

## War to the Death Against CIA's Mullah Cutthroats!

# Battle for Afghanistan

FEBRUARY 14—The Red Army withdrawal from Afghanistan is a cold-blooded betrayal of the Afghan and Soviet peoples. The CIA's Islamic warriors, armed for over a decade with billions of dollars of ultramodern military equipment, are poised to carry out the wholesale slaughter of Afghan women, teachers and other intellectuals, leftist activists and peasants. And George Bush has now announced the U.S. will continue to supply the *mujahedin* with arms as long as the left-nationalist Kabul regime is in power.

If this army of mullahs and tribalist cutthroats topples the Najibullah government, Afghanistan will become an imperialist dagger pointed at Soviet Central Asia. In his drive to appease Washington by abandoning Afghanistan, Moscow leader Mikhail Gorbachev is giving U.S. imperialism and its allies a launching pad for counterrevolution in the homeland of the socialist October Revolution. With their backs to the wall, the forces of social progress are facing a war to the death. Smash Washington's "holy warriors"!

The *mujahedin* call it *badal*, the code of revenge of the dominant Pushtun tribes. It means not just death but often torture, dismemberment and mutilation. Over the past several months, as Soviet troops abandoned one outpost after another, the CIA's "freedom fighters" meted out a taste of their barbarism. In November about 70 Afghan soldiers surrendered to the *mujahedin* at Torkham, on the Afghan side of the Khyber Pass. When government forces retook the outpost several days later, they found their comrades' bodies—mutilated and chopped into pieces—in wooden crates.

The U.S. and its NATO allies are



Reuters/Bettmann

Kabul, February 5: Members of Afghan women's militia face life-and-death struggle.

doing everything they can to *set up* a bloodbath. Richard Murphy, a top State Department official under Reagan, predicts the fall of Kabul within a few months, and goes on, "there are very deep passions" that "will be turned

against those who have been central to the regime." Last month the State Department sent a formal note to its embassies around the world instructing them to *deny visas to anyone* associated with the Afghan regime. Anticipating the *mujahedin* terrorists' laying waste to Kabul, and in order to sow panic, Washington and its European allies have closed their embassies.

The *Wall Street Journal* (12 January) gloats that "what the Afghans don't know about revenge isn't worth knowing." The victims of the *mujahedin*'s bloodlust will by no means be limited to supporters of the left-nationalist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Even peasants whose only "crime" was not emigrating to Pakistan after 1979 are infidels in the eyes of these Islamic "holy warriors." The fall of Kabul and other Afghan cities would be followed by a massacre of the *entire* educated population, especially tens of thousands of women who escaped from *purdah* (seclusion) and cast off the *chadori* (the head-to-foot veil).

Even Western bourgeois journalists, particularly if they're women, are anxious about the hideous fate now threatening liberated Afghan women. Mary Williams Walsh reports in the *Wall Street Journal* (19 January):

"The plight of Kabul's women is a poignant reminder that the West's vicarious victory over communist expansion here isn't without its ambiguities. In a backward country where the female peasantry still toils like medieval serfs, Kabuli women have managed to hold on to many 20th-century freedoms.... Instead of staying at home behind purdah walls, they emerge each day and work in offices, hospitals and schools."

Walsh contrasts this to the horrible condition of Afghan women in the refugee camps in Pakistan, reporting that "foreign doctors working among the refugee women tell gruesome tales of husbands leaving them to die, rather than permitting diagnosis by a male obstetrician"!

But the battle for Kabul does not look like it is going to be a walk-over. The Afghan army is well supplied with Soviet MIG fighter-bombers and medium-range missiles. The government has distributed arms to the population, including young women, creating a 30,000-strong civilian militia. The PDPA regime, in the past given to murderous factional and cliquish infighting, appears committed to a united stand. "We must all fight now," declared Najibullah. Throughout the world every class-conscious worker, socialist and believer in human decency and the rights of man must materially aid the Afghan government against the CIA's Islamic cutthroats.

At stake in the battle for Afghanistan is far more than the fate of this hideously backward land. The armed Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 provided America's pretext for Cold War II. We proclaimed at the time "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" while most self-styled leftists around the world joined the imperialist campaign for Soviet troops out. Well, now the Soviet troops have been pulled out to appease U.S. imperialism. If the *mujahedin* succeed in butchering every leftist, teacher and unveiled woman in Afghanistan, their blood will be on the hands not only of the Bushes, Thatchers and Kohls, but also on their "left" camp followers.

### Origins and Nature of the Afghan War

For decades Afghanistan's small number of modernizing intellectuals

*continued on page 12*



Mingam/Gamma

Mujahedin hack up the body of man sentenced to death by mullahs.

## Gorbachev's Pullout Is a Betrayal

# PDC: Class-Struggle Defense in Action

The past year has seen a rapid expansion of the PDC's activities. In Philadelphia and Atlanta the PDC initiated successful labor-centered mobilizations against fascist terror, giving thousands of trade unionists, blacks, student and civil rights activists firsthand experience of what class-struggle defense is all about. Together with the international Spartacist tendency we initiated an emergency worldwide campaign of protest against the mass murder of Iranian leftists and religious and national minorities. And we continue our work on behalf of the imprisoned victims of capitalist repression—the class-war prisoners of today.

\* \* \*

Former Black Panther Party leader Geronimo Pratt continues to fight

for his freedom. On December 8 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco vacated its dismissal of Pratt's appeal last June on the technicality that it was filed a few days late. That three-judge panel of Nixon and Reagan appointees is only reconsidering the technical issue of whether to accept the late filing—still not daring to consider the substance of Pratt's appeal, which exposes the infamous FBI/COINTELPRO conspiracy that murdered dozens of his comrades and has kept him in jail for 19 years.

Interest in Pratt's case continues to grow. The current issue of *Covert-Action Information Bulletin* (Winter 1989) details the FBI's frame-up. The recently formed National Campaign for Amnesty and Human Rights for Political Prisoners has petitioned the gov-



WV Photo

Atlanta, January 21: 3,000 answer PDC call "Act Now! Stop the KKK!"

ernor of California to parole Pratt to enable him to be their representative at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights meetings starting this month in Geneva, Switzerland. *International labor protest must be mobilized in defense of America's foremost class-war prisoner. Free Geronimo!*

\* \* \*

On January 10 Thomas Reed, head of the Alabama NAACP, and 13 black legislators were convicted on trespass charges for attempting to remove the Confederate flag from the Alabama state capitol last year. At the time Reed also was a member of the Alabama House of Representatives.

In letters to the governor and D.A., the Partisan Defense Committee protested the convictions and demanded that all charges be dismissed:

"It is truly criminal that the Confederate flag of slavery still flies atop the Capitol—an outrageous provocation and insult to every black person, every decent person in Alabama. The Confederate flag is the banner of racist terror—the flag of the slaveowner's whip and KKK's years of lynching, burning and shooting. It remains the state flag of Alabama. On the centennial of the Confederacy's capture of Fort Sumter your state adopted this seditious banner of white supremacy as a protest against Supreme Court decisions against segregation. Its continued use confirms that today's 'new South' is just the same 'old South' of Bull Connor, George Wallace and Ross Barnett."

Drop the charges against Thomas Reed! Tear down the Confederate flag of slavery!

\* \* \*

Joseph Ryan and Sylvia Weinstein, Socialist Action candidates for San Francisco Board of Supervisors and Board of Education, face criminal prosecution for refusing to turn over the names of contributors to their fall 1988 election campaigns. In response, Social-

ist Action is challenging the disclosure demands in a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union. The PDC protested to the San Francisco District Attorney:

"The candidates of Socialist Action have acted responsibly by refusing to comply with your police-state demand. Disclosure of the names of their supporters opens the door to harassment, victimizations and physical attack. The right of political association has no meaning whatsoever unless it includes the right to engage in political activity free of state interference. Stop the witchhunt of Ryan and Weinstein."

\* \* \*

The fight against state repression goes on. The PDC is campaigning to save the life of MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal, a death row political prisoner in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. We just added MOVE member Alphonso "Mo" Africa to the class-war prisoners receiving stipends—22 prisoners on three continents.

International class-struggle defense costs money—lots of it. Though the 1988 Holiday Appeal for the class-war prisoners and their families successfully raised over \$5,000, this was less than the \$10,000 we aimed for. The PDC still owes over \$20,000 for the November 5 Mobilization in Philadelphia. In addition to that, January's Atlanta demonstration cost us over \$10,000.

The PDC looks forward to the continued support of *WV* readers in the coming year. We want your help to build a class-struggle defense organization the workers movement sees as its own—one that can mobilize masses of workers around the globe in defense of all victims of capitalist repression. This work is sustained by regular monthly contributions of our supporters. We need your help, *now!* Become a monthly sustaining contributor. Send your donations to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. ■

## Letter

## A Correction

Berkeley, California  
31 January 1989

Dear Comrade Editor:

Richard Fraser played an historic role as one of the early leaders in the struggle against the political degeneration that brought the SWP from revolutionary Trotskyism to its current brand of eccentric reformism. *Workers Vanguard* is doing a great service to the cause of socialism by reprinting the speeches and letters that were read at the January 8 memorial meeting held for comrade Fraser in Los Angeles.

At the meeting, Dave Cooper of

Socialist Action spoke movingly of the many comrades, such as Dick Fraser and Jim Cannon, who have passed away after devoting years to the revolutionary movement. In this regard, Cooper also referred to his recently deceased former brother-in-law Max Goldman, a founding member of the SWP, and one of the eighteen Trotskyists who were imprisoned in 1944 for their heroic and principled opposition to the American imperialist war effort. In the transcript of Cooper's remarks, *WV* (No. 469, p. 9) confused Max Goldman with the renegade Max Shachtman, the SWP leader who defected from Trotskyism in 1940 under the pressure of petty bourgeois anti-Sovietism.

Revolutionary greetings,  
Bob Z.

WORKERS VANGUARD



TROTSKY

### The Emancipation of Women of the Muslim East

*The civil war in Afghanistan is the only war in modern history triggered over the question of women's rights. The liberation of women from the stifling grip of Islamic feudal oppression is both a powerful force for and historic task of social revolution in the East. We reprint an excerpt from a 1926 account by veteran German Communist Clara Zetkin on the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution on Muslim women in Soviet Central Asia.*



LENIN

impact of the Bolshevik Revolution on Muslim women in Soviet Central Asia.

In the Orient, the working women who passionately desire a transformation of social conditions that will lead to their liberation are beginning to stir and to act. The lowest of the low, who had been pushed into the deepest depths of social enslavement by traditions, laws and religious decrees, are rising. Diffident and wounded in body and soul, they are nevertheless rising steadily in order to achieve freedom and equality. Lenin correctly judged this event as having the greatest historical significance. He was always most sensitive to even the faintest stirrings of revolutionary energies and he evaluated them always within the framework of the general social transformation of this world. Even if the stirrings of the Oriental women masses appear only as faint lightning at this time, they are the harbinger of the approaching thunderstorm. They confirm the fact that the proletarian revolution will indeed turn out to be a world revolution in which even the last suppressed and enslaved individual will free himself by his own strength. The Muslim Women's Clubs in the Soviet Republics are not the tender breeding grounds for suffragette tendencies but the gathering places and schools for the revolutionary forces.

The Muslim Women's Club of Tiflis was founded by the Communist Party and is the special work of its women's division. It was founded in the knowledge that the establishment of the Soviet system had profoundly stirred the psyche of Muslim women. It symbolizes for them the transformation of their lives since Soviet laws know of no domination of men over women and of no prerogative of one sex over the other. Instead, this club proclaims the full equality of women in all social fields and proves that the Soviets are eager to realize this equality. These women demand passionately that they can realize their new legal status by participating in the transformation of society, building a new structure which will accommodate the talents of the working women.

—Clara Zetkin, *In the Liberated Caucasus* (1926)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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17 February 1989

# L.A. Student Walkouts Back Teachers' Demands

LOS ANGELES—In the last two weeks, a wave of student walkouts has swept L.A. high schools, largely in support of teachers' demands for higher salaries. School authorities watched in amazement, then called the LAPD and threatened arrests. Demonstrations have ranged from a few hundred to a few thousand students from some 50 high schools and junior highs in the L.A. Unified School District. Students listened on their Walkmen to hear which schools went out that day, and walked out before attendance was taken in homeroom. Not since mainly Hispanic students demonstrated against racist injustices in the L.A. schools in 1968 has there been such an outpouring of militant youth.

It doesn't take a high school diploma to understand that your teachers are overworked and underpaid. One student at Garfield High School, where 1,000 youth poured out of classrooms, captured the spirit: "It's Stand and Deliver, man." This high school is the home of Jaime Escalante, the self-sacrificing math teacher whose efforts to inspire barrio kids to overcome obstacles to academic achievement was popularized in the movie of the same name. The film itself is far from pro-union, as "superteachers" working themselves to death are presented as the solution to the problems of impoverished ghetto youth. Yet identification with their hard-working, underpaid teachers has rallied students to the union's cause.

The protests were sparked by the union's threat to withhold midyear grades, as part of a long-simmering salary dispute. On January 27, 4,300 students poured out of school, supporting the teachers' demands so they could get their official grades. The day before, 250 students converged on district headquarters. The *Herald Examiner* (27 January) reported, "Students—some in leather, some in tie-dye—chanted pro-teacher slogans like 'The boys got green/But they're too mean.'" An



Belvedere Junior High School students hit the streets in solidarity with teachers, January 31.

attempt to split the students from the teachers has flopped—a parents meeting demanding the union "not hold the students hostage" attracted only 30 people.

The 22,000 members of UTLA (United Teachers Los Angeles) have been working without a contract for over a year. The teachers are demanding a 12 percent salary increase, as well as compensation for work they do for nothing, such as yard duty and parent/student conferences. The union has been carrying out a teacher boycott of all non-classroom duties, but its threat to withhold the midyear grades from the district was the spark that set off the student walkouts. Students were scared that their grades not being reported would hurt their chances of college admission, so the teachers issued "union report cards" which the state university system says it will accept. Now the district is threatening "no grades, no pay" if the teachers don't file grades by the time of the March monthly paycheck.

The next step ought to be a strike, the

first in 19 years. The 1970 strike sparked walkouts of hundreds of radicalized students in support of the teachers. Under UTLA president Wayne Johnson, the union has gained a reputation for militancy, forcing a 43 percent increase in starting teachers' salaries over the last five years. But while Johnson denounced the district's threat as a "lockout," the union is saying publicly there will be no strike until it's "legal," i.e., after school gets out! Grotesquely, the UTLA has *opposed* the students' walkouts, telling students to "resist the understandable urge to demonstrate in support of their teachers" (*United Teacher*, 27 January).

L.A. has the second-largest school district in the nation, and one of the most overcrowded and underfunded. The school population is 56.8 percent Latino, 17 percent black, and 8.2 percent Asian, and has more students in bilingual programs than any other district in the U.S. Meanwhile, the LAPD has targeted minority youth in "anti-gang" roundups of *over 20,000*

in a racist sweep worthy of apartheid South Africa.

In a background article on the student walkouts, the *Los Angeles Times* (6 February) wrote:

"For three weeks, demonstrations have swept Los Angeles schools in a way that recalls the city's campus unrest of the '60s.... But this is not your father's sit-in."

The article was headlined "Career Concerns at Heart of 1980s Campus Protest." But the L.A. students, 82 percent of them minorities, are not a bunch of aspiring yuppies. Forty percent of the students don't make it to graduation day. They're fighting to get a decent education from a system that's been slashed to the bone and beyond. They're fighting for their future, so they won't be trapped serving fast food in East L.A. or South Central, or with no job at all.

The past year has seen a rise in political activism among junior high and high school students in the greater L.A. area. In mid-January, nearly 2,000 marched on the South African consulate, in a demonstration called by the Los Angeles Student Coalition, which has also organized aid to the homeless. These students, who were about nine when Reagan was elected, are coming out of the Reagan period, with its arrogant disregard for black life, deeply angry about racism at home and abroad.

Despite the tinsel-town message of *Stand and Deliver*, millions of black and Hispanic kids in this country can't "pull themselves up" out of the barrios and ghettos by good education and dedicated teachers alone. They're locked into the life of brutal oppression, unemployment and despair by the decaying racist capitalist system. It will take a socialist revolution to unlock the future for minority youth. Uniting students and teachers behind a solid teachers strike that shuts down the L.A. school system would deliver an awesome blow. ■

## Young Republicans or Stormtroopers? Ed Meese or Heinrich Himmler?

### UMass Amherst

FEBRUARY 10—Last night students attended the Spartacus Youth Club's Black History Month video showing at UMass Amherst on the November 5 Mobilization that stopped the race-terrorist KKK in Philadelphia. The meeting was the target of an organized attack by the ultrarightist *Minuteman*/Republican-Conservative Alliance crowd. Fired up at their own meeting billed as "Never Again—A Communist Student Government President," half a dozen of the "Minutemen" entered the socialist meeting. Intent on preventing any discussion of the labor-centered action that stopped their friends in the white sheets, they repeatedly disrupted the proceedings and were removed. In the hallway out-

side, several more right-wingers joined the provocation. Indicating the kind of "discussion" this type favors, one of them brandished a chair, screaming, "I will kill you."

