New Left turn toward the working class, initiated in the early 1970s, has dissipated. The Maoists have disappeared as an effective force and the other ostensibly revolutionary organizations have simply become social-democratic appendages to or satellites of the labor tops.

Presently no wing of the union bureaucracy offers a credible alternative even on the level of economic militancy. Arnold Miller is a dirty word in the coalfields. The Sadlowski forces in steel have been defeated in their main base, Balanoff's District 31. The Machinists' Winpisinger, "labor party" rhetoric and all, was very visible in the breaking of the PATCO strike. Thus in an upsurge there is a good chance that polarization within the bureaucracy to produce a less discredited wing may be too little and too late to place itself directly at the head of motion from the base. Tactically this situation can provide dramatic openings for our socialist agitation, which are necessarily of brief duration before other, more massive forces quench such opportunities.

Where we have been able to maintain our fractions we  
*continued on next page*

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have in a number of instances found there is considerable support for our politics. This support has mainly been passive, expressed in voting for candidates who stand for union offices, running on our program. Some of these electoral campaigns have succeeded, giving the party friends who have gained valuable experience and augmented authority in the workers movement.

We aim to build communist fractions in the labor movement in order to implant our program in and give leadership to the working class. The task of our fraction in the labor movement is programmatic—to win the broadest support for the SL's program and to recruit militants to the SL.

However, in some fractions we have seen the growth of a sort of parliamentary cretinism in the trade-union arena, whereby the aim of the fractions becomes transformed into contesting for offices in union elections. Behind this perspective lurks a literary, social-democratic conception of politics—namely, that victory of the class-struggle forces in the labor movement is a piecemeal, gradual, cold process—a contention of ideas to be decided at the union ballot box.

Such a perspective can only isolate us from and earn the contempt of the revolutionary-minded workers who the fractions must find and recruit to the party. In many instances, e.g., the United Auto Workers, the union bureaucracy is conjuncturally so discredited, yet so entrenched, that proletarian revolution seems like a far more likely event than ousting the sellout union tops and installing a class-struggle leadership in power. This is particularly the case in Detroit where our union work is intimately linked to black work and the struggle to mobilize labor to crush Klan/Nazi terror. Given the weight of the UAW in that city, the fake lefts have capitulated to a perspective that everything must go through the UAW leadership and consequently that the job of the "left" is to force the UAW to the left. Parallel attitudes are shared by the British centrists and reformists towards the British Labour Party.

Our fractions must be alert to tactical openings and boldly seize the initiative for militant class-struggle action

when opportunities that permit the wide mobilization of the workers are present. The intervention of our friends in New York to protest a horrendous industrial accident is a good example.

While it is necessary to know when to be bold, it is also necessary to be cautious. We do not want to keep our comrades submerged for a prolonged period in a milieu that is deeply conservatizing and depoliticizing, but a factory is not a campus. A trade-union demonstration is not a PAM May 3rd. In the period prior to the New York City Labor Day demonstration, comrades had difficulty in making this distinction. The point was underlined by a proposal which would have put a key fraction into a direct confrontation with a powerful, entrenched bureaucracy. Such problems naturally arise with the creation of new fractions and will be resolved through political struggle, processes of natural selection and attrition.

To reiterate, trade-union work in the coming period will be trade-union work in the Reagan years. September 19 showed the promise of much greater working-class receptivity to our politics, centered on our call for "Workers' action to bring Reagan down!" However, as noted elsewhere in this document, our bourgeois opponents are not idle, but instead are preparing to suppress and repress the workers movement. In this regard, the single most important protection we have is our links to and the firm rooting of our organization in the labor movement.

Against the reformists and centrists, we base our trade-union work on the revolutionary program of Trotskyism:

"... the independence of the trade unions in the class sense, in their relations to the bourgeois state, can, in the present conditions, be assured only by a completely revolutionary leadership, that is, the leadership of the Fourth International. This leadership, naturally, must and can be rational and assure the unions the maximum of democracy conceivable under the present concrete conditions, but without the political leadership of the Fourth International the independence of the trade unions is impossible."

