

Smash Apartheid! For Workers Revolution!

South Africa: Blacks Defy Apartheid Elections

As South Africa's whites trekked to the polls on September 6 to vote for the racist candidate of their choice, the country's oppressed and disenfranchised black majority registered its vote—and its power—in the factories and streets. Mines, mills, shops and schools were shut down and buses, trains and taxis idled as some two to three million black workers—far more than the number of whites voting—staged a massive two-day stayaway strike to protest the apartheid elections. The London *Independent* (7 September) reported: "With 90 per cent of urban workers estimated to be on strike, Cape Town, like Johannesburg and Durban, was as deserted as on a Sunday, eloquently demonstrating the degree to which the country's economy depends on non-white labour..." Once again, the black proletariat has shown it has the power, standing at the head of all the oppressed, to *bring down* apartheid capitalism.

The general strike capped a six-week "defiance campaign" against the apartheid elections. Organized by the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), which includes the now-banned United Democratic Front and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), this was the first sustained and most widespread wave of anti-apartheid protest since the brutal suppression of the township rebellions of 1984-85. The MDM protests directly defied the "state of



September 15—Ten thousand at Johannesburg police headquarters protest state terror against blacks in racist elections. AP/Wide World

emergency" imposed three years ago and a frenzy of murderous repression called out by National Party president F.W. de Klerk. And on election day there were protests in at least 20 cities.

Armored cars terrorized the townships, cops chased down demonstra-

tors, and riot police charged into groups of schoolchildren peacefully demonstrating, whipping them with heavy leather *sjamboks*. In the days leading up to the elections, police stormed a cathedral to suppress an anti-apartheid rally and arrest liberal anti-apartheid leaders

Desmond Tutu and Allan Boesak. Cops invaded the offices of COSATU and the home of its general secretary, Jay Naidoo, arresting eleven trade unionists. On August 30, over 200 women were arrested while on their way *continued on page 12*

Practicing for Racist Martial Law

Bush Flexes Military Muscle in St. Croix

Leave it to the Bush administration to use even a natural disaster to whip up hysteria for a military exercise in racist repression. At the direction of the former CIA director in the White House, 16 Air Force C-141 transports landed on St. Croix September 21 in the wake of Hurricane Hugo. They were bringing not water, not food, but... 1,200 U.S. troops, "to suppress the violence." More accurately, they were sent there to protect property values of white real estate interests, on this island which is three-quarters black, while pandering to a racist media barrage. Officials in St. Croix, one of the Virgin Islands, complained that "the Bush administration was more interested in deploying troops than airlifting relief supplies." Something sinister is going on here.

The hurricane wreaked havoc from the Caribbean to the Carolinas this week, cutting a swath through Puerto Rico, including San Juan, and virtually destroying some smaller islands such as

Montserrat and Culebra. A newsman who flew over St. Croix told *WV* that the devastation "looked like Hiroshima without the radioactivity." With no food, water, electricity or phones, people on St. Croix became desperate to get food and water. White merchants, panicked tourists and ham radio operators put out stories of roving bands of machete-wielding crazies and "rapists" escaping from prison to imperil white womanhood. Tabloid headlines screamed "Anarchy" and "Island of Fear." An NBC-TV report claimed a Coast Guard cutter had exchanged gunfire with "Rastafarians" on shore who had shouted "Leave the island to us!"

On St. Croix, the worst stories of "anarchy" that reporters could produce were scenes of National Guardsmen helping in the "looting" and giving away things. A witness was horrified seeing "50 people sitting on the street, trying on sneakers." The *Times* mentioned that *continued on page 10*



Ft. Bragg military police armed with M-16s in St. Croix. AP/Wide World

Black Student Thrown Out of Class on Civil War

No Jim Crow at S.F. State!

Something very ugly is afoot at San Francisco State University. Under the robes of academia, professors are peddling open racist lies about the history of this country, the better to justify the inequalities of the present. Courses on the Civil War, the Second American Revolution which put an end to slavery, are introduced with KKK recruiting films like *Birth of a Nation* (originally titled *The Clansman*). Black students who challenge this crap are abused like "uppity Negroes" and kicked out of the classroom. One young woman decided to fight back, and now students—black, Latin, Asian, white, gay—are incensed and organizing to do something about it.

On September 11, Cindy Nolan, a

black student and member of the Spartacus Youth Club, attended the first session of Professor Barbara Loomis' course on the Civil War. Cindy spotted D.W. Griffith's pro-slavery *Birth of a Nation* on the syllabus. The son of a Confederate soldier, D.W. Griffith was a vicious racist whose film vilified Reconstruction, glorified the Klan and fueled the revival of the terrorist KKK. The NAACP launched vigorous protests of the film and tried to block its release, but President Woodrow Wilson, who was pushing segregationist legislation, endorsed it at a private screening at the White House, as did Edward White, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and a "former" Klansman. Klansmen timed the burning of a



Cindy Nolan speaks at defense rally September 18 at S.F. State.

Young Spartacus

cross on Stone Mountain with the movie's release in Atlanta and ran recruitment posters in local papers next to ads for the film. One Yankee filmgoer proclaimed, "It makes me want to go out and kill the first Negro I see," as "Ku-Klux fever" spread in the North as well.

The effect of pushing KKK propaganda in classrooms today while minority students are under attack on campuses across the country was played out in Loomis' class. Professor Loomis, with her "Gone With the Wind" syllabus, brooked no debate with Cindy, giving a green light to racists who then barraged Cindy with fighting words like "black slaves were lazy and goofed off a lot," that "poor whites were the real victims of slavery," that Chinese immigrant workers, who were victims of murderous racist pogroms and repression in California, were "treated well." Refusing to abide by Loomis' appeal for "self-imposed censorship," Cindy was told she "didn't belong," ordered to leave the room and dropped from the course.

The Spartacus Youth Club fought back—and in the process found many other students who had also been degraded and victimized at this school. One black woman told how she had been driven out of a class for objecting to the screening of *Birth of a Nation* on the first day of her history course! Another told how she was given an "incomplete" in a psychology course for challenging the professor's assertion that "black women have babies differently from white women." A lesbian woman complained of another psychology professor who made anti-homosexual remarks and claimed that blacks were oppressed "for genetic reasons." Many are eager to challenge "bigotry as usual" at SF State. On September 14, Cindy addressed an abortion rights rally on campus:

"This class is supposed to be on the Civil War, it's supposed to be on the smashing of chattel slavery, and the only black in the class—me—is kicked out! So who's this class really for?... This racist incident comes in a wave of a whole growing tide of race-terror. You have a racist murder of Yusuf Hawkins in Bensonhurst, New York. He was in the 'wrong place,' he was a black and didn't have the 'right' to be there too, he 'didn't belong' in the neighborhood. He was murdered.

"What the racists are trying to do in this country, and what the administration on this campus is doing to help, is turn back the hands of the clock. What they want is 'white only' pre-1954 segregation!... Any decent student, white or black, on this campus is a potential victim of this kind of racial harassment and the kind of anti-scientific things that these teachers are trying to put forth. "So we call on all decent, anti-racist students to come out on Monday...to have a militant demonstration against this racist expulsion, so that black students can get an education just as well as any other student on this campus! We want all of you to be there because all of you know a lot more about the history of the Civil War than this teacher does.... A white student asked me, 'But I'm white, why should I be there?' And I

said, 'That's the whole point. What they're trying to do is keep whites against blacks and vice versa.'

Dozens of students signed up to help build a protest of this racist outrage. Students announced the demonstration on graffiti chalkboards in the bathrooms, and filled the boards with comments against racism on campus. You could hear a pin drop in the usually boisterous cafeteria when SYC members came through to announce the demo, and students as well as campus workers grabbed up leaflets. On the evening of September 18, as Barbara Loomis' shamefully segregated "History 424" reconvened, a very integrated demonstration of over 50 people chanted outside, "Protest Jim Crow 424! It's time to finish the Civil War!" and "From Bensonhurst to SF State, workers and students must fight race-hate!"

Twenty years ago, minority students took over San Francisco State University in the militant 1969 student strike. That spectre still haunts the administration today. (They tried "banning" the Spartacists five years ago, only to be defeated when we spoofed their totalitarian red hunt by going "underground" as "Xandra and the Red Avengers"!.) Now director of student activities Russ Natson has declared the anti-racist protest "an illegal demonstration" and has revoked "official recognition" of the Spartacus Youth Club on the campus he patrols like an apartheid bantustan! The SYC swiftly responded with a petition campaign to "protest the exclusion of Cindy Nolan from History 424 and demand that the administration cease and desist its harassment of the Spartacus Youth Club." Six different student organizations took petitions and several have invited the SYC to address their meetings on how to fight back.

What's happening at San Francisco State is not an isolated phenomenon. On September 21, at San Francisco City College (a school with 70 percent minority enrollment) Black Student Union posters were defaced with Nazi swastikas, skulls and crossbones and racist death threats: "Niggers Beware. Hands off Whites. Or Die!" At the College of San Mateo, a "free speech" newspaper called *Monday Morning Blues* ran a slimesheet of slurs against Asians, signed by one "Jubal Early." Jubal Early was a lieutenant general in the Confederate Army! The American Civil War is as relevant to Asian immigrants as it is to blacks or anyone else fighting for equality in this country. As Cindy Nolan stated:

"In 1989 a black woman is still denied access to a college class—because I dare to challenge those who would reverse the verdict of the Civil War. Today KKK race-terrorists—the 'ghosts of the Confederacy'—spew racist filth to mobilize for genocide. We have to stop them and the way to do it is by mobilizing the power of the integrated, organized labor movement to finish the Civil War with a third American revolution, a socialist revolution that will make good on the promise of racial equality." ■



TROTSKY

East Germany and Political Revolution

In June 1953, East Germany was the scene of the first mass proletarian uprising against Stalinist bureaucratic rule. The workers' protests defied the collectivized foundations of the East German deformed workers state and called on their class brothers in the West to "clean out your crap in Bonn." Fighting against the pro-Stalinist revisionism of Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel which destroyed the



LENIN

Fourth International, the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party of James P. Cannon championed the East German workers uprising as a vindication of the perspective of proletarian political revolution, and called for the reunification of Germany on a socialist basis.

Briefly, what did the East German uprising reveal?

1. It showed that the working class was the initiating and decisive force in leading the people to revolt.
2. It disclosed the colossal power and potentialities of the workers' movement which united all currents of labor opinion in massive protest. Virtually the entire working class opposed itself to the regime and all its agencies, beginning with the SED.
3. The unpopular government was sprung into midair without any support amongst the people. Its main props, the party, the police and the top bureaucracy, crumbled and collapsed under the impact of the uprising.
4. The advanced workers broke in action with the government party, the SED.
5. They evinced determination to overthrow the regime, not to reform it. This repudiation and rejection was implicit in the demand for "a metal-workers government." The sum total of the other demands were incompatible with the continuance of the dictatorship.
6. The general mass political strike, sparked by immediate economic demands and directed against the government, became the means for mobilizing the masses and pitting them against the regime.
7. The Trotskyist program of the necessity of political revolution against Stalinism by a mass uprising was vindicated and adopted in action by the insurgent workers.
8. The unarmed and unsupported masses had to fall back. They felt the need for the formation of a revolutionary leadership and a party to organize the next stages and link it up with the struggles in the West and the buffer zone countries.

—"Against Pabloist Revisionism" (November 1953)

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Black Political Prisoner on Death Row

Join the Fight to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Philadelphia Rally, October 14

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a death row political prisoner. A Black Panther Party spokesman at the age of 14, a prominent journalist known as a supporter of Philadelphia's MOVE organization, former president of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Association of Black Journalists. For his political views and activities the racist capitalist courts have sentenced Abu-Jamal to die. The name of Mumia Abu-Jamal must be made a rallying cry in the fight against injustice and synonymous with the fight against the barbaric death penalty. Save Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Death Penalty!

The "voice of the voiceless" is again being heard—Abu-Jamal's columns are now being published in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, *Atlanta Inquirer*, *Savannah Herald*, New York's *Big Red News*, *Bakersfield News Observer*, San Francisco's *Sun Reporter*, *San Francisco Metro Reporter*, *Jackson Advocate*, Alabama's *Greene County Democrat* and *Workers Vanguard*. From Paris to the San Francisco Bay Area over 9,000 people—union officials, civil rights organizations, death penalty abolitionists, religious leaders—have demanded of the Pennsylvania governor that Abu-Jamal not die.

Chicago's Amalgamated Transit Union Local 308 and Cleveland's Communications Workers of America Local 4309 have written Governor Casey on Abu-Jamal's behalf. Congressmen Ron Dellums and John Lewis, Wisconsin state representative David Clarenbach and Massachusetts state representative Byron Rushing wrote Governor Casey, as did Chicago Aldermen Bobby Rush and Danny Davis, who said Mumia's "fight should become the fight of all those who seek justice and love mercy."

Among the many rallying to Mumia's support are television's Edward Asner and Sabrina LeBeauf of "The Cosby Show"; Pat Turner, widow of blues great "Big Joe" Turner; Rev. Daniel Berrigan; Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Jack Healey, executive director of Amnesty International; and Robert Bryan, chairperson of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

Don't let them murder this courageous fighter for the oppressed. Take a stand against "legal" lynching. Mobilize your unions, community and civil rights organizations. Send your letters demanding Abu-Jamal not be executed to: Governor Robert Casey, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120. Join us in Philadelphia to rally against the death penalty on October 14 (see ad). Take a stand with the PDC contingent at the March Against Executions in San Francisco on October 21.

We print below excerpted letters demanding Mumia not be executed.

JoNina M. Abron
Assistant Editor, *The Black Scholar*,
Oakland, California

I am a former member of the Black Panther Party and a former editor of *The Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*. I know from firsthand experience the racist treatment to which African-Americans like Mr. Abu-Jamal are subjected when they take a strong stand against the many injustices suffered by black people.

Ronald V. Dellums
Member of Congress, Oakland, California

Having reviewed the basic facts of the case, the failure to call witnesses, the jury selection, Mr. Abu-Jamal's injuries at the time of the incident, and the circumstances leading up to and following the shooting, I am deeply troubled by the conviction and sentence. While it remains for the Court to determine the

substantive and procedural fairness of the trial, I appeal to you in your capacity as governor to remove the cloud of death from Mr. Abu-Jamal.

Beyond the fact that I believe that utilization of the death penalty is unbecoming of a modern, civilized society, I believe that the circumstances of this case compel a rejection of this most ultimate sanction. I join with many others in urging you to commute this sentence, and to spare the life of one who seems perhaps to have met his accusers on the spoiled ground of political entanglement.

Rev. Graylan S. Ellis-Hagler
Northeast Coordinator, Church of the United Community, Roxbury, Massachusetts

Under no circumstance should the State put themselves in a place to judge who lives and who dies. The act of judgment resulting in death should only rest with God and not any state. Also, as we look across the country, one easily realizes that who serves on Death Row and faces death at the hands of the State are almost always poor people and usually people-of-color. Which automatically says to us, that the use of Capital Punishment is both classist and racist.

Pat Farren
Editor, *Peacework*, Publication of American Friends Service Committee, Cambridge, Massachusetts

To have a man on death row essentially for political reasons, because his outspoken views were offensive to those in power and because the color of his skin made him appear expendable, is absolutely outrageous. This adds up to the premeditated murder of a political prisoner; beyond the basic immorality of capital punishment and the fact that there is deep doubt about the circumstances of the crime, the fact that Mumia Abu-Jamal is being punished for his race and for his politics is a triple level of immorality.

James W. Ryder
President, ILWU Local 6, San Francisco, California

It is true that I, personally, and my Local and International Unions deplore the death penalty, but in this particular case, it is most compelling that you reject the death penalty and commute the sentence of Mr. Abu-Jamal. His life should not be sacrificed as part of a larger political battleground.

