

## Bush, Clinton, Perot—Capitalist Shell Game

# Elections '92: The Politics of Misery

At a whistle stop in western Michigan, the imperial president of the United States sighted a man in the crowd dressed in a chicken suit carrying a sign saying, "George Bush was in the loop." Bush shouted at him: "Let this chicken here tell what's wrong with America. I'll tell you what's great about it." You don't need a chicken to tell you what's wrong with America. The rich have become filthy rich, the working class has become poorer, and the poor have become homeless.

All along the campaign trail, reporters encounter pain, desperation and a grim view of the future. "I don't see a future," said a young worker at a Springfield, Ohio truck and diesel engine plant. "I work seven days a week, and I still can't save any money. I got two kids, a wife and a house payment. I don't know what's going to happen with my kids." It's not just the Midwest rust belt that's suffering. A professional photographer in L.A. exclaimed, "everybody I know is hurting. I've been laid off from my last two jobs."

The Clinton candidacy is benefiting from the immiseration of American working people, even though he hasn't made the slightest pretense of economic populism. Quite the contrary. The Democratic convention in New York last July turned its back on the party's traditional core constituencies—organized labor and blacks—in order to appeal to white suburbanite yuppies. (For the first time, the majority of the U.S. population lives in suburbs, and two-thirds of suburban whites live in communities which are less than 1 percent black.) Disdaining the usual  
*continued on page 14*



Thousands line up for jobs in a Chicago hotel last January as decaying American capitalism is mired in recession.

# Imperialism Starves Africa

Thousands of people are dying of hunger every day in Somalia. The strife-torn northeast African country, initially a Soviet client, switched sides to become a client of Washington in the late '70s and then back to Moscow in the late '80s. With the end of the Cold War it is no one's client. Tens of thousands have been killed by marauding bands, hundreds of thousands driven from their lands to become homeless refugees. Drought, famine, civil war and banditry lay waste to the land, where human existence was precarious in the best of times. This is the hidden face of the imperialist "New World Order." And it reflects the agony of an entire continent, where colonialism has been replaced by neocolonialism, and for the masses life continues to spiral downward to pure hell.

A famine of unprecedented proportions is ravaging Africa. The worst drought in a century has hit southern Africa and the eastern part of the continent up to Kenya, causing massive crop failure and destruction of livestock. Hardest hit by the famine is the north-

## Somalia Famine



eastern Horn of Africa where communal warfare has devastated crops, curtailed trade and interrupted shipments of food relief. In Somalia, engulfed by all-sided clan conflict, 1.5 million people—more than a quarter of the population—are in danger of starving to death. In the Sudan,

where the fundamentalist regime is waging a *jihad* (holy war) to impose Islamic rule on the black peoples of the south, the situation is possibly even more critical as the government continues to block relief aid to the region.

The capitalist media treat the famine

as an inevitable consequence of drought and war. But the mass starvation is not due to an "act of god." The countries of sub-Saharan Africa are deprived of the most elementary provisions for times of shortage and crop failure: food and currency reserves, reservoirs and irrigation. Ordered by the IMF (International Monetary Fund) to grow export crops instead of food in order to pay off the usurious debt, cut off by the banks and multinationals from new investment, their populations have been driven down into desperate misery. The underlying cause of African famine is the brutal exploitation of the continent by imperialism, which in its ruthless drive for profit is thrusting the African peoples into poverty which is below the minimum level for human existence.

The food relief sent to Africa by the capitalist leaders has been pitiful compared to the need. By UN estimates, it will take well over half a million tons of food to provide for Somalia alone over the next year. Yet only 30,000 tons of food monthly are being received from donor nations—and other sub-Saharan countries are being largely neglected. Bush flamboyantly announced in mid-August that the U.S. was airlifting

*continued on page 6*



# California, the Cutback State

## No to Prop 165!

Fresh on the heels of his \$11 billion hatchet job on the state budget, seriously crippling education, health and welfare for the working class, California Republican governor Pete Wilson is pushing deadly Proposition 165 on the November 3 ballot. In the guise of welfare and budget "reform," this viciously vindictive proposal blames the poor for their own poverty. Cynical "experts" rant about "helping" the poor end their welfare "dependency"...by phasing out welfare. Right-wing politicians evoke vile racist myths about black women living high on the hog by making babies, and out-of-state "welfare bums" flocking to California to get on the "gravy train."

The governor and his cohorts literally want to starve black women and children, drive thousands into homelessness and deny life-or-death medical care to the sick and elderly. The Spartacist League says: *Proposition 165 is racist murder*, pure and simple, and it must be defeated, if not at the polls in November then on the streets by the mobilization of the labor movement.



Dixon/L.A. Times

The measure would begin by amending the state constitution to declare that "public assistance is not a fundamental right" but rather a "disincentive" to "seeking employment." Instead the emphasis is to be on "self-sufficiency" and "family." In other words: homeless, jobless, hungry, sick or disabled—you're on your own. Among the biggest finan-

cial backers of the measure is Safeway, which has been trying to break the Teamsters union and would like people to "seek employment" at poverty wages.

So at a time when the official unemployment rate in California has been nudging 10 percent, Prop 165 would slash the maximum welfare grant by 10 percent, and another 15 percent if a family continued to receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) for six months—totaling a 25 percent cut. This means, for instance, that a mother with two children would immediately see her pitiful grant go from \$663 a month to \$597, and then in six months it would drop again, to \$507.

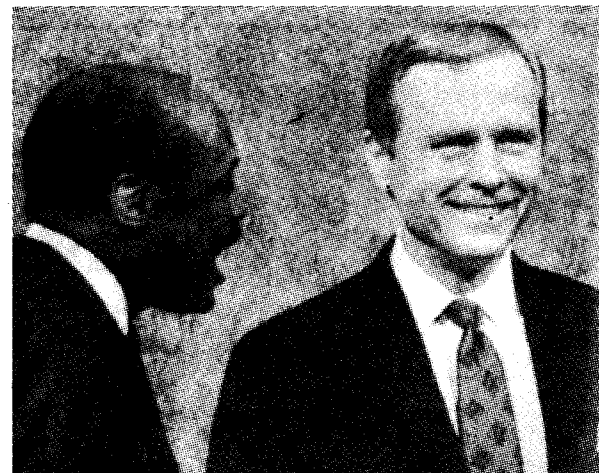
In addition Prop 165 would deny an increase in the AFDC grant for a new baby if it was conceived while the mother was on welfare, and repeal all special cash aid to pregnant women, including the \$70 "pregnancy supplement." And it would mandate limits on county General Assistance/Relief programs, the last-resort aid received largely by single males, and even allow a county to repeal such aid. GA dates back to 1931, during the Great Depression. Already Alameda County, which includes Berkeley and Oakland, has independently decided to reduce its minuscule GA grants from \$340 to \$308 starting December 1.

To top it off, the measure includes a so-called "reform" of the "budget process" giving the governor virtual dictatorial powers over the purse strings. In the event a budget bill is not passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor by the July 1 due date, the governor can declare a "fiscal emergency" and implement cuts at will. The only explicit limitation is that state employees' salaries cannot be cut more than 5 percent. Thus Wilson, backed by his far-right network of Republican Party committees which are now dominated by Christian fundamentalist kooks, could vastly escalate his assault on public services (such as his pet peeve, workers compensation).

### Pete Wilson Couldn't Do It Without Willie Brown & Co.

This vicious attack comes just a few months after the black and Latino poor rose up in Los Angeles, only to be suppressed by a massive military mobilization orchestrated from the White House and the state house. Despite the Democrats' electoral posturing as friends of the poor, black Democratic mayor Tom Bradley called on Bush and Wilson to send in troops.

Likewise the Democrats in Sacramento signed off on the state budget just passed, which slashed over \$2 billion from education alone (in a state that already ranks 48th in per capita spending on schools), plus billions more from health and welfare, and other vital services.



Davis/L.A. Times

Students at Cal State Long Beach protest tuition hikes. State Democratic leader Willie Brown (above, left) and Republican governor Pete Wilson agree on new budget slashing billions from education, health and welfare.

This is now reverberating down to the county and city levels in the form of layoffs, pay freezes, etc. While the Democratic-dominated State Assembly under Speaker Willie Brown put up a mock battle for two months, it was merely over the details of where the weight of the cuts would fall. Both sides had a bipartisan nod of agreement that *big business would not be touched*, that the working class had to sacrifice. According to Democratic kingpin Brown, "the state can no longer afford to pump money" into local governments, so "the battle in the Capitol has largely been fought over how much each would be cut" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 30 August).

For the Democrats, the "magic of democracy" is the "art of compromise"—meaning everything is for sale. But Reaganite Republican Wilson insisted he would not sign the budget unless education suffered the heaviest hit. So the Democrats' "opposition" eventually collapsed and made the deal. In the aftermath the Democrats are trying to claim they won some "concessions" to ease the pain of the cuts. One gets the feeling that if the Republicans proposed a bill to send all Jews to concentration camps, the Democrats would propose to compromise at 50 percent, and then brag that they "saved" half the Jews.

The remarkable thing about the budget fight was the virtually total silence from the state labor movement, whose necks are on the chopping block. Indeed, the only memorable utterance by any labor official was San Francisco plumbers union leader Larry Mazzola's offer to pony up \$200 million in union pension funds...for a new stadium to keep the Giants from moving to Florida. The paralysis of the unions flows from their marriage to the Democratic Party: everything is banked on electing Clinton, and they don't want to do anything evoking images of "special interests." So they laid low. The California Teachers Association relied on Willie Brown, to the tune of nearly half a million dollars in PAC money, and got royally screwed.

The unions such as the Service Employees are behind the "No on 165 Committee," but here again they duck for cover. Their propaganda deliberately avoids talking about the racist attacks on welfare and instead focuses entirely on the governor's "power grab" and the threat to state workers' pay. This is a strategy for defeat. What's needed is an alliance of labor and blacks and the unemployed in a full-scale assault on the bipartisan attacks by the governor and legislature—including a *statewide general strike*. But this clearly requires a break from the capitalist Democratic Party, and a perspective of working-class revolution. It requires above all a revolutionary party, and that is what the Spartacist League is working to build. ■



TROTSKY

### Lenin Against Great Russian Chauvinism

*In Yeltsin's Russia today we are witnessing the obscene spectacle of Stalinists fostering Great Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitism while carrying red flags. This is the legacy of the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country." It is flatly counterposed to the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky which created the multinational Soviet workers state. As the following statement to the Eighth Party Congress in 1919 underscores, Lenin*

*waged uncompromising struggle against any and all manifestations of Great Russian chauvinism toward the national minorities which had suffered oppression under the tsarist yoke.*

The Soviet Republic, which has been established in the country where tsarism formerly oppressed Finland, must declare that it respects the right of nations to independence. We concluded a treaty with the short-lived Red Finnish Government and agreed to certain territorial concessions, to which I heard quite a number of utterly chauvinistic objections, such as: "There are excellent fisheries there, and you have surrendered them." These are the kind of objections which induce me to say, "Scratch some Communists and you will find Great-Russian chauvinists..."

Exceptional caution must be displayed by a nation like the Great Russians, who earned the bitter hatred of all the other nations; we have only just learned how to remedy the situation, and then, not entirely. For instance, at the Commissariat of Education, or connected with it, there are Communists, who say that our schools are uniform schools, and therefore don't dare to teach in any language but Russian! In my opinion, such a Communist is a Great-Russian chauvinist. Many of us harbour such sentiments and they must be combatted.

That is why we must tell the other nations that we are out-and-out internationalists and are striving for the voluntary alliance of the workers and peasants of all nations. This does not preclude wars in the least. War is another question, and arises out of the very nature of imperialism. If we are fighting Wilson, and Wilson uses a small nation as his tool, we say that we shall oppose that tool. We have never said anything different.

—V.I. Lenin, "Speech Closing the Debate on the Party Programme" (March 1919)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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# Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!

## From Nebraska to California: Stop Migra Union-busting!

In a massive display of state power, with helicopters and attack dogs, 200 federal agents, state troopers and cops surrounded a Grand Island, Nebraska meatpacking plant on September 22. The INS immigration cops (*la migra*) seized and immediately deported over 300 night-shift workers at the Monfort Company plant, owned by the agribusiness giant ConAgra. The workers were ripped from their families and bused and flown to Mexico. In some cases children were left alone, as both working parents were seized and deported. As many as 600 workers in all (out of a total of 1,700 employees) have been driven from the plant.

The nine-hour raid, the biggest by the INS in years, was an open union-busting move against an ongoing organizing drive by the United Food and Commercial Workers. A UFCW organizer said that the Mexican-born workers were the most pro-union at the plant. There was panic at the plant again last week as INS agents came back. Workers returning to pick up annual bonus checks amounting to hundreds of dollars were told the company had given them to the Mexican consulate. Midwest labor—especially Teamster truck drivers and railroad workers—must use its power to hot-cargo Monfort meat and stop the INS union-busting raids and organize ConAgra!

In Southern California, there has been an escalation of official repression and open racist terror against immigrant workers. On September 10, the INS opened a "hearing room" inside the L.A. County Men's Central Jail to grab foreign-born inmates, including legal residents with papers, and deport them without benefit of a lawyer or the chance to produce documentation. Immigration attorney Peter Schey called it the "fast-track approach.... People with long residence in the U.S....end up being dragged onto the stagecoach and railroaded out of town." This is the fruit of the 1990 immigration "reform," aimed at accelerating deportations.

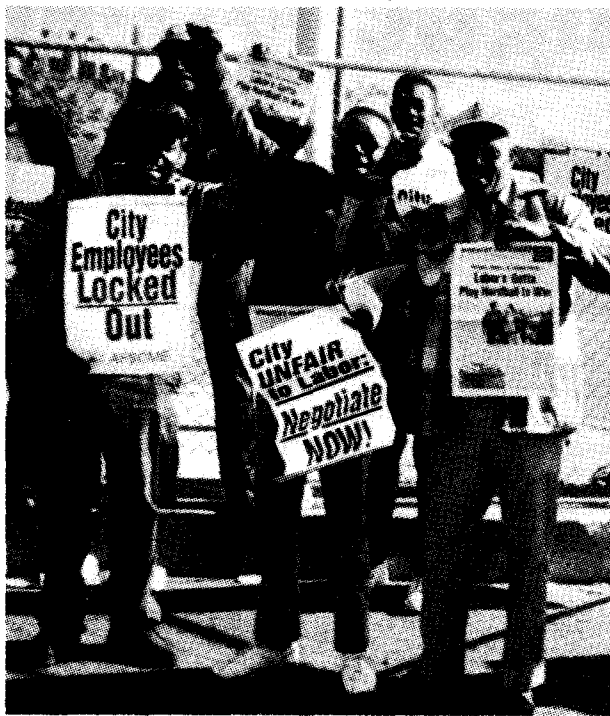
Meanwhile in Alpine, California, east of San Diego, a migrant labor camp was assaulted on October 2 in a racist attack chillingly reminiscent of the "Zoot suit riots" of World War II. Whites wielding baseball bats claimed the Latino workers had "whistled" at white women. Three laborers, two Mexican and one Guatemalan, were seriously injured, and one is still in intensive care. The workers have taken measures to defend themselves if the racist thugs return. Striking drywall and shipyard workers in the area must be organized to see that they don't stand alone.

The Latino drywall strikers, who have played hardball with the contractors with their roving pickets and demonstrations, are also battling the LAPD and *la migra*. On September 23, representatives of the Partisan Defense Committee joined 100 strikers at the L.A. federal building in a protest picket as deportation hearings were taking place inside. The PDC called on key L.A. unions, including longshore and warehouse Local 13 and SEIU janitors Local 399, to turn out their members for the protest. A solidarity statement was fired off by ILWU Local 6 in the Bay Area, but the local union tops stayed home.

As drywall pickets continue to shut down construction sites from Ventura County south to the border, there is talk of a settlement. It is crucial that the labor movement in Southern California come to the strikers' aid by demanding that in addition to full union recognition, *all charges be dropped and not one of these militant fighters be deported!* Victory to the strike! Stop *migra* union-busting!

## Vote Down the Sellout! Union Tops Sabotage Philly City Workers Strike

PHILADELPHIA—After months of being held in check by the union tops, Philly city workers struck on Tuesday, October 6. This was the first joint strike of blue- and white-collar city workers since 1986. The key issue is a plan by Democratic mayor Ed Rendell, supported by the entire city council, to break the unions by enforcing "management rights" and privatization of city services. But despite the workers' eagerness to fight "Fast Eddy" Rendell, the last thing the AFSCME union bureaucrats wanted was a major class battle that would upset Clinton's presidential campaign. They abjectly folded the strike in 16 hours, the



Philly sanitation workers fight Mayor Rendell's "privatization" schemes.

shortest work stoppage by city workers in 50 years.

