

## Jesse Jackson Fronts for Party of War and Racism

# Unchain Labor, Blacks— Break with the Democrats!



AP  
WV Photo  
Democrats Dukakis and Jackson, no friends of labor and blacks. Spartacists at Harlem Hospital protest against racist austerity and cop terror in Democrat Koch's New York.

We print below excerpts from a talk given in San Francisco on June 10 by Don Alexander of the Spartacist League Central Committee.

About a decade ago, at a news conference Democrat Jimmy "Ethnic Purity" Carter, in response to a decision which denied Medicare for poor women for abortions, had the following to say: "Life is not fair." Now, if that's what Jimmy Carter said a decade ago, the bourgeoisie's prescription for working people and oppressed in America today, particularly in light of the stock market crisis, is more pain and more suffering. Because it was this "born again" anti-Soviet Democrat who launched Cold War II over Afghanistan and paved the way for the certified nuclear nut Ronald Reagan, and a stargazer at that.

The imperialist racist Democratic Party, which brought World War I under Woodrow Wilson, World War II under Roosevelt, the Korean War under Truman, and the Vietnam War under JFK and LBJ, is no longer even making the cynical promises of yesteryear. Like their twins and partners in the Republican Party, they have been waging a bipartisan class war against working people and oppressed minorities as an integral part of their war drive against the Soviet Union.

Our starting point as revolutionaries is that capitalism cannot be reformed.

## Fight for a Workers Party!

The whole system is set up to oppress and exploit working people and minorities, and it will take a socialist revolution under the leadership of a multi-racial Trotskyist vanguard party to lead a united working-class struggle to the seizure of state power, by smashing the bourgeois state machine and replacing it with the rule of the working class.

The fight for black liberation is strategic to the fight for proletarian revolution in the U.S. The all-sided brutal racial oppression is widely documented, there's a proliferation of studies with regard to the deterioration of life—things are worse for the black masses in comparison to the 1930s in terms of sheer social misery. Blacks are forcibly segregated at the bottom of American society as an oppressed race-color caste—ghettoized, lumpenized and terrorized. The last hired, the first fired, the specially oppressed black population will achieve its centuries-old quest for genuine freedom by helping to build that revolutionary workers party that can put an end to the decrepit system of capitalism.

Now the American dream is not only a racist nightmare for the black population in this country, but it's a racist

nightmare a thousand and a million times over. The system of capitalist anarchy in this country increasingly is no longer even functioning off a reserve army of the unemployed, who historically have been disproportionately black. Today in racist capitalist America, we witness the absolute rot and decay of this sick, dying capitalist system, as reflected in the homelessness, the police terror and murder, the number of poverty-stricken women heading up families, the number of babies dying in their early years. The absolute pauperization of the ghetto masses and the immiseration of the working class in America is the unmistakable sign of capitalism in its death agony.

### Jackson Campaign a Trap for Labor and Blacks

So this is an election year, and the labor fakers, the fake-left and other defenders of capitalism are saying: Vote Democrat, Don't Fight. They're playing the capitalist game once again, and pushing the greatest deception and fraud: that the party of Kennedy and the party of George Wallace, the party of the Klansman Tom Metzger, is the party

of the "little people" and the "common man." The reformist fake-left in this country is sprinting at breakneck speed to chain labor and blacks to the chariot of the so-called "lesser evil" capitalist Democratic Party. For the left, the Jackson campaign has become the issue of the American popular front, the vehicle for class collaboration which ties the working class to the bourgeois parties.

Obviously, Jackson can't come to the masses with a program like the late Clarence Pendleton of the Civil Rights Commission, or with a program offered by a character like Reverend Ike, who once said that the best way to help poor people is not to be one. So he's running around posturing as a New Deal liberal in the spirit of Roosevelt, combining anti-corporate rhetoric, flag-waving protectionism and anti-drug crusading. And he's the only one of the bourgeois candidates who's making cynical promises. His advisers, like the crooked Georgia banker Bert Lance, they don't mind it, because they know he's following the master's advice, to get those blacks to the polls and shut up about black rights.

He's done that and more. For example, initially he said the death penalty was supposed to be central to his campaign. So during the primaries while he was running around, Willie Darden was executed in Florida. Mumia Abu-Jamal, former Panther, MOVE, journalist, class-war prisoner, on death row—nothing said about that. The incineration of the Philly MOVE commune; orchestrated by the black Democratic Party mayor there, Wilson Goode, along with the FBI and Edwin Meese. Jackson's response to that? We need black contractors to rebuild! Geronimo Pratt, foremost class-war prisoner in America, who's languished in jails for close to 20 years, victim of

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# PDC Partisan Defense Committee

## CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

### Free Leaders of Turkish CP!

On 16 November 1987 Turkish police arrested Dr. Nihat Sargin, general secretary of the Turkish Workers Party, and Haydar Kutlu, head of the "official" pro-Moscow Communist Party of Turkey, as they emerged from a plane at Istanbul airport. Handcuffed and blindfolded, Sargin and Kutlu were taken to the notorious "Deep Investigation Laboratory" of the security police and thrown into solitary confinement for 19 days of torture. Sixty-year-old Sargin was kicked, hosed with freezing water and hung by his arms from the ceiling.

Sargin and Kutlu are charged under the infamous articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code, modeled on Mussolini's fascist Code of 1936. The charges include "making Communist propaganda," "insulting the president" and "forming an illegal organization aiming to overthrow the constitutional order." They were arrested as they stepped off the plane in their well-publicized return to join in the "democratization" (!) process in Turkey and establish their newly merged party, the United Communist Party of Turkey (TBKP), as a legal organization.

Since Turkey's 1980 NATO military coup, half a million people have been detained, the trade-union federation DISK was banned and many of its leaders imprisoned. Thousands remain in jails for political "crimes," 400 face the death penalty, and the genocidal repression of the Kurds in eastern Turkey continues.

Over the past 18 months a new wave of workers' strikes and student struggles against the brutal austerity rule of the Evren regime has swept Turkey. The charges against Kutlu and Sargin are a sinister attack on all Turkish workers and leftists. But in an act of sectarian stupidity, the rival left-Stalinist Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) responded by branding Kutlu and Sargin as "traitors," suggesting they arranged their own arrest as part of a "deal" with the Turkish government. Whatever their illusions in Turkish "democracy," Kutlu and Sargin are in the hands of the notorious security police. This hideous frame-up must be defeated—and the TKP's criminal sectarianism repudiated—by mass workers protests in Turkey and around the world.

Nihat Sargin (left) and Haydar Kutlu, leaders of United Communist Party of Turkey, imprisoned and tortured by NATO regime.



Committee for the Freedom of Kutlu and Sargin

East 1st Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Contributions can be sent to: Mark Curtis Defense Committee, P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311.

\* \* \*

On May 13 MOVE member Alberta 'Africa' was finally released from Muncy state prison. Pennsylvania state officials forced Alberta to serve every single day of her seven-year sentence on charges arising from a 1977 cop siege on MOVE's Powelton Village home. They released her on the third anniversary of the hideous police bombing of MOVE's Osage Avenue home. Now MOVE's Minister of Information, Alberta vowed to continue the struggle for the release of all imprisoned MOVE members.