The video showing drew an integrated group of students from Marxist and many other political persuasions, including members of the Radical Student Union, the student government and a reporter from the *Collegian*, who stood their ground against this premeditated attack. The "Minutemen" then resorted to calling on campus police to close down the meeting. They goaded campus security, telling them that the video featured a "convicted cop killer"—a reference to framed-up journalist and MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther Party member who was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. The cops did disperse the meeting, depriving the Spartacus Youth Club and in-

terested students of their democratic rights. They went so far as to threaten Spartacist supporters with apartheid-style "banning orders." This is an outrage!

We always thought Young Republicans happily capitulated to greed and shady legal practices, and you can bet they were celebrating the victory of the Savings and Loans bailout of \$50 billion—money stolen by the rich in this country from the working people. But is the role model of today's breed Ed Meese or Heinrich Himmler? The Republican-Conservative Alliance is a menace to all UMass students. They exist to incite and directly perpetrate violence against all who deviate from the conservative fold epitomized by their pinup, Ollie North.

Gay students on campus are up in arms over the *Minuteman*'s display of a revolting "word puzzle" filled with slurs against gays. The *Minuteman* crowd

feeds off the racist frenzy of the mob violence directed at black students at Amherst. They have repeatedly attempted (and failed) to drive leftists off campus. In December 1987, they disrupted a speech by Communist Party (CP) leader Gus Hall, tried to make a "citizen's arrest," physically assaulted a CP member, and provoked cop intervention in the meeting. More recently they've pursued a blatantly anti-democratic campaign to unseat Jason Rabinowitz, a leader of the Young Communist League, from his elected position as co-president of the student body. In October 1987 they tried to bust up a Trotskyist Spartacus Youth Club forum. And now they've struck again.

While these defective punks are a long way from forcing their dreams of an American Reich down the throats of UMass students, their incitement to state repression of the left must be fought. Defenders of democratic rights, including the many Amherst students who rode to Philadelphia to lend a hand in stopping the Klan and Hitler-loving skinheads, can only redouble their efforts to defend black students, gays, reds and anyone else these sinister losers target. Stop the attacks on the Spartacus Youth Club! ■



# Richard Fraser—Memorial to a Veteran American Trotskyist

We print below the final portion of the speeches and messages delivered to the memorial meeting for Dick Fraser held in Los Angeles on January 8. As we noted in the first segment (*WV* No. 469, 20 January), the friends and comrades of Dick's who came to the meeting spanned three generations of the communist movement. They invoked the traditions of the Western radicalism of the Wobblies, of the Russian Revolution, of the work of the American Trotskyists in the Socialist Workers Party of James P. Cannon to carry forward the banner of Bolshevism in the face of the Stalinist degeneration of the American Communist Party.

In his remarks, Spartacist League National Chairman Jim Robertson proposed holding a symposium dedicated to the life, work and central contributions of Richard S. Fraser to the Marxist movement, not only as a memorial to this veteran American Trotskyist but as an important part of our revolutionary history. For the latter-day SWP under Jack Barnes, all the remaining veterans of the old party had to be axed in order to wipe out any vestige of "Trotskyism," however warped and distorted. For us, preserving a continuity which goes back to Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party is a vital life line.

*Message of the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands and the Ligue Trozkyiste de France, sections of the international Spartacist tendency*

We share with you the loss of anti-racist fighter and historic American Trotskyist Richard Fraser. In January we also honor the "Three L's," Lenin, and Liebknecht and Luxemburg who were murdered 70 years ago this year. In so doing we pay tribute to all those, like Comrade Fraser, who died at their posts, fighting for a socialist future.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Dan

*a friend and comrade of Dick's who knew him for many years*

Before I make a few remarks about Dick, I feel deeply constrained to make some related comments. Several years ago, Dick became befriended, very deeply and very meaningfully, by the comrades of the Spartacist League and especially, although not exclusively, those in their Los Angeles group. Without this help that they gave him, Dick would not have been able to have maintained his life, more or less normal, within the constraints of his physical condition, living in his own apartment with his library, his correspondence, his telephone and his word processor. They took him to the hospital, they took him back from the hospital. They provided medical consultation. They helped him with his household arrangements.

Finally, four days before he died, when he made his last trip home from the hospital, they provided a 24-hour-a-day, three-shift guard at his house, helping him with his feeding apparatus, helping him with the difficult life that he was living then in his last hours and last days. They did this with no hope or any intent of



any profit, or any political gain. They did it because it was the honorable thing to do. And they did it with considerable difficulty. I don't want to give away any trade secrets, but they're not a large group in this town. And these people have other lives to live, they have jobs, they have family, and they have other responsibilities. But with total loyalty and total devotion, they performed these duties. And I just felt I had to express this here.

Dick Fraser was a musician, a merchant seaman, an aircraft worker, a lumber worker, pattern maker, plastic mold maker, working-class. He never had a middle-class job in his whole life. He made his living as a worker and no other way. But more, Dick was a restless organizer, an inveterate propagandist, a "boss-hater" in the Wobbly tradition, and still more. He was a socialist and a worker-scholar in the finest tradition. You study, you learn, and you teach.

He studied the Reformation, gave a series of lectures in Los Angeles. He studied the colonial period of American history, and gave a series of lectures, perceptive, revealing. How the Indians taught the colonists to survive, gave them not only the tech-

nology but the communal social organization which was necessary to the continuance of their existence. He went to Seattle, organized a branch. Went to the south side of Los Angeles, organized a branch.

He studied about the rise and fall of the slave power in the United States and about the Reconstruction period. And he asked the question, how did the race relations in the United States today originate? What was their connection with the slave system and its aftermath? The Old Man [Trotsky] said, if you don't want to regard the issue of black liberation as a national question, then determine what it is. Dick struggled with that question. As before, he studied, then gave a series of lectures, in Los Angeles in 1953. The elaboration of this question became his life's work. He codified his thoughts in the resolution "Revolutionary Integration" in 1963 in Seattle. His work on this question has been republished and forms the programmatic basis of the Spartacist League and other sections of the Trotskyist movement today.

In later years, Dick turned back to the history of the slave power and the struggle against slavery, and has authored a book, in the form of abstracts. He also authored his autobiography, mainly a study of his long struggle with cancer and the aftereffects of the debilitating surgery which he underwent. "How I Came to Love My Carcinoma" is a tale of dark humor, pathos and tragedy.

Dick was a speaker and an educator, first and foremost. And to have been handicapped in his speech was the cruelest of blows. But to the last day of his life Dick remained optimistic, fretting over his illness but planning the continuation of his work on slavery. As little as four days before he died, he was discussing these issues.

Well, there were other sides to Dick, personal sides, his undying love for his son Jonny, which he constantly expressed. The inventions, that by the patent laws of the United States were stolen by his employer, but were of considerable significance. His undying love of music and knowledge of it. You may not know it, he was even a little bit of a card player. We'll reserve those topics for informal discussion. We are left with the memory of a worker, a rebel, a restless organizer, speaker, worker-scholar. And we have to say good-bye to our old friend. The world's a poorer place without him.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Greetings to the memorial meeting from the Spartacist Group of Japan, dated 18 December 1988*

We join you today in honoring the life of Richard S. Fraser, a "historic American Trotskyist" and a tenacious fighter for black liberation. Although few of us knew Comrade Fraser personally, we salute his years of struggle against the special oppression of blacks in North America and his unique contributions to a Marxist understanding of how to end it.

The black question is the question of the American revolution. Comrade Fraser's historic 1955 doc-



Dick Fraser's fight for revolutionary integrationism is carried forward in the work of the SL and Labor Black Leagues. Left: San Francisco, 1983. Right: Philadelphia, 5 November 1988.





WV Photo

Comrades at January 8 memorial meeting sing the *Internationale* in salute to Dick Fraser.

ument, "For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question," is a sharp refutation of black nationalism and all its variants in favor of revolutionary integrationism. This conception lives on today in our American comrades' work to build Labor Black Leagues in the major urban centers. Our most recent victory in stopping a fascist provocation in Philadelphia on 5 November 1988 was a powerful display of the black and red social components that will lead the third American revolution.

Richard Fraser's major work, centering on a Marxist perspective to end the vicious oppression of blacks in the U.S., has important ramifications internationally. Here in Japan, we seek to build a party that sees its workers revolution ending the centuries of women's oppression as well as the institutionalized discrimination against Koreans, Chinese, Japan's indigenous minorities, the Ainu and burakumin, and the Japanese bourgeoisie's newest victims, immigrant labor from the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

Dick Fraser's insistence that only a proletarian revolution can end the horrid plight of capitalism's oppressed minorities is an important component of the international Spartacist tendency's program today. From the other side of the Pacific we embrace our American comrades who have lost a "cherished friend and theoretical mentor."

\* \* \* \* \*

### Sam Hunt

*a comrade of the international Spartacist tendency who sent the following letter*

Dear comrades and friends,

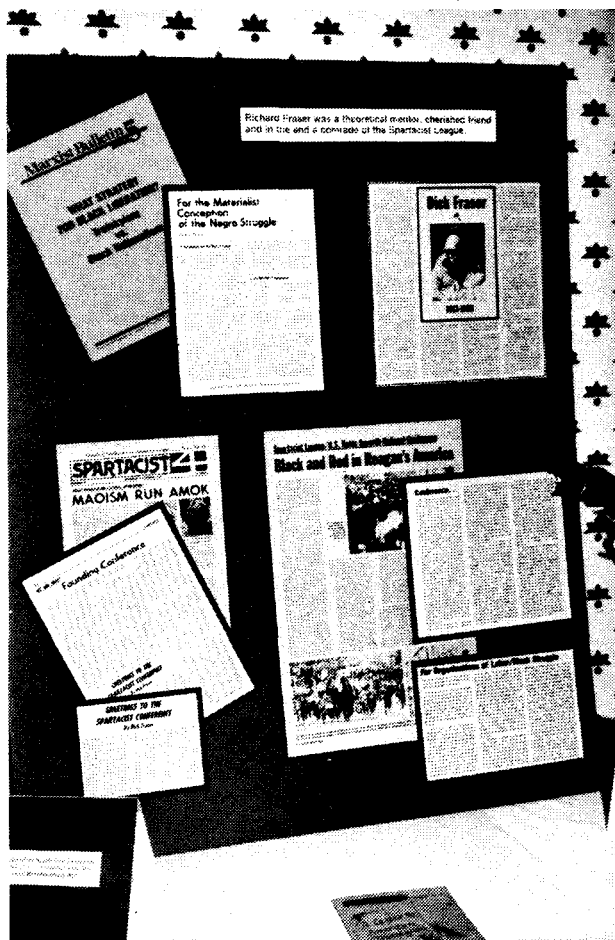
Like all of you, I was saddened to hear about Dick Fraser's death. I am grateful that I knew Dick pretty well during the last years of his life. I first met Dick in a hospital room in Long Beach in 1981, but also spent a good deal of time with him when he was home and lucid as hell. I would often stop at Dick's apartment on my way home from work when I lived in L.A. He lived near Hollywood Park and the horse races that he loved. It was here that I received an education on life in the SWP in the 1940s and '50s. Trotskyist leaders, especially black leaders like C.L.R. James and Edgar Keemer, became far more than historical names.

The height of black recruitment to the American Trotskyist movement came during WWII when the Stalinists and social democrats betrayed the fight against Jim Crow. The SWP's courageous stand for black civil rights during the war had a profound impact on Dick who lived through these events. When the SWP veered on a black nationalist course Dick fought hard against this anti-Marxist stance and this culminated in his historic 1955 document. Dick's interest in this question was no idle intellectual venture but a life-long commitment to black liberation.

The *Workers Vanguard* article about Richard's death importantly notes that his last political act was to endorse our Partisan Defense Committee rally to stop a KKK provocation in Philadelphia on November 5th. This is very special to me, as the day Dick endorsed our demonstration was also the last time I saw him alive. While weak and resting in bed, he was quite animated in his desire to get a full report on what was going on. He followed the events leading to the November 5th demonstration very carefully and in his last days the fire of class struggle still burned in his eyes. I had many disagreements with Dick over the years but our *WV* obituary underlined our bending the stick in the

direction of our programmatic agreements. Dick's endorsement of our November 5th demonstration in Philadelphia epitomizes this agreement and I'm glad Dick died with his boots on.

In closing, I have to commend my comrades and friends in L.A. who worked tirelessly to prolong this valuable communist's life and I'm glad I could help this effort. I'm sorry I can't be with you today and must pay my respects from afar. Dick's exemplary struggle to overcome his debilitating physical ailments gives new meaning to the words courage and tenacity. Dick was a



WV Photo

Display at memorial highlights Fraser's contributions to our movement.

communist to the end and I'm going to miss his sense of humor and zest for life. He was my friend and I'll never forget him.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Jim Robertson

*National Chairman of the Spartacist League of the U.S.*

Like comrade Frank Krasnowsky, I, too, would be happy to take about 30 minutes on the technicalities of the decomposition of the SWP until it ends up as a Barnesite organization. But I, too, am bound by the ten-minute limit.

I first ran into Dick Fraser about 31 years ago, and he was my last personal teacher. Frank has mentioned what happened in Seattle when you got around Dick Fraser. Well, I stayed at his house, so I got it day and night!

But it came at just the right time, because our theoretical mentors, the both of us, he of an earlier generation than me, had been formed out of the arguments that C.L.R. James, Jimmy Johnson that is, and

E.R. McKinney had been having in the SWP and in the Shachtman Workers Party then. I could not understand how black nationalism could be analogous with a European national oppressed minority. And having broken with the Shachtmanites, and even before that, I knew that there was something terribly wrong, simply looking at the history and reality of American social relations, with the idea that a kind of militant reformism was going to eliminate the race question in America.

So I was really quite ready to run into comrade Fraser's presentation and historical foundation, that one can achieve the abolition of racial division in this country *only* through a profound, pervasive, far-going social revolution in which the working class comes to power. So I walked away quite thoroughly recruited. And with some, I think, continuing personal affection throughout the rest of those years between us.

This led me to think in preparing to talk here today, why Fraser? I can offer some elements, but I also have a suggestion, because it's rather soon and we only have some of his papers available. Perhaps on the first anniversary of his death we could have a symposium on his central political thought, its development, in the context of his life and his work. I will offer a few ideas about how it is that this particular man in a given set of circumstances could make what I consider to be a fundamental contribution to the program of Marxism, growing out of the particularities of the American racial relations rather than national relations.

I don't think that comrade Fraser could have done this work if he hadn't been a Trotskyist. Because if his head had been filled with ideas of "socialism in one country," or support for bourgeois political formations, which were characteristic of the other socialist groups, it would not have been possible. In a striking way, C.L.R. James had a great influence when he arrived in the United States in 1939, evoking also a reaction and a certain paralysis, theoretically, on the part of the SWP.

Then Fraser spent four or five years in the National Maritime Union. The SWP's cadres were concentrated in the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, which was completely racially exclusionary, unlike the National Maritime Union. And yet Dick was very prominent in the NMU. This contrast in the work of the two factions obviously had to be a source of stimulation and thought.

Finally, I believe that he was a genuine native genius. And I think that somewhere in this matrix you will find the start of the process that took several years to percolate and really only came into fully rounded form in the early '50s. By the later '50s, beginning with the Little Rock crisis, when Eisenhower sent the troops to the South and the SWP said, Hail the American troops to the South, they're going to be the saviors—already a major political departure—I think that the first theoretical verification of Fraser's views had been obtained.

A few other remarks. Dick Fraser is supposed to have said, "One of the best things I ever did in my life was sit Jim Robertson down at a kitchen table and pound at him for a few nights." Well, it's funny, because I'd just said, across the country at the same time, "The last guy that ever convinced me of anything in an argument was Dick Fraser." That does not mean that program is finished. There's an exchange between Cannon and Shachtman to that effect. Cannon is supposed to have said, "We have a finished program," and Shachtman said, "Yeah, it's finished."

I believe that through time that program must change and develop, even though I believe that very little that is fundamental can change within the framework of capitalism since it took its essential shape in 1848. But I believe that comrade Fraser is one of those who found a particular set of conditions in the North American continent and made a Marxian, materialist analysis of it.