The combative mood of the city workers was clear in the week before the strike, as garbage in the streets and paperwork in city offices began to pile up. When the strike began, sanitation workers in AFSCME District Council 33 were angry, bitter and determined to defend their jobs and their union. Pickets at the Wheatstheaf Lane garbage transfer station, targeted to be privatized by Waste Management Inc., told *Workers Vanguard* of vicious harassment. One black worker said, "I had to transfer from a station on the west side when a supervisor called me a n----r in front of my wife!"

In Center City, militant picket lines were predominantly composed of black women. They stood on the steps blocking the entrance to the D.A.'s offices on Arch St. Just after 4 p.m., assistant D.A.s who were lined up along the curb, itching to put working people in jail, couldn't stand it any longer and charged the picketers on the steps. The feisty pickets held the line and drove the would-be strikebreakers back down to the pavement. As they lost ground, the yuppie D.A.s dragged two women down on the ground and began to stomp on them. The rest of the pickets threw the punks off and rescued their sisters.

But 16 hours after the picket lines went up, the AFSCME bureaucrats sent 15,000 city workers back to work under a tentative settlement which includes a wage freeze until April 1995, massive cuts in city payments for medical benefits, privatization of city services and layoffs if the city declares a "budget deficit." The agreement is so bad that one-third of the bargaining committee of District 33, representing the 12,000 city blue-collar workers, voted against it. DC 33 president James Sutton lamely pleaded it was "the best deal we could get." But a water workers business agent told the press, "The union caved in.... It's a terrible contract."

AFSCME DC 47 bureaucrats, representing 3,000 city white-collar workers, quickly followed suit. DC 47 president Thomas Paine Cronin had already said where he stood before the strike: "it is our intention to keep the rank and file working for as long as we can" (*AFL-CIO News*, 28 September). The union tops, as usual, refuse to let the membership meet on the sellout; instead they will be forced to vote by mail. Philly workers: Dump their sellout! For the unions to fight means driving out the present spineless labor traitors and replacing them with a leadership that has the guts and the program to wage a real class struggle.

Labor Day in Philly should have been the kick-off of an all-out war on the union-busters. The entire city labor movement was poised: AFSCME workers had been held back from striking for two months; the contract for 20,000 teachers and other school employees expired on September 7. Even the hidebound fakery on the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council made noises about a general strike, but quickly settled the teachers' contract. And now they've shafted AFSCME.

Philly bosses have waged a long campaign to break the power of labor in this city. When former mayor Wilson Goode, black Democratic front man for Reagan reaction, carried out the horrendous racist bombing and massacre of six adults and five babies of the MOVE commune in 1985, it was a threat to blacks and unionists like Reagan's crushing of the PATCO air controllers. Goode followed the MOVE massacre with a

campaign against the predominantly black sanitation workers of DC 33.

Whether it's Rizzo, Goode or Rendell, the Democratic Party mayors and their racist cops have carried out a war on unions and minorities in Philadelphia. They continue to persecute the MOVE prisoners, locked away in Pennsylvania state prisons for the "crime" of surviving the Philly cop assaults. Black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, framed by Rizzo for his eloquent defense of MOVE and black Philadelphia, sits on death row in Huntingdon. Free all the MOVE prisoners! Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

The unions can bust the union-busters, but this means standing up to the capitalist state—beginning with a fight to oust the bosses' lieutenants in the labor bureaucracy. Waging strikes to win requires mass picket lines that *no one crosses*, defying court injunctions, and this must be accompanied by a *political* fight to build a class-struggle workers party.

## Victory to the NASSCO Shipyard Strike!

After a resounding 91 percent vote for a strike, the 2,700 workers at National Steel & Shipbuilding in San Diego shut down the yard on October 1. The workers, members of the Operating Engineers, Teamsters, Machinists, Electricians, Ironworkers, Carpenters and Painters unions, struck NASSCO, the last ship construction yard on the West Coast, for the fourth time in eleven years.

Machinists business agent Peter Zschiesche told *WV* that the Navy, which provides almost all NASSCO contracts, was caught unawares. The heavily Latino and black workforce was eager to hit back at the shipbuilder, which is attacking seniority with a plan to rate the "efficiency" of the workers in deciding who gets laid off. José Ríos told the *San Diego Union-Tribune* (2 October), "I have been working here for 18 years. If the company cuts seniority, I cannot stand for it. This is my life." Skilled journeymen at the yard currently



Striking NASSCO shipyard workers on San Diego waterfront, October 7.

earn only \$12.72 per hour, eight cents less than they did five years ago.

In 1980, after angry protests at the NASSCO yard against unsafe working conditions, a government/company conspiracy set up and railroaded three union militants, including two supporters of the Communist Workers Party. As part of a union-busting drive, the workers were crudely framed up and convicted of "bomb conspiracy" charges in a trap set by an FBI provocateur.

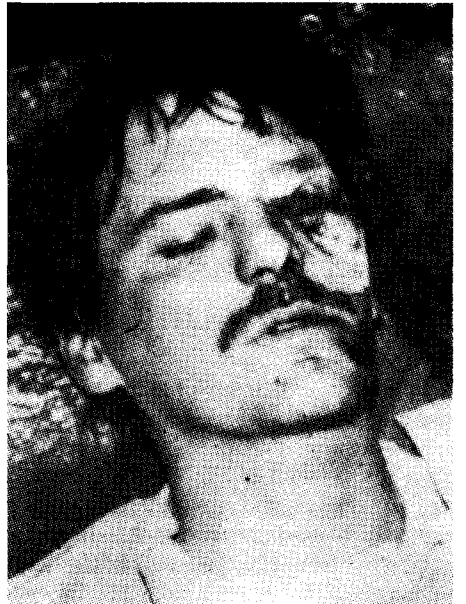
In the last decade, shipyards up and down the coast have closed their gates, as the Navy whipsaws yards across the country against each other in order to gut the unions. NASSCO was unloaded by the Morrison-Knudsen conglomerate in a phony "employee stock ownership plan" leaving total control in the hands of NASSCO bosses.

A victory at NASSCO would boost a much-needed organizing drive by the unions' United Waterfront Council among workers of non-union subcontractors, starting with the big yard at Southwest Marine, which has some 1,500 workers in San Diego. Victory to the NASSCO strike! ■

# Free Mark Curtis!

# Workers League Brokers

# Frame-Up Operation



Singer/Militant  
**Mark Curtis after savage beating by Des Moines cops in March 1988.**

There's a first-rate anti-communist witchhunt in progress over the case of Mark Curtis, a member of the quirky reformist Socialist Workers Party, now doing 25 years in the Iowa state penitentiary on frame-up charges. The Des Moines district attorney's 1988 railroad-ing of Curtis was aided and abetted by the Workers League, a dubious outfit that specializes in provocation, in pursuing its vendetta against the SWP, long a target of government harassment and "dirty tricks." But although Curtis has spent the past four years behind bars, his defense campaign has been the object of a frenzied assault by right-wing feminists who want to prevent him from getting out on parole. Their aim is to smear the entire left as racists, rapists and sexists. To do so, they pass off the Workers League as good coin, ignoring its history of many years of sinister provocation, insist on the existence of a "rape" which even the prosecution doesn't claim took place, and cite a plethora of "pro-victim" sources which turn out to be linked to government agencies.

There's some pretty strange stuff going on, particularly coming out of the Boston area. Consider the following:

- The Boston NAACP has been on campaign footing circulating a letter (dated March 14) declaring "MARK CURTIS IS A VIOLENT RAPIST!" and urging those who had defended him to withdraw their names from the Curtis campaign.

- When multiracial protests swept the country in solidarity with the Los Angeles upheaval against the acquittal of the racist cops who beat Rodney King, Boston NAACP official Mary Bertin and some associates attended a May 8 demonstration at Boston City Hall. They were there *not* to protest the racist L.A. verdict, but...to circulate an anti-Curtis tract calling to "Dis-endorse now" and saying "it's not anti-left to be anti-rape."

- Days later, at a May 16 Boston SWP forum on the Rodney King case, a group of so-called progressives showed up including Bertin, Fred Pelka of "Men to End Sexual Assault" (MESA) and other activists of the "stop rape movement." They had come, *not* to discuss police brutality, and certainly not to criticize the SWP's reformist call on George Bush's "Justice Department" to indict the cops, but...to set up a picket line outside the Pathfinder Bookstore, chanting "Racist, sexist SWP!" and "Keep Mark Curtis in jail!"

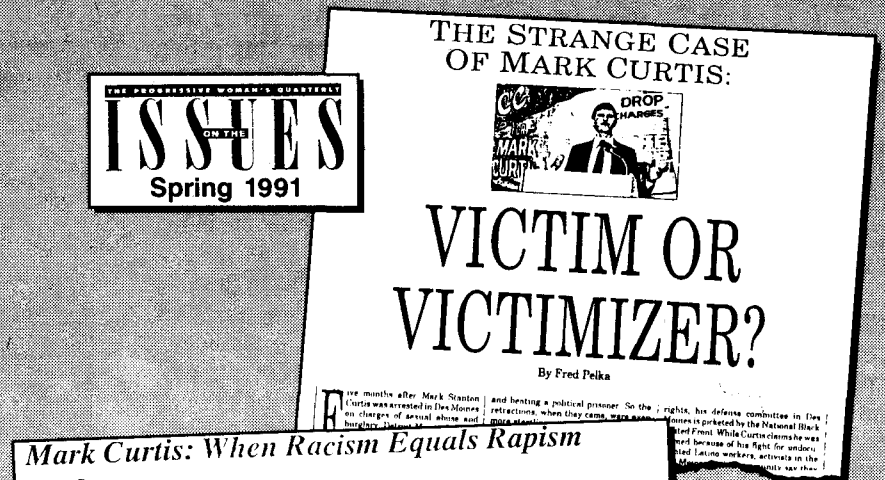
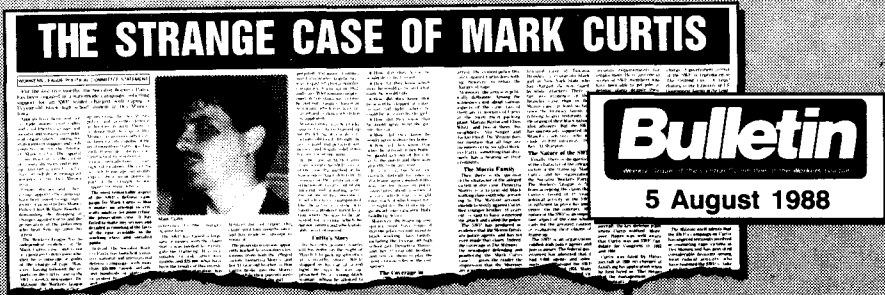
- On July 18, a forum was held at the Boston Public Library where Bertin, Pelka and Ann Russo, a women's studies professor at MIT, participated in a panel discussion whose purpose was...to destroy the Mark Curtis Defense Committee activities in the Boston area. Mark Curtis was described here as a "white man" who "raped" "an Afro-American woman," and the SWP as "racists" who "glorify" a "rapist."

- At a demonstration in Boston on September 30, where thousands of black Haitian workers were protesting the anniversary of the military coup that overthrew the government of the radical priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the anti-Curtis crowd was back again, with leaflets *not* against the bloody junta and its links to the U.S. government but...denouncing a socialist group and its imprisoned member for "Racism and Rapism."

What kind of people go to a Rodney King demonstration against cop brutality and a Haiti demonstration against a military junta in order to pillory a young socialist militant who was active in the defense of immigrant workers at a meatpacking plant in the Midwest? Even if they think he is guilty of rape, why are self-proclaimed advocates of the interests of women, blacks and labor so driven to go after someone who is

and sexual abuse are serious crimes, and we have given careful consideration to the Curtis case. We have read the 400-page trial transcript and the voluminous articles and pamphlets on this case, and we have documented our conclusion that Mark Curtis was framed—see the statement of the SL/U.S. Political Bureau, "The Workers League and Mark Curtis" (WV No. 480, 23 June 1989), and our article "Why Should

## Anti-Communist Feminists Enlist in WL Provocation



**Right-wing feminists push demented witchhunt against Socialist Workers Party member Mark Curtis. Sinister Workers League's Bulletin initiated and braintrusts vicious anti-communist campaign against Curtis and the SWP.**

already in jail? What is going on here?

What's going on here is a sinister, organized provocation with a not-so-hidden agenda of vilifying the left. In the name of victims' rights and stopping rape, a network has sprung up that works closely with the police, embraces vigilantism and is in the tow of reactionary forces. With liberal rhetoric they engage in witchhunting taken straight from the book (literally) of J. Edgar Hoover. And the whole operation is being brokered by David North's Workers League, which is obsessed with destroying the Socialist Workers Party and sees this case as its vehicle.

The Spartacist League has no love lost for the rotten-reformist SWP, but we can tell a dirty frame-up when we see it. And this one is a threat to everyone. Rape

Anyone Believe David North?" (WV No. 487, 13 October 1989).

### The Railroad of Mark Curtis

Mark Curtis is a former national chairman of the SWP's youth group, the Young Socialist Alliance. At the time of his arrest he was a union activist at the Swift packing plant in Iowa. There had been a lot of turmoil in the Midwest meatpacking industry, particularly around the protracted 1985-86 Hormel strike by Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota, which was broken by the combined efforts of the company, the Democratic state government and the social-democratic national union bureaucracy. In the Swift plant in Des Moines, four days before Curtis' arrest in March 1988, an INS immigration raid had picked up

17 workers. On March 4, Curtis spoke in Spanish at a meeting in defense of these workers. Only hours after this, he was arrested at the Morris residence in Des Moines by cops who took him to police headquarters where they beat him to a pulp, calling him a "Mexican lover."

In September 1988, Curtis was convicted of third degree sexual assault and first degree burglary. The state charged that he had forced his way onto the porch of the Morris house, and attempted to rape 15-year-old Demetria Morris. Curtis said he was lured there by a request for aid. By no account, not even that of the police *or* the young woman at the trial, did a rape ever take place, nor was anything stolen, nor was there a weapon. Whatever may have happened to Demetria Morris, there was never *any* physical evidence of contact between Curtis and the alleged victim. The court refused to allow testimony about the government's multi-year campaign of "dirty tricks" aimed against the SWP. And now Curtis is serving a 25-year sentence. Despite vows by members of the Iowa State Parole Board that he will serve his entire sentence unless he confesses his "guilt," Curtis has not been broken. "I am not a rapist, but a fighter for women's rights. And I am not guilty of the crimes I have been charged and convicted of," Curtis declares.

The Workers League has aided the capitalist state prosecution of this young socialist militant as part of their decades-long vendetta against the eccentric, and pretty irrelevant, reformists of the SWP. In the trial, the closing arguments of the Polk County prosecutor were taken virtually *verbatim* from the pages of the WL's paper, the *Bulletin*. After the conviction, they have sought to destroy Curtis' defense committee and drive away its endorsers. Through the father of the alleged victim, Keith Morris, they went to the capitalist courts demanding the names of endorsers, and access to the defense committee finances. WL agents have crisscrossed the globe searching out individuals who endorsed or contributed to the defense fund, contacting and harassing them.

In January, Mark Curtis won a police brutality suit against the Des Moines cops who beat him bloody the night of his arrest. (The verdict came a month after the Des Moines cops were exposed for the brutal beating of a black worker, Larry Milton, who they subsequently tried to frame up on "theft" charges.) The court decided the cops lied when they said they didn't beat up Mark Curtis, and awarded him \$11,000 plus attorney's fees. Since the cops were critical witnesses at Curtis' trial, that testimony is deeply suspect as well.

### The Smear Campaign

All this has only been a spur for the Workers League to accelerate their campaign smearing Curtis as a "depraved rapist." The WL went after Curtis' labor support, lining up with the Iowa AFL-CIO officialdom as well as bourgeois black organizations like the Des Moines NAACP and Black United Front. More



recently they have hooked up with a clot in Boston including the Rape Crisis Center, black politicians and union officials. As a result of their poison campaign, some 20 people have reportedly withdrawn their support, including former Boston mayoral candidates Mel King and Rev. Graylan Ellis-Hagler, IUE Local 201 president Jeff Crosby (Lynn GE), former Boston University professor Howard Zinn and feminist author Margaret Randall.

Circulating in the feminist milieu are several articles notable for their praise of the Workers League and virulent attacks on "the left" for supposed racism. "The Strange Case of Mark Curtis: Victim or Victimizer?" by Fred Pelka of Boston MESA appeared in an obscure Queens, New York "progressive woman's quarterly" *On the Issues* (Spring 1991). And the Boston-based feminist newspaper *Sojourner* (October 1992) has an article by Ann Russo, "Mark Curtis: When Racism Equals Rapism." Russo calls the WL's Martin McLaughlin "one of the few progressives who supported the rape survivor and her family." She also lays out the witchhunt campaign in detail:

"Efforts to challenge the propaganda of the defense committee escalated this past spring when Mary Bertin, on behalf of the Boston NAACP, got involved.... A group of us, including Barry Shuchter, Fred Pelka, Anita Saville and others, including myself on behalf of White Women Against Racism and Violence Against Women, have been directing our efforts towards supporters of Curtis, encouraging them to disendorse his defense campaign."