\* \* \*

Time is running out for the Sharpeville Six, who still face the apartheid hangman. Worldwide protest won a stay of execution in March. But on June 13 a South African Supreme Court judge cleared the way for a July hanging, rejecting their application for a new trial. The Six were convicted, by the state's use of a Nazi-like theory of "collective guilt," for being in an area where an enraged crowd of black rent strikers stoned to death a hated collaborator of the white supremacist regime in September 1984. On June 20 the PDC sent a letter demanding their immediate release, stating, "The Sharpeville Six have been condemned to die for one reason—they 'shared a common purpose' with the millions of black South Africans, and hundreds of millions around the world, who detest your racist apartheid regime." An international outcry of protest must immediately be raised to save them from the apartheid hangman's noose!

\* \* \*

Mumia Abu-Jamal continues to fight for his life (see "Abolish the Death Penalty! Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!" *WV* No. 454, 3 June). There has been an

*continued on page 10*

#### Behind the Moscow Trials



TROTSKY

The Soviet bureaucracy has just exonerated the victims of Stalin's 1936 show trial, among them Lenin's close comrades-in-arms Gregory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev. Trotsky's son and comrade in the Left Opposition, Leon Sedov, himself among those accused and later a victim of Stalin's terror, wrote in a pamphlet exposing the Moscow Trials that the nationalist bureaucracy's aim was to drown the internationalist foundations of Leninism in a sea



LENIN

of blood. The Stalinist degeneration of the October Revolution cannot be reversed by bureaucratic fiat, but only through the revolutionary action of the Soviet masses.

The corpses of Zinoviev and Kamenev are intended to prove to the world bourgeoisie Stalin's break with the revolution, to serve as a certificate of his dependability and maturity as a national statesman...

The Moscow trial has shown once again to what extent the bureaucracy has played out its progressive role as the keeper of the achievements of the October Revolution. It has become an obstacle to the further development of the USSR, as the interests of this development come into irreconcilable conflict with this bureaucracy, socially, culturally and politically. To open the way for the development of the USSR to socialism, what's needed is to liquidate the bureaucracy...

The Soviet proletariat can arrive at socialism only through the rebirth and free development of soviet democracy through the legalization of soviet parties, above all the party of revolutionary Bolshevism. Yet the rebirth of soviet democracy is possible only as the result of the overthrow of the bureaucracy. Only the power of the revolutionary working masses can overthrow the bureaucracy.

—Leon Sedov, *Rotbuch über den Moskauer Prozeß* (Red Book on the Moscow Trial, October 1936)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon

EDITOR: Jan Norden

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Noah Wilner

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Jon Lawrence

EDITORIAL BOARD: George Foster, Liz Gordon, Frank Hunter, Jane Kerrigan, Len Meyers, Jan Norden, James Robertson, Reuben Samuels, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer, Marjorie Stamberg, Noah Wilner (Closing editor)

Workers Vanguard (USPS 098-770) published biweekly, except 2nd issue August and with 3-week interval December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: 732-7862 (Editorial), 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. Domestic subscriptions: \$5.00/24 issues. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers Vanguard, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

No. 456

1 July 1988

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No. 35 SUMMER 1988

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Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League

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# The "Blank Space" That Haunts Gorbachev's Russia

## Leon Trotsky: Fighter for World Revolution

JUNE 27—As tensions mount within the Soviet bureaucracy with the approach of the Communist Party's special conference, set to open June 28, the "historical" issue of the victims of Stalin's purge trials has become one of burning immediacy. But as the Gorbachev regime rehabilitates the leaders of the Bukharinite Right Opposition and the Zinoviev-Kamenev capitulators, there is one glaring "blank space" which continues to haunt Gorbachev's Russia: Leon Trotsky, co-leader together with Lenin of the Russian Revolution, founder of the Red Army and leader of the Left Opposition—the only ones who fought Stalin to the end, those who stood on the Leninist program of communist internationalism.

On Monday, June 13, the Supreme Court of the USSR formally reversed



Bulletin of the Opposition  
**Leon Sedov, Trotsky's son and organizer of International Left Opposition, victim of Stalin's terror.**

the convictions of Kamenev, Zinoviev, Pyatakov, Radek, and 29 other Bolshevik leaders framed up in the first two Moscow Trials in 1936 and 1937. Earlier, the court had rehabilitated Bukharin, Rykov, Rakovsky and 17 others convicted in the 1938 frame-up trial of the so-called "Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites." Although the latest court decision cleared "everyone involved in their trials," there was no mention of Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov. But on Friday, June 17, Yuri Afanasyev, rector of the State Institute of Historical Archives, called at a press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the juridical exoneration of Trotsky and for the publication of his works:

"We have to rehabilitate all who were oppressed or wrongly accused and, as a matter of justice, Leon Trotsky stands equally with all the victims of Stalin. ... It is very strange that professors and teachers try to criticize Trotsky when they have never read a word that he

wrote. The same is still true of Bukharin and Kamenev and Zinoviev."

Meanwhile, the London *Guardian* (23 June) reported that a public memorial in central Moscow to millions of Stalin's victims is expected to be authorized by the CPSU conference. A public rally for the memorial was held June 25 outside Moscow's Dinamo Stadium, with speakers including prominent Gorbachev supporters such as Afanasyev and Vitaly Korotich, editor of the *glasnost* weekly *Ogonyok*. And on the eve of the conference, *Moscow News* (26 June) ran a lengthy article, "The Poisonous Mist Disperses," on the rehabilitation of the victims of the Moscow Trials. The article admits that "the main defendant at the trial—in absentia, to Stalin's great dismay—was Trotsky, whom Stalin hated bitterly." And it adds:

"Trotsky, then living in Norway, couldn't believe his ears. How could he—a Jew and an anti-fascist—and his former supporters be accused of conspiring with the Gestapo?"

Elsewhere in the same issue of *Moscow News*, the heretofore number one "non-person" in the Soviet Union is mentioned in an interview with Healyite actress Vanessa Redgrave (who calls for Trotsky's works to be published), and a column by Afanasyev urges tour guides in Leningrad's Smolny Institute, the hub of the 1917 October Revolution, to point out Trotsky's study. Yet *MN's* back page gives even more prominent coverage to the millennium of the Russian Orthodox church, that bastion of Russian nationalism, obscurantism and anti-Semitism. And in a succinct expression of *glasnost* today, they announce that George Orwell's 1984 will soon be published in the Soviet Union (while Trotsky's works are still banned).

As we noted in "The Bukharin Dossier" (*WV* No. 455, 17 June), the common thread behind the rehabilitations has been the "desperate need to find some historical alternative to the discredited Stalin on the same political ground of 'socialism in one country.'" Thus the *Izvestia* (14 June) article on the rehabilitation of Zinoviev and Kamenev baldly claims, "Everyone knows today that Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin was another Lenin, the favorite of the party and its most prominent theoretician." Gorbachev's brain trusters look to the leader of the Right Opposition as the granddaddy of their market-oriented economic policies (*perestroika*). Trotsky remains anathema because his name is synonymous with the program of world revolution.

Moreover, with the rehabilitations they seek not to solidarize with the generation of the October Revolution that Stalin murdered in the Moscow Trials, but to conciliate Western liberal (imperialist) opinion. The *Moscow News* article makes this explicit. Not only does it grotesquely suggest that the seeds of Stalinism are to be found in the intran-

**Trotsky exposes  
Moscow Trials  
frame-up from  
Mexican exile  
in 1938.**



Wide World

sigent defense of revolutionary Russia during the Civil War, castigating Trotsky and Zinoviev for regarding "their well-known ruthlessness during the Revolution as a sign of valour" and claiming, "They themselves put into the operation the bone-crushing machine which crushed them." The author's main objection to the purge trials is that: "Satisfying his thirst for blood... Stalin himself undermined the anti-fascist front then taking shape, and ignited the democratic West's mistrust for the USSR."

