

Homeless and Hungry in America

Here comes Christmas. It's freezing outside and on the streets the homeless will be dying. On the coldest day of the year so far, a homeless man lies under a foot and a half of snow on a park bench in Lafayette Park in the shadow of the White House. In New York City, one man has frozen to death already this year. While NYC mayor Ed Koch is trying to forcibly incarcerate the city's homeless in mental institutions, the big business media is starting its cynical charity campaign for the "needy." Who will they choose as this year's most worthy "Tiny Tims"? From the thousands huddled over subway gratings against the frigid weather of Northern and Midwest cities to the tent city under an L.A. freeway, the cities of the "land of opportunity" are a landscape of destitute men, women and children discarded by a capitalist system in deep economic crisis.

Having looted the wealth produced by the working people of this country, America's rulers now throw workers out on the streets—and then try to sweep them away like so much garbage. The contrast with the unbridled greed and opulence of the rich is stark.

• On the mean streets of New York City—against the backdrop of yuppies in their BMWs, corporate raiders, inside traders and condo kings like Donald Trump flaunting their riches—are the thousands of people who live on the
continued on page 10



On the coldest day of the year, a man sleeps in Lafayette Park in front of the White House.

Lipski/Washington Post

Haiti: Election Drowned in Blood

U.S. Imperialism Hands Off!

Their backs against the wall, the Haitian masses have no choice but to fight. They have suffered grinding poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy under decades of tyranny "made in U.S.A." Today, "Papa Doc" Duvalier is dead, "Baby Doc" has fled, yet his hand-picked American-backed junta is clamping down a new dictatorship. On November 29, as people turned out to vote, the army and the Duvalierist Tonton Macoutes thugs unleashed a massacre, slaughtering more than 80 and wounding hundreds. The election was canceled, the impotence of the "democratic opposition" revealed in this latest episode of a bloodbath that has engulfed the country. And in Washington, imperialist Democrats are calling for a new U.S. occupation. The last time the Marines came in, it took 20 years for them to leave. For the impoverished Haitian peasants, workers and poor, in this "nightmare repub-

lic," their "choice" is simple: fight or die. *It is the obligation of American workers to see that they don't fight alone!*

General Henri Namphy and the National Governing Council (CNG), the military regime installed by the U.S. to oversee the "transition to democracy" after the collapse of the terminally corrupt Duvalier dynasty in February 1986, have made it clear that they cannot be removed except by civil war. And that's what looms in Haiti today. If a 48-hour protest strike called by the unions and the bourgeois opposition drew only partial support, it is because a solid month-long general strike last summer didn't make the CNG budge. Now people are talking of "armed struggle." As the army and Macoute gangs rampage through the slums, their marauding could provoke a Port-au-Prince Commune.
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Election Day—Voters slaughtered at Port-au-Prince polling station.

UPI

Philly Mayors of Murder

The following letter was received from Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania state prison. Mumia, the courageous former president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Journalists Association, was sentenced to death on frame-up cop-killing charges for his courageous defense of the Philadelphia MOVE group against the state's racist vendetta.

On November 19, four Philly cops who played key roles in the bombing of MOVE were granted tax-free disability pensions for supposedly suffering "post-traumatic stress disorder" due to their participation in the 1985 Mother's Day massacre of MOVE. Among those rewarded for murder was the cop who designed the bomb which set off the fiery inferno on the Osage Avenue house, incinerating eleven black people including five children. Yet over a dozen

MOVE supporters remain in jail today, among them Ramona Africa, the only survivor of the massacre. Save Mumia! Free all the MOVE prisoners!

10 November 1987

Kudos on your latest WV (#439)—Your piece on a "Philly Election" was superb!

Didya ever have the feeling someone was reading your mind, and upon reading written material, feel that it was replaying those very thoughts?!? "Philly Election—Goode, Rizzo—Mayors of Murder" hit that mental mark quite accurately. Whatta piss-poor choice of a generally paltry political pack! To Blacks, the very thought of voting for Rizzo, even against Goode, smacked of racial treason. To progressive whites, and whites in general, the arch-fiend of Osage Avenue represented anathema.

Candidates Frank Rizzo and Wilson Goode: "No matter who wins, the people lose."



Once again, by choosing the players, the ruling class has decided the outcome—No matter who wins, the people lose—No matter who loses, the system wins! Ain't that a bitch? The system, by putting up that fraudulent front of fascists, played on the people's racial fears and divisions, once again. Your article

did a damn good job of analysis and uncovering of the bullshit behind the Goode-Rizzo "battle"—it revealed the utter foulness of both!

Ona MOVE!
Long Live John Africa!
Mumia Abu-Jamal

The Pope's Maoists

25 October 1987

To the editor:

As a former nun who left the Catholic church during the civil rights movement, I thought WV readers would share my revulsion that a "left" group is trying to hitch a ride in John Paul Wojtyla's "Popemobile." *Unity*, paper of the pro-China Stalinist League of Revolutionary Struggle (LRS), put out a "Special Complimentary Edition on the occasion of the visit of Pope John Paul II" to the U.S. Eager to blaze new frontiers in opportunism, they bend

over backward to kiss the Pope's posterior, gushing that the visit "has stirred up tremendous excitement among U.S. Catholics," that it's a "rare privilege," and: "Most of us are in agreement with his message that we in the U.S. must not get trapped in the prison of vulgar consumerism..."—in other words, eat less, pray more.

How gross can the fake-left get? Who are these guys appealing to? Who wouldn't be grossed out by their paeans of praise to a papal visit which "gives us hope that the Church will continue to heed Christ's admonition to feed the

hungry, clothe the poor and seek justice for the oppressed." Twenty years ago I left the convent and the church, like thousands of others, realizing that this pillar of social reaction was the enemy of the social justice I sought. Now *Unity* wants us to believe everyone from Voltaire to Marx and Lenin had it all wrong about the Vatican. They finish up emphasizing "that we warmly greet the Pope...." Tell it to the American Indians protesting the Pope's beatification of the role of the church in enslaving and murdering the first inhabitants of North America! The Pope is widely despised among Catholic workers in the U.S., many of whom *detest* his anti-abortion, anti-contraception, anti-sex, anti-gay, anti-woman, anti-people diatribes. What next—the Inquisition Fan Club (M-L)?

The holy war against red Russia is what unites *Unity* and the Pope. This Pope is notoriously the most ravingly anti-Communist and reactionary bigot to occupy the Holy See for decades. Everywhere he goes he commits new outrages, meeting with Nazi war criminal Waldheim, making the viciously anti-Semitic and anti-woman equation between abortion and Auschwitz, etc. As for counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność, of which Wojtyla, NATO and the CIA are the sinister godfathers, *Unity* adores it.

When *Unity* gushes that the church plays "an increasingly positive role in the Latino community" and that it feels "great pride" that Wojtyla deigned to

—14 September 1987

Unity

Pope John Paul II...

The visit to various Sunbelt cities highlights the growing role of Chicanos and Latinos in the Church

continued from pg. 1
meet with and speak to us and hear our concerns. Most of us are in agreement with his message that we in the U.S. must not get trapped in the prison of vulgar consumerism...
for the Catholic Church that the Pope on this visit is paying special attention to our community (in recent years, there has been a relative decline in the percentage of U.S. Latinos in the Catholic Church).

Stalinist LRS paper "warmly greets" Pope of counterrevolution.

visit cities in the Southwest, what it means is that it hopes kneeling to the Pope will help ingratiate the LRS with union bureaucrats in the farm workers and cannery workers unions, who cynically exploit many workers' religious beliefs for their dirty work of selling them out and chaining them to the bosses' Democratic Party. In its contempt for the working class, *Unity* believes advanced workers will never accept proletarian class politics, so these condescending saviors paternalistically feed the workers more and more backwardness. "After all, that's what they want, isn't it?" No—plenty of workers are looking for a strategy to stand up and fight, not crawl on their knees and beg for blessings from the bosses. This is a class question.

Communist greetings,
Janet McCullough John



TROTSKY

When Black Slaves Rose Up in Haiti

The Haitian slave revolt and war of independence against France, from 1791 to 1804, foreshadowed the national liberation struggles of the 20th century. The black republic of Haiti was also an inspiration for slave revolts and resistance in the American antebellum South symbolized by the names Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner. The Black Jacobins by the West Indian C.L.R. James, written when he was



LENIN

a Trotskyist, points to the world-historic significance of the Haitian Revolution and its great leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture.

In August 1791, after two years of the French Revolution and its repercussions in San Domingo, the slaves revolted. The struggle lasted for 12 years. The slaves defeated in turn the local whites and the soldiers of the French monarchy, a Spanish invasion, a British expedition of some 60,000 men, and a French expedition of similar size under Bonaparte's brother-in-law. The defeat of Bonaparte's expedition in 1803 resulted in the establishment of the Negro state of Haiti which has lasted to this day.

The revolt is the only successful slave revolt in history, and the odds it had to overcome is evidence of the magnitude of the interests that were involved. The transformation of slaves, trembling in hundreds before a single white man, into a people able to organize themselves and defeat the most powerful European nations of their day, is one of the great epics of revolutionary struggle and achievement.

—C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!

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Be There! December 22, 9:00 a.m., Cook County Circuit Court

Chicago: All Out for Cassandra Seay!

CHICAGO—Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) locals representing over 10,000 workers are calling on their members to mobilize December 22 at the Circuit Court of Cook County to stop the racist frame-up of bus operator Cassandra Seay and her family. Seay, a member of ATU Local 241, and her mother Callie Bryant were viciously assaulted by seven Chicago cops who invaded the Seay home last July 21. Seay was hospitalized for over a week and missed three months of work at the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) because of severe injuries inflicted by the police.

On December 22 Seay and Bryant must go back to court for the fourth time to defend themselves from trumped-up charges thrown at them by the cops, including "assaulting a police officer." They face penalties of up to 15 years. Seay's two teenage sons, David and D'Artagnan, whose only "crime" was to witness the brutal attack on their mother and grandmother, face similar charges in juvenile court. The labor movement must not let the bosses' cops and courts destroy this innocent black family! A massive labor/black outpouring, representing every major union in the city, must answer the call issued by ATU Locals 241 (bus) and 308 (rail)!

Seventy members of the ATU locals and their supporters turned out for Seay's previous court appearance November 24, packing the courtroom and spilling into the hallway. Included in this crowd were 16 members of the Local 241 executive board and ATU International Vice President Jackie Breckenridge. When Cassandra's case was called, everyone in the courtroom (except the cops and prosecutors) stood in a silent and moving display of solidarity. After Judge Leo Holt ordered a



Cassandra Seay (right) and her daughter Wenndi at November 24 rally outside Chicago courthouse. Her coworkers and supporters demand: Drop the charges against Cassandra Seay and her family!

continuance in the case, the union members pledged to return December 22 with a large turnout.

The campaign to defend Cassandra Seay and her family has attracted support from across the country and even from Britain. Telegrams to Cook County state's attorney Richard M.

Daley demanding that all the charges be dropped have been sent by trade unionists, particularly transit workers, in the Bay Area, New York, Atlanta, Cleveland and Philadelphia, as well as London and Sheffield, England. From Cleveland, Harold Mitchell, president of Local 100 of the American Federa-

tion of State, County and Municipal Employees, wrote:

"This racist frame-up and others like it will not be tolerated by the Labor Movement or the Black Community.... Challenges by racist, brutal police to their victims to 'go tell Harold,' bring to mind similar incidents which occurred in Cleveland during the term of office of former 'black' Mayor Carl Stokes.... Police murder, terrorism, violence and brutality must end now!"