"Some activists wonder why we are making such an effort to stop the Curtis defense campaign," Russo writes. "In this case, the rape survivor faces an international progressive community that supports this white male rapist." She quotes Mary Bertin saying: "For the past four years, [the SWP has] literally had the reign of the world, and that has to end. I felt the NAACP could be her voice, and so we designed a campaign to inform people of Demetria's story."

Russo's piece is loaded with emotional white liberal guilt-tripping. At issue in the Curtis case, she claims, is "a young working-class African-American girl... brutally raped and beaten by a white man." Russo keeps repeating: Demetria Morris was "brutally raped and assaulted," she is "a rape survivor." Russo puts herself inside the victim's mind, saying "imagine being reminded" about "the good things that the man who raped you has done." Russo imagines this, imagines that. Of the SWP, she says that "they consistently downplay the rape" of one of the "women of color who have been raped by white men," and they ignored "the impact of their campaign on the rape survivor." How has the SWP "gotten away with" a "support campaign in defense of a rapist," she asks. The "progressive community... supports this white male rapist," and this supposedly "illustrates the racist ignorance and denial of sexual assault that continue to permeate the progressive community."

Russo locates the source of this in "the ideology that so-called 'good men' (which in this country translates into white men) don't rape." In the May 8 leaflet this is rendered as "'good men' (that is, progressive activists) don't rape." What is the conclusion? That all men rape? But in the midst of all this imaginary psycho-projection and demagogic collective guilt-tripping, a simple fact has been left out: in this case *there was no rape!* In fact the state *dropped* the charge of rape against Mark Curtis. So why then this tabloid-style hysteria based on the assertion that there was a rape? And what purposes does the exploitation of the non-rape of Demetria Morris serve?

### In Defense of the Scottsboro Boys

In this respect, the article by Fred Pelka of Men to End Sexual Assault is instructive. This smear job paints the left as "sexists" who reflexively defend and

# Scottsboro Boys Slandered Again



American CP and the International Labor Defense battled courts and NAACP sabotage to mobilize mass support among labor and blacks for Scottsboro Boys (right) against false charges of rape.

harbor rapists if they are among "their own." Pelka claims that a "feminist analysis of the Curtis case" shows "how effectively the left has acted to silence the survivor." "What does it mean... when so many 'politically correct' people are willing to take, at face value, the word of a white man convicted of rape over that of his Black victim?" And in showing that the left supposedly has a long tradition of vilifying rape victims, he obscenely cites the case of the Scottsboro Boys!

This astounding claim comes in response to Russ Davis, a Boston supporter of the Curtis defense campaign, who wrote that there are historical precedents for the use of rape in frame-ups. Pelka asserts:

"It's significant that Davis' list of cases where rape 'has been used in frame-ups' begins and ends with the 'Scottsboro Boys'—a group of African-American men convicted of rape by an all-white (and all-male) jury in Alabama in 1931....

"There is one similarity, though, between the Curtis case and that of the Scottsboro defendants. In both cases, the prosecution witnesses, women without access to power and unable to tell their stories, were vilified by the left. In 60 years that much, at least, hasn't changed."

What racist, anti-communist trash! Naturally Pelka doesn't bother to mention that the Scottsboro Boys—nine young black men—were sentenced to die on the basis of the testimony of two young white women, based on charges of rape that had been manufactured by the Alabama cops! But to keep Curtis in jail, Pelka is glad to retry these victims of Southern lynch law.

Defense of the Scottsboro Boys was the focus of an international campaign, centrally led by the Communist Party, in which hundreds of thousands of people were mobilized to save these young black men from Jim Crow "justice." As

for the two women, one did "tell her story." Ruby Bates later recanted her testimony, and in 1933 marched at the head of a protest in front of the White House demanding freedom for the Scottsboro Boys. As James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, wrote in a 1932 article entitled "Mobilize White Workers for Scottsboro Prisoners":

"The deliberately planned assassination of the unfortunate Negro children is notice to the entire world that imperialist America, this pretended pacifist and friend of justice, is in fact a monster. The endeavor to thwart its bloody designs in the present case calls out the deepest and best human instincts."

Not so for Pelka & Co., for whom, even 60 years later, the case of the Scottsboro Boys calls out the basest, if reflexive, instincts.

What gets them seeing red is not the lynch rope, but that the lives of these young men were saved by mobilizations led by Communists. In his attack on the left over the Scottsboro Boys, Pelka is playing on an old theme. The NAACP sabotaged the Scottsboro defense, defamed the court that convicted the framed-up youth, denounced the mass mobilizations and raised the cry of the "red menace," accusing the CP of using the case for its own purposes. (Only four years later, under intense pressure from the black masses, did the NAACP finally take up the case.) During the McCarthyite witchhunt, the liberal historian Wilson Record vituperated against the CP over the Scottsboro case in his book *The Negro and the Communist Party* (1951). And today we have the Boston and Des Moines NAACP and Fred Pelka playing the same theme in the Mark Curtis case.

At the same time, the Workers League has scandalously erased the Scottsboro Boys from American working-class history. While fraudulently claiming to have recently resuscitated the traditions of the

CP's International Labor Defense, the economist WL never mentions any of the ILD's defense of blacks. Moreover, the WL's *Bulletin* (31 July) fulsomely quotes from Pelka and Russo without a mention of their vicious anti-communism and racism. Their silence on these issues is utterly damning.

The Scottsboro and the Curtis frame-ups are wielded in a cynical attempt to portray the left as enemies of women and blacks. Pelka, Bertin & Co. are supporters of the racist capitalist system. Just look at the charge of "lying." Pelka approvingly cites the argument of prosecutor Catherine Thune that Curtis can't be trusted because he lied...on an employment application! Is there another way to get a job? And what about the "illegal" immigrant workers at Swift whose jobs Curtis was defending—if their documents weren't in order does that mean they should be deported? On the other hand, Pelka waves aside the fact that one of the cops, Gonzalez, had been suspended from the Des Moines police for lying, saying he was only "fudging an arrest report to protect the identity of an informant." Actually, Gonzalez was caught lying about beating a suspect.

A lot of Pelka's stuff sounds like it comes out of the House Un-American Activities Committee. "How is it," he wants to know, that the SWP has gotten so much support for Mark Curtis? For the answer he goes to Barry Shuchter, formerly an editorial committee member of the *Boston Labor Page*. "The first thing (SWP members) do is the personal favors trick," says Shuchter. "They say, 'We've been on the line with you, we've come to your events. Now we're asking for this one favor in return.' Then comes the 'Look who else has endorsed' trick." This sounded so much like a page out of J. Edgar Hoover's *Masters of Deceit* that we decided to check. Sure enough, the FBI boss gave as an example of Communist agitation:

"The communists publish a story: John Doe has been arrested, the charge is murder.... The Party machinery springs into action, typical of thousands of mass-agitation campaigns.... The next step is probably the formation of the XYZ Committee to Save John Doe.... Finally come the unsuspecting noncommunists, with contact being made either in person or on the telephone.

"Mr. X, I'm So-and-So from the XYZ Committee to Save John Doe. I was just over at Mr. Y's office. You know him, don't you?"

"On and on. 'Dr. F, Rev. O, etc., have given statements'....

"Why," a friend will say after reading the testimonial, "if So-and-So endorses that organization [or issue], it must be OK." The dupe becomes a communist thought-control relay station."

Pelka and Shuchter have learned well at the knee of this master of frame-ups.

*continued on page 13*



Mark Curtis (right) and his wife and comrade Kate Kaku explain his defense campaign to his coworkers at Swift meatpacking plant, spring 1988.

# Imperialism Starves Africa...

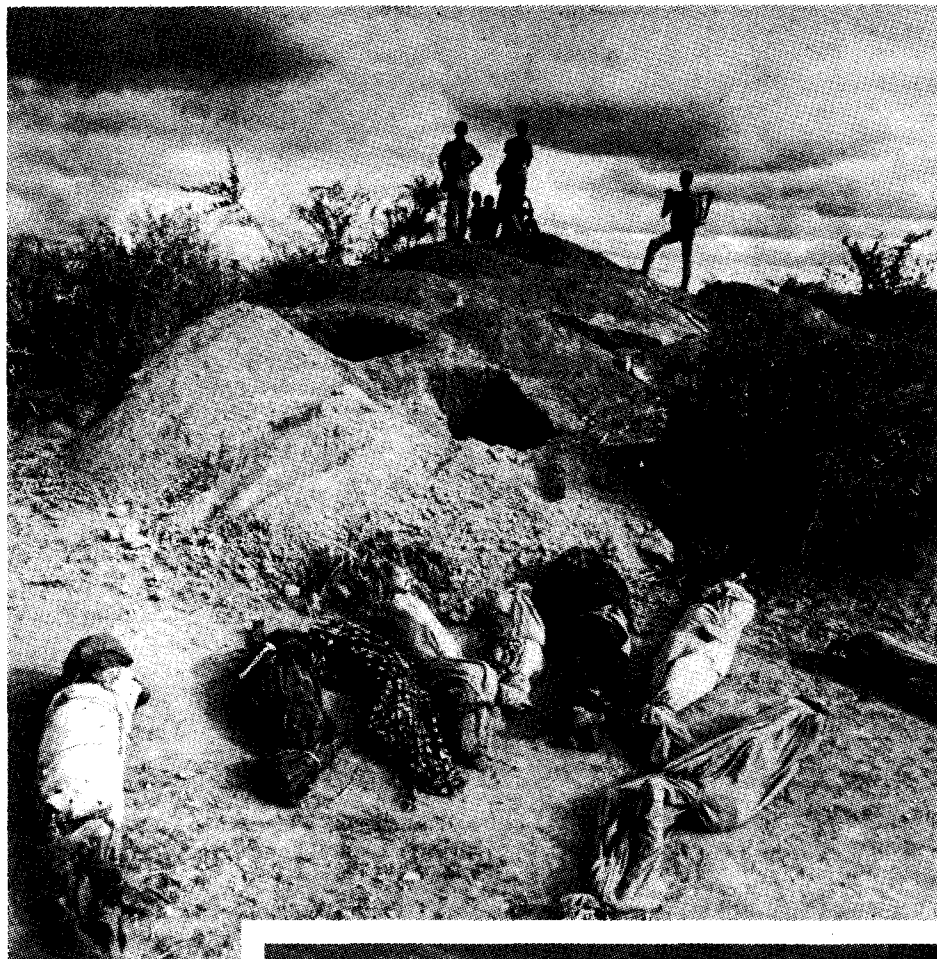
(continued from page 1)

140,000 tons of food to Somalia, but it later turned out that only one-tenth of that amount would be airlifted; the rest will supposedly be available the "next fiscal year" and will be sold to "merchants in Kenya." The racist arrogance of the Washington fat cats is summed up by one official who suggested that Somalia "should be paved over and turned into a parking lot" (*Washington Post*, 12 August).

Instead of feeding the population, food relief has become a weapon in the savage fighting between Somali clan chiefs. Journalists report that starving villagers who received food aid were assassinated and their food seized by the warlords. The UN, while stationing 500 Pakistani soldiers to protect the unloading of shipments at the port of Mogadishu, is negotiating to sell most of the food at cut-rate prices to local strongmen, who will resell the supplies at exorbitant prices to finance their murderous feuding. Washington saw in this human tragedy an opportunity to do some saber rattling, stationing a 2,400-man Marine amphibious group from the Persian Gulf just off the coast of Mogadishu to provide "seaborne command and control."

The violent disintegration of the Somali state is a by-product of the collapse of Stalinist rule in the Soviet Union. For more than two decades, the Somali regime of Mohammed Siad Barre played off the Soviet Union against U.S. imperialism, obtaining the guns and a dribble of aid that enabled him to keep "order." With the end of the Cold War, Barre lost his international backers and last year fell from power. The country was engulfed in furious warfare among rival clans who turned on each other the modern weaponry that had been provided by the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The capital of Mogadishu was turned into a wasteland.

For a full year the world's capitalist leaders closed their eyes to the famine raging in Somalia. Last July, it suddenly became front-page news when UN secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali challenged the expansion of the UN "peacekeeping" operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, calling it a "rich man's war" which detracted from relief operations in black Africa. Journalists suddenly discovered the tragedy in Somalia. Now UN aid operations have resumed, but many who flock to the relief camps are already so sick that food alone can no longer help them. Since almost no



Morris/Black Star

**Above: Somali famine victims are buried wrapped in sacks from food relief. Lack of medical supplies condemns many children (right) who are too ill to be saved by food alone.**



Feterberg/AFP

medical supplies are being sent, epidemics of measles, pneumonia and tuberculosis are decimating the population of weakened children and turning the camps into what one relief worker called a "death trap."

Now that the Horn of Africa no longer has strategic interest for the imperialists, they see no profit in "humanitarian" aid. When famine last struck Africa in 1984-85, the world's capitalist leaders mobilized relief for Ethiopia (and rock stars sang "We Are the World") to discredit the Soviet-allied regime. (They virtually ignored the other sub-Saharan countries which were also hit by the drought.) This time, famine in Africa coincides with a massive cut in grain production engineered by the U.S. to drive up prices. After a record harvest in 1990, the U.S. slashed wheat production by 30 percent (27 million tons), largely by reducing

the area planted, triggering the largest one-year fall in worldwide grain production in history.

So as Africa is starving, the imperialists order huge cutbacks of grain production! The answer to mass hunger is not philanthropy but class struggle. And the main enemy is not a bunch of feuding clans in Somalia, but the worldwide capitalist system which produces solely for profit and not to satisfy human need. Lenin noted, regarding one of the many famines in tsarist Russia (when the government continued to export grain in the midst of starvation):

"There neither is nor can be any other means of combating unemployment and crises, as well as the Asiatic-barbarian and cruel forms the expropriation of the small producers has assumed in Russia, than the class struggle of the revolutionary proletariat against the entire capitalist system. The rulers of the capitalist state are no more concerned about the vast numbers of famine and crisis victims than a locomotive is concerned about those whom it crushes in its path. Dead bodies stop the wheels, the locomotive halts, it may (with a too energetic driver) jump the rails, but, in any case, after a delay, long or short, it will continue on its way."

—V.I. Lenin, "Review of Home Affairs" (October 1901)

## Africa: Imperialism and Hunger

Africa's natural resources are more than adequate, if correctly utilized, to provide sufficient food for its population. Estimates of the continent's uncultivated arable land range from *three to four times* the area presently cultivated. As one study concluded, "there is little doubt that Africa contains enough land to feed its present population and more, if rural areas were properly developed" (Ronald Cohen, ed., *Satisfying Africa's Food Needs* [1988]). However, the irrigation projects, drainage of swamps and cleaning of disease-infested areas which would be required to develop Africa's agricultural potential are unthinkable as long as Africa is squeezed in the vise of Wall Street and the international bankers.

Nowhere is the necessity of worldwide socialist revolution clearer than in the inhuman condition that capitalism imposes on its colonial and semi-colonial slaves. Famine has become a chronic condition in Africa and the situation is getting steadily worse. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that about a third of the 450 million people on the continent suffer from malnutrition and between one-quarter and one-fifth of the population in the region does not have enough food to be able to work or pursue any form of physical activity (Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, eds., *The Political Economy of Hunger* [1991]).

Africa is caught in the blind alley, inherited from colonialism, of concentrating its agriculture on tropical cash crops for sale on the world market. Prices for these crops are steadily falling because of the imperialist stranglehold on the world market for tropical exports. This market is characterized by competition among many suppliers while a few giant trading companies, often having a near-monopoly, drive prices down by playing suppliers off against each other. For example, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda and the Ivory Coast all compete with each other (and with Brazil, Colombia and others) to sell coffee to a handful of companies like General Foods and Nestlé.

At the same time, 90 percent of world grain exports come from North America, giving the U.S. near-monopoly control of the market for exportable grain. The hammer lock that a few U.S. trading companies have on the world market for food grains makes the "oil cartel" pale in comparison. The result is that world food prices have steadily skyrocketed. In the decade following the mid-'70s, African countries' food bill increased five-fold—and their foreign debts increased ten times.

The high price of oil is often cited as the reason underdeveloped countries are driven into debt to the world bankers. In reality, food imports place a much heavier burden on the poorest countries than oil. Imports of food and fertilizer in the mid-1970s cost the least-developed countries nearly twice as much as their payments for oil imports. Many African countries, after selling their cash crops on the world market, are able to import less food than they could have grown themselves!

But they are not permitted to grow it themselves. The imperialist powers, and their agents in the IMF and the World Bank, see to it that the semi-colonial countries increasingly concentrate on cash crops to "export" themselves out of the debt crisis. This only pushes them further into the red. When the Sudan, in the 1970s, decided to switch over from cotton to food production in the vast, irrigated Gazeira region, the IMF and World Bank imposed a veto. As a World Bank official explained: "Cotton definitely has an advantage in terms of efficiency of production and profit margin in the short run over wheat in that area" (PBS documentary "The Politics of Food," 6 January 1988).