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Abolish the Death Penalty!

Stop Racist "Legal" Lynchings!



Jackson/Times Picayune

Sponsors/Speakers

- William Babcock**, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Prison Society
- Charles Brover**, Co-Chairman, Partisan Defense Committee
- Sister Falaka Fattah**, President, House of UMOJA Boystown*
- Muriel Feelings**, Director, Pan-African Studies Community Education Program of Temple University (PASCEP)
- Wadiya Jamal**, Wife of Mumia Abu-Jamal, MOVE supporter
- Harold Jamison** of the New York *Amsterdam News**
- I Abdul Jon**, Mumia Abu-Jamal supporter, MOVE supporter
- Raymond Martinez, Jr.**, Vice President, Philadelphia Chapter, Pennsylvania Social Services Union SEIU Local 668*
- David P. Richardson, Jr.**, President, National Black Caucus of State Legislators,* Pennsylvania State Representative
- Sonia Sanchez**, Poet
- Pamela S. Tucker**, President and Co-Founder, Western Pennsylvania Coalition Against the Death Penalty*
- Charles Valenta**, President, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers Union Local 1034*
- Lois A. Williamson**, Executive Director, Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE)*

*Organization for identification purposes only.

Saturday, October 14, 3:00 p.m.

Temple University, Gladfelter Hall, Room 107

Hosted by Pan-African Studies Community Education Program (PASCEP)

12th and Berks Streets

Refreshments Available

For information contact: **State Representative David Richardson**, 6345 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144
Partisan Defense Committee, Suite 92, 1530 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102

(215) 849-6592
(215) 222-7880

Anti-Communist Frenzy Over East German "Dropouts"

The following article is translated from Spartakist No. 63, September/October 1989, newspaper of the Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands.

The biggest mass outflow from East Germany since the Berlin Wall was built in 1961 has precipitated a sharp confrontation between capitalist West Germany and the East German bureaucratically deformed workers state. Since Hungary opened its border with Austria in early September for East Germans heading for West Germany, the number coming this route presently totals 17,000. In addition, more than 50,000 citizens of the German Democratic Republic (DDR—East Germany) have legally emigrated to the Federal Republic (West Germany) so far in 1989. The West German media is having an anti-Communist field day whipping up the mass flight "psychosis." East Germans listening to the bombastic, minute-by-minute reports on West German TV said that they sounded like "victory reports in wartime."

In addition to an expected 100,000-plus East Germans, the Federal Republic is bringing in half a million ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) this year from the Soviet Union, Poland, Romania, etc. The same imperialist state that has expelled Turkish "guest workers" by the tens of thousands is now conducting a campaign to "Aryanize" its workforce along the lines: "Foreigners out, émigrés in, and German women should give birth."

But those that are enticed by the propaganda barrage to "flee" to the West don't always find the experience pleasant. Currently the influx of tens of thousands of skilled workers is being used by the bosses to undercut wage demands by West German unions in upcoming negotiations. Moreover, many who are used to having cheap housing, guaranteed employment and free medical care just don't fit into the competitive "elbow-society" of capitalist West Germany. An estimated 20 percent of the homeless are former DDR "refugees." Meanwhile, chauvinist hostility against them is growing among West German *Spießbürger* (philistines) anxious to defend their standard of living.

When East Berlin denounced the West's "trade in human beings," Bonn cried foul. But the next day a DM 500 million (\$250 million) bank credit to Hungary was announced, secured by a West German government guarantee.



East Germans line up at West German embassy in Budapest, Hungary. West German magazine *Der Spiegel* gloats, "Is the DDR Exploding?"

The first "breakout," on August 19, was organized by the ultrarightist Pan European Movement of Count Otto von Habsburg. Nothing "spontaneous" about it—a special train was standing by in Vienna to whisk the "refugees" to camps in West Germany. And the "exodus" of September 10 was minutely prepared: the West German Auto Club set up fuel dumps along the Austrian *Autobahn* of the gas-oil mixture needed for older East German "Trabant" autos. The bourgeois press (as well as the Greens' unofficial house organ *taz*) predicted that East Germany was "disappearing," and sniggered that the last one out (DDR chief Erich Honecker, of course) would have to turn out the light.

To get a sense of proportion, even the conservative London *Economist* (16 September) noted that the total number of East Germans likely to enter West Germany this year "is proportionately smaller than the number of people who abandoned the Republic of Ireland last year. Nobody assumes the collapse of Ireland." Out of a total DDR population of 17 million, there were 1.8 million East German visitors to the West last year, a total of 3.3 million visits to West Germany (some visited more than once). Except for 40,000, they all went back. The standard of living in the DDR is by far the highest in the Soviet bloc, and certainly higher than Britain or Italy (in fact, unemployed Italian work-

ers are now applying for jobs in the DDR).

So why do these thwarted "dropouts" from a materially comfortable no-win society leave? By and large it's not for economic reasons: many know of mass unemployment in West Germany (almost two million jobless according to official figures) from Western TV. While the emigrants are not particularly political, there was a sense that there would be no "opening" in East Germany for the foreseeable future. Gorbachev's *glasnost* is *verboten* in Honecker's *Vopo* (People's Police) state. The hardline Stalinists who lead the DDR were one of the few governments in the world to applaud Deng's bloody massacre in Beijing. And now there was an opportunity, with the opening of the Hungarian border, coupled with *Torschlusspanik*, a panic over the gate slamming shut. But rather than a hemorrhaging, the pressures building up in the DDR steam boiler could produce an explosion.

Contrary to the expectations of *Der Spiegel* et al., that upheaval is by no means destined to be counterrevolutionary. More than 40 years of Stalinist misrule has not extinguished a deeply egalitarian consciousness in the DDR. The *International Herald Tribune* (15 September) reported that in random interviews with young, well-educated East Germans visiting Budapest, many shared the sentiment of a 27-year-old chemical engineer who said, "We're educated in such a way that we believe socialism makes everybody equal. Here in Hungary, I see that people are not equal. Here, I think it depends on the money." The social foundations of the East German deformed workers state were laid as the Red Army smashed the Nazi Third Reich. As a result, East Germany experienced a more profound social upheaval than did Hungary or Poland.

Bonn's Drang nach Osten

The chauvinist hysteria in the West over the East German emigrants, extending from the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) to the Social Democrats (SPD) and Greens, reflects the ominous rise of German nationalism. Bonn claims a "protective right" for "ethnic Germans" throughout the Soviet bloc—no matter if they don't speak a word of

German, so long as they aren't Jewish. (There have been numerous cases of *Volksdeutsche* who petitioned for West German citizenship but were turned down because they were Jews.) This ominously recalls Hitler's "protection" of the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia in 1938.

Along the same lines, the 50th anniversary of Hitler's invasion of Poland was "commemorated" in West Germany with the right wing in Bonn reasserting that the Federal Republic laid claim to the "1937 borders of the German Reich." No wonder the Poles got nervous: even *Solidarność*—funded for years with D-marks from the West German DGB unions (and CIA dollars)—was squirming. U.S. chief Bush may find the prospect of a capitalist unification of Germany tantalizing but it sends cold shivers up the spines of his European allies, whose memories of the last Reich are not that short.

The imperialists are using the DDR émigrés as a wedge for breaking up the Warsaw Pact by exploiting contradictions among the East European bureaucracies. The meaning of Budapest's aggressive act of abrogating its treaty with the DDR was made clear when the president of the Hungarian parliament spoke of withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact and becoming neutral, like Finland or Austria (*Washington Post*, 19 September). Simultaneously, Washington announced that Hungary would be granted "most favored nation" trade status. In Warsaw, where the new government is headed by a Catholic prime minister who openly vows to restore capitalism, Bonn has indicated that future D-mark investment in the moribund Polish economy is conditional on flying out East Germans occupying the West German embassy.

The crisis in East Germany reflects above all developments in the Soviet Union. Until now the East German Stalinists have tried to follow the Kremlin's every zig and zag, for good reason. Facing the economically far stronger West Germany, they needed the military backing of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact. But with relative success based on central planning, the DDR has little reason to follow Moscow's market-oriented perestroika. (They tried

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West Germany's doors close to non-German refugees seeking political asylum (above). Tamils, Kurds are routinely deported, tens of thousands of Turkish workers have been expelled.

Centrists Swing Wildly Over Baltics, Poland

The Men on the Flying Trapeze

As thousands of Jewish slave laborers left the Vilna Ghetto in Lithuania for their work detail on the morning of 6 August 1943, they were surrounded by Estonian Nazi troops. The Jewish men and women knew what this meant—deportation to death, the Final Solution. Many resisted—they were bloodily mowed down. The rest were loaded onto freight cars for transport to concentration camps in Estonia. A month later, Vilna, the historic center of Jewish culture in East Europe, was “Judenrein”—“cleansed” of Jews. As the final *Aktion* was being carried out in early September, Estonian patrols stood outside the ghetto gates to get those who tried to escape. After the Soviet army drove the Wehrmacht out of the Baltic region in 1944, many of these local Nazis escaped to the woods, where as the “Forest Brothers” they continued to carry out terror against Communists and Jews until the early 1950s.

Now we read that these sadistic beasts were “freedom fighters” who were part of “The Armed Struggle Against Stalinism in Estonia.” And where is this apologia for Estonian Nazis to be found? Not in the pages of some neo-Nazi “revisionist” history, but in a “left-wing” publication, *International Viewpoint* (18 September), the organ of Ernest Mandel’s United Secretariat (USec), represented in this country mainly by “Socialist Action.” Mandel’s outfit reprints *without criticism* this piece by one Herbert Lindmae, originally published in the monthly paper of the Estonian People’s Front. In its editorial introduction *International Viewpoint* recommends Lindmae’s article as an answer to the Soviet press which “continues to cry scandal about any defense of the ‘Forest Brothers.’” Scandal? The “Forest Brothers” were anti-Soviet Nazi terrorists!

Swinging from another pole in the fake-Trotskyist milieu are the confused centrists of the British Workers Power group, which has simultaneously come out for the Stalinist position of the inviolability of the borders of the Soviet Union while supporting the anti-democratic demands of the Baltic nationalists. And after years of tailing pro-capitalist Solidarność in Poland, now that Solidarność has formed a cabinet intent on carrying out its program of restoring capitalism, Workers Power sagely advises the Polish workers: “No



Stone/SF Examiner
Socialist Action leader Nat Weinstein (left) joins with anti-Communists in December 1981 rally for counterrevolutionary Solidarność. Workers Power honcho Mark Hoskisson (far right) showing “solidarity” with Reagan’s favorite “union.”



Spartacist Britain

return to capitalism!” Like Nancy Reagan telling ghetto kids to “just say no to drugs!” But when Solidarność was preparing a counterrevolutionary coup in the fall of 1981, Workers Power called for a “military united front” with Walesa & Co.

Ernest Mandel’s USec Salutes Estonian Nazis

Any Red Army veteran of the war against Nazi Germany, any survivor of the extermination camps and of the *Einsatzgruppen* death squads would boil in outrage if they saw *International Viewpoint*’s disgusting glorification of their tormentors. A 1982 *History of the Waffen SS* by Hugh Page Taylor, sympathetic to the Baltic nationalists, noted: “The German advance through southern Estonia was greatly assisted by the efforts of Estonian guerrillas, those men who had started to go into hiding as ‘Brothers of the Forest’ during the latter stages of the Russian occupation.” A recent piece in the *New Yorker* (18 September), which conveys a sense of the virulent anti-Slav racism permeating the current Estonian nationalist movement, interviews one Forest Brother who proudly recalls his participation in the siege of Leningrad. For 900 bitter days, at the cost of a million lives, the people of Leningrad heroically held out *and triumphed*—and today Mandel salutes their Nazi attackers!

Where many Baltic nationalists try to

sweep the issue of Nazi collaboration under the rug, Lindmae positively crows: “In the expulsion of the Red Army from the mainland and islands of Estonia, Forest Brothers’ self-defense units participated along with the German armed forces.” He takes pride in the fact that by May 1943 “there were already 22,849 Estonians in Hitler’s armed forces.” For Lindmae, the Estonians in Hitler’s armed forces were engaging in a “national liberation” struggle:

“The armed struggle against Stalinism was fundamentally a struggle of the Estonian people for liberation.... The fact that during the war people involved in it fought on the side of fascist Germany is strictly the fault of Stalinism.... It was hoped that the Germans would reestablish Estonian independence or that it would be re-established when Germany lost the war to the Western Allies.”

Here is the true longing of anti-Communist Estonian nationalism: to have been an “independent” puppet of either Nazi Germany or U.S. imperialism—“re-established” over the mass graves of Jews and Communists.

The Estonian Nazis played their full part in Hitler’s crusade against “Judeo-Bolshevism,” as Arno J. Mayer points out in *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?* (1988): “Significantly, some of the first and for a time the worst outrages against the Jews were committed not by the new-model *Einsatzgruppen* but by latter-day local pogromists in the

new ‘liberated’ territories—Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, White Ruthenia [Byelorussia], the Ukraine....” The Estonian Nazis had a particular place of “honor” in Hitler’s satellite legions: unlike the others, they were deemed to be full equals in the German-Nordic Aryan “New Order.”

Early in the war, Estonians formed the 658th and “Narva” volunteer battalions and 17 border guard battalions; in 1943 the Estonian SS Volunteer Brigade was formed as part of the Waffen SS. Estonia was the main center for Nazi concentration camps in the Baltic. Of Estonia’s tiny prewar Jewish population of some 4,000, the 1,000 not fortunate enough to make it to Soviet Russia had all been wiped out by the end of 1941. At the Tartu camp, whose Estonian commandant Karl Linna was finally extradited from the U.S. in 1987, 12,000 people were slaughtered, most of them Communists. When the Red Army was about to liberate the camp at Klooga, Estonia in 1944, a band of 30 Estonian fascists killed as many Jews as they could get their hands on.

The current Baltic nationalist movement is being portrayed by the Western media and most self-styled leftists as a noble struggle for democracy and freedom, symbolized by young girls in folk costumes carrying candles and flags of the pre-1940 “independent republics.” We have warned that this movement is

continued on page 14

Ernest Mandel’s USec Salutes Estonian Nazis

The armed struggle against Stalinism in Estonia

IN THE AREAS forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in the Second World War, one subject remains extremely sensitive even under *glasnost*: the armed resistance to Soviet annexation. In Estonia, a prominent figure in the Estonian Historical Society, Mart Laar, was indicted for what he said about the “Forest Brothers” in an article on the period of the Stalinist terror (see IV 157, February 20, 1989, for a translation). The Soviet central press continues to cry scandal about any defense of the “Forest Brothers,” and this is an element in the intensified polemics about the Baltic peoples’ movements.

The following article from the June 1989 issue of *Postipois*, the monthly paper of the Estonian People’s Front in the Estonian underground, shows a detailed account of the armed resistance to the mass deportations of the Estonians in Laar’s article for the article for

HERBERT LI

International VIEWPOINT

18 September 1989

ANY H... formation of the new government of the Estonian Republic under O. Tiel on September 18, 1944, until the conquest of the Estonian Republic by the Red Army.



R. James Bender Publishing



VIVO Institute

United Secretariat’s *International Viewpoint* defends Estonian “Forest Brothers,” claiming these Nazi collaborators were waging “liberation” struggle. Center: Three Estonian officers of Waffen SS 20th Division. Alfons

Rebane (left in photo) led “Forest Brothers” unit against Red Army, then joined Nazi forces. Right: Klooga death camp in Estonia, where 3,000 people, half of them Jews from the Vilna Ghetto in Lithuania, were exterminated.

Young Spartacus

The following is the second and final part of an edited speech given in Paris on July 22 by Joseph Seymour, member of the Central Committee of the Spartacist League/U.S. The talk was part of an educational by the Ligue Trotskyste de France on the bicentennial of the French Revolution. Part One is printed in Workers Vanguard No. 484 (1 September).