I would also like to note that comrade Fraser received, on arriving in L.A. after Seattle, in a pretty battle-fatigued condition, a great deal of fellowship from the NAM (New American Movement), later the DSA, and especially from Dorothy Healey, who helped him a great deal. And I believe that this understandably slowed down his *approchement* with the SL, although we had been in loose association with many disagreements for a long time, comrade Fraser even having attended our founding conference in 1966. See, I could take off now about the SWP, Tom Kerry and those guys and what they did, but I really don't have time for that.

Most of my other few remarks have already been picked up by others. I think that comrade Fraser found a great deal of satisfaction in offering guidance and advice, especially with the Labor Black Leagues sprouting around the country, and with our members and the younger comrades in general. All the rest of my

*continued on page 11*



# What Row Over "Kristallnacht" Speech Shows

## Dangerous Rise of German Nationalism

The following article is translated from Spartakist No. 60, February/March 1989, newspaper of the *Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands*.

On the eve of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the West German state, its imperialist rulers want to throw their weight around. The German bourgeoisie is far from satisfied with the enormous wealth it is raking in through trade with West Europe and the gradual economic penetration of the East. Using the strong D-mark to put the arm on Washington over economic policy, Bonn also seeks to get its hands on nuclear weapons in the process of modernizing NATO's short-range nuclear missiles (while setting up a Franco/German brigade outside the NATO command). But if West German imperialism is no longer an "economic giant and political dwarf" (as Willy Brandt once said), its full emergence as a world power is blocked by a whole series of barriers.

In recent years, West Germany under Christian Democratic (CDU) chancellor Helmut Kohl has tried hard to gain international stature, yet repeatedly these attempts have backfired. Kohl got a slap in the face when he tried to crash the 40th anniversary celebration of the Western Allies' victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, held at the site of the Normandy invasion. To compensate for this rebuff, Kohl twisted Reagan's arm to visit the cemetery at Bitburg in 1985, where in the service of the anti-Soviet Cold War they saluted the SS Division "Das Reich." The obscene Bitburg visit was internationally condemned as a boot in the face of



Der Spiegel

Former speaker of West German parliament, Christian Democrat Philipp Jenninger.

Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and a mockery of the memory of millions of Jews murdered in Nazi death camps.

So last November, the Kohl regime sought to recoup after the Bitburg fiasco by holding a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of *Reichspogromnacht*—the night in 1938 when the Nazis unleashed a pogrom against the Jewish population throughout the Reich, burning synagogues and Jewish homes and businesses to the ground and subsequently deporting 30,000 Jews to the deadly concentration camps. But the speech by the CDU chairman of the West German parliament, Philipp Jenninger, produced an uproar across the political spectrum, from the Greens and Social Democrats (SPD) to Free Democrats (FDP) and Christian Dem-



Peter Thomann

West German Bundeswehr reintroduces Prussian tradition of public swearing-in of soldiers on 25th anniversary of NATO.

ocrats. Jenninger was reproached for "tastelessness," accused of being an anti-Semite and of "marching through history with mental jackboots."

Yet this was not a crypto-Nazi speech, and the protests as much as the speech are an expression of a renaissance but frustrated German nationalism. They railed at Jenninger's graphic account of Nazi crimes and Hitler's popularity at the time. But his real crime in their eyes was to say publicly what the Thyssens and Krupps say privately, expressing fascination with the "victories" of the Third Reich. For Jenninger it is necessary to talk openly about Auschwitz in order to smooth the way for the German bourgeoisie's great-power ambitions, promising a German imperialism without genocide. Jenninger declares, "Next time, it's Mr. Nice Guy." But in the rest of the world, many expect the opposite.

West Germany today is too strong to be simply the loyal junior partner of American imperialism in Europe. But it is not strong enough to impose its will on Europe, West or East. For the rest of the world, especially Germany's most immediate neighbors, the memory of the tens of millions slaughtered in Hitler's onslaught is vividly alive to this day. Even the Reaganauts evoked the Auschwitz gas chambers to force Kohl to eat crow over an alleged chemical weapons plant built for Qaddafi. In order to present a "new face" to all those who remember the last time German imperialism ravished Europe, West Germany's rulers must indeed attempt to "master" the Nazi chapter of German history. But once again they failed, as the Jenninger fiasco no less than Bitburg reflects the dilemma of the German ruling class facing its past.

The question of the past is also the question of the future, as racism and frustrated revanchism feed upon each other, providing fertile soil for fascism. The CDU is being outflanked on its right, its electoral base eroded by fascist organizations like the Republikaner, led by former Waffen SS officer Schönhuber, with a dramatic showing in the Cold War "frontline city" of West Berlin under the slogan "Germany first." The neo-Nazi Deutsche Volksunion, financed by the Oetker trust, has sent

out 28 million Bundespost-subsidized "Drecksachen" (printed filth), to every household in the country, with the slogan "First Germany, then Europe." The sinister growth of the Nazis and the appearance of violent skinhead gangs have produced a polarization in West German society, posing ever more sharply the need to mobilize the power of the industrial working class, including its strategic immigrant component, to crush these scum.

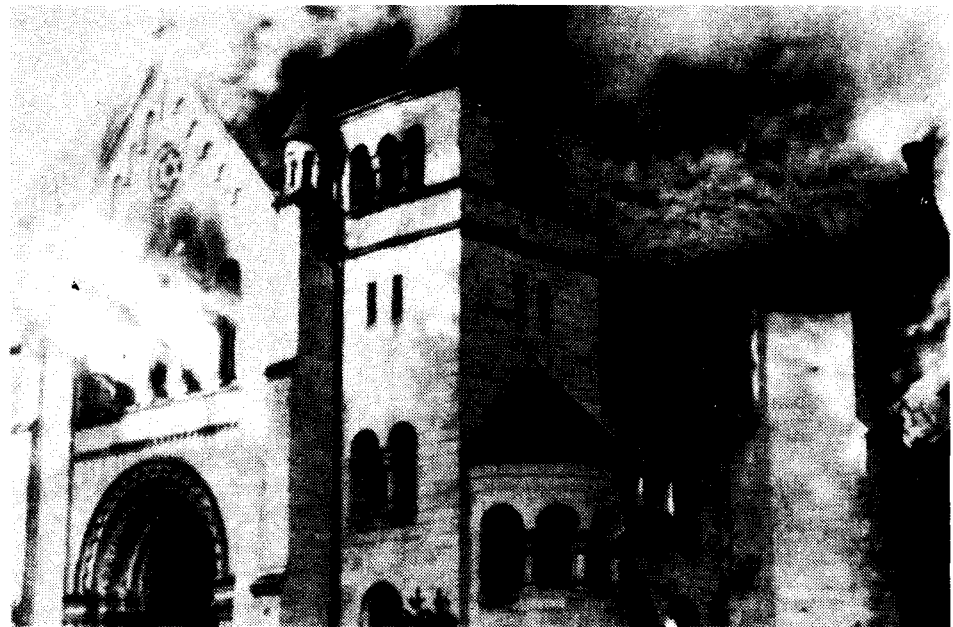
### Green, Red & Black Uproar in the Bundestag

After the obscene spectacle of Bitburg, West German imperialism faces increasing tension between the drive to "morally rearm" its population for aggressive big-power politics and imperialist adventures and its diplomatic need to peddle the myth of a "new," "peace-loving" Reich (complete with its own nationalist "peace" movement). Chancellor Kohl has advertised himself as the first leader of the postwar generation, speaking of the "blessing of being born late"; he and his peers feel they have been compelled to stand in the corner long enough for the crimes of their fathers. But the Bonn politicians' attempt to dissipate the shadow of the Nazi past cast by Bitburg with a com-

memoration on the anniversary of the "Kristallnacht" pogroms showed that the German bourgeoisie is still encumbered with its history at every step.

From the outset, Kohl was dogged by failure. Thus the majority of the governing body of the Frankfurt Jewish community voted against the appearance of the federal chancellor in the West End synagogue on November 9. When Kohl spoke anyway, he was interrupted by heckling of "Bitburg!" and "You're lying!" and many walked out. Outside the Frankfurt Opera house where Kohl attended a memorial meeting that same day, there was a protest joined by supporters of the *Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands*, German section of the international Spartacist tendency, carrying signs with the slogans "Workers Revolution Will Avenge Victims of the Holocaust!" and "Bitburg: Kohl in the Footsteps of the SS."

The following day, at a "commemorative hour" in the Bundestag, Speaker Jenninger wanted to deliver a major address. But by the time he finished, over 50 delegates from the Greens, SPD, FDP and some CDUers—over one-third of those present—had walked out of the room in protest. Jutta Oesterle-Schwerin, a Green Bundestag member of Israeli origin, accused Jenninger of



Der Spiegel

Nazi "Kristallnacht" pogrom, 1938: Baden-Baden synagogue set aflame by stormtroopers.

making Hitler into a great politician and demonstrating "that anti-Semitism is present in the hearts of many members of this house." Former Social Democratic chancellor Willy Brandt said it was a "dark day in German postwar history." SPD chairman Vogel complained about "stunning lack of sensitivity," and FDP deputy Lüder called the speech "unbearable." That night the CDU/CSU had Jenninger resign.

Fearing embarrassment abroad, the governing Christian Democrat/Free Democrat coalition was full of consternation. Even big-time swindler Count Otto von Lambsdorf (convicted in the Flick scandal and now back as FDP chief) said he had "the impression of a justification or partial justification of the worst events in modern German history." As in a low-grade comedy, suddenly the CDU and FDP appear in the clothes of committed anti-fascists. As for the Social Democrats, didn't they work willingly with old Nazis like Kiesinger, Carstens and Lübke during the time of "Grand Coalition" which first brought the SPD into office? The Greens, who used to count in their parliamentary fraction WWII Eastern Front general Bastian, called for Jenninger's resignation to restore the image of the successor state to the Third Reich.

Both Jenninger and Kohl in his West End synagogue speech were minding their manners, carefully using the term "Reichspogromnacht" instead of the Nazis' "Kristallnacht," and referring to "Jewish fellow citizens." But from the start Jenninger slipped into the racist distinction between "the Jews" and "us Germans." Federal president Weizsäcker, in his celebrated 1985 speech demolished the "vital lie of postwar Germany" (*Der Spiegel*) that Germans "didn't know" about the Holocaust. But for him as well as Kohl and Jenninger, *German Jews* simply don't and didn't exist, an especially noxious conception in light of the over half a million who had lived in Germany before Hitler's "final solution."

But Jenninger's speech could hardly be misunderstood as an apology for fascism. At the beginning of his talk he stated clearly that in the 1938 pogroms "the state made itself the organizer of the crime." The objections really came after he set out to explain why "the population was largely passive" which "corresponded to the attitude toward anti-Jewish actions and measures in previous years." It became pandemonium when he asked, speaking in the voice of "very many Germans" who thought, "And as far as the Jews were concerned: had they not in the past presumed to a role, as it was said then, to which they had no right? Must they not finally, for once, accept restrictions? Had they perhaps even deserved being put in their place?"

This *description* of the prevailing anti-Semitism in Hitler's Germany was taken as the corpus delicti proving Jenninger to be an anti-Semite. But whatever his problems in delivery and whatever his "real views," he did not give a crypto-Nazi speech. No Nazi would have quoted, as he did, the simultaneously moving and horrifying eyewitness account of an SS Einsatzgruppe carrying out a mass execution.

But then the Bundestag Speaker went way beyond the accepted ritual of official anti-Nazism. What the SPD described as Jenninger's "stunning lack of sensitivity" was when he spoke of "Hitler's political victory procession" during the early years in power. He listed: "Reincorporating the Saar, reintroducing general conscription, massive rearmament, concluding the German-British fleet agreement, occupation of the Rhineland, the Olympic Summer Games in Berlin, the 'Anschluss' [annexation] of Austria and the 'Greater German Empire' and finally, only a few weeks before the November pogroms, the Munich Agreement, the breaking up of Czechoslovakia—the Versailles treaty was really now only a piece of paper and the German Reich had sud-



Left: Bitburg, 1985—Kohl and Reagan in obscene salute to Nazi SS war dead. Right: German Trotskyists on anniversary of 1938 pogrom say "Workers revolution will avenge victims of Holocaust."

denly become the hegemonic power of the old Continent."

Jenninger's statement, "With the attack on the Soviet Union the possibility arose of combining the two: conquest of 'Lebensraum' in the East and the 'destruction of the Jewish race in Europe,'" was the policy not only of "madman Hitler." General-Oberst von Fritsch, fired by Hitler as army chief of staff in 1938, had the same program. And the *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East) was not born with the writing of *Mein Kampf*: it is shared by *all* the representatives of German imperialism today, from the Ruhr industrialists to the social-patriotic SPD. And when

of the German bourgeoisie would prefer silence, and Nolte & Co. attempt to deny or "relativize" Nazi crimes, Jenninger called this "senseless.... Our past will not rest, nor will it disappear."

Jenninger's recipe for absolution: "to keep memory alive and to accept the past as part of our identity as Germans—this alone promises to us the elders as well as to the young deliverance from the burden of history." In a later speech, certainly *not* for international consumption, delivered to the clerical-reactionary "Catholic Student Union Arminia," he declared, "Some want the Germans to stand for all time in the position of the accused. But we

United Secretariat summarizes aptly: "...from the point of view of the revolutionary class consciousness of the German proletariat, it has not yet recovered from this defeat, 55 years after the moment in which Hitler took power" ("The Historical Balance Sheet of the Fourth International," *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, December 1988).

As a bourgeois nationalist, Jenninger, to paraphrase Kaiser Wilhelm on the outbreak of World War I, sees "no parties" or classes, "only Germans"...and only Germans who supported Hitler and the Holocaust. What the bourgeoisie does not say is that the German working class had to be beheaded and smashed as a precondition for the Nazi "final solution." In 1918-19, it used Social Democracy to drown the revolution in blood, assassinating Liebknecht and Luxemburg. What was lacking then was a formed Communist party. In 1923, the KPD let the most significant revolutionary opportunity that offered itself to German Communism pass by for lack of a determined party leadership.

The petty bourgeoisie, driven mad by economic crisis, shifted their hopes for salvation from the powerful but indecisively led proletariat to the "party of white-hot reaction," in Trotsky's vivid phrase. The Krupps and Flicks threw their millions behind Hitler, and after 1933 they more than recouped their investment. As we wrote last fall: "Nazism was the German bourgeoisie's last desperate recourse to rescue its own class rule before the revolutionary onslaught of the proletariat.... The German bourgeoisie as a whole had united around exploiting anti-Semitism to revive Germany from its defeat in World War I" (see "Kristallnacht: Reign of Nazi Terror," *WV* No. 465, 18 November 1988).

To the terror of the Third Reich which atomized the workers movement must be added the terror and counter-revolutionary effects of the Western Allied invasion and occupation. American and British imperialists feared that the class-conscious German proletariat would rise from the ashes of the defeat of Hitler's Reich as it had from the

*continued on page 10*



Parliamentary leaders of Greens want a "clean" German imperialism.

Jenninger remarked, "The years from 1933 to 1938 are, even looking back from a distance and knowing what came next, still today an object of fascination...almost without parallel in history," he was expressing real admiration. So does much of his audience—in *private*.

Jenninger quoted at length Himmler's infamous speech in 1943 which extolled participation in the extermination of the Jews as vital to building Nazi character. But as the Reichsführer SS said of these hideous crimes in his speech, "still we will never speak about that in public." Was Jenninger's crime to have said it at all? Historian Gordon Craig concluded, in a recent essay titled "Facing Up to the Nazis," that "It is quite possible that the reaction to Jenninger's speech was a sign that some at least of the parliamentarians are becoming fed up with being lectured about their country's past" (*New York Review of Books*, 2 February).

#### Whose "Collective Guilt"?

Jenninger's speech, like the *Historikerdebatte* (historians debate) of the last couple years, "is really about the future," as the London *Guardian* put it. He "did not minimize Auschwitz, he did not explain genocide with Bolshevism, but named German reasons," noted *Die Zeit*. It pointed out that both Jenninger and Kohl in their "Pogromnacht" speeches "turned away" from the "revisionist" historians and apologists for fascism like West Berlin professor Ernst Nolte, for whom the Nazis' genocide of the Jews only imitated the "Asiatic deed" of the Bolsheviks. While the bulk

must emerge from this condition" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 17-18 December 1988). Jenninger's line is that while all Germans share responsibility for history, "everyone must answer...the question of guilt himself": i.e., collective "responsibility" without guilt.