A telegram from Transport Workers Union Local 234 president Roger Taus in Philadelphia said:

"Transit workers around the country are incensed by the racist treatment and legal frame-up of transit worker Cassandra Seay. Do not let the Chicago legal system replace cross burning as the new symbol of racial oppression. Drop all charges immediately."

After four years under black Democratic mayor Harold Washington, recently deceased, racist attacks are rampant in Segregation City. Police superintendent Leroy Martin brags, "I've got the toughest gang in town, the Chicago Police Department" (*Chicago Tribune*, 7 November). This gang of gun thugs for the racist capitalist system is carrying out an escalating campaign of terror against working people and minorities in Chicago. For a young black man, even a misdemeanor arrest on disorderly conduct can carry a death sentence at the hands of the police. For example, young Anthony Wesley was booked on disorderly charges November 30 and dead within a few hours; the cops say he hanged himself with his jacket, but the severe bruising about his head told the real story (*Chicago Defender*, 31 November).

This racist police terror must be stopped, and only massive labor/black mobilizations can do it. *All out December 22 at 9 a.m., 1340 S. Michigan Avenue. Be there!* ■

KKK Terror Rape in Upstate New York

Black Teenager Kidnapped

Two days after Thanksgiving, black teenager Tawana Brawley was found near her upstate New York home, trembling in a plastic bag, her body covered with excrement and the letters "KKK" scrawled across her breasts. On November 24 Tawana had been brutally kidnapped by three white men shortly after visiting a prisoner at the nearby Orange County Jail in Goshen, the scene of a Klan-style riot by prison guards two days earlier. The 15-year-old cheerleader was raped and terrorized for four days by a gang of Klan scum, including one who was wearing a badge.

The racist Dutchess County cops have done their best to cover up this hideous crime. They did nothing when Tawana's mother reported her missing. After the ordeal, the severely traumatized young woman became hysterical when questioned by two white cops. Later, when she identified two cops as having been among her attackers, the information was squelched. Tawana was only given a perfunctory physical examination and now the Dutchess County Sheriff Frederick Scoralick even questions whether a crime was committed!

The area has long been infamous for its Klan-infested state police and prison guards. The cop riot at the Goshen jail

November 22 began when black and Hispanic prisoners complained about overheating and dangerously poor ventilation in their cells. The guards, some of whom donned Klan hoods, then set upon the prisoners with fire hoses and guard dogs. They forced the inmates to strip, shackled them and beat them with nightsticks and mop handles. At least two prisoners required hospital treatment, suffering head and abdominal injuries. It was after visiting one of the victims of this racist assault that Tawana Brawley was herself attacked two days later. And on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, the home of an interracial couple in nearby Peekskill was firebombed.

Noted black attorney Conrad Lynn, attorney for the Mid-Hudson region chapter of the NAACP, connected the racist atrocities to the economic situation: "There's a rise of racial bigotry, and that always happens when you're on the verge of a Great Depression," noting "the terrible riots and the lynchings of blacks after the First World War" (WBAI, 4 December). The cops and courts of American capitalism are instruments of oppression of blacks and Hispanics, and twisted racist sickos like those who raped and terrorized Tawana Brawley are doing the same "off duty."

These filthy swine (who often wear blue uniforms under their white sheets) are on the wrong side of the prison bars—they ought to be put away for good!

Minority families in the Hudson Valley north of New York City face a growing racist backlash: blatant segregation by the Yonkers city council, cop riots against Hispanics in North Tarrytown, open terror against the black populations of Hudson River towns and some Catskills communities. The Klan is notoriously active among prison guards from Sing Sing to Goshen jail. And the police are no different. Rockland County is a "bedroom suburb" crawl-

ing with racist NYPD cops who don't dare live in the city they ride roughshod over every day. Last December, Jimmy Bruce Lee, whose mother is the chairman of the Ellenville NAACP, was choked to death by Middletown cops. And in July two members of the New York Eight were arrested in Monroe as the police continue to hound these black militants.

Blacks in upstate New York are isolated and vulnerable. But they're close to the Big Apple. New York City labor and minorities must stand ready to come to their aid to stop the racist scum in their tracks. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

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U.S. Plays "Nuclear Chicken"

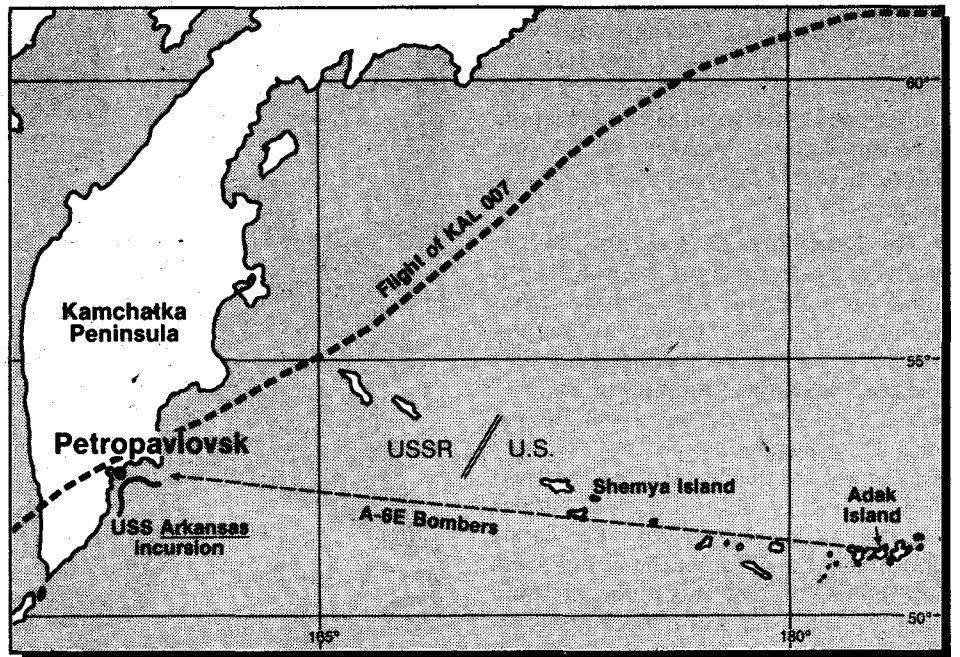
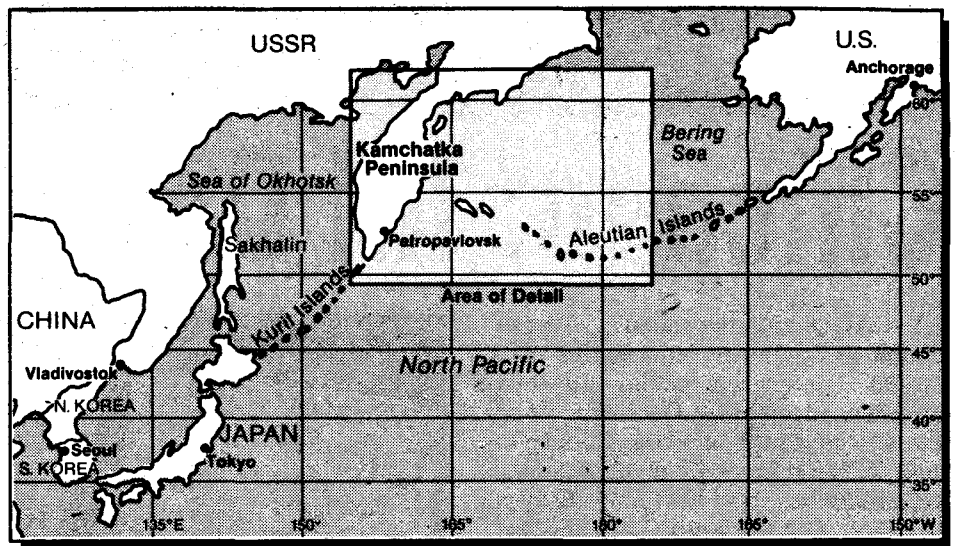
Target: Petropavlovsk

Petropavlovsk, the USSR's vital naval port on Kamchatka Peninsula where almost half of the Soviet strategic nuclear deterrent force of missile-firing submarines is based, has been subjected to "mock" bombing runs by U.S. Navy jets for well over a year. As revealed in a little-noticed Associated Press report buried in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (23 November), the "mock attacks... are waged by A-6E bombers based on Navy-controlled Adak Island in the Aleutian island chain" and "an estimated 24 to 27 missions have taken place since spring 1986, with the most recent mock attack in late October." And in November, 10,000 U.S. sailors and airmen conducted an eight-day "exercise" with 100 planes and eleven ships in the Aleutians.

"This is the first time either [power] has used armed supersonic bombers on a beeline run toward an adversary's city," Navy officials casually observed. The Navy bombers "reportedly stop about 90 miles short" of Petropavlovsk—less than eight minutes from their targets! These provocations were begun around the time the U.S. destroyer *Caron* and guided missile cruiser *Yorktown* were invading Soviet territorial waters off Black Sea Fleet headquarters at Sevastopol, followed by the criminal U.S. bombing raid on Libya—a supposed Soviet "surrogate." The White House madmen have been deliberately yanking on the trip wires of World War III.

The Reaganauts are particularly obsessed with the Soviet Far East, which has been the focus of repeated U.S. war provocations. Last May, the guided missile cruiser *Arkansas* deliberately invaded Soviet waters at Petropavlovsk as part of a provocative "exercise" by the Third Fleet. While the Soviets responded with naval and air defense forces in a tense confrontation, the ship's captain launched a small boat so that a photographer could snap a photo of his exploits. As we wrote in *WV* No. 435 (4 September), this was a dry run for "a Pearl Harbor-style sneak attack," part of U.S. nuclear first-strike plans.

In April 1983 during Pacific "exercises" the U.S. aircraft carrier *Midway* suddenly went into electronic silence, as if would in wartime, and then popped up southeast of Kamchatka, followed by a sudden "mock" attack by Navy planes which violated Soviet airspace over the Kuril archipelago. A few months later, on the night of 31 August-1 September 1983, the KAL 007 spy plane made its provocative flight across Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin island, triggering Soviet defenses along the way as intended by U.S. intelligence agencies monitoring the "errant" flight, before being shot down. Just before the plane penetrated Soviet airspace at Kamchatka, it rendezvoused with a U.S. RC-135 electronic spy plane, which had flown from its base on Shemya Island in the Aleutians—about 40 minutes



Soviet strategic defense base at Petropavlovsk on Kamchatka Peninsula in Far East threatened by U.S. Navy A-6E bombers based in Aleutians. The same region was invaded by U.S. guided missile cruiser *Arkansas* last May and overflowed by KAL 007 spy plane in 1983.

west of Adak Island, where the A-6E bombers are based. Petropavlovsk is clearly a top target on the imperialists' hit list.

Now Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is sitting down to sign an "arms control" treaty with President Reagan. Naive pacifists and muddle-headed Stalinists seem to think that peace is break-

ing out all over. But for the last 70 years, the imperialists have sought to wipe out the conquests of the October Revolution. Those Soviet radar operators staring at their screens in lonesome outposts would do well to keep their eyes peeled: when Reagan talked in 1984 about bombing Russia "in five minutes," it was no joke. ■

On the Minsk Partisans: A Correction

WV No. 437 (2 October) ran a photograph of a young woman and a young man being hanged by the Nazis with a caption reading, "...fascists publicly execute young Jewish partisans in Minsk, USSR, 1941." In fact, while the young woman, Maria Bruskina, was Jewish, her comrade, Volodya Shcherbatsevich, was not.

This photograph has long been famous, depicting the first public executions on Soviet soil by the Hitlerite occupiers. But it was given particular importance because of a recent article in the *New York Times* (15 September) detailing Soviet authorities' ongoing cover-up of Maria Bruskina's Jewish identity. For years, Shcherbatsevich and Kirill Trus, two comrades executed along with her, were named in Soviet history textbooks. But Maria remained an "unknown partisan."