—"Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay"

The American unions today are a prime example of what Trotsky described as characteristic of the epoch of imperialist decay. Our struggle against the labor bureauc-

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Washington, D.C., March 27: Anti-Imperialist Contingent stands out as the only opposition to pro-Democratic Party popular frontism.

racy's functioning as agents of the capitalist state demands our vigorous opposition to the AFL-CIO's role as an adjunct of CIA/State Department imperialist policy from Latin America to Poland. The fight for labor's political independence from the state leads straight to our position, unique on the left, of opposing use of the capitalist courts against the union by "dissidents," "democracy" demagogues, disgruntled groups of black or women workers, etc. This fight is central to our program for the unions, from agitation for concrete union solidarity against Taft-Hartley and other union-busting laws to our propaganda for a workers party/workers government.

If the pressure building up at the base among those targeted by Reagan is not expressed in industrial militancy, it will be expressed elsewhere: in the growth of fascistic currents on the "fringe," in sharp polarizations among the petty bourgeoisie, in desperate ghetto explosions. If the union bureaucracy appears immobile at present, the social fabric remains rent with contradiction, from the top, where the bourgeoisie is far from united, to the bottom, where the black sub-proletariat will be literally starving and freezing this winter. In this context a socialist propaganda group posing a labor-led struggle against capitalist economic crisis, racial oppression and imperialist war should have a powerful appeal.

IV.

Organization and Recruitment

A continued high rate of recruitment does not depend on the issue of El Salvador. The bottom line for the drive was the "three whales" of contemporary Bolshevism. (1) "Build Picket Lines, Don't Cross Them," a reaffirmation of the elementary principles of trade unionism, acquires added force at a time when many workers, conscious of the anti-strike intransigence of the bosses and government, are

hesitant to strike in isolation but well aware of the boost a class-struggle victory for any group of workers would be to their own needs. (2) Our high political profile derives principally from our insistence that revolutionary opposition to Reagan reaction is inseparable from the Russian question: "Defend Cuba and the USSR!" (and now, "Smash Solidarność Counterrevolution!"). (3) A program to bring the power of the labor movement to bear to stop the rising line of race terror—"Smash Klan/Nazi Terror Through Labor/Black Defense!"—confronts the bourgeoisie's anti-communist drive at its fringe and indicates the strategy to successfully interdict the fascists from the major northern industrial centers.

The student population seems in its mass to be politically quietist, careerist and, in large measure, conservative to reactionary in their outlook. This does not mean we will not recruit students, though work at "backwater" campuses will have to be undertaken cautiously. It does mean that we expect a good proportion of our new recruits in this period to be young workers. The recent indications of openness toward our politics among workers and blacks must be consolidated into new contacts and recruits through energetic local work, systematic regional trailblazing and the effort to organize *WV* readers' circles among workers, thereby utilizing our fine press as a "collective organizer" in the best Leninist sense.

Working people, particularly blacks, feel pushed to the wall by Reagan's attacks and the economic crisis. We are in a period of Reagan reaction, but this is certainly not the 1950s, when the economy was fat, U.S. imperialism was the hegemonic world power and American leftists and union militants targeted by the witchhunt felt hopelessly isolated, irrelevant and defeated in advance. The present situation is characterized above all by instability. The Reagan "consensus" is under attack from all sides; the economy is in real trouble; the situation of minorities and the poor is desperate and explosive; fear of nuclear war is vivid and widespread. The discredited Democrats are singularly unsuited just now to play FDR and the ossified union bureaucracy is intimately associated with the bipartisan war drive.

This gives our line for labor-led struggle to defend the workers and oppressed—"For Workers' Action to Bring Reagan Down!"—a powerful appeal. It remains an open question how many individuals will feel goaded into raising

*continued on next page*

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their own "profile" in a period of Reagan reaction by hooking up with a small party of internationalist communists. A lot depends on cracking the no-struggle "strategy" of the union tops and winning even some defensive victories—something our small propaganda league can't do much to bring about. But in this situation of polarization, we will win at least "a few good communists" (in particular, good black communists) and in any case a pool of supporters who will look to us for leadership when they do go into action.

The recruitment drive has given us a real youth group, one with a higher rate of turnover certainly, but one that genuinely serves as a training ground for young revolutionists. In the previous period of membership stagnation, recruitment to the Spartacus Youth League (SYL) was generally linear, lengthy and literary. The results were, on the one hand, the layer of "clones" whose excessively literary values, egotism/cliquism and bloodless sense of politics were corrosive and, on the other, a level of political commitment and sophistication among youth members not greatly different from the level of the party membership. Now for the first time in a while we have a "generation gap."