This is simply a continuation of the policy followed by the colonialists since they first conquered Africa, of seeking to eliminate subsistence farming in favor of cash crops for the market. Only in this way could the Africans' labor be transformed into profit to fill the colonialists' coffers. Vast tracts of land were seized outright and turned into plantations. Peasants who retained their land were "persuaded" to stop producing food by such measures as taxation (which required cash crop production in order to have money to pay the tax), stark coercion and even subsidizing food imports. By imposing cash crops, often to the exclusion of staple foods, colonialism sowed the seeds of famine.

Numerous academic studies have been made to uncover the causes of the crisis of African agriculture and to propose

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ways to increase the productivity of those peasant holdings producing food. However, the root of the problem was explained by Lenin in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916):

"It goes without saying that if capitalism could develop agriculture...if it could raise the living standards of the masses, who in spite of the amazing technical progress are everywhere still half-starved and poverty-stricken, there could be no question of a surplus of capital.... But if capitalism did these things it would not be capitalism; for both uneven development and a semi-starvation level of existence of the masses are fundamental and inevitable conditions and constitute premises of this mode of production."

### The "Food Weapon"

The excruciating fact is that the terrible famines which strike capitalism's semi-colonies take place in the midst of plenty. Currently, worldwide production of cereal grains alone is sufficient to supply a diet of 3,600 calories a day to every man, woman and child on the planet. As a recent study declared: "If food were distributed equitably, current supplies would be more than adequate to provide an ample diet to all" (Basil Blackwell, *Hunger in History* [1990]). The reason food does not get distributed to all is that under capitalism, food is a commodity which is sold on the market in order to make a profit. Like any other business, agribusiness seeks to monopolize and control the market to keep prices as high as possible and maximize profits.

To achieve hegemonic control of the world food market, the U.S. carried out a fundamental transformation of that market—and turned agriculture into the country's number one export industry. Before World War II, Europe was the only continent which was a net importer of food, all others produced more food than they consumed. By the 1960s, this had been fundamentally altered. All continents except North America (and Australia) now produce less than they consume and have become net importers of food. By the late 1970s, the underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America had gone from being non-importers of food to buying almost 80 percent of U.S. wheat exports.

The unchallenged dominance of the U.S. as global food supplier was achieved through a policy of massive government assistance to U.S. agriculture and forcing world grain prices down in order to "drive out" the competition. Grain prices on the world market were kept low by "dumping" U.S. grain at artificially low prices, by maintaining enormous unsold government grain reserves and by massive food aid (through the PL 480 program) and credits (in the 1950s, U.S. aid alone accounted for one-third of world trade in wheat).

When the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people knocked U.S. imperialism from its position as hegemonic imperialist power, marked by the devaluation of the dollar in August 1971, agriculture was slated by U.S. leaders to play a central role in shoring up the declining U.S. economy. In 1972, U.S. leaders engineered a world "food crisis" which drove food prices to unprecedented levels by taking 50 million acres out of production and wiping out U.S. grain reserves. Despite famines in Africa and Bangladesh and crop failure in the Soviet Union, the U.S. slashed food aid to one-third its previous level (much of the rest was sent to South Vietnam and Cambodia to help finance the war). By 1974, a ton of wheat was selling for three times as much as a ton of oil!

The U.S. imperialists were quick to seize on their power to throw underdeveloped countries into starvation as a way of furthering their political interests. A secret CIA report of August 1974 projected that "the United States' near-monopoly position as a food exporter... could give the U.S. a measure of power it never had before" (quoted in Robert Paarlberg, *Food Trade and Foreign Policy* [1985]). President Reagan's secretary



COI London

**"Green Revolution" in the Punjab: Current grain production could amply feed world's population, but extension of large-scale capitalist farming drives peasants from land, increasing hunger.**

of agriculture enthused that food was the U.S.' "greatest weapon" because "countries become more dependent on American farm exports and become reluctant to upset us" (*New York Times*, 24 December 1980).

The U.S. pioneered the use of food as a weapon during the Vietnam War when President Lyndon Johnson repeatedly interrupted food aid to India, suffering from the terrible famine of 1965-66, in retaliation for criticisms of U.S. policy.

has increased as a result of the "Green Revolution." Hybrid strains will grow only if they have irrigation, fertilizer and insecticides which require enormous capital outlays. Only the largest landowners can profit from the new technology, and small peasants, unable to compete, are driven from their land. A study by the Asian Development Bank of the consequences of the "Green Revolution" in the 1970s concluded that the number of malnourished people had

reinforcing small farmers. This is a futile attempt to hold back the tendency under capitalism to increased concentration of capital. Despite the American myth of the family farm, which capitalist ideologues are now trying to transplant to the ex-USSR, in fact corporate "factories in the field" (relying on heavy mechanization and low-paid Mexican agricultural workers) are far more efficient producers. In fact, the majority of American agricultural output now comes from units that are the size of Soviet collective farms.

Hunger is not exclusively a "Third World" problem. It results from the poverty and misery which are inevitably produced by capitalist exploitation. In South Africa, the sixth leading grain producer in the world, three million black children suffer from clinically diagnosable malnutrition, and some 50,000 die each year from illnesses related to hunger. In the U.S., a scientific survey determined that 12 million children—more than a quarter of all children—are chronically undernourished (*Scientific American*, February 1987). And the immiseration of the ghetto population fosters epidemics of deadly diseases of poverty, from cholera and tuberculosis to AIDS. In Africa alone, an estimated six million people have been infected with HIV viruses.

With present-day technology, U.S. agriculture alone could make up for the entire world shortfall of food production, eliminating hunger from the face of the earth. With aid from the advanced industrial countries, Africa could feed itself and have plenty of surplus left over to invest in improving the life of the masses. The question is what class holds the power. So long as capitalism remains, it will continue to reproduce the scourge of mass hunger. However, capitalism sows the seeds of its own destruction. By socializing and internationalizing production, it lays the basis for the working class, through world socialist revolution, to institute economic planning on a global scale. ■



Der Spiegel

**Somali regime, without Soviet backing, fell last year. Savage clan warfare destroyed the capital, Mogadishu (above).**

In late 1974, as a million people in Bangladesh perished in a famine, the U.S. cut off food aid because Bangladesh sold jute to Cuba. In late 1982, when famine struck Ethiopia, the U.S. held up relief assistance because Ethiopia was a Soviet ally. And last year, as famine swept across southern Sudan, the UN cut off food relief because of Sudan's support for Iraq in the Gulf War. The cut-throats in Washington have turned death by starvation into a routine instrument of foreign policy.

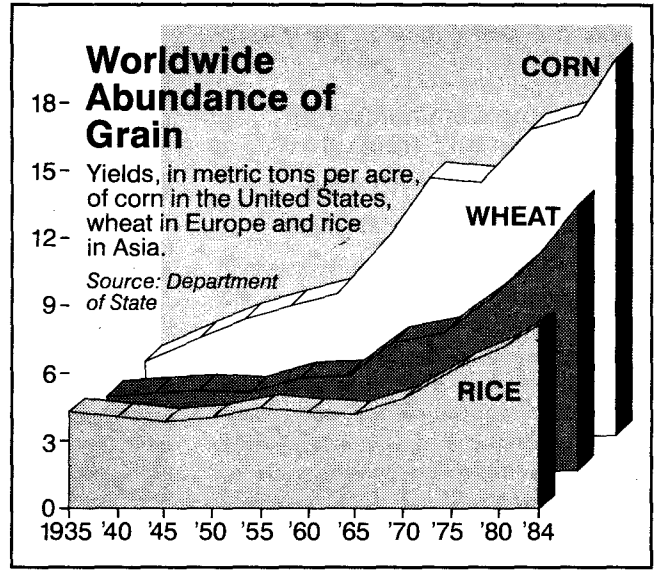
### Hunger and the "Green Revolution"

Technological advances in agriculture have been spectacular in the last 30 years, but under capitalism even these have translated into increased hunger and misery. The "Green Revolution" was launched in 1943 in Sonora, Mexico where Norman Borlaug (who received the 1970 Nobel peace prize) with the backing of the Rockefeller Foundation used genetic selection to develop "miracle" strains. Since they were introduced in the mid-1960s, hybrid strains of wheat, rice and corn have provided spectacularly increased yields. India went in five years from severe famine to being self-sufficient in grain. Indonesia, which had been the world's largest rice importer, became self-sufficient in two years. The new hybrid strains were touted as solving the problem of world hunger.

In fact, the hunger of the world's poor

increased, that rural incomes had declined and that unemployment had been exacerbated. It declared that "the region is no closer to solving the food problem than ten years ago" (quoted in Susan George, *Feeding the Few: Corporate Control of Food* [1979]).

The liberals' proposals for "solving" the hunger crisis—such as easy credit for small agricultural producers, organization of producer cooperatives and breakup of the agribusiness monopolies—are centered on preserving and



New York Times Graph

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I1. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(Signed) Jan Norden, (Editor)

The following is a leaflet produced in Russian by the International Communist League for distribution in the former USSR.

**For the Communism of  
Lenin and Trotsky!  
Why Haven't the  
Workers Risen Up?**

It is now more than a year since the forces of counterrevolution led by Boris Yeltsin and orchestrated by Washington gained the ascendancy and launched a forced draft march toward capitalist restoration. Hunger and homelessness stalk the land. Pensioners line the street, selling their possessions to survive. Thousands of factories face liquidation. Fratricidal wars rage. The counterrevolutionary drive could have been spiked through concerted workers' mobilization against the Yeltsinites at the outset, against the devastating price rises in January, against the threat of mass unemployment which has been looming for months. But this has not happened. Why? At bottom it is a question of proletarian leadership.

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) said in August 1991 that a mobilization of Moscow workers should have swept away the counterrevolutionary scum on Yeltsin's White House barricades. We issued an urgent call, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" At the same time, the botched putsch by the GKChP ["Emergency Committee"] sought to enforce "perestroika without glasnost" by imposing the heavy hand of repression in order to continue on Gorbachev's road to capitalism. We raised a program to mobilize the working class in struggle against the restorationist drive: for independent workers committees in all enterprises to prevent layoffs and privatization, through seizing control of production; against the witchhunting ban on the CPSU; for multinational workers defense guards to prevent inter-communalist fratricide and nationalist and anti-Semitic pogroms.

Following the imposition of Yeltsin's "shock treatment," in our leaflet "Form Workers and Soldiers Soviets to Stop Capitalist Restoration!" we raised the call for workers committees to seize control of food distribution, backed up by workers defense guards. "There can be no return to the old crap of Stalinism," we stressed. "Out of yesterday's Stalinists come today's Yeltsinites."

Throughout, the ICL has fought for proletarian political revolution to restore the multinational Soviet state on the basis of its Leninist foundations, to drive out the capitalist-restorationist governments of Yeltsin, Kravchuk & Co. and replace them with the rule of democratically elected soviets of workers and soldiers deputies, and for a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the workers struggle to victory. In this, we continue the struggle of the Left Opposition of

# ICL Leaflet in Ex-USSR

## Stalinist Has-Beens: Left Wing of Nationalist Counterrevolution



Sipa

Remnants of Stalinist bureaucracy now calling themselves patriots (left) block with anti-Semitic Russian fascists such as Pamyat (right).



AP

Leon Trotsky, for which countless numbers of Bolshevik-internationalists went to their deaths at the hands of Stalin's assassins. The program of the Left Opposition was the program of the Bolshevik victory in October 1917. Stalinism, which trampled on that program, received its death blow in August 1991, but the communism of Lenin and Trotsky lives in the international class struggle.

Now with the demise of the CPSU, there are more organizations than one can count which call themselves "communist" or "socialist": the Russian Communist Workers Party (RKRП) of Viktor Anpilov and General Albert Makashov, the All-Union Communist Party (VKPB) of Nina Andreyeva, the Russian Party of Communists (RPK) of Anatoly Kryuchkov, the Union of Communists (SK) of Alexei Prigarin, the Socialist Party of Labor (SPT) of Roy Medvedev and A. Denisov, and the Socialist Party of the Ukraine (SPU), as well as Boris Kagarlitsky's Labor Party (PT). They claim to represent significant

forces within the working class. Yet they have not organized a hint of serious working-class resistance to the ravages of capitalist restoration.

From "hardline" Stalinist leftovers like Anpilov and Andreyeva to pro-Gorbachev social democrats like Medvedev, these organizations have been a roadblock to struggle by the multinational Soviet working class. The reason: these organizations continue the Stalinist policies of nationalism and blocs with bourgeois forces which paved the way for counterrevolution. The workers, not only here but throughout the entire world, have paid dearly for this.

Nearly seven decades of Stalinist bureaucratic rule politically paralyzed and atomized the Soviet proletariat. Today the numerous decomposition products which emerged from the collapse of the bankrupt Stalinist apparatus aid the consolidation of the counterrevolution by sowing passivity and criminally fanning chauvinism within the multinational proletariat. One and all, they have blocked with reactionary nationalist and other pro-capitalist elements who are no less committed to counterrevolution than Yeltsin.

### "Red-Brown" Coalition: Betrayal of the Working Class!

The demonstrations of Anpilov's RKRП invariably include the fascist Pamyat and a gaggle of supporters of the rabidly anti-Semitic Zhirinovskiy, while Anpilov's *Molniya* (No. 39) calls on its readers to subscribe to that Pamyat-loving chauvinist rag *Dien*. The RKRП is prominent in the disgusting "red-brown" coalition with outright Great Russian chauvinists like the anti-Semitic writer V. Rasputin and Zhirinovskiy, the monarchist Alexander Nevzorov and the Russian National Synod (*Sobor*) of General Alexander Sterligov. On the RKRП Central Committee sits Makashov, who calls Yeltsinites "Zionists" and regularly

denounces "cosmopolitans"—Stalin's anti-Semitic code word for Jews—and was elected to the presidium of the *Sobor*. It is no accident that Pamyat endorsed Makashov for president in June 1991.

The June 12 conference in Moscow of the *Sobor*—including monarchists, black-shirted fascists and Cossacks in full regalia, as well as the RKRП—marked an important stage in the strengthening of fascist-corporatist forces. The *Sobor* railed that the Yeltsin regime is an "administration of national treason" which is "Russophobic and Jew-loving." Sterligov is just as fanatic an anti-communist as Yeltsin or Gaidar. Sterligov denounces communism as "hostile to the old national traditions of Russia...so it is quite impossible to collaborate with people who are carriers of this ideology." Both Sterligov and his deputy Ilya Konstantinov, who parades as head of the "All-Russian Toilers Assembly," sided with Yeltsin in August 1991. But while Anpilov rails against Yeltsinite "demofascists," this does not prevent him from licking Sterligov's boots. The Leningrad RKRП's *Narodnaya Pravda* (No. 24) featured the full text of Sterligov's June 12 speech to the *Sobor*. *Molniya* (No. 40) published another speech by Sterligov and hailed it as an example of the "intellectual might of the opposition."

Sterligov/Zhirinovskiy try to poison the Russian workers with chauvinism, the better to lead them to the capitalist slaughter. And they are aided in their efforts by those, like the RKRП, who stand at their side obscenely waving red flags. This is a cynical operation. Anpilov & Co. call the Yeltsin gang "demofascists" in order to justify unity with "national patriots" against Western influence. This harks back to the supposed "national unity" against the Nazi invaders in 1941, when Stalin resurrected the tsarist watchword of the "strong state" (*derzhava*). What a perversion of history! It was neither Stalin's chauvinist propaganda for a "Great Patriotic



Nogues/Sigma

Counterrevolutionary rabble manning barricades at Yeltsin "White House" in August 1991 should have been dispersed by working-class mobilization under genuinely communist leadership.



War" nor the alliance with the "democratic imperialists" which defeated the Nazis, but the heroic effort and sacrifice of the *multinational Soviet proletariat*. The "red-brown" coalition spits on the memory of that struggle.

The *Sobor's* only difference with Yeltsin is in wanting to restrict a new class of capitalist exploiters to purebred sons of the Rus. Konstantinov calls for "Russia, one and indivisible; equal rights for all forms of property; a mixed economy." Sterligov rails that property must not be allowed to pass into the hands of Jews and foreigners, but only "those whose ancestors built Russia." In other words, he wants to restore Russia's factories, collective farms, mines and oil fields to those who would follow in the footsteps of tsarist capitalists and landlords and the rest of the old Russian nobility, who will be no less servants of imperialism than is Yeltsin. In reality, the pre-1917 tsarist autocracy—for all its reactionary Russian nationalism—served as agents of Western finance capital, especially the Paris *bourse*, in exploiting Russia's toilers.