In fact, after an exhaustive search Soviet journalists discovered her identity and published the story in the Moscow newspaper *Trud* in 1968. But authorities in Minsk to this day refuse to recognize that the girl who walked to her execution with her head held high was a Jewish partisan. Soviet Stalinists still do not acknowledge a particular role played by Jewish fighters in the war against the German occupation.

The *Times*, however, has its own anti-Soviet ax to grind in this affair, absurdly attempting to cast the young girl as a Zionist, "the ultimate 'refusenik'." Nonsense. She was a Soviet heroine. The *Times* doesn't consider it news "fit to print" that Maria Bruskina was a Young Communist who at the age of 17 volunteered for clandestine work to free captured Red Army prisoners of war.

An article on "The Unknown Girl" by Soviet journalists Lev Arkadyev and Ada Dikhtyar (published earlier this year in *Yiddish Writers Almanac*, a collection of translations from the *Sovietish Heimland*) reported that almost all of Maria's classmates at Jewish School No. 28 in Minsk also joined the partisan movement. Indeed, in the Minsk area alone *thousands* of Jewish partisans fought under the command of the Red Army.

As a Jew, Maria Bruskina was in particular danger, subject to being shot on sight by the Nazis simply for leaving the ghetto in Minsk, as she did every day to carry out her work, disguising herself by dyeing her hair blonde. When an informer exposed them to the Nazis, Maria and eleven of her Communist comrades were arrested, tortured and murdered by the Nazi



TASS from Sovfoto

beasts in public hangings on the streets of Minsk.

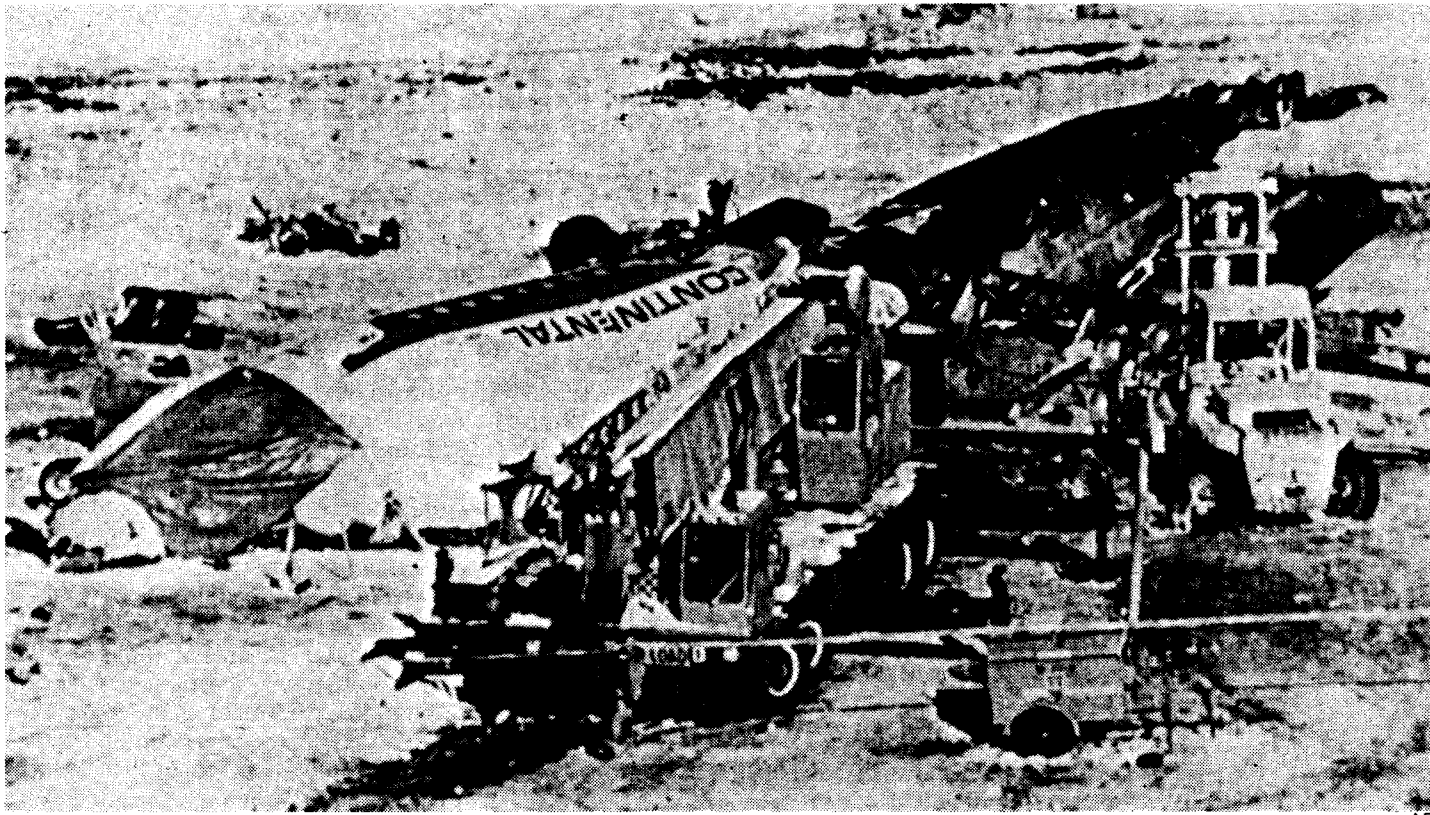
Maria and her comrades died as fighters. More than a million Soviet citizens were slaughtered by the Nazis simply because they were Jews, including the victims of the infamous massacre at Babi Yar. But the Stalinist bureaucrats, purveyors of Great Russian chauvinism, refuse to acknowledge that Jews were singled out as special targets of the Nazi Holocaust.

The October Revolution smashed the tsarist Black Hundreds who terrorized the ghettos with their murderous pogroms. Yet in order to crush oppositionists such as Trotsky, Kamenov, Zinoviev and other Bolshevik leaders, Stalin revived anti-Semitism.

Shamefully, this scourge is raising its head again today in the form of the fascistic association *Pamyat* (Memory). Protected by elements of the bureaucracy, such groupings are a counterrevolutionary threat to the conquests of October.

The *New York Times* rants about Soviet anti-Semitism, but itself joined in covering up the extensive employment of Nazi war criminals by American imperialism in its anti-Soviet Cold War. It also ignores the fact that the Soviet Union eventually provided refuge for Jews fleeing the Holocaust (while the U.S. kept its doors tightly shut) and it was the Red Army and the Soviet peoples who heroically fought and defeated the Nazis.

"Free Enterprise" Kills



Denver, November 15—Continental airliner, owned by vicious union-buster Frank Lorenzo, flipped over on runway, killing 28 passengers. There were numerous public warnings that this model DC-9 was unsafe in icy conditions.

Death on the Runways

The first snowstorm of the season hit Denver's Stapleton airport November 15 with 40 mile-per-hour winds, sub-freezing temperatures and blinding swirls which cut visibility to one-eighth of a mile. Two of the four main runways were closed, major airlines like TWA cancelled many flights. In theory, a pilot has the right to refuse to take off in such unsafe conditions. But the men in the cockpit of Flight 1713 worked for Continental Airlines, which broke the pilots' union four years ago. So the DC-9 with 82 people on board rolled down the runway, lifted off for a few seconds, then rolled violently to the right, then back to the left, clipping a wing in the process, then flipped completely over and skidded 1,200 feet, breaking into three big pieces along the way.

The control tower at Stapleton could not even see the wreckage of the plane in the storm. Many of the survivors were trapped for hours into the night, hanging upside down strapped into their seats as rescuers fought in sub-freezing temperatures to pull them from the tangled metal dripping with explosive jet fuel. One such victim, David Daniel, was pressed against his 26-year-old wife Tami's back for six hours in the numbing cold—he heard her whisper, "I love you, hang on," and then felt her go limp as she died (*Daily News*, 18 November). This was not an "accident"—28 people were murdered by "the magic of the marketplace."

These disasters have become so

commonplace that even establishment papers like the *Los Angeles Times* (17 November) are starting to delicately mention "the Reagan Administration's widely perceived shortcomings in management of the deregulated airline industry." Indeed, investigators for the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) were gathering last week in Detroit for hearings on last August's crash of a Northwest Airlines jet, in which 156 people died, when they were suddenly dispatched to Denver for the latest tragedy. In the first nine months of this year alone "near misses" in the air have shot up 50 percent. On December 1 a Delta 737 nearly taxied into a United Airlines jumbo jet taking off from L.A. International Airport. Two days later there were four traffic incidents at LAX, one plane missing another by 35 feet!

"Free enterprise" has created a jungle of air traffic far beyond what the system can reasonably handle: "On a typical evening at Chicago's O'Hare International," notes the *L.A. Times*, "roughly 70 takeoffs and landings were scheduled between 6 o'clock and 6:15.... The nation's aviation system is pressed to the limit." The system has been doubly strapped by Reagan's firing of all 11,400 PATCO air traffic controllers during their 1981 strike. The high-tech Reaganauts expected to be bailed out by a \$12 billion computerization plan for the air traffic system, but like the "Star Wars" scheme, it fizzled—the system is years behind schedule. Instead, they have created pandemonium in the skies, something like an amusement park bumper cars ride, but with deadly consequences.

And so the drumbeat for more and more profits, completely unrestrained in this era of government deregulation, continues to pile up the bodies. The airline pilot who decided to take his chances in that Denver snowstorm was pulling the throttle for profit-hungry Continental Airlines, owned by takeover artist Frank Lorenzo, who with the help of bankruptcy laws in 1983 cut Continental pilots' wages in half and then smashed their strike. Even the *Wall Street Journal* (24 July) is disturbed by the resulting "chaos" at Continental, where managers "have to cajole over-worked crews to fly on their days off." Lorenzo, of course, was only following

the example of President Reagan, whose destruction of PATCO set the tone for the union-busting '80s.

Continental has become notorious as one of the worst airlines in America. Last July the federal government announced it led the list in passenger complaints. In a recent survey, 52 percent of airline pilots named Continental as the company least concerned about safety, followed by Eastern (also controlled by Lorenzo). Investigations following the Denver crash are focusing on the lack of experience of the cockpit crew. Last year Continental paid a \$402,000 fine for safety violations, including improper pilot training. Yet only a few months ago Continental was ballyhooed as the high-flying paragon of union-free enterprise in the skies. The deaths in Denver are really an indictment of the whole profit-driven capitalist system.

Ghost of Crashes Past

"I have to suspect ice," was the comment of Richard Shevell, one of the designers of the DC-9, after the latest crash in Denver. The 21-year-old plane lacked a critical modern feature: extending wing slats on the forward edge of the wings which provide extra lift on takeoff. After a crash in 1985 the NTSB had issued a prophetic warning: "Aircraft without leading edge devices are more sensitive to even light amounts of airfoil ice, which may not always be visibly detectable and which may accumulate during pretakeoff taxi operations." This Continental DC-9 had sat for 23 minutes in a snowstorm waiting for takeoff permission from the control tower. Air turbulence from a wide-body jet landing on a parallel runway may have added to the takeoff difficulties.

It appeared to be an eerie replay of the 1982 Air Florida tragedy in which a Boeing 737 crashed into the Potomac River, killing 78. In that case, after routine de-icing the plane had waited 49 minutes in a snowstorm until takeoff. Months earlier a British aviation official had issued a warning letter that the Boeing 737 was "unusually sensitive" to wing contamination. In fact, the manufacturer had known of the 737's vulnerability to snow and ice coating ever since it was flight-tested in the early '70s. But

advertising such shortcomings does not sell airplanes, and maximum profit is the "bottom line." After the 1982 crash, the NTSB had recommended that de-icing take place at most 20 minutes before takeoff, but the Federal Aviation Administration—ever sensitive to the "needs" of business—ruled in favor of no time limit.