If we do not transform the layers of new recruits into layers of young Trotskyists, we will lose them. Young comrades unable to see the connection between the issues which brought them around us and the long-haul Marxist aims of the group they joined will leave as easily as they entered.

Indeed, the recruitment of youth attracted to our "far-left" politics but essentially innocent of Marxism means that among new members we frequently encounter impulses toward an alien and counterposed political line, one which corresponds to the Narodnik current historically. Impatience, spontaneism and a penchant for self-gratifying verbal extremism may be understandable diseases of youth but their political incarnation is counterposed to the program of scientific socialism. It is our political responsibility to educate our members in the politics of the organization they joined, not least because the party as a whole can and will be victimized for the irresponsible statements of its newest candidate member.

Comrades are urged to study in particular "FBI Targets the Spartacist League," *WV* No. 151, 1 April 1977, for a discussion of what our line is and what it is emphatically not:

"...A revolutionary conjuncture in the U.S. will be defined by the fact of *dual power*. Most probably it will pose the choice between the democratic soviets of the working class and a tottering bonapartist dictatorship headed by a militarist... unencumbered by the trappings of a Congress.

"On the basis of historical probability in the future, the FBI wants us to plead guilty to 'advocacy' to 'overthrow the government' today. We are not able to. It is simply self-serving nonsense for the FBI to imply that the SL is planning a secret putsch against the U.S. government. Any organization that fits the FBI's conspiratorial definition would have to be a group of suicidal psychopaths."

## V.

### The U.S. Left Moves Right

After a decade of quiescence, the petty-bourgeois left had moved a long way even from the primitive radical

impulses of the New Left. With the rising line of anti-Sovietism and the onset of the Reagan years, this drift to the right has dramatically accelerated. Across the board our opponents, by various increments and quantum leaps, have so shifted to the right that by remaining politically stable we have become the very visible left opposition to pro-Democratic popular frontism in America.

The U.S. political terrain has become more "traditional" with the effective disappearance of Maoism, the increasing irrelevance of the SWP, the splintering of the Shachtmanoids and the end of a definable black movement. The Russian question draws the lines clearly. There is the "State Department socialist" complex, the Stalinist orbit, and us.

With the developing Washington-Peking axis and the decline of détente, Maoist anti-Sovietism pushed its adherents toward the right wing of the American political spectrum. Especially since the 1975-76 Angola war, where China lined up with the U.S. and South Africa, and then the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, the Maoists have suffered from an "antagonistic contradiction" between their opportunist appetite for a bloc with bourgeois liberalism and their anti-Soviet hawkishness.

For many years our major opponent, the reformist Socialist Workers Party is becoming increasingly politically irrelevant. After perpetually finding a "new radicalization" wherever they looked, sometime around August they belatedly noticed the Reagan election and seem to be finding it something of a shock.

The "Watersuit" showed both the full flowering of the SWP's parliamentarist/legalist appetites and a surprising absence of basic technical/administrative competence and thought. As we wrote in *WV*: "For the SWP, the trial is the finale of a long period of rightward-moving reformism.... Both the government's efforts to justify its surveillance of the SWP with charges of 'terrorism' and the SWP's attempts to show itself the very model of a tame electoralist party spell danger for the left" ("Reformism on Trial," *WV* No. 286, 31 July 1981).

At its last national convention the SWP completed its divorce in leadership and organization from the earlier party, for example from the SWP of the period of centrist degeneration under Dobbs/Kerry. The latest "age purge" removing from leadership those in the SWP cadre older than Barnes leaves the clique around Barnes exclusively

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beyond the size of minuscule sects. In the case of the virulently unstable Healyite Workers League, we were able to assist them on their trajectory all the way out of the left.

Thus for a number of years we have been in the enviable position of having no significant national group between us and the SWP claiming the mantle of Trotskyism. While it is a truism that a labor upsurge would likely benefit the reformist forces before the revolutionaries, an upsurge in which we are the only credible force to the left of the reformists could result in dramatic growth for our party.

But there are those who have also noticed this empty ideological space. In particular, the Sollenbergerite Revolutionary Workers League (RWL) is making a bid to fill it.

