

Report from Heroic Jalalabad

Front Line Afghanistan



AP/Wide World



Franklin/Magnum

Soviet-supplied Afghan army tank on the way to aid defenders of Jalalabad. Armed Afghan women volunteers ready to fight against CIA's "holy warriors."

JALALABAD, July 7—Thousands of people thronged through the streets of this revitalized city today to celebrate an important military victory over the CIA's *mujahedin* (holy warriors). Two days ago, the armed forces of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) government, spearheaded by

From Our Correspondent in Afghanistan

an armored Special Guard unit and heavily backed by the Air Force, forced the counterrevolutionaries to pull back to positions they occupied before the March offensive against Jalalabad.

Crush CIA's Mujahedin!

Not only has the months-long bitter siege been broken, but Jalalabad and the surrounding parts of Nangarhar Province of which it is the capital are once again secure from the threat of rocket attacks. The rout of the *mujahedin* was so sweeping that the initial impulse of advance elements of the armored unit was to roll all the way up to Torkham, on the border with Pakistan. But the order came from the High Command to consolidate their positions before advancing further.

This reporter was with the first group

of journalists to visit Jalalabad since May, and only the second visit since the *mujahedin* siege began in March. It was particularly moving to be here on behalf of the international campaign of humanitarian assistance conducted by the Partisan Defense Committee and fraternal legal and social defense organizations in other countries which raised over \$42,000 to aid the civilian victims of the siege. The English-language *Kabul Times* (3 July) and the Dari-language *Payam* (2 July) had both carried articles reporting on a message of

acknowledgment from the Nangarhar Province Defence Council to the PDC. Part of the message quoted by the *Kabul Times* read:

"The Defence Council of Nangarhar Province representing all the PDPA members, social organizations and the peaceloving people of Nangarhar, cordially thank you and express gratitude for the assistance extended by you, assuring you honourable friends that it is a must that we would triumph, for we are struggling for a just right."

The front has now been pushed back to Samarkhel, some 12-15 kilometers further east, a key fortified outpost that was the scene of heavy fighting in March and again now. We were taken by bus to Samarkhel. A few kilometers away, we

continued on page 5

Soviet Workers Flex Their Muscle

Miners Strike Spreads

JULY 18—Over the last eight days mass strikes involving some 110,000 miners have brought the Soviet Union's second-largest coal-mining region, the giant Kuznetsk Basin (Kuzbass) in southwestern Siberia, to a complete standstill. Now the strikes have spread to pits in the heart of the USSR's coal country, the Donetsk Basin (Donbass) in the Ukraine. Already it is the largest labor struggle since the 1920s. At least half a dozen cities and towns are reportedly in the hands of strike committees.

This explosive movement by the Soviet workers has shaken the bureaucratic apparatus, which is frantically (and so far unsuccessfully) trying to cool it down. Provoked by Soviet

leader Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika ("restructuring") reforms, the Kuzbass strikes are raising anti-bureaucratic political demands. And they have quickly generated organizational forms of proletarian power, including strike committees and workers militias. This powerful action of the working class has exposed the fragility of the privileged bureaucracy in the Soviet degenerated workers state and the need for a workers political revolution.

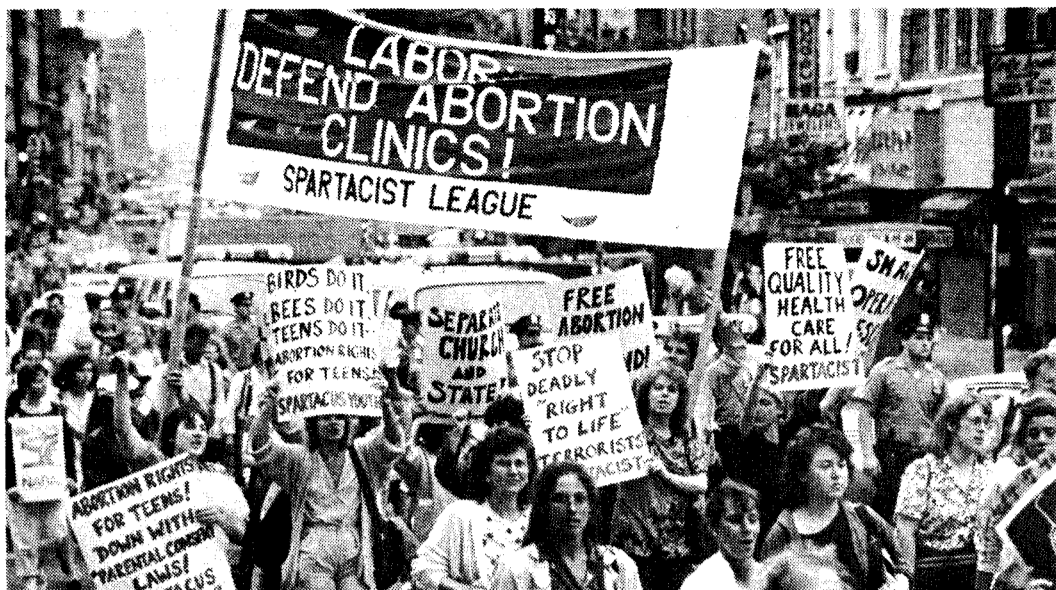
The strikes began in the town of Mezhdurechensk on Monday, July 10 when 77 night-shift miners staged a sit-in at one mine. Soon the entire city of 107,000 was in the hands of the

continued on page 8



TASS via AFP

Strike leader Vladimir Butkevich addresses mass meeting of coal miners in Mezhdurechensk.



Spartacist contingent in New York City march, July 5. Cops in Boston choke pro-choice demonstrator at State House rally, July 4.

Thousands Protest Anti-Abortion Ruling

Widespread outrage over the Supreme Court's July 3 ruling threatening abortion sparked protests around the country. On July 4, 3,000 marched in San Francisco, and in Boston overflow crowds blocked Beacon Street traffic, in defiance of burly cops who manhandled women demonstrators (above, right). In New York City the next day, a Spartacist contingent marched in the thousands-strong demonstration from the federal courthouse at Foley Square to Union Square, chanting, "Defend the

clinics, take a stand—free abortion on demand!"

Abortion rights are on the line. While women are mobilizing to defend the clinics and to keep abortion legal, the liberal feminist organizers are trying to channel the outrage into electing Democratic Party politicians. In New York, a host of Democrats were invited to speak at the July 5 rally, including Bella Abzug and Brooklyn district attorney Liz Holtzman. Capitalist pols like Holtzman, the enforcer of racist repres-

sion in Koch's New York, are class enemies in the fight for minority rights.

At the march, the Spartacist placards demanded "Stop Deadly 'Right to Life' Terrorists!" and "Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!" With the battle over abortion now focusing on "parental consent" for teenagers, an SL sign read: "Birds Do It, Bees Do It, Teens Do It—Abortion Rights for

Teens!" In an interview with *El Diario/La Prensa* (4 July), Spartacist League spokesman Alison Spencer commented on the reactionary Supreme Court decision: "This decision's going to make it impossible for Hispanics and blacks especially to exercise their right to abortion. We think that the unions and the working class should be involved in this struggle." ■

Letters

AIDS and Tragedy

9 July 1989

Dear Comrades:

In the article "AIDS Blacklist" (*WV* No. 480, 23 June), we write:

"AIDS is spreading like wildfire in America's hellish inner-city ghettos, along with other scourges like tuberculosis. Most tragic is the growing number of babies born infected with the HIV virus, overwhelmingly to black and Hispanic mothers."

I understand that the motivation involved in this passage is to stress the fact that AIDS has become a disease that is ravaging the ghetto, and the tragedy of AIDS babies movingly depicts this horror. We should obviously make these points as strongly as possible. But adding the words "most tragic" to give rhetorical emphasis to the point is not

the way to do it.

This is, after all, the prevailing moralist view of the cruder expressions of bourgeois ideology, which hold that unlike supposedly "deviant" sodomites and druggies who have "done something" to get the disease, "innocent" babies who are totally victims are deserving of greater compassion. Writer David Leavitt noted in "The Way I Live Now," in the 9 July *New York Times Magazine*, that it's but a "short ride" from the fundamentalist Christians shrieking that AIDS is divine retribution against sin "to the banal, but equally enraging voice of George Bush declaring his compassion for people with AIDS, 'especially the children'."

Jon Lawrence

Video Arcade Racism

14 June 1989

To the Editor:

I came across the following bit of news in the *Guardian's* "In Brief" section (June 7):

"Intifada' the video game is all the rage among Israeli computer buffs who can't yet try their hand at attempting to crush the real Palestinian uprising. The game allows the player/soldier to use tear-gas, clubs and bullets to stop stone- and gasoline bomb-throwing 'Palestinians.' As the player's game improves, more extreme rightwingers come to power. The best players get to be under the command of hardliner Ariel Sharon, while beginners get Moshe Arens. The game was invented by a member of the racist Kach Party of Rabbi Meir Kahane."

The rad-libs at the *Guardian* are probably tickled pink (or maybe even red) at the thought that they have the chutzpah to denounce growing signs of fascism in faraway Israel. (Though they are awfully tepid about it. Sharon is a "hardliner"? How about "blood-drenched fascist"? Does "stop" mean kill?)

But they forgot to notice that we have popular video games in the U.S. that are just as bad. Case in point: "Narc—say no to drugs" (Williams Electronic

Games, Inc., copyright 1988), which I recently saw getting heavy action in the local shopping mall. "Narc" starts out with the emblem of the FBI over the quote "Winners don't use drugs" from FBI director William Sessions. The player is then placed in this really hip red sports car with "Say 'no' or die" written on it. (In context, "or die" doesn't refer to the danger of overdose but to the danger of being shot by the player.) This sports car zips one to a seedy city slum where there are all sorts of lowlifes for one to shoot. When you kill a slum dweller they all drop packets of heroin and bundles of money—pick 'em up for points. Running over garbagemen (yes, all men) with the sports car gets a bonus. Interestingly, all the lowlife "targets" are white. I suppose that having a (white) narc protagonist shooting blacks in a slum would be just a bit too much realism for Williams, Inc. At least for now.

Now if the *Guardian* published this evidence for popular fascism right here in the U.S. they might have to stop being a cheering squad for Baptist Rev. Jesse ("Just say no") Jackson.

Revolutionary Greetings,
Jeffrey S. Vogel

WORKERS VANGUARD



Jacobinism and the Russian Revolution

Today, amid official celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, even "socialist" French president Mitterrand seeks to disown its most decisive phase, that of the Jacobins, which rooted out the aristocracy. Anti-Jacobinism has always been a rallying cry of capitalist rulers fearful of revolution. In Russia in June 1917, as hundreds of thousands of workers flocked to the



LENIN

TROTSKY

Bolsheviks' banners, the bourgeois "Constitutional Democrats" warned that if the soviets obtained "all power," they would "stoop to Jacobinism and terrorism." Lenin replied:

Bourgeois historians see Jacobinism as a fall ("to stoop"). Proletarian historians see Jacobinism as one of the highest peaks in the emancipation struggle of an oppressed class. The Jacobins gave France the best models of a democratic revolution and of resistance to a coalition of monarchs against a republic. The Jacobins were not destined to win complete victory, chiefly because eighteenth-century France was surrounded on the continent by much too backward countries, and because France herself lacked the material basis for socialism, there being no banks, no capitalist syndicates, no machine industry and no railways.