The Jacobin regime, which came into being through the *journée* of 2 June 1793, and was overthrown with the fall of Robespierre on the 9th of Thermidor, July 1794, represented both the climax of the French Revolution and one of the most extraordinary moments in the history of the Western world. Ever since, almost all of the passionate debates and conflicts around the French Revolution have centered on precisely this brief period. For 200 years reactionaries and liberals have denounced the Jacobin terror as a great crime against humanity carried out in the name of red revolution. At the same time, the young Marx believed that the Jacobin regime represented the political rule of the proletariat. In this misconception he was expressing the views of many of the participants of the Revolution itself.

After the monarchy was overthrown the Parisian plebeian masses became increasingly radical, especially because their living standards were eroded by the

PART TWO OF TWO

inflation generated by the war. Increasingly the *sans-culottes* raised economic demands which went against the interests of both the bourgeoisie and sections of the upper petty bourgeoisie. They demanded price controls, laws against hoarding and speculation, and these questions widened the split within the revolutionary bourgeoisie ruling on the basis of the Convention. The right wing of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, the Girondins, opposed these demands in the name of economic *laissez-faire*. The left wing, the Montagnards—what we call the Jacobins now—were willing to meet these demands halfway. Thus the Girondins denounced the Montagnards—the Robespierrists—as practically communists. The Girondin leader Brissot referred to the Montagnards: “The troublemakers are those who want to level everything down—property, human comfort, the price of goods, and the various services that are performed for society.”



Maximilien Robespierre

Orbis-Bulloz

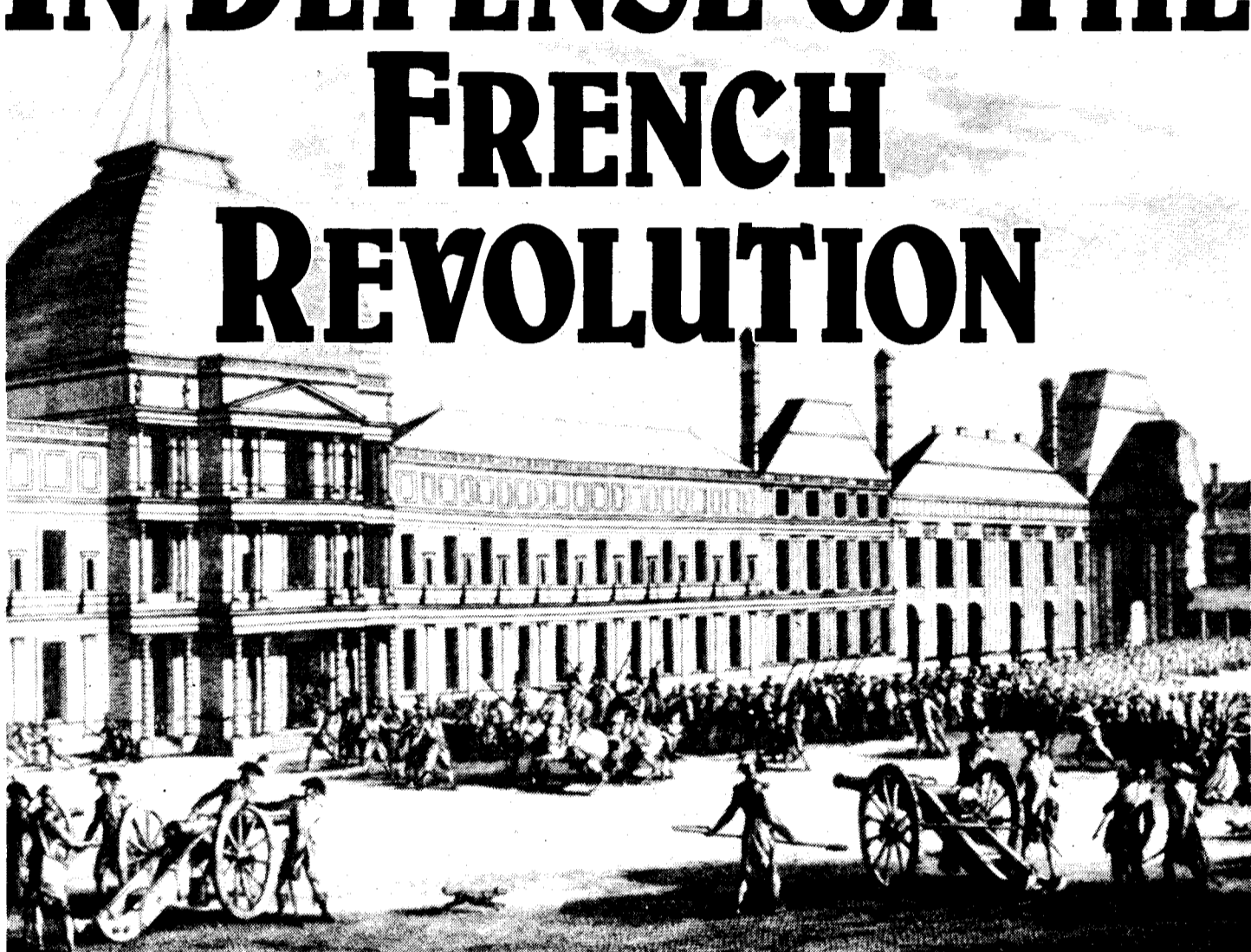


Georges Danton

Mansell-Bulloz

From Jacobinism to Bolshevism

IN DEFENSE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION



Pierpont Morgan Library

Uprising of 2 June 1793 brought Jacobins to power. Eighty thousand National Guards surrounded Convention, demanding purging of right-wing Girondins.

This was a demagogic falsification, because the Montagnards were not social levelers. In February of 1793 the poor people of Paris broke into many shops, taking sugar and soap and paying at prices far below the going market rate. This action was denounced, not only by the Girondins but also by the Montagnard leaders Robespierre and Marat, for disturbing the unity of the French *patrie*, because for them the shopkeepers and merchants were also part of the *patrie*.

But such opposition risked alienating the *sans-culottes* and driving them to

a leadership to the left of the Jacobins, that is, militants like Jacques Roux and Pierre Varlet whom later historians termed the *Enragés*. Thus Robespierre and his colleagues decided to conciliate, co-opt and utilize the *sans-culotte* radicalism rather than simply opposing it. And indeed the Montagnard leadership took power through the *journée* of June 2, when 80,000 National Guardsmen surrounded the Convention and demanded the purging of the Girondin leaders.

Marx was mistaken to believe that this marked the beginning of the political rule of the proletariat, the artisan proletariat. What actually happened was that the proletariat imposed upon France a government of a revolutionary minority of the bourgeoisie. But in Marx's mistaken conception there was an important germ of historical truth—that is, the *journée* of June 2 was the distant ancestor of the dictatorship of the proletariat, because this inspired the uprising of the Paris proletariat in the June Days of the Revolution of 1848, an uprising which Marx termed the first attempt to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. And the June Days of 1848 were a major factor inspiring the uprisings which created the Paris Commune a generation later.

It is very significant that even today the liberal François Furet sees the original sin of Jacobinism in that they came to power through the violation of parliamentary sovereignty. Thus Furet and Denis Richet write in their book *The French Revolution*: “The whole bourgeois revolution, even in its most dem-

ocratic convictions, rested on a belief in the virtue of the parliamentary system. . . . The revolt of 2 June had struck a grave blow at parliamentary ideals.” This is one of the few occasions in which I find myself in agreement with Furet, because 125 years later the reverberations of this *journée* were heard when the Bolsheviks disbanded the Constituent Assembly in the name of soviet power.

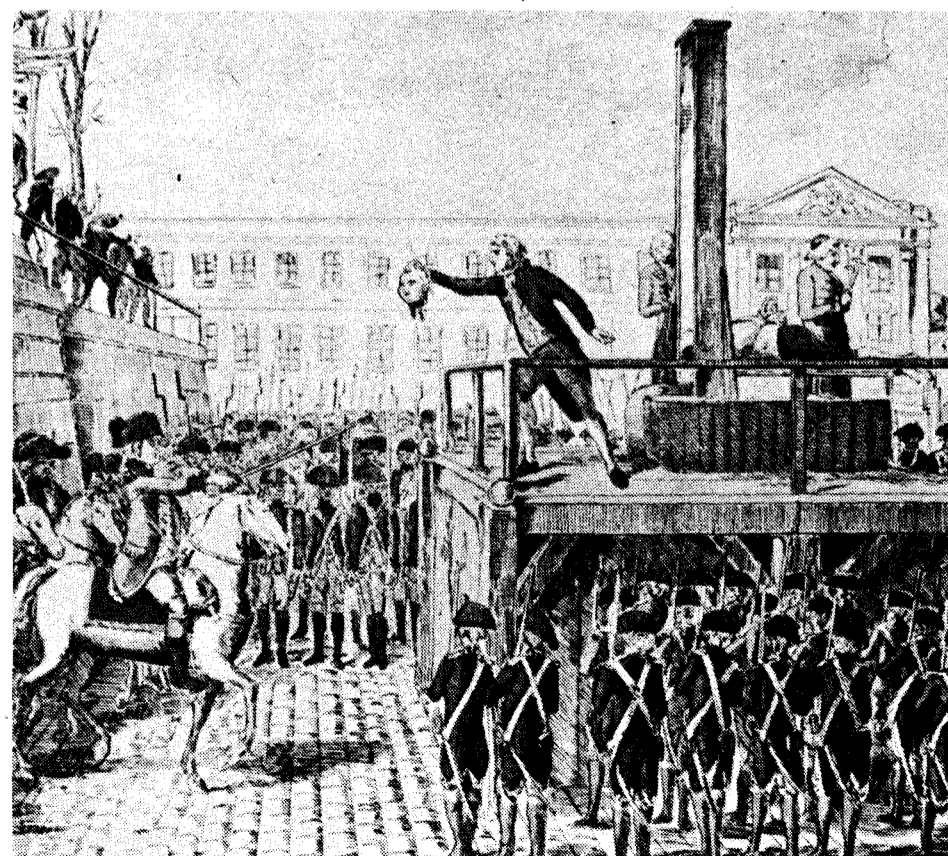
But the original *journée* created only an unstable regime of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, resting on classes with fundamentally different and conflicting economic interests. While all of the dramatic events of the French Revolution occurred in the cities, predominantly Paris, the key to the Revolution is really what happened in the countryside. As long as the peasants were still struggling to abolish the system of feudal exploitation, the French Revolution moved leftward. However, one of the first acts of the Jacobin-dominated Convention was to order the abolition of all feudal rents without any indemnification. Moreover, they ordered the title deeds burned.

Once the peasantry felt secure as small property owners, their economic interests obviously conflicted with those of the urban lower classes. They wanted high food prices, the urban lower classes wanted low food prices. Thus during much of the Jacobin regime the revolutionary army had as its task to collect grain from the peasantry at prices below the natural market rate. This did not make the Robespierre regime very popular in the countryside.

At the same time, the question of economic controls also split the *sans-culottes* along class lines. Obviously all of the Parisian lower classes could agree that the price of grain should be lower. But the so-called "general maximum," the controls on all major prices and wages, opened up conflicting interests between the small property owners—the shopkeepers and the master artisans—and the wage earners such as journeymen and day laborers. In the fall of 1793 there were violent conflicts between the market women of Les Halles, who resented the price controls, and the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, which was part of the *Enragé* current and wanted more severe and better-enforced price controls. The Jacobin leadership used this as a pretext for suppressing the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women.

The class contradictions of its political base account for the internal contradictions of Jacobin ideology. In practically every speech and every piece of writing by Robespierre and Saint-Just on the question of property, one sentence contradicts the previous sentence and the following sentence. For example, here's Robespierre in the spring of 1793: "I can hardly believe that it took a revolution to teach the world that extreme disparities in wealth lie at the root of many ills and crimes." That sounds pretty good. However he goes on: "...but we are not the less convinced that the realization of an equality of fortunes is a visionary's dream. ... It is far more a question of lending dignity to poverty than of making war on wealth." Well, even Chirac and Raymond Barre could agree with that! Robespierre states that he upholds the right of property, but then he qualifies it: "It may not be so exercised as to prejudice the security, or the liberty, or the existence, or the property of our fellow men." This is an entirely utopian qualification.

Of course the contradictions of the Jacobin, or revolutionary, bourgeoisie did not only exist in the realm of ideas. They existed in the realm of real politics, and under the pressures of conflicting social forces the Jacobin bourgeoisie began to rip apart into bitterly hostile factions. On the right you had the so-called *Indulgents* led by Danton, who wanted to negotiate a compromise with the forces of counterrevolution—both the foreign royalists and the domestic counterrevolutionaries—and to pursue an economic policy favorable to the peasantry and the bourgeoisie. On the left you had the so-called *Exagérés* led by Hébert and Chaumette, who wanted an economic policy more favorable to the *sans-culottes*. Robespierre and Saint-Just tried to occupy the center. And in the spring of 1794 the Robes-



The execution of Louis XVI, January 1793.

Mary Evans

At the Grave of Philippe Buonarroti

THE JACOBIN COMMUNIST TRADITION

We print below a translation of the remarks by Jean Thimbault, speaking for the Ligue Trotskyste de France at a gathering at the tomb of Philippe Buonarroti in Montmartre Cemetery in Paris on July 22.

First I would like to begin by quoting the inscription that the disciples of Philippe Buonarroti wanted to place on his tombstone, his graveyard monument, in 1837: "Philippe Buonarroti, born in Pisa (Tuscany) on 11 November 1761, granted French citizenship by a decree of the Convention on 27 May 1793, died in Paris on 16 September 1837. 'My life, stormy, troubled, full of sacrifices and sorrows, marked by an ardent effort for the happiness of others, this is what you have been called upon to judge.'" That was Buonarroti's defense argument to the High Court of Vendôme on 21 Floréal, Year V [April 1797], after the coup d'état of 9 Thermidor. The inscription goes on: "Sentenced to deportation, deprived of his civil rights in jail and exile, prey to the cruelest persecution, he nonetheless persisted in his work. Nothing could shake his courage. He lived for humanity."

It was a little more than 150 years ago that Philippe Buonarroti died—the former revolutionary Jacobin cadre, former communist leader of the Conspiracy of Equals alongside Gracchus Babeuf. He was 75. When he was buried, more than 1,500 people followed the funeral procession. A copy of his book, *Babeuf's Conspiracy for Equality*, a real bible for European revolutionaries of the time, was buried with him to symbolize, according to the burial certificate, a desire to shield it from the desecration of man and pass it on to a far-distant posterity. On his tomb, before which we are now

pierre center physically destroyed the left and right Jacobin factions, executing their leaders. This fatally narrowed the social and political base of the entire Jacobin regime, and laid the basis for Robespierre's overthrow a few months later.



Kurt Desch

Philippe Buonarroti carried forward Babeuf's heritage.

standing, a worker placed a wreath with these words: "Buonarroti, great citizen, friend of equality, the people award you this wreath. History and posterity will uphold this acclaim."

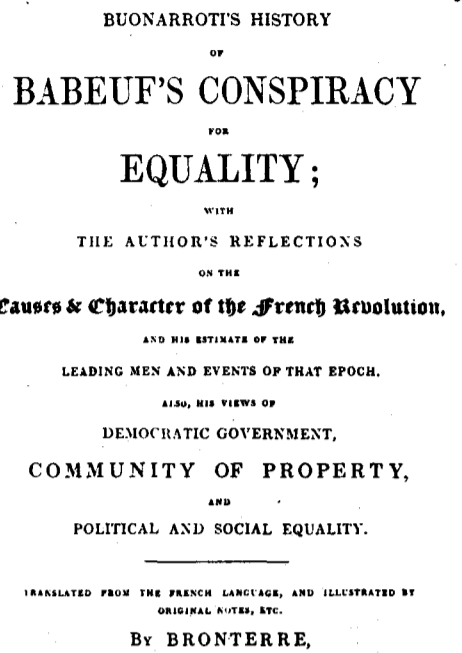
On the occasion of the bicentennial of the French Revolution, we Trotskyists, members of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), are indeed here to pay homage to Buonarroti and all the Babouvist fighters who were the first to try to institute communism through revolutionary action. From this point of view, we are their heirs.