Nazi rule in Germany was supported by a large part of the population, and that was different from fascist Italy or imperial Japan. The Italian masses were passively, then actively hostile to Mussolini's regime. Mussolini was killed by Italian partisans and his corpse publicly exposed and desecrated in Milan. In Germany the defeat of the proletariat by the Nazis was not merely an episode, but a world-historic defeat. As Claudio Magnani of the fake-Trotskyist

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# Bureaucratic Mismanagement Undermines Soviet Planning

## Armenian Earthquake Disaster

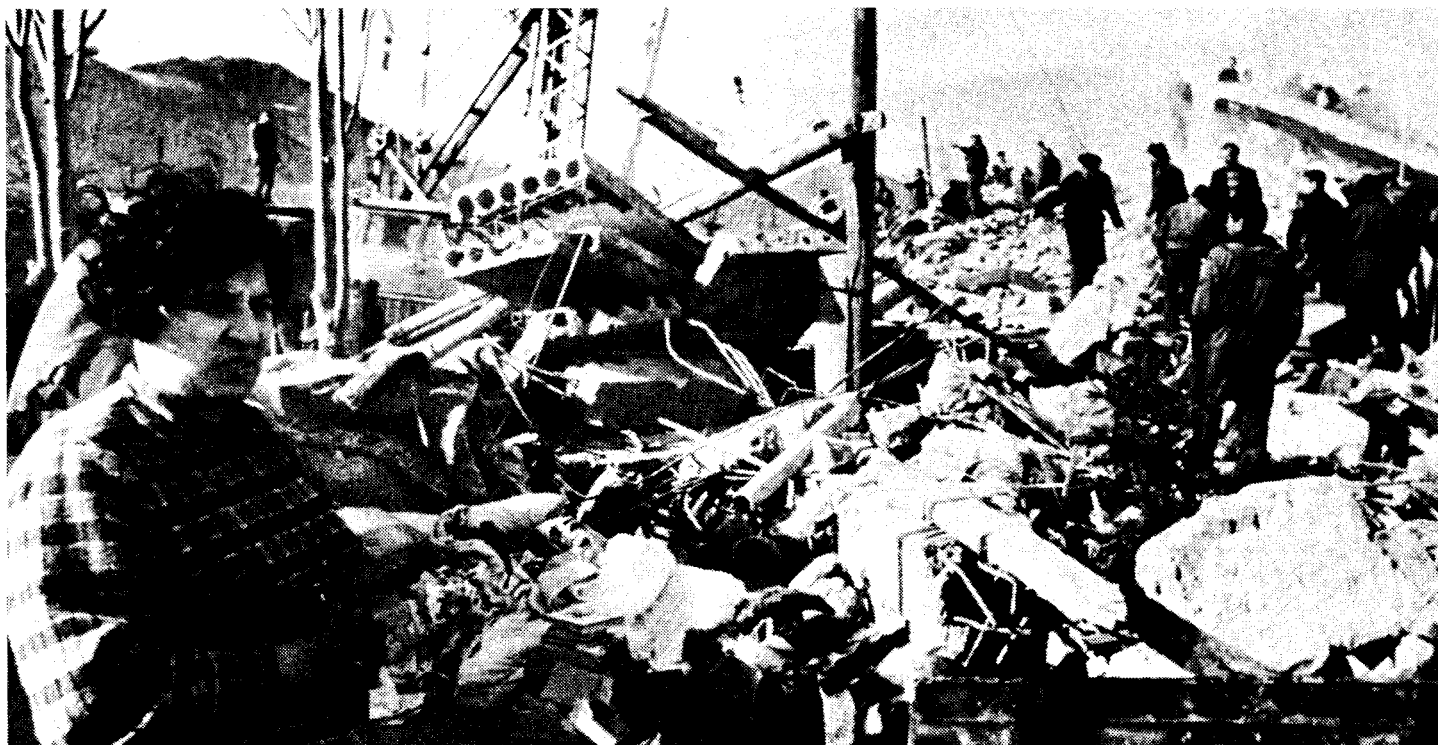
Last December's earthquake in Armenia, which left tens of thousands dead and hundreds of thousands homeless, was a human tragedy of immense proportions. For weeks, the attention of the world was riveted on Armenia, as volunteers from over 50 countries joined Soviet rescue workers of various nationalities in seeking to find and save those who remained buried beneath the rubble. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev broke off his visit to the United Nations in New York to return home and tour the devastated areas. What he found was shattering.

Spitak, a town of 30,000, had been leveled. In Leninakan, with a population of 290,000 the second largest city in Armenia, four out of five buildings were destroyed or heavily damaged; more than 120 high-rise apartment buildings had been reduced to rubble. The earthquake hit just minutes before schools and factories were to empty out for lunch, trapping schoolchildren and workers beneath collapsing walls and ceilings. In Leninakan's Lenin Square, coffins were stacked 12 high and 20 across. Nearly 25,000 bodies have been recovered, and estimates of the death toll range to 50,000 or more.

Then, in late January, even as Soviet authorities were preparing plans for the enormous task of reconstruction, a second earthquake occurred in Tadzhikistan in Soviet Central Asia, killing more than 250 people. Beyond the enormous toll in human life, the impact of these natural disasters on the already troubled Soviet economy is staggering. Initial estimates of the cost of reconstruction exceed \$25 billion, and the final figure may well be far higher.

The level of destruction far exceeded that in other recent quakes. Peter Yanev, a structural engineer from San Francisco who participated in a National Academy of Sciences study team sent to the quake zone in late December, compared what he saw with the 1985 Mexico earthquake: "Mexico City was shocking but the suffering was isolated. Spitak from the air must have looked like Hiroshima after the bomb dropped" (*Engineering News Record*, 12 January).

Amid all the suffering, Armenian nationalists pressed forward their separatist campaign with a frenzy (see box on facing page), while sections of the Western press tried to turn the tragedy into an anti-Communist morality play. The London *Economist* (17 December



Most devastating earthquake in Armenia's history: rescuers search through rubble for survivors.

Novosti

1988) practically cheered that the Soviet population could now see "how poorly their country measures up to the standards of the outside world." However, it is a measure of the impact of Gorbachev's *glasnost* (openness) that, by and large, Western press coverage was far more balanced, and contradictory.

If anything, the Soviet press was more caustic than its anti-Soviet imperialist counterparts. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* asked: "Where were the seismologists, the architects and the construction workers that drafted and built the houses that fell apart like matchboxes?" Gorbachev demanded: "Who is to blame for the fact that in the concrete blocks there is too little cement but more than enough sand?" *Pravda* wrote: "Practically everything constructed during the years of stagnation collapsed." The evening television news program *Vremya* denounced the rescue effort as inadequate and disorganized, where teams "cannot get hold of a simple pick."

Yet no less an anti-Soviet mouthpiece than the *New York Times* (16 December 1988) observed that "Although the Soviet press has sharply criticized Soviet inefficiencies and poor preparedness, foreigners interviewed here said the overall disorganization was no worse than normally expected in major disasters." While the most severe self-

criticism is certainly in order, in this case *glasnost* was aimed at boosting Gorbachev's pursuit of "market socialism" and appeasement of U.S. imperialism, and at laying all the blame at the feet of his predecessor Brezhnev.

A natural disaster of this scale throws a sharp light on the economic system which is subjected to a wrenching physical test. What, if anything, does this say about the Soviet Union and its centralized, planned economy? Does it show, as *Time* magazine claimed, "much of the blame" is to be laid on "shoddy construction"? In an attempt to sort through the technical questions and how they might relate to Soviet political and economic policies, *Workers Vanguard* spoke to a number of experts in the field, including staff at *Engineering News Record* and Dr. Mihran S. Agbabian, chairman of the Civil Engineering department at the University of Southern California, who was part of the NAS team that went to Armenia.

### Quake Destruction and Soviet Construction

Why was the devastation so horrendous? First, it must be understood that this earthquake was far worse than any ever expected or experienced in the region, which is seismically more like Utah than California. As Dr. Agbabian told *WV* before his departure, "historically they never had in that particular area an earthquake larger than magnitude 5.75 [on the Soviet MKS scale of 1 to 12]. And the records go as far back as the tenth century." The buildings in Armenia were designed to withstand an earthquake of magnitude 7 to 8, but the December quake was 10.5 at the epicenter—meaning the intensity of ground shaking was four times greater than the design limits and 16 times greater than any quake ever experienced in the region. "Even the good buildings would have come down in this earthquake," said Janice Tuchman, editor of the buildings department of *ENR*.

To what extent do building standards in the Soviet Union have provisions for seismic engineering, to withstand quakes? Dr. Agbabian explained that Soviet "design procedures are very much like ours." The Soviet *Standards and Regulations for Construction* includes a chapter specifically on "Construction in Seismically Active Regions." Building designs are also subjected to testing before construc-

tion. In fact, the Seismological Institute in Leninakan was in the process of testing a model of a building as the earthquake hit, a member of the NAS team related. The model building survived, the testing lab around it did not.

The idea behind seismic design is that new construction be able to withstand—with relatively little damage—the worst natural catastrophe likely to occur in that region within a reasonable period of time (known as the "return period"). For example, the dikes in Holland are designed for a storm that would occur once every 500 years; many flood control projects in the U.S. are designed for floods that might occur every 100 years. Needless to say, what the Pentagon considers a reasonable "return period" for its underground command bunkers is far greater than what a California real estate developer takes into account—and the cost of construction is accordingly far higher.

"The return period for buildings is certainly a much shorter period than the return period for, say, a nuclear power plant or a dam," Agbabian added, "because if they are damaged the consequences are much more catastrophic." As it happened, a nuclear power plant, now to be shut down, was located not far from the quake and survived unscathed. After returning from Armenia, Agbabian suggested that perhaps buildings in the region should have been designed to withstand more severe earthquakes, given the concentration of seismic fault lines. Of course, the study team stressed at their New York briefing on January 24 that their conclusions are preliminary until the evidence is thoroughly weighed.

What causes a building to collapse or be damaged in an earthquake is basically the buildup of lateral forces as the structure tries to resist the motion of the ground under it. Many of the high-rise apartments in Leninakan simply "pancaked," as columns gave way and the floors fell one atop another. The effect on a building is worsened if the frequency of the earthquake ground waves is near that of its natural frequency of vibration (at which it resonates, more or less like a tuning fork), making it vibrate or shake violently. This appears to have been the case with the nine-story apartment buildings predominant in Leninakan. However, some types of nine-story buildings collapsed wholesale while others did not.



Soviet high-rise apartment complex in Arkhangelsk.

Soviet Life



Some accounts in the West, like *Newsweek* (19 December 1988), claimed it was the fault of "Soviet construction techniques, particularly the widespread use of precast concrete slabs." Unlike in the U.S., where construction is overwhelmingly done on-site, most contemporary Soviet construction is prefabricated, or "industrialized." Standardized precast concrete slabs or box units are manufactured in the factory and then assembled at the site. But among the buildings which collapsed were many that were not prefab, and a number of the high-rise apartments which did not suffer were prefab.

Most of the high-rises that collapsed, according to NAS team member Loring A. Wyllie, had a concrete frame structure with beams and columns. The floors, walls and column segments were not connected together strongly enough to form a single force-resisting unit. So the columns gave way and the walls and floors fell out of the frame. To make matters worse, in many cases the flooring consisted of hollow-core concrete planks which broke up upon falling instead of leaving pockets of space between collapsed slabs where people trapped in the rubble could survive. Many of these buildings were built in the Brezhnev years, which is when Soviet factory-based construction expanded rapidly. Yet, another type of nine-story prefab building, in which the precast panels connect directly to each other to form load-bearing walls and floors, with reinforced joints at all panel edges, came through the quake with only hairline cracks.

Another factor contributing to the extent of destruction, explained NAS team geotechnical expert Thomas O'Rourke, was the soil condition in the region. Leninakan and Spitak are built on relatively deep deposits of alluvial soil, which contains ground water and tends to become very fluid under quake conditions. In contrast, "there was virtually no damage in the village of Akhurian, which is situated on shallow soil cover" only three miles from Leninakan. Kirovakan, about the same distance from the epicenter as Leninakan, suffered severe damage only in one part of the town which was built over a filled-in marsh. The most secure high-rise buildings, like New York's older skyscrapers, have their foundations set directly into bedrock.

After touring the quake zone, Dr. Agbabian suggested that the standard designs may have "cut it too close" in economizing on the use of materials in order to cut costs (particularly in the amount of reinforcing steel used). He also noted that Soviet engineers they had met were critical of quality control



Gorbachev (foreground) tours disaster area.

17 FEBRUARY 1989

# Nationalist Venom Amid Human Tragedy

The Soviet troops in Armenia who assisted in the rescue effort were already in place when the quake hit, sent to quell the pogromist fratricide between Armenian nationalists (agitating for control of the mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh region) and the neighboring republic of Azerbaijan. In the face of the grim tragedy of the earthquake one could at least hope that the chauvinist agitation on both sides would be put aside, at least temporarily. But as Gorbachev toured the stricken areas, he was hounded by protesters demanding Nagorno-Karabakh and grotesquely insisting that Armenian children not be evacuated to other regions of the USSR for fear they would not be returned! Some Armenian nationalists even argued against accepting donations of blood from Azerbaijan.

Gorbachev seized the moment to arrest the leaders of the nationalist Karabakh Committee.

Rumors abounded in the Armenian capital of Yerevan that Azerbaijanis had welcomed the earthquake as "Allah's punishment" against Armenians. Even so, many Azerbaijanis worked voluntary Saturday overtime to help the quake victims, and collections were taken at factory gates in Baku. An account in the London *Independent* (19 December 1988) of a street argument in Kirovakan captured the fact that not all Armenians had been so swept up by the nationalist bitterness as to forget the overwhelming natural disaster around them. When a young nationalist insisted, "we must not forget Nagorny Karabakh," a woman engineer who had lost 53 of her staff members shot back, "I'm sick of

Nagorny Karabakh, let the people who want Nagorny Karabakh go and live there."

Under Gorbachev's *perestroika*, nationalist rivalries have resurfaced with a fury, while the most dangerous nationalism, that of the predominant Great Russian people, has taken the form of an ugly emergence of the anti-Semitic Nazi Pamyat organization. Ominously, Pamyat has sought to exacerbate racial divisions between Christian Armenians and Muslim Azerbaijanis, appearing at an Armenian church meeting in Moscow after the quake with a banner reading, "To the dead and murdered of Armenia, from the Pamyat." These disgusting recrudescences of the dark past must be swept away through a return to proletarian internationalism by the Soviet masses.

procedures and the general level of inspection. Stalinist bureaucratism certainly encourages a high degree of shoddy labor and corruption, including the siphoning-off of materials for the black market, but even more serious is the way it disorganizes the centralized distribution system. One NAS team member marveled at the amount of "field ingenuity" used in splicing column joints, the result of workers substituting for materials which do not arrive in the right amount at the right time and place. Unfortunately, this contributed to the failures.

## Mass Housing, Not Mass Homelessness

So there are problems in some Soviet prefab housing designs and in construction, as there are with any technological innovation. But why do the Soviets have so much prefabricated construction? Because, as is acknowledged even by capitalist governments, it is the most effective means to provide livable accommodations for everyone. And it is no accident that the USSR leads the world in industrialized construction. Central planning based on socialized property means that they can respond directly to the needs of the population, not the quest for higher profits—which in the capitalist world produces massive real-estate speculation, soaring rents, a glut of luxury housing, massive shortages for poor and working-class families, and millions of homeless.

The destruction wrought by World War II and the Nazi occupation left the USSR with a crippled economy, a severe labor shortage and 40 percent of its housing destroyed. Even a U.S. Department of Commerce document on "Industrialized Building in the Soviet Union" (1971) points to the "astonishing pace" of postwar reconstruction:

"Rapid transition from a rural to an urban population coupled with war destruction called for Herculean efforts to 'build it now'—and the Soviets have done just that. The USSR has 'built it now' in great quantity. People who lived in cabins or dilapidated buildings without electricity or water in the 1940's moved into apartments sharing bathrooms and kitchens with other families in the 1950's. In the 1960's these same families have moved up to their own new private quarters."

Apartment sizes have continued to rise, and Soviet citizens generally pay well under 10 percent of their wages for rent and utilities combined.