"Jacobinism" in Europe or on the boundary line between Europe and Asia in the twentieth century would be the rule of the revolutionary class, of the proletariat, which, supported by the peasant poor and taking advantage of the existing material basis for advancing to socialism, could not only provide all the great, ineradicable, unforgettable things provided by the Jacobins in the eighteenth century, but bring about a lasting world-wide victory for the working people.

It is natural for the bourgeoisie to hate Jacobinism. It is natural for the petty bourgeoisie to dread it. The class-conscious workers and working people generally put their trust in the transfer of power to the revolutionary, oppressed class, for that is the essence of Jacobinism, the only way out of the present crisis, and the only remedy for economic dislocation and the war.

—V.I. Lenin, "Can 'Jacobinism' Frighten the Working Class?" (June 1917)

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No. 482

21 July 1989

Bush Ducks, North Walks

So Oliver North took the Nazis' Nuremberg defense (I was just following orders) and got off with a slap on the wrist. To no one's surprise, for the fix was in from the start. Judge Gesell just saved President Bush the trouble of pardoning the gung ho Contragate and fellow conspirator. Bush ducks, North walks and the Democrats don't squawk—not a peep of protest from Capitol Hill, they're so caught up in their own cover-up of the Iran/Contragate debacle.

On July 5, Judge Howard Gesell told the National Security Council contra officer that he would not go to prison because it "would only harden your misconceptions." Instead, North got a \$150,000 fine (which he can easily pay with a half dozen appearances before fascistic audiences at his going rate of \$25,000 a pop), plus 1,200 hours of "community service" at drug rehabilitation centers. The chief probation officer of the District of Columbia said that North "will have no contact with the youths themselves. None."

North was convicted in May on only three of the twelve charges brought by a Special Prosecutor for his Contragate role. The trial was a farce, naturally. They eliminated the conspiracy charges in order to protect "national security." They insisted that the jury be composed of people who had no knowledge of the Contragate hearings. North blatantly declared on the stand that he lied to Congress. The defense produced documents initialed by Reagan authorizing operations to circumvent Congressional prohibitions on contra aid. And ... nothing happens.

When North thought that he faced taking a heavier rap, the "ramrod" ex-Marine rejected his designated fall guy role. He tried unsuccessfully to have Reagan cross-examined at his trial. Then North's lawyers began producing



Bush with Panama strongman Noriega, then CIA "asset," in 1983. Oliver North: "I lied."



McNamee/Newsweek

copies of some of those supposedly shredded-and-forever-lost documents proving that the "looped-out" Bush was at the center of the Iran/contra murder and mayhem. Despite Gesell's efforts to discount North's implication of Reagan and Bush, the jury wanted to hold Bush and Reagan accountable. "North was the subordinate. He wasn't the boss. He wasn't running the show," stated the jury foreman.

Next up on the Contragate court circuit will be Joe Fernandez, the CIA's Costa Rican station chief, who worked with North on the contra drugs-for-guns airlift. Fernandez' lawyers will use the same tactics which worked so well for North. They have already introduced "a top-secret directive, signed by Reagan, describing the role of a high-level

Planning and Coordination Group in approving and supervising covert operations." In order to avoid more "disclosures" of Reagan and Bush's roles, the prosecutor will drop the conspiracy charge against Fernandez. A similar deal has been worked out for NSC chief Admiral John ("the buck stops here") Poindexter.

George Bush is certainly breathing a sigh of relief. A 9-11 May *New York Times*/CBS News poll shows almost two-thirds of Americans think Bush is hiding something that they ought to know. They're right. The North trial papers show that Bush went to Panama in 1983 to arrange Noriega's help for contra terror; in 1985 Bush was in Honduras personally arranging a money deal with Honduran president Suazo for

the contra bases in violation of the Boland Amendment. When a CIA plane was shot down over Nicaragua in 1986 and Eugene Hasenfus was captured by Sandinista soldiers, the call went from contra supplymaster Felix Rodriguez to Colonel Sam Watson in Vice President Bush's office. Bush was the first to know their cover was blown, because it was Bush's baby.

The Democrats had Reagan and Bush dead to rights three years ago on Contragate—if they had wanted to get them. But Reagan's "spin control" boys went to work with a very cooperative Democrat-controlled Congress and bourgeois press to save the imperial presidency. The Congressional "investigators" let the White House pick and choose which doctored documents they would get. They were never inclined to ask too many questions anyway, preferring to let North et al. launch their flag-waving tirades against Congress. And now that the North trial revealed a whole slew of documents not provided to the Iran/contra committees, the Democrats concluded that this was because of "an honest mistake in judgment as to what documents were relevant!"

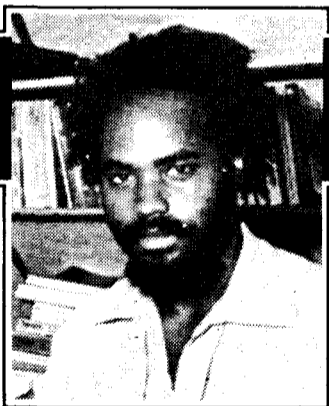
Reagan's cabal from the NSC and CIA along with numerous other Iran/ contra rats are now Bush appointees to important administration posts. J.D. Negroponte, the former U.S. "pro-consul" to Honduras who coordinated U.S. contra supply efforts and unleashed death squad leader General Alvarez, was confirmed last month by the Democratic-controlled Senate as ambassador to Mexico. Donald Gregg, a CIA agent for 32 years, up to his neck in the blood of the 60,000 Vietnamese murdered in Operation Phoenix and Bush's right-hand man in the contra operations, was recommended for confirmation as ambassador to South Korea in a bipartisan vote by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

And anti-communist psychopath Oliver North, whom Bush invited to Christmas dinner and calls a national hero, is

continued on page 10

From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

Supreme Court Assault on Prisoners' Rights



It is darker in America's prisons today, thanks to a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision which upholds broad censorship of publications. The Court majority, in a backwards, rightwing lurch which overturned a prison rights 1st Amendment case from 1974, makes it easier for the prison to censor publications it deems objectionable, and harder for the imprisoned to receive news of the world at large.

In a 6-3 decision, the Rehnquist wing of the Court raised the old rubric of "security" to justify this assault on the 1st Amendment, saying regulations of the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBP) could exclude a number of publications, if the censorship rules are "reasonably related" to the need to maintain prison order and "security."

By clear implication, the Court ruling in *Thornburgh v. Abbott* (No. 87-1344) suggests the truth about the vile, racist and utterly repressive treatment of prisoners will threaten "security." None of the major media, not even the "newspaper of record," the *N.Y. Times*, detailed how the censorship regulations were actually applied in the *Abbott* case. The facts are startling.

Among the censored publications deemed a "security threat" by the FBP:

(1) *WIN Magazine* [Workshop In Nonviolence] (pacifist political journal)

(2) *The 1979 Peace Calendar: While There Is A Soul In Prison*

(3) *The Guardian* (leftwing political newspaper)

(4) *The Labyrinth* (leftwing prisoner-oriented periodical)

(5) *Workers World* (leftwing weekly)

(6) *The Militant* (leftist, socialist newspaper)

(7) *The Call* (leftwing, political paper); and some 40 other publications.

Notably, the trial court, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, made no finding as to the "security threat" posed by any of the above 7 publications, and, in fact, except for the *1979 Peace Calendar*, either the FBP Regional Director, the wardens of various prisons, or in some cases, censorship employees, later, in depositions, admitted the banned publications were "not detrimental to security."

ACLU lawyers Edward I. Koren, Alvin J. Bronstein, Steven R. Shapiro, and Counsel for the *Abbott* plaintiffs, Steven Ney, presented these facts, by brief, to the Supreme Court, but to no avail.

The majority, bent to a rightist tilt, rejected the plaintiff's position, and by so doing, erected yet another wall around America's prisons, one more ominous than the thick brick, steel fences and concertina razor wire which adorn American gulags.

The Court built a wall around the minds of men, composed of the mortar of conservatism, and the brick of regression.

Is it mere coincidence that the bulk of the banned publications are of the leftist variety? Not hardly.

Is it curious that *TIME*, *Newsweek*, *Reader's Digest*, or even *The New Republic* never made the Federal Bureau of Prison's hit list of censorables?

In a fallback to the repressive '50s, the Court narrows the already restrictive range of "rights" which remain among the encaged. Papers which try to present a reflection of world resistance against the U.S. Empire, or regional, local resistance against the repressive U.S. prison systems of legalized slavery, are now subject to censorship by the repressors themselves, with the Court's blessing.

The Court does its vital part to insure that the teeming throng stuffed into America's overcrowded cages remain as they came into them, unlearned, uninformed, docile and unpoliticized. It reminds one of America's laws which outlawed, under pain of death, reading by its African slaves, and reveals the growing similarity between prisoner and slave, in the Court's eye. For prisoners, the 1st Amendment has all the relevance of junk mail. The *Abbott* court stamped the damn thing, "null and void."

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

To get involved in the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the death penalty, contact the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. If you wish to correspond with Mumia, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, M8335, Drawer R, Huntingdon, PA 16652.

British Strikers Defy Thatcher

LONDON—Britain faces its deepest industrial ferment since the defeat of the heroic yearlong miners strike four years ago. The financial and political center of the country has been crippled one day a week for each of the past few weeks by 24-hour commuter rail, tube (subway) and bus strikes. The flow of critical North Sea oil revenue has been disrupted by work actions on the offshore platforms over union recognition, wages, and health and safety conditions. The construction industry, the postal service, BBC television and radio, and local councils (municipal government) have been hit by sporadic strike action. And on July 11, dockers set up picket lines at 60 ports around the country, digging in for a bitter strike against the government's abolition of the National Dock Labour Scheme.

In response to the widespread industrial action, Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher has set up a special Cabinet committee under her direct supervision (dubbed a "War Cabinet") and is pushing for a total ban on strikes in public-sector "essential services." Thatcher came to office committed to straitjacketing the combative trade-union movement. Faced with a spineless Labour Party and Trades Union Congress (TUC) leadership, she has managed to impose one draconian piece of anti-union legislation after another—effectively eliminating the closed shop, limiting picketing and secondary strike action, making strikes dependent on balloting by post (mail). Having privatized the nationalised phone service and sold the assets off for a song to City of London fat cats, she now threatens to privatise British Rail (BR) in order to sap the power of the rail unions.

The deep-going class bitterness intersects broader social unrest provoked by the "Marie Antoinette of Number Ten." Mass demonstrations against the widely hated poll tax have spread from Scotland to England. Large sections of the population—from poor and working-class to middle-class—are outraged over cuts in the National Health Service which threaten to liquidate it altogether. The generalised anger over cuts in public transport runs so deep that in the face of BR's attempts to whip up middle-class anti-union hysteria, the *Financial Times* (15-16 July) admits that "Commuters blame 'mean-spirited' BR for rail chaos."

Mounting trade deficits and inflation rates have generated sharp disputes within the Tory Cabinet. Meanwhile, acting like the last tsarina, Thatcher lectures the far more powerful West German bourgeoisie on NATO, and the rest of the European rulers on the EEC. For eight years, Thatcher basked in her "special relationship" with Reagan. But with Reagan gone, renewed domestic discontent and an economy in shambles, Thatcher's high-handed posturing as the



Cambio 16
Thatcher's vindictive assault on workers and poor could spark "summer of discontent." Angry dockers (right) strike for job security and union rights.