In fact, the *opposite* is the case. The Western press overwhelmingly bought the Moscow Trials and helped to spread Stalin's murderous slanders around the world, with such mouthpieces as the *New York Times'* Walter Duranty, the British Fabian "socialists" Sidney and Beatrice Webb, and various Stalinist fellow travelers. A Boston paper gleefully summed up the bloody purges, saying that the Third International had been stood against the wall and shot. At the same time, Stalin was beheading the Spanish Revolution by starving it of weapons, smashing the Barcelona workers and executing militant leftist leaders. As the then-Trotskyist Max Shachtman wrote in his 1936 pamphlet, *Behind the Moscow Trials*:

"The dramatic indictment of Zinoviev, Kamenev and the others, their ruthless execution, the indictment of Trotsky—that is, the assault upon those figures that symbolize the dread words 'World Revolution' to the international bourgeoisie, is Stalin's way of taking the blood-oath to the latter that the international proletarian revolution, so long as the Kremlin is concerned, has long been interred."

Yet this was not enough for the "democratic" imperialists, who refused Stalin's entreaties for an alliance. They were counting on Hitler to finish off the "Bolshevik menace." As Trotsky wrote in "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?" (November 1937):

"In spite of all the efforts on the part of the Moscow clique to demonstrate its conservative reliability (the counterrevolutionary politics of Stalin in Spain!), world imperialism does not trust Stalin, does not spare him the most humiliating flicks and is ready at the first favorable opportunity to overthrow him. Hitler—and therein lies his strength—simply more consistently and frankly expresses the attitude of the world bourgeoisie to the Soviet bureaucracy. For the bourgeoisie—fascist as well as democratic—isolated counterrevolutionary exploits of Stalin do not suffice; it needs a complete counterrevolution in the relations of property and the opening of the Russian

market. So long as this is not the case, the bourgeoisie considers the Soviet state hostile to it. And it is right."

In explaining the "confessions" extorted by Stalin and his GPU thugs, and to explain away the political capitulations, the *Moscow News* writes that "a torture can be found to break anyone, even the staunchest." Yet there were those who did not confess, who fought to the end. The Soviet people in the search for the truth about their own history will rediscover the courageous Left Oppositionists, whose commitment to international socialist revolution armed them for irreconcilable battle against Stalin's destruction of Lenin's Bolshevik Party and program. As an eyewitness at the prison camp of Vorkuta reported, when the Trotskyists were shot during the bloody spring of 1938, "As they marched away, the condemned sang the 'Internationale,' joined by the voices of hundreds of prisoners remaining in camp."

The Trotskyists do not look to the bureaucracy, but to the Soviet workers to restore the Bolshevik leaders to their rightful place in history. Soviet democracy will only be restored through proletarian political revolution which will oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy in fighting to defend and extend the gains of the October Revolution throughout the world. As Trotsky wrote at the height of the Moscow Trials: "Revolution will unlock all the secret compartments, review all the trials, rehabilitate the slandered, raise memorials to the victims of wantonness, and cover with eternal infamy the names of the executioners" ("The Beginning of the End," June 1937). Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky! ■

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# Capitalist America in Physical Decay

## New York Bridges Are Falling Down

The chief engineer of New York City's Transportation Department stopped during an inspection of the Williamsburg Bridge one morning in April to listen to a "squealing or screeching sound, which was then abruptly cut off and followed by a bang. That was one of the most frightening things," he told the *New York Times*. "It was the sound of something going."

The inspection had already discovered that 90 percent of the cross section of several beams holding up the roadway had been lost to corrosion. However, cars and trucks with their unsuspecting occupants continued to use the structure until almost 36 hours later, when 30 such beams had been found. At that point NYC mayor Ed Koch decided the spectre of collapse of the roadway into the East River, with possible deaths and certain political embarrassment, outweighed the predictable uproar over requiring 240,000 commuters to find another way across the river. The bridge was closed; an army of traffic guards was sent out to try to unsnarl the clogged streets. Small businesses near the bridge were devastated. And the engineers went out with pick hammers to see how far the damage went.

City officials knew that the bridge was in very bad shape, but they were making every effort to keep from replacing it. (For one thing, more federal money is available for repairs.) A 1985 engineering study concluded the huge suspension cables holding up the entire span wouldn't last a decade. The entire top of the bridge was wired with strain sensors, vibration monitors, frequency analyzers. But nobody looked underneath. On May 26, after closing the bridge for six weeks to patch rotted beams at break-neck speed, the city partially reopened the Williamsburg to light traffic. The very next day, four construction workers were injured when a repair platform collapsed. Now a new city study calls for \$350 million in repairs to the roadway, but claims nothing is wrong with the main suspension cables. Even Koch's friends at the *New York Times* (11 June) don't believe it, editorializing: "Fix the Bridge? Get a Second Opinion."

And the Williamsburg is just the tip of the iceberg. Jim Bishop, secretary-treasurer of the bridge painters' union, told the *New York Post* (25 May):

"A truck could fall through the lower deck of the Manhattan Bridge any day. The Williamsburg? That could go down any time. The only thing holding them up is rust.... When it comes to bridges, and highways, New York is a disaster waiting to happen."

But it's not a "natural" disaster: the state of NYC's bridges, like the condition of



Mark Ivins

the streets and water system, the schools and housing stock, is literally the product of the decay of capitalism.

### Fish Oil and Salt

The Williamsburg Bridge, built in 1903 in conscious competition with the then 20-year-old Brooklyn Bridge, is a rusting monument to the low bidder system. They built it to carry subway trains, they eliminated any designed-in safety factors, and they finished it in half the time. To save money they didn't galvanize the suspension cables, as was standard practice. Instead, the cables were treated with graphite and linseed oil. Seven years after the bridge was opened, the cables were found to be deteriorating. By 1922 the city was pouring fish oil on the foot-and-a-half-thick cables to try to halt the rust. A concrete roadway was installed in the 1950s, without drainage. Water and road salt collected in cracks, seeped down into steel pockets.

The *New York Times* (10 June) reports that by 1971 an engineering consultant recommended "repair of corroded members be undertaken at an early date." (The *Times*, which finds very little critical of the NYC fathers "fit to print," entitled its article a "Chronicle of City's Neglect.") Nothing was fixed, just painted over. In 1980 another study warned of "heavily corroded" beams. In 1985 the understructure passed a state inspection—a few cracks were repaired, then more paint. Last August Mayor Koch announced flatly,



Raia/Newsday

**Disaster waiting to happen: Williamsburg Bridge (above), shut down because of massive corrosion. Koch reopened bridge after patchwork repairs.**

"This bridge is safe." But finally, many years of neglect, coupled with an active corrosion agent—salt—took its toll.

Salt is cheap. At the first snowflake, city trucks fan out across the city, pouring salt onto every major roadway and bridge. Steel and air and salty water form a complete electrochemical cell producing current which greatly accelerates the oxidation of the metallic iron by air. Steel bridges contain thousands of pockets where this reaction can occur, thousands of such cells producing current and corroding away the structure. Freeze and thaw cycles produce cracks in the concrete roadbed. Saltwater works its way in toward the steel reinforcing bar. The rusting rebar expands against the concrete, which cracks and falls out of the roadbed.