Buonarroti was born in 1761 in Italy, more exactly in Pisa. He was a descendant, it is said, of Michelangelo. When the French Revolution broke out in 1789, he went to Corsica, which was then French, in order to devote himself totally to the revolutionary struggle. In particular, he served as

Before discussing Thermidor and its aftermath I want to discuss the question of the so-called Terror, because for 200 years this has been the main focus of attack by both reactionaries and liberals against the French Revolution. Approximately 16,000 people were executed, maybe another 20,000 people were killed without a trial. It's unfortunate that the popular image of the Terror focuses on Paris—the executions of Marie-Antoinette, Danton, Hébert and Chaumette—because the Terror in Paris was atypical of the Terror as a whole and moreover constituted only a small fraction of the people who were executed or killed—much less than 10 percent.

Over 70 percent of the people who were executed, and far more of the people who were killed without trial, were killed in only *two regions* of France—both the regions of *full-scale civil war*: the Vendée and the Gironde in western France; and Lyon and the lower Rhône valley. In half the departments of France there was no Terror; practically no one was killed. Over 80 percent of the people who were sentenced to death were caught fighting the revolutionary government arms in hand. So the Terror was simply the revolutionary side in a civil war in which neither side gave any quarter or took prisoners.

We Americans fought an even bloodier Civil War than that of the French Revolution. During that Civil War the Union general William Sherman ravaged the state of Georgia and burned



national commissar to the tribunal at Corte. He participated in the attempt at a revolutionary invasion of then-feudal Sardinia. In Paris, he linked up with the Jacobin milieu. It even seems that he was a frequent visitor to the house where Robespierre lived, owned by the Duplays, who themselves later participated in the Conspiracy of Equals. The revolutionary government entrusted him with several missions and on 9 Thermidor he was governor of the principality of Oneglia, a small territory east of Menton, which the revolution had split off from the Kingdom of Piedmont.

Thrown into prison, Buonarroti joined the former Robespierrists and former Hébertists in the jails of Thermidor, where they drew up a balance sheet of the revolution from which they had expected, in the language of

continued on page 10

down the houses of the slaveowners. For this he was accused of being a barbarian, a modern Attila the Hun. Sherman replied: "If the people raise a howl against my barbarity and cruelty, I will answer that war is war, and not popularity-seeking. If they want peace, they and their relatives must stop the war."

I want to emphasize that the Jacobin Terror had nothing to do with totalitarian thought control or Stalin's Russia. If you read the letters and the diaries of the soldiers in the revolutionary army, they are continually complaining that royalists and counterrevolutionaries are insulting them, that the waitresses who serve them are openly declaring their sympathy with the counterrevolution without any fear of reprisal.

There's another important question, and that is a question of scale. The last major war of *ancien régime* Europe before the French Revolution was the Seven Years' War from 1756 to 1763. In this war Frederick the Great's Prussia faced a European coalition of Austria, Russia, France and other European powers. During this war 100,000 Prussians were killed, not only soldiers but also civilians. Since the Prussian army was a very efficient killing machine, they killed about 200,000 non-Prussian Germans, Russians and others. The war ended in a stalemate. The treaty ending it simply reaffirmed the prewar boundaries of all the contending parties. In other words, a generation before the

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French Revolution...

(continued from page 7)

French Revolution 300,000 people were killed—ten times the number of the Jacobin Terror—for absolutely nothing, for no political or social gain at all. Yet today Frederick the Great is universally honored, including by the East German Stalinists, while Robespierre is vilified as a bloodthirsty monster.

In any six hours of any of Napoleon's major battles—Eylau, Austerlitz, Borodino—more people were killed than were executed in the entire so-called Reign of Terror. During World War I, 2,700 French soldiers were executed by the French government for refusing to fight, for desertion and for mutiny. That was more than were executed in Paris under the Jacobins. In other words, the government of Pétain, Foch and Clemenceau executed more French soldiers than the government of Robespierre did in Paris during the entire period of the Terror. Yet this crime of the French bourgeoisie is today practically unknown. So all of the hue and cry against the Terror has nothing to do with considerations of humanity, and is entirely motivated by hostility to radical social revolution.

The French bourgeoisie was prepared to accept the exceptional reign of Robespierre—the Jacobin dictatorship—only as long as it was necessary to defeat the forces of counterrevolution.



Downfall of Robespierre at the Hôtel de Ville, 9th of Thermidor (27 July 1794).

position and recognized that Thermidor had been bourgeois reaction clothed in the language of liberal principles. But he did more than that. He also recognized it was not enough to try to turn the calendar back to before Thermidor.

He recognized that the fundamental division was no longer between the aristocracy and the patriots, between the royalists and the republicans—that the fundamental division was between the rich and the poor, the exploiters and the

and naturally in all the people. The reason for this is simple, Robespierreism is democracy, and these two words are perfectly identical: thus in reviving Robespierreism you are sure to revive democracy."

—quoted in R.B. Rose, *Gracchus Babeuf* (1978).

Thus just a few years after his downfall Robespierre had become a *symbol* of radical democracy and equality transcending the actual experience of the Jacobin regime.

Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals was easily suppressed by the Thermidorean bourgeoisie, and within a few years it was largely a forgotten incident. Yet it had a world-historic importance which in some ways is equal to any of the other achievements of the French Revolution. Thus Trotsky in the founding manifesto of the Communist International states that "we Communists, united in the Third International, consider ourselves the direct continuators of the heroic endeavors and martyrdom of a long line of revolutionary generations from Babeuf—to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg." And the communists of Marx and Engels' generation saw in Babeuf the continuator of the principles of the French Revolution. Thus Engels wrote in 1845, "Babeuf's conspiracy for equality revealed the final consequences of the democracy of '93—insofar as these were at all possible at that time."

The French Revolution and Bourgeois Reaction

How was it that an extreme left-wing extension of Jacobinism, a movement which had almost no impact in its own

time, came to be seen by future generations as the legitimate continuator of the Great French Revolution? The answer is that the Jacobin bourgeoisie of 1793 for the most part became the Bonapartist bourgeoisie a decade later, that almost all of the Jacobin cadre who remained politically active became integrated into the Bonapartist bureaucracy. The others simply dropped out of politics.

The principles of revolutionary democracy embodied in the Jacobin constitution of 1793 were carried forward only by a small number of extreme-left radicals such as Buonarroti. Buonarroti made a living teaching Italian and music. When in 1821, at the height of the Metternichian reaction, he praised the Republic of '93 to one of his music students, the young man looked at him as if he were out of his mind and said: who today could hope to restore this kind of government? Buonarroti's history of Babeuf's Conspiracy, published in 1828, was also an ardent defense of the Robespierreist regime. Indeed the old Jacobin claimed that if Robespierre had continued to rule France, he would have gradually introduced communist institutions.

When a new revolutionary period, a new revolutionary movement, came into existence after the Revolution of 1830, the term "Jacobin" had come to mean something far more radical and something far more proletarian than the politics of the Committee of Public Safety of the Year II. In other words, the term "Jacobin" was simply a synonym for "red." Behind both the idealization of the Jacobin Republic by the communists and working-class radicals of that period, and the demonization of the Jacobin Republic by the ruling classes of that period, there was an important historical truth.

During that period a democratic republic was incompatible with the political rule of the bourgeoisie as a class. It was assumed by reactionaries, by liberals and by radicals that a sovereign parliament based on universal male suffrage would lead directly to civil war, as in fact it did in France in 1848. That is, a democratic republic was seen as necessarily a red republic, and it's significant that the Communist Manifesto was first published in English in the Chartist newspaper *The Red Republican*. In his own way Blanqui captured this when he said somewhat later: There are only two real parties in France—the communists and the priests. So that on the eve of 1848 Marx and Engels believed that a democratic revolution, the establishment of a democratic constitution like the Jacobin constitution of 1793, would lead quickly toward the rule of the proletariat and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie—directly in



Gernsheim Collection, U. of Texas

Napoleon column toppled during Paris Commune of 1871, termed by Marx the first dictatorship of the proletariat.

In June 1794 the French revolutionary armies won a decisive victory over the Habsburgs at Fleurus in Belgium. A month later, on July 27 (9 Thermidor according to the revolutionary calendar), all of the various factions of the revolutionary bourgeoisie got together and overthrew Robespierre.

The Heritage of Babeuf

At first Thermidor was apparently welcomed by most sections of French society, including the *sans-culottes*. And here Babeuf's reaction is extremely interesting. Babeuf himself had been loosely associated with the left Jacobins like Chaumette, prosecutor of the Paris Commune. However, he was in prison in the provinces during the last several months of the Jacobin regime. He was released from prison a few days before Robespierre's fall, and initially was a very ardent supporter and propagandist for the Thermidoreans, whom he saw as opening up a new period of political liberty and democracy.

However, after a few months it became clear that the abolition of economic controls was reducing the Paris proletariat to extreme misery, that the *sans-culotte* militants were being persecuted, and that the Thermidorean bourgeoisie was suppressing the democracy of the Paris sections far more thoroughly and ruthlessly than Robespierre had done. And thus Babeuf changed his

exploited. It was not enough to attempt to reinstate the various economic controls of the Year II. Thus a reign of equality was possible only under what he called *le bonheur commun* (the collective well-being)—that is, a form of rudimentary, distributive communism in which everyone would work, putting their goods into a common warehouse from which they would then be distributed equally among all citizens.

Babeuf's change of attitude toward the Robespierre regime was not simply an individual reaction. With the deepening of the Thermidorean reaction, many of the *sans-culotte* militants began to look back on the Robespierre regime as a kind of golden age when bread was cheap and a poor man could speak his mind. Babeuf, Buonarroti and their colleagues therefore associated their program of communism with the old Robespierre regime.

This provoked a very interesting debate within the Babouvist movement. One of its organizers, Joseph Bodson, an old Hébertist, objected to associating *le bonheur commun* with Robespierre who, he argued, had destroyed many good revolutionaries. Babeuf replied in a letter which demonstrates very considerable political insight, and it also gives us an insight why even today Robespierre is such a vilified figure in official bourgeois opinion:

"Robespierreism is in all the Republic, in all the judicious and farseeing class



Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne

Roots of the French Revolution go back to the massacre of Protestant Huguenots by the royalist government on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572. Destruction of French Protestantism retarded capitalist development under the *ancien régime*. Preservation of royal absolutism and aristocratic order called forth the most radical of all bourgeois-democratic revolutions two centuries later.



Beard



Marx's Communist Manifesto was first published in English in the Chartist Red Republican.

England, where a majority of the population were proletarians, and indirectly in France and Germany, where a majority were rural and urban petty bourgeois.

The actual course of the Revolutions of 1848 proved very different from Marx and Engels' conceptions, as they themselves later recognized. In France under universal suffrage the peasant masses voted in a reactionary government which first provoked and then crushed the Paris working class in the so-called June Days. The fear of social revolution drove the French bourgeoisie toward Bonapartism and the German bourgeoisie toward a compromise with the monarchical reac-

national fibre, he is a patriot like the Jacobins of 1793." But a bourgeois tendency like Clemenceau's Radicals was necessarily *unique* to France.

After the Revolution of 1848 the European bourgeoisie—centrally the German—became *counterrevolutionary*. There were no bourgeois forces who praised the French Revolution in Bismarck's Germany, or late Habsburg Austria, or late Bourbon Spain—not to speak of tsarist Russia. Quite the contrary. In the 1890s, a century after the French Revolution, a Prussian Junker stood up in the Reichstag and declared that the King of Prussia must be able to order any lieutenant to take ten men and shoot the Reichstag. This speech

Europe. But of course the French bourgeoisie, while continuing to pay lip service to the Revolution, also played a key role in the anti-Bolshevik campaign. French military cadre—including the young Charles de Gaulle—aided Polish forces in turning back the Red Army from Warsaw in 1920.

The isolation of Bolshevik Russia, its encirclement by hostile and stronger capitalist states, produced within Russia a bureaucratic degeneration that Trotsky regarded as analogous to Thermidor. That is, the revolutionary leaders were overthrown by a group of nationalist and conservative bureaucrats, but the social achievements of the Bolshevik Revolution—the expropriation and collectivization of property—remained. And this is of course the basis for the hostility of world capitalism to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to this day.

The coming to power of the Nazis in Germany constituted a terrible danger to the Soviet Union. The Stalinists responded to that danger by seeking an alliance with the so-called "democratic imperialists," especially in France and England. This was called the "popular front against fascism." The French Stalinists attempted to glorify French imperialism with the mantle of Jacobinism. To use our analogy, one can describe the Popular Front in France as the attempt of the French supporters of the Russian Thermidor to ally with the heirs of the French Thermidorean bourgeoisie against the heirs of Babeuf.

But in helping to prevent a proletarian revolution in France in the mid-1930s and in actually suppressing a proletarian revolution in Spain, the Stalinists only encouraged, emboldened and strengthened European fascism. The Popular Front paved the way both for the Vichy regime and for Operation Barbarossa, the Nazi German

invasion of Soviet Russia. Continuing our analogy, one can describe the Vichy regime as an alliance of the French heirs of the Thermidorean bourgeoisie along with the heirs of the French émigrés with the descendants of the Prince of Brunswick.

And one can describe the Battle of Stalingrad as a titanic struggle between the Russian heirs of the French Revolution, albeit in its Bonapartist form, and the enemies of the French Revolution. And one likes to think on this 200th anniversary of the French Revolution that the ghosts of Robespierre and Hébert and Jacques Roux and Babeuf will all join us in celebrating not only the storming of the Bastille and the victory at Valmy, but will also join us in celebrating the victory at Stalingrad, for that, too, is in a sense their victory.

In 1792 the French bourgeois *constitutionnel* Adrien Duport declared that the French Revolution was over. Eight years later Napoleon, with rather greater justification, declared that the French Revolution was over. Two hundred years later the liberal ideologue François Furet declares that the French Revolution is over. Well, as a historical event, the French Revolution certainly is over—it achieved the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution more



U.S. Army

French Marshal Pétain (left), head of collaborationist Vichy regime, and Hitler united in hatred for heritage of French Revolution and Russian Bolshevik Revolution.

tion. Thus it was only a generation later, after the debacle of the Franco-Prussian War, after the crushing of the Commune, that there was established a bourgeois-democratic republic. (Incidentally, 17,000 people were killed in Paris in one week after the suppression of the Communards—without trial, without anything. Talk about terror!)

It was only in this period that the French bourgeoisie began to celebrate the French Revolution as the birth of its power. It was the Radical Party historians of the early Third Republic like Avenel, Spulier and Aulard who first identified the French Revolution and Jacobinism with French nationalism and liberal principles. In the 1870s Avenel criticized the conservative German historian Sybel for saying that the French Revolution fostered communism. No, said the French Radical, communism is an invention of you Germans like Karl Marx.

This exchange is indicative of the different attitudes on both sides of the Rhine. Outside of France the Revolution was still identified with social radicalism and leveling. Within France a significant section of the bourgeoisie was trying to dissociate the Revolution from its Babouvist heritage. So that it was only in the early years of the Third Republic that the term "Jacobin" came to be identified with French nationalism, especially anti-German nationalism. On the eve of World War I, the French reactionary Poincaré praised Clemenceau as "in the highest degree,

was greeted with wild applause by the Reichstag deputies of the right.