Independent [London]

"senior statesman" in Europe is not cutting much ice. Even the "American cousins" in Washington don't fully buy it, and there's a widespread feeling that the Iron Lady is losing her grip. Now she may be facing a "summer of discontent."

"Left" Union Leaders Seek to Derail Strikes

The rail dispute was triggered by BR's provocative unilateral imposition of a 7 per cent wage rise—with inflation run-

targeted passengers, making train or tube travel a deadly game of Russian roulette. In November 1987 a fire at Kings Cross killed 31; it turned out the largest rail and tube junction in London had no automatic sprinklers, smoke detectors or elementary fire prevention devices. Last year, 35 people died in the Clapham Junction train crash, caused by a faulty signalling mechanism.

One-day and rolling strikes, however disruptive and unsettling they may be,

tion under the Docks Labour Scheme and its guarantee of job security, this strike is a decisive battle in defence of the dockers union. Striking dockers rightly fear a return to the days of casual labour and an end to the closed shop and any protection against layoffs. For this mainly older workforce, defeat now will doom them to the dole queues for the rest of their lives.

Thus far, most of the old "scheme" ports have been shut down solid, but TGWU head Ron Todd refuses to picket out the non-registered ports, whose workers are also in the TGWU. Among the exempted ports is the huge container terminal at Felixstowe, owned by the notorious P&O conglomerate, whose *Herald of Free Enterprise* capsized in Zeebrugge harbour in March 1987, killing nearly 200 crew members and passengers. Todd hides behind Thatcher's laws against secondary picketing, but these laws would not even be on the books if in the summer of 1984 Todd & Co. had not forced striking dockers back to work. Two national dock strikes that summer in defence of solidarity action with the miners had Thatcher squirming and the country on the verge of a general strike.

The TGWU is Britain's largest union. Thatcher's anti-union laws can be torn into shreds through a militant strike that shuts down all the ports, calls for solidarity action from TGWU lorry drivers, and fights to extend the rights of registered dockers throughout the industry.

Not a Labour Cabinet But Forward to Workers Rule!

For years the Thatcher government has been on a reactionary rampage—busting unions, unleashing racist cop terror in the black and Asian communities, meting out bloody repression to the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland. Her attacks on civil liberties and attempts at police-state censorship have outraged even pillars of the establishment like the BBC. Her piecemeal privatisation of the National Health Service—which at one time provided free medical care for all—is designed to create a two-tier system, with private hospitals for the better-off and squalid public facilities for the rest. Successive cuts in health funding by Labour and Tory governments have already reduced service to the point where up to 30 per cent of the seriously injured die needlessly because hospital casualty units (emergency rooms) are understaffed and underequipped.

And now you have to pay a tax just for staying alive—ranging up to £45 (\$80) per person per month in depressed inner-city areas. The poorer you are, the

continued on page 9



Don McPhee

Over 20,000 protest in Manchester against extortionate poll tax.

ning over 8 per cent and twice that in London. Rail workers earn as little as £90 (\$140) weekly; in the southern region drivers are forced to work 30 hours overtime a week to make ends meet. Besides seeking to depress labour costs, BR aims at throttling the power of the rail unions by doing away with national bargaining. The massive cuts in maintenance and investment have also

are not a tactic for victory. In contrast, a serious rail strike would not easily be broken by a government now in palpable disarray and lacking popular support, and a complete shutdown of London Transport would rapidly bring the City financial empire screeching to a halt. Yet the "left" rail union leaders have consciously sought to avoid all-out national strike action. Two of the three unions have just announced a separate 8.8 per cent wage settlement with BR, feeding into the bosses' divide-and-rule ploy. But this situation can be reversed. The Spartacist League/Britain has called for galvanising the current isolated and episodic strikes into a common offensive:

"What is needed is all-out strike action not more one-day skirmishes. London underground and bus workers, BR workers, dockers—all out and stay out to win!"

—*Workers Hammer* No. 108, July/August 1989

The "left" leaders of the Transport & General Workers Union are working overtime to sabotage the first national dock strike in five years. With the dockers' base decimated by automation and the virtual demise of British industry, and many of the most lucrative ports (accounting for half of all trade by value) already exempted from registra-

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

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482
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Jalalabad Defenders Message to Partisan Defense Committee

On April 8, the Partisan Defense Committee launched an international campaign to support the victims of the CIA's mujahedin cutthroats in the Afghan front line city of Jalalabad. Joined by fraternal legal and social defense organizations in Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Italy, Japan and West Germany, over the next three months the campaign raised more than \$42,000 for the Jalalabad Civilian Victims Aid Fund. All monies collected are securely forwarded to an account established by the embassy of Afghanistan in Paris.

In addition to the tens of thousands of people who contributed to the Jalalabad fund drive, this campaign enabled us to bring to the working people of the world the crucial importance of the battle to defend elementary social progress in Afghanistan, not least the freedom of women from the veil. The campaign also brought to the fighters in beleaguered Jalalabad the knowledge that they did not stand alone. The siege has now been broken and the counterrevolutionary attackers are in disarray.

We print below a dispatch from the official Afghan Bakhtar News Agency reporting on a message to the PDC from the Defence Council of Nangarhar Province, of which Jalalabad is the capital.

KABUL, July 1 (Bakhtar)—The armed forces of the Republic of Afghanistan stationed in Nangarhar, following the Geneva accords, resulted in the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan, completely foiled the aggressive designs and plots of opposition, Pakistani militarists and Saudi Wahabis, says the message of gratitude of the Defence Council of the Nangarhar Province addressed on June 30, to

the Solidarity Committee of the French Partisans.

With the direct cooperation of the residents of Nangarhar, the message goes on, the Afghan armed forces independently defend independence, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the country.

It was on March 6, 1989 the message adds, that the armed extremists, commandoes of the 11th Pakistani Corps

and Saudi Wahabis attacked the city to capture it in 72 hours and declare the Rawalpindi made extremist government there.

As a result of the criminal and barbaric actions of the enemies, residential houses and civil establishments were shelled, hundreds of innocent civilians here killed, schools, factories, mosques and Hindu worshipping places (Daran-saals) razed to the ground, the message stated.

We Afghans say that a best friend is that who helps his friend in difficult time. You as real friends of the Afghan people, supporters of peace and love with human-being, set an outstanding example of humanity by sending such assistance in a difficult moment faced the Nangarhar inhabitants with. Your help with the people of Nangarhar will be written in golden letters in the Afghan history, the message says.

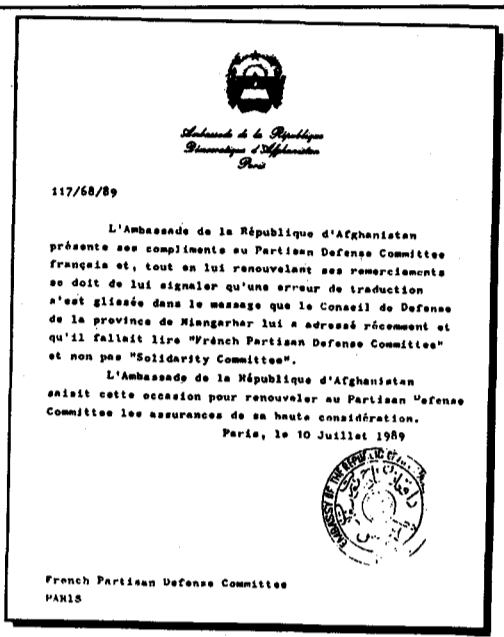
The Defence Council of Nangarhar Province on behalf of all members of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan, social organisations and peaceful residents of Nangarhar, cordially expresses its gratitude for your humanistic assistance rendered to them.

We assure you that we will triumph, because our cause is a righteous one, we struggle for peace, justice and security, the message concludes. ■

The Embassy of the Republic of Afghanistan greets the French Partisan Defense Committee and, while reiterating its thanks to the PDC, is obliged to note that a translation error crept into the message that the Defence Council of Nangarhar Province recently sent it, and that instead of "Solidarity Committee" it should have read "French Partisan Defense Committee."

The Embassy of the Republic of Afghanistan takes this occasion to reiterate to the Partisan Defense Committee the assurances of its high esteem.

Paris, 10 July 1989



Afghanistan...

(continued from page 1)

could see a tank firing shell after shell over a ridge, along which some Afghan soldiers were advancing. This ridge is the mujahedin's only natural defense line for many miles, but there was no sign that they were holding their own or fighting back.

The officers and soldiers of the Special Guard unit proudly showed us around, describing the weapons captured, while warning us to stick to the areas that have already been cleared of mines—i.e., where a tank tread has left its "signature." We could see the damaged buildings of the housing complex, the school and the shop, and visit the big diesel power station.

A City of Determination

At the head of the line of march of today's victory celebration was an armored car atop which rode our team of journalists. Following the military and civilian leaders of the city came dozens of multicolored banners and Afghan national flags and some five to ten thousand residents of Jalalabad. People were everywhere in the streets. There was not a sign of fear, but rather an evident determination which exploded in loud chants of "Afghanistan Zindabad!" (Long Live Afghanistan) and "Marg ya Watan!" (Death or Country) that punctuated the march throughout. Young and old, women and men—many carrying their weapons—Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus joined together in this march from Jamhuriat Garden to Pashtoonistan Square.

After listening to a speech by Lt. Gen. Manookay Mangal, governor and chairman of the Defence Council of Nangarhar Province, the participants adopted a resolution "expressing all-out solidarity with the victorious and heroic armed forces in the defence of homeland, independence, territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the country." The roofs of the mainly two-story houses along the route of the march



PDC launched emergency appeal for Jalalabad victims at April abortion rights rally in Washington, D.C. (left). International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) at French Lutte Ouvrière fête raises Jalalabad aid campaign banner.



were guarded by young militiamen (some appeared to be no older than 13), their Kalashnikovs slung over their shoulders looking almost too big for them.

From the helicopter and from the road, it was clear that Jalalabad, once renowned as a tourist resort for its beauty and greenery, is a wounded city, whose scars will take a long time to heal. The ravages of the brutal war against the population can be seen in torn walls, damaged houses, smashed windowpanes and roads full of ditches and debris. Between March and July, 973 houses were damaged along with 150 government buildings, shops and markets, mosques and temples. Many of the houses are made of mud bricks—making them relatively easy to rebuild—and the people have been working hard at repairing them.

The airport, some five kilometers to the east of the city, shows all the signs of the fierce battle that went on around and

for it in March and April: hangars blown apart, the airstrip damaged, remains of jeeps and helicopters lying around, the control tower heavily damaged. It's clear that there has been no time to care for the niceties of appearance: the airport is functional again and that's enough.

The civilian population has suffered terribly: 1,993 injured and 1,002 killed, half of them children. On the single day of March 8, the mujahedin cutthroats, bankrolled by the Pakistani ISI [Inter-Service Intelligence] and the CIA, bombarded Jalalabad with 5,000 rockets. But they did not succeed in overwhelming its heroic defenders.

At the Central Hotel we met some of the civilian victims of these rocket attacks. Among them was Hayatullah, aged 14, a bright kid who lost his right leg in February. He had been afraid of rockets, he said. When one hit his home in the eastern district of Jalalabad, a brother was killed and another lost his

leg. Hayatullah was a student at the time and wanted to become a teacher. With the stern look of a young man who had to grow up a lot faster than kids his age in luckier parts of the world, he asserted his resolve to complete his studies, because he very much wants "to teach small children." When asked how he felt about those who did this to him, he replied, "They should all be eliminated," adding that "America" is ultimately responsible as the country that supplies the rockets.