The technology exists—cathodic protection—to prevent the ravages of this corrosion cell activity by running a small electric charge through a bridge's steel components. And for years there have been recognized, elementary measures which can be taken to protect a bridge from salt (and particularly in a marine environment), notably maintenance—washing it down after the snows are ended, providing for drainage and keeping the drains clean, and keeping it painted. But NYC bridges aren't washed down, and what little paint is applied goes over salt, pigeon

droppings, dirt and acid automobile exhaust residues, sealing in the wet corrosives.

The Williamsburg is the symbol of all the 2,098 city bridges: 32 are closed, 471 must be repaired or replaced in the next few years to avoid collapse, at an estimated cost of \$2.5 billion, more than twice the amount budgeted. The most heavily used East River bridge, the Queensboro, is in worse shape than the Williamsburg, and the Manhattan Bridge "has a distressing tendency to twist whenever a subway train rumbles across it" (*New York Times*, 21 February). The Sheridan Bridge in the Bronx was opened in 1967 as a temporary wooden timber detour. So many cars used it that they paved over the wood. When that gave out they installed steel plates. Twenty years later the timbers finally gave way, so they start to build a bridge.

The city's bridges are going the way of the subway system and highways. The Wall Street bankers have let the transit system go to hell, while assaulting the heavily minority Transport Workers Union. Now, after years of derailments, subway fires and deaths due to faulty doors, the bourgeoisie has announced a \$8.6 billion "rebuilding plan." But once again the bankers will feed at the trough, as interest payments on the financing bonds funnel hundreds of millions of



NYC public employees union exposed crumbling bridges in 1976.

dollars to the Wall Street profiteers.

And Manhattan is left with only one overcrowded, deteriorating north-south highway. After a truck fell through a hole in the West Side Highway in 1973, the roadway was used by joggers until its final demise years later. Unlike the rad-lib opponents of "Westway," our 1978 NYC election campaign (under the watchword of a "Socialist Fight to Save New York") called for a ten-lane underground West Side highway, as part of a massive program of public works under union control.

### Koch's Cuts Kill

The decay of this city's infrastructure is directly connected to Koch's calls for more murderous police and his attacks on city workers unions. Koch lets black and minority youth rot in the streets and the prisons he calls schools, while the bankers and arbitragers plunder this country's industry. The ports and rail yards, bridges and water mains rust away in the shadow of tax-supported luxury housing. The only things being built for minority and working people are more prisons. And until those are ready, they've added a prison barge—a floating jail—which was first docked in the shadow of the Williamsburg Bridge and now (following community uproar) has been moved to the Hudson River.

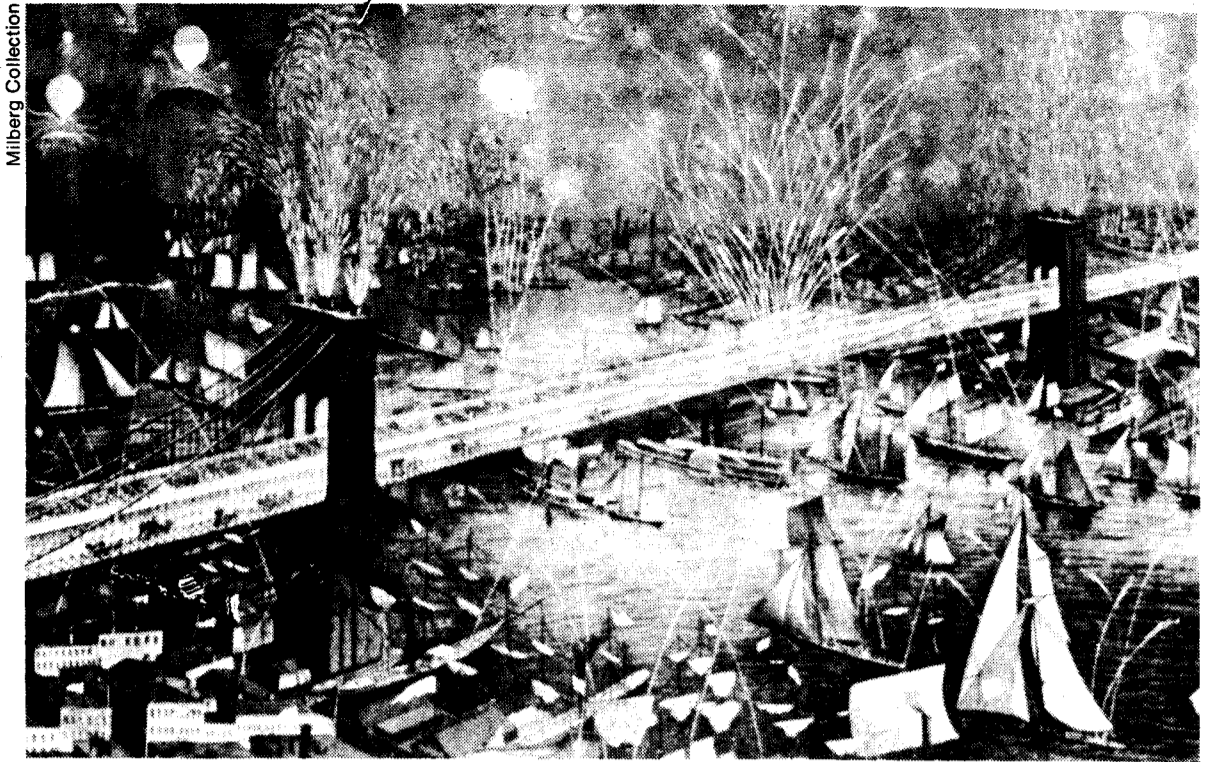
Meanwhile, under his administration the number of bridge workers and painters was slashed by more than one-third. Koch was installed to finish the job begun by the bankers with "Big MAC" in 1975, when New York was put in receivership to the direct rule of finance capital. A fifth of the entire city budget went to debt service to the banks. To pay for this they launched a wholesale assault on the unions and city services, used overwhelmingly by the poor and working people:

"Wages were frozen, 30,000 workers were axed, future pension benefits were reduced, and the unions' pension funds themselves—not the banks—became the major source of emergency city financing. Hospitals were closed. Transit fares... were increased 43 per cent. A free university education—the traditional passport between poverty and the middle class—would soon be abolished."

—Jack Newfield and Paul Du Brul, *The Abuse of Power, The Permanent Government and the Fall of New York* (1977)

Even before the cutbacks, in April 1967, Jim Bishop of the bridge painters union had warned Mayor Lindsay that he was facing a "catastrophe—with the bridges of New York City." What did Lindsay do about it? He eliminated bridge painting from the budget (*New York Post*, 25 May). And AFSCME District 37, the largest NYC union, recalled that it warned the city more than a decade ago when it headlined the union paper "New York's Bridges Are Rusting, Crumbling" (*Public Employee Press*, 9 April 1976). But the union tops didn't lift a finger to fight the cutbacks and layoffs. In 1898 there were 206 maintenance workers assigned to

**Grand opening of Brooklyn Bridge, 1883. Ascendant capitalism built magnificent public works, capitalism in its decline is letting them go to hell.**



the Brooklyn Bridge alone. Today 160 workers are responsible for 846 bridges—less than five for the Brooklyn Bridge. It's barely enough to watch them rust.