The Spectre of Bolshevism

Thus the radical democratic heritage of the French Revolution was taken over almost exclusively by the international workers movement in this period. Analogies with the French Revolution were especially common in tsarist Russia among both the Marxists and the Populists, who appeared to be facing an *ancien régime* very similar to late Bourbon France. In 1900 Georgi Plekhanov, the father of Russian Marxism, wrote to one of his comrades, "you know I am beginning to lean toward Jacobinism."

The Bolshevik Revolution reawakened in the world bourgeoisie an understanding that the French Revolution had also carried with it a radical egalitarian tradition, that the French Revolution really was a revolution. Remember that not a single European monarch was executed between 1793 and 1918, when the Russian tsar and his family were killed. That fact alone identified the French and Bolshevik Revolutions in the minds of both the rulers of Europe and the popular masses.

The anti-Bolshevik hysteria reawakened all the old hostility of European reaction to the French Revolution, which is seen as the original sin giving birth to this terrible event. Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, for example, denounced the French Revolution as a catastrophe for



Foreign Languages Publishing, Moscow
G.V. Plekhanov, father of Russian Marxism, was inspired by Jacobin intransigence.

radically and more completely than any other. But for precisely that reason it has become something more than a long-concluded revolution—it has become a symbol of the struggle of the oppressed and exploited for a just and egalitarian society. And that is why the French Revolution is still being fought, and it will continue to be fought until liberty, equality and fraternity become a reality in a communist world. ■



Georgi Zelma

Battle of Stalingrad: titanic battle between Soviet heirs of the French Revolution and its enemies, embodied by German Nazis.

Buonarroti...

(continued from page 7)

the times, collective well-being [*le bonheur commun*], the emancipation of mankind, the realization of the principles of fraternity, liberty, equality, which had been the principles of the Enlightenment, the principles of the French Revolution since 1789. The balance sheet drawn up by the left Jacobin tendency gathered around Gracchus Babeuf concluded that these lofty emancipatory principles could not be achieved in the framework of private ownership of the means of production. For the Babouvists, realizing "equality" in particular—which is central to the French Revolution—required, and I quote, "suppressing private property," "establishing common management," "establishing 'common property and labor' set up by a provisional dictatorship of what we would call a revolutionary party."

The communism of Babeuf is obviously not that of Marx. The communism of Marx seeks a limitless development of human capacities based on achieving abundance. The communism of Babeuf is essentially a communism of distribution which seeks a frugal equality in the realm of consumption. But how could it have been otherwise in the conditions of the time, when small-scale ownership and small-scale, preindustrial artisan or peasant production predominated, when the working class as we know it did not exist. From this vantage point, the Babouvist program was utopian. But it was nonetheless a *revolutionary* communism. In the 18th century, even in the 17th century, communist theories existed, but they were only utopian systems. With Babouvism, with the Conspiracy of Equals, communism entered into the history of social and political struggles. It was, as Marx and Engels later wrote, "the first

appearance of a communist party with a real activity in the framework of the bourgeois revolution."

As you know, the Conspiracy of Equals failed. Babeuf and Darthé were condemned to death and executed by the Thermidoreans. Buonarroti and others were deported. But there is one fact that remains extraordinary to this day—namely that for nearly 40 years



A. Mondadori

Buonarroti fought for the universal revolutionary principles of '89, for a communist program and organization, during the [Napoleonic] Empire, during the [post-1815] Bourbon Restoration, when reaction reigned and grew stronger, at a time when virtually all the Jacobin cadre, even the Babouvists, capitulated to Bonapartism. Buonarroti—totally isolated, going against the stream—continued indefatigably to organize popular societies, secret societies to spread democratic, revolutionary and communist propaganda from his place of exile, whether in Switzerland or Belgium.

This is not the place to go into Buonarroti's activity in detail, but I want to

insist on how crucial this activity was in transmitting communism to new generations of revolutionaries, and I want especially to stress its importance in connection with Marxism. Most of Marx and Engels' collaborators in the 1840s were directly or indirectly influenced, in varying degrees, by Buonarroti and some of them had even been recruited by him. In Belgium, Lucien

LE COMITÉ INSURRECTEUR DE
SALUT PUBLIC, AU PEUPLE.

Acte d'Insurrection.

ÉGALITÉ, LIBERTÉ,
BONHEUR COMMUN.

DES Démocrates Français, considérant que l'oppression et la misère du Peuple sont à leur comble, que cet état de tyrannie et de malheur est du fait du gouvernement actuel;
Considérant que les nombreux forfaits des gouvernants ont excité contre eux les plaintes journalières et toujours inutiles des gouvernés;
Considérant que la constitution du Peuple, jurée en 1793, fut remise par lui sous la garde

The Conspiracy of Equals, led by Gracchus Babeuf (left), called for insurrection against Thermidorean reaction, 1795.

Jottrand, president of the Democratic Association of which Marx was vice president, had been recruited by Buonarroti. In England during this period, one of Marx's main collaborators was Harney, the left Chartist leader who was the protégé of [James Bronterre] O'Brien, the famous Chartist leader who was a follower of Babouvism and had translated Buonarroti's book, *Babeuf's Conspiracy for Equality*, into English and corresponded with him toward the end of Buonarroti's life. The German founder of the League of Exiles was also linked to Buonarroti. This League, after being transformed into the League of the Just, later gave rise to the Communist League, which adopted the

slogan "Proletarians of the world, unite!" and which Marx and Engels joined in 1847. Marx had read Buonarroti's *Conspiracy for Equality* and even considered translating it.

After 1830, with the development of Chartism and also the July Revolution in France, the figure of Buonarroti infused the nascent European workers movement. In varying degrees, he influenced a whole new generation of revolutionaries, Blanqui and others, all those who were the revolutionary leaders of the first half of the 19th century.

One of Buonarroti's disciples gave a striking description of him that I want to quote and that bears witness to the justified admiration of an entire revolutionary generation. It is by Prati, who was an Italian revolutionary in exile. I quote: "Neither the success of his adversaries, nor the glory of Napoleon, nor the combined efforts of the Holy Alliance, nor the betrayal of many of his friends, nor the slanders of his enemies, nor exile, nor poverty—nothing ever shook his courage or slackened his efforts. When I knew him, he was a man of 70, with silvery, wavy hair framing a face that radiated Promethean energy, that seemed to defy the powers of this world, and incite the world, near or far, to break the chains of despotism."

He was known familiarly to all these young men as the "Old Man of the Mountain." The Mountain [*Montagne*] here obviously refers to Jacobinism. Buonarroti was seen as, and is, the living and active link between a past revolution, the French Revolution, and the coming revolution, the communist revolution, whose cadre are being formed and forged. The unremitting and intransigent fight of Buonarroti, like Babeuf's martyrdom in the cause of communism, was far from futile. Their Conspiracy, which emerged from the womb of the French Revolution, is also at the origin of the communist, Trotskyist, contemporary revolutionary movement. ■

St. Croix...

(continued from page 1)

"Some looters were hungry people picking over groceries that were about to rot anyway." Most telling of all, "Four days after the hurricane struck, no relief supplies had arrived. There was no running water, little food, no electricity, no telephone service. The hospital, badly damaged, was closed." But Washington sent... cops.

This mini-invasion was a police operation, not a relief effort. It was the first time in 21 years that American troops were called out against disturbances on U.S. territory. "Top generals met in the underground operations center at the Pentagon to work out details of the troop movement," reported the *New York Daily News* (21 September). The troops were six companies of MPs; in addition, Bush dispatched 100 federal marshals and FBI agents. Yet the black Democratic elected governor of the islands, Alexander Farrelly, told Associated Press "there is no near state of anarchy" and denied he had called for U.S. troops. Bush wants to look like he's "standing tall," so since he can't get rid of Noriega, he "cracks down" on Rastafarians in St. Croix!

Rampant government racism was apparent on the mainland too, where supposedly "normal" relief operations were under way. In Charleston, South Carolina, residents of poor black neighborhoods were unable to stock up before the storm. Now, with electricity still out, there are virtually no stores open. So "looting" has occurred. The Red Cross even removed its food truck, even though hundreds of people were lined up for hours waiting for it; a cop cited fear of "mobs." "They're thinking more about downtown Charleston stores... than about people who are going hungry," said one woman (*Atlanta Journal & Constitution*, 24 Septem-

ber). National Guardsmen joined local cops in patrolling the streets, while Charleston police chief Reuben Greenberg told his men: "Don't arrest anybody. Beat 'em." One cop admitted, "We're beating the... out of them."

FEMA and Military Coup

What the White House wanted in the Virgin Islands was an offshore practice run for martial law. Spearheading the plan is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which used to concentrate on flood relief but under the Reagan administration was secretly transformed into a sinister agency for introducing military rule during a fabricated "emergency." The authorization was provided by National Security Decision Directive No. 52, signed by Reagan on 6 April 1984. One of the Iran/contra scandal revelations was that Colonel North had drawn up a secret "contingency plan" according to the wishes of his commander in chief. As Alfonso Chardy reported:

"The secret plan called for suspension of the Constitution, turning control of the government over to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), appointment of military commanders to run state and local governments, and the declaration of martial law in the event of such a crisis as nuclear war, violent and widespread internal dissent or national opposition to a U.S. military invasion abroad."

—*Philadelphia Inquirer*,
5 July 1987

Now with Hurricane Hugo, Bush saw a chance to try out his martial law plans. Two days before the troops arrived, FEMA agents landed on St. Croix on an Air Force C-141 carrying "radio equipment." They probably figured the Virgin Islands are small enough and distant enough from the mainland that they could get away with it without significant political blowback.

St. Croix is also a microcosm of the racial tensions in the U.S. Median income for white households (\$17,281) is

nearly twice that of blacks (\$9,908) in the Virgin Islands. The building boom by white condo developers has further fueled resentment by the majority black, poor population which has been left out. Unemployment is estimated at 30 percent, and blacks are often made to feel unwelcome in the tourist town of Christiansted. Keeping black people down is a big money question in real estate. As the editor of the *St. Croix Avis*, the only black paper in the islands, Charles Fisher, said: "This is a class fight. The rich guys come down from New York or wherever and build a hotel, but they can't be bothered to build us a hurricane shelter or a playground" (*New York Times*, 26 September).

A medical worker in New York told *WV* that when news of Bush dispatching troops reached Caribbean workers at Harlem Hospital, there was spontaneous anger and denunciations of the occupation because it was "just like Grenada." Once again American troops would be imposing "law and order" on defenseless black islanders. But the Virgin Islands, unlike Grenada, have a black proletariat with significant social power. Out of a total islands population of 110,000, over 8,500 are unionized by the United Steelworkers of America alone, principally at the giant Hess Oil refinery. Add in their families, as well as unionized hotel/restaurant and government workers, and the power of organized labor is clear. These workers come from all over the Caribbean, and have ties to their union brothers and sisters on the mainland as well.

The Bush administration's operation in St. Croix is a threat to blacks and labor at home. The labor movement must demand U.S. troops out! Elementary justice would require that the people who live and work on the Virgin Islands be able to decide their own fate. But it is clear that this is not possible so long as an imperialist ruling class rules in Washington. ■

Save Mumia Abu-Jamal...

(continued from page 3)

James F. Gay
NAACP, Norfolk, Virginia

Specifically, this country must never allow the death penalty to be utilized as a means of curtailing free speech and expressions of political beliefs. To do so, would reduce us to the level of many totalitarian governments which we condemn.

In the name of humanity and for the advancement of civilization, we ask that you not permit this act of murder in the name of the state. If it is wrong to kill, then it is also wrong for the state to kill. We are sure that your conscience will guide you in the way of righteousness and that you will not allow this barbaric act to occur.

Rev. George E. Riddick
Vice President at Large, Operation Push, Inc., Chicago, Illinois

We are writing requesting that the death sentence imposed against Mumia Abu-Jamal be reversed immediately. First, because we do not believe he is guilty of the crime he is alleged to have committed. There is nothing in the background of this man to suggest that he would contrive to undertake a deliberate and calculated crime of murder. Second, the death penalty itself entertains the worst that is in our criminal justice system and has been shown to have little effect as a deterrent against crime.

A talented and gifted journalist who defended unpopular and controversial causes should not be for that reason vulnerable to charges that lead to incarceration and to criminal conviction on charges of murder. ■

E. Germany...

(continued from page 4)

"decentralization" in the mid-'60s and abandoned it as unworkable.) Noted historian Jürgen Kuczynski and former secret service chief Markus Wolf represent a still small minority that may want to follow Gorbachev's glasnost.

As the German Democratic Republic approaches the 40th anniversary of its founding, October 7, its leaders are feeling isolated and threatened. The Berlin Wall, a bureaucratic defensive measure erected to stem an earlier exodus of skilled workers, is no longer effective. The ruling SED's (Socialist Unity Party) Stalinist program of building a "socialist nation" in half a country is ever more divorced from reality. And with the 77-year-old DDR leader lying in the hospital, with no heir apparent, a leadership crisis comes on top of the social crisis. Yet their course of pursuing "peaceful coexistence" with Western imperialism and competing on the terrain of German nationalism with Bonn revanchists encourages counter-revolutionary forces. As the Federal Republic seeks to subordinate and ultimately gobble up the "other Germany" as part of its *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East), we Trotskyists uncondition-

**17 June 1953—
East German
workers rose
against Stalinist
regime, calling
on West German
workers to
"sweep out your
crap in Bonn."
Ulbricht regime
was saved only
by Soviet tanks.**



Der Spiegel

official media are stultifying. In the 1950s, in "Operation Ox Head" the FDJ (Free German Youth) climbed up on roofs to turn TV antennas around so they couldn't receive West German television. Now the DDR has laid cable into Dresden so that the only East German city which couldn't get TV from "drüben" (over there) now has clear

a show window full of bananas or glitzy travel brochures" (quoted in *Die Wahrheit*, 14 September).

The alienation of many East German youth cannot be overcome simply through more and better consumer goods and greater freedom for a Western-style youth culture in the DDR. But the Stalinist bureaucracy cannot inspire among young German workers and intellectuals the socialist idealism which animated their forebears, from Karl Marx's Communist League to the militants of the Communist Party in Weimar Germany. Honecker & Co. offer East German youth nothing more than a defense of the postwar status quo vis-à-vis Western imperialism. An authentically communist, internationalist vision of the future would win over many of today's disaffected East German youth.

For Revolutionary Reunification!

In German imperialism's division of labor, the Social Democrats have the special task of carrying out a counter-revolutionary political mobilization in the DDR. As we wrote in *"Market Socialism" in East Europe* (Spartakist pamphlet, July 1989):

"In recent years the Brandt wing of the SPD, along with its Green fellow travelers, has been the main expression of resurgent German nationalism in pseudo-leftist and pacifistic colors. The slogan of a neutral, demilitarized and reunified Germany—independent of both Washington and Moscow—is a thinly disguised call for 'democratic' counterrevolution in East Germany."