An Internationalist Struggle

Toward the end of our eight-hour stay in Jalalabad we met the governor. After the deputy governor, who was accompanying the team of journalists, learned that this reporter was a representative of the PDC campaign, he made it known to the governor. When we entered the room for the press conference, Lt. Gen.

continued on page 6

On the "Jalalabad Express"



Crown Publishers

The trip that took a team of foreign journalists and an Afghan TV crew to Jalalabad on July 7 lasted for about one hour and 20 minutes. We took off from the Kabul airport at 10 a.m. in a green transport helicopter armed with some 40 rockets. Two green-yellow gunships, looking like ugly insects and bristling with guns and rockets, took off at the same time to escort us across enemy-infested territory.

Afghan helicopter pilots are easily among the best in the world. The flight of the "Jalalabad Express" involves crossing the mountain range that surrounds Kabul on all sides. This gives the city a fair amount of protection from frontal attack, but can also offer the counterrevolutionaries a hide-out from

which rockets can be fired onto the capital and missiles aimed at planes and helicopters. Those 15-20 minutes required to navigate the mountains are definitely the most dangerous and dramatic part of the ride.

Our Soviet-trained pilots, Amanullah, 35, and Abdullah, 27, were wonderful. The helicopter flies very low, literally hugging the mountains, at times as close as three to four meters from the mountain face. It swerves quickly right and left, following the ragged contour of the hills, climbs abruptly and then plunges *very fast* whenever a ravine opens up. At every turn *mujahedin* could be hiding. The pilot must think ahead of time and act even faster.

Both our helicopter and the gunships fired rockets—a rather scary experience the first time. For a moment I thought we had been hit. From the next rocket onwards, it's just very noisy, but you keep wondering whether we are indeed being shot at. One reporter said he saw a missile fired at us. When we asked the pilots after landing in Jalalabad, Amanullah said that he had seen a bandit getting ready to fire at us, but "I hit him first."

We returned to Kabul just before dusk. A government minister was also on board our helicopter. Crossing the mountains was much more tense than on the way in, partly because Jalalabad had turned out to be rather quiet. But there was one incident. Our helicop-

ter—at that point in time some 60 to 70 meters above the ground—suddenly banked left and circled, first once, then twice. Down below, on an islet in the middle of the Kabul River, our escort gunship could be seen grounded. What had happened?

I recalled what a journalist who had been with the previous trip to Jalalabad told me. Their lone chopper had been surrounded by eight gunships. After returning to Kabul she was told that the casualty rate was one in four. True, the situation now was better—we only needed one escort for that part of the ride. But that gunship was now grounded.

Another circle around, and a few more tense moments, then the gunship took off—apparently a technical failure of no import. Now came the hard part. Just before entering the mountain range, two gunships were hovering low, waiting for us. They really looked like beasts of prey—it was good to know they were on our side. They seemed almost poised as if to draw the *mujahedin* out and then smash them to pieces.

Set off against the darkening sky, the Bengala flares that our helicopter was busily throwing right and left (they are an added protection, meant to divert heat-seeking missiles) glowed like little suns before dying against the dark mountain.

After a few very long minutes the advance outpost of the Kabul defensive rings appeared and we waved at the soldiers down below. They waved back. Another 15 minutes and we were safely on the tarmac at Kabul airport. Outside we shook hands and embraced each other—pilots, journalists, minister, government officials come to greet us. A good trip! ■

Afghanistan...

(continued from page 5)

Mangal shook hands with every reporter, but embraced me enthusiastically, saying "Ah, Partisan."

A doctor by profession, the 41-year-old former chief of political affairs of the interior ministry in Kabul has been governor of this crucial border province for six months. He said that "Pakistani militarists and the U.S. ambassador in Islamabad decided to declare war on Jalalabad on the 6th of March." The reactionaries—with a total of 40,000 troops, including two Pakistani tank battalions and 120 units of "reactive artillery"—were supposed to occupy Jalalabad in 72 hours; planes were ready in Peshawar to bring the *mujahedin* "provisional government" onto Afghan territory. "But they could not occupy the city," Lt. Gen. Mangal declared proudly. "Nangarhar men and women fought valiantly," including PDPA members as well as the military, he added. The Air Force played a major role in the defeat of the attackers.

I asked the governor if the defenders and people of Jalalabad are aware that in many countries of the world, working people are following their struggle with extreme concern. "Certainly," he replied, adding that the struggle of the Afghan people is an "internationalist struggle." Mangal mentioned specifically Pakistan's plan to dismember Afghanistan and to impose a government that would join with Pakistan and Turkey in a "new CENTO" anti-Soviet and anti-Indian U.S.-dominated alliance. He again thanked the PDC for our efforts in support of the people of Jalalabad. The international aid campaign clearly boosted morale in Jalalabad. The message from the Defence Council said, "Your great and humane move is so noteworthy that no devilish eyes can dare see it."

In the course of these three months of



Kabul home after attack by U.S.-supplied rocket.

Reuters/Bettmann

fighting, the defenders of Jalalabad had lost some 800 killed. But using a combination of high-level bombing by converted propeller-driven Antonov AN-12 cargo planes—which can fly above the range of the U.S.-supplied Stinger missiles—and long-range SCUD missiles fired from the Kabul area, the Afghan armed forces have inflicted far heavier losses on the enemy. At a July 3 press conference in Kabul, Gen. Alumi, head of the military section of the PDPA and secretary of the Supreme Defence Council, explained that the counterrevolutionaries have taken more casualties between March and June than "in any previous two years of fighting taken together." He gave a figure of 35,000 *mujahedin* casualties (including

3,000 Pakistanis) since the signing of the Geneva agreement in 1988.

Bakhtar News Agency (5 July), reporting a meeting between bereaved Afghan mothers and a delegation of Pakistani journalists, quoted one mother saying: "We were pleased with the signing of the Geneva accords, we thought that in the light of these agreements war in the Republic of Afghanistan could be stopped.... But unfortunately after the signing of the accords, war in the Republic of Afghanistan has further intensified." In fact, Gorbachev's pullout has served only to embolden the imperialists and their cutthroats.

The Soviet intervention in 1979 was mandated by defense of the gains of the

1917 October Revolution and opened up the prospect of extending those gains to Afghanistan; that is why the international Spartacist tendency, now the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), proclaimed "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" After the Soviet withdrawal, Washington and Islamabad thought the instant the Soviet troops pulled out, the Afghan government would crumble. They have been proved wrong by the fighting valor of the Afghan people.

Meanwhile, the PDPA's policy of "national reconciliation" aims at luring the reactionaries into a coalition. Kabul papers regularly report agreements with regional *mujahedin* commanders, effectively leaving them in control of their fiefdoms. The day after *Payam* reported on the internationalist aid campaign by the PDC, it carried a speech by the foreign minister headlined, "Except a Political Settlement—No Other Way Exists for Putting an End to War in Afghanistan."

But to put an end to the imperialist-backed war against social progress requires rooting out—not conciliating—entrenched feudal and capitalist reaction through workers revolution. In the extremely backward conditions of Afghanistan, the tiny industrial proletariat does not have the weight to effect a fundamental transformation of society. But next door in Bhutto's Pakistan, the home base for the CIA's *mujahedin*, conditions for social revolution are brewing, with national minorities in turmoil and the regime divided. In Iran, the Islamic theocracy is now headless and the population sick of a decade of bloody war and domestic terror.

Jalalabad besieged was the focal point of imperialism's *jihad* (holy war) against social progress and the Soviet Union. Jalalabad victorious can inspire revolutionary struggle throughout the region, from India to Turkey. That requires above all the program of Leninist internationalism, the banner of the International Communist League. ■

On the Streets of Kabul

KABUL, July 13—The poverty and backwardness of the country is an undeniable fact which finds its statistical expression in an average life expectancy of 42 and in the world's highest rate of mortality for children under the age of five. The civil war that has ravaged Afghanistan for eleven years has obviously contributed to rendering the situation worse, notwithstanding the government's measures to bring the country into the 20th century.

Schools and hospitals have been built and the city is covered with pharmacies. Housing complexes called "micro-rays," built by the Soviets since the mid-'60s, are all over the place. Looking at the chaotic traffic in the streets of Kabul, you would find it hard to believe that petrol is rationed. Cars of all kinds and shapes, buses with obscure beer ads in German, carts pulled by animals and men, compete with trucks and pedestrians for the road. Public transport is not bad and really cheap. The Millie Bus Company (Millie means People's), with some 1,000 buses and 100 trolley buses, regularly runs 52 lines in the city of Kabul.

One striking feature of transportation, however, is sex segregation. Women walk in at the front, and the men at the back. Within the buses, which rapidly fill up to overflow, people don't cross over an invisible line that runs somewhere in the middle of the bus. Exceptions to this unwritten rule are the buses that pick up workers for specific government institutions—Afghan TV/radio, hospitals, university, etc.—where people can occupy the places as they see fit.

Hygienic conditions in Kabul are very

Children making wooden crutches in Kabul's bazaar for the thousands of victims of mujahedin terror.



bad. Along the roads run ditches, which stink from the accumulation of refuse (including human excrement). The autumn rains will wash the ditches away. What's more, very young children can be seen walking barefoot in that filth, looking for something to use or rummaging through the garbage in

search of something to eat. The luckier ones carry around large cans of water, to sell to passers-by. Others beg for money.

A significant proportion of beggars are women covered from head to foot in the horrible *chador*. Their age can only be guessed from a look at the hand that asks for a coin—they are the hands of

old women, which means they are perhaps 40 or 45.

In Kabul a majority of women wear Western clothes, a few daring ones put on trousers and T-shirts, but most content themselves with midi-length skirts. At a couple of marriage parties that were held in the Kabul Hotel it was noticeable how women and men tend to stick together in groups of the same sex. On the campus of Kabul University, students and teachers are all dressed in Western clothes, but again you don't see mixed groups of students.

For women the situation since 1978 has improved dramatically in terms of their rights. The civil war was started by reactionaries who opposed the very idea that women had equal rights and that little girls should be taught to read and write. But in recent years the reforms have been slowed or curtailed—for example, education for girls is no longer compulsory. In the name of "national reconciliation" with sectors of the *mujahedin*, the country's name was changed from Democratic Republic to Republic of Afghanistan. Today is a big religious holiday and the TV showed President Najibullah in a mosque kneeling and praying.

It seems that these days there are complaints even against Soviet TV for going "against traditional Afghan values." But in seeing life in Kabul, one cannot help but recall the leap Afghanistan has made in the past ten years, and the even more enormous leap—spanning not decades, but centuries—it could make if it underwent the sort of deep-going social transformation Soviet Central Asia did under the impact of the Russian workers revolution. ■

A Country at War—A City Under Fire

KABUL, July 15—A huge car bomb exploded in one of the busiest shopping streets of the capital today, killing at least nine people and injuring 49. Luckily it occurred during a holiday or the carnage would have been far greater. This terrorist attack comes after a week in which rocket attacks on Kabul by the U.S.-backed *mujahedin* have escalated sharply.