With the feverish growth of airline travel since deregulation, the number of passengers is up by almost half in the last five years. Today many airports face 20 percent more air traffic but "there are 26 percent fewer fully qualified controllers" (*Newsweek*, 23 November). Controllers work six-day weeks and often must forego vacations. Things are so bad that this workforce, many of whom scabbed on the 1981 strike, are now seeking a new union for themselves. Some Congressmen are pushing for rehiring the fired PATCO workers, but the Reaganauts are "standing tall" against such obvious necessities. (Reagan has Air Force jets and Marine helicopters to protect him from stray aircraft when he's in the air, but the rest of us are not so fortunate.)

And don't forget Elizabeth Dole, just-resigned Transportation Secretary and wife of the Republican presidential candidate, who helped make air travel what it is today. But deregulation was a bipartisan affair: it began not in the Reagan years but under Democratic president Carter, with the 1978 Airline Deregulation Act sponsored by Democratic Senators Edward Kennedy and Howard Cannon. The game plan to destroy PATCO was also drawn up by the Carter administration—Reagan merely implemented it. Today the two parties of big business sit down together to draw up austerity budgets which will mean more sacrifices for millions. And in order to make the federal deficit look smaller, the government continues to sit on \$5.6 billion accumulated in the Airport and Airway Trust Fund.

John J. Nance, a professional pilot with 10,000 hours experience flying for the Air Force and Braniff International, has documented the decline of air safety in the deregulation years in his book *Blind Trust* (1986). "The system was not adequately safe in 1978," he admits, but at least the major airlines kept operational safety levels above federal minimums by passing on the costs to ticket prices, so that many flights consisted of business executives on expense accounts. But under today's cutthroat competition, the "safety buffer... is being thinned drastically and dangerously by the free-market forces of cost accountability unleashed by deregulation." The result: crashes are skyrocketing. The solution is not simply a reversal of deregulation, bringing back monopoly price-fixing, but going to the root of this disaster-prone system.

Under capitalism profits are paid for in blood, literally. If the labor movement had stood fast with the PATCO air traffic controllers in 1981 by shutting down the airports, Reagan's anti-union offensive would have been stymied and we'd all be a lot safer now. But the labor bureaucracy shrank from the task. As we wrote in "Reagan's Deadly Skies" (*WV* No. 383, 12 July 1985): "But the development of air transportation requires the highest level of human skill, technology and coordination, while cutthroat competition produces fiery disaster. In a concentrated form, the life-and-death question of air safety demonstrates the need for international planning in a socialist society." ■

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NOTICE
Workers Vanguard
skips a week in
December.
Our next issue will be
dated January 1.

Spartacist League/U.S. Holds Eighth National Conference

Toward Revolutionary Conjunction

The Eighth National Conference of the Spartacist League/U.S., the highest body of our democratic-centralist organization, was held in New York, September 18-20. The political situation confronting the conference was the end of the Reagan years coming with the Iran/Contragate scandal. The main conference document, "Toward Revolutionary Conjunction," noted:

"Surveying our work during the Reagan years, the striking incongruity is our small size. For we are, more visibly than before, the nucleus of America's communist party, which defends the Soviet Union, combats fascist proliferation through mass action, champions science and culture, defends America's class-war prisoners, retrieves the lessons of class struggle that built the unions, and so on."

The years of Reagan reaction have seen some of the most wanton and vicious attacks on virtually every oppressed sector of the population, generating much social tinder. Since Contragate we have seen a heightened receptivity to our propaganda for class struggle to bring down Reagan, shown for example by the success of this fall's *WV* subscription drive (see *WV* No. 439, 30 October, for a discussion of the sub drive).

On the domestic front the conference was pretty much a nuts and bolts working body seeking to expand and consolidate areas of party work. This was reflected through commissions on labor/black, defense and youth work. The conference was prepared by a three-month period of internal discussion (somewhat unusually for us, the draft document was available on time at the beginning of pre-conference discussion). Debate took place in the party branches and in writing through the internal discussion bulletin. An additional bulletin published by the International Secretariat ("On the German, Jewish and Russian Questions—Reforge the TLD!") dealt with the reconstitution of our tendency's German section. Additional contributions to the conference discussion were included in the delegates' packets, while other materials were distributed to conference working commissions. These covered a wide range including reports on regional and black work, a debate on the limits of post-Civil War Reconstruction and several contributions to a discussion led by the SL Medical Commission on the AIDS witchhunt.

In a formal sense, the main business before the conference was to debate and vote on "Toward Revolutionary Conjunction" and to elect a Central Com-

mittee. Anticipating broad agreement within the party on the main thrust of the document, we took the unusual step of making the draft available for public sale immediately, to enrich the discussion with contributions from ex-members and other non-party supporters. (Copies of the SL conference document can be obtained by sending \$5 to: Spartacist Publishing Company, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.)

The document concentrated on what's new in the world—essentially, from our standpoint, two things. First

scandal, but that in the absence of any upsurge of union struggle or massive social upheaval, the reactionary and racist social climate termed "Reagan reaction" will not just go away. As far as the Spartacist League is concerned, the document argues that the party, although not devoid of worrisome symptoms, has emerged in a good position to take advantage of the new openings for our politics likely to be presented.

The proposal to publish an issue of *Spartacist* devoted to the "Russian question" became a major-focus of the

recent intervention of Indian troops in Sri Lanka. Spurred by a very thoughtful contribution to the pre-conference discussion, some comrades suggested a more pointed line. What was proposed to the international for consideration was the slogan, "Indian troops out of Eelam!", which must be linked to the call for "workers to power." The situation is complicated and bloody and becomes more so every day. The concerns which shape our line are the Sinhalese-chauvinist government's violent oppression of the Tamil people, the gulf separating proletarian revolutionists from the genocidal Tamil nationalists, and opposition to the hegemonic move by the Indian government, in the context of the relationship of international forces.

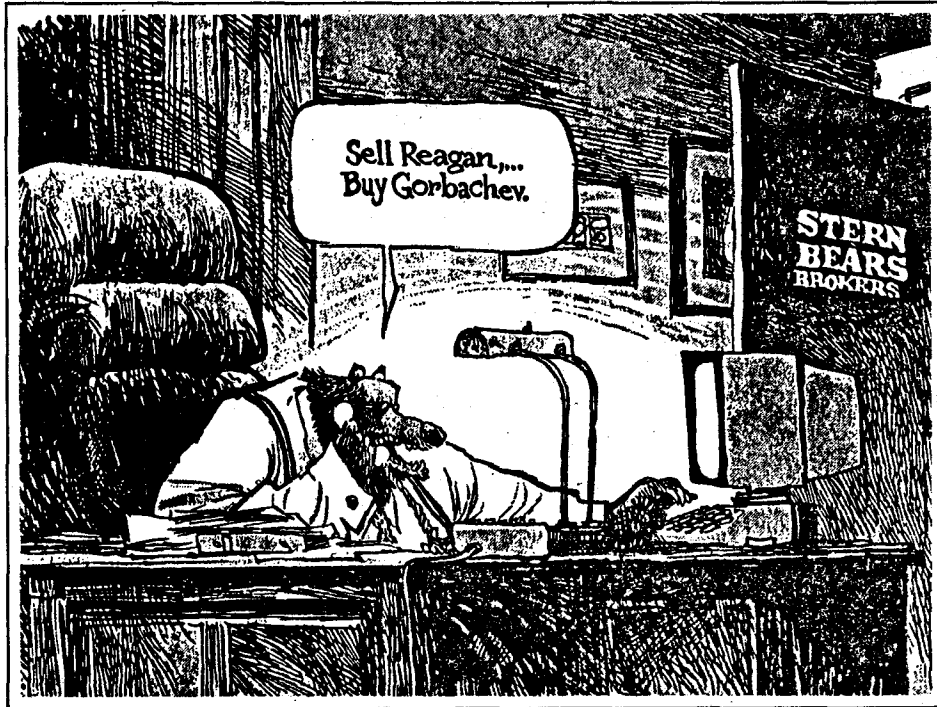
The conference voted to adopt "Toward Revolutionary Conjunction" with three substantive changes (minor and stylistic points were referred to an editing commission). These were: an additional section on "Deng's China and Political Revolution" (see *Spartacist* No. 41-42, which *WV* subscribers will receive along with this issue of *WV*); a pair of amendments to the "Gorbachev's Russia" section which are incorporated in the revised document section also published in the new *Spartacist*; and an amendment on black nationalism.

Revolution and Truth

The main conference document drew a response from two outfits buzzing around the pro-Democratic Party popular front: Irwin Silber's Stalinoid *Frontline* (20 July) and the Morenoite Internationalist Workers Party (*Working Class Opposition*, September 1987). Although from somewhat different parts of the reformist spectrum, both share a capacity for the most fatuous dishonesty about themselves and willful lies about us. For the Frontliners, even the Khrushchev revelations were too honest—they sent Silber running straight into the Democratic Party. As for the Morenoites, theirs is an organization of political swindlers, made in the image of their late *lider máximo*, Nahuel Moreno, a notorious chameleon, cheat and thief. That our document told the truth about the problems our small revolutionary organization has faced during the Reagan years has both outfits ecstatically proclaiming the supposed imminent demise of the Spartacist League.

Both the Morenoites and Silberites seize upon a statement SL/U.S. national chairman Jim Robertson made to the New York local executive in October 1986 that: "...only a stupid person would join an organization like ours at the present time." In the Reagan years, even among the advanced layers of black workers and others who have been eagerly buying the Spartacist press, there was a keen awareness of the negative consequences of joining a small revolutionary Marxist organization which has increasingly stood out as the hard communist opposition in Cold War North America. The hideous MOVE massacre in Philadelphia drove home in blood and fire what the rulers of this country intend to do to anyone who steps out of line. But for the "dizzy with success" Stalinoids and the "ever deepening radicalization" fake-Trotskyists, facing reality squarely is a crime against nature. For them, lying is a method—and it's not enough to do it, you've got to live it and love it.

Flowing from our estimation of the period were certain tasks centering on



MacNelly/Chicago Tribune

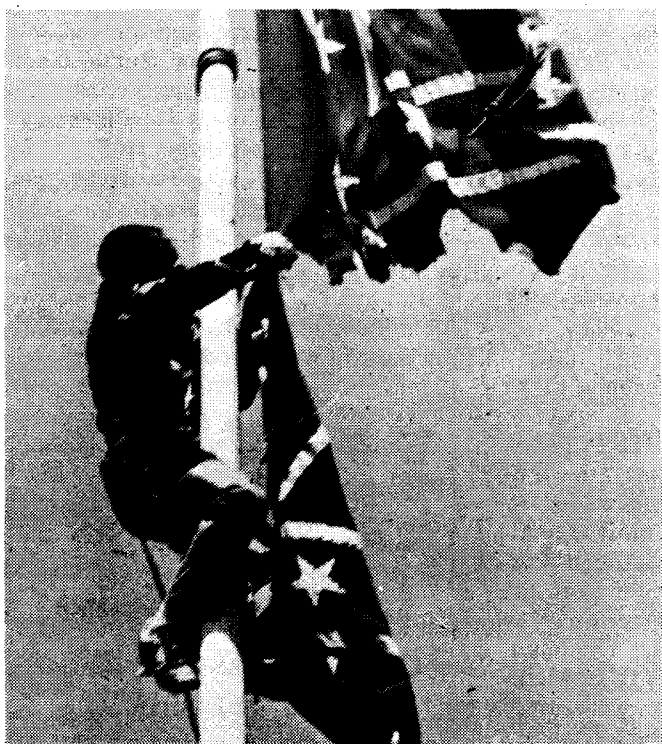
was the "Russian question" today, with the rapidly developing and highly contradictory phenomenon of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the Soviet Union. Things have moved so quickly that the "Gorbachev's Russia" section of the document already seemed somewhat stale when the conference was held (for an evaluation of recent events, see especially "Pamyat: Russian Fascists Raise Their Heads," *WV* No. 434, 7 August, and "Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!" *WV* No. 440, 13 November). The bureaucracy in Gorbachev's Russia—a ruling caste administering a degenerated workers state, lineally descended from Stalin's destruction of Lenin's Bolshevik Party—nevertheless responds to a somewhat different sociology and cultural level than that of Stalin's Russia.