Meanwhile the RKRП and others join in every sinister chauvinist crusade, as over Moldova, falling in line behind the fascists and other counterrevolutionaries. In doing so they claim to be defending Russian-speaking minorities against nationalist assaults. As Leninists we oppose *all* national privilege and *all* nationalisms. To support either the Slavic or Romanian side in Moldova will only escalate the inter-ethnic bloodletting, further inflame murderous nationalism and lead to an endless series of communalist massacres and counter-massacres. Look what has happened in the Caucasus; and in Yugoslavia the workers state was destroyed in all-sided nationalist fratricide!

It was only through the most ruthless struggle against all national oppression that Lenin created the basis for the multinational Soviet workers state. While recognizing the right to self-determination for all nations, Lenin opposed even "the 'most just,' 'purest,' most refined" nationalism ("Critical Remarks on the National Question," 1913). He denounced as Black Hundreds propaganda any taint of anti-Semitism or Great Russian chauvinism. And not only before but also after October. In his struggle, in league with Trotsky, against Stalin and Ordjonikidze over the Georgian question, Lenin declared "war to the death on dominant nation chauvinism" (October 1922).

Yet today the Black Hundreds chauvinism denounced by Lenin is propagated by those falsely claiming his mantle. A recent issue of the Toiling Russia newspaper *Shto Delat* ("What Is To Be Done") carried a rehash by Yakushev of the anti-Semitic tsarist secret police forgery, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." *Molniya* (No. 39) then defended Yakushev as a "leader of the workers movement." The June 12 demonstration at Ostankino to demand a chauvinist "Russian Hour" on television, built through the efforts of Toiling Russia, was an orgy of chauvinism and anti-Semitism dominated by Sterligov and



Der Spiegel

**Woman scrounging for food in Moscow garbage dump. Yeltsin's capitalist-restorationist regime is starving Soviet working people.**

Zhirinovskiy, with signs proclaiming, "Russian TV Means TV Without Jews."

As Lenin said, "*Kto kovo?*" (who does what to whom?). Elements of the RKRП may try to fool themselves that they are only "temporarily" using the Sterligovs and his ilk to further the struggle against Yeltsinite counterrevolution. Others, like the RKRPer whose letter was published in *Glasnost*, worry about "too close contact with national-patriots." But Ostankino shows who is using whom. Any bloc with, any conciliation of these reactionary "national patriots," no matter how many red flags are present, only

"red-brown" coalition. This statement proclaimed: "We, representative of the 'left' and 'right' oppositions, have come to the conclusion that the salvation of the Fatherland is only possible through joint action on the basis of civil peace and national trust." The declaration insists on "the impermissibility of confrontation between 'whites' and 'reds'."

In other words, this was an appeal for the workers to maintain "class peace" while the fascists march with impunity and the counterrevolution rages triumphantly. The "red-brown" coalition is simply the most grotesque form of the

enterprises." The same issue includes remarks by Buzgalin of the PT, which explicitly models itself on the pro-capitalist British Labour Party, calling for the "transfer of property to the work collectives." All of these, in one form or another, amount to calls for illusory "workers' privatization."

Even if such a system could be set up, ownership by work collectives would only be a brief transition to neocolonial capitalist exploitation. Such collectives would be *competing against one another* under conditions of hyperinflation, total disruption of the supply system and mass unemployment. Most enterprises would go bankrupt even if they cut wages to the bone. Desperate worker collectives would then have to sell the enterprises to foreign investors or well-heeled members of the Russian mafia. Even in Yugoslavia, where limited "workers self-management" existed on the basis of *state-owned* property, this undermined working-class solidarity, increased inequality in all spheres and widened economic divisions between the constituent national republics, setting the stage for the bloody counterrevolutionary breakup of the country.

We Trotskyists oppose the reactionary utopia of "workers' capitalism" and stand for a *planned collectivized economy under a workers government based on democratically elected soviets*. Genuine soviets would be organs of mass struggle and proletarian rule rather than the bureaucratic apparatuses under Stalinism (or the artificial concoctions of the rump Stalinists today).

Stripped of "left" phrasemongering, in

Spartacist

Keller/NY Times

AP



**From left to right: Viktor Anpilov, Nina Andreyeva and Albert Makashov, leaders of Stalinist "patriots" aligned with anti-communist Russian nationalists.**

further their goal of bloody fascist counterrevolution.

### **Allying with Capitalists to Fight Capitalism?**

The Ostankino demonstration was so flagrantly reactionary that some have sought to take their distance from it. Medvedev and Denisov even held a press conference on June 23 to announce that "only a few [!] isolated provocateurs" shouted "beat the yids." But the journal *Glasnost*, on whose editorial board Medvedev and Denisov sit, praises the *Sobor* of anti-Semitic provocateur Sterligov.

And the SPT—along with the RKRП, VKPB, RPK and SK—joined with such reactionary outfits as the *Sobor*, the "Union of Cossacks" and the "Fund for the Restoration of the Shrine of Christ the Savior" in signing the "Declaration on the Founding of the United Opposition" last March which formalized the

class-collaborationist People's Front policy proclaimed by Stalin/Dimitrov in 1935. Then as now, the popular front subordinates the workers movement to a section of the bourgeoisie. Today there is not even the old Stalinist fig leaf justifying support to "democratic" capitalism as a supposed stage on the road to socialism, but rather an open bloc with the more nationalist wing of the counterrevolution.

No different in substance is the support given by many of these same elements around the SPU and SK in the Ukraine to Kravchuk in last year's presidential elections as the "lesser evil" against the fascist Chornovil. The rampaging Ukrainian fascist bands see no need to "unite" with the left. But no less than Yeltsin, Kravchuk is administering the restoration of capitalism, which will necessarily proceed to a fascist or bonapartist stage in order to crush the workers.

*Is it not obvious that one cannot fight against capitalist counterrevolution by joining with capitalist forces?* The truth of the matter is that none of these organizations are opposed to the reintroduction of capitalism. The SPT, SK and RPK all support a "mixed economy," which in the context of raging counterrevolution means support to capitalist restoration.

The RKRП occasionally makes "left" noises against privatization, while regularly proclaiming the "equality of all property forms." *Molniya* (No. 39) reprints a statement from the "Federation of Communists of Educational, Scientific and Creative Organizations" which calls for "destatification" through "the establishment of self-management of people's

Russia today the call for privatization through the "work collectives" is nothing more than the program of the industrialist Volsky and would-be strongman Rutskoii for factory managers to take ownership of the means of production under a corporatist "strong state." They understand that the restoration of capitalism cannot be carried through democratically, but requires the strong hand of a bonapartist, i.e., dictatorial, regime.

The "Russian Communists" of the RKRП et al. are in fact the left flank of the counterrevolutionary faction of Volsky/Rutskoii/Sterligov. When Rutskoii deployed the forces of the state to attack the air traffic controllers strike in August, the Stalinists stood aside. They justify their own hostility to the strikers by pointing to the fact that the "free trade union" leaders are pro-Yeltsin, even though these unions were now pitted *against* the Yeltsin regime. By arrogantly blaming the workers for the crimes of their leadership, the Stalinists serve only to drive these workers deeper into the arms of their reactionary leaders. And where have the arrogant supposed workers' leaders of the RKRП, Toiling Russia et al. ever led any strikes against Yeltsin's starvation policies?

### **The Anti-Leninist Lie of "Socialism in One Country"**

Behind the capitulation by these self-styled "communists" to nationalist counterrevolution is their fealty to Stalin/Bukharin's nationalist lie of "socialism in one country." Lenin concluded his brief address to the Petrograd Soviet announcing the workers' seizure of power in 1917 with the words: "Long

*continued on page 10*



**Aleksandr Rutskoii (far left) and Arkady Volsky (above), leaders of corporatist faction of capitalist counterrevolution.**

Saprony/APP

DeKeerle/Syigma

# Stalinist Has-Beens...

(continued from page 9)

live the world socialist revolution!" Time and again, Lenin—expressing the view of all Marxists—insisted that socialism could triumph only through international proletarian revolution. But in 1923-24, the Bolshevik Party of October was strangled and the program of Lenin was thrown overboard. The political counterrevolution led by Stalin transformed the CPSU into a bureaucratic apparatus and proceeded to betray one revolutionary opportunity after another—from China to Spain to post-war Western Europe—in the name of "socialism in one country."

From the RKR to the SPT, the various degeneration products of the collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy all trace their origins to this bankrupt, treacherous program. Thus RKR "ideologue" Sergeev dismisses the idea of "international collectivism" while claiming that "the idea of Russian, or Great Russian, if you please, collectivism will work." And Medvedev echoes: "We have to say...of Leninism, that too much importance was placed on the idea of world revolution." We have to say of Sergeev, Medvedev and their kind, that those who repudiate the Leninist perspective of world revolution are necessarily incapable of combatting the counterrevolution.

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky explained that even a healthy revolutionary workers state could not for long escape the pressures of the imperialist world market. The choices: either the promotion of socialist revolution to eliminate capitalism internationally, or conciliation of imperialism abroad and concomitant rehabilitation of domestic nationalist reaction. The Leninist-

Trotskyists fought for the former program; Stalin and his heirs promoted the latter. And when the bankruptcy of their bureaucratic-commandist system became apparent, Stalin's heirs saw no alternative but to accept the development of capitalism.

## "Workers Democracy" Group = Yeltsinite "Democrats"

The grotesque character of the "red-brown" coalition provides an open door for some to offer a seemingly "left" alternative as a halfway house to authentic Leninism-Trotskyism. This is the role of the Workers Democracy group of Sergei Beits, associated with the British Militant group. Despite their economist demands and workerist rhetoric, they have *not* opposed capitalist restoration. On the contrary, in August 1991, they *joined the forces of capitalist restoration* in the defense of the White House with the rest of the Yeltsinite "democrats." Likewise, Alexei Gusev's Socialist Workers Union (affiliated to the British Workers Revolutionary Party of Cliff Slaughter), Dmitri Zhvania's Proletarian Revolutionary Cells (connected to the British anti-Soviet Socialist Workers Party of Tony Cliff) and Workers Power all stood with Yeltsin in August 1991.

Workers Democracy actually hails Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary counter coup as the beginning of "the revolutionary anti-bureaucratic process," grotesquely paraphrasing Lenin in proclaiming: "The revolution that gave power to the bourgeoisie has finished, the next revolution will put power in the hands of the workers." These people have nothing to do with Trotskyism, but rather represent a strain of Stalinophobia. Behind their talk of "democratic socialism" is support to not-so-democratic capitalism against the Stalinist degenerated workers state. They *supported* Lech Walesa's Solidarność, financed by the Vatican and the CIA, during its drive



Protest against privatization by workers at Moscow Zil auto factory in September was addressed by spokesman of the International Communist League.

for capitalist restoration in Poland in 1981. They welcomed the destruction of the USSR, absurdly *denying* that "the liquidation of the USSR weakened the position of socialism in the world" (*Workers Democracy*, April-May 1992). They are not Fourth Internationalists, but Second International social democrats: the Militant group in Britain was for four decades buried deep inside the pro-imperialist, anti-Soviet Labour Party, to which they remain loyal.

But in the classical manner of opportunists, when they found there was no gain to be derived from tailing the Yeltsinite "democrats," they simply switched over to tailing after the "red-brown" coalition. In a front-page appeal to Toiling Russia over fighting privatization, *Workers Democracy* (April-May 1992) in no way denounced Toiling Russia's chauvinist position—not even mentioning the words "chauvinism" or "anti-Semitism." Now Workers Democracy has finally mustered up the courage to say, at least in the abstract, "Down with nationalism and chauvinism! Long live the October of Lenin and Trotsky!" But what can such words mean coming from people who invited outright monarchists for "comradely" discussion at an August 29 meeting in Moscow, and stood with Yeltsin on the barricades of counterrevolution?

## Reforge the Communist Party of Lenin and Trotsky!

There is much talk today of reconstituting the CPSU. But what is decisive is the question of program—a fighting strategy to mobilize the proletariat in struggle for its own power. We are for the reconstitution of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. The draft "Programmatic Declaration of the 20th All-

Union Conference of the CPSU," published in *Pravda* (8 September), concedes "large-scale miscalculations, abuse of power and crimes against the positions and the very lives of people" under the Stalin era, as Khrushchev already admitted in 1956. But despite its denunciation of "betrayal by the Gorbachev-Yakovlev group," there is no attempt to come to grips with the degeneration of the Bolshevik Revolution, and thus it is only a cover-up for the policies which led to Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

At the CPSU conference itself, held on October 10, Prigarin, one of the authors of the *Pravda* declaration, continued to defend blocs with "patriots" and called for an all-inclusive party containing those who see "Stalin as a criminal" and those who see him as a "savior," those who want a centralized economy and those who favor "market socialism." Such a Kautskyan mishmash is a recipe for a social-democratic party which at best would confuse and disorient those workers over whom it might exercise influence. What these former bureaucrats fear above all is a clear, revolutionary program.

Seven decades of Stalinism perverted the conception of revolutionary leadership into one of bureaucratic fiat, buttressed by the constitutional enshrinement of the "leading role of the party." Revolutionary leadership is the struggle to break the working masses from the misleaders who foster bourgeois and nationalist ideology, and to mobilize them around the genuine interests of the international proletariat. What is needed today is the genuine unity of all who seek the communism of Lenin and Trotsky around the Bolshevik program of world socialist revolution. That is the only way forward.

11 October 1992



Galpain/Reuters

Cossacks, descendants of shock troops of tsarist autocracy, reappear at Congress of People's Deputies.

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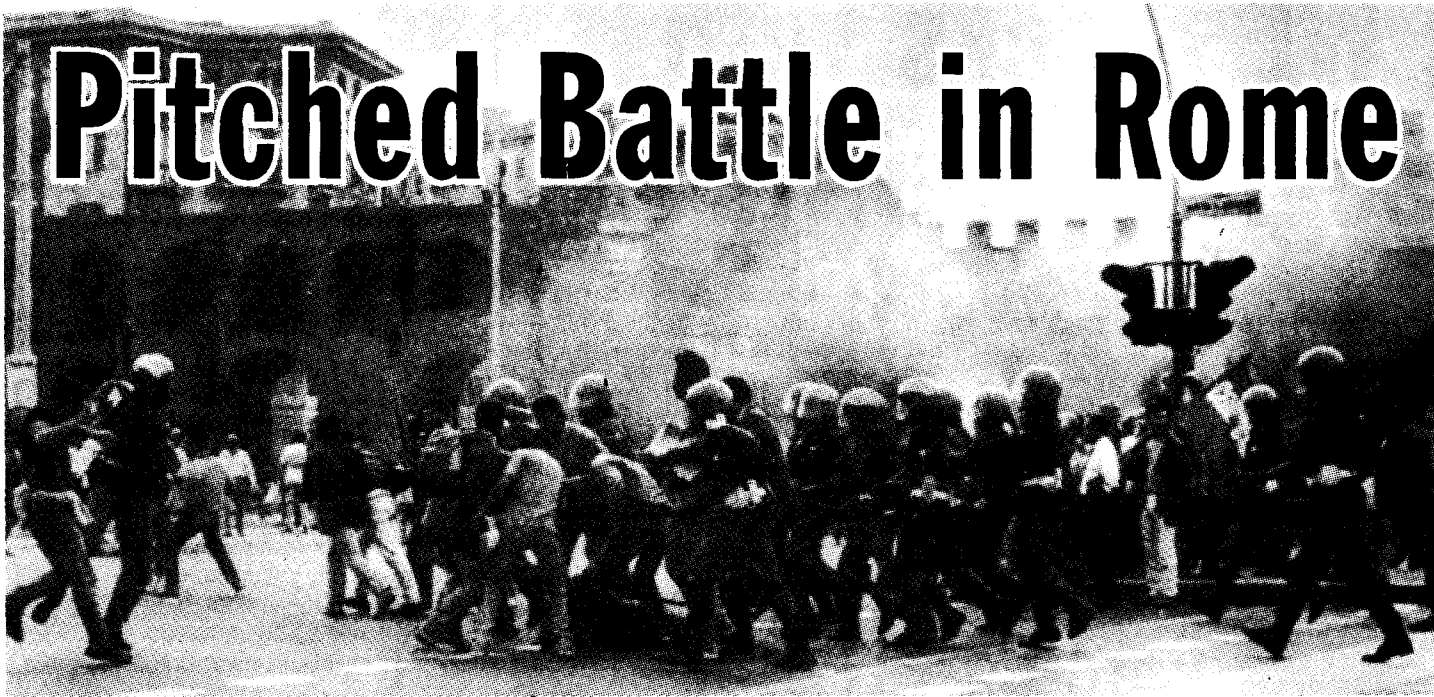
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# Workers Pitted Against Union Tops, Cops



## Pitched Battle in Rome

October 2 demonstration in Rome against government austerity: police and goons of the trade-union bureaucrats disperse workers denouncing sellout leaders.

ROME, October 2—Today was the turn of the Italian capital to protest against the vicious austerity package of the Amato government. Where most capitalist governments talk of “sacrifice” as they seek to tighten the belts of the working class, the current prime minister is calling for “penance.”