Two days ago our team of journalists visited Kandahar, some 600 kilometers southwest of Kabul and the second largest city in Afghanistan. A year ago, Kandahar was the scene of hand-to-hand fighting, and the city is still under regular attack. The airport shows evidence of the destruction—rows of bombed buildings and charred ruins of a fighter plane and helicopter. The shutters of shops in the bazaar had holes big enough for a car to pass through, electricity poles were torn and twisted. Lt. Gen. Alumi talked about a fresh offensive being prepared in Pakistan, with reports indicating that 200 tanks and 40 bombers were being deployed.

On July 11, President Najibullah proclaimed a unilateral cease-fire, to coincide with the Islamic holiday of Haj, from 8 a.m. on the 12th until Saturday, and to be prolonged indefinitely if observed by the *mujahedin*. But the cease-fire was broken within an hour by rocket attacks in the Jalalabad area. In the afternoon today at least seven rockets were fired against Kabul. Sitting in an office last week, I saw a rocket go by outside the window and asked if we were under attack. It turned out to be a SCUD missile being fired out of Kabul.

People are angry over the constant rocket attacks. Between midnight and noon of July 11, some 65 rockets were fired at Kabul—the worst attack in three



Wreckage of July 15 terrorist car bomb which killed nine people and wounded 49 in one of Kabul's busiest shopping streets.

months—killing 20 and injuring 131. One of the rockets hit the "microrayon" neighborhood inhabited mainly by government employees, where it struck a bus stop, killing eight. Another hit the Central Kabul Hotel: nobody injured. But only a week ago, huge marriage parties of 300-350 people had been held there. Had a rocket hit the hall at that moment, it would have been carnage.

The 11th was a day of mobilization in the capital. A protest petition was submitted to the Pakistan embassy and to the UN military mission. Over 20 protest meetings were held in ministries

and workplaces. I attended two, one in the afternoon at the city bus main Millie Bus depot and one in the morning at the Ministry of Light and Foodstuff Industries. At this meeting, attended by some 150 employees, I had the honor to speak (with the help of a translator from the press center), bringing to these men and women not only an expression of support and solidarity from the outside, but also providing them with a brief eyewitness account of Jalalabad.

Jalalabad is very much in the minds and hearts of every Afghan. I said: "In Jalalabad I have seen the destruction caused by the counterrevolutionary

bandits in the pay of Pakistan and U.S. imperialism, but I have also seen children playing in the fountain. I can tell you that life has come back to Jalalabad." The audience burst into enthusiastic applause. After stating that their victory is a victory for the workers of the world, and saying we should all thank the heroic defenders of the city, I concluded saying, "We will do all we can to support you till the victory against your enemies."

The government holds Pakistan responsible for the continued rocket attacks on Kabul and has threatened retaliation against *mujahedin* bases inside Pakistan. In a letter to the United Nations secretary general, Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil warned that Afghanistan has "the capability to foil any such aggressions." The failure of the cease-fire seems to increase the possibility of a more direct confrontation between Afghanistan and Pakistan in the next few days. Dr. Gosem of the Kabul City Party Committee told today's meeting of ministry workers, "We have the ability to hit Pakistan" and "we will give Pakistan the same lesson we gave Britain."

On Monday, I had a brief conversation with a PDPA member in charge of the militia in a Kabul district. Hamid, 37, a philosophy teacher by profession, is a fluent Russian-speaker. A pistol at his side, he checked the positions of his young militiamen at each street corner, talking briefly with each of them. Men armed with Kalashnikovs are stationed at each intersection and in front of workplaces, hotels, offices, banks, etc.

The *mujahedin* are on the retreat, but this is still very much a country at war and a city under fire. ■

Soviet Miners...

(continued from page 1)

strike committee. *Le Monde* (14 July) reported, "The strikers—12,000 miners including 'hundreds of Communists'—have demanded the resignation of the city council and refuse further contact with the first secretary of the local party organization. They have also formed 'workers militias' which are maintaining order alongside the ordinary *militia* [police]... The press describes assemblies of miners in work clothes, the spread of the movement to other enterprises in the city and the progress of the negotiations which are broadcast into all the streets by loudspeakers." In a matter of days the strike spread to nine other mining towns. Workers from at least 17 factories joined the walkout in solidarity.

The strikers drew up a list of more than 40 demands, including calls for increased food supplies, winter clothing, improved maternity leave, anti-pollution measures and housing im-

Bolshevik Revolution.

The imperialist press would like to see in every expression of working-class discontent the seeds of a new Solidarność, the CIA-funded "union" led by clerical reactionaries in Poland. But Soviet workers have an abiding identification with their revolution. According to the West German news magazine *Der Spiegel* (17 July), the strike at Mezhdurechensk was called by a member of the Communist Party, lead worker Kokorin, and supported by the party secretary in the pit, Becker. *Spiegel* noted that "no anti-Soviet slogans were uttered." And when a spokesman for the pro-Western Democratic Union tried to speak at a miners meeting on the main square of Kemerovo, he was booed down. (Leaders of this anti-Communist outfit have received money from the notorious CIA conduit, the National Endowment for Democracy.)

On Saturday there were demonstrations throughout the area. On Sunday a regional strike committee met to hammer out a platform. UPI (16 July) reported a phone call from a *Trud* correspondent in the region:

"As we speak, strike committees from the coal towns have gathered in Proko-

interests of *all* the Soviet working class is *central planning based on soviet democracy*.

Workers Against Perestroika

Last year, as Gorbachev's glasnost opened the door to protests across the Soviet Union while perestroika threatened workers' living standards, we wrote: "Yet amid all this ferment the decisive social force in the Soviet Union—the working class—has *not yet* entered the political fray" ("Perils of Perestroika," *WV* No. 458, 29 July 1988). Recently, even Gorbachev's team of economists have been predicting a social explosion as their anti-worker, pro-market reforms produce shortages, speedup, pay cuts, price rises and layoffs. Populist demagogue Boris Yeltsin said the economic situation could produce "a revolutionary situation."

Now the voice of the Soviet workers is being heard. The Soviet press would like to present the Kuzbass strikes as support for perestroika. But as shortages spread, manipulated by speculators and profiteers, the hated Nepmen of today, Soviet workers are getting shafted—and they know it. As the main document of



Films Art et Science

Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky! Leon Trotsky, co-leader of 1917 Russian Revolution, addresses May Day rally in Red Square, Moscow. Banner salutes workers struggling against the "old world" of capitalist exploitation.

provements. According to *Le Monde*, they asked to "keep the enterprise canteens open on weekends because stores in the city are 'empty'; meat in the meals served underground; a cotton tunic for winter and also... 800 grams [a pound and a half] of soap and a clean towel each month." These demands are so indisputably, even pathetically, just that they have won wide sympathy from the working population, who see the Kuzbass miners speaking for them.

Feeling the heat from below, the official Council of Trade Unions gave its support to the strikes. Coal industry minister Shchadov rushed in from Moscow to negotiate. But the strikers rejected his proposals, declaring "we've had it" and breaking off negotiations. The strike spread to the neighboring town of Osinniki where construction workers downed tools, turning it into a citywide general strike. Delegations began to pour in from throughout the Kuzbass, an area the size of Belgium.

Desperate, on Thursday the government granted major concessions to the Mezhdurechensk miners, including wage increases and shift differentials reportedly totaling \$80 million. They also agreed to deliver thousands of much-needed disposable syringes for hospitals, demanded by the population after the recent uproar over an outbreak of AIDS spread by dirty needles. Strike leaders ordered a return to work, but instead miners held rallies outside the gates Friday morning. Thereupon the strike committee called for a regional general strike and issued an open letter to the Soviet government which also raised political demands, including the abolition of special privileges for the bureaucracy, and a new Soviet constitution to be drafted, publicly discussed and adopted by 7 November 1990, the anniversary of the

pievsk to formulate regional demands," he said. "At this very moment, the speeches are being heard live on the radio."

"The speeches were heard blaring over the long-distance line, illustrating the fervor gripping the coal belt."

Initially the Soviet press gave the miners strike unusual positive coverage, treating it as a warning to recalcitrant bureaucrats. As the movement continued and spread, the signals coming from Moscow changed. Coal minister Shchadov warned a mass meeting in Novokuznetsk on Saturday that Magnitka, the huge steel complex at Magnitogorsk, is "on the verge of stopping working" for lack of coal. And on Monday a Politburo member flew to the Siberian coal belt bearing an appeal signed by President Gorbachev and Premier Ryzhkov. Speaking to the Supreme Soviet, Ryzhkov asked the miners to end their stoppage, but opposed using force against the strike.

While previous strikes have been localized affairs, mainly protesting pay cuts resulting from perestroika, the openly political demands of the miners strikes point to an initial struggle by the working class to reclaim the political power stolen from it by the Stalinist bureaucracy decades ago. But so far the main demand has been for "independence" from the bloated coal industry bureaucracy in Moscow. The settlement reached in the Mezhdurechensk negotiations authorized each mine to run its own financial affairs as an independent state company beginning August 1. Within the framework of Gorbachev's market-oriented reforms, the Kuzbass miners want to get theirs. But this will only benefit the strongest, most profitable enterprises, producing harmful disparities—including *unemployment*—even among the Kuzbass miners. What is urgently needed in the

the Spartacist League's Eighth National Conference stated:

"Gorbachev's *perestroika* not only goes against the immediate material interests of most workers but also affronts their deep reservoir of collective feeling. At the same time, the regime's call for *glasnost* permits a degree of organized dissent against official policies.... The present situation in the Soviet Union is probably more favorable for the emergence of an *independent* workers movement than at any time since the 1920s."

—"Where Is Gorbachev's Russia Going?" *Spartacist* No. 41-42, Winter 1987-88

Ever since Stalin and his cohorts usurped political power from the working class in 1923-24, the bureaucracy has pretended to speak in the name of the proletariat on whose backs and on whose state their parasitic misrule rests. Meanwhile, Stalinist regimes have mercilessly crushed any independent movement of the workers, such as the Hungarian uprising of 1956 or the 1962 strike by Soviet workers in the industrial city of Novocherkassk in the Donets Basin. Barely a month ago, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* finally reported, 27 years later, on the protest by locomotive factory workers and women from the textile mills against food price rises ordered by Khrushchev, and the bloody repression as troops fired on a crowd of thousands waving red banners.

From the Donbass to the Kuzbass, Soviet miners have taken the lead. This time the Stalinist reformers are treating the Siberian protests gingerly. Already last fall when Gorbachev traveled to Krasnoyarsk, he was berated in the street by housewives complaining about shortages. In March, coal miners in Vorkuta, site of the former forced labor camp, won demands for a big pay raise. Now the entire press is praising the miners. Even *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, which

has acted as the mouthpiece for old-line Stalinist bureaucrats, noted that most people in authority had joined the strike committees: "That includes many Communists, trade union representatives and party secretaries." The miners have seen an opening and taken it. Strike committee member Yuri I. Shikharev said coyly, "Gorbachev himself called on us to start from the bottom if the top does not want to do it."

Gorbachev may succeed in settling the Kuzbass strikes. But they are a harbinger of events to come. Workers militias patrolling the streets, strike committees and mass strike meetings—this points to the formation of soviets, the workers councils which under Bolshevik leadership took power in the October Revolution. Even after the settlement in Mezhdurechensk, the strike committee became a "works committee" to oversee its implementation. Genuine soviets—not the pseudo-parliament which met recently in Moscow—will be the vehicle for restoring the revolutionary workers democracy that reigned under Lenin and Trotsky. With the impact of the nascent Chinese political revolution and its bloody suppression reverberating around the world, it is all the more urgent that the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country," common to all wings of the Stalinist bureaucracies, be countered with the Leninist perspective of world socialist revolution.