### Coast-to-Coast Rust Belt

New York City bridges are a symbol of the decaying infrastructure across the United States. Almost one-quarter of the country's bridges are closed, have reduced load limits, or need immediate rehabilitation to remain open. Over 150 bridges collapse each year. An estimated \$51 billion is required to fix them. And it's not just bridges: in 1960, 3.6 percent of the GNP was spent on infrastructure. This dropped to 1.7 percent in 1980, and then climbed back to only 2.6 percent in 1985. From highways to water and sewer systems, from schools and hospitals to the subways and railroads, the bourgeoisie in its decline is letting the physical plant of this country go to hell.

Historically, the bourgeoisie has produced massive public works in periods of capitalist expansion... and for war. In early 1800s Britain every new mile of railway laid inland from the ports produced a thousandfold return for the capitalists, as colonial markets exploded and factories were built to supply them. The broad boulevards of Paris were built by Emperor Napoleon III as a defense against militant Parisian workers, who in the defeated 1848 Revolution held the old neighborhoods with barricades of paving stones. In the 19th century, the American system of canals and railways was the path of expansion to the West. Today's 42,000-mile "National System of Interstate and Defense Highways," begun in the 1950s, was patterned after the Third Reich Autobahn system which was designed by the Nazis to speed their invasion of Europe.

After U.S. imperialism's dreams of an "American Century" were shattered by the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants, the bourgeoisie decided it had

to massively rearm. Beginning under Democrat Carter and sharply escalating under Reagan, billions which could have gone into capital investment were put into Trident subs and "Star Wars" nuclear first-strike schemes. Last year the Center for Defense Information reported, "Preparations for war have cost the United States \$2 Trillion since 1981," and current spending is more than double that of all U.S. imperialist allies (including NATO and Japan).

American capitalism in its heyday had an international reputation for building things to last, from machine tools to construction. A recent article in the *New York Times* (28 April) described the use in Vietnam of small American pumps which have been operating since the '50s to drain land and irrigate fields. So widespread and integral to Vietnamese farming are they, that the generic word for pump is derived from Kohler, the manufacturer. The article quotes a peasant requesting recently built pumps. But the pumps being built today by the notoriously anti-union Kohler Company now have plastic ("no-lube") bearings and rotors, and a five-year life expectancy.

The Brooklyn Bridge just reached its 100th birthday, and its first major overhaul. It was designed by the brilliant German-born engineer (and student of Hegel) John Roebling, and built by his son, Washington Roebling, a Union veteran of many of the Civil War's bloodiest battles. In the 1930s, Robert Moses, the public works czar of New York, built a municipal water system that dazzled the world, a magnificent system of reservoirs and lakes, aqueducts and tunnels. Even today people in Los Angeles pay for bottles of New York City tap water. But the system is living on the investments of the past. A new water tunnel to Manhattan, under construction for decades, has run into mishap after mishap. The two existing tunnels have not been inspected since they were built. On the block grid level, tens of millions of gallons of water are wasted, and frequent main breaks result in closing subway lines, roadways, and even buildings.

### For Socialist Revolution to Rebuild America

A recent study called for an increase of "up to 100% in the amount of capital the nation invests each year in new and existing public works"—some \$50 billion annually (*Engineering News Record*, 25 February). But the ideologues around the White House apparently think they can solve all problems with an apocalypse now. Other members of the bourgeoisie, who don't trust in the stars, are worried. Privatization is proposed as one solution. Everything from prisons to highways is being built by private investors, who will use chain gangs and tolls and tax breaks to return a profit.

The feds are urging Donald Trump to rebuild the Williamsburg Bridge for cheap. He visited the bridge in a heavy-duty photo opportunity, to declare great plans. It would be "Trump's Folly"—there's a big difference between a recreational skating rink and a major transportation link. The resources of this country cannot be squeezed out of an economic base increasingly made of junk bonds and junk food joints.

During the New York state primary, Jesse Jackson led a march across the closed Williamsburg Bridge, calling for "rebuilding people to rebuild the bridges"—a WPA-style program for a new New Deal. He proposes an "American Investment Bank," financed with the pension funds of public employees! But NYC workers have already had their pension money siphoned into the Big MAC sinkhole. Dukakis, meanwhile, calls for "Rebuilding America." The Democrats, and their reformist supporters on the left, call for "reordering priorities," for butter not guns. But the Democrats and Republicans are solidly united around a mounting war drive against the Soviet Union to restore the U.S. as a hegemonic world power.

The program of the Democratic Party (and their kept labor lieutenants) is to make the working class pay for decades of capitalist looting of this country's wealth. At Chrysler, the Democrats and the UAW company cops conspired with the auto bosses to steal billions in concessions and throw auto workers on the scrap heap. That's what Dukakis' and Jackson's "Rebuild America" slogan means: racist Japan-bashing protectionism, giveaways and war.

From factories to people, the ravaging of the country's productive forces reflects the decay of American capitalism. A Pentagon study lamented that private investment in plant and equipment, as a percentage of the Gross National Product, is currently a paltry 10 percent in the U.S. By comparison, in Japan it is 17 percent (*Wall Street Journal*, 16 May). The economic lifeblood of this country—the steel, the autos, the farm machinery and tools and oil—needs highways, railroads, waterways, bridges. The capitalist class is letting the factories rust into the ground, while the industrial working class rots in low-paid McDonald's jobs. The black youth of this country are being deliberately wasted, kept out of any meaningful role in this racist, rotting society.

A workers revolution would put America back to work rebuilding the bridges, highways and factories. And not just here—massive aid programs to rebuild Vietnam, Latin America, Africa, everywhere the imperialists have plundered and destroyed. The capitalist class in its twilight has shown that it is incapable of maintaining society. The working class led by its revolutionary vanguard must wrench society from the bourgeoisie's death grip. ■



Jesse Jackson leads march over Williamsburg Bridge during NY primary campaign, calling for grabbing workers' pension funds to pay for years of neglect by capitalist rulers.



## David North: Joseph Hansen's Natural Son



Workers Press

Workers League leader David North has made no small effort to enshrine himself as the undisputed "leader" of the shattered remnants of Gerry Healy's corrupt International Committee (IC). To do so of course requires that North declare all of the other former leading lights of Healyism (including the "founder-leader" himself) to be hopeless "renegades." Never mind that North was trained, tutored and installed as a leader by the same crew he now denounces in order to proclaim himself to be the sole surviving repository of Healyite "orthodoxy."

One of the most recent installments of this cynical charade is North's book *The Heritage We Defend*. Ever so modestly described as "A Contribution to the History of the Fourth International," in reality it is a 500-page treatise against Healy's longtime hatchet man Michael Banda. Against Banda's ignorant, anti-Trotskyist "Twenty-Seven Reasons Why the IC Should Be Buried Forthwith and the Fourth International Built"—a way station on Banda's road to becoming a Stalinist PR man—North attempts to claim as his own the revolutionary heritage of James P. Cannon's Socialist Workers Party. This is really egregious considering that the Workers League published hundreds of pages written by their former leader Tim Wohlforth, sneering that Cannon was a barely Marxist, vulgar "window smasher." This was Wohlforth's way of making himself out to be, in effect, the first real American Marxist.

As for North, he was specially chosen by Healy to be the WL "leader" as a reward for his eager services as mouthpiece for Healy's obscene "Security and the Fourth International" campaign—a psychotic smear job impugning the integrity of the old, revolutionary SWP and Trotsky himself. Slandering the SWP's Joseph Hansen as a conscious agent of the FBI and the Russian secret police, and an accomplice in the murder of Trotsky, the Northites have for over a decade echoed the Stalinist lie that Trotsky was killed by one of his own.