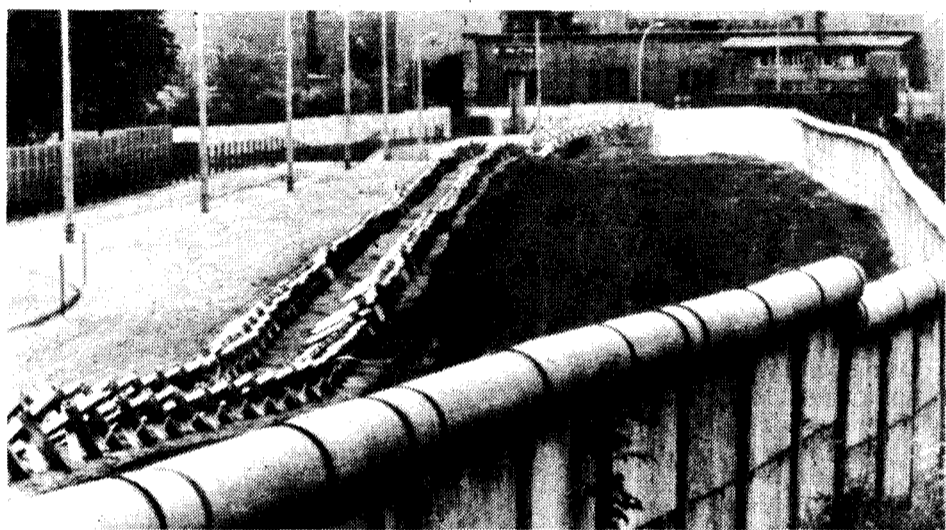
The East German SED Stalinists and their West German cohorts claimed that the August 1987 SPD/SED "common declaration" would mean "peace in our time." The SPD tops, however, have seen in the flood of East German émigrés a big chance to break through politically in the DDR. But they upped the voltage so much that East Berlin canceled the visit of a high-level parlia-

mentary delegation this week. So now the SPD is turning its attention to a new crop of East German dissidents in the orbit of the Lutheran church (New Forum, Democratic Departure, Democracy Now).

How long will the powerful East German working class remain quiet? *Le Monde* (14 September) quotes a high-ranking Soviet official as saying that the DDR was "on the eve of great changes, almost a prerevolutionary situation." And former Soviet ambassador to West Germany Valentin Fallin reportedly said that by next spring the Kremlin expects "mass demonstrations which would be hard to control" in the DDR. Many bourgeois commentators and petty-bourgeois leftists consider this impossible, and speak of the historic "docility" of the German working class, which supposedly obeyed the Kaiser, then Hitler and then the Stalinists. But, in fact, the German proletariat has been the strongest and most class-conscious in Europe, and has fought heroic battles when it had the opportunity.

Germany's position in the heart of Europe is a key factor in its present (and past) division. This makes it the natural theater for continent-wide war, but also places the German proletariat in a strategic position. In 1953, the East German workers were the first in East Europe to rebel against Stalinist bureaucratic rule. This occurred when the hardline Ulbricht regime in East Berlin found itself out of step with the post-Stalin thaw in Moscow. Beginning with the construction workers in Stalinallee on June 16, strikes, demonstrations and workers assemblies spread throughout East Germany. The bureaucracy was paralyzed and polarized, with part of the lower and middle party cadre going over to the side of the workers uprising. Ulbricht was saved only by Soviet tanks. Today once again there are tensions between East Berlin and Moscow. And as Siberian and Silesian miners strike against the ravages of "market reforms," the East German workers can make common cause with their class comrades.

The revolutionary unity of German and Soviet workers is indispensable for the victory of the proletarian political revolution, ousting the Stalinist bureaucracy in the DDR and throughout the Soviet bloc, establishing the rule of workers soviets. Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky! The key is forging an internationalist Bolshevik leadership, which can also lead the workers in the imperialist West in socialist revolution against capitalism. The Stalinists, who despair of social revolution in the West, hand the national question in class-divided Germany over to the fascists. Today, when both Gorbachev's market-oriented "reforms" and the DDR's regimented regime are in crisis, the internationalist program of Trotskyism stands out in sharp relief, fighting for revolutionary reunification of Germany in a socialist united states of Europe. ■



Der Spiegel

Berlin Wall: bureaucratic defense measure to stem drain of East German skilled workers instigated by Western media.

ally defend the DDR against counter-revolution, from within or without.

DDR: Consumerism Instead of Communism

The tens of thousands who have left for the West pose a grave threat to East Germany's economy. The writer Stefan Heym, a loyal critic of the East Berlin regime, says this is a "phenomenon that threatens to destroy the DDR" (*Der Spiegel*, 14 August). The émigrés are on the whole young, highly trained, and their loss already hurts in areas such as hospitals, schools and skilled trades. This is added to the already acute labor shortage in East Germany, which has brought in more than 100,000 Vietnamese and African workers as well as tens of thousands of Poles.

To keep the lid on, the East German regime has assiduously encouraged Western-style consumerism, complete with "summer close-out sales" for everything from food processors to stereo sets (at high prices, to soak up surplus marks). Nor is the outflow due to increased repression. The *Vopo* cops are quite as arbitrary as Prussian police officials could be, and the *Stasis* (state security police) have recently broken up demonstrations by pro-"democracy" dissidents and would-be émigrés in Leipzig with their usual efficiency. But if anything, as former East German protest singer Wolf Biermann commented, "it has become looser because of all the trips to the West that are now permitted" (*taz*, 21 August). Until 1963, dancing the twist was forbidden in the DDR as an example of Western decadence; this last summer the hit film was *Dirty Dancing*.

But the all-pervasive bureaucracy is seen as "anchored in cement." The

reception. Intended as an escape valve, it boomeranged as Western TV instigated mass "escape."

Economically, while the centralized *Kombinate*, huge conglomerate enterprises, are relatively successful, there are endless infuriating bureaucratic snafus and no way to remedy them. Doctors can't operate for lack of oxygen supplies. Now East Germany has a halfway decent car, the new Wartburg, but still can't build a decent engine. And then there's nowhere to drive it. One of the biggest complaints of the westward-heading youth is sheer boredom. Even the FDJ paper *Junge Welt* bitterly asked how it is possible to make East Germany "into a home...from which you don't let yourself be lured simply by



WV Photo

East Berlin store window: DDR regime encourages consumerism to soak up surplus currency and buy off social discontent.

South Africa...

(continued from page 1)

to present a petition to the British consulate in Cape Town. On election day alone, 29 demonstrators were killed in the apartheid butchers' bloody crackdown.

Black anger has been fueled by a flood of executions and death sentences meted out by the white-supremacist regime in recent months, many on the basis of the Hitlerite "common purpose doctrine" under which anyone present at the scene of killings of police agents and informers is deemed guilty of murder. In late May, the Uppington 14 were condemned to death for being part of a large crowd which killed a black policeman in 1985. Two weeks later, four blacks were hanged in Pretoria, including the first woman to be executed in two years. Twelve others from the Ciskei bantustan ("tribal homeland") were sentenced to hang for a 1987 "necklacing" (executing informers and other apartheid collaborators by placing burning tires around their necks). Now, in the Delmas III trial, 12 Pretoria anti-apartheid activists charged with being "ANC terrorists" face possible death sentences.

The outcome of the election reflected increasing polarization within the white minority, as the National Party emerged with its narrowest majority in 41 years. The "Nats" lost ground on both flanks, though the ultrarightist Conservative Party gained less than expected while the "liberal" Democratic Party increased its vote substantially. While successfully appealing to Indians and "coloureds" (of mixed race) to boycott elections for their segregated sham parliamentary chambers, the anti-apartheid MDM implicitly called on whites to vote for the Democratic Party. The DP was recently formed out of a merger of two smaller parties with the Progressive Federal Party, voice of the giant mining conglomerate Anglo American Corporation.

"Peace" with the Apartheid Regime

The election was seen as a referendum among whites on de Klerk's five-year "action plan," which claims to offer reform of the apartheid system while firmly maintaining white control. De Klerk took over as acting president in August after finally forcing P.W. Botha, the longtime head of the apartheid state, to resign. Botha provoked a storm of outrage from ultrarightists when he had



Work in Progress
Many of South Africa's black unionists see need to smash apartheid system of capitalist exploitation.

tea with jailed African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela on July 5, the first time a government official openly met with a representative of the banned organization. Then the *Weekly Mail* revealed that foreign minister Pik Botha and other leading National Party officials had been meeting with Mandela regularly for almost three years. Immediately after taking over from Botha, de Klerk flew off to discuss the ANC's new "peace plan" with Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda as a show of his "moderate" credentials.

For years, the ANC has sought to pressure Washington and London to force the apartheid regime to the conference table, while the imperialists have insisted that the ANC first accede to Pretoria's conditions (i.e., "renouncing violence"). Under Gorbachev, the Moscow bureaucracy has begun placing intense pressure on the ANC to give in to negotiations without any preconditions. In April, the first public Soviet diplomatic mission to South Africa in 33 years arrived in Johannesburg. Yuri Yukalov, head of the Soviet foreign ministry Department of African Countries, insists: "South Africa should not be destroyed. It should also be spoken to not only through threats or pounding our fist on the table. There should be dialogue" (*New York Times*, 16 March).

Yukalov cited the Angola/Namibia "peace process" as an example of successful negotiation in which "all sides stood to gain" (*Weekly Mail*, 23 March). The sort of "dialogue" Pretoria has in mind can be seen from the first result of the Namibia "peace process," as the apartheid butchers slaughtered 300 SWAPO supporters who tried to cross the border from Angola under the

terms of the agreement. Meanwhile, as Cuban troops are shipped home, Angolan peasants continue to be massacred by the U.S./South Africa-backed UNITA terrorists, who immediately violated the UN-negotiated "cease-fire" agreement.

In the buildup to the September 6 elections, the ANC unveiled its "peace plan" at a summit of "front line states" held August 10 in Lusaka, Zambia. For the nationalist ANC, the "defiance campaign," like its sporadic guerrilla forays into South Africa and its appeals for imperialist disinvestment, are aimed at pressuring the apartheid rulers. As the *Weekly Mail* (11 August) noted: "It is

South Africa's de Klerk held discussions with Zambian president Kaunda on ANC "peace plan," then ordered crackdown on defiance campaign against apartheid elections.



understood that the ANC sees the defiance campaign as a key vehicle for pursuing a peaceful end to apartheid in conjunction with negotiations on the basis of equality." The ANC plan, subsequently endorsed by the Organization of African Unity meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe on August 21, is modeled on the Namibia settlement. It envisages a transitional government—with the existing apartheid regime—and "free and fair" elections for a constituent assembly which would then draw up a new constitution for South Africa.

Despite occasional talk of revolution, particularly at the height of the township rebellions four years ago, the ANC has long pursued a strategy aimed at "power-sharing" with apartheid capitalism. The ANC disavows "wholesale nationalization," calling instead for a "mixed" (i.e., capitalist) economy, and the growth of a black capitalist class. Imperialist investment would be encouraged, noted an ANC representative, "on terms acceptable to the foreign investors." But while COSATU supports the ANC's Freedom Charter, the combative and increasingly organized black proletariat is far from sanguine about this program for a "democratic, nonracial" capitalist South Africa.

COSATU has grown two and a half times larger since its formation in 1985, while strike activity in the first half of this year is almost triple what it was for the same period a year ago. Particularly with the banning of the United Democratic Front and AZAPO (Azanian People's Organisation), COSATU has emerged as the strongest organization of the black proletariat in South Africa's history, and the voice of broad sections of the oppressed masses. A number of

unions within COSATU, particularly the National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA), headed by the recently freed Moses Mayekiso, and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWUSA), advocate "socialism" as the goal of their struggle. At the latest COSATU congress in July, a focus of discussion was ACTWUSA's call for a "workers charter" to guarantee elementary trade-union rights. One unionist commented, "They want to ensure that when apartheid goes, they will still be the workers' watchdogs, not the pet poodles of the nationalist movement—as in Zimbabwe."

The road to liberating the toilers of South Africa is not, however, through maintaining a strong trade-union movement under a petty-bourgeois nationalist ANC regime which it is assumed will replace white-supremacist rule. What's needed is the establishment of a black-centered workers government through smashing apartheid capitalism. This poses the formation of a racially integrated workers party, drawn primarily from class-conscious militants in the predominantly black trade unions. This is the only road forward if the protestations of "socialism" and "workers power" by left-wing militants in COSATU are not to be simply a means of pressuring the ANC. We are not talking about a reformist labor party as in Britain, but rather forging a revolutionary workers party such as Lenin built in tsarist Russia, the Bolshevik Party which in October 1917 led the first vic-

torious workers revolution in history. Furthermore, South Africa is not like Zimbabwe or Zambia where petty-bourgeois African nationalists displaced the white colonial regimes within the framework of continuing imperialist economic dominance and exploitation. Apartheid as a system of white caste domination will not be ended without uprooting the entire system of capitalism in South Africa, which cannot exist without the superexploitation of black labor. This necessarily means starvation wages and the denial of democratic rights to the black majority. For the moment, Pretoria is dead set against any negotiated settlement with the ANC. But even were some future South African government to reach an agreement with the ANC—under the pressure of the Western imperialist powers—it could not "negotiate" the end of apartheid, but only do away with the more odious and obvious manifestations of apartheid.

South Africa's racial capitalism is both the generating force for the extraction of superprofits and at the heart of its inability to advance as an industrial country in the world economy. With the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley and then gold on the Rand at the turn of the century, the character of the economy changed from overwhelmingly agrarian to extractive. Mining of the low-grade ore was labor-intensive, requiring a large reserve of unskilled and therefore relatively uneducated labor. Apartheid evolved out of and was dictated to a large extent by these conditions. The ANC seeks an accommodation with "progressive sectors" of the apartheid ruling class, like Anglo American's Gavin Relly. But the black miners who toil and die in

Spartacist Forums

Stalinism in Crisis

For Proletarian Political Revolution!

- Return to Lenin's Communism! For Workers Soviets! Oust the Bureaucrats!
- Poland on the Brink—Defend Deformed and Degenerated Workers States Against Imperialist Attack and Domestic Counterrevolution!

Speaker: Ed Clarkson, Spartacist League Central Committee

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University Center, Room 110
Cleveland State University
For more information: (216) 781-7500

OBERLIN

Saturday, Sept. 30, 7:30 p.m.

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For more information: (216) 781-7500

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Saturday, Oct. 7, 7:30 p.m.

Blackstone Hotel, Regency Rm.
636 S. Michigan Avenue
For more information: (312) 663-0715

Speakers: Jan Norden, Editor, *Workers Vanguard*,

Marjorie Stamberg, Spartacist League Central Committee
(Both speakers have recently returned from a tour of Eastern Europe)

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, Sept. 30, 3:00 p.m.

Sponsored by the Spartacus Youth Club

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Black Workers Strike Against "Divestment" Union-Busting

Strikes of black South African workers against the hellish conditions of apartheid rule increased dramatically in 1989, vividly demonstrating the social and economic power of organized black labor. But two key strikes this year have focused world attention on workers' opposition to divestment. In May, workers at nine Mobil Oil installations struck against the company's plan to "divest" by selling out to Gencor, a South African mining conglomerate notorious for union-busting. The Chemical Workers Industrial Union called the action to protest Mobil's refusal to negotiate the terms of the sale, but later agreed to call off the strike in return for a cash settlement of one month's pay (about 2,000 rand) per worker.

In July, 1,200 workers at Goodyear Rubber, represented by the National Union of Metalworkers, struck over the company's sale to the South African company Consol. The strike demands of separation pay of 5,000 rand per worker, guaranteed conditions of employment, maintenance of existing labor agreements, payout of pension benefits, and writing off housing loans, reflect widespread anger over divestment's victimization of the black working class. Goodyear's response, on August 8, was to fire all the strikers, and go ahead with the divestment deal.

For years, liberal and reformist anti-apartheid activists, taking their lead from the ANC, have held as an article of faith that to be against apartheid means to be for divestment and economic sanctions. In 1985-86 big student protests swept U.S. campuses, demanding that university administrations sell off their

financial holdings in corporations operating in South Africa. The Spartacist League alone stood up and told the truth: divestment is *at best* an empty moral gesture, and if foreign companies did withdraw productive assets from South Africa this would hurt black workers and weaken the black union movement.

Four years ago, it was cheap to advocate divestment, since there hadn't been any. But since then, 136 companies—half of all the U.S. firms with direct investments in South Africa—have sold out to South African businessmen. This was not primarily the result of pressure

from divestment activists. On the contrary—divestment is simply good business for corporations, though not for black workers who have to live with the results.