In the absence of working-class struggle, national conflicts are ripping apart the social fabric of the Soviet Union. On July 13 there was a pitched battle involving thousands over land and water rights on the border between Kirghizia and Tadzhikistan in Soviet Central Asia. (This was not far from the Fergana Valley in Uzbekistan where last month 100 people were killed and 40,000 Meshketian Turks were evacuated as a result of ethnic persecution.) And two days later fighting broke out between Georgians and Abkhazians in the Black Sea city of Sukhumi, leaving 14 dead. The imperialists have always dreamed of breaking up the USSR in an orgy of national hatred. But the Soviet workers, for whom November 7 remains a symbol of revolutionary inspiration, can transcend this nationalism in the name of internationalism. As we wrote recently:

"But working-class resistance to perestroika has to date remained passive, unorganized, without a political expression. That is why the political scene has been dominated by Gorbachevite reformers, pro-Western liberals, nationalists of all stripes, Pamyat fascists and populist demagogues like Yeltsin. An authentic Bolshevik party must be built anew in the Soviet Union, to combat not only the Stalinist betrayers of the revolution but *all* forms of nationalism and chauvinism, liberal and pacifist illusions, and outright capitalist restorationism. Such a party would raise on its banner, in Trotsky's words, 'the overthrow of the bureaucracy in the USSR and regeneration of Soviet democracy on a far higher economic and cultural basis than in 1918.'"

—"Soviet Elections: A Vote for What?" *WV* No. 475, 14 April

This is the program of proletarian political revolution, to return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky, to defend and extend the gains of October. ■

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New York, N.Y. Phone: (212) 267-1025



Workers Hammer
Miners' wives march through London in 1984 during yearlong coal strike. Labour Party, trade-union leaders knifed miners strike, blocked spread of class struggle that could have swept away Thatcher.

Britain...

(continued from page 4)

more adults live in your dwelling, the more dependents over 18 in a dwelling unit, the more the poll tax financially disables. And in England and Wales, if you can't or won't pay, you go to jail. In Victorian days, they had debtors' prison—now you don't even have to be in debt! Underscoring and exacerbating the class divide between the yuppie-dominated southeast of England and economically devastated regions to the north and west, the poll tax was first imposed on Scotland, an aspect as well of Scottish national oppression. More than 26,000 have already "officially disappeared from Scottish cities" to escape payment; in terms of all social services as well as the right to vote, they have become non-people.

There is plenty of social tinder for an explosion of class struggle in Thatcher's Britain. But the Labour/TUC misleaders work overtime to keep the rotting edifice of British capitalism intact. Organically linked to the Labour Party leadership, the trade-union bureaucrats seek to enhance Neil Kinnock's credentials as a reliable instrument to discipline the working class and administer the capitalist state. After ten years of Thatcherism, many working people may well believe that a Labour government would ease up the relentless pounding on their rights and living standards. Over the last few months, the Labourites have recouped considerable support, reflected in recent by-election victories in London and Glasgow and in the EEC Euro-elections.

But even in opposition, Labour has already made it clear it would also demand government-imposed ballots

before any strike, is not committed to the closed shop, would limit secondary picketing and is "totally opposed" to mass pickets of the kind that conjure up "images of Orgreave"—where thousands of militant miners confronted Thatcher's cossacks in a pitched battle in 1984. In fact, the Labour Party—from Kinnock to the oh-so-left Tony Benn—is "totally opposed" to any challenge to capitalist rule. With a million people in Scotland refusing to pay the extortionate poll tax, Labour's line is pay now and vote Labour later.

And where Labour treads, the Labour-loyal left follows. In March, the left-centrist Workers Power group was calling for a general strike to smash the poll tax. As Labour's electoral prospects—and the concrete possibilities of class struggle—have picked up, Workers Power's references to the general strike call have noticeably gone down. Indeed, Workers Power pointedly *refused* to call for a general strike when it was eminently appropriate, during the 1978-79 "winter of discontent," because a Labour government was in power. And that Labour government had no hesitation in calling out the army to break a militant firemen's strike.

In contrast to the rest of the left, the Spartacist League/Britain seeks to *split* the Labour Party, breaking its working-class base away from parliamentary reformism. The long, steady decline of British imperialism has periodically provoked social crises. But no matter how sharp the conflict, capitalism has survived because of the absence of a revolutionary leadership at the head of the working masses. Beyond a doubt, Britain today is overripe for revolution. The fundamental and indispensable condition for workers' victory remains the forging of a revolutionary party. ■

BT Cringes on Afghanistan Defense

Over the past decade Western imperialism waged a hysterical campaign against Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. For the anti-Soviet left, which quickly fell into line with the Carter/Reagan Cold War hysteria, our slogan "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" was anathema. After assiduously trying to duck the issue, last year the renegades of the so-called Bolshevik Tendency (BT) finally fessed up that they hated our angular Soviet-defensist stand. But they tried to cover their tracks by claiming to give "military support to the Soviets and their allies" against the CIA's *mujahedin* cut-throats (see "BT Protests Too Much," *WV* No. 453, 20 May 1988).

After Gorbachev treacherously withdrew Soviet troops last winter in order to appease U.S. imperialism, the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC) offered "to organize an international brigade to fight to the death" on the side of social freedom in Afghanistan. The BT response (1917, Summer 1989) was to ridicule the PDC offer as "bizarre," a cynical "publicity stunt," deriding the "utter unreality of the proposal." Alleging the "extremely unfavorable military and political situation" after the Soviet pullout, these gutless wonders went further, rejecting fighting under the military discipline of Stalinists. So much for the BT's "military support"!

Although the Kabul government declined the offer of an international brigade as militarily unnecessary at this time, shortly thereafter it proposed that the PDC participate in an international campaign to raise money for victims of the siege of Jalalabad. In two months over \$40,000 was raised. This rather surprising amount is testament to the increasing international solidarity, in particular among immigrant communities, for the embattled people of Afghanistan fighting imperialist-backed terrorists. But this is meaningless to the BT, who cannot comprehend a world view other than seen through the prism of imperialist anti-Sovietism. Indeed, the BT did not cough up one red cent for the PDC's Jalalabad Civilian Victims Aid Fund.

Behind the BT's cringing over Afghanistan is Stalinophobia. They make it utterly clear that if the Afghan government itself had appealed for an international military brigade, they would have said no:

"...it could have proved physically extremely hazardous for young militants (or guilt-ridden ex-members) identified with a 'Trotskyist' organization to place themselves under the 'control and direction' of the PDPA [People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan]—a Stalinist organization with a history of bloody purges within its own ranks."

—1917, Summer 1989

By extension, the BT is here saying it will *never* engage in military actions under Stalinist-led forces against counterrevolution and imperialism.

The BT's entire line on Afghanistan is an adaptation to rad-lib anti-Sovietism. This becomes quite clear if you compare it to their line on Nicaragua. Politically, there is *no essential difference* between the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and the Afghan PDPA. Both are radical petty-bourgeois nationalist regimes allied to the Soviet Union. A few years ago we undertook a successful campaign to raise money to aid the Nicaraguan government against the CIA-organized contras. A number of our comrades and sympathizers have gone to Nicaragua on work brigades under the control and direction of the Sandinista authorities.

But the BT has not (yet) denounced

these activities. Why not? Because there is general sympathy for the Sandinistas against the contras in the North American rad-lib milieu and pseudo-Trotskyist circles. But these same left liberals and fake-Trotskyists were violently hostile to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and have been generally supportive of the *mujahedin*. Hence the BT's anti-Soviet double standard on Afghanistan and Nicaragua.

The BT line on Afghanistan reeks of "Third Campism." In opposing the SL slogan "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" they asked rhetorically if we thought that "Trotskyists should have been 'hailing' the Stalinist apparatus" in the struggle against the Nazis. In fact, during World War II the Trotskyists certainly did hail the victories of the Red Army against Nazi Germany. In a 1942 speech commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, James P. Cannon declared:

"I say the whole world has been taken by surprise, including Stalin, who had no more confidence in the Red Army than he had in the power of the Soviet economy, than he has in the revolutionary powers of the workers generally. The Trotskyists were not taken by surprise. Trotsky predicted that imperialist attack on the Soviet Union would unleash marvels of proletarian enthusiasm and fighting capacity in the Red Army. He could do that because he, better than others, understood that the great motive power of the victorious revolution had not all been expended. *The Red Army that the world hails is an army created by a proletarian revolution.* [our emphasis]

—*Speeches for Socialism* (1971)

In the same issue of 1917 which ridicules the proposal for an international brigade for Afghanistan, there is a polemic against the slogan "The Klan Doesn't Ride in Moscow." We raised this slogan in mass labor/black mobilizations, initiated by the Spartacist League, which have in several cities stopped the Klan/Nazis over the past decade. The BT points to the ominous public emergence of the nativist fascists of Pamyat in Gorbachev's Russia. "Strictly speaking," says 1917, "the Klan doesn't ride in Moscow; but then, Pamyat doesn't ride in Washington."

What does the BT care? When we mobilized to stop the Klan from riding in Washington in November 1982 they were nowhere to be found. In fact, they demanded that instead we should have concentrated our efforts on the Canadian Chrysler strike. Now they condemn a slogan which was an expression of Soviet defensism, albeit a shallow and one-sided view of the *contradictions* in Soviet society reflecting the isolation and degeneration of the world's first workers state.

In typical Third Campist fashion, the BT *equates* the role of fascist groups in racist, capitalist America and in the Soviet Union. This negates the conquests of the Russian Revolution, which crushed the anti-Semitic Black Hundreds. The Klan rides in the American South because there was a political counterrevolution which overturned Radical Reconstruction after the Civil War. The victory of this counterrevolution isn't just in the white sheets of the KKK but in the blue uniforms of the state's police who are the main source of racist terror and murder in the U.S.

Although Pamyat might be protected by some elements of the Kremlin bureaucracy, it would take a social counterrevolution to overthrow the gains of the October Revolution and resurrect capitalist exploitation for Pamyat to ride in Moscow. In its own pathetic little way, the BT undermines the defense of the Soviet Union. ■

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For a Solid NYC Hospital Strike!

More than 20,000 members of hospital workers union Local 1199 from 53 New York City hospitals rallied outside the headquarters of the League of Voluntary Hospitals July 11 during a one-day strike demanding better pay and an end to understaffing. The 47,000 union members have been working without a contract since the beginning of the month. The tactic of the new 1199 leadership under Dennis Rivera is to have one-day strikes while demanding that the League match the earlier settlement with the Catholic hospitals (which included suspending payments to the pension fund).

Rather than mobilizing the union's power and seeking the backing of the rest of NYC labor to shut down the hospitals, they're looking to the capitalist politicians. Rivera's main efforts are going into the mayoral campaign of liberal black Democrat David Dinkins, who was a featured speaker at the July 11 rally.

The 1199 leaders are able to foist this piecemeal "strategy" on the combative, heavily black and Hispanic membership in large part due to the debacle of the 1984 strike. Then hospital workers held out for 44 days, took scores of arrests and stood up to massive fines imposed by the courts. Bowing to pressure from the state and

July 11: Hospital unionists rally in Central Park during one-day strike.



city government, then-president Doris Turner capitulated, proclaiming "victory." *Workers Vanguard* (No. 362, 14 September 1984) broke the story that the 1199 contract looted wages and benefits to pay off the hospitals' "deficits"!