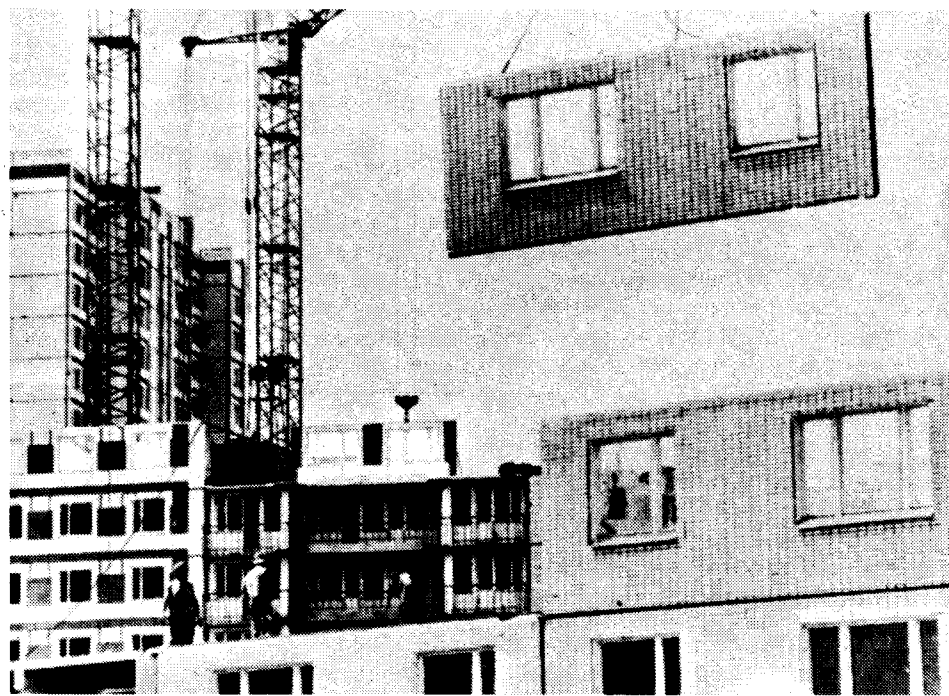
According to Charles Abrams' *Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World* (1964): "The U.S.S.R. has made great advances in prefabricated construction of apartment dwellings and has not only increased its housing investment in recent years but attained a higher rate of new housing construction than any other country for which statistics are available; this rate has risen

from 7 per 1000 inhabitants in 1954 to 10.8 in 1957 and 14.4 in 1959. The assumption of responsibility for housing workers is no longer questioned, and the U.S.S.R. is trying to seal the housing breach with brick and mortar."

Nor was it simply a question of post-war reconstruction: capitalist West Germany in the same period had a housing construction rate of 11 units or less per thousand people. From 1945 to 1968, the U.S.—with a qualitatively stronger economic base and a much greater pool of skilled labor—produced some 30 million living units (or just over 6 per 1,000 inhabitants per year), of which well under a million were low-income public housing. The 1968 Housing and Urban Development Act estimated that a minimum of 26 million new units

to 400,000 (*Newsday*, 22 January).

Nor does throwing construction open to the market make buildings safer. The very conception of a uniform building code cuts against the grain of capitalist "competition." One American earthquake consultant explained fatalistically, "Noncompliance with building codes in the United States is widespread. Make no mistake: catastrophes here and throughout the world are inevitable" (*New York Times*, 17 December 1988). In California, where there is probably the biggest concentration of expertise in seismic construction in the world, houses are built directly above the San Andreas Fault. And the ticky-tacky boxes of Suburbia U.S.A. are complemented by the decrepit, rat- and roach-infested firetraps that pass for



Soviet Union pioneered in mass prefabricated construction.

would have to be built by 1979 to ensure that every American family had adequate housing. It was estimated this would require an increase from \$30 billion to \$60 billion in the housing budget. Instead, during the 1980s, HUD's budget was slashed by 84 percent, from \$33.4 billion to \$5.5 billion.

Today the U.S. has some three million homeless living and dying on the streets. New York City alone has 60-90,000 homeless and on top of that an estimated 100,000 families who are the "hidden homeless," doubled and tripled up with other families. Over the last decade, the rate of new construction has fallen from 15,000 to 9,000 units—less than one-fourth the rate of Soviet urban housing construction. Of those New Yorkers who do have apartments, one out of four spends more than half their gross income on rent. Yet the number of NYC apartments renting for less than \$300 per month plummeted between 1981 and 1987 from 1.1 million

apartments in most urban ghettos in the U.S.

## For Central Planning Under Soviet Democracy!

In spite of the tremendous achievements of Soviet housing construction, there remains serious overcrowding. A 1986 government resolution mandated an ambitious program of accelerated housing construction so that all Soviet families will have separate apartments or private houses by the year 2000. But at the 19th Communist Party conference held last July, Gorbachev declared that in line with his market-oriented *perestroika* economic reforms the government is pushing for private ownership of publicly built apartments, aping the Tory Thatcher government in Britain. A letter writer to *Moscow News* (1 January) who supports this scheme nevertheless notes, "Who will be able to

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# Germany...

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Kaiser's. Massive Allied bombing raids targeted the working-class districts of the big cities. An armed uprising at Buchenwald against the Nazi jailers was disarmed and the left-wing prisoners interned for many more months by their American "liberators." And the doctrine of "collective guilt" was minted to justify heavy-handed military occupation.

Meanwhile, for Stalin "collective guilt" was a program for stamping out any possibility of proletarian revolution in postwar Germany, in order to preserve his bureaucratic rule. The imperialist Allies, also fearing the spectre of workers revolution, for a brief period used this doctrine to justify their "de-Nazification" campaign, then used it for exonerating former Nazi officials to deploy them in the anti-Soviet Cold War and to build up West Germany as a NATO bulwark against the East. Marxists reject the concept of collective guilt as applied to the entire German nation because it covers over the class nature of fascism. It's the German bourgeoisie that is collectively guilty.

## "Left" Nationalism and Revanchism

Repudiation of collective guilt can also be associated with reactionary, nationalist resentment against the victors of WW II, the Soviet Union as well as the U.S. One of the prominent spokesmen from the extreme right wing of the CDU is Alfred Dregger who stated in 1986, "the guilt is behind us," and called on "all Germans" to "step out from behind the shadow of Hitler." For him the scandal of Bitburg was an opportunity to stress his pride as a fighter on the Eastern Front in WW II. Dregger and his Stahlhelm (steel helmet) faction opposed holding the *Pogromnacht* commemoration at all. He wants to return to the old "glory days" by founding a new German Reich now. Ominously, after Jenninger's forced resignation, the first candidate Kohl came up with for his successor was precisely revanchist hardliner Dregger.

But German nationalism is not at all restricted to the right wing. Kurt Schumacher, the fiercely nationalistic leader of the SPD in the early postwar years, argued that the German people were just as much victims of Nazism (he himself was, being a former concentration camp inmate) as, say, the Poles or Czechs. Therefore, he stated, the Russians and Americans had no right to divide Germany. Schumacher, from his own, different, standpoint was no less complicit in building up a Fourth German Reich with the cadres of the Third; he even envisaged rehabilitation of the Waffen SS decades before Bitburg. And



John Heartfield  
"The Meaning of the Hitler Salute": 1932 left-wing journal exposes German capitalists' support to Nazis.

it's no accident that the SPD originated Bonn's *Ostpolitik* (Eastern policy): historically a national party with much of its social base located east of the Elbe, i.e., the present-day DDR, it was best-placed to spearhead the revanchist appetites of German imperialism toward what it still calls *Mitteldeutschland*... and beyond.

As for the Greens, in addition to clean air they want a "clean" German imperialism; bringing back all the *Dreck* from the Hitler era is only going to dirty it. The almost pathological reaction of the Greens to the Jenninger speech—they also didn't protest at Bitburg—is an expression of their often virulent nationalism. In the aftermath of the Jenninger affair, some West German newspapers wished the Bundestag had listened to the Greens beforehand when they wanted to invite the chairman of the central council of Jews in Germany, Heinz Galinsky, to speak on the *Pogromnacht* with the usual platitudes. For here these graduates of the New Left were speaking for important sectors of the West German ruling class.

Hermann Gremliza in *konkret* magazine (December 1988) was one of the few who tried to probe the reasons for the Greens' reaction to Jenninger: "What was rebelling on the left side of the house was the yearning not for truth and enlightenment...but for quasi-religious forms and rituals which free a reconciliation with 'this our state'... from the pain of a guilty conscience." Along with the Social Democrats and Liberals, the Greens have in the past preferred the lofty rhetoric of a von Weizsäcker (who praised the recent release of two SS mass murderers by the Netherlands government as an act of "conciliation").

Meanwhile, as "left" German nation-

alism overlaps with expressions of revanchism, a lot of disgusting crap is surfacing that shades over into outright fascism. Thus while Hitler-loving skinheads beat up and murder Turkish immigrants, "Redskin" gangs in West Berlin spew out anti-Soviet garbage and chant "Trotskyists out." One of the more repulsive examples came from the editorial offices of the pro-Green *Tageszeitung*, which "jokingly" described a crowded West Berlin disco as "*gaskammervoll*" (full as a gas chamber). A new "no-guilt" generation has arisen in West Germany—according to a survey by *Stern* after the Jenninger affair, those under 20 felt the least concerned about Germany's past.

## The German Question and European Revolution

As a would-be ideologue for resurgent German imperialism, Jenninger declared, "We Germans wish to attain a clear understanding of our history and clear lessons on how to shape our present and future politically." Concerned about a lack of moral confidence on the part of German youth to act as a full-fledged imperialist power if the Hitler period is left in the closet, Jenninger says at the end of his speech:

"On the foundations of our state and history it is necessary to found a new moral tradition which must prove itself in the human and moral sensitivity of our society."



Dietz Verlag Berlin  
1919 Spartacus uprising (above) crushed by Social Democrats in service of capitalist reaction.

"In foreign policy this means the duty of collective responsibility for peace, for actively making the world peaceful."

What was later presented as "ambiguousness" and "clumsiness" on Jenninger's part reflects the fundamental problems of German imperialism. The Bundestag Speaker's "fascination" with Hitler's imperialist "victories" of the '30s comes as no surprise. The Federal Republic declares itself the successor state to the Third Reich, constitutionally sworn to "restoring the Reich to the borders of 1937," which go far beyond the Oder-Neisse line to include parts of present-day Poland and the USSR. And more fundamentally, the revanchist German bourgeoisie has a major structural problem: the partition of the country into a capitalist West and a state in which capitalism has been expropriated in the East.

"Our history can't be divided into good and bad, and responsibility for the past can't be distributed according to the geographical arbitrariness of the postwar order," said Jenninger. Chancellor Kohl considers it "absurd" to construe a contradiction between the goals of German reunification and the European unification" (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 19 January). The SPD, as well, wants to reserve the unconditional right for an imperialist reunification of Germany after the supposed "complete integration" of the European Common Market in 1992. But uniting Germany under capitalist rule would mean bloody counterrevolution to smash the DDR. And it would directly pose the spectre of world war; even its Western imperialist

allies fear the domination of Europe by a Fourth Reich.

Meanwhile, the German bourgeoisie sees tremendous opportunities for economic penetration and social counter-revolution in Gorbachev's *perestroika* reforms for "market socialism" in the Soviet Union and East Europe, which fuel deep-going popular dissatisfaction and explosive nationalist strife. The Frankfurt bankers and Bonn politicians would like to use their "Swing" credits [for trade with East Germany] and D-mark loans to squeeze dry the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe like banana republics. But the socialized property forms of these states represent a barrier to capitalist penetration, a barrier that can only be smashed, to use Bismarck's phrase, with "blood and iron." And that brings the German bourgeoisie up against the enormous power of the Soviet degenerated workers state. It is this power that stays the hand of the imperialists.

By itself, without its NATO allies, West Germany is not now capable of a military foray eastward. This would require, to begin with, substantial expansion of its conventional capacities as well as acquiring strategic nuclear weapons (a venture already being tackled in its development of nuclear arms technology in South Africa). The Western imperialist allies acknowledged West

Germany's growing military/economic power by naming former "defense" minister Wörner NATO general secretary. But NATO strategy calls, in the first instance, for fighting a "limited war" against Warsaw Pact forces on *German soil*. Even the most extreme West German Cold Warriors like Dregger don't look forward to this prospect. And large sections of the German population, who remember only too well the destruction of the last world war, are rightly afraid of nuclear annihilation.

That is why Jenninger speaks of "actively making the world peaceful." German capitalists today want to exploit the Slavs, not exterminate them. And the bourgeoisie's labor lieutenants of the SPD, the "fatherland defenders" of 1914, know their duty as the political organizers of counterrevolution in East Germany. The program of a neutral, reunified (capitalist) Germany is the main basis for attracting significant numbers of workers, petty-bourgeois intellectuals and elements of the bureaucracy in the DDR behind a "democratic" counterrevolution.

Proletarian internationalism is the only answer to the revanchism and nationalism that twice in this century have mobilized the masses for imperialist war, and the resulting devastation of Europe: this is the lesson of history. Gordon Craig recalled in his essay that the same Bundestag which walked out on Jenninger:

"...gave a distinctly chilly reception to Professor Fritz Stern of Columbia University when he was invited to address it last year on the occasion of a commemoration of the East German



Yevgeni Khaldei  
Hammer and sickle flies over the Reichstag as Soviet Red Army liberates Berlin from Nazi terror regime, 30 April 1945.



## Fraser Memorial...

(continued from page 5)

notes are more of that polemical stuff that I think is historically important, but not now.

Finally, I would like to thank those who have prepared this memorial, who worked very hard and very well, and also the materials that have gone into the memorial display. A very good thing.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Ed Swabeck

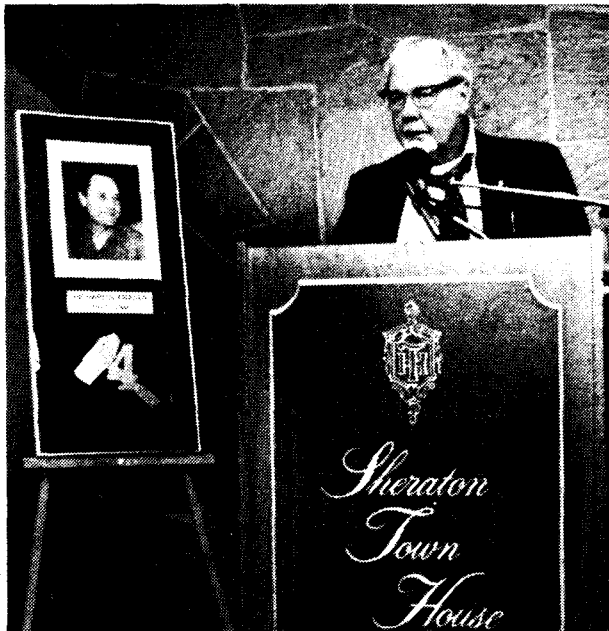
A comrade of Dick's who worked with him in the SWP and its maritime work and, later, on Revolutionary Age

The first time I met Dick Fraser was in 1941, when I got to the coast again to try to ship out. Later on, on the East Coast, we—that is, Dick, I and many other Trotskyists—participated in a great general strike in maritime of 1946.

The Seafarers International Union objected to the buck-passing of the ship owners and the War Shipping Administration. This time the former, that is the ship owners, wanted to give in to postwar contractual improvement demands, but the latter, the War Shipping Administration, played hard cop.

The Manhattan Center meeting hall of the general strike committee of all the unions involved was decorated with huge banners, spread right across the damn hall, to greet the sailors and others from up and down the coast participating in this meeting. The banners said, "An injury to one is an injury to all! United we stand, divided we fall!" And another one, "For collective bargaining and against government interference!"

The strike of AF of L unions was general, all right, pulling the pin with the seamen and their unions, the longies—the longshoremen—tugboat, all maritime



WV Photo

Ed Swabeck recalls his comradeship with Dick Fraser during 1946 maritime general strike.

trades, and railroad men, and the Teamsters too. That coast was bottled up, particularly the island of Manhattan. At that time some of the sailors around said, boy, this is a revolutionary situation! Well, many of us thought, we don't know if we're going to take over the government like the days of the October Revolution and the Bolshevik October. But what we wanted to do, and what we did, and what was achieved, was to give the War Shipping Administration, the government's outfit, a swift kick in the ass.

The ILA [International Longshoremen's Association], Marine Firemen and SUP held the fort in the Pacific ports. The CIO unions, like the NMU, followed later, radical socialists of the rank and file, urging towards the Debs and Wobblyite ideal of revo-

lution. And make no mistake, that was led by Trotskyists, such as Dick Fraser and like-minded rank-and-file Bolsheviks. And to carry—I think I got one in my pocket somewhere, that I dug up since I learned about this meeting—to carry that strike clearance card, the general strike clearance of 1946. I carried two of them, one from the CIO because we went, a lot of comrades went, after the AF of L was out on strike, went out to support in solidarity with the CIO unions. So Dick and I were a part of that scene, and I wanted to mention this as one of the big achievements of the Trotskyists' maritime fraction, comrades like Dick.

Later on, on the West Coast, Dick and Arne Swabeck, my father, collaborated in the struggle for a revolutionary workers party of the working class. We had our disagreements. I remember I had one with Dick about shipping, it was about how best to operate a ship, run an old liberty ship without popping the boilers and throwing the safety valves all over the place, while running the U-boat wolf packs down in the torpedo junction. Well, there were others. They were all settled through democratic centralism, as good comrades should. And I say this, that his passing therefore is to be deeply regretted.