With the apartheid state's economy in its worst shape since 1985, foreign investors do not want to touch South Africa. Although sanctions and divestment have had limited overall impact on the economy, the cutoff of foreign loans from banks worried about the future of the white-supremacist regime is draining up to \$2 billion annually in repayments from an economy stretched to the limit. So with profits very low, and

interest rates up to 20 percent, U.S. and other foreign capitalists can sell their assets for interest-bearing notes and make a killing while divesting.

Thus the primary demands of the reformist anti-apartheid movement have been fulfilled, as much as they can be, yet apartheid remains intact, while black unions are forced to try to negotiate the terms of divestment. The assumption of the divestment/sanctions movement, which includes such so-called "socialists" as the Communist Party USA, the Socialist Workers Party and the International Socialist Organization, really is that South African capitalism can be fundamentally reformed through the pressure of other capitalist powers, especially the "democratic" United States. It's obscene to imagine that racist American imperialism—which put its own citizens in concentration camps while A-bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which carpetbombed Indochina, and props up every "moderately authoritarian" butcher dictator on earth—can be pressured into pressuring their South African allies to dismantle apartheid.

The continued flight of capital can only further depress the South African economy. Except in a period when the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid system is immediately posed, isolation from the world market is likely to result in massive dislocation and deprivation of black workers, weakening their ability to struggle. The wealth of South Africa must go not to the capitalists—American, European or Afrikaner—but to the workers who created it. The only kind of "divestment" that will benefit the exploited and oppressed will be proletarian revolution, and the expropriation of these riches by a black-centered workers government as part of a socialist federation of southern Africa. Here in the U.S., real solidarity with the courageous black masses of South Africa means a revolutionary fight to bring down the most rapacious imperialism of all. ■

NYC demo against South Africa executions, June 1983: Spartacists call for class struggle to overthrow apartheid capitalism, not liberal "divestment" schemes.



Relly's gold and diamond mines *know* that their lives will not fundamentally change unless Relly and his class are put out of business permanently.

Forge a Trotskyist Vanguard in South Africa!

For the Stalinist South African Communist Party, the debate over the "workers charter" evoked the terrifying spectre of Trotskyist "ultraleftism": "Those who champion...the cause of 'workerism' against so-called 'populism' betray...a bias toward Trotskyism" ("What Is Trotskyism?", *African Communist*, Fourth Quarter 1988). The

SACP revealed the extent of leftist opposition to the bourgeois-democratic Freedom Charter by reporting in their subsequent issue that they had received a slew of letters disputing the article's conclusions. (They cynically decided "not to publish" any of them!) But even the wretchedly tailist SACP, which has been submerged inside the pro-capitalist ANC for decades, acknowledges the socialist aspirations of the South African proletariat with its stagist slogan, "For a Democratic Victory and Advance to Socialism."

Yet there are self-styled "socialists" who explicitly oppose the struggle for socialism in South Africa. Jack Barnes' American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) insists that the South African revolution will have one stage only—democratic capitalism. "We could say," says Barnes in a 1985 report (reprinted in *New Internationalist*, Fall 1985), that:

"Yes, the key tasks of the revolution in South Africa are clearly national and democratic in character. Yes, it would be completely ultraleft for South African revolutionists to wage the struggle around a socialist program. But, given the development of modern capitalist industry and mining, and the size of the Black working class, won't the overthrow of the imperialist apartheid state actually establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and open what we might call the democratic stage of the socialist revolution?"

But even such a hackneyed Stalinist apologia for betrayal in the name of revolution in stages is too "ultraleft" for Barnes, who in 1982 explicitly denounced the SWP's distant Trotskyist past. He replies to his hypothetical question:

"The answer is, 'No.' What is on the agenda in South Africa is a bourgeois-democratic revolution, not the democratic stage of the socialist revolution."

Barnes insists to the black workers: This far and no further!

The SWP's "democratic" program is flatly counterposed not only to the class interests of the black proletariat but to the struggle for democratic rights. South Africa is a quintessential example of the validity of Trotsky's perspective of permanent revolution: in this country the black working class is patently the decisive force in the struggle against apartheid. Trotsky explained:

"The theory of the permanent revolution...pointed out that the democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois na-

tions led directly, in our epoch, to the dictatorship of the proletariat and that the dictatorship of the proletariat puts socialist tasks on the order of the day."

—Introduction to *The Permanent Revolution* (1930)

The black proletariat of South Africa has already amply demonstrated its capacity to fulfill its historic mission. What it lacks is a revolutionary leadership worthy of its courage and aspirations. Forward to a Trotskyist party, section of a reformed Fourth International! For a black-centered workers government! Smash apartheid! For workers revolution! ■



Apartheid butchers slaughtered 300 SWAPO supporters returning to Namibia under "peace process" and threw their bodies into mass grave.

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Centrists...

(continued from page 5)

aimed at a counterrevolutionary restoration of capitalism, that these flags stand for fascistic dictatorship, anti-Semitism and anti-Communism. Last month we reported that Estonian nationalists in the city of Kohtla recently openly commemorated a gang of World War II Nazi collaborators, the ERNA group organized in Finland with German support, by erecting a memorial on the site of a former Nazi monument (see "Stop Baltic Counterrevolution!" *WV* No. 484, 1 September).

Now Lindmae dots the i's and crosses the t's—and the Mandelites shamelessly trumpet his fascist glorification. His article ends with the demand that the Soviet government rehabilitate these Baltic Nazi collaborators! He complains that the law passed by the Supreme Soviet early this year annulling the verdicts of Stalin's frame-up trials "does not apply to traitors to the fatherland and punishment battalions formed during the Great Fatherland War [World War II], to Nazi criminals, members of nationalist bands, their satellites and so on." And he concludes: "Such persons must also be considered rehabilitated."

Lindmae has a fig leaf in the final paragraph condemning "summary executions" and participation in "mass repression outside the borders of the Estonian Republic"—he's well aware of how the Estonian Nazis had to go to Latvia and Lithuania to get in on the mass extermination of Jews. But this is a call for the rehabilitation of practically all fascist murderers, armed anti-Communist squads and nationalist bands who fought alongside the Nazi invaders and then joined the SS murder machine. What's going to appear in *International Viewpoint* next? A call for the rehabilitation of General Vlasov, a defector from the Red Army whose "Russian Liberation Army" fought under the Wehrmacht in the name of "anti-Bolshevism"?

Mandel's USec is shamelessly opportunist, wildly impressionistic and given to extreme zigzags in line. But this is an incitement. Even the anti-Communist bourgeois press wouldn't touch such a blatant salute to pogromist counter-revolutionary terrorists. Although they claim to be Trotskyist and in some sense to defend the Soviet Union, the Mandelites' embracing of Baltic fascism in the name of "anti-Stalinism" has a pre-history. Tailing Eurocommunism in the mid-'70s, Mandel & Co. championed pro-Western Soviet "dissidents" like Andrei Sakharov, who called for imperialist economic warfare against the USSR. And they then glorified the clerical-nationalists of Polish Solidarność, whose great hero figure is Marshal Pilsudski, the fascistic dictator of Poland in the 1920s and '30s.

A few years later the Australian USec section, the Socialist Workers Party, established close political collaboration with an émigré group associated with the Croatian Ustasha. When Nazi Germany invaded the Balkans in 1941, it

established in Croatia a puppet fascist state. The Ustashi bands were so bloodthirsty in slaughtering Serbs, Jews, Gypsies and many Croats that even some German officers sought to restrain them. The anti-Nazi Yugoslav partisans led by the hard-bitten Stalinist Tito, and drawn largely from the peasantry, liberated the country from the Croatian fascists as well as Serbian monarchists. Postwar Yugoslavia was established on the basis of an anti-capitalist social revolution, albeit bureaucratically deformed, and in a nationally very uneven country. Since World War II émigré Ustashi groups have waged a terrorist campaign against Yugoslavia, especially its diplomatic representatives.

The SWP's support for and collaboration with Croatian fascists was quite a scandal on the Australian left. The Ustasha affair was sufficiently embarrassing for Mandel's center in Europe to take its Australian comrades to task over it. But now there is an anti-Soviet "mass movement" in the Baltics, and with their longstanding support to any



Gdansk, 1980: Lech Walesa oversees Catholic priests hearing workers' confessions. This is the clerical-nationalist "fighting strength of the early days of Solidarity" that Workers Power celebrates.

and every opposition to the Soviet government the USec is openly defending the fascist fringe of Baltic nationalism. Where Mandel & Co. hail the Nazi "Forest Brothers," we salute the real Estonian freedom fighters, who were the soldiers of the Red Army's Estonian 8th Rifle Corps, which included 250 Jews. In June 1944 these Estonians helped liberate their homeland from the Nazi butchers and the "Forest Brother" collaborators.

Workers Power Lost in East Europe Without a Compass

While the Mandelites embrace Baltic Nazis in the name of "national liberation" and "independence," the left-centrist Workers Power group mimics Stalin's opposition to any national secession from the Soviet Union. In reprinting excerpts from the 26 August statement of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the threat of civil war in the Baltics (*WV* No. 484, 1 September), we stressed that the statement "leaves out the critical element, insisted upon by Lenin, that all nations not seeking counterrevolutionary social change were promised the right to fully administratively disaffiliate from the rest of the Soviet Union." Workers Power says nothing about the danger of capitalist counterrevolution in the Baltics today but simply declares, "we oppose calls for independence in the sense of secession from the Soviet Union" (*Workers Power*, September 1989).

At the same time as it falls into line behind the old tsarist doctrine of "Russia—One and Indivisible," Workers Power capitulates to some of the worst nationalist excrescences of the Baltic movements, supporting the demand for "recognition of non-Russian languages as official languages." The very idea of an "official

language"—which was attacked by Lenin even before 1917—is inherently anti-democratic. Ever since 1944, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian have been used in their respective republics' governments, schools, media, etc., along with Russian. Now the Baltic nationalists demand that *their* languages be made the *sole* "official" languages of the republics, thus degrading millions of Russian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian and other inhabitants to second-class citizenship.

The large and largely proletarian Russian-speaking population has resisted this anti-democratic measure, mainly through the "Internationalist Movement." But here is one mass movement Workers Power explicitly refuses to support, slanderously dismissing the mass protest strikes organized by Inter-Movement against the reactionary language laws with the canard that the "KGB-organised 'Intermovement' is coordinating a chauvinist campaign." In its strikes, Inter-Movement has raised the demand for "equal rights for all nations." In speaking with the *New*

around CIA/money, when Solidarność strikers were kneeling before the priests in the Lenin Shipyard and their leader was openly taking his marching orders from the Polish pope in Rome.

As Walesa & Co. became ever more shrill in their counterrevolutionary agitation, Workers Power hopped from one to another "left wing" in Solidarność. Most recently it was the small Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution), heralded as a potential "nucleus for forging an independent Polish internationalist workers' party" (*Workers Power*, May 1989). During this period the PPS-RD was in a political bloc with "Fighting Solidarność"—animated by the rabidly anti-Communist and anti-Semitic KPN—which greeted George Bush's arrival in Gdansk last summer with signs proclaiming "A Good Communist Is a Dead Communist." Some nucleus for "an independent Polish internationalist workers' party"! Now it seems the PPS-RD—which just opened up a very visible public office in London—has disappeared into one of those "blank spaces" in Workers Power's history.

Trotsky defined centrism as "crystallized confusion." Polemicizing against the American SWP's Shachtman/Burnham bloc which opposed defense of the Soviet Union in 1939-40, Trotsky addressed their plaint that they failed to "foresee" Stalin's occupation of eastern Poland: "If our ill-starred politicians failed to foresee 'this' it is only because they fail to think a single question through to the end" (*In Defense of Marxism*). For Workers Power, this is congenital. They "fail to foresee" the danger of counterrevolution in the deformed workers states because they wear the blinders of Stalinophobia. Despite their nominal Soviet-defensism, they carry the baggage of their origins in Tony Cliff's "third camp" outfit, which blew out of the Trotskyist movement in the early 1950s over Cliff's refusal to defend North Korea against U.S. imperialism.

Behind the wild vacillations of the centrists over events in East Europe and the Soviet Union lies their lack of a programmatic anchor. They spurn the Trotskyist position of unconditional defense of the gains of the October Revolution against counterrevolution and instead tail every "mass movement" that comes along. They tailed the mullah-led movement in Iran, and ended up with Khomeinist reaction; they tail reactionary "anti-Stalinists" of every stripe in Poland, and end up with a pro-capitalist, anti-working-class government in Warsaw. What differentiates Bolshevism from centrism is precisely the capacity to "swim against the stream" when the masses are being misled against the historic interests of the proletariat. There would have been no October Revolution if Lenin's party had submerged itself in the sea of social-chauvinism that inundated the Russian workers at the start of World War I. But Lenin persevered, and three years later the Bolsheviks achieved state power.

Today the opportunities are opening up for political revolution in the deformed/degenerated workers states. Solidarność—in league with Jaruzelski—intends to administer a "short, sharp shock" of capitalist austerity to the Polish workers as the opening shot of dismantling the historic gains of the collectivized economy. What is posed is a real struggle by the Polish workers in both the Stalinist and Solidarność unions, necessarily beginning around immediate economic demands for survival but raising implicitly the perspective of a working-class struggle for political power. For the first time in decades, the Soviet workers—including in the Baltics—have begun to assert themselves as an independent social force. The situation cries out for revolutionary leadership, for Trotskyist parties, to whose construction the slick centrists are an *obstacle* as they trot eagerly behind the illusions and false consciousness of the masses. ■

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Pittston Miners...

(continued from page 16)

the deadline came union lawyers told the judge that they "were having a hard time persuading a small number inside the plant to leave."

With 5,000 strikers and supporters massed outside, it wasn't the threats of a coal company judge that ended the sit-down late Wednesday night. It was the miners' own union bureaucrats. UMW vice president Cecil Roberts, who led the miners out of Moss No. 3, shouted, "We stood the state on its head," as the 98 sitdowners melted into a sea of camouflage. But as one miner said: "We came, we saw, we conquered, we left."

In the 1938 *Transitional Program* Leon Trotsky pointed to the revolutionary implications of the workers' seizure of capitalist property:

"Sit-down strikes... go beyond the limits of 'normal' capitalist procedure. Independently of the demands of the strikers, the temporary seizure of factories deals a blow to the idol, capitalist property. Every sit-down strike poses in a practical manner the question of who is the boss of the factory: the capitalist or the workers?"

In the hands of the UMW tops, the sit-down at Moss No. 3 was never intended to challenge Pittston's "right" to destroy the lives of 1,700 striking miners and their families. And at the first threat by Pittston's black-robed judges, the bureaucracy pulled the sitdowners out. But miners who felt the power of the occupation at Moss No. 3 may not be so easy to pull out in the future.

Bring Out Labor's Muscle to Win the Strike

After a dozen years of union-busting, from Jimmy Carter's use of Taft-Hartley against the miners in 1978 through the years of Reagan reaction to the greed of corporate raiders like Frank Lorenzo, workers want to fight. When miners' pickets appeared at power plants and steel mills in western Pennsylvania, workers walked. Eastern pilots fought the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) tops for a national pilots' shutdown.

And this anger, reflected in the outpouring of labor solidarity for the Pittston strike and earlier demonstrations and picket lines at Eastern, has prompted "militant" phrasemongering from some very unlikely quarters: the New Jersey AFL-CIO Industrial Union

Council and the Lorain, Ohio Central Labor Council passed resolutions calling for a "one-day general strike." George Leitz, Transport Workers Union (TWU) president, blusters that "Organized labor is already talking about a nationwide strike. If that's what it takes to get some attention, so be it" (*People's Daily World*, 31 August). AFL-CIO chief Lane Kirkland responds: "I have no aversion to a general strike. I would never say never" (*Newsday*, 3 September). Like hell! He would run to his pals at the CIA to try and stop it.