Second, on the domestic terrain, the document argues that the Reagan regime has definitively come to an end over the so-called Iran/Contragate

conference. The table of contents was a hot topic in the main sessions, at the most heavily attended commission meeting, and at the meeting of the International Secretariat (I.S.) held the day after the conference, taking advantage of the presence of leading comrades from our French, British, Australian and Canadian sections. Comrades who have visited the Soviet Union during the past several years enriched the discussion with their observations.

A rich and lively point at the conference reviewed the timing of the call for the Fourth International, weighing the magnitude and character of the 1933 defeat in Germany (Hitler's rise to power essentially unopposed by the powerful German workers movement) against the impact on the workers movement internationally of the *popular front*, codified at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935, whose opportunist legacy is still with us today. The discussion stressed Trotsky's recognition in *The Revolution Betrayed* that Thermidor, the Stalinist political counterrevolution, occurred in 1924 and was politically expressed that same year in the anti-Leninist slogan of "socialism in one country." The conference passed a motion directing comrades' attention to "The Evolution of the Comintern"—a document from the first International Conference for the Fourth International—which points out that, after 1924, "The Comintern, created to be an instrument of world revolution, now became the tool for the national interests of the Soviet bureaucracy." This discussion was not conclusive nor was it meant to be. Rather it was to feed into a broader international discussion, similar to a discussion on the Trotskyists in World War II held at the eighth plenum of the Spartacist tendency's International Executive Committee in 1985 (see *Spartacist* No. 38-39, Summer 1986).

The American conference and the I.S. meeting also took up the question of the



WV Photo

The vanguard party must be a "tribune of the people." Spartacist supporter Richard Bradley tore down Confederate flag, symbol of slavocracy and KKK lynchers, from San Francisco Civic Center.

the understanding that the party's role as a "tribune of the people" (Lenin's phrase to describe the vanguard's obligation to champion the special needs of all the oppressed as an integral part of the working-class struggle against capitalism) could draw around us advanced elements not presently willing or able to join a small socialist cadre organization. The founding of the Labor Black League for Social Defense in the SF Bay Area as an activist organization of struggle against racist oppression reflected this perspective. Similarly, the non-sectarian legal defense work of the Partisan Defense Committee has been warmly received. The impressive legal initiatives of the SL and PDC have included a successful suit against the FBI's equation of political dissent with "terrorism" and a challenge to the efforts of "creationists" to impose religious bigotry on the public schools. In this period, the PDC has become a living defense organization with a monthly column in *WV*, its own newsletter and 75 sustaining contributors.

As a *fighting propaganda group*, we have sought to intersect the outbursts of sharp class struggle which have stood out against the background of "give-backs." We have distributed to strikers many tens of thousands of our supplement, "Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win," which argues the futility of labor seeking to play by the bosses' union-busting rules. At the same time, through the successful anti-fascist mobilizations initiated by the Spartacist League, we have sought to provide the working people and black masses of this country with avenues to fight back against racism and all-sided bourgeois reaction.

Throughout the Reagan years our organization looked for openings to advance our program. And we have been pretty bold, especially as brought

Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense built demonstration against racist segregation of workforce at San Francisco General Hospital, December 1985.



laboration must combat the idea that *class struggle* is the alternative—that with the American bourgeoisie embarrassed and divided, *now* is the time for a union offensive to "take back the givebacks," *now* is the time when powerful mobilizations of integrated labor organizations and minority communities can reverse the rising line of racist violence. What are the obstacles to such a fightback? Primarily, a labor "leadership" which has shackled labor's power to the bosses (and the Democrats), and would rather go under than rock the boat, particularly at an unstable conjuncture like the present. In the absence of major social struggles, certainly many black workers and others targeted by Reagan reaction are going to do what Jesse Jackson tells them to do next election day, and not what we tell them. Yet we suspect most of these people are a lot less "fired up" about the

value of corporate wealth—has added another dimension to the perceived instabilities of the American capitalist order.

Black and Red

As part of the pre-conference discussion a former member wrote a letter objecting to the discussion of a "70 percent black party" at our 1983 conference. The comrade questions "the substantive political difference between an approximately half black leadership and membership, which is what I thought the SL's long-standing perception of what an American workers' party should be, and the higher figure."

Since our inception as a tendency we have recognized the struggle for black freedom as strategically key to the struggle for proletarian revolution in this country. As we wrote in "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom," one of the founding documents of the Spartacist League/U.S.: "Because of their position as both the most oppressed and also the most conscious and experienced section, revolutionary black workers are slated to play an exceptional role in the coming American revolution."

Our struggle to forge a black Trotskyist cadre is not based on some kind of arithmetical prescription or racial quota. Throughout the Reagan years, the most concentrated hatred for and opposition to the new "Cold War" and its domestic reflections has been among the black population. We expected (and still do) that our *breakthroughs* in mass work will be among black workers and youth, hence the question put to the 1983 national conference: "Are you willing to live in a 70 percent black party?" The discussion was posed when a section of the party was resistant to the tasks clearly posed by our successes in leading exemplary labor/black mobilizations to stop fascist provocations in the large Northern cities. That political struggle, which was then reviewed at the 1983 conference, had prepared us to lead the important anti-Klan mobilization in Washington, D.C.

Recognizing that the recruitment of black communists is a *strategic* question for the American revolution, nonetheless we take our breaks where we get them. To give an example, in the 1960s

we began to recruit ex-Catholics hand over fist. With the election of a Catholic president (Kennedy), there was a change in the political psychology of Catholics: they became part of the "mainstream" of American society and more susceptible to its political differentiations, including socialist politics.

Organization and Politics

Going into the Reagan years we knew that we would have our losses; at the same time the cadres of our party have stood at their posts for ten years. Overall we have emerged pretty much intact—a bit smaller, harder, older and with a fair degree of programmatic homogeneity. A very important aspect of the conference was the deliberations of the Nominating Commission, a body constituted to arrive at a slate proposal for Central Committee after hearing from all members wishing to offer arguments about general slate criteria or particular comrades proposed for CC. At our 1983 conference, we elected a CC which was quite large for our size. This year, the alternate and candidate CC lists were cut back to a more appropriate number. In the discussion, it was noted that the voice of all comrades will be heard in the discussions which shape party policy, whether or not they are on the CC. This was held up against the negative example of the pernicious "discipline of higher bodies" as practiced by the SWP in its degeneration—i.e., that discussing with members the differences within leading bodies of the organization is a violation of "discipline." Our practice is codified in our "Organizational Rules," a proposed revision of which was adopted by the conference delegates.

The relative stagnation of a decade of protracted bourgeois reaction (beginning with the resurgence of rabid anti-Sovietism under Carter) can't help but lead to certain deformations among the cadre of a communist organization. The deindustrialization of the SL (reflecting the overall savaging of the industrial workforce in America) has produced a somewhat staid social composition. Under these circumstances, it behooves an organization undergoing the intense political process of a national conference to soberly assess weaknesses that

continued on page 8

LOOKING LEFT by Max Elbaum

Toward Revolutionary Caricature

Many activists in the people's own organization—on the one hand, and the leadership of the party—on the other, have suffered the fate of an encounter with one of the very ultra-left sects that inhabit the fringes of progressive politics. Among the former leaders of these sects is the...

Fake-lefts freak out over frank talk in SL conference document.

FRONTLINE
20 July 1987

Opposition
September 1987

Alice in Wonderland Politics

A Dying Sect: Spartacist League USA

home in our leadership of the 5,000-strong mobilization of black unionists and youth that stopped the Klan from marching in the nation's capital on 27 November 1982. While showing the SL's ability under unusual circumstances to play the role of a small mass party leading vanguard layers of the working people, this political success was not consolidated in membership growth. (In the aftermath of that event, we observed that if this kept up we'd be in danger of becoming "a mass party with no members.")

Contrast this with the sorry record of our opponents from the popular-frontist milieu which Silber and the IWP, in their own ways, speak for. These outfits are endlessly prating about how the anti-Reagan fightback of the masses is daily increasing; indeed anyone who in 1983 believed the American fake-left press would have had no doubt that Walter Mondale was about to be elected president. Behind this cynicism, they all share a secret program which, though wrong, has the virtue of simplicity: that until or unless the Democrats recapture the White House in '88, everything is *hopeless* and the only thing to do is take more and more political dives in hopes of getting closer to Jesse Jackson.

The Silberites are among the most devoted (if hardly the largest) peddlers of the idea that Jesse Jackson and the Democrats in general are the alternative to discredited Reaganism. The purveyors of "Rainbow"-style class col-

merits of Jackson and the Dems—whose "strategy" is to be politically indistinguishable from Reagan insofar as possible—than the Silberites are.

Now let's look at the purported crisis of the Spartacist League. Speaking to the New York local executive committee on 25 October 1986, comrade Robertson emphasized the contradictory aspects of the "Reagan years" which give rise to frustration and friction in the party. His observations are as a matter of fact revealing of the difference between us and our popular-frontist opponents:

"Basically around here nobody is joining. And rightly so, because we don't want to recruit stupid people. And only a stupid person would join an organization like ours at the present time. "Let me hasten to add that America is a very large and disparate place. There are all kinds of pockets and unevenness.... I've been screaming ever since the Yanks were jerked out of Saigon that this country is really unstable. But it is a very powerful, very stable country which is unstable. In any 30-day period this country can be turned around...."

It wasn't much more than 30 days after this speech that Iran/Contragate blew up. And when Ben Linder, a young American volunteer working on rural electrification in Nicaragua, was murdered by Reagan's contras, the war "came home" to America, becoming an active issue for many of the millions who already viewed Reagan's adventures in Nicaragua with a very suspicious eye. Now the Wall Street crash—which in one day wiped out a third of the paper

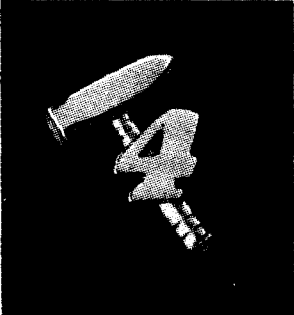
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Remember Michael Stewart

NY Transit Cops' Racist Dragnet

You are black or Hispanic and you're riding a packed Lexington Avenue subway at rush-hour. Naturally there are no seats and you're trying to keep your balance as the train pitches around curves. It finally lurches to a stop and then—"You're under arrest!" You're charged with sexually molesting a white woman or maybe attempted grand larceny. You are now a "perp," collared by the NYC Transit Police. This is the M.O. of five white undercover transit cops who made hundreds of deliberate false arrests, mainly of black and Hispanic men, in a 12-month period during 1983-84. The victims were hauled away in handcuffs, sometimes chained to basement steam-pipes in the station house, waiting in jail for up to three days before being dragged into court. That's if they're lucky—they could have been killed: remember Michael Stewart!