Striking government employees from the ministries, municipal workers, teachers, postal workers and other public employees brought the city to a halt as nearly 200,000 workers tried to march on the huge Piazza San Giovanni. They were furious over the July 31 sellout accord between government, business and the union tops that eliminated the *scala mobile* (sliding scale of wages). In huge rallies in Florence, Milano, Torino, Bologna and Naples, angry workers had been pelting labor misleaders with rotten vegetables and worthless coins.

In Rome today, militant workers and youth were hurling ball bearings, bottles and pieces of pavement at the sellout tops of the CGIL-CISL-UIL union federations. The bureaucrats, in turn, surrounded themselves with a huge (10,000-man) helmeted union goon squad which was bused in from the provinces and stood guard in front of the podium from the early morning hours, along with a massive show of police force.

From the very beginning, concentrations of young militants were singled out for special treatment. They were carry-

ing banners proclaiming, “The Workers Must Be Allowed to Speak,” and chanting “general strike!” The contingents of students and youth were forcibly dispersed, producing the first injuries and arrests. By the end of the morning, over 100 had been detained by the police.

Other sections of the march, made up of public sector workers and Rank-and-File Committees (Cobas), also sought to make their way toward the rallying point. As the bureaucrats droned on about pressuring for improvements in the Amato package, the crowd shouted out “you clowns,” “get out of the

way” and “general strike!”

When the crowd pressed toward the platform, the union bureaucracy authorized a charge into the crowd as police fired off tear gas. This was followed by indiscriminate beatings of demonstrators. During the charges, the bureaucrats could be heard screaming, “They’re only 200 delinquents, 200 vagabonds, 200 fascists!” But the crowd wouldn’t leave the square.

One embarrassed union marshal remarked, “Once upon a time the trade unions were there to defend the workers, now they’re here to defend themselves

from the workers.” Over the din, UIL leader Larizza, the main speaker, said under pressure that “if necessary we will make a general strike.” During one of the cop charges, he added, “Let’s thank the police workers.” These were Larizza’s last words, as he was taken away for his own good.

Bertinotti, leader of “Essere Sindacato” (To Be a Union), a grouping close to Rifondazione Comunista (RC), was panic-stricken, yelling out, “Stop this violence somehow!” While RC mouths opposition to the betrayals of CGIL chief Trentin who signed the July 31 agreement, small-time bureaucrats like Bertinotti are terrified by the fact that the union brass can no longer appear before the workers without a security guard of 10,000 goons and cops. When the chips are down, the RC reformists stand with the bureaucrats, not the outraged ranks.

The afternoon demonstration (around 25,000) by the Cobas was like a Sunday afternoon picnic in comparison. The ranks of the working class were not present, and there was no tension because the trade-union bureaucracy was not there. The demo gave the impression of a leftist playpen. Although small advanced sections of the working class see themselves part of this movement, the Cobas slogans center on union democracy rather than calling for revolutionary action. And they try to sidestep the crucial task of breaking the stranglehold of the reformist bureaucracy on the workers.

Militants of the Lega Trotskista, Italian sympathizing section of the International Communist League, sold some 120 copies of their press, including a special supplement on the current workers upsurge (see “Red Hot Autumn in Italy,” WV No. 560, 2 October). ■



Demonstration called by Cobas (Rank and File Committees).

Corriere della Sera

## Oregon Referendum...

(continued from page 16)

Oregon are double what they were this time last year.

The local fascists also direct their murderous terror against racial minorities. In 1988 an Ethiopian immigrant, Mulugeta Seraw, was beaten to death by skinheads in Portland. The killers were linked to San Diego “ex”-KKK grand dragon Tom Metzger through his son, a skinhead leader.

Oregon’s Measure 9 is not the home-grown bigotry of the backwoods Pacific Northwest, but part of a national campaign which is being tested in Oregon in order to advance a vicious reactionary agenda targeting not only gays, but blacks, women and all of the oppressed. Colorado now has a similar measure on the ballot to amend the state constitution to prohibit “protected status based on homosexual, lesbian or bisexual orientation.”

The Christian Coalition, of which OCA is the Oregon chapter, is organizationally

linked to “ex”-Klansman David Duke and arch-bigot Jesse Helms. At the Christian Coalition’s “Road to Victory” conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia last November, members of the OCA attended, along with Helms, Dan Quayle and David Duke booster Reverend Billy McCormack, who introduced Pat Robertson.

OCA promises their associates to take anti-gay legislation on the road to California if things go their way in Oregon. Voting against Measure 9 is certainly called for—but this menace must be resoundingly defeated, which ultimately will not happen through the ballot box, but through class struggle.

Robertson’s followers have made a point of going after not just “mainstream” gays, an oppressed sector of society enjoying little sympathy from the rest of the population, but a particularly demonized group within it, the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA)—libeled as “child molesters”—by prominently displaying them in the OCA’s video smear propaganda.

The Spartacist League, in defending NAMBLA’s democratic rights, has stood against the liberal gay community and “radical” feminists who in past years have shown that they would turn

NAMBLA over to a murderous lynch mob. Last January in San Francisco, some members of the gay milieu literally stood side by side with Confederate flag-waving skinheads in protesting a NAMBLA press conference—criminal complicity with bigots who call for “Death to Child Molesters” as part of their program to murder all gays and lesbians.

As we wrote in a 1983 article in defense of NAMBLA, “Not only is the existence of NAMBLA, the livelihoods and perhaps the lives of its members threatened, but democratic rights for all the oppressed, particularly homosexuals, must be an early casualty in the crusade” (WV No. 321, 14 January 1983). State out of all consensual sexual activity! Government out of the bedroom!

In line with the attacks on NAMBLA, police and residents of Tacoma, Washington literally ran out of town a former supporter of the organization, who had just served a prison term for a child molestation conviction, after police posted notices warning that he posed a “high risk” because he “felt no remorse.” A cop reportedly responsible for tracking NAMBLA’s activities gloated to the *Oakland Tribune* (8 October) that Wash-

ington’s “sexual predator law” helped to keep a “pervert” out of town.

This anti-gay vendetta is one aspect of the reactionary “family values” hysteria. The crusade to “save” the family is an essential part of a quest for social stability, necessarily targeting gays, whose very existence is deemed a “threat.” The “war on drugs,” attacks on women’s right to abortion, criminal neglect of people suffering from AIDS and the onslaught against welfare are the product of decaying capitalism.

The key is to mobilize the social power of the working class against this filth. The Spartacist League demonstrated this in 1982, when Nazis threatened to stage a provocation against Gay Pride Day in Chicago. Instead, the fascists found themselves vastly outnumbered by a contingent of labor, gays, blacks, Jews, and students, mobilized by the communist Spartacist League.

Hard class struggle under revolutionary leadership can cut through the anti-gay, anti-black, anti-labor crusade. To bring an end to this bigotry, it is necessary for the working class to overturn the capitalist system that breeds it and build a socialist future. ■

# Fight Over Malcolm X School

## Detroit: WL Blocks with White Segregationists

Swastikas emblazoned on school doors. A poster reading "We won't have Malcolm X" and signed "KKK." A crowd of angry whites shouting "Open your school in a crack house!" Is this Little Rock, 1956? Selma? Ole Miss? No, it's Detroit 1992.

Last year the Detroit school board opened three "black male academies" for elementary school students, named after Marcus Garvey, Paul Robeson and Malcolm X. This summer, the Malcolm X school was moved to the closed Leslie school in Warrendale, a neighborhood on the far west side of Detroit. Warrendale, which is over 75 percent white (the inverse of the rest of this heavily black city) is home to many white cops who are forced by a residency law to live inside the city limits. There was an eruption of segregationist filth against the opening of the school at two school board meetings in August that left no doubt about the motives of the opposition: "Is this the forcible integration of Warrendale?" one racist shouted.

But there was one organization that rushed to defend the segregationists and deny that the opposition had anything to do with racism! The Detroit-based Workers League and their newspaper, the *Bulletin*, have championed the racists' attempt to keep the Malcolm X school out of Warrendale. The WL brags that their candidates "were warmly received by residents when they canvassed the neighborhood" and "denounced the racist policies of Mayor Coleman Young and the school authorities" (*Bulletin*, 14 August). With that line they could also get applause at a David Duke rally.

The WL says "the issue in Warrendale is not race," and proceeds to disappear every racist taunt and placard at school board meetings and outside the school. With phony talk of uniting the working class in a "color-blind" fight against budget cuts, the WL covers up the raw racism spewing from opponents of the Malcolm X Academy. In dozens of pages denouncing the black Democratic Party liberals as "racist," there is not a single mention of the largely white crowd of several hundred that turned out for a school board meeting on August 3 and shouted down speakers with racist slurs.

Of course, there are whites in Warrendale who aren't racists. However, unlike the Workers League, they can recognize the racist nature of the opposition to the school. One white woman whose son attends Malcolm X spoke out against protestors at the school opening: "It's ridiculous, I'm just interested in getting my son into a good school. The school is mostly black, but so what?" One letter writer to the *Detroit Free Press* wrote:

"I am a white resident of Detroit who grew up in the Warrendale neighborhood. I am appalled, but not surprised, at the racist sentiments expressed by many who oppose the new Malcolm X Academy."

Giving a "left" cover to "we just want our neighborhood school" racists, the *Bulletin* (11 September) screams: "Rad-

**KKK/Nazi symbol of racist terror and murder painted on door of Detroit's Malcolm X Academy. David North's Workers League obscenely says "race isn't the issue," alibis white segregationists.**



Lubens/Detroit Free Press

icals Defend Segregated Schools." This is a prime example of the Workers League brand of laborite provocation, the product of years of tailing after the pro-capitalist, racist labor bureaucracy. While WL honcho David North today writes off the unions as no longer working-class organizations in any sense, on questions of racial oppression he sidles up to the racists in a way that even the UAW's Owen Bieber couldn't get away with.

### "African-Centered" Education

After the board set up the schools as male-only academies, it was forced to admit girl students last year after a court suit by the ACLU and the National Organization for Women. Currently there are 422 boys and 39 girls enrolled in the Malcolm X school, and despite the WL's claim that Warrendale residents cannot send their children there, 160 slots are reserved for neighborhood children.

These "African-centered" schools are a national phenomenon, a response by liberal nationalist educators and politicians to the destruction of the lives of black and Hispanic youth in the cities. But this "voluntary" segregation is a dangerous accommodation to the racist status quo. As opposed to the schemes of black elected officials and black nationalists who accommodate to the rollback of black rights with "Afrocentric" school proposals, the Spartacist League has consistently championed the fight for integrated education. In an exchange last year with jailed Black Panther Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, we pointed out:

"White schoolchildren as well as black schoolchildren need to learn about Denmark Vesey, Frederick Douglass, John Brown, and Karl Marx. But we're Marxists, not idealists, and understand that education is a class question. True quality education for the masses will be possible only with the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of working-class rule."

—"On Integrated Education and Black Liberation,"  
WV No. 526, 10 May 1991

Conditions for children in the Detroit schools mirror the devastation that capitalism has wrought on the working class of the city. The Detroit district's 170,000 students are 90 percent black. According to the Children's Defense Fund, Detroit

ranks first among all major cities in the number of children living in poverty—46.6 percent. Black Democratic mayor Coleman Young, installed by the Big 3 auto bosses to derail and repress social struggle in response to the 1967 ghetto rebellion, has been on the warpath against city unions, slashing wages and thousands of jobs. And school board

superintendent Deborah McGriff has gone after the teachers union, provoking a bitter strike in her efforts to gut teachers' seniority while packing more students into the overcrowded classrooms.

### WL "Blind Eye" to Racism

The Workers League has campaigned heavily in Warrendale, holding a press conference there on August 25, and alibiing the racists on the Sally Jessie Raphael TV show in September. WL Congressional candidate D'Artagnan Collier spews their "color-blind" line that the racists in Warrendale "were justifiably angry at the news that Leslie was to be reopened as a 'black academy' with only a few openings for youth from Warrendale." Then comes his "evenhanded" cover for his campaign pitch to Warrendale: "I am opposed to segregated schools, whether they are proposed by David Duke or by Deborah McGriff" (*Bulletin*, 11 September).

This revolting "blind eye" to racism is nothing new for the Workers League. From its inception, the WL has tailored its program to the most reactionary prejudices of the union bureaucracy. Rather

than speak the truth—that the bedrock racism of U.S. society is the single greatest obstacle to the construction of a multiracial, revolutionary workers party—the WL has responded with something much worse even than the Debsian position that the socialist movement has "nothing special to offer the Negro."

The WL sneeringly calls the Spartacist League's commitment to build black leadership, our view that the black working class is strategic to the success of proletarian revolution in this country, an "obsession with race." And in the streets of Boston and Washington, D.C., this denial of the need to fight against special oppression has placed North & Co. squarely on the wrong side of the class line.

When racist anti-busing mobs took to the streets attacking black schoolchildren in the early 1970s in Boston, the SL fought for mass mobilizations of labor/black defense to stop racist attacks and to extend busing to the suburbs. At the height of the violent, racist rampages, when black schoolchildren's lives were in physical danger and defense of integrated education was posed in the concrete, the WL's *Bulletin* (13 September 1974) declared: "The issue of forced busing is being used to whip up racism to divide the working class."

In November 1982 in Washington, D.C., the Spartacist League initiated and led an important victory against the resurgent racist terror of the Carter/Reagan years, when 5,000 black and white workers and youth drove the KKK off the streets. It was built in sharp struggle against the black Democratic Party politicians and reformists like Workers World who sought to divert workers from stopping the Klan. But for the WL—which wasn't to be found in D.C. that November 27—the successful mobilization was a "Revisionist Frenzy Over Klan" (*Bulletin*, 7 December 1982) and "an adventure which played right into the hands of the police":

"For the Spartacists, the issue in America is race, not class.... The grotesque fixation with the issue of race plays an utterly reactionary role and the Klan undoubtedly sees it as an assist for its own recruitment campaign."

Only Northite pseudo-dialectics could claim that the Klan was emboldened by fleeing before they even donned their sheets. But the KKK will get a boost from the activities of the segregationist thugs the WL is shielding in Warrendale.

If the racists mobilize in the streets against the Malcolm X school, the multiracial Detroit labor movement should be organized to defend those wanting to attend the school. No reliance on the cops or the state! An integrated labor battalion from the nearby and historically militant Ford River Rouge auto plant should be dispatched to dissuade the segregationists from any provocations—including those of the misnamed Workers League. ■

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# Workers League...

(continued from page 5)

Incidentally, the first use of the term "PC," to our knowledge, comes from J. Edgar's how-to chapter on "The Communist Front": "Don't just 'slap' slogans on cardboard. Make sure they are 'politically correct'."

## Police Aides, Vigilantes and Willie Horton

What's behind the new assault on Mark Curtis is a right-wing trend that might be called yuppie feminism. One of the most tangible effects of the women's movement has been the appearance of a layer of women professionals and executives: lawyers, professors, bank managers. They're hostile to the left, and the heroines of this upwardly mobile strata include Democratic women politicians and lady prosecutors, from Liz Holtzman to Des Moines' Catherine Thune. They have a ruling-class outlook, including seeing the state and its police as their defenders and allies, from going after rapists, child abusers and "pornography" to "protecting" abortion clinics (by clamping down on radicals who seek to stop the bible bigots besieging the clinics).

The politics of these self-styled "progressives" are thoroughly bourgeois, and can get pretty reactionary. The Pelka article appeared in the same edition of *On the Issues* (Spring 1991) as a column by editor Merle Hoffman in support of Bush's Persian Gulf War! *On the Issues* has a distinct Zionist flavor, with articles on the "pros and cons" of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. It features photos of the Vigilante Queen, the Guardian Angels' Lisa Sliwa (at the trial of the black youths who brutally assaulted the Central Park jogger). The current (Fall 1992) issue has an article, "Let's Make Rape an Election Issue," which blames Dukakis' 1988 defeat on his wimpy response as to what he would do if Kitty was raped—supposedly showing his "insensitivity"—while Bush at least was addressing the "issue" with the Willie Horton ad!

In the Mark Curtis case, it's striking how the people lined up in the witchhunt against him all base themselves on the story being disseminated by the Des

## On August 5, the Workers League asks:

- How did the police know that Curtis was going to abruptly leave his house in the middle of the night to buy food?
- How did they know he would drive by himself?
- How did they know which store he would go to, and what route he would take?
- How did they know that he would be stopped at a particular red light, where he could be accosted by the girl?
- How did they know that he would agree to let the girl into his car?
- How did they know he would agree to drive her home?
- How did they know that when he arrived at her home, he would get out of his car, go to the porch and then wait placidly to be arrested?