## VI. Internal Problems and the Threat of Repression

When we saw the Reagan years coming we knew we were going to have problems:

"We're expecting a rotten time with Reagan and the social climate in the country. So you're going to see political dives. I've mentioned a couple on the part of the so-called left. We're going to see some other stuff too, mainly a loss of nerve and a loss of will.... So we don't particularly welcome the coming political period. But we're going to use it to temper our cadre, and to find out who the nervous nellys are. There's something else. It's not all bleak. We're entering a strategically defensive period. But there are going to be opportunities. Every section of the oppressed is going to get it. We want to be cautious, but we don't want to have a policy of caution."

—"Facing the Reagan Years," *WV* No. 273,  
30 January 1981

Our heightened profile, Soviet defensism, international extension, increased weight on the U.S. left, and the fact that we make political trouble way out of proportion to our real weight and authority, mark us as a prime target for Reaganite reaction. And it is clear that the Reagan administration is in the process of a series of "unleashing" activities for the secret police.

Particularly with our aggressive campaign against counterrevolutionary threats in Poland, the SL/U.S. is marked as "Russia lovers" in an increasingly anti-Soviet period. The enemies of U.S. Cold War policies are branded according to the new coded vocabulary as "international terrorists" and Kremlin "surrogates" spreading KGB "disinformation." The code for us seems to be changing accordingly. Increasingly now the international bourgeois media refers to the SL as "pro-Soviet." Our banner in the recent British anti-nuclear demonstration was said by the *Wall Street Journal* (28 October 1981) to belong to "The Trotskyite" "pro-Soviet" group. And two major European papers characterized us with the same phrase: "American-founded pro-Soviet Spartacist group." No less a bourgeois force than the *Wall Street Journal* (29 September 1981) in a lead editorial described our anti-Solidarność picket as the sort of "dirty business" that must be stopped, ending with an unmistakable threat:

"... the American labor movement... remains a free and independent force pitting its weight against state power both in the U.S. and abroad. Its efforts on behalf of political freedom are thus significant. Anyone seeking to delegitimize its performance in this realm should be aware of just how serious an attack he is launching."

Heading into the Reagan years a number of cadre quit, a reflection both of the "conjuncture" and of the aging process (the latter being at bottom a lack of energy and a tendency for personal difficulties to become keener and more keenly felt). Some were prominent union oppositionists uneasily aware of their personal "high profile" in a period of virulent bourgeois anti-Sovietism. As well, those to whom politics seemed an interesting game necessarily find it to be a game for higher stakes now. The S.F. local exec on 13 February observed: "We note that the Reagan election and the resulting fear has caused a variety of latent deadbeats, dilettantes and rotten elements throughout the organization to erupt like so many pimples and exit from the party and revolutionary politics by committing indefensible acts."

Blacks continue to have the fewest illusions about the "American way of life" and are being thrust into the front lines of the struggle to bring down Reagan. The fight against the fascists is a key to this. As we wrote in *WV* (2 January 1981): "Many blacks see the connection between the rise of fascist terror across the country and the occupation of the White House by a certified right-winger." We have shown that labor can be mobilized to beat back the fascists. In San Francisco, where we initiated the successful ANCAN rally with the support of 22 Bay Area unions, the Nazis have not shown their face since. We should not be too modest about this.

In the depressed Midwest the fascists have been able to raise their banner provocatively recently as small bands of leftists in losing battles confront the KKK/Nazis, who are backed up by the cops. In a major industrial center, like Detroit, we long to see a dozen spindly punks in brown shirts taught a lesson they will not forget by thousands of workers.

## Fighting Repression

We can expect no buffer in the left milieu to stand between us and state repression. We have faced a series of attempted exclusions from demonstrations and meetings including frequent use of the police: in Chicago by the CP, in Washington by the Marcyites, in New York by CISPES et al., everywhere they can by the SWP. The reformists and centrists are more than willing to act as cops for the bourgeoisie when it comes to the Spartacist League. Their violence is but an echo of that being generated by the government.

At the May 30 El Salvador demonstration in Chicago, the CP, in league with the cops and FBI, excluded our contingent and set us up for possible attack by the notoriously brutal Chicago police, who staged a massive show of state force. Again in San Francisco at the September 27 protest against Duarte, the cops brutally beat demonstrators and, in the pages of the *Examiner*, claimed the SL (and the Avakianites) were troublemakers who had caused the violence.