The scandal broke last week when Thomas Dargan, a retired lieutenant from the Transit Police Internal Affairs Unit, made public his 1984 report on the cops' racist dragnet. Dargan blew the whistle when he heard about a "malicious prosecution" lawsuit filed against the city by Ronald Yeadon, a black NYC cop. Hell-bent on promotions and racking up "arrest overtime," the racist cops busted Yeadon even after he identified himself as NYPD. Charges of sexually abusing a female passenger were later dropped. In the other cases, many

of the "victims" were unaware that they had been victimized or that they had pressed charges. Dargan was ordered to close the case and Manhattan D.A. Robert Morgenthau stood by his racist enforcers in blue: "They were arresting, by and large, the right people."

The TA racist cops' targets included Robert Young, a black day-care center worker from Queens who was awarded \$400,000 for false arrest on sexual abuse charges. In the first few days after Dargan's suppressed report became public some 30 victims have added their names to the list of those falsely arrested. Evidence now implicates at least nine officers who together "made 51 percent of all sexual-abuse arrests carried out by the 3,500-member force in a 16-month period," according to the *New York Times* (8 December). Most of the "collars" were made at Union Square. It was the same time, same place, where on 15 September 1983 eleven transit police fatally stomped and choked black artist Michael Stewart in full view of students watching out of dormitory windows. Six cops went on trial and all of them walked. From the TA to the D.A., the apparatus of racist state repression covered up the crime.

Koch now promises to "go after" anyone involved in a cover-up of the TA cops' dragnet. Then MTA chairman and ex-CIA spymaster Robert Kiley jumped on the bandwagon, suspending the

Decoy squad transit cops "collar" a passenger.



Davidson/Magnum

operation of the TA's "decoy" unit amid investigations of 18 cases in which the elite undercover cops employed "aggressive enticement" to make arrests. Now U.S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani and the FBI are entering the case. Have the forces of racist "law and order" suddenly had a change of heart? Hardly. The New York "justice" system runs on the idea that the cops' word is the truth. TA cops getting caught out in blatantly false arrests undermines that image. A few dumb racist cops—out of more than 30,000—may twist in the wind but in New York City the bottom line is still: Koch's cops kill!

Amid the furor over this latest racist

outrage, the trial of four members of the Howard Beach lynch mob is wrapping up. During the two-month long trial the black victims were subjected to never-ending character assassination and abuse while the racist murderers of black construction worker Michael Griffith have been portrayed as "youngsters" in a "turf fight." If they get off, or a slap on the wrist, it will be a green light to racist terrorists in or out of uniform. We have repeatedly insisted that a massive show of power by organized labor at the head of the black and Hispanic population is urgently needed to make the streets and subways of New York safe for all. ■

SL Conference...

(continued from page 7)

have shown up and the measures taken to deal with them. It is this kind of critical review, totally alien to the bullshit-and-backstabbing school of internal political life among the fake-lefts, which gave the Morenoites and *Frontline* some quotable quotes; of course they suppressed our conclusion: that through internal political struggle when necessary, the SL/U.S. has come out of the Reagan years in pretty good shape.

But complacency is not in order. One of the benefits to the SL of the formal abandonment of Trotskyism by Jack Barnes' SWP—shaking a whole layer of remaining party veterans out into the cold (who then began writing voluminously, if from our standpoint not too accurately, about party history)—is that we were prompted to re-examine the SWP's embrace of centrism and then reformism as its program (associated with the embrace of Jack Barnes and his clique as the party's "next generation" of leaders). Our *Spartacist* No. 38-39, Summer 1986—particularly in "The SWP—A Strangled Party," the obituary of George Breitman and the text of our 1974 memorial meeting for SWP founder James P. Cannon—reviews the intersection of the aging of the SWP founding cadre with the isolation experienced during the McCarthy witchhunt.

If our cadres and leaders have gotten older at the usual rate while being only inadequately replenished by the infusion of younger forces, this underlines

the importance of recruiting youth. Happily we have seen a resurgence in recruiting young people to our organization. The meeting of the youth commission reaffirmed the value of some of the younger comrades taking the opportunity to participate in some of the harvest brigades in Nicaragua this year. Additional discussion in this commission centered on leftist opponents in the U.S., even some of the smaller ones like the "Spark" group which is presently making its appearance on American campuses. That this Detroit-based semi-syndicalist group would venture onto campus at all, 20 years after its leader split from the SL on a program of "going to the workers" (i.e., turning one's back on the campuses during the height of the Vietnam War/"New Left" radicalization), suggests that even they recognize there is a new layer of students open to radical political ideas.

Today, millions of people deeply and actively hate the greedy, incompetent rulers of this country. But more than hatred is required to bring down this vicious system—that takes a revolutionary leadership. As Trotsky observed in the *Transitional Program*, the objective conditions for revolution are over-ripe; what is lacking is a party to fight for workers power. Now that the regime of the White House cowboy is in deep disarray, radical students, militant blacks, advanced workers can be won to the communist movement. In the teeth of Reagan reaction, our party has won itself a hearing among some very impressive people, but we badly need more members. And members don't recruit themselves; we have to go out and get them. That's a lot of what our conference was about—now, we just have to do it. ■

Corrections

In the article on "Leon Trotsky and the Bolshevik Revolution" in *WV* No. 441 (27 November) there were some omissions due to transmission and translation errors in the speech by Esteban Volkov. The sentence beginning "In everything the situation is becoming dangerous—the countries with a statified economy headed by bureaucracies are falling totally behind" should have ended with: "the progress, so dynamic, so innovative, being undergone by the technology of the advanced capitalist countries." And the end of the first sentence of the last paragraph should read: "whether the bureaucracy is an excrescence of a planned system, which due to the evolution of its own contradictions with the progress of the country will disappear as a privileged group or class—which is very probable."

In "Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!" in *WV* No. 440 (13 November) we incorrectly stated that after submitting to Stalin, Bukharin was later named editor of *Pravda*. Bukharin had been editor of *Pravda* prior to his ouster from the Politburo and Comintern leadership in 1929; he was named editor of *Izvestia* in 1934, before being executed in 1938.

In "Lutte Ouvrière Censors Trotskyist Defense of the Soviet Union" in *WV* No. 438 (16 October), we mistakenly wrote that it was a "liberal Democratic city administration" in New York which tried to break the 1968 teachers strike there. At the time, Mayor John Lindsay

had been elected on a Republican/Liberal ticket. In the same issue, the article "Divided Germany and Gorbachev's Glasnost" incorrectly described Unter den Linden street in East Berlin as the former Stalin-alley. Unter den Linden has always been called so; Stalinallee is now Karl-Marx-Allee.

The article "Reagan's Amerika" in *WV* No. 437 (2 October) gave the number of German Communists killed by Hitler's Holocaust as a million. While different figures have been given by various sources, *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (History of the German Workers Movement) published by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Socialist Unity Party reports: "Of the roughly 300,000 members that the KPD had in 1933, about 150,000 were persecuted, jailed or sent to concentration camps. Tens of thousands of officials and members of the Party were murdered."

A box accompanying "Spectre of Trotsky Haunts Gorbachev's Russia" in *WV* No. 430 (12 June) excerpting Lenin's Testament (written December 1922-January 1923) said that it had been "totally suppressed in the Soviet Union for almost 40 years" before being published in the 1961 edition of Lenin's *Collected Works*. A letter from a comrade who researched the question notes that it "was first published in 1956, in the Russian-language journal *Kommunist* (a CC organ), No. 9," and was reprinted separately as well as translated into numerous languages.

Haiti...

(continued from page 1)

What then? Like the Santo Domingo commune of 1965, it would quickly be met by an imperialist "peacekeeping" force, perhaps under the auspices of the OAS, which Che Guevara aptly called a "Yankee ministry of colonies."

The Haitian masses desperately want revolution. Crowds of starving people march on food warehouses and empty their contents. Chanting "We want communism," hundreds storm the airport to prevent a notorious Macoute criminal from fleeing. In Fort Liberté protesters march with red flags complaining there's no work, electricity or running water. It's clear to all that only a struggle for power can uproot Duvalierism without Duvalier. *A bas CNG, pouvoir ouvrier!* (Down with the junta, workers to power) must be the battle cry—for a workers and peasants government! Yet the social base *inside Haiti* to sustain such a revolution is exceedingly narrow, with a tiny proletariat amid the masses of rural and urban poor. The life line for any revolutionary struggle by the working masses in Haiti must be militant proletarian-internationalist support in the imperialist centers. As American rulers talk of another Grenada invasion, American workers must demand: *U.S. imperialism hands off Haiti!*

The hundreds of thousands of Haitian workers abroad can play a key role in defending the embattled masses in Haiti by joining in struggle with their class brothers and sisters from Santo Domingo to New York, Montreal and Paris. A revolutionary struggle for national and social emancipation in that black Caribbean nation would have a real impact on the American proletariat. The common enemy is U.S. imperialism, which busts unions and sows racist terror at home while super-exploiting Haitian workers at miserable wages of \$3 a day and less. With Reagan on the ropes in Washington and his contras on the run in Central America, now is the time to strike a blow against the imperialist war drive. The urgent task is to forge a Leninist party to unite and lead these struggles to victory!

Duvalierism Without Duvalier

Election day in Haiti was a gruesome massacre. As voters stood in line November 29 at a school near downtown Port-au-Prince which was being used as a polling station, a mob of 50-100 soldiers and Tonton Macoutes charged at them. Dozens were killed, riddled with bullets, blown apart by grenades, dismembered with machetes. Reporters were shot, opposition radio stations were destroyed. From the slums, reported the *New York Times* (30 November), "came the alarm of the poor—terrified calls for help on whistles and conch-shell horns and the banging together of pots and pans. The pleas went on all night. But the only response was more gunfire." Particular targets were the neighborhood vigilance committees who fought against the Macoute terror in the days preceding the elections. A terrified young woman told the *San Francisco Examiner* (3 December) of a massacre of 46 civilians inside the Fort Dimanche military prison.

Such scenes were repeated at schools, churches and other voting sites around Haiti. But the rivers of blood on election day were only the culmination of a months-long massacre by the soldiers and Duvalierist thugs. Two presidential candidates were shot dead, one of them on the steps of a police station where he was demanding freedom for a political prisoner. Offices of the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) were bombed, and the plant that printed ballots was burned down. Gunmen in jeeps fired into the offices and homes of election officials and candidates. The streets of the capital were deserted at night as people stayed indoors for fear

that they would become the next victims of arbitrary killings.

When mass uprisings forced Reagan to oust "Baby Doc" in February 1986 Washington was hoping it could pull off a Cory Aquino-style "people power" coup, installing a U.S.-loyal regime with a democratic façade credible enough to quell popular struggles. Key members of the CNG were former Duvalierist officers. With the junta in place, U.S. aid to Haiti was increased to \$100 million and millions were poured into the army and police. The masses demanded *rache manyok* (pull up manioc—a euphemism for rooting out Duvalierism): peasants demonstrated for land, a general strike for higher wages shook the country. But all of the regime's democratic promises were broken and new massacres began. In late June the militant CATH labor federation was outlawed and its headquarters were bombed. A month later 300 peasants were massacred by Tonton Macoutes in the pay of rural landowners outside the rural town of Jean Rabel.

To bolster its anti-Communist crusade from Nicaragua to Afghanistan, the Reagan regime (backed by liberal Democrats) has posed as a champion of "democracy" by ousting used-up dictators like Marcos and Duvalier. In Haiti, the CEP election board no less than the CNG junta was U.S.-controlled. While excluding notorious



Juan B. Arellano/El Diario-La Prensa

Spartacists join outraged Haitian community protesting bloodbath, New York City, November 30.