I want to say one other thing. When Dick came around to the house a couple of times, I was playing music. And he says, "Damn it, have you got that stuff by that guy that plays 'The Lemon Tree'?" I say, "Oh, you mean Herb Alpert?" He says, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, with that 'Tijuana Taxi' and so forth." And I said "Sure, I'll play it." And he liked that. I don't know if he liked the music that we were playing before, that Brahms thing or I don't know what, sort of sleepy funeral kind of stuff. I know damn well he liked a rousing singing of the *Internationale*! The red, Bolshevik *Internationale*!

\* \* \* \* \*

The memorial meeting concluded with the singing of the *Internationale*. ■

## Armenia...

(continued from page 9)

purchase a state apartment? Naturally, those who have money. . . ." And what of those, like young workers' families, who don't?

Gorbachev wants to use the market to discipline both managers and workers. Inefficient operations will be punished, efficient operations will be rewarded. The whip of bankruptcy will supposedly force the reorganization of production. Today, financial speculation and profiteering are not merely condoned but encouraged. But if the concrete slabs had too much sand and too little cement before, how much cement will they have as managers scramble to make a profit? If on-site construction is presently slipshod, what will it be like when the work teams are cut in half to maximize

productivity? If inspection is inadequate now, imagine what it will be like when every profiteering capitalist "co-operative" is going around greasing the palms of inspectors and foremen.

The power of a planned economy is perhaps nowhere as vividly demonstrated as in the response to a disaster. When something goes wrong, a decision can be taken and the full resources of the nationalized economy mobilized to achieve it. A year after the Chernobyl disaster, 90,000 of the people who had been evacuated had already been provided with new homes. When an earthquake virtually demolished Tashkent (with a population of 1.1 million) in 1966, a massive reconstruction program had the entire city rehoused in three years.

And mass housing does not have to mean poor quality and zero esthetics. Typically, a Kiev apartment complex

for 40,000 people was designed to have 80 percent green space. With buildings grouped around nursery, kindergarten and schools, children do not have to cross busy thoroughfares. Soviet citizens are surveyed before major housing construction projects are undertaken. But they are not asked how big apartments should be, how they should be laid out or finished. The knowledge and technical know-how of construction workers, for example concerning safety features, is not tapped but spurned. In a society based on large-scale industrial production, decisions made by a bureaucratic hierarchy will necessarily be partial at best.

This can be seen by looking at any major project. Take the Aral basin irrigation project in Soviet Central Asia, a showcase both of the effectiveness of the planned economy and the capricious mismanagement of bureaucratic commandism. In the 1950s, the Soviet government decided to divert the waters of the two rivers feeding into the Aral Sea to facilitate production of water-intensive crops like cotton and rice. Agricultural production in the region has quadrupled since then. Yet failure to take account of the ecological effects has led to the creation of a salty desert over nearly half of what was once a fertile fishing area.

What to do? The bureaucracy proposed a colossal project to divert rivers now flowing into the Arctic. Ecological groups mobilized against this. How can this question be resolved? Certainly not through a market mechanism. One look at the environmental destruction being wrought by American capitalism answers that. To reach an intelligent resolution requires drawing technical specialists, residents of the region, the fishermen, the agricultural workers, into a wide-ranging debate resulting in a democratic decision. And if the decision doesn't work, constant monitoring by the producers themselves will spot imminent dangers and contribute to modifications before a disaster occurs. That is the essence of soviet democracy—and it will take a proletarian political revolution, ousting the bureaucracy, to get it.

The same applies on a broader scale.

It is certainly true that hostile imperialist encirclement and an American arms drive aimed at achieving nuclear first-strike capability put enormous pressures on Soviet expenditures for domestic/consumer needs, including adequate materials like reinforcing steel for housing. But all the questions raised by construction of new housing—safety, design, where, when and how much—must be balanced against other domestic expenditures, development of weapons, aid to the impoverished Indochinese people, and other internationalist responsibilities like the intervention in Afghanistan which has now been betrayed. And they can only be resolved effectively when those who labor also decide.

Indeed, a centrally planned economy can only function effectively if it involves the *conscious* political control of the working masses. In an address to the First All-Russian Congress of Scientific Workers in 1923, Bolshevik leader and Minister of War Leon Trotsky wrote:

"The harsh experience of these six years, with all its pluses and minuses, has shown one thing—at least to those who have not deliberately closed their eyes—that the stronger the workers' state becomes, the keener and more impatiently the toiling masses perceive our technical, scientific, and cultural backwardness and the more persistently they seek to overcome this backwardness, thereby creating a fundamental precondition for giving our scientific thought maximum scope in the more or less near future. . . . "Socialist construction is in its very essence conscious, planned construction, combining—on a hitherto unprecedented scale—technology, science, and carefully thought-out social forms and methods of utilizing them."

The Soviet peoples have come a long way since the days of immiseration under the tsar's knout. But to go forward to a society in which everyone is well housed, in which food lines disappear, in which a socialist future is genuinely assured, requires an international division of labor based on worldwide socialist planning. Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky! For proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucratic usurpers! For international socialist revolution! ■

uprising of June 17, 1953, and told his audience that the revolt had not been a demonstration in favor of reunification, as West German politicians were fond of saying, but rather a courageous demand for freedom and reform, and reminded them that "undivided Germany brought unspeakable misfortune to other peoples and to itself," a fact that no German could afford to forget."

The June 17th rising was *not* pro-capitalist, as the German revanchists who have usurped it for their own reactionary purposes claim (and neither was it for Western-style "democracy" as Stern implies). On the contrary, East German workers initiated the struggle for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and erect genuine soviet democracy. June 17th showed the way to the *only* progressive solution to the German national question—through proletarian-internationalist revolutionary struggle. With the slogan, "Now clear out your crap in Bonn, we're cleaning house in Pankow," they called on their class brothers in the West to rip state power from the capitalists.

It was the Soviet Red Army which smashed Hitler fascism in 1945. For the workers of the world it was a victory when the red flag with the hammer and

sickle was placed atop the Reichstag. And to get rid of the legacy of Nazism forever, it is necessary to sweep away the capitalist order which continues to breed nationalist and racist reaction. The leadership of a Trotskyist world party of socialist revolution is ever more urgently needed, a party which fights for socialist revolution in the capitalist West and proletarian political revolution in the East, which would, as with the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky, weld together the Russian and German revolutions.

As we wrote in *Spartakist* (No. 57) in May 1988, addressing militants of the Stalinist DKP and SEW:

"Because they can only conceive of a capitalist reunification of Germany, they hand the national question over to the fascists. But the struggle for proletarian power poses the question of *revolutionary leadership*. And restoring the unity of the proletariat poses in this country the question of the *revolutionary reunification of Germany* as part of a Socialist United States of Europe. That is the program of the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands, which stands for unconditional defense of the USSR and DDR against imperialist attacks and internal counterrevolution."

Proletarian revolution will avenge the victims of Nazi terror! ■



# Afghanistan...

(continued from page 1)

have generally been pro-Soviet. When they looked across their northern border into Soviet Central Asia, they saw children who could read, women liberated from the veil, and a level of social and economic well-being centuries in advance of Afghanistan. As a result of Soviet central planning, living standards in Tashkent are as high as in Moscow.

In 1965 Afghan leftist circles formed the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. The PDPA was a unique phenomenon in Afghanistan: a secular party not based on any tribal or ethnic group. It claimed adherence to Marxism-Leninism, and its structure was modeled after Stalin's bureaucratized Communist Party. However, its program was limited to moderate reforms to be carried out by a government of "workers, farmers, enlightened and progressive intellectuals, craftsmen, the petit bourgeoisie and national capitalists" (cited in Raja Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan* [1988]).

Labeled "Communist" by their opponents, the PDPA cadre were in fact modernizing petty-bourgeois nationalists more akin to Kemal Atatürk's Young Turks than to Lenin's Bolsheviks. The PDPA established three bases of support: the country's small urban intelligentsia (e.g., schoolteachers), students, and military officers (many of whom were trained in the Soviet Union). Almost immediately the party split into two factions, the Khalq (Masses) and Parcham (Banner). When Daud Khan ousted the king in 1973, Parcham leaders served as his advisers, while Khalq suggested "a government composed of a 'United Front' including the PDPA."

In April 1978 the Daud regime, prodded by the Western powers and the shah of Iran, moved to suppress the PDPA, arresting its principal leaders on charges



Kabul parade greets Soviet troops arriving to back up left-nationalist PDPA regime, 1980.

of treason. But the party's supporters in the military effectively fought back and toppled Daud. The so-called "Saur Revolution" was in fact a left-wing military coup with considerable support among the urbanized population.

The PDPA found itself ruling a population of 15 million people, overwhelmingly rural and scattered in isolated river valleys. On the local level tribal chiefs shared power and land with some 300,000 Islamic mullahs, who made up a privileged landowning caste. Taking the country as a whole, there was about one industrial worker for every eight mullahs! The peasants were totally in thrall to the khans, who controlled the sources of credit, seed, fertilizer and, in this arid land, even water. Forget pro-

## PDC: For Internationalist Military Support to Afghan Government!

*We reprint below a letter from the Partisan Defense Committee to the government of Afghanistan, offering concrete support in the struggle against the murderous reactionary mujahedin. The letter proposes organization of an international brigade to assist in defending the Afghan peoples against the CIA's feudalistic terrorists. When we spoke with representatives of the Afghan government about the letter, they thanked us for this initiative while indicating that they believe such a measure is not necessary to defend the country at this time.*

7 February 1989

To: Ambassador of the Republic of Afghanistan

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

With the withdrawal of the Soviet Army now completed, we join with you in fearing that elementary social progress is in grave danger in Afghan-

istan. The right of women to read, freedom from the veil, freedom from the tyranny of the mullahs and the landlords, the introduction of medical care and the right of all to an education—we are compelled to offer our aid before all this is drowned in blood. The Partisan Defense Committee hereby makes the urgent offer to organize an international brigade to fight to the death in defense of these rights in Afghanistan. Volunteers would of course operate under your control and direction.

The Partisan Defense Committee is a class-struggle defense organization supported by militant Marxists worldwide, many associated with the international Spartacist tendency.

In making this offer, we pledge to handle all aspects of agitation, propaganda and recruitment necessary to amass forces and publicize the effort. These forces would be recruited internationally from among disaffected progressive youth, leftist militants, lib-

eration fighters, and decent people who wish to prevent the destruction of any vestige of human progress achieved through struggle. We further pledge to provide transport to an appropriate transit point. International fighters would be expected to acquire equipment when in place.

From the Afghan government we would need air fare from a transit point to Kabul and, in the field, food and military direction.

Capitalist governments which hypocritically condemned the presence of the Red Army in Afghanistan are fleeing Kabul, aghast at the prospect of a full-scale civil war reaching that city. They abandon their embassies now in the hopes of returning after the victory of the feudalist mujahedin. This must not happen!

We hope most fervently that you will accept this offer of assistance proffered with a keen sense of internationalist duty. Please respond as soon as possible.

letarian revolution—Afghanistan could not even sustain the kind of widespread peasant revolt experienced in medieval France, Russia and China.

Thus when the PDPA government attempted to institute a program of minimal democratic measures—land reform, elimination of the bride price for women, universal education for both sexes—it instantly outpaced the social forces to sustain them. The khans and mullahs, driven into a frenzy by such measures as teaching young girls to read, launched a reactionary *jihād* and began slaughtering teachers and PDPA activists.

The growing revolt received im-

in December 1979 which installed Babrak Karmal, leader of the Parcham faction. Only five of the party leaders in April 1978 escaped being killed, imprisoned or exiled by their "comrades" over the next few years. An ever smaller group of modernizing intellectuals was being pitted against a mass reactionary revolt.

It was only the Soviet military intervention of December 1979 which opened the road to the liberation of the Afghan toiling masses. Although conducted halfheartedly, sending troops into Afghanistan was the one unambiguously decent and progressive act of the corrupt and conservative Brezhnev regime, going against the grain of the reactionary Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." We wrote at the time:

"There can be no question that for revolutionaries our side in this conflict is with the Red Army. In fact, although uncalled for militarily, a natural response on the part of the world's young leftists would be an enthusiastic desire to join an international brigade to fight the reactionary CIA-connected rebels."  
—"Hail Red Army!" *Spartacist* No. 27-28, Winter 1979-80

We further raised the demand to extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples.

The Western press hoped and speculated that the Soviet troops, especially those from the traditionally Islamic regions of Central Asia, would become infected with the "liberating" message of the *mujahedin*. But Soviet soldiers sent into battle were told they were fulfilling their duty toward their Afghan brothers, and their experiences in the country convinced them of it. Most were appalled at the backwardness, poverty and hideous oppression they witnessed in a country so close to home. One Soviet Tadzhik soldier told a Western reporter in the early days of the war that "most of them were glad to go to help—it's a very backward country and we are neighbors, after all" (*New York Times*, 11 April 1980).

While Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan were generally proud to do their internationalist duty, the Kremlin bureaucracy did not send them there out of internationalist commitment. As we wrote a few months later:

"Of course, the conservative bureaucrats in the Kremlin did not send 100,000 troops into Afghanistan to effect a social revolution, but simply to make secure an unstable, strategically placed client state.... It is possible the Kremlin could do a deal with the imperialists to withdraw, for example, in return for NATO's reversing its decision to deploy hundreds of new nuclear missiles in West Europe. That would

be a real counterrevolutionary crime against the Afghan peoples."

—"Afghanistan and the Left: The Russian Question Point Blank," *Spartacist* No. 29, Summer 1980

### Imperialist Hue and Cry Over Afghan "Self-Determination"

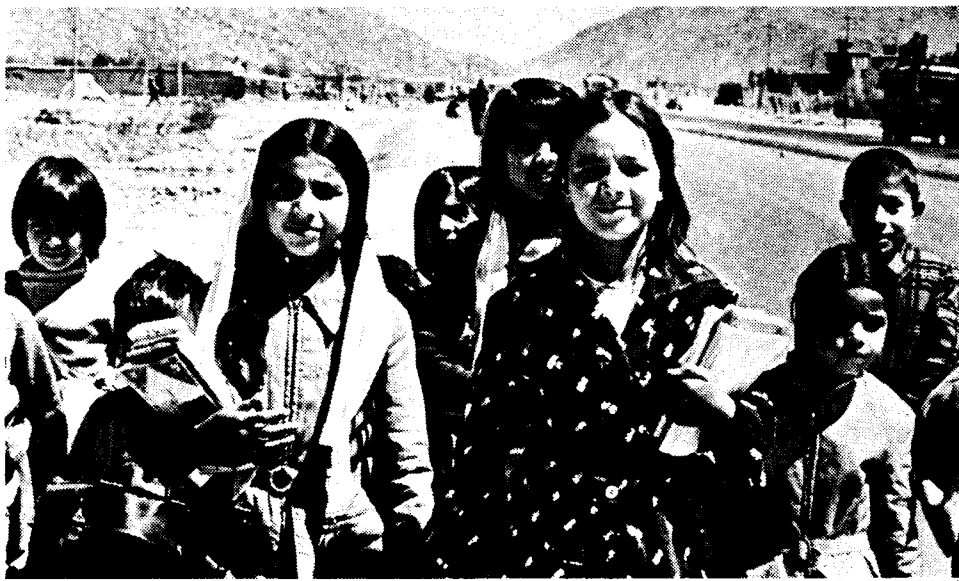
For almost a decade the demand for Soviet troops out of Afghanistan has united the far right, liberals, social democrats and most self-styled radicals. The Democratic Carter administration used the Soviet intervention to officially declare Cold War II. Under Reagan, Congressional Democrats seized upon the issue of Afghanistan to demonstrate their anti-Communist credentials. Chary of Reagan's bellicose posture in Central America, where the U.S. risked being drawn into another losing military adventure like Vietnam, liberal Democrats were more than willing to pour money into Afghanistan, where U.S. proxies were *killing Russians without risking a single American life*. In 1985 the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives tripled Reagan's request for aid to the Afghan contras.

Just as support for the Afghan "freedom fighters" has united liberal Democrats with Reaganites, so it has united most of the American and West European left—social democrats, Eurocommunists, ex-New Left Maoists, "Third Campists"—with their imperialist rulers. Afghanistan and Polish Solidarność, the only "union" Ronald Reagan loved, have been two central issues defining which side you're on in Cold War II. Thus the hard pro-Moscow factions in the Eurocommunist parties were variously dubbed *afganos* (Spain), *kabulisti* (Italy) and "tankies" (Britain).

An Iranian woman leftist, Val Moghadam, drawing on the bitter experience of Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution," expresses consternation that:

"Left-wing support for the Mujahedeen has been especially strong in Europe, where activists from London to Stockholm have defended the putative national liberation struggle. One of the surprising features of this support has been the total neglect of the meaning of national liberation under an Islamic rubric for Afghan women. Since the Saur revolution (April 1978), and to some degree even prior to it, women have made incremental but important gains in education, employment and political participation. Indeed, it was precisely the reform programs launched by the PDPA government that provoked reaction....