Predictably, the "socialist" water boys for the trade-union bureaucracy have churned out adoring stories on the labor traitors' newfound "militancy." The Socialist Workers Party gives glowing press to the stunt where Kirkland and a dozen International union chiefs took a grandstand arrest in Virginia, Kirkland's first ever for union activity. The Communist Party's *People's Daily World* obscenely quotes Kirkland telling miners the old refrain: "Which side are you on?" (In a 3 August *PDW* column, however, CP chairman Gus Hall blasts Kirkland as the leader of a "right wing" cabal, collaborating with the FBI and the capitalists against "militant left elements." Sounds like Hall can't figure out which side Kirkland's on.) Sam Marcy and Workers World's *United Labor Action* (July-August 1989) grovels as it "asks": "Will the top AFL-CIO officials heed this call for a nationwide one-day work stoppage?" The dubious Workers League pleads with Kirkland to "call a general strike."

These reformists' cynicism is boundless. The sordid record of the labor traitors in the Eastern and Pittston strikes is well known: Leitz has kept thousands of TWU airline ground service workers on the job, as TWU flight attendants at Eastern are left to twist in the wind. Kirkland appeared before ALPA's executive board in August to denounce the Eastern pilots' demand for a national pilots' action. And in a letter earlier this summer, AFL-CIO headquarters ordered state and local labor councils *not* to support the UMW if it meant violating "legal obligations imposed by the court" or "existing labor agreements"—in other words: *cross the miners' picket lines*.

Coming from the bureaucracy and their fake-socialist press agents, the "general strike" talk is a cover for their sabotage of the Pittston and Eastern strikes. What is needed is to *bring out labor's muscle* to smash the union-

Detroit Union Convoy Rolls Into Coal Country

We print below a report from a trade unionist in Detroit who took part in the September 8 caravan which traveled 1,300 miles round-trip to show solidarity with the Pittston strike.

We had 215 cars, vans, trucks and motor homes—590 people in all. That many cars is about three miles on the expressway, more than a couple of miles when we were closed up. Great logistics job—CB radio controlled, wrecker, doctor and nurses, lawyers, portable toilets, food, gas pumpers, traffic controllers. It was an 18-hour trip.

The last 30 miles or so to Camp Solidarity were without local police traffic control. We closed up by radio and ran in at the highest possible speed, running the lights. No breakdowns or accidents. Local residents and UMW supporters turned out to wave us through from front porches and intersections. Close to Castlewood, Lebanon and St. Paul we got an enthusiastic reception from working people, glares from upper-class types.

Camp Solidarity is in a lovely location. It is very well run—security is in good shape, discipline in evidence everywhere. It's disquieting that a rail spur is running coal through the back of the camp site. Pittston has a massive security operation running, and one can see some of it when the coal is moving. A helicopter and light

plane came low over the camp. The old-timers I spoke to are not speaking ill of Trumka or the District leadership, but do talk about using effective traditional methods and tactics for conducting a strike.

The morale is very high. I think the civil disobedience tactics, whatever their ultimate worth, have helped in this respect, especially with the women and young people. Everybody's *doing something*. There is also a feel to the place that the traditional miners' strike is being waged. It's not without reason that the State of Virginia has brought its meanest dogs out of the basement and cut them loose from their chains.

State police usually run in pairs and at extremely high speeds, like stock car racers drafting. The troopers and the governor who sent them are hated. Miners told of strikers arrested for civil disobedience being forced to kneel at the side of the road with loaded AR-15 carbines pointed at their foreheads.

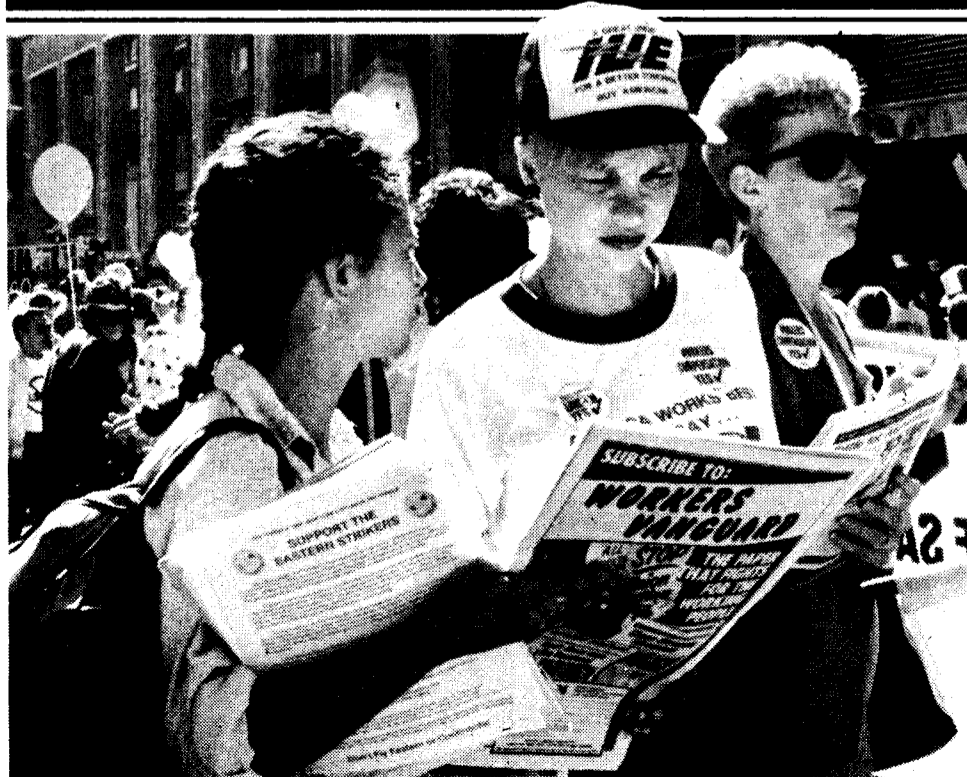
Courts seem to be after tying up the union treasury more than anything else. The convoy raised \$110,000 in the Detroit area, which will go out to strikers immediately as a back-to-school bonus for the kids. UMW members were genuinely thrilled to see this convoy. The hospitality and food were wonderful, the farewells were heartwarming.

busting offensive. Miners in a dozen states already showed what is needed when they wildcatted, fighting Trumka and the judges who forced them back to work. This is class war, and to win requires a leadership which will take on the state's injunctions, dispatch the flying pickets and call on railroad workers, waterfront and steel workers to "hot cargo" scab coal. Everyone who is in this fight—working miners, pensioners, the Daughters of Mother Jones auxiliary—should send delegates to Camp Solidarity to elect a strike committee and decide

how to win this one.

The labor bureaucracy's alliance with the Democratic Party is the roadblock standing in the way of successful labor struggle. Virginia coal miners, fed up with getting the shaft from Democrat Baliles, are casting write-in votes for John L. Lewis and Mother Jones in November. Class-struggle militants, from Pittston to Eastern, must fight to break the bureaucracy's stranglehold on the unions through the battle for a revolutionary workers party that can lead all the oppressed. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Mobilize Labor to Back Them Up! Don't Touch Scab Coal!

Pittston Coal Miners on the Front Line

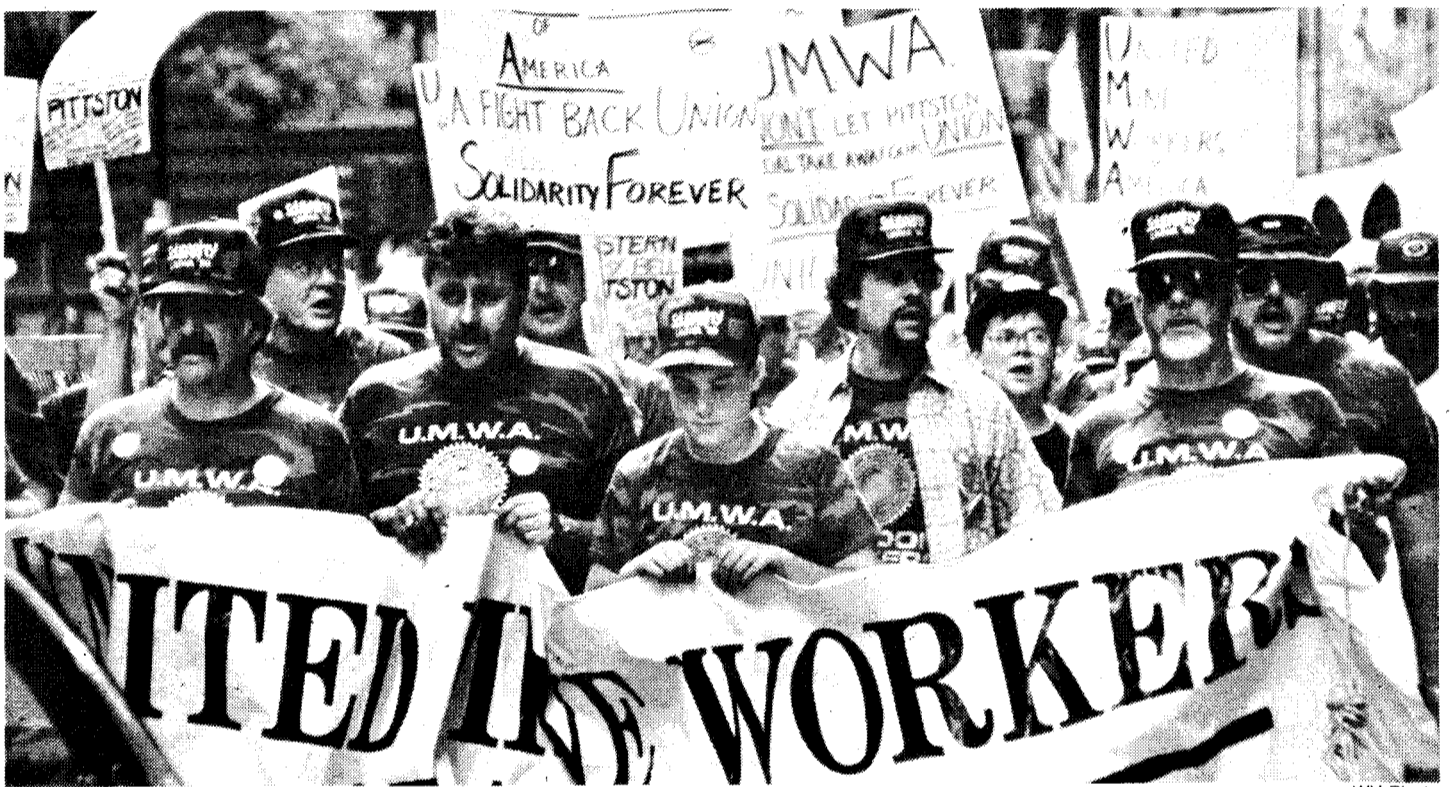
SEPTEMBER 25—For over three days, 98 members of the United Mine Workers (UMW) occupied the control room of Pittston's strategic Moss No. 3 coal preparation plant. One of the sitdowners told *Workers Vanguard* of the power they felt looking out at the miners and strike supporters in camouflage massed to defend the occupation: "When we were standing on that tippie, there were 5,000 standing out there. It really makes you feel good. We knew we had the backup." Eighty hours later, the UMW tops pulled the strikers out.

The plant occupation came as the Pittston strike nears its sixth month. The 1,700 strikers in southwest Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky are battling for the UMW and all working people. By breaking from the industrywide contract and seeking to slash miners' and pensioners' medical benefits, the company has provoked a battle the coal bosses hope will destroy the union at Pittston.

The coal miners, for years the "shock troops of American labor," are on the front line of the class war. In West Virginia, coal company gunmen shot and wounded Roy Blankenship, vice president of UMW Local 1971. Less than ten days later some of the same thugs returned to try to run down UMW pickets in Slab Fork Hollow with a front-end loader. At every turn, the Pittston strikers have come up against the cops and court injunctions of the capitalist state. The courts have demanded that the UMW pay over \$24 million in fines this week. In the 110-day coal strike of 1977-78, miners defied the Arnold Miller leadership and burned Taft-Hartley injunctions. But this time the miners' courage and militancy has been diverted by the UMW tops into impotent "corporate campaign"-style boycotts and endless civil disobedience arrests.

Every union-conscious miner knows that the union cannot afford another defeat like A.T. Massey—the capitalists are trying to turn union miners into an endangered species. Almost 50,000 miners from Pennsylvania to Alabama poured out of the mines in June and July in a virtual national strike in solidarity with the Pittston strike. But they were shoehorned back to work by federal judges and their own UMW misleaders. Enough! Send out the flying pickets—for a national coal strike!

Defy the Injunctions! For a National Coal Strike!



WV Photo

Pittston miners contingent at Chicago Labor Day march.

Across the country, hundreds of thousands of workers have poured out for solidarity rallies, car caravans and picket lines on behalf of key strikes: some 17,000 Machinists, flight attendants and pilots fighting Eastern Airlines with their backs to the wall; 63,000 NYNEX phone workers defending their medical benefits; 50,000 Local 1199 hospital workers in New York, who voted ten to one to strike on October 4. Unionists from across the Midwest have poured into Camp Solidarity in southwest Virginia to stand with the miners. As Ken Crowe noted in *New York Newsday* (3 September), this has been the year that the "Labor Movement Takes to Streets."

This sentiment must be tapped to win the Pittston strike. Railroad workers must let the bosses know that Pittston coal is too hot to handle; let it pile up on the docks in Tidewater; unionists in the steel mills and power plants must shut down the coke ovens and boilers that are burning scab coal, and appeal to Japanese steel workers to do the same. The

current labor misleaders will wail that such tactics are "illegal." Well, if it works for the working class, there is always a law against it. There must be a hard fight in the labor movement for a class-struggle leadership that is willing to defy the bosses' injunctions and break from the racist, anti-labor Democratic Party.

The Miners Take Moss No. 3

The workers' occupation of Moss No. 3 took the Pittston union-busters and their gun thugs by surprise. On Sunday, September 17, busloads of miners rolled up to the preparation plant, which cleans, grades and ships coal from the surrounding mines. Moving quickly across a narrow bridge, the strikers barricaded themselves inside the plant's control room with padlocks and steel cables, three stories up and accessible only by a narrow stairway. The scabs fled, escorted through the assembled miners at the gate to Moss No. 3 by a convoy of state troopers. These "Pittston blue lights," as the miners call them,

were helpless against the sitdown, as miners lined the road into the plant. In an instant, the sitdown strike at Moss No. 3 had done what five months of civil disobedience and parading in front of New York banks had failed to do—*shut down Pittston*. The company's million-dollar-a-day plant lay silent.

President Richard Trumka and the UMW tops intended the occupation only as a "dramatic public statement" to appeal to labor-hating Democrat Virginia governor Gerald Baliles to bring Pittston boss Michael Odom to the bargaining table. But the moment workers seized the mine baron's sacred property, Odom squealed like a stuck pig. Comparing the takeover to the 1979 seizure of the U.S. embassy in Iran, Odom declared, "We will not negotiate with terrorists."

Baliles and Douglas Wilder, the new Democratic candidate for governor, issued a joint statement demanding the miners abandon the plant. Federal judge Glen Williams threatened that if the occupation wasn't ended by 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, something "unpleasant" was going to happen to the miners. But unlike Virginia Beach, where the racist cops and National Guard terrorized black college students, in Carbo, Virginia they faced the power of organized labor. After five months and 3,000 arrests, the Pittston strikers refused to be cowed. And despite assurances by the UMW tops that the sitdown strikers would obey the judge's injunction, when

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**Black Student Thrown Out of Class on Civil War
No Jim Crow at S.F. State!**

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