"Security and the Fourth International" grew straight out of Gerry Healy's own particular combination of years of political banditry and paranoid megalomania. It was Healy's way of "explaining" his International Committee's failure to definitively expose and defeat Pabloism, the revisionist current originated by Michel Pablo which in the early 1950s abandoned Trotskyism with the perspective of liquidation into the mass Stalinist and social-democratic parties. In the 1960s Joseph Hansen became the main spokesman of the Pabloite degeneration of the SWP as it abandoned the struggle for an independent proletarian vanguard. But instead of political struggle the Healyites concocted their devil

theory that Hansen had been hired by the U.S. government and the Kremlin Stalinists to destroy the SWP.

Declaring themselves to be the Fourth International, Healy's IC kept up a vicious vendetta against the long-since reformist SWP, including the use of the capitalist courts. This is not the only time they crossed the class line. A secret report (which surfaced as part of the fallout from the Healyites' spectacular implosion) by an IC Commission to investigate "the corruption of G. Healy" details payoffs that were received for services rendered to a variety of oil-rich Arab despots. This included supplying photographs to the Iraqi embassy of a

demonstration of opponents of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime in Iraq. The report of the IC investigation says that while the "Commission has not yet been able to establish all the facts... a receipt for £1,600 for 16 minutes of documentary footage of a demonstration is in the possession of the Commission." An indisputable and monstrous fact is that the Healyites hailed the execution of 21 Iraqi Communists by Ba'ath rulers in 1979. Healy's payoff was blood money!

As the Spring 1988 issue of *Solidarity*, a British journal of "libertarian socialism" which leaked the secret IC report, notes: "It is certain that the anti-Healy camp know far more about

the dirtier aspects of the WRP's past than they have so far publicly admitted.... These include North, who has resolutely chosen not to make public even the skeletal information we publish...." Of course he hasn't. Of all Healy's former lieutenants, North is uniquely the one who clings to the real "heritage" of Healyism—in particular the scandalous "Security and the Fourth International" campaign.

### "Counterrevolutionary Through and Through"

But North could well be hoist on his own petard. In *The Heritage We Defend* he writes that "Trotsky had branded the Stalinist bureaucracy as 'counterrevolutionary through and through'...." One can look through everything Trotsky ever wrote and never find this falsely and stupidly one-sided formulation. On the contrary, as he said in "The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (October 1933): "Whoever fails to understand the dual role of Stalinism in the USSR has understood nothing." The formulation "counterrevolutionary through and through" which North embraces was the work of... none other than the devil incarnate of Healyism, the arch-agent himself—Joseph Hansen.

It first issued from the big and unwise mouth of Dave Weiss (D. Stevens) during the 1952-53 fight against the pro-Stalinist liquidators in the Cochran-Clarke faction in the SWP. And it was Hansen who landed the assignment of defending Weiss' statement. This Hansen did with his usual quite capable vigor, including the amplification that the Kremlin Stalinists were not only "counterrevolutionary through and through" but "to the core" ("What the New York Discussion Has Revealed," Joseph Hansen, SWP Internal Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 4, February 1953). Indeed Hansen was the biggest exponent, if the number of pages count, of the view North falsely ascribes to Trotsky.

Yet who in the Soviet Union could be characterized as "counterrevolutionary through and through"? Only an out-and-out Great Russian fascist, something out of the present-day *Pamyat* or perhaps a CIA mole in the KGB could fit this bill. But this certainly doesn't describe the Stalinist bureaucracy. A conservative nationalist caste resting on the proletarian property forms established by the Russian Revolution, the Kremlin bureaucracy is the product of and reflects the contradictions of a bonapartist regime issuing from the degeneration of a workers revolution in a backward country surrounded by imperialism.

In "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?" (November 1937), Trotsky explained:

"The proletariat of the USSR is the ruling class in a backward country where



Stanton/Pathfinder Press

American SWP's Joseph Hansen framed by Healy/North's psychotic "Security and the Fourth International" smear, which parroted Stalinist lie that Trotsky was killed by "one of his own."

### Bulletin

#### Security and the Fourth International

THE INDICTMENT THAT REMAINS UNANSWERED

—June 11th 1976

Statement by the International Committee of the Fourth International



Spartacist protest against Healyite Big Lie campaign. We defended Hansen as "an honest revisionist."



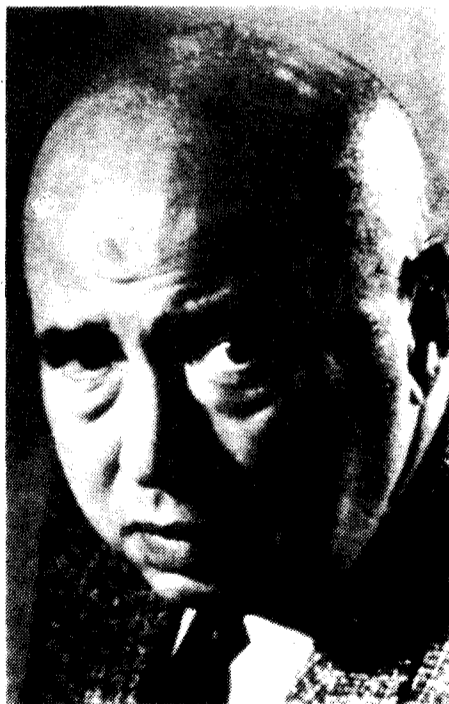
WV Photo

there is still a lack of the most vital necessities of life. The proletariat of the USSR rules in a land consisting of only one-twelfth part of humanity; imperialism rules over the remaining eleven-twelfths. The rule of the proletariat, already maimed by the backwardness and poverty of the country, is doubly and triply deformed under the pressure of world imperialism....

"In its capacity of a transmitting mechanism in this struggle, the bureaucracy leans now on the proletariat against imperialism, now on imperialism against the proletariat, in order to increase its own power. At the same time it mercilessly exploits its role as distributor of the meager necessities of life in order to safeguard its own well-being and power. By this token the rule of the proletariat assumes an abridged, curbed, distorted character. One can with full justification say that the proletariat, ruling in one backward and isolated country, still remains an *oppressed* class. The source of oppression is world imperialism; the mechanism of transmission of the oppression—the bureaucracy. If in the words 'a ruling and at the same time an oppressed class' there is a contradiction, then it flows not from the mistakes of thought but from the contradiction in the very situation of the USSR. It is precisely because of this that we reject the theory of socialism in one country."

Far from characterizing the bureaucracy as "counterrevolutionary through and through," in the *Transitional Program*, the founding document of the Fourth International, Trotsky wrote that "all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko)." The dual nature of the Kremlin oligarchy is fundamental to the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union combined with the call for political revolution to oust the bureaucracy.