The lesson of the 1984 strike isn't the futility of struggle, but rather the need for a union leadership that's willing to

defy the courts and that fights for a class-struggle workers party instead of looking to phony "friend of labor" politicians like Cuomo and Dinkins. After years of cutbacks and closings, New York City hospitals are in crisis with dangerously high occupancy rates and criminal understaffing in the midst of the AIDS epidemic and tens of thousands of homeless living in the

streets. Among working people in NYC there is near-universal support for the union's demand for better health care. A solid citywide hospital strike, uniting AFSCME workers in the municipal hospitals with 1199 members, as well as nurses and doctors, could bring the hospital bosses to their knees and advance the cause of decent health care for all.

NYC Raw...

(continued from page 12)

to keep the parks safe from the people. "No individual person shall lie upon or spread possessions upon a bench... reside in a park or sleep overnight or make preparation to sleep overnight... building a shelter or other structure for the purpose of comfort or protection during sleep." Also, "No person shall leave personal belongings unattended within or adjacent to any park for more than two consecutive hours." Begging or panhandling are prohibited "in all parks and streets adjacent to or abutting a park (including sidewalks of such abutting streets)." They even tried to ban

"activity by a person that reasonably appears to be intended to sexually arouse that person or another person," including exposure of "the area of the female breast below the top of the areola" (*New York Times*, 15 March).

Such bizarre bureaucratic prurient precision is a load of horseshit (they even stipulated diapers for the Central Park carriage horses—but not police horses!). It's all intended to drive out the homeless, as community activists stormily protested at a hearing in April, temporarily forcing the Commissioner to back down. This July's crackdown is in part Stern's revenge.

While Koch's cossacks brutally roust the homeless, bloody racist attacks go unchecked as the cops stand by. On July

4 a sinister mob of over 50 white racist skinhead punks invaded Washington Square Park to beat up leftist and homeless groups who planned to burn a flag as a political protest. "Burn the flag and we'll burn a fag," the neo-Nazi skinheads shouted, then went after a man who angrily yelled "Sieg Heil" at them, beating him with brass knuckles and beer bottles while police looked on until he was bloody. On their way to the park the skinheads earlier attacked the Anarchist Switchboard in the East Village. "We had a conference with the cops beforehand," a skinhead told a reporter, "we were on the same side as the cops. We would be helping them do their jobs, so we agreed that they wouldn't arrest us unless we got totally out of control"

(*Village Voice*, 18 July).

In Queens a pack of over 30 whites chased and beat up blacks celebrating July 4th. Fabrice Thebaud, a Florida businessman visiting his family for the holiday, was attacked along with his companions as they watched fireworks in a playground in Rosedale. They were then chased by a mob with baseball bats, knives and sticks, yelling racist epithets and threatening to kill them. The cops took over two hours to respond to an emergency call and refused to post a bodyguard at Thebaud's cousin's home, even though he was getting death threats. (*Daily News*, 7 July). In Brooklyn on July 9, three black youths walking home from their jobs at a Canarsie Roy Rogers were assaulted by a mob of bottle-throwing white teenagers. Screaming racial slurs, the whites kicked one youth in the head and groin; he's still in the hospital after undergoing two operations. No arrests were made.

New York City has been rubbed raw by racism and desperate poverty amid shameless wealth. The real-estate megamoguls "warehouse" apartments, holding them off the market to keep rents up, while city wrecking crews tear down empty buildings inhabited by squatters. Meanwhile, the capitalist politicians indulge in a mean-minded mayoral race to see whose "get tough on crime" pitch can best appeal to racist voters. And New Yorkers able to read their newspapers between subway breakdowns in stifling pitch-black tunnels got a glimpse of the unbelievable greed and arrogance of the real "princes of the city." Hotel "Queen" Leona Helmsley's former housekeeper testified at the Helmsleys' extortion trial that this Marie Antoinette of the tourist trade made her pay for food she bought for the house, while telling her, "We don't pay taxes—the little people pay taxes."

They made a revolution in France 200 years ago over that kind of thing—we're certainly overdue for one here. In the meantime, the homeless in Tompkins Square Park's desolation row should move their things into Helmsley Palace and Trump Towers! ■

Bush Ducks...

(continued from page 3)

hitting the lecture circuit to give his Hitler-style "stab in the back" speech. North rebaited Congress for "giving Central America away to Communists" while the Congressional Iran/contra committee's hollow threat of a new investigation comes to naught. Liberals like the *New York Times'* Anthony Lewis complain that North's defenders want an "all-powerful Presidency"

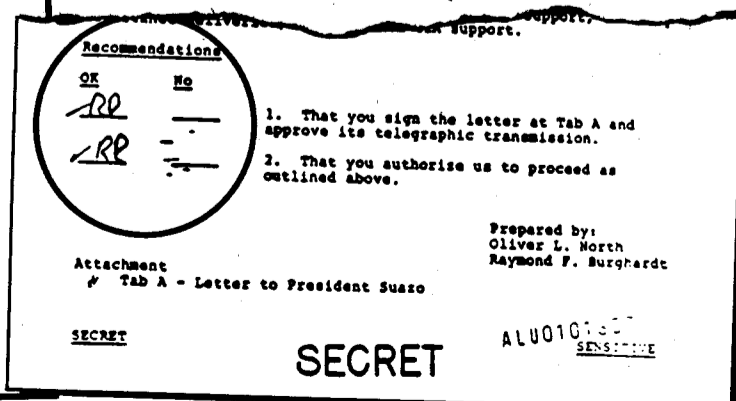
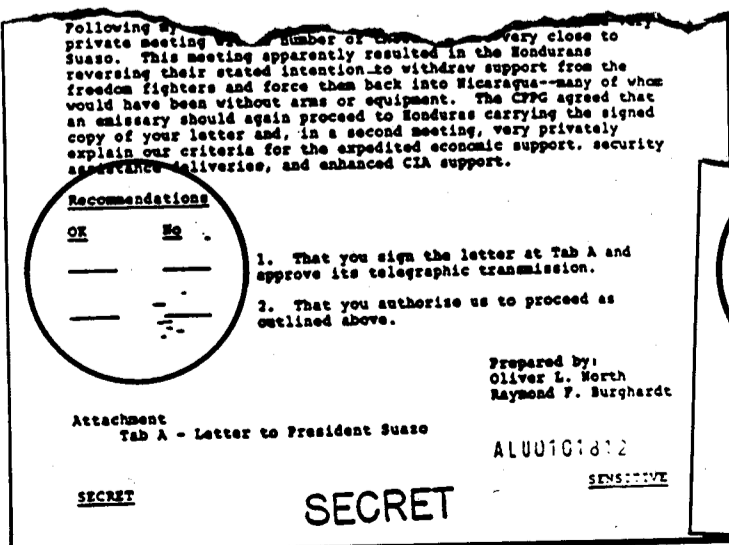
which would undermine constitutional checks on foreign policy. But the various Congressional "oversight" committees did nothing but overlook the not-so-secret operations being run out of the White House basement.

Newsweek (17 July) commented after North's sentencing, "Yet somehow Iran-contra was never taken quite as seriously as Watergate." Why is not hard to figure out. After American imperialism was beaten in Indochina by the heroic Vietnamese fighters, and the Watergate scandal forced Nixon out of the White

House, the last thing either capitalist party wants is another commander in chief down the tubes. As we wrote in "The Bush File" (*WV* No. 468, 6 January) before the North trial began:

"The Democrats didn't nail Reagan and Bush on the Iran/Contra affair because these covert operations are the stock in trade of the declining American empire in its desperate worldwide crusade for counterrevolution. The network Bush brought into play are the hit men for imperialism in its death agony, and it will take world socialist revolution to put this Company out of business for good." ■

Iran/contra committees received doctored version of key document (left), minus Ronald Reagan's initialed approval. Now Democrats say switch was "honest mistake."



Coal Fields...

(continued from page 12)

moving fast enough on the narrow, twisting roads with 100-foot drops on either side. Overhead are police and company helicopters spying on pickets and ferrying scabs holed up in bunkers at struck mines.

There is also a private army of gun thugs working alongside the cops and the courts to terrorize strikers. Vance International is a vicious scabherding outfit run by Gerald Ford's son-in-law, formerly with the Secret Service. Vance deploys mercenaries fresh from Central America where they joined the contra scum murdering Nicaraguan peasants. This is the outfit that A.T. Massey used against the UMW during their 1984-85 strike; now they're working for Pittston Coal to break the UMW. Another notorious union-busting outfit, Nuckols

Jones auxiliary, their kids staging school boycotts, *the miners are at war*. But they are saddled with generals who have no stomach for a fight.

Camp Solidarity

On a road outside Clinchfield dotted with miners' homes a posted signboard proclaims: "Scabs you better run like hell. We're sick and tired of going to jail." Signs on a UMW hall proclaim "Unity, Solidarity, Strength," while displaying a giant check for \$71,000 to the Pittston miners from District 11 miners in Indiana. The roof of a shed is painted with a declaration of what they're fighting for: "Our Kids, Our Lives, Our Union—UMWA."

In Russell County off Virginia Route 63 there is Camp Solidarity, established two weeks into the strike and run by United Mine Workers members. At the camp WV reporters met auto workers and steel workers from North and South

that they have witnessed cops putting sawed-off shotguns to the heads of miners stopped alongside Virginia roads.

An Ohio miner at Camp Solidarity said that "the government is the one that's fighting with the union. They're spending \$1 million a month on the state police." At a strike rally in nearby St. Paul on July 12, over 2,000 incensed miners from Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Alabama and Pennsylvania demanded freedom for UMW brother Roy Glovier. A federal judge tried to make an example out of him, sentencing Glovier to three months in jail for "going slow." The state troopers are so hated that miners picket the motels where they are lodged, from Norton to Lebanon, Virginia, and even motel owners tried to evict them (they were enjoined by court orders).

The miners have the militancy, the unity, the organizational capacity and the sympathy of trade unionists around

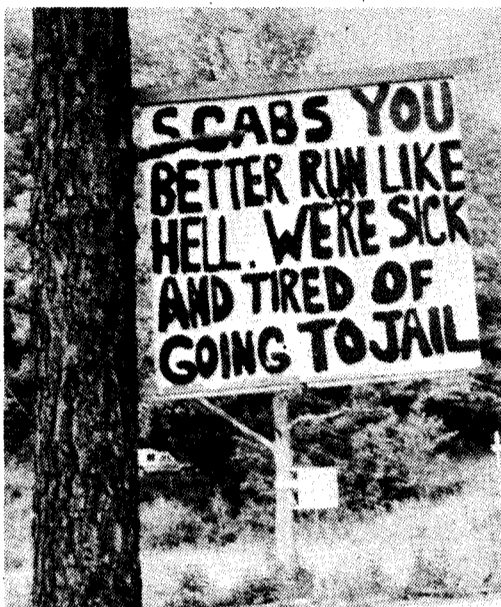
for the Pittston strikers! The scab coal must be *stopped!* It should be stopped at the pit, stopped on the highway, stopped on the Chessie and the Norfolk & Western, stopped on the docks—anywhere!