**Bulletin**  
Weekly Organ of the Central Committee of the Workers League  
5 August 1988

## ...A month later, the prosecutor's summation:

- "How did the police, or how did Demetria and Jason or their family, know that the defendant was going to abruptly leave his home, sometime between 8:30 and 9:00, to buy food? How did they know?"
- "How did they know that the defendant would get into a car and drive by himself?"
- "How did they know that the defendant would go to the HyVee store to do his grocery shopping? How did they know what route he would take?"
- "How did they know that he would be stopped at a particular red light, where a girl could approach him? How did they know the light would be red?"
- "How did they know that the defendant would agree to give this girl a ride to help her out?"
- "How did they know that he would agree to drive her to her home, or a home, in what the defense has brought out to be a bad or unsafe neighborhood?"
- "How did they know that when he arrived at the home, he would get out of the car, agree to go to the porch, and then wait calmly to be arrested?"

**Bulletin**  
Weekly Organ of the Central Committee of the Workers League  
16 September 1988

Moines police and their adjuncts. Pelka quotes prosecutor Thune, Marti Anderson of Polk County Victim Services, Demetria Morris' rape crisis counselor Terry Schock. Barry Shuchter, who kicked off the Boston disendorsement campaign, says, "We called the Des Moines Rape Crisis Center who gave us quite a different story" from Curtis' defenders (*Labor Page*, April/May 1990). Well, we called the Des Moines Rape Crisis Center, too, and they answered the phone, "Victim Services." We confirmed that all of these are Polk County, Iowa, official agencies: Catherine Thune, Marti Anderson and Terry Schock are all government spokes-

men and worked together in preparing the case against Mark Curtis. So the witchhunters call up the prosecution, and surprise, they get the prosecution line.

How could you not believe the victim, these righteous feminists ask? A piece of literature titled, "Rape Myths and the Mark Curtis Case," claims: "In fact, more than ninety-eight percent of all rapes reported to the police actually occurred as described by the victim." Yet, as the SWP points out, the source of this assertion can only be the police themselves. In reaction to the whole history of rape trials, in which the woman victim was placed on trial, her character

assassinated and her word dismissed, it has become an article of faith in the "stop-rape movement" that the victim never lies. Russo says the Curtis defense campaign must be fought because it "betrays the already shaky alliances between the feminist, civil rights, labor, and progressive movements," since "trust...cannot be assumed when a white man's word" is taken as truth "against the words and experience of an African-American girl."

This brings to mind the Tawana Brawley case, in which a black teenager having family trouble invented a story about being a victim of a racist rape. This became a cause célèbre as it was pushed by black nationalists with their own agenda and taken up by liberals and radicals who implicitly took the word of "the victim" as good coin. And it was all a pack of lies.

In his article, Pelka quotes Claire Kaplan of the "National Coalition Against Sexual Assault" who sees in the Curtis case "this eternal denial on the part of the left to think that men among their ranks couldn't possibly commit such a crime." Kaplan is one of the main proponents of the victims-don't-lie argument. So much so, that in a Virginia case where the day after a Manassas man was convicted of rape the alleged victim (who was married with two children) recanted, admitting the sex was "probably consensual," Kaplan told the press that such an incident was rare: "if a case is falsely reported...it doesn't even get to a conviction" (*Washington Post*, 9 May 1990). For her, Curtis must be guilty, because otherwise it will damage the "stop-rape movement" and "groups will be divided wherever the SWP takes this campaign."

Kaplan & Co. not only work closely with the police, but they also sanction reckless vigilante action, with not the slightest concern for the rights of the accused. In 1987, a teenage boy in a small California town sued for defamation when his name appeared on flyers posted around the county by the Santa Cruz Women Against Rape listing supposed rapists. The flyers included not only his name but a physical description, his address, place of employment and what kind of car he drove. The young man commented bitterly, "It's a vigilante thing—they're the Lone Ranger and all of a sudden they started getting out of hand with it." The young woman who initially named him to the Women Against Rape settled out of court, putting in writing that "I was not raped by you...on the night described in the flyer, or at any time." Kaplan, however, justified this vigilantism, saying "the whole anti-violence movement got started by guerrilla tactics and this is just one of them" (*Los Angeles Times*, 10 December 1987).

Working as adjuncts of the police, vigilantism, slander, anything goes in this milieu. And don't forget one of the favorite themes of the new McCarthyism, child abuse. The current uproar against and police investigation of Woody Allen, in retribution for leaving Mia Farrow, is the worst kind of frame-up, designed and guaranteed to destroy his reputation and his life. Here also, some enraged feminists are making common cause with the Republican right in their vicious crusade over "family values."

## Boston Feminist Witchhunters

In Boston the anti-Curtis campaign has taken on a particular frenzy. Here the Workers League found fertile ground for its frame-up campaign against Curtis and the SWP. A center of the "disendorsement" campaign is the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, which is the parent outfit of Pelka's MESA. In passing, let us note that this center gets almost half of its funding (\$81,000 out of a total of \$178,000 in 1991) from agencies of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Another chunk of their income comes from the Haymarket People's Fund, based heavily on the

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## Would-Be Prosecutors Can't Get Their Stories Straight

A couple of documents are being circulated by the campaign to get supporters of Mark Curtis' defense to "dis-endorse."

"Labor Defense and the Mark Curtis Case" was written in 1989 by Charles Adams. Adams is a former member of Socialist Action who was expelled by the group for conducting a private "investigation" into the Curtis case; they noted his "secret contact with the Workers League."

"The Case Against Mark Curtis" was written by Greg McNaghten, a Seattle official of Brakemen's Local 1024, in the form of a 29-page open letter to his "fellow UTU [United Transportation Union] members."

These documents are cited as showing how a "leftist" and a "unionist" undertook "independent investigations" and supposedly found that the evidence proved Mark Curtis guilty. But some of this "evidence" is more than suspect: for instance, Adams' account that after Demetria Morris was attacked, "blood was running down her face." This is repeated as fact by other accounts, yet at the trial it was never stated that Morris was bleeding. Where does this come from?

Parts of these documents are bizarrely revolting. Thus Adams reports his "long conversation" with Assistant D.A. Catherine Thune, whom he asked to explain how a person like Mark Curtis, a union

activist committed to the rights of the oppressed, could commit such a crime: "Mrs. Thune explained that she had handled many rape cases and that unfortunately is the profile very often. Mark is a very gentle passive person.... They do lots of little kind things for people but there's an inner rage that may come out only once in a lifetime." So Curtis is deemed prone to rape because he's a quiet person!

Then there's Adams' dismissal of the time discrepancies in Demetria Morris' testimony—he "explains" that black people can't tell time, are guided by "Colored People's Time," and the only reason the defense attorney pushed the time question was that he "was viewing the conception of time from white cultural perspective." This is blatant racism.

UTU official Greg McNaghten also says he "spent several hours on the phone with Mrs. Kathy Thune, the prosecuting attorney in this case," as well as the Iowa State Parole Board, Polk County prosecutors and others, and "as a result of all this digging" concluded that "Mark Curtis was given a fair trial" and is guilty. McNaghten has a novel theory as to why the cops beat Curtis bloody—it was all part of Curtis' plot to show he was framed up: "Ergo: create a mysteriously disappearing woman, throw in police racism

and bigotry; get your self beat up...and you've got yourself a defense."

But, interestingly, on some of the key facts about the case, these two accounts contradict each other. Take the question of dog hairs. The forensic expert testified Demetria Morris had dog hairs all over her sweatshirt, yet no dog hairs were found on Mark Curtis. How can this be, if, according to the story, Curtis wrestled Demetria to the ground and attempted to rape her? The anti-Curtis people attempt to explain this, for instance Adams asserts that "The dog is never kept on the front porch." But McNaghten states flatly, "Demetria testified that they often let the dog on the front porch."

Curtis says that after work on March 4, he attended and spoke, in Spanish, at a large meeting (which was videotaped) called to protest the INS raid and arrest of 17 fellow workers at the Swift plant. Adams says he uncovered the fact that "Nobody remembers him [Curtis] even at the meeting," the meeting was small and the media wasn't present. But McNaghten says that he spoke with a member of Curtis' union local who "said it was true that Curtis spoke and in Spanish but he did so from the assembled crowd and was one of a great many who spoke up."

In repeating the lines fed to them by the prosecutors, the witchhunters can't even get their stories straight. ■

# Elections...

(continued from page 1)

ticket balancing, Clinton chose as his running mate a fellow white Southerner, Al Gore, a stalwart of the party's right wing. Previously, Gore was best known for his wife Tipper's campaign against "obscenity" in rock music.

The Clinton/Gore campaign is aimed at the country club set, not factory bowling teams. Jesse Jackson, the most prominent black Democrat and spokesman for the party's so-called left wing, is playing the invisible man this election season. At the same time, Clinton is playing up his close ties to Fortune 500 boardrooms and Wall Street. This year Goldman, Sachs gave Clinton twice as much as they laid on Bush.

Nonetheless, the Democratic campaign is capitalizing on the decay of American capitalism, which in the public's eye is now personified by George Herbert Walker Bush III. According to a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll in mid-September, one-third of those opposed to Bush say it's mainly because his policies favor the wealthy over the average person. And in the bland Sunday night three-way debate, Bush was the big loser, mainly over the economy.

The American-flag-waving, racist and reactionary demagoguery which worked for the Republicans in the past few elections is not working now. The initial move by Bush/Quayle to run an anti-feminist campaign against career woman Hillary Clinton under the rubric of "family values" blew up right in their faces. The

Nazi-like celebration of "*Kinder, Küche, Kirche*" (children, kitchen, church) at the Houston Republican convention in August truly frightened people. A local newspaper in Salinas, Kansas—hardly a center of the "cultural elite"—proposed that Bush be impeached because: "He invites the kind of bigotry and hate that has destroyed nation after nation."

The overwhelming majority of women in all social groups regard abortion as a vital democratic right. While support for the two candidates is about evenly split among men, Clinton enjoys a 20 percent lead over Bush among women, and the

gap among working women is even greater. Some wealthy women executives, who had bankrolled right-wing Republicans since the days of Barry Goldwater in the early 1960s, are now big contributors to Clinton.

Likewise, Republican efforts to tar Clinton as a Vietnam War draft dodger haven't stuck. And Clinton/Gore's attempt to out-patriot Bush by denouncing Washington's help in arming Saddam Hussein prior to the Gulf War has fallen on deaf ears. These kinds of things don't matter to an electorate which is struggling and failing to make ends meet. One

Georgia Republican politician observed: "I think that in February or March of last year, something clicked in with the American public, where they said, we're sick of the scandal of the week, that unless it's something of cataclysmic proportions, we don't give a damn about it. They're just concerned about the economy" (*New York Times*, 26 September).

The widespread disgust with the Washington establishment—Republican and Democrat alike—found an outlet last spring in the candidacy of the weird and sinister Texas billionaire Ross Perot, who talked about radical solutions to the country's sorry economic state. Perot—a big-time federal government contractor posturing as an anti-Washington outsider—was leading both Bush and Clinton in the polls. Had the "Ross for boss" campaign succeeded in cutting across the traditional two-party system, the United States could have faced a major constitutional crisis. As it was, under pressure, Perot dropped out of the race.

Perot just re-entered but is no longer treated as a serious candidate. The public views him as a quitter. He got a boost in Sunday's debate, because he didn't sound like a mealy-mouthed politician. But in reality what Perot wants is a corporate state to impose an American version of the "austerity" programs which international bankers inflict upon Third World countries ruled by military juntas.

As liberal columnist Russell Baker put it: "Beware the millionaire calling for sacrifice." American working people are already sacrificing dearly, regardless of what the candidates for the White House are calling for. They are sacrificing for



Pittsburgh Press strikers burn copies of scab paper, July 27. Hard class struggle is needed against bankrupt American capitalism.

# Workers League...

(continued from page 13)

inheritance of Abby Rockefeller and the Kellogg heirs, which underwrites various "progressive" causes in the Boston area. Until several months ago, NAACP official Bertin was on the Board of Directors of the Haymarket fund. What the WL has tapped into here is a feminist/popular-front milieu in which key actors have hated the SWP (and anyone they consider "Trots") for the last 20 years.

It goes back to 1970 when the SWP split the Boston radical women's group Cell 16, led by Roxanne Dunbar and among whose founders and funders was Abby Rockefeller. The history of "Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975" by Alice Echols (*Daring to Be Bad* [1989]), notes: "Cell 16's shift from Marxism might have been related to the Socialist Worker's Party's (SWP) attempted take-over of the group some time after Dunbar's departure.... non-SWP women circulated a letter throughout the movement alerting women to the SWP's efforts to 'infiltrate' feminist groups." Old history? Not at all. It's still useful in whipping up anti-communist frenzy.

This summer, the New York Women's Action Coalition (WAC) was a hotbed of controversy after abortion clinic defense demonstrations against the combined efforts of Operation Rescue and Cardinal O'Connor on the eve of the Democratic Party convention. Political polarization at WAC meetings led to an exclusion attempt against the Spartacist League and the ISO. At one meeting we found rent-a-cops and lady goons at the door, and leaflets of pages from a book by Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960* (1990) retailing horror stories about how the Boston women's liberation movement was "infiltrated" by "outsiders, primarily by the Socialist Workers' Party," which had "targeted" Cell 16. Railing against "takeover attempts by the Trots,"

Davis wrote: "The Cell 16 women soon realized that they'd lost control. The Trots had their mailing list; they had the signature on the bank account...they had most of the back issues of the journal and the posters."

Certainly, the SWP's apolitical organizational maneuvering in the style of the Stalinist CP leaves them open to this kind of anti-communist attack (as occurred also in NOW at around the same time). Moreover, the by then anti-Trotskyist SWP recruited women not to Marxism but to socialist-flavored feminism. In contrast, the SL was able to beat back the WAC redbaiting attack with an up-front defense of our communist program for women's liberation through socialist revolution (see "SL Zaps WAC Attack," *WV* No. 557, 7 August). But in the Mark Curtis case, what's notable is that liberal witchhunters are still burning over the SWP, and this feeds into their desire to burn Curtis at the stake. This is the culture medium of ex-New Leftists-become-social-democrats, the rad-lib Jamaica Plain crowd (more lib than rad) in which Pelka, Russo, Bertin, Shuchter and their friends are getting a hearing. And the SWP can't fight it because they capitulate to it politically, not wanting to "alienate" potential bloc partners in their endless lowest common denominator pop-front coalitions.

## WL and the Anti-Curtis Cabal

We have had our own experience with this crowd. In March 1991, when fascist David Duke tried to hold a rally at Boston's Old South Meeting House, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee initiated a united-front demonstration and mobilized 1,500 people in the streets to stop this Klansman-in-a-suit. The NAACP and the various bureaucrats around *Labor Page* gave us the run-around and refused to endorse. And a slanderous whispering campaign was started, violence-baiting the Partisan Defense Committee and SL and claiming that the communists just want to "take all the credit," to try to poison the atmosphere and prevent a united-front mobilization. Above all, this milieu of liberals, reformists and labor bureaucrats don't like reds mobilizing in what they

consider "their" constituencies, because it undermines their political "credit"-ability. It's noteworthy that when there is a major class battle, to defend minorities against the fascist Duke or to protest cop brutality in L.A., these friends of the police are nowhere to be seen...or show up only to trash Mark Curtis!

This slander campaign has become even more ominous now that it has been taken up by a "respectable" layer of anti-rape feminists and wannabe bureaucrats. Their anti-communism is their own, but their ammunition comes from the professional provocateurs of David North's Workers League. This is hardly the first time that North's sinister outfit has acted as finger-men for forces hostile to the interests and defense of the workers movement. In 1983, on the eve of the British coal miners strike, the WL's British mentors, the Workers Revolutionary Party, set off an anti-red witchhunt against miners union leader Arthur Scargill by "exposing" his forthright statement that Polish Solidarność, the favorite "union" of Ronald Reagan, was "anti-socialist." The WRP "exposé" was taken up by Cold War labor bureaucrats and the labor-hating Fleet Street press with the aim of crushing the militant miners union.

In the late 1970s, the WL tried to use the bourgeois courts against the SWP, in the Alan Gelfand case, demanding that it turn over its membership lists, financial records and minutes to the imperialist government which had been spying on it for 50 years, most recently in the COINTELPRO case. Meanwhile, for years North's "International Committee," then under founder-leader Gerry Healy, was on the payroll of virtually every Arab regime in the Near East. By its own later admission, the IC received over one million pounds sterling (at least) from these kings, sheiks and tinpot colonels. In exchange, the "IC" offered to supply the names of, and intelligence on, prominent "Zionists" in "finance, politics, business, the communications media and elsewhere" to Qaddafi's Libya. Financial backing from Saddam Hussein to the "IC" bought his regime not only the publicity services of the Healy/Northites—whose press hailed the 1978 execution of 21 Iraqi

Communist Party members—but photographs of anti-Hussein protesters in Britain.