"By all accounts and indications a Mujahedeen-ruled Afghanistan would be more intolerant and repressive than the Islamic Republic of Iran and would



Sobolev/TASS



Planeta Publishers

**Liberation from the veil and literacy for women are at stake in Afghan war. Left: young girls on their way to school. Right: at Kabul University over half the students are women.**

work fervently to undo the measures taken toward women's equality."

—*Against the Current*,  
November/December 1988

Moghadam asks how it is possible for leftists, including self-styled radical feminists, to support such a reactionary and barbaric movement. Her answer: "It can only be a misguided Third Worldism and fascination with any and all guerrilla warfare that prevents leftists from discerning reactionary movements." This explanation is wide of the mark. Practically no Western leftists support the guerrillas of the Nicaraguan contras or Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in Angola. Moreover, some leftists (e.g., Tariq Ali) who joined the imperialist chorus for Soviet troops out initially supported the PDPA against the *mujahedin* revolt before the Soviet intervention.

Western leftist support for Washington's Afghan cutthroats (and also for Polish Solidarność) expresses anti-Soviet prejudices and the elevation of national independence as the highest political principle. Since 1917 when the Russian Revolution toppled capitalism in one-sixth of the globe, the imperialists' central aim has been to reverse the gains of October and restore capitalist exploitation in this bastion of workers power. That is why the entire apparatus of political indoctrination in the United States and West Europe is geared to producing hatred and fear of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state.

The standard line of Western imperialism and its left camp followers is that "Russia violated Afghan national self-determination." This charge doesn't even hold up on its own terms. Afghanistan is not a nation but a feudal-derived state composed of a mosaic of nationalities, ethnic and tribal groupings. Most of the rural population has never lived under the effective control of any central state power, but identifies exclusively with particular ethnic, tribal or linguistic groupings. In Afghanistan the term "Afghan" refers *only* to the Pushtuns, not to the Hazaras, Tadjiks and other peoples.

Should the *mujahedin* topple the Kabul nationalist government, the two-sided civil war could well become a war of all against all. Already, Shi'ite groups are refusing to accept Sunni domination, and the rival *mujahedin* groups are threatening to kill one another. We can only hope they do so quickly and massively. Yet even if the country were a homogeneous nation, communists would support the Soviet Union's armed intervention. All talk of Afghan "national sovereignty" is but a cover to defend the class and caste privileges of the khans, mullahs, landlords and moneylenders. For Marxists, the furthering of *social revolution*, including the defense of the USSR against capitalist imperialism, stands higher than the bourgeois-democratic right of national self-determination.

#### Russia's Vietnam?

Ever since the 1979 Soviet intervention, the Western media has labeled

Afghanistan "Russia's Vietnam," an insidious lie now taken up for its own reasons by the Gorbachev regime. In Vietnam the U.S. fought a genocidal war to stop a social revolution, and was defeated *on the battlefield*. The Soviet army fought to stop *counterrevolution* which would turn back the clock by centuries, but never fought to win. From the outset the Kremlin tops kept open the option of withdrawal as a bargaining chip in dealing with Western imperialism. The U.S. sent 500,000 troops halfway around the world to Vietnam. The Soviet leaders sent just 100,000 troops across the border into Afghanistan.

Nonetheless, by 1984 the Soviet and PDPA forces had practically won the war. The CIA's "holy warriors" were shattered and demoralized. And the government's modest social reforms, although scaled back from even the moderate program first offered by the PDPA, were winning support in the countryside. One rebel leader stated: "The war has been deadlocked up until now, but we are beginning to lose the population. . . . If this continues, we may eventually lose the war" (*Chicago Tribune*, 16 November 1984).

Seeking to turn the tide, in early 1986 the U.S. began supplying the *mujahedin* with state-of-the-art Stinger missiles. Soon these shoulder-fired rockets were bringing down scores of Soviet and Afghan aircraft, including civilian airplanes. Soviet military aircraft were so crucial to the Afghan war only because the Kremlin was willing to commit but a *small fraction* of its five-million-strong armed forces. Even so, the Russians could have easily deployed available

technology to defeat the "Stinger war," but they did not. And no serious effort was made to interdict the flow of U.S.-supplied weapons from Pakistan.

When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he faced economic stagnation aggravated by the intensified military pressure from Reagan's America. His domestic program of market-oriented reforms (*perestroika*) was linked to a foreign policy of global appeasement. Gorbachev's most dramatic foreign policy initiative was to cut and run from Afghanistan.

To help set this up, the Kremlin strong-armed the PDPA regime into calling for "national reconciliation," i.e., a coalition government with sections of the *mujahedin*. In 1986 Afghan leader Karmal was dumped, apparently because he resisted the new turn. He was replaced by Najibullah, who at the beginning of 1987 declared a unilateral cease-fire while further scaling back progressive social reforms so as not to affront Islamic tradition. Calling for a coalition of the PDPA and *mujahedin* is somewhat like calling in the 1930s for a coalition of Nazis and Jewish leftists. The *mujahedin* want not only to kill every leftist in Afghanistan but to exterminate the *entire* educated urban population, whom they regard as infidels.

The Gorbachev regime appears willing to accept such a bloodbath if it is necessary to appease the Western powers. A historical parallel is Stalin's pulling the Red Army out of northern Iran in 1946, abandoning the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan under the Cold War pressure of U.S. imperialism. There followed a massacre of pro-Soviet Iranian leftists at the hands of the shah.

Downing/Newsweek



**Bush and Reagan meet with Gorbachev last December. Kremlin leader pulls Soviet troops out of Afghanistan to appease U.S. imperialism.**

Nickelsberg/Time



To prepare the Soviet people for the abandonment of Afghanistan, Kremlin officials and the Soviet media are parroting the imperialist lie that the Afghan intervention was wrong, that the lives of the 15,000 Soviet soldiers killed there were simply wasted, that Afghanistan is Russia's Vietnam. In a flippant "we wash our hands of the whole business" tone, the Communist Youth paper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported what will happen when the Soviet commander, Lt. Gen. Boris Gromov, leaves Afghanistan:

"He will cross without looking back. Then he will stop and make a speech, but only to himself. It will last one minute and seven seconds. It will not be written down or listened to."

Soviet veterans of the Afghan war are being treated like pariahs instead of heroes. In their fight for official recognition, these veterans (the *afghantsy*) deeply resent the comparison of their internationalist combat duty to Washington's drive to transform Southeast Asia into a moonscape. One veteran activist told the West German magazine *Der Spiegel* (7 March 1988): "Our sacrifices were not for nothing. We have after all brought there the achievements of the civilized world." Honor Soviet veterans of the war in Afghanistan!

#### Defeat Imperialism Through Communist Internationalism!

During the 19th century Afghanistan was a chessboard on which the "Great Game" between tsarist Russia and Great Britain was played out. But in 1917 the Bolshevik Revolution changed the rules of this "game." Imperialist machinations in the region now had as their ultimate goal the destruction of the Soviet workers state and the opening up of its vast territory for capitalist plunder.

After World War II Pakistan became the U.S.' main client in the region, but Washington never lost sight of Afghanistan's potential military value in a counterrevolutionary assault on the USSR. In the early 1960s the U.S. offered to build an airport at Kandahar for the Afghan king Zahir Shah. The Pentagon secretly planned to use it as a "recovery base" where bombers could land after attacking Soviet targets in Siberia or Central Asia" (Henry Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* [1983]).

U.S. imperialism wants to turn Afghanistan into not only a military forward point but also a conduit for anti-Communist agitation among the Turkic peoples of Soviet Central Asia. A few years ago the most rabid of the *mujahedin* leaders, Gulbaddin Hekmatyar, declared: "If the Mujahideen continue to fight persistently, the day is not far when the occupied areas of Soviet Central Asia will also be liberated." It is ludicrous to think that the Central Asian population—freed from religious obscurantism and grinding oppression, and enjoying modern medical care, universal education and an incomparably higher standard of living—would want to link up with

*continued on page 14*



# Irving Brown

## "Mr. AFL-CIA" Drops Dead

On February 11 one of the most sinister figures on the American labor scene died. For over four decades Irving Brown personified the link between the rabidly anti-Communist American labor bureaucracy and the counterrevolutionary terrorists of the CIA. Through "labor" fronts like the American Institute for Free Labor Development, the CIA helped prepare bloody right-wing coups throughout Latin America—Guatemala 1954, Brazil 1964, Chile 1973. Irving Brown was "Mr. AFL-CIA." He was identified by Philip Agee, a former CIA operative in Latin America, as the "principal CIA agent for control of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions" (*Inside the Company* [1975]).

Brown began his career in the 1930s as the No. 1 sidekick of Jay Lovestone, once Stalin's hatchet man in the American Communist Party. Lovestone/Brown became anti-Communist witch-hunters in the unions long before the Cold War and McCarthyism. When Lovestone was made head of the AFL's "Free Trade Union Committee" in 1944, Irving Brown became his main European operative. His mission: to sabotage the Communist-led labor movement. The accompanying red purge of American unions installed the anti-Communist, pro-capitalist bu-

reaucracy which decades later presided over the "givebacks" which gutted much of labor's hard-won gains.

Already in the McCarthy years Brown's activities were revealed in an exposé by Hal Draper entitled, "Cloak-and-Dollar Man: Mr. Irving Brown of the AFL in Europe," published in *Labor Action* of 20 October 1952. Draper quoted articles in the French newspaper *Le Monde* detailing Brown's operations in France, where with the aid of U.S. dollars, fascist collaborators and Corsican gangsters he engineered a split in the Communist-led CGT union federation:

"Being a realist, Mr. Irving Brown does not long hesitate, it is well known, about the choice of methods to struggle against communism. . . . In his speech on December 13, 1951 at the American Club in Brussels, he even gave France precise advice: abolish the CGT's right to trade-union representation; return to the ranks of free trade-unionism the activists who were purged for having given their support to the [Nazi-allied] Vichy regime."

Draper comments on the methods of this apostle of "free trade-unionism":

"This frankly means 'anti-Communist terror,' and less frankly, terror backed by the benevolence of the government. The prime example in France. . . is that of the so-called Mediterranean Committee which is virtually a Brown creature. He had found his man, one



Bettmann Archive

Irving Brown (right), with Italian union bureaucrat in 1950, plots Cold War against left wing of European workers movement.

Pierre Ferri-Pisani, among the Marseilles dockers—described flatteringly as a 'steely Corsican' by the [*Reader's Digest*—and poured AFL money in to build it up."

Brown's "steely Corsican" put together goon squads in every French port to intimidate the CGT and unleashed a wave of terror that sent several CP leaders to the hospital.

Brown's close ties to the Corsican Mafia linked him to the drug-trafficking "French Connection." In 1973 Jack Anderson reported that Brown:

"...befriended and housed France's notorious Maurice (Broken Head) Castellani and occasionally enters the twilight circle of other shadowy figures who operate the heroin pipeline to America.

"Castellani, 49, is identified in a classified Justice Dept. document as one of 'the triumvirate leadership of the "Trois Canards" (Three Ducks), an underworld organization involved in numerous illicit financial enterprises, not least of which is narcotics."

—*New York Post*,  
5 September 1973

CIA links with criminal syndicates are well known. In the early '60s the Company contracted Mafia hitman John Roselli to assassinate Castro. And more recently there is the CIA's notorious "Contra-cocaine connection."

In 1975 the Company dispatched Irving Brown to Portugal to stop the revolution which ousted the Caetano dictatorship. They tried to bust up the Communist-led union federation while CIA-funded mobs were burning CP offices. And in 1981 Mr. AFL-CIA was officially invited to attend the first national congress of Polish Solidarność, which thus openly signaled its counterrevolutionary appetites. Over the next few years, the "AFL-CIA" funneled millions of U.S. dollars to this company "union" for Wall Street and the Vatican.

With Irving Brown's death the Company has lost a valuable asset. Yet it's unfortunate he didn't live long enough for the workers of the world to bring him to justice. ■

## Afghanistan...

(continued from page 13)

a reactionary Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Nonetheless, Gorbachev's *perestroika* has fueled reactionary nationalist currents in the Caucasus and Baltic republics. And Central Asia is certainly not immune. Moscow's increasing reliance on market forces will tend to favor the more developed regions of European Russia, the Ukraine and Baltic republics. Under these conditions pan-Turkic nationalism in Islamic coloration could make headway in the Central Asian republics.

The Soviet Union is confronting a deepening political and economic crisis. The bureaucratic centralism of the Brezhnev era led to stagnation. Gorba-

chev's *perestroika* will generate unemployment, increasing inequalities and intensifying national animosities. Internationally, his policy of appeasement will only embolden the imperialist drive to roll back Soviet power and influence.

Afghanistan's modernizing intellectuals have viewed Soviet Central Asia, despite the enormous deformations of Stalinism, as representing social progress. Under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, Bolshevik Russia was viewed as beacon of the socialist future by workers and radical intellectuals around the world, including in the imperialist centers of North America and Europe. The Soviet Union can and must be restored to its rightful place as a bastion of international communism through proletarian political revolution against the treacherous Kremlin bureaucracy. ■

## Eastern...

(continued from page 16)

La Guardia Airport the company broke into the union office, carted off the union's files and drove the union office off company property.

Lorenzo is the archetypal corporate raider of the '80s, the model for Mr. Gekko in the movie *Wall Street*. Even the capitalist mouthpiece *Fortune* called him a "loose cannon"; Lorenzo responded by banning the magazine from his planes. Using a "leveraged buyout," Lorenzo paid for Eastern with "junk bonds," increasing the debt of his Texas Air holding company to over \$5 billion. Lorenzo is sucking Eastern dry, selling off its most valuable assets to himself (in the form of Texas Air) for a pittance and raking in \$365 million by the proposed sale of Eastern's moneymaking shuttle operation to New York real estate mogul Donald Trump.

Lorenzo is out for the workers' blood, demanding a whopping wage cut to "solve" the financial crisis he created. In two years, the workforce has been slashed by 12,000. Transferred Eastern workers are reportedly sleeping in airports after they finish their shift, unable to afford an apartment in their new city. Yet the airline owners are raking in millions. To hell with Lorenzo and the junk bond speculators! What airline workers, and all workers, need is some hard class struggle. And the battle against the "Darth Vader" corporate raiders will quickly become a political struggle in which labor must stand together against capital, its parties and its state.

### Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!

Bryan's only consistent demand has been to put himself on the management "team." Last October he had a three-

hour dinner with Lorenzo at a swank Houston restaurant, to discuss yet another "stock-for-wages swap and even perhaps giving Mr. Bryan a seat on the Texas Air board" (*Wall Street Journal*, 8 November 1988). Meanwhile Bryan has forbidden all strikes during the past couple of years of company attacks, even as Lorenzo has fired hundreds of union militants, including whole layers of shop stewards. Instead Bryan has been relying on endless maneuvering in the courts and government labor boards.

In its drive for ever more profits, Lorenzo's Eastern Airlines is spearheading the bosses' attack on the entire union movement. But hard class struggle now can break Lorenzo and open up a fight by labor and all the oppressed to reverse the brutal givebacks and grinding oppression of the Reagan years. The battle to defend the unions at Eastern must be linked to the fight for a revolutionary workers party which can rip American industry out of the hands of parasites like Lorenzo and build a socialist planned economy. *No more PATCOs! Defend the IAM—Shut down the airports!* ■



WV Photo

"Hail Red Army!" Spartacist contingent in 1980 Washington anti-draft demonstration confronts imperialist hysteria over Afghanistan.

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# Fired Machinists Local President:

## "If We Don't Strike, Pack It In"

We print below excerpts of a *Workers Vanguard* interview with two officials of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), John DiPaola, president of IAM Local Lodge 1018 at La Guardia Airport in New York, and LeRoy Washington, chairman of IAM District 100, on January 26. DiPaola was recently fired by Eastern Airlines, part of a wave of firings by corporate raider Frank Lorenzo. And on February 7, 86 stewards and chief stewards in Miami were suspended—almost the entire shop committee!

Airline workers, and all of labor, have paid for the givebacks handed over by the AFL-CIO tops. As we said in "Eastern Unions: Fight or Die!" (*WV* No. 463, 21 October 1987), "it's the labor bureaucrats' alliance with the Democratic Party that has kept the unions from fighting the anti-labor offensive." When PATCO was smashed by Reagan, it was IAM chief "Wimpy" Winpisinger who ordered machinists to cross the air controllers' picket lines. And now Wimpy and Charles Bryan, president of IAM District 100, continue to preach reliance on Congress and the capitalist courts and labor boards.