Trotsky presented his fullest analysis of the contradictory nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the last political battle of his life, against the repudiation of Soviet defensism by the petty-bourgeois Shachtman/Burnham opposition in the SWP in 1939-40. Even in the context of some of the most heinous counterrevolutionary crimes of the Soviet government—the destruction of the Bolshevik Party, the strangulation of proletarian revolution in Spain by the Kremlin bureaucrats, the beheading of the Red Army—Trotsky never charac-

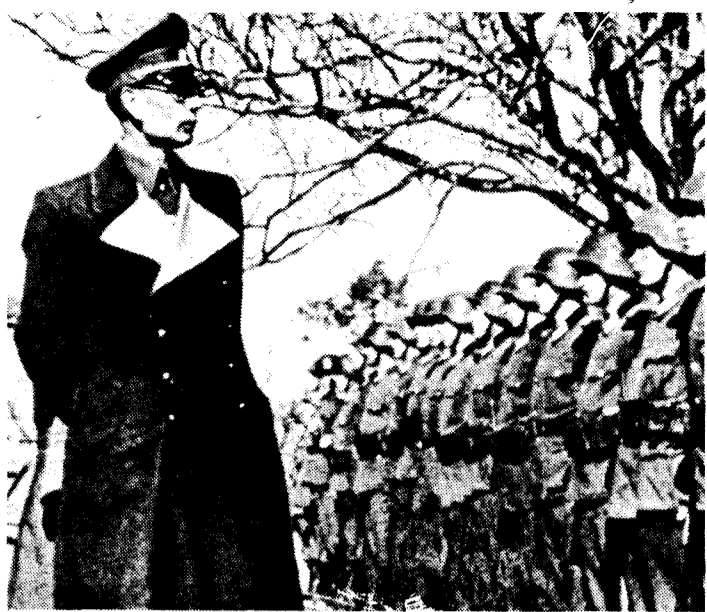


Donald Press

### Max Shachtman

terized the bureaucracy as "counterrevolutionary through and through." But Shachtman certainly did.

Defending Baron von Mannerheim's Finland against Soviet intervention, Shachtman argued that in Poland the Red Army had acted only as a "counter-revolutionary force." Trotsky, who saw the possibility for a social transformation in Finland coming with the Red Army intervention, pointed to the expropriation of the capitalists and large landowners in Eastern Poland which took place despite the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet workers state. Against Shachtman he argued:



World Publishing

**Who in the Soviet Union could be "counterrevolutionary through and through"? Only CIA agents or Russian fascists like General Vlasov (left), who collaborated with Nazi invaders, or anti-Semitic Pamyat leader Dmitri Vassiliev (right).**

"the Kremlin with its bureaucratic methods gave an impulse to the socialist revolution in Poland.... This impulse in the direction of socialist revolution was possible only because the bureaucracy of the USSR straddles and has its roots in the economy of a workers state."

As Trotsky noted, the seizure of Eastern Poland was both "a pledge of the alliance with Hitler" and "a guarantee against Hitler" through the nationalization of semi-feudal and capitalist property. To understand this means understanding real dialectical materialism as opposed to the cynical shell game of "dialectics" employed by the Healyites. For years they were distinguished by obfuscating, idealist lectures on the ever-mystical "dialectic" which nobody could understand—except Healy. Only the self-declared "founder-leader" was meant to understand, just as only he could determine "security" clearances. "Dialectics" and the "Security" slanders were the underpinnings of the Healy cult, designed to keep the membership completely confused and above all intimidated by their omnipotent leaders.

### David North: A Joseph Hansen of the Second Mobilization

But just how is it that David North has come to embrace the politics of Joseph Hansen—a man he has reviled as the sinister arch-nemesis of Trotskyism and slandered as the number one agent responsible for the supposed infiltration and takeover of the SWP by the U.S. government? Applying the demonology of Healyism to North himself one can only ask: can he be far behind? Not subscribing to the paranoid conspiracy theories that are the stock-in-trade of Healyism against their opponents, we can trace the political genealogy of Hansen/North's shared anti-Soviet revisionism back to the source.

In his 1953 document "What the New York Discussion Has Revealed," Hansen proclaims, "I trace the current differences back to the discussion on Eastern Europe.... First of all, in taking the position that Stalinism had brought about an overturn in property forms in these countries, I raised the question myself as to how this affected our estimate of the political character of Stalinism. My answer was that the power to make such changes did not require us to revise the concept of Stalinism developed by Trotsky. Stalinism still remained counterrevolutionary to the core."

Leaving aside Hansen's wrongful attribution to Trotsky the view that the Kremlin bureaucracy was "counterrevolutionary to the core," his analysis of the differences that developed within the SWP and the Fourth International are quite to the point. The SWP had a very hard time for a couple of years explaining how deformed workers states were created in Eastern Europe. So did the leadership that emerged at the head of the Fourth International in Europe where the most promising cadres had

been killed by war and by fascist and Stalinist repression. As we noted in "Genesis of Pabloism" (*Spartacist* No. 21, Fall 1972), they were confronted with the question:

"...is the Trotskyist understanding of Stalinism correct if Stalinism shows itself willing in some cases to accomplish any sort of anti-capitalist social transformation? Clinging to orthodoxy, the Trotskyists had lost a real grasp of theory and suppressed part of Trotsky's *dialectical* understanding of Stalinism as a parasitic and counter-revolutionary caste sitting atop the gains of the October Revolution, a kind of treacherous middle-man poised between the victorious Russian proletariat and world imperialism."

Empirical evidence tore a gaping hole through the Trotskyists' post-WWII attempt at wooden orthodoxy. The impressionistic Pablo simply threw overboard "the old Trotskyism" and declared that the Stalinists could play an "objectively revolutionary" role; his conclusion was deep entrisism into the Stalinist and mass reformist parties in Europe. During 1951-53, Pablo's liquidationism led to the destruction of the Fourth International. The SWP (with Healy in tow) waged a belated and partial fight against Pabloism, splitting out the anti-liquidationist International Committee. But a few years later over the Cuban Revolution the SWP followed suit and Joseph Hansen was the main theoretical apologist. The need for a Trotskyist party was dropped as Castro's petty-bourgeois guerrillas were embraced as the modern-day equivalent of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks.

In the name of combatting Pabloite revisionism the Healyites reacted by simply putting a minus where the SWP put a plus. Making a caricature of the sterile, formal "orthodoxy" that had characterized the post-World War II SWP, the Healyites argued that since there was no Trotskyist party in Cuba no social transformation had taken place—in short they stood Pabloism on its head. In contrast the Spartacist delegation to the 1966 conference of Healy's International Committee argued:

"...the petty-bourgeois peasantry under the most *favorable* historic circumstances conceivable could achieve no third road, neither capitalist, nor working class. Instead all that has come out

of China and Cuba was a state of the same order as that issuing out of the political counter-revolution of Stalin in the Soviet Union, the degeneration of the October. That is why we are led to define states such as these as *deformed workers states*. And the experience since the Second World War, properly understood, offers not a basis for revisionist turning away from the perspective and necessity of revolutionary working-class power, but rather it is a great vindication of Marxian theory and conclusions under new and not previously expected circumstances."

—Spartacist Statement to International Conference, *Spartacist* No. 6, June-July 1966

The Healyites' opposition to the SWP over the Cuban Revolution had little to do with fighting the Pabloist liquidation of Trotskyism. In fact Healy's line was that the Fourth International had been rebuilt, the International Committee was it, and Pabloism was simply proto-Stalinism. In contrast the Spartacist delegation to Healy's 1966 IC conference argued that the actual reconstruction of the Fourth International could only be achieved through completely rooting out this revisionism: "Up to now, we have not done very well, in our opinion, in smashing the Pabloites; the impact of events alone, no matter how favorable objectively or devastating to revisionist doctrines, will not do the job." As we pointed out: "The 'orthodox' movement has still to face up to the *new* theoretical problems which rendered it susceptible to Pabloism in 1943-50 and gave rise to a ragged, partial split in 1952-54." This was borne out in the Healyites' embrace of various "Third World" Stalinists like Ho Chi Minh and Mao's "Cultural Revolution."