Whereas whining about our democratic rights will not impede gangster attacks against us, we found that we earned respect that cascaded nationally for having taught the Marcyite bully boys a lesson in workers democracy on June 6 when they were repelled in trying to smash our NYC protest against their May 3 tactics.

We are resolved not to be quiet targets for state



repression. When college newspapers started regularly calling us "terrorists" and violent putschists; when we were slandered as arsonists at Wayne State, when major newspapers started taking a highly selective interest in us, we intensified our counteroffensive. As well as carefully documenting and protesting falsehoods in the press, we undertook direct court actions. We brought our energy and resources to bear to make certain we are not nameless, faceless nobodies who can be blown away in the dead of night. When we have been labeled in ways that set us up for government or night-riding attack, we have responded with all the resources—moral, legal, financial and political—that we can muster.

Our campaign around the initiation of a legal case against Secret Service seizure of CWA convention delegate and SL supporter Jane Margolis wrested a formal apology from the government and a \$3,500 federal check which Margolis turned over to her union. And while it is difficult to imagine the present Reagan regime handing such an apology to communists, the case can prove very valuable for the future.

When California attorney general Deukmejian issued an official report on "Organized Crime in California, 1979 (Part II—Terrorism)" naming us as purported left-wing criminal terrorists, we brought suit. Claiming our right to organize the party of the working class, we did not sue against the attorney general's list as such (a course which would have found us defending the Hell's Angels and various right-wing nut groups), but sued to get our name removed. This case, urgently necessary for our own protection against those who would hang a target around

our neck, should strike a chord in California and elsewhere among left-liberals, libertarians, unionists and blacks and others who feel threatened by Reagan reaction and the rise of new McCarthy-style witchhunters.

If this is a good time for radicalized youth, blacks and workers to join, it is a good time for the scared, the wavering, the psychologically retired to quit. Revolutionary leadership is tested also in periods of repression. Trotsky stressed in *Lessons of October* that passing such tests in turn generates possibly fatal conservative responses in more tumultuous times. But the experience of the Bolshevik Party also shows that a working cadre that preserves itself and functions under fairly severe conditions of repression is a tough cadre.

We are not yet even a small party. We are a working propaganda group with a regular press and a small implantation in the unions, seeking to grow. Our perspective is to build the vanguard nucleus which can grow through quantum leaps to the point that we can, when the bourgeoisie is deeply split and demoralized, come forward as America's last, best hope to lead our class to victory.

[condensed version]

—adopted by the  
Central Committee  
28 November 1981

—bracketed material adopted  
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## El Salvador...

(continued from page 24)

"Take San Salvador!" It wouldn't please Teddy Kennedy.

The reformists and liberals say they're for a "political solution" with the junta. What does that mean? You know in the American Civil War they had people who were for a "compromise" like that with the slave South. They called them "Copperheads." These were the "peace Democrats," and they had a saying describing these traitors to the Union cause: "A rattlesnake rattles, a viper hisses, an adder spits, a black snake whistles, a water snake blows but a copperhead just sneaks!" Sounds sort of like Jack London's definition of a scab, doesn't it? Why were they so hated? Well, just think what it would have meant for slavery if there had been a "political solution" with Jefferson Davis! It was necessary to win that civil war—there were fundamental questions at stake as in El Salvador today, and you have to take a side. Which side are you on, that's the basic question here.

I want to say a couple of words about Vietnam. Remember when radicals used to chant, "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, NLF is Gonna Win!" and Che Guevara's slogan "Two, Three, Many Vietnams!" Well, today the *ex*-radicals who are organizing the El Salvador protests are saying "No More Vietnams!" This slogan really tells the story of who they are—the equivalent of the Democratic Party "doves" of yesteryear. The pro-imperialist "doves," I should say, because what they object to about Vietnam is that it was a *losing* military adventure by the United States. That's what the Teddy Kennedys object to. And the reformists want to keep the El Salvador protests "ready for Teddy," just like they kept the Vietnam antiwar movement "clean for Gene" McCarthy. Well, we're revolutionaries. We have an opposite program. Our slogan is "Vietnam was a Victory—Two, Three, Many Defeats for Imperialism!"