Insofar as one can speak of this Healyite outfit on a political level, its defining characteristics have been vicious anti-Sovietism and a crude workerist adaptation to the Cold War AFL-CIO tops. Their catering to the labor bureaucracy means mimicking every form of racial insensitivity and political backwardness. Or in the immortal words of former Workers League leader Tim Wohlforth: "the working class hates faggots, women's libbers and hippies and so do we"! These days, along with targeting the Curtis campaign, the Workers League's other major activity in Detroit is blocking with white racists against the Malcolm X school (see article on page 12). But in order to get Mark Curtis, the Northites suddenly and cynically "discover" black oppression and play to the bourgeois feminists and "stop rape" vigilantes.

The Curtis case is the latest installment of the Northites' psychotic "Security and the Fourth International" campaign slandering the SWP as an organization supposedly controlled by the U.S. government. The WL's *Bulletin* (17 July) writes: "The issue has gone far beyond the guilt or innocence of Mark Curtis. The real question is: What is the Socialist Workers Party, and whose interests does it serve?" The same article provides a veritable data sheet of the names of leading SWPers and their industrial employers. This scurrilous McCarthyism is then offered as "proof" that they are police agents—because they got hired! (Of course, for Pelka & Co., it's the opposite, Curtis is a dishonest commie because he lied to the boss!)

Today the Northites act as brain-trusters for government prosecutors, right-wing feminists, AFL-CIO labor traitors, to get the SWP. Only a paranoid believes history is a conspiracy, but everybody knows there are conspiracies in history. And about North's organization we can only warn: Beware! To paraphrase the *Bulletin*, "what the Workers League is" is pretty hard to fathom, but "whose interests it serves" are definitely not those of women, minorities or the working class. ■

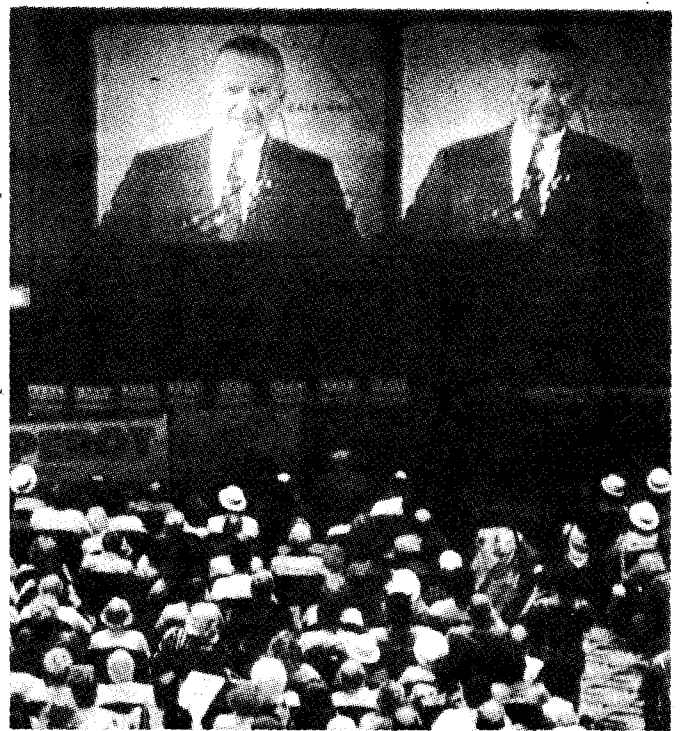




Harrity/U.S. News & World Report



David Ake



Renato Rotolo

Clinton, Bush, Perot: three faces of Wall Street rule. Capitalist candidates offer reactionary "family values," flag-waving, Big Brother government.

the rapacious greed of those who own the country's productive wealth.

### For a Workers Government to Rebuild America!

In the last year of the last Democratic presidency, Jimmy Carter's, the U.S. experienced both a deep recession and near-runaway inflation. In 1980, Reagan rode into the White House by combining a pocketbook appeal with racist demagoguery. The "tax revolt" promised to increase the take-home pay of lower- and middle-class whites by cutting social programs seen as especially benefiting the black and Hispanic poor—welfare, public health and housing, aid to the cities, etc.

While the poor certainly got the ax, there was no tax cut for the so-called middle class. The reduction in federal income tax rates was more than offset by higher Social Security deductions, increased federal excise taxes (e.g., on gasoline) as well as higher state and local taxes. Only the richest one percent of the American population saw tax "relief." The federal taxes they paid fell from 32 percent of their multimillion-dollar incomes in 1980 to 29 percent today.

To finance the massive military buildup against the Soviet Union while cutting taxes for the wealthy, the Reagan/Bush regime borrowed like crazy, especially from Japanese and German moneymen. Echoing Perot, Clinton is campaigning against the federal deficit as supposedly a burden to future generations. By far the fastest-growing item in the federal budget has been interest on the national debt, which increased five-fold since Reagan took office.

This year interest payments from the U.S. Treasury to Wall Street, Tokyo and Frankfurt bankers will reach almost \$300 billion, an amount greater than total Social Security benefits and ten times federal spending on education. The orgy of financial parasitism indulged in by Washington in the '80s was paralleled

in the private capitalist sector by the corporate raiding/leveraged buyout binge. But America's financial house of cards collapsed a few years ago. The main reason this recession goes on and on—the head of Tandy computer called it a recession with nine lives—is that corporate treasurers are using their meager profits to reduce their mountains of debt rather than expand production and hire more workers. And Clinton doesn't even pretend to have a program for ending the recession and putting the unemployed to work.

There's a lot of talk about job retraining programs. But where are jobs for even the most highly trained workers? An instructor who teaches welding to laid-off factory workers in Missouri says having this basic industrial skill doesn't make them any more employable. "You've got unemployed welders all over the St. Louis area," he told a radio call-in talk show. In California's Silicon Valley, computer programmers and hardware technicians are getting pink slips.

If skilled workers like welders and computer techs are hurting, the plight of those without skills, jobs or savings is truly desperate. In early September the Census Bureau reported that the number of people living below the official government poverty level soared last year by two million. The federal government itself recognizes that almost 36 million American men, women and children now live in poverty, the highest level in over a quarter century. One-third of all blacks and almost 30 percent of Hispanics are below the poverty line.

With the elections focused heavily on the economy, the bourgeois media is to some degree revealing the grim conditions of life and death in this country. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* (22 September) ran a headline: "Heating or eating? Spare poor the choice." Come winter, many residents of North Philadelphia cannot afford to pay their utility bills, so they resort to lanterns and kerosene

lamps for light, heat and cooking. In other words, in America's late 20th century cities, people are reduced to the conditions of mid-19th century log cabins. Last winter, the *Inquirer* reported, at least five Philadelphians were killed when their homes were set afire by gas heaters.

If millions of poor try to survive the winter with dangerous gas heaters, countless others have no shelter from the cold at all. Todd Gitlin, a former New Leftist turned liberal academic, has written: "There is, in America, scarcely a downtown to be found today without its colonies of the desperate and demented, taking their bits of space on the sidewalks, rummaging through garbage cans for bottles, cultivating their panhandling routines or wandering down the streets looking strangely accustomed to their condition" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 19 April).

Gitlin, like all liberals, blames this state of affairs on "the legacy of the Reagan-Bush years," implying that things would be fundamentally different if Carter, Mondale and Dukakis had been elected president. However, the Democratic-controlled Congress supported all the basic economic programs of the Reagan/Bush White House. More fundamentally, the homeless wandering the nation's cities, the black welfare mothers freezing in ghetto slums, the laid-off factory workers trying to feed their families on food stamps and unemployment insurance are not the victims of Reaganomics as such but of capitalist decay.

Defending himself against the charge

that he's responsible for the economic misery engulfing the country, Bush points out that not only the U.S. but also West Europe and Japan are mired in a slump. In his own way and for his own reasons, Bush is stating a fundamental truth: no bourgeois government—even that of the most powerful capitalist state—can control the basic economic conditions. Capitalism is an internationally linked system driven by the profit-grasping operations of multinational corporations and banks.

To bring down this system of poverty, racism and war requires hard class struggle, and above all a leadership with the program and determination to mobilize the oppressed against their common enemies. But the present "leadership" of the labor movement has been busily dismantling union gains won through decades of struggle. And the Los Angeles riots dramatically revealed the utter political bankruptcy of the Democratic "black elected officials." American workers and oppressed minorities desperately need communist leadership.

There will be no end to the politics of misery unless the working class and poor rise up and seize the country's productive wealth from the directors of the Fortune 500 corporations and the Wall Street financiers. Only a globally planned socialist economy can rebuild America's decaying industrial base, provide homes for the homeless and a decent life for all working people and their children. Break with the two parties of capitalist misery—For a workers party to fight for a workers government! ■

## Death Penalty...

(continued from page 16)

of those Dixiecrats who thinks that Washington is their personal plantation. Shelby originally wanted to impose the death penalty outright, but was dissuaded from that by some of the "moderates" of the millionaires' club. The measure will now appear as a referendum on the November ballot. We oppose the death penalty because we do not accord the racist, capitalist state the right to decide who lives and who dies, because this legal barbarism necessarily enhances the brutalization of society in all respects. And in America, the primary victims are black, Latino and poor.

Meanwhile, the capitalist media is whipping up hysteria over crime in order to overcome the tradition of opposition to the death penalty here. The proponents of death are in an all-out drive to get the referendum passed—and they may succeed. Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly and other politicians don't even oppose the death penalty, only the way Congress is ramming it down D.C.'s throat. Kelly,

who would have the power to commute death sentences if the measure passes, has already declared she will not stop these legal lynchings. And the "black elected officials" are promoting Clinton, who last January made a show of going back to Arkansas to preside over the execution of Rickey Ray Rector, a brain-damaged black man.

About the only politician openly campaigning against the death penalty is former mayor Marion Barry, who just assured himself election to the city council representing Ward 8, the desperately poor Anacostia area of Southeast D.C. Barry was set up in a honey trap by the feds in 1991, was railroaded in court and did his time. But blacks in D.C. voted to return him to office despite the howls from the liberals at the *Washington Post*. It is a testimony to the bankruptcy of the black Democratic front men for capitalism that Barry, who was always the willing instrument of the real estate interests against the black city unions, can posture as the champion of black D.C. against the death penalty.

The power of the multiracial labor movement must be brought out now to stop the assembly line of death in this country. Abolish the racist death penalty! No legal lynching in D.C.! ■

## Women and Revolution

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## No to the Racist Death Penalty!

# Congress Decrees Executions for Black D.C.

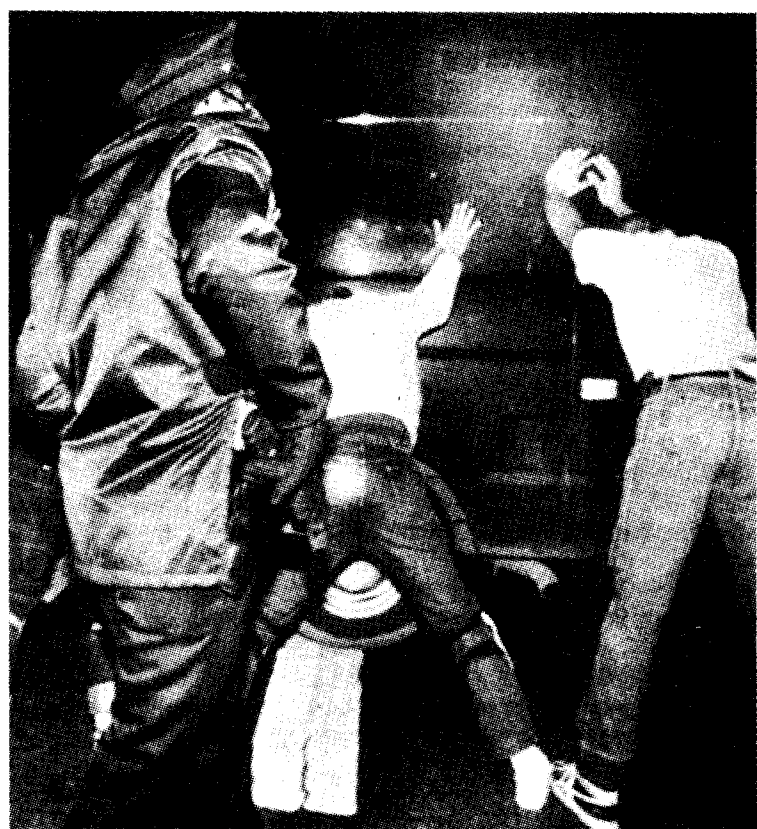
WASHINGTON, D.C.—The racist rulers are trying a new tack to terrorize the 70 percent black population of “their” capital city. The death penalty was repealed here in 1981; no one has been executed since 1957. Now the capitalist politicians want to impose the broadest death penalty law in the country—and it will be only blacks who are executed. Today, 42 percent of the city’s young black males are either in jail, on parole or facing trial. But the prosecutors complain that juries aren’t sending enough to the pen! D.C. residents can’t vote for Congress, but Congress says they can die at the hands of the state.

Every year at budget time it’s the same ritual. Dixiecrats in the House District Committee rail against local politicians. Whichever anti-abortion bigot is in the White House vetoes the piddling federal appropriation to D.C. until the city agrees not to spend any money to subsidize abortions for low-income women. This year Congress gutted D.C.’s “domestic partners” law, which would have allowed homosexuals (and all D.C. residents who don’t have a state-sanctioned relationship) to add their spouses to their health insurance. And they’re pushing the death penalty as the “answer” to the high murder rate.

Washington abounds in mass murderers—in the White House and on Capitol Hill. They ordered the gratuitous



Cops’ nightly reign of terror against D.C. youth under the guise of the racist “war on drugs.”



Independent photos

slaughter of tens of thousands of men, women and children in Iraq. Black life is cheap for the ruling class. They sanctimoniously cluck their tongues at

the “crime rate,” while carrying out a policy of legal *genocide* against black ghettos through hunger, disease, homelessness, killer cops. And now they want

to add D.C. to their death belt.

The drive for the death penalty has been led by Alabama Senator Shelby, one

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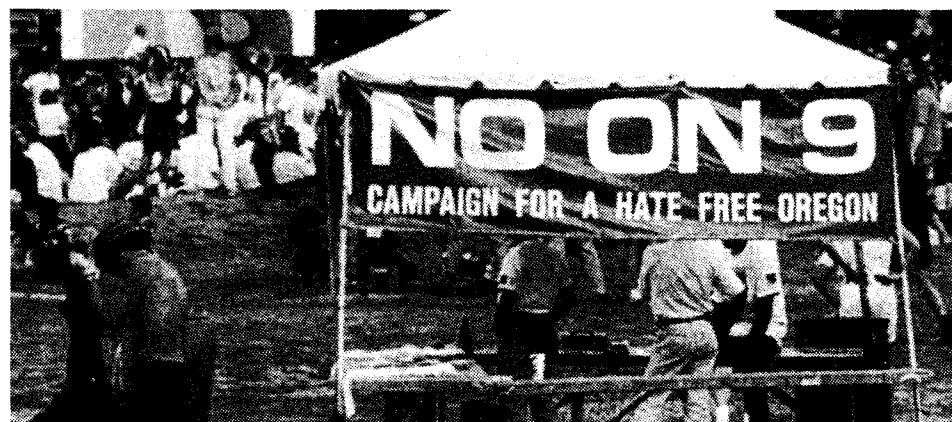
# Defeat Oregon Gay-Bashing Referendum!

On September 26, a young lesbian and a gay man, Hattie Mae Cohens and Brian Mock, were murdered in Salem, Oregon when a firebomb was thrown through the window of their apartment. Four skinhead punks, who have ties to a neo-Nazi group, have been arrested in connection with the firebombing murders.

This grisly act of fascist terrorism takes place in a climate of anti-gay hysteria fueled by the bipartisan crusade to “restore family values.” A band of religious bigots in Oregon has put a measure

on the ballot that would amend the state constitution to classify homosexuality as “abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse.”

Measure 9, also known as the “Abnormal Behaviors Initiative”—sponsored by the Oregon Citizens Alliance, an outfit fronting for ultrarightist Pat Robertson’s Christian Coalition—would take the witchhunt against gays and lesbians to new heights: firing schoolteachers and other state employees; taking away child custody rights, business licenses,



Wojahn/Oregonian

Anti-gay referendum in Oregon incites murderous terrorism against gay men and women.

public facilities and rally rights; pulling books off shelves and censoring public television shows. Teachers at all grade levels would be required to “assist in setting a standard for Oregon’s youth” that homosexuality is “to be discouraged and avoided.”

This anti-gay, anti-sex legal code would be the most repressive in the country and *must be smashed*. Beyond criminalizing gays and lesbians, this “legal” bigotry gives the green light to skinheads and other violent vermin to

terrorize them, as well as setting them up for gay-bashing by the cops.

The same day that Cohens and Mock were murdered in Salem, the anti-Measure 9 office in Eugene was broken into, its files with phone lists and names stolen, and a sinister leaflet posted on its door and at the homes of two supporters. Jean Marchant, a lesbian living in Springfield, told the *New York Times* of being spit on and called a “queer.” In fact, reported attacks against gays in

*continued on page 11*