Duvalierist candidates, it okayed former World Bank official Marc Bazin, a one-time Duvalier cabinet member who was favored by the State Department. Yet the social contradictions are so acute in these lands of starvation-wage capitalism that the U.S.' local flunkies often find they can't indulge in the "luxury" of elections, however tightly controlled. So after the flak he got from Washington for shooting up the elections, Namphy decided to call up his fellow strongman General Noriega in Panama to commiserate. Maybe next these two rogue puppets will have a conference call with Salvadoran death squad leader D'Aubuisson!

Now various liberals are calling for the U.S. to intervene militarily, either directly or through the OAS. The *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, Democratic Congressman Stephen Solarz, Cold War columnist Abe Rosenthal and others are calling for U.S. troops to defend "human rights" in Haiti. They are joined by various black Democrats including D.C. Congressional delegate Walter Fauntroy and New York Congressman Major Owens. In Haiti, the same plea is heard from Christian Democrat Silvio Claude and IMF plutocrat Bazin.

Haitians who took to the streets of U.S. cities to protest the election massacre were not interested in any Washington-imposed "solution." In Miami they chanted, "We want Cas-

tro," and in New York City, November 30 several thousand protesters proclaimed: "No U.S. intervention, power to the people!" and "The only solution is revolution!" They eagerly snapped up over 400 copies of *Workers Vanguard* as well as *Le Bolchévique* (newspaper of the Ligue Trotskyste de France) and other Spartacist literature. Spartacist League signs demanded: "U.S. Hands Off Haiti!" "U.S. Fleet Out of the Caribbean!" "For a Workers and Peasants Government in Haiti!" and "Macoutes to the Wall, Workers to Power!"

From Toussaint to Trotsky

The social conditions endemic to Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, cry out for revolution. *Business Week* (7 September) reported that after the army massacred eight civilians earlier this year, popular Catholic priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide reminded his congregation that Jesus' disciples always carried swords for self-defense and asked, "What is the modern equivalent of swords?" The crowd roared, "Uzis!" In Haiti there is no lack of will to fight. Many of the courageous militants who today face the Macoute and army terror unarmed must be dreaming of Soviet AK-47s miraculously arriving from Cuba, just as the die-hard Duvalierists fear this. But to liberate the masses from hideous poverty and bru-

December 7-8 general strike, rather than giving it a clear class character the leftist CATH called for a mobilization of "workers, the unemployed, pastors, students and voodoo people." But above all they have limited themselves to the Haitian terrain.

In drawing the lessons of the Russian Revolution of 1905, Leon Trotsky first put forward the perspective of permanent revolution, which applies with burning immediacy to Haiti today:

"Our liberal bourgeoisie comes forward as a counter-revolutionary force even before the revolutionary climax. At each critical moment, our intellectual democrats only demonstrate their impotence. The peasantry as a whole represents an elemental force in rebellion. It can be put at the service of the revolution only by a force that takes state power into its hands. The vanguard position of the working class in the revolution, the direct connection established between it and the revolutionary countryside, the attraction by which it brings the army under its influence—all this impels it inevitably to power. The complete victory of the revolution means the victory of the proletariat. This in turn means the further uninterrupted character of the revolution."

—L.D. Trotsky,
Our Revolution (1906)

This program was realized by the October Revolution of 1917, through the vehicle of the Bolshevik Party, forged by Lenin through sharp struggle against the Menshevik program of class collaboration with the "liberal" bourgeoisie, which was later taken over by Stalin with his treacherous dogma of "two-stage revolution." While tsarist Russia was a vast, populous country—a major European power—Haiti is a tiny half of an island in an "American lake." Thus, the need to extend the revolution internationally is all the more acute in the case of Haiti.

When Haitian peasants burn effigies of "Tonton Sam," it testifies to their understanding, however unformed, that they face not only the pathetic Haitian bourgeoisie but also their Yankee imperialist masters. When Haiti was occupied by the Marines in 1915, Charlemagne Peralte, a patriotic army officer, organized a peasant army which put up a valiant but isolated resistance to the U.S. invaders. Occupied until 1934, Haiti has been a de facto U.S. protectorate ever since, condemned to misery under the military boot. The example of Cuba next door shows the tremendous advance which social revolution can bring: the infant mortality rate there is 15 per thousand, compared to 20 in Harlem and 126 in impoverished Haiti. Yet aside from aiding a single abortive expedition by Haitian exiles in 1959, the nationalist Castro leadership has not sought to spread the revolution across the narrow Windward Passage.

Under French domination, Saint Domingue (the future Haiti), was once the richest colony in the world, supporting whole sections of the French bourgeoisie. The uprising of the Haitian masses, led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, created the first black republic in history. But hemmed in by the colonialists' blockade and subjected to imperialist domination, Haiti declined into misery, the land ruined, the people destitute. Yet today the very "diaspora" of hundreds of thousands of Haitians fleeing poverty to Miami, New York, Boston and Montreal serves to give greater resonance to revolutionary struggle on the island. As we wrote at the time of the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship (*WV* No. 397, 14 February 1986):

"...the Haitian Revolution of 1793-1804...sent shock waves through the Caribbean, inspiring slave revolts in Jamaica, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, Grenada, Dominica and Curaçao as well as the American South. Today, the Haitian masses, beset by decades of U.S.-imposed dictatorship and IMF-dictated starvation, can spark a revolt against capitalist wage slavery, for workers revolution throughout the region. This is the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, the program of the international Spartacist tendency." ■

Homeless and Hungry...

(continued from page 1)

subway trains, who lie on the street, who build fires in building entrances; families crowded into squalid, unheated SRO (single room occupancy) welfare hotel rooms and armories filled with tens of thousands of cots that look like the barracks for the shell-shocked refugees of World War II.

• In the nation's capital Nancy Reagan is haughtily planning to show off the "good life" of capitalist America to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in her gala black-tie-only fete. But Gorbachev would only have to cross Pennsylvania Avenue to see the other America, the bodies covered in newspaper which are the product of "free enterprise." While the number of homeless in Washington, D.C. has shot up more than 500 percent in the last year, Metro officials have fenced off a downtown subway station where many huddled to keep warm.

• In sunny Los Angeles with an estimated homeless population of 50,000 there was Mayor Tom Bradley's "urban camp" for the homeless. A banner read, "Soweto, USA." Surrounded by a chain link fence and with guarded entrance, some compared it to a concentration camp. But for the hundreds of men, women and children this modern-day "Hooverville" was the alternative to freezing to death on the streets of Northern and Midwest cities. This "Bradleyville" even had showers—that is until it was torn down last September.

A couple of years ago Reagan pontificated about "the homeless who are homeless, you might say by choice." This is not just the arrogant callousness of the B-grade Hollywood star in the White House. It is the statement of a system incurably debased by production for profit in which human beings are simply another commodity to be produced and maintained when times are "good" and to be gotten rid of through poverty, starvation and disease when they are no longer useful.

The homeless are an eyesore for the bourgeoisie. But it is *their* stock market which is crashing; it is *their* system which condemns millions to live in the streets; it is *their* government which is paralyzed. For the multimillioned victims of Reagan reaction and its Democratic front men, now more than ever the cry should be: Don't beg—Take it! It's yours! This country is rotten-ripe for some militant hard class struggle that can put a stop to the ever-increasing brutalization and degradation of everybody from black welfare mothers in Harlem to unemployed industrial workers in Detroit and farmers facing foreclosures in Iowa.

One Paycheck Away From Destitution

Since Black Monday, October 19, the day the stock market lost half a trillion dollars, a lot of people are scared and not just on Wall Street. Plenty of Americans are rightly worried that they could be just a paycheck away from being the body that others trip over on their way to work, the person waking up after sleeping all night on the E train. Today there are an estimated *three million* homeless in America, over 20 million hungry. Even according to official statistics 33.1 million Americans—14 percent of the population—live in poverty. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless over 500,000 children are homeless. Many never go to school, in some cases the schools won't let them because they have no permanent residence in the school's district.

As Congress axes ever more social programs, America's rulers argue that there must be something wrong with the impoverished, the hungry, the homeless. Ed Koch, the racist pig who runs New York City, says the homeless are



Davis/NY Post

Billie Boggs (above) says: "Koch can't run my life for me." Grim shelters are crime-infested, disease-ridden hellholes.



Bograd/Public Employee Press

demented. In Seattle the poor are wanted "criminals" to be tracked down, arrested and jailed under a new city ordinance against "aggressive" begging on the streets. In L.A. black Democratic Party mayor Tom Bradley sent out the notorious LAPD to tear down the cardboard shanties in the streets of "tinsel town." In Congress the Democrats wail "are there no workhouses?" as they push to "rehabilitate" the poor by shoving welfare recipients into minimum wage "workfare."

For years the Reaganites and Congressional Democrats stole lunches from the mouths of black schoolchildren to help pay for MX missiles. Cut back Medicaid for the aged. Sold government-financed low-income housing to private investors who threw out the poor and moved in the rich. Slashed welfare benefits for single mothers. Meanwhile the Republicans and Democrats are getting ready to vote some more millions in "humanitarian aid" to their "dependent contras" in Nicaragua who specialize in murdering defenseless peasant families, torching day-care centers and destroying health-care clinics.

In recent years millions of men, women and children lined up for Velveeta cheese as the government paid dairy farmers to slaughter or export their cows. Now America's rulers are congratulating themselves for cutting back the agricultural "surplus" which for several million people had provided a source of nutrition for themselves and their families. Next year the Velveeta will run out. In Fort Lauderdale a city councilman suggested spraying garbage bins with rat poison to stop the homeless and hungry foraging for food. Not since the deepest, darkest days of

the 1930s Great Depression, when farm "surplus" was dumped before the eyes of starving millions, has the cruel irrationality and vicious inhumanity which is a constant feature of the capitalist system of production for profit been so glaringly exposed.

New York, New York—It's a Hell of a Town

New York City—the financial capital of the world—it's "a city of beggars and limousines," as *New York Times* columnist Russell Baker put it. And homelessness is big bucks. The slumlord owners of SRO welfare hotels charge up to \$100 a night for families to stay in freezing cockroach-infested rooms where they are menaced by junkies and more often than not have no access to cooking or bathing facilities. At the same time, 60,000 city-owned, low-income apartments stand vacant!

Then there are the shelters. Row after row of cots lined up in the dungeons of armories across the city. You have to sign up by 4:30 p.m. and you're thrown back out on the streets at 6:00 a.m. If you stay in the shelters you're cut off welfare. Disease is rampant. Tuberculosis, the scourge of the 19th century, is spreading. Most people don't sleep for fear of being robbed or murdered. They are preyed upon, degraded, dehumanized. No wonder most homeless prefer sleeping in the abandoned buildings, on the subways or on the streets.

But that's not so easy. As Anatole France said: "The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread." Recently NYC city council majority leader Peter Vallone gave his own Orwellian twist to

France's famous quote, declaring, "I don't care whether you're a Harvard physicist and perfectly sane or anything else, you do not have the right to occupy the sidewalk or the street. Otherwise, we have a total breakdown of law and order."

The court of Catherine the Great which erected Potemkin villages to hide the poverty of tsarist Russia doesn't hold a candle to New York City mayor Koch for sheer arrogance and viciousness. A few years ago Koch put up decals to hide the burnt-out rubble of buildings in the Bronx, which look like Dresden after the WWII firebombing. Now Hizzoner shows his "concern" for the homeless by sweeping "offensive" bag ladies off the streets of affluent, white neighborhoods like the Yupper East Side where *he* lives in Gracie Mansion. The first person targeted in the roundup ordered by the egomaniac and sociopath who runs NYC was Joyce Brown, a black woman who calls herself Billie Boggs. It was a pure vendetta. Brown had been living for the past year and a half over a cafe air vent on the Upper East Side where she had been spotted by Koch and apparently ruined his evening outing. According to columnist Sydney H. Schanberg, in May Koch went out with a team of city "outreach" workers where he picked Brown "out for the signal honor of being the first to cut the ribbon and enter his model program for keeping sidewalks clean" (*Newsday*, 6 November).