Another point about Vietnam: the victory came in 1973-75 when they drove the American army and its Saigon puppets literally into the sea and they became boat people. But there was a "political solution" in Vietnam, the Geneva Accords of 1954. It was a "compromise." They divided the

country in half, leaving the South to the Duarte of the time—his name was Ngo Dinh Diem. And it took another 20 years and over a million dead in Indochina before they were able to drive the imperialists and the landlords and their corrupt torturing generals out. That "political solution" was a *betrayal* of the Indochinese revolution, and if it happens in El Salvador today, it won't be any different.

Now the same reformists and liberals object to our slogan, "Defense of Cuba and the USSR Begins in El Salvador." They want to duck the question of Russia at the very time that Haig is "drawing the line against Communism" on "America's doorstep." The U.S. is sending in Green Berets and CIA hit teams of gusano thugs; they're planning a blockade of Nicaragua and talking about mining the harbor in Havana—which could unleash a third world war, let's be clear about that. And these turkeys in CISPEs claim it's just a question of "self-determination," communism's got nothing to do with it! We as Trotskyists don't ignore the imperialists' Cold War drive—we oppose it, from El Salvador to Poland. Despite the Stalinist degeneration and deformation of the Soviet bloc, we defend it against imperialism. And we say exactly where we stand.

At bottom, on the issue of military victory, on defense of Cuba and Russia, it's the question of workers revolution. We're for it and they're against it. For example, the last argument that they give you is "the Salvadorans" are for a "political solution," so who are the Spartacists to object? Well, who are "the Salvadorans"? Are they FDR leaders who are sitting in Mexico or Washington, or are they the guerrillas out in the hills fighting to liberate their people. And I can name you one Salvadoran who was for a workers and peasants' victory. His name was Farabundo Martí, the Communist leader of the 1932 peasants uprising that the military butchers drowned in blood in the infamous *La Matanza*, or massacre. Today the FMLN guerrilla leaders usurp his name, but here's what Farabundo Martí called for in 1932:

"The Communist Party calls all poor workers and peasants of El Salvador to bloody struggle against the national bourgeoisie, who are unconditionally allied to Yankee imperialism."

That isn't exactly calling for a "negotiated settlement" with the junta! Can you imagine the CISPEs "doves" saying that today? No, they would denounce it as "ultra-leftism." The man was obviously a Spartacist plant in El Salvador! And by the way the Salvadoran revolutionary poet Roque Dalton wrote a poem called "Ultralefts" in honor of Martí which is very much to the point.

Why are the minor league capitalist politicians of the Salvadoran FDR opposition opposed to victory for what is supposedly their side? One of them, Rubén Zamora, told *Newsweek* that they opposed military victory because it would make the U.S. "completely hostile" and the "business community" would leave, making "pluralism" impossible. Well, he has a correct perception of what the consequences would be. It would threaten the possibility of a reformed capitalist system, without the death squads but with the army.

This week *New York Times* reporter Alan Riding reported that the opposition leaders are now ready for a negotiated settlement which would preserve the "institutionality" of the army. My god! In the first place, Marxists

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insurgents.

know that the officer corps is the armed fist of the capitalist state, and if it remains intact it will defend that state and crush you again. If you don't believe it, just look at what happened in Chile in 1973, where all the "constitutional" and "democratic" generals united to crush the workers movement. Besides which, the Salvadoran armed forces are something else again, they're run by kill-crazy psychopaths. It's like calling for a "political solution" with the Nazis while leaving the SS in place!