PR ploys won't win this strike—hard class struggle will. And that requires a leadership that's independent of the bosses and their parties. The Democratic Party governors of West Virginia and Virginia that Trumka pins his hopes on to "intervene" in the Pittston strike are capitalist politicians whose job is to preserve this system. *Virginia Business* (March 1986) noted: "For nearly a decade, the political lore of isolated Southwest Virginia has read like a bank statement. Eight coal company executives gave [Virginia governor] Baliles just under \$215,000, not to mention occasional use of company planes and helicopters. . . . In return, the coal barons expect their candidates to oppose a severance tax and to use state troopers to keep the mines open during strikes."

A working-class *political* program is needed to win the coal wars. In 1972, Arnold Miller was elected UMW chief as a "reform" candidate after Boyle and his hired killers were ousted. We warned then that Miller was beholden to the Labor Department and the Democratic Party. Soon miners were wildcatting every summer, as the union tops worked hand in glove with the courts to squelch labor struggle. In the great coal strike of 1977-78, miners held out for 110 days, burning Democratic president Carter's Taft-Hartley injunctions. *Three times* they turned down contracts negotiated by Miller and the BCOA. But finally they were stuck with Miller's sellout. *Break with the Democrats—build a class-struggle workers party!*

A class-struggle leadership must put forward a program for victory in the Pittston battle. Delegates should be elected from among the working miners, the pensioners, the Daughters of Mother Jones auxiliary—everyone who's in this fight for real—and send them to Camp Solidarity to meet together and decide how to wage this strike to win. And that means taking on the state—rip up the injunctions, can the fines, demand all charges be dropped against strikers and their supporters! And fight to free all the class-war prisoners, including the five Kentucky UMW brothers railroaded for defending picket lines during the A.T. Massey strike and abandoned by the UMW International to rot in prison.

An elected strike committee would mobilize the entire union for struggle, with strike benefits for all miners on strike. And that musn't depend just on the resources of the UMW: a call should be sent out to the entire American labor movement. The support already being shown—the food, the money, the caravans to Camp Solidarity—must be generalized. *Win this strike* and turn that victory into a launching pad for a massive organizing drive; bring the non-union mines back into the UMW! A victory over Pittston will be a blow against union-busters throughout the country. ■



WV Photos

Left, miners at St. Paul, Virginia rally angered as scab coal rolls by in Norfolk and Western coal train. Above, sign along road near Clinchfield.

Inc., is protecting non-union mines in West Virginia.

After the courts slapped injunctions on the Pittston strikers' sitdowns in front of company gates, the miners resorted to "rolling blockades" on the highways. On July 12, the state's uniformed thugs arrested a nun in a Winnebago for going too slow trying to deliver medical supplies to a pregnant woman. WV reporters, on their way from the Moss No. 3 processing plant picket line to a rally in St. Paul, were forced off the road through a fence into a miner's front yard by a scab coal truck barreling down a narrow road around a blind corner. Of course, the cops ticketed our reporters.

Pittston Coal president Michael Odom told the press, "I've got a war to run." Pittston, king of U.S. metallurgical coal exporters, left the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) in 1987, arranged a \$100 million credit line with several banks, hired the same union-busting lawyers and the same goons used against A.T. Massey strikers, then callously cut off 1,500 retirees' insurance benefits. But Pittston watched helplessly while miners turned injunctions into scrap paper as production plummeted to a fraction of pre-strike levels. Now coal output is down by 90 percent in all of West Virginia, and nationally production dropped by a third.

It's war, all right, and Pittston is fighting as dirty as it can. But where is the miners' leadership in the coal war? For over a year, Pittston miners worked without a contract before Trumka finally pulled them out in April. Trumka wants to run the strike by the bosses' rules served up with lawyers' talk about a "corporate campaign" and "civil disobedience" tactics that mean mass arrests while the coal trucks keep rolling. Dressed in camouflage fatigues, living in camps in the woods, wives mobilized in the Daughters of Mother

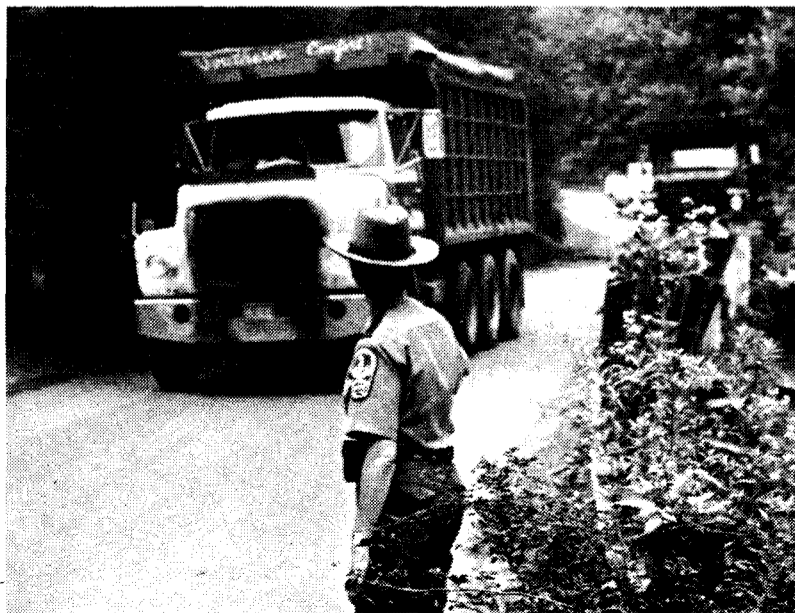
Carolina, miners from Alabama to Virginia, and UMW retirees whose presence is the living embodiment of the class-struggle tactics which built the UMW into a powerful workers organization. A few months ago Camp Solidarity was an abandoned field; now over 100 tents have been erected, 1,000 miners and their supporters are fed daily, and demonstrations are organized on a moment's notice.

There is no end to the stories that miners tell about the viciousness of the cops and courts—agents of the coal bosses. A 12-year-old boy was left abandoned by police who hauled away his miner father, then the cops arrested the miner's friends who came to pick up the boy—leaving him by the side of the road again! The widow of a Pittston miner said: "My husband worked for Pittston for 32 years. He passed away of Lou Gehrig's disease February 17th of 1988. Two weeks before he died, the New Year's gift we got from this company was the news that we no longer had health care coverage." Miners' pickets at the Clinchfield No. 2 portal told WV

the country that are needed to beat Pittston Coal and strike a great blow against the decade-long war on labor. But without a leadership with the program and the will to win, the battle against Pittston could go the way of the Eastern strike, where the militancy of the airline strikers has been dissipated by "leaders" who look to the capitalist courts rather than labor's power.

For a Class-Struggle Leadership!

Instead of leading the battle in the coal fields, UMW leader Trumka spends his time in stunts like appealing to the Boston City Council to plead with the local Shawmut Bank not to do business with Pittston! When the memorial period began on July 10, Trumka was at a meeting in New York with the head of a major Japanese steel company and importer of American coal. Trumka joined Democratic West Virginia Senator Jay Rockefeller and the president of the West Virginia Coal Association in pledging reliable supplies of coal from UMW miners. This is a stab in the back



WV Photos

State troopers protect scab coal truck at Moss No. 3 plant, July 12 (left). WV reporters' car forced off road by scab coal truck (right).

WORKERS VANGUARD

Coal Fields Under Siege

ST. PAUL, Virginia, July 18—There's a war going on in the heart of Appalachian mining country. An army of cops and coal company thugs have invaded the highways and mining towns of southwestern Virginia to run scab coal. They're trying to crush the determination of the United Mine Workers (UMW) ranks to win the 3-1/2 month old strike against Pittston Coal Company. The Pittston strikers have been joined by over 50,000 of the union's 65,000 active miners across ten states. This is a showdown for the UMW and an important battle for all American labor.

These miners have endured nearly 3,000 arrests and millions of dollars in fines. Following a union rally in Charleston, West Virginia on June 11 to support the 1,700 Pittston strikers, the battle spread to include almost all union miners east of the Mississippi. Initially the UMW tops denounced the wildcats. For nearly a month, the government—despite its court injunctions, its federal marshals and state troopers, and its huge, constantly escalating fines against the UMW (now over \$4 million)—couldn't force the miners back into the pits.

Faced with the accomplished fact of a nationwide strike by the ranks, UMW president Richard Trumka called a three-day "memorial" period starting July 10 explicitly to "cool out" the miners' militancy. When it was clear miners would not go back to work on the 14th, he extended it to the end of the week. Then he had to extend it again for Districts 6 and 31. But as *WV* goes to



Don Petersen/Roanoke Times and World News

State troopers arrest strikers trying to stop scab trucks at Moss No. 3 plant in April. As strikes spread across ten states, miners stood fast: rally in St. Paul, Virginia, July 12 (right).



WV Photo

press, striking miners in southern West Virginia's coal fields continue their picket lines in defiance of the International's call to return to work. A Logan County union official stated on Monday, July 17, that "Everybody is out. They were out in full force last night. They are not going back until this thing is settled with Pittston."

"Trumka's riding the back of a tiger," Leo Troy, a labor expert at Rutgers

University, told the *Wall Street Journal* (17 July). "If he tries to get off, he'll be devoured." The *Journal* reported that union officials told them "frustration and anger in the coalfields have been building up because, over the years, producers have been shifting coal reserves from union-operated mines to non-union subsidiaries, a move that has left UMW miners fearful that work one day will simply run out."

A *Workers Vanguard* reporting team traveled to southwestern Virginia last week where a virtual state of siege has been imposed to keep coal moving. Highway patrol cars are clustered every 1,000 feet on state Route 63. Police "bomb squads" with sniffer dogs comb the woods around mine sites. Federal marshals ride shotgun with state troopers arresting and jailing motorists not

continued on page 11

Cops Drive Homeless Out of Tompkins Square Park

New York City Raw

Tompkins Square Park on Manhattan's Lower East Side was invaded again on the night of July 5: over 250 cops, some in riot gear, and park rangers with dump trucks swept in with no warning. Hundreds of homeless people were evicted, their belongings thrown into garbage trucks. Many community activists were temporarily absent marching in a pro-abortion demonstration when cops closed the streets around Tompkins Square, positioning snipers on rooftops and sealing off the park to brutally trample the makeshift shelters of the homeless, as ordered by Parks Commissioner Henry Stern.

While outraged local residents watched, a woman yelled, "These are people's homes!" But to Koch and his officious minions, the homeless are just so much human refuse to be pushed out of sight; the few possessions of these people with nowhere else to go—their mattresses, sleeping bags, tents and shopping carts—are

just "debris." With infinite bureaucratic cruelty, Commissioner Stern laid down a new "regulation" setting up the raid: the poor as well as the rich can sleep on the grass or on a bench, but they better not try to protect themselves from the rain or cold.

"They can't even let them have a piece of plastic to cover their sick bodies in the park," said community activist Clayton Patterson, who took videotapes of last summer's violent cop assault on the park. Last August over 450 of Koch's cops launched a full-scale police riot in the park to enforce the "gentrification" driving up rents and driving out *Loisaida* (Lower East Side) residents and the homeless. Over 100 complaints of police brutality were filed, but a year later the only result, in the face of a solid wall of cop silence, has been a few token transfers of police.

Meanwhile, city bureaucrats feverishly scribbled away at new rules

continued on page 10



Kevin Cohen/NY Post

War against the homeless: cops invade Tompkins Square Park July 5, arresting over 30.