The Koch rules call for picking up anyone who poses a "foreseeable" danger to others or to themselves. Koch had determined that Brown was insane because she was unwashed, used the street as a toilet, talked to herself. But this supposedly demented woman quite rationally shot back: "Provide public facilities. Let them shower and go to the bathroom instead of saying 'you're insane' because you're on the street." "Koch can't run my life for me," she said. "My rights have been violated."

State Supreme Court judge Robert Lippman ordered Brown released from the psychiatric unit at Bellevue, noting: "She refuses to be housed in a shelter. That may reveal more about conditions in shelters than about Joyce Brown's mental state. It might, in fact, prove that she's quite sane" (*Newsday*, 17 November). Koch went nuts. The city appealed and Brown was locked up again. Now they want to perform a spinal tap on her and force her to take anti-psychotic drugs.

The gentrification of the inner cities which has driven the poor, working class and blacks onto the streets across the country has its own perverse pathology in New York. One slumlord paid kids \$2 for each bottle of cockroaches they put under the door of an old woman he wanted evicted. Another



WV Photo

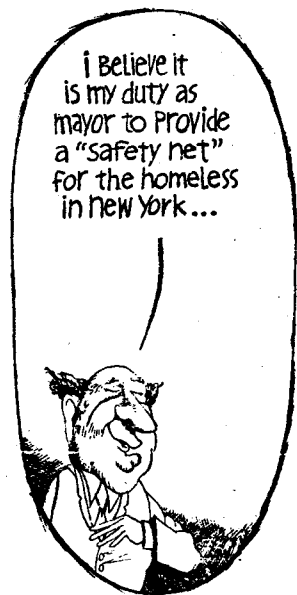
New York City, a city of luxury condos amid squalid misery.

turned pit bulls loose in a building he wanted to sell. Slumlord Zenek Poldolsky hired gangs of pimps, prostitutes, pushers and thieves to take over empty apartments and terrorize the tenants. Utilities were shut off, windows smashed, locks removed, fires set, floors flooded and apartments burglarized. But the deadliest eviction squad is the murderous NYPD, who in October 1984 blew away black grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs in her Bronx apartment because she was \$386 behind on her rent. Triggerman Sullivan the cop got off—and got promoted to detective.

New York has become a giant horror house of hunger, poverty and racist cop terror. And Billie Boggs has become a folk hero as many New Yorkers see Mayor Koch as a "foreseeable danger" to themselves and their loved ones. Meanwhile, Democratic Party leaders are urging Republican mega-millionaire real estate developer Donald Trump to join the Democrats: "The message Trump has been preaching is a Democratic message." And the message Citizen Trump preaches from the Xanadu of his \$200 million complex on New York's Fifth Avenue is, let 'em starve in the streets. The Rockefellers own the city, Koch runs it for them and for Donald Trump, a gross example of the Reagan-era tycoons who have yet to learn to be inconspicuous and "genteel" robber barons.

The American Dream: A Nightmare for Blacks

Last hired, first fired, victimized and terrorized—blacks always get the worst

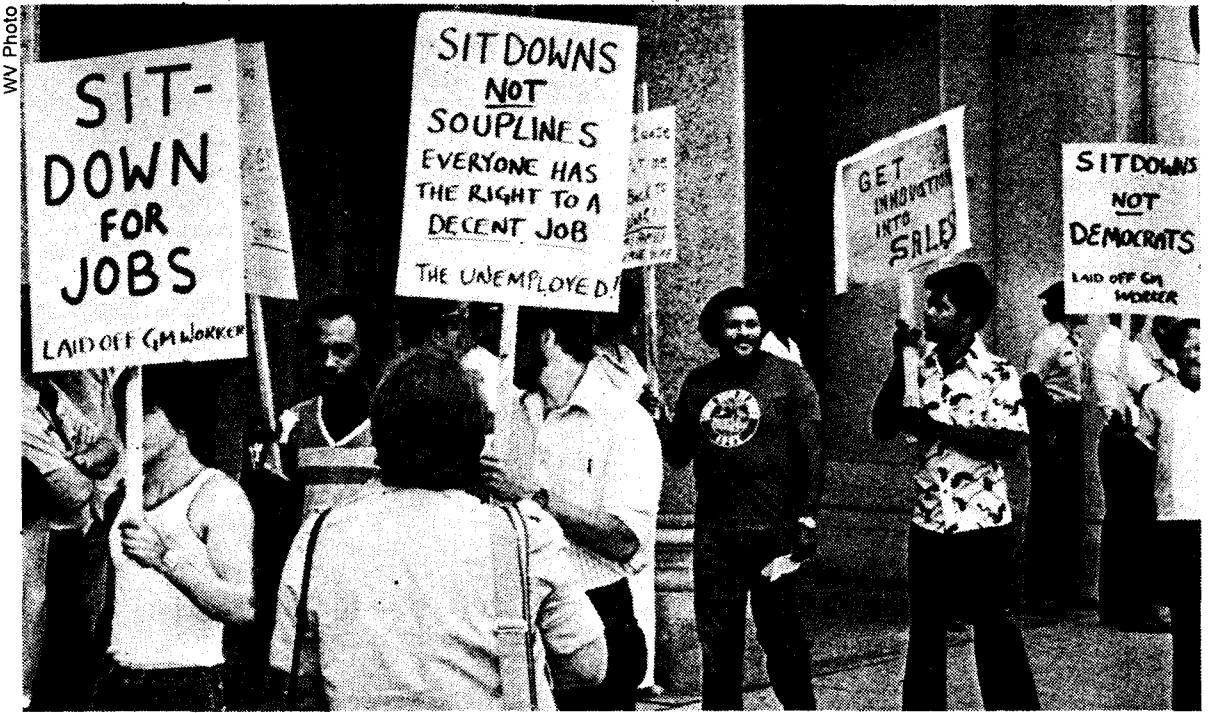


Rabid bigot Ed Koch at work.

of what this deeply racist capitalist society has to offer. Every social and economic indicator shows that life has become more and more desperate for the black "underclass." Unemployment for black men has averaged 17 percent during the "prosperous" 1980s and double that for black youth; last year nearly half of all black men were without stable full-time work. And as the number of employed black men nose-dived, the number of black families headed by single women—the poorest of the poor—skyrocketed. The U.S. census could not even find 20 percent of the adult black male population: joblessness, poverty, homelessness have turned them into non-persons.

Nearly half of the poor are black, and nearly half of those are children, over 75 percent of whom live in single-parent families. Hunger has reached epidemic proportions, school dropout rates are at a record high and the black infant mortality rate of 19.2 per 1,000 is higher than many Third World countries. Every year over 40,000 black babies die before their first birthday. More and more are born with AIDS, which is rapidly spreading among users of intravenous drugs, who are heavily black and Hispanic. For those black youth who make it to adulthood without being killed or flung into jail, the only way out of the ghetto (for those who are high school graduates) is to enlist in the military—to serve as cannon fodder abroad for the

Laid-off GM workers protest in Detroit, 1982. American capitalists have driven industry into the ground, throwing millions of workers onto the scrap heap.



imperialist rulers who have destroyed them and their families at home.

Republicans and Democrats alike maintain that the poverty of the ghetto is the fault of the blacks themselves. Two decades ago Daniel Moynihan—then a Nixon adviser, now a Democratic Senator—blamed the economic plight of blacks on "the breakdown of family values" in order to justify a policy of "benign neglect." But the hellish conditions of the ghettos are the product of the decay of American capitalism. During World War II millions of blacks migrated from the rural South to the booming war industries in the North

to appear the homeless from the streets of the city by creating a "vagrant free zone" around the site where the Democratic Party Convention is to be held next summer. Philadelphia's Wilson Goode, who murdered eleven black people including five children and destroyed an entire black neighborhood in the hideous 1985 MOVE massacre, hosted a "summit on the homeless!"

In Coleman Young's Detroit, there are high school drug pushers armed with Uzi submachine guns, and desperate young kids blow each other away for a few bucks. Under the shadow of the glitzy Renaissance Center there is a billboard reading, "Stop the Madness," with a young black wearing a cap with the motto, "Shoot me. I'm already dead." This was once Motor City, but greedy auto bosses have destroyed and lumpenized this center of the black proletariat, turning it into a ghetto wasteland. And the pro-Democratic Party labor traitors who head the union movement hopped on the corporate gravy train, taking seats on company boards, as mass layoffs sent their members to the soup lines. For black auto workers, UAW came to mean "U Ain't Workin'."

The horror and misery of the ghettos is rooted in the decaying racist capitalist system. While decreasingly integrated into the economy, American blacks have been forcibly segregated at the bottom. The beneficiaries of the "Great Society" programs of the 1960s are what today is called the black "middle class." In reality these are mainly white-collar workers. They have moved out of the ghettos where the blacks who were once the "industrial reserve army" of American capitalism, to be tapped when there was a labor shortage, are now a permanent "surplus population." The struggle for black equality and survival must

necessarily confront—and destroy—the capitalist system which is at the root of black oppression. And it is the American working class, those who still have a job and the social power that flows from it, who must fight racial oppression, mass homelessness, hunger and poverty by breaking the chains of exploitation.

Writing about the horrid condition of housing for the families of the working class in Britain a century ago, Frederick Engels explained:

"The breeding places of disease, the infamous holes and cellars in which the capitalist mode of production confines our workers night after night, are not abolished; they are merely shifted elsewhere! The same economic necessity which produced them in the first place, produces them in the next place also: As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist, it is folly to hope for an isolated solution of the housing question or of any other social question affecting the fate of the workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of life and labour by the working class itself."

—Frederick Engels, *The Housing Question* (1872)

More than 200 years after the industrial revolution, the quality of life of millions in the advanced capitalist countries and hundreds of millions in the neocolonial countries is no better than it was for serfs under feudalism. The young are denied a future, the elderly are discarded, human life is devalued and degraded. Capitalism long ago outlived its progressive role in the development of human civilization. It must be rooted out through workers revolution and replaced by a planned, collectivized economy in which the energy of humanity is devoted to satisfying the needs of humanity, and not the greed of a handful. ■



Shefelman/Newsday

and West. In the relatively prosperous 1950s, blacks—predominantly black men—made up a sizable part of the American industrial proletariat: auto workers in Detroit, steel workers in Chicago/Gary. But by 1985 black unemployment was 29.9 percent in Detroit and 24.5 percent in Chicago.

A recent article by liberal political scientist Andrew Hacker (*New York Review of Books*, 3 December) points out that in 1954, at the tail end of the Korean War boom, 75 percent of all black men were working, many in unionized, relatively well-paid jobs. Their incomes sustained the ghetto economy. Last year, only 40 percent of black men had full-time, year-round jobs. In Chicago, where the steel industry has been gutted, a survey showed the typical homeless person is a black male high school graduate in his late 30s who has been without a job for 120 months (*Science*, 13 March 1987). That's ten years without work! They were laid off in the 1975-77 depression and have never been hired back.

The liberals and reformists put it all down to "Reaganism" and argue that things will change if people vote Democrat in '88. But the Democrats are trying to out-Reagan Reagan in their calls to slash poverty programs. Meanwhile the black Democratic big city mayors serve as overseers on Reagan's plantation. Atlanta's Andrew Young has set up a special cop squad to disap-

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