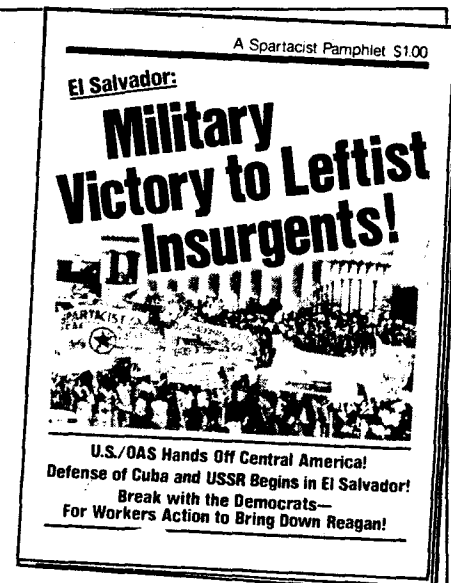
That brings me to the anti-communist exclusions, and there has been a series of them. First last May 3, PAM tried to link hands [to prevent people from attending the anti-imperialist rally at the Pentagon]; then on June 6, right out in front of this building, they used broken bottles and planks, trying to draw a blood line against the revolutionaries. And when that didn't work they resorted to the ultimate weapon of all reformists—they called the capitalist cops on the reds. It's not exactly the first time. Remember in the movie *Reds* how the reformist social democrats called in the police to throw out the majority led by John Reed that supported the Bolsheviks? It's the same today. And when they don't literally call the cops they try to provoke them to intervene with their goon squads. That's what happened here on February 20—a conscious, planned provocation. But they're not going to stop us with these goons for the Democrats.

So they want to pressure the Cold Warriors in Washington; we want to bring Reagan and his junta down. They look to the Democrats; we look to the working class. We say Reaganism spawns fascism, from El Salvador to Detroit. And the same reformists who call for a "negotiated settlement" in El Salvador look to the capitalist government to protect them from the race terrorists while the Spartacist League calls for labor/black mobilizations to stop them in their tracks, as happened in Ann Arbor today.

To finish, let me remind you of when Nixon's secretary of "justice" John Mitchell—or maybe it was Martha

Mitchell—was looking out the window on some Vietnam antiwar protest and commented that it looked like the Russian Revolution. Well, that was a considerable exaggeration, but it's what they should have seen, because that's the only real answer to imperialist war. You put in the Democrats and what do you get? Under FDR they were "good neighbors" to Latin America and put in the dictator Somoza. Under Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress" they organized the Bay of Pigs, and so on. So when Reagan & Co. look out of their windows on March 27, what are they going to see? Teddy Kennedy and the people who follow him? It's up to us to see that there's a bright red Anti-Imperialist Contingent that sends the message of workers action to bring Reagan down. ■

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## New York City Anti-Imperialist Rally

# El Salvador: Revolution or Death!

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A benefit showing of "Revolution or Death" sponsored by the Anti-Imperialist Contingent was held at the Machinists' Hall in New York City March 20. The program featured a slide show by Tom Janota, the last Peace Corps teacher to leave El Salvador. Janota, New York-area trade unionists and Spartacist League speakers urged the 180 attendees to take a side in the Salvadoran civil war and join the Anti-Imperialist Contingent in demonstrating in Washington March 27 for leftist military victory.

The rad-lib Guardian refused to publish a paid ad for the film showing. This anti-democratic act was part of a concerted effort by "left" apologists for the liberal wing of imperialism to suppress the expression of anti-imperialist views in the El Salvador protest milieu.

We publish below some edited excerpts from the remarks of Workers Vanguard editor Jan Norden at the New York meeting.

The Spartacist League has initiated the Anti-Imperialist Contingent to march in Washington, D.C. on March 27 for "Military Victory to Leftist Insurgents in El Salvador." Why military victory? There's a civil war going on there; you have the workers and peasants on one side pitted

against a dictatorship of pathological killers in uniform protecting big landowners who live like feudal lords. And we want the workers and peasants to win the war. It's as simple as that.

How can anyone who considers themselves a leftist or socialist be for anything else but military victory? Do you think that the masses of the people of El Salvador are fighting only to put in a bunch of "democratic" landlords and "moderate" politicians who curry favor with Uncle Sam? No, they want to free themselves from decades of oppression by a landlord-capitalist regime and the longest-lasting military dictatorship in the Americas—half a century the Salvadoran colonels have been in power. As the title of the film we've seen tonight puts it, the choice is "Revolution or Death." We're for the former.

That film is a year old now, and what has changed? Mainly what's changed is that anybody who today calls for a negotiated solution looks more and more like fools, or people who are trying to sabotage the struggle. The rebels just defeated a junta offensive on the Guazapa volcano only 20 miles from the capital, and now there's fighting in the working-class suburbs. What's posed now is to take San Salvador! But you aren't going to find the official organizers of the March 27 march—CISPES and all the reformists, CP/SWP/Marcyites and so on—calling to

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Salvadoran FMLN guerrillas advance, have U.S.-backed junta on the run.

Bonner/NY Times