Today, even many local union officials are getting increasingly fed up, as the union gets decimated at Eastern. The bosses' state is the *enemy* in the class war being waged against the airline unions. *Labor's gotta play hardball to win*—and that means *joint strike action* to shut the airports down and building picket lines that nobody crosses.

**DiPaola:** Right now we're getting our asses kicked in the labor movement. At La Guardia we had 12 stewards in sales and service, which are cargo handlers, cleaners, refuelers, and air freight people. In the past two years, we're down to approximately five. We got stewards who were there for 20 years, held the position of shop steward, and two years ago at an election, they came up and wouldn't even accept the nomination. We're dying slowly.

**Washington:** [At Kennedy airport] they have fired four shop stewards, one in maintenance and three in sales and services. They attempted to fire both of the chief stewards, like they did John. They've got this ongoing policy to get rid of any leadership in the union that they can.

**WV:** It's their policy to get rid of the union—at La Guardia three-quarters of the stewards have been fired. It seems to me the union is going to have to strike soon, if it's to defend its life. I don't see the preparations for it. What's the strategy?

**Washington:** I agree with what you're saying, that for the union's survival itself, the only recourse we've got is to flex our muscle by withholding our services, a strike. What I think needs to be

done in that area is that we must take a stand collectively—not just Eastern, all transportation people in this country, especially in the IAM. Because what's happening at Eastern, if it's successful, will surely spill over to all other groups in transportation. That might very well mean a situation like the PATCO situation. But that's what it's going to require, because nobody is going to come to the rescue on a white horse, in

those guys that they were not going to do anything. Winpisinger, who was one of the three of the 39, took the position that we must shut down the country. With the 39 council, it was 36 to three. That's the way the vote went. [AFL-CIO chief] Kirkland was one of the ones that made a decision not to do a damn thing. And I blame those people strongly.

Going back to the Eastern thing. We should have taken a position when



IAM officials  
LeRoy  
Washington  
(left) and  
John DiPaola.

my opinion, Congress, the government. We're gonna have to do it alone.

**DiPaola:** We should've learned from the PATCO incident. We let it happen. If we don't strike, we might as well pack it in and get the hell out of there. Not only at Eastern Airlines, all organized labor. Until our leadership realizes that, we can't win. We thought we were going to go on strike, be released from the Railway Labor Act, last February. Then July 4 came and we're still here. And then Labor Day, then Thanksgiving, then Christmas is behind us. By delaying these tactics, not preparing our membership for a strike, I think it's the biggest mistake ever been made.

I'm telling you today what we should have done two years ago. Two years ago when we were strong, two years ago there were 13,500 Machinists in Eastern Airlines. Now we're down to a little over 8,000, and the assets are sold. The company's last proposal is nothing but a strike. If Frank Lorenzo is successful in cutting our wages by 40-50 percent—he already has 20 percent of the market counting Continental and Eastern—the other airlines can't compete with him.

If we have to strike, we have to strike; if we have to lose, we lose. People sacrificed in the 1920s and 1930s for what we have today. If we don't want to sacrifice today, our kids, our grandchildren will have no future. They'll all be working at minimum wage, there'll be two classes, rich and poor and that's it.

**WV:** One of the obvious lessons of PATCO is that the unions should have shut it down back then together.

**Washington:** Labor should have shut the country down. What happened was, the government, Reagan, made certain calls to certain key leadership in the 39 council [AFL-CIO Executive] and had a commitment from them before he fired

Lorenzo came on board and started pushing around and terminating our people, we should have struck right then and there. That might put us in a position that we're violating the law, but let me tell you something—John said something earlier—people in the '20s and the '30s fought and they died, some of them died.

**WV:** Obviously things have gotten a lot worse in terms of day-to-day existence on the job, and I'm sure that's affected safety as well. I know pilots at Eastern have been forced to fly more hours per month. What is happening to the mechanics?

**DiPaola:** Forced overtime. They lay our people off, they fire them, they suspend union people. And then they force the people who are there to work—I'm talking mechanics working 24, 30, 36 hours steady. Straight, without punching out and going home. Without sleeping, because you can't sleep on the job. We have an attendance control program that is so ridiculous that if you're [out] four times for any reason, you're fired. We have a mechanic who came into work with a broken finger because he's afraid of losing his job.

I've been working for Eastern Airlines for 22 years. This little kid gives me a letter firing me. When I was working here he wasn't even born yet, and he's telling me my job. When Frank Lorenzo came on he said it flat out, put it in writ-

ing, Eastern Airlines is not a career job. It's a steppingstone. It's gonna be looked upon as a Burger King job.

**Washington:** John's point is critical for what's happening for the flying public. Ninety-eight percent of the people at Kennedy have already received discipline in the last year. They know that if they terminate you today it's gonna take three years to have a hearing.

**WV:** The law is stacked against you.

**Washington:** It is. We don't belong in the courts, fighting in the courts. Any one of the acts in the labor movement you can think about is the result of action taking place first, and then the law coming.

**WV:** Do you guys think the other unions will back you up and honor your picket lines?

**Washington:** First of all, it goes back to the 39 people who made the decision with PATCO. See, that's the problem with labor. The leadership in the unions today only look at their problem, if they have one. Corporate America has got together, sat at a table like this, determined that the unions are the enemy. And when we sit at the table, we decide Lorenzo is the enemy. Not just Lorenzo is the enemy, it's corporate America, and that's what we need to be fighting.

**DiPaola:** What management has done, they've done it at all the major airlines. Some contracts say you can't honor the local picket line—cannot—even though you're in the same union, have brothers in the same industry. I think it's a mistake by the union—they made a concession they never should have made. I think we had blindfolds on, to tell you the truth. If you violate that agreement, they go to court and get an injunction against you. But sometimes, the hell with it, let's face it. If we have to bring them to their knees, it has to be done.

**WV:** The Democrats posture as the "friends of labor," but what Lorenzo's got working for him is a bunch of Democratic Party types, Kennedy's staff, Joe Califano, Robert Strauss. The Democratic Party politicians pass as many laws against labor as the Republicans, it's been a Democratic Congress for years and years. So what I'm driving at is...

**Washington:** We need a labor party.

**WV:** ...a workers party, an independent workers party.

**DiPaola:** I think everybody realizes, but nobody's doing anything about it. So we could sit back and look back on the past 15 years, look back on what happened to organized labor. Look back at PATCO where we screwed up. We're not making any adjustments. We're still following the same old stream, and there's nothing ahead but a disaster. Things are going to get worse before they get better. ■



Union-busters' deadly skies: Eastern has laid off thousands while those still on the job are forced to work 24 to 36 hours at a stretch.

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Crucial Battle for All Labor

# Showdown at Eastern Airlines

Over 8,000 ground support personnel, members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), are gearing up for a strike March 3 against corporate raider and labor-hater Frank Lorenzo's Eastern Airlines. But this is no ordinary contract battle. The destruction of the PATCO air controllers union in 1981 shaped the anti-labor era of boundless greed and union-busting in the Reagan years. Now, the Eastern-IAM confrontation is shaping up as a key test of the labor movement—and, frustrated after months of delaying tactics by the IAM tops, the ranks want to fight.

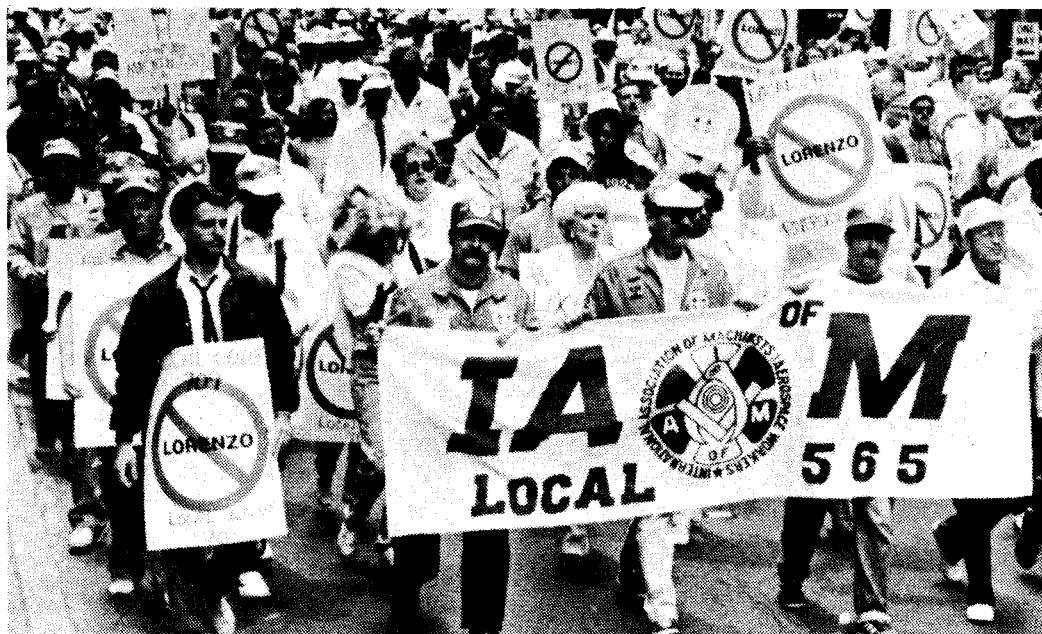
"This is an all-out war. This is for all the marbles," said Mickey O'Connell, president of Machinists Lodge 1894 at Kennedy airport in New York (*Newsday*, 8 February). Lorenzo is stepping up his provocations against the IAM, as he gets ready to impose a 40 percent wage cut on March 3. What Lorenzo is out to do is *destroy any union representation* in his airline empire—Continental is already a non-union operation and now he aims at wiping out the unions at Eastern even if it means killing the airline. When 2,000 IAM workers at Miami airport walked out over forced overtime on February 7, Lorenzo gave a taste of the coming battle by suspending 1,000 workers and 86 stewards—every union official on duty that day! Eastern has put a huge fence around its Miami facility and is stockpiling spare parts, while recruiting scabs in New York and Atlanta through Butler International—whose Butler Aviation subsidiary is organized by the IAM!

The other unions at Eastern—the Transportation Workers Union representing flight attendants and the Air Line Pilots Association—must hit the bricks with the Machinists. It's time for labor to draw its sword. *No more PATCOs!* Contracts covering over 100,000 workers in airlines and the aerospace industry expire this spring and fall—at American, United, Boeing, Lockheed and McDonnell Douglas. The labor movement must act *now* to defend the IAM and all unions, respecting picket lines at Eastern and *shutting down the airports!*

Make no mistake: a serious airline strike will be *class war*. If the key air hubs on the East Coast—New York, Atlanta, Miami—are tied up, there will be a direct *political* confrontation with the capitalist state. They'll come down like a ton of bricks with their cops and courts. Yet while Republicans and Democrats alike will be screaming for union blood, the social-democratic "labor statesmen" and their fake-militant supporters appeal for government intervention! It will take an army of labor wielding its numbers and its social power to win.

The IAM tops, led by president William "Wimpy" Winpisinger and District 100 president Charles Bryan, are reportedly "considering" whether to pull out all 90,000 IAM members in the airline industry and call secondary boycott strikes by 500,000 Machinists in rail and aerospace. Winpisinger and the AFL-CIO Executive Council have called a mass demonstration against Eastern in

## Union-Buster Lorenzo Demands 40 Percent Wage Cut



WV Photo



Fusco/Magnum

At Machinists convention in Atlanta last April, thousands march against corporate cannibal Lorenzo.

Miami on February 21. But behind the bluster is Wimpy's real strategy: to get George Bush to step in and have the Democratic Congress "save" Eastern by imposing a contract and forcing the IAM back to work for Lorenzo!

These are the gravediggers of PATCO, who condemned the "illegal" strike of the air controllers and ordered union members to cross their picket lines, while showboating with a useless consumer boycott. Now they are desperately trying to keep angry IAM members chained to the courts and labor boards. But the government's laws and labor boards are designed to *break* strikes and enforce union-busting by the likes of Lorenzo and Carl Icahn at TWA. Just ask pilots at Continental or flight attendants at TWA, whose strikes were broken while they were told to place their hopes in the "neutrality" of the capitalist state.

When the showdown comes, the future of every airline worker will be on the line—they should determine how the strike is run. There must be *elected strike committees*, responsible to the membership, which can be key in overcoming jurisdictional divisions and organizing *joint strike action* throughout the industry. Flood the airports with pickets—Teamsters, transit and rail unionists, unemployed and homeless—we all have a stake in the IAM's victory!

### Capitalist Greed and Deadly Skies

The showdown at Eastern Airlines was triggered on February 2 when the National Mediation Board—which had been preventing both Lorenzo from imposing a takeaway contract and the union from striking in an attempt to mediate a "settlement" under the 1926

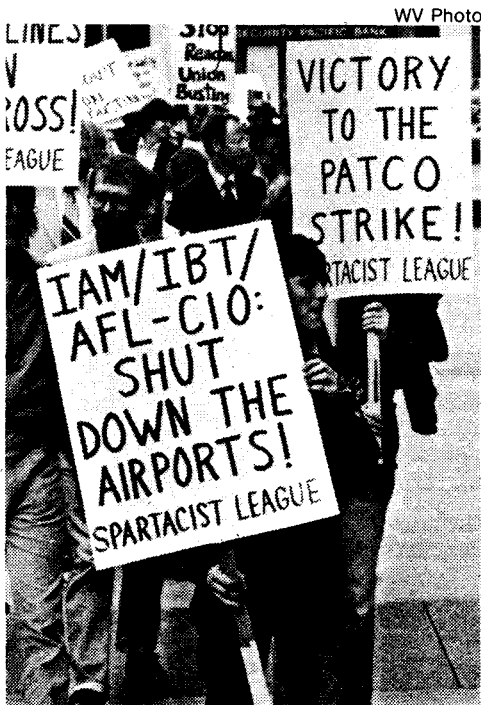
Railway Labor Act (RLA)—declared an impasse, meaning both sides would be free to act at the end of 30 days.

When the airlines were deregulated in 1978, profits were no longer guaranteed by government regulation—and the airlines declared war on the unions. As a result of "free competition" the five biggest airlines now control 70 percent of passenger traffic. Fares have skyrocketed. Safety has gone to hell. Planes are literally falling apart in the air, as the debt-ridden companies cannot afford to replace their aging aircraft. (The average Eastern plane today is over 15 years old.) A year ago, four courageous Eastern flight attendants were suspended when they defended passengers' lives by refusing to allow an ice-laden plane to take off in Denver.

The response of the IAM tops to Lorenzo's assault was to offer themselves as more efficient capitalist managers. A *Frontline* television documentary "The Battle for Eastern Airlines" (31 January) captures this corporatist policy. When Eastern faced a financial crisis in 1983, District 100 chief Bryan proposed wage cuts in exchange for a "progressive plan for sharing co-determination." In December 1983 he got his wish: then-company chairman Frank Borman, the former astronaut, took the IAM's concessions of an 18-22 percent wage cut (worth \$292 million), speedup and work rule changes in exchange for giving the union 25 percent of Eastern stock and four seats on the board of directors. Bryan still describes it as "Camelot." But while Bryan got his seat, IAM members got the shaft.

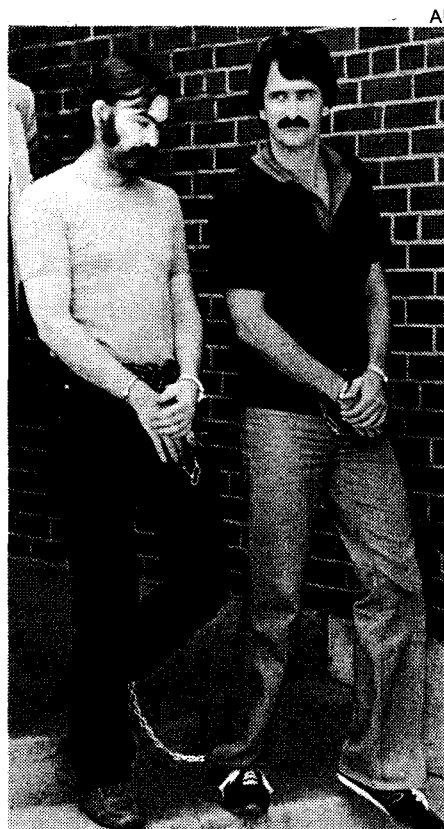
When Eastern went back to the well in 1985 and demanded another 20 percent wage cut, Bryan offered 15 percent, if Borman was fired. Instead the board of directors sold the airline to Frank Lorenzo, the empire-building head of Texas Air Corporation. Bryan got the boot and was banned from setting foot on company property. At New York's

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WV Photo

When Reagan smashed PATCO in 1981 and put the union leaders in chains, Spartacists called on labor to "Shut Down the Airports!"



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