For daring to raise our political differences openly in 1966, we were denounced by Healy as petty-bourgeois American chauvinists, and expelled for refusing to confess to the charge. False confessions were a matter of "discipline" in the political cult of the megalomaniac Gerry Healy, the man whose shoes David North is desperate to fill. Almost two decades later Healy himself was ousted amidst lurid charges of moral turpitude leveled by his former lieutenants. In an interview "On the

*continued on page 8*



G. Neri



Pathfinder Press

**Leon Trotsky in Mexican exile. His last political battle was against petty-bourgeois faction that abandoned defense of Soviet Union.**



## David North...

(continued from page 7)

1966 Split" in *Spartacist* (No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86) covering the subsequent rather spectacular implosion of Healy's British Workers Revolutionary Party, comrade James Robertson commented:

"...we have some stuff to say now, because we were the principled people the whole way. And I would suggest that the main reason is not some morality associated with Americans versus English persons, but that over a long period of time, through many fights, through one tendency after another, we stood concretely for the defense of the Soviet Union, against imperialism, and against the damn Russian bureaucracy. That has in fact been our political compass, and it also generates a certain cultural superstructure and a certain morality."

### The "Principles" of Political Bandits

The Healyites had no such compass. Despite their inverted Pablistism over Cuba, denying that a social revolution ever took place, Healy's International Committee had a perfectly Pablist tailist line toward the Vietnamese Stalinists and went on to herald Mao's "Cultural Revolution." It was their support to the mythical "Arab Revolution" in 1967 that provided the theoretical preparation for their various forays across the class line, some of which have come home to haunt them. And it was under the cover of "anti-Stalinism" that the Healyites hailed the murder of

**SPARTACIST**

NUMBER 36-37    ENGLISH EDITION    WINTER 1985-86    ONE DOLLAR/75 PENCE

# HEALYISM IMPLODES

— With —

## Documents and Interviews on the WRP's Buried History

**The Far Left: 1900-1920  
British Communism Aborted**

See Page 64

**When Healy's WRP/IC spectacularly blew up in 1985, special issue of *Spartacist* explored political roots: two decades of cynical political banditry. To receive a copy, send \$1.00 to Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.**

21 Iraqi Communists by the Ba'athist regime.

While they lined their pockets with Arab gold and availed themselves of the forces of the bourgeois state against leftist political opponents, the Healyites would still invoke Leninist "orthodoxy" when it suited their purposes. Last year saw North screaming foul at the SWP for using the capitalist courts against the workers movement, to wit suing the Workers League for costs in

North's years-long court suit against the SWP (see "David North and the Law," *WV* No. 430, 12 June 1987). More recently, witness the 1988 "Election Manifesto" of the Workers League's candidates for president and vice president. The call to "establish the political independence of the American working class from the capitalist class" is rather remarkable from an organization which continues to drag leftists through the bosses' courts.

The WL's election manifesto also demands that "The working class must defend the Soviet Union." But repeatedly over the past two decades North's Workers League has taken the side of virulently anti-Soviet forces—with Khomeini's mullahs in Iran, with the CIA's company union *Solidarność* in Poland, with U.S. imperialism's Islamic cutthroats in Afghanistan. To cover for their anti-Sovietism the WL has invented a global conspiracy between Washington and Moscow. Or rather, they borrowed it from Pierre Lambert, Healy's one-time bloc partner, who regularly vituperates against a "counter-revolutionary Holy Alliance, sealed at Yalta," supposedly uniting the White House and the Kremlin. They just leave out the Cold War, and for a reason.

"Down with Imperialism and Stalinism! Unite Soviet and American Workers" was the front-page headline of a "Workers League Political Committee Statement" in the 27 May *Bulletin*. This slogan, equating the bureaucratic misleaders of the degenerated/deformed workers states with the capitalist class enemy, comes straight out of Lambert's Organisation Communiste Internationaliste. "Long live the struggle of the youth against the Stalinist bureaucracy and imperialism!" was the clarion call for the Lambertistes' 1971 Essen Conference. The OCI's Stalinophobia led it straight into the camp of the most right-wing Cold War social democrats. For example, several dozen of the OCI's members, including Lambert himself, served as paid functionaries of the French social-democratic union Force

# Workers Power: The Baggage of State Capitalism

David North's *The Heritage We Defend* is the subject of a critical review by *Trotskyist International* (Summer 1988), new journal of the centrist current led by the British Workers Power group, the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI). In a nutshell, the review is devoted to again vindicating WP's "plague on both your houses" line on the 1953 split by the International Committee, then led by the American Trotskyist SWP of James P. Cannon, from the Pablist liquidationism which destroyed the Fourth International. Yet, throughout five densely packed pages, the review never takes note of North's ludicrous misattribution to Trotsky of Hansen's formulation that "Stalinism is counterrevolutionary through and through."

On the contrary, it takes the logic of this stupidly one-sided formulation to absurdity, asserting that "Castro and co, like Mao and Tito before them, carried out a counter-revolutionary overthrow of capitalism." Ditto for the bureaucratically imposed social revolutions in Soviet-occupied East Europe following World War II. In brief, according to *Workers Power*, every overthrow of capitalism since the Russian Revolution has been "counter-revolutionary." What could a counter-revolutionary overturn of capitalism mean—except, perhaps, a return to feudalism? The closest thing to this in recent times was the "Islamic revolution" in Iran. But there WP backed the mullah-led "mass movement" unconditionally, just as they supported Polish *Solidarność*' full-blown attempt at counterrevolution despite admitting the *Solidarność* leadership was committed to the restoration of capitalism.

Workers Power carries the political baggage of its origins in a 1975 split from Tony Cliff's International Socialists (now the Socialist Workers Party of Great Britain). It was not until February 1980 and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan that WP renounced Cliff's "third camp" ("Neither Washington nor Moscow") line, adopting a

## Tony Cliff's Stepchildren

Socialist Challenge



**"State capitalist" Tony Cliff broke with Trotskyist-Fourth International in 1950.**

formally Trotskyist position that the Soviet Union was a degenerated workers state.

In typically centrist fashion, however, *Workers Power* recoiled from drawing the hard revolutionary conclusions. In the abstract, WP called for defense of the Soviet Union; in the concrete, they had "no hesitation in condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan" (*Workers Power*, February 1980). But with mealy-mouthed gutlessness, they deemed it "tactically wrong" to openly join the imperialist outcry for Soviet withdrawal until "the forces exist in Afghanistan which can mobilise the masses for the major democratic and socialist goals, and hold the pro-imperialist forces at bay." Now, with a bloodbath looming, an April 1988 MRCI resolution continues to "condemn the invasion as counter-revolutionary," while simultaneously denouncing the Soviet withdrawal! Not one of the some two dozen slogans at the end of the resolution raises defense of the Soviet Union.

Workers Power's line on Afghani-

stan is a quintessential example of the "crystallized confusion" that Trotsky cited as a prime characteristic of centrism. In the eight years since it repudiated its state capitalist position, WP has continued to try to keep one foot in each camp. In its "Twenty two theses in defence of Trotskyism" (May 1987), the MRCI asserts:

"We reject Stalinophobia—a differential hostility to Stalinism over social democracy or other alien class influences. This, with its emphasis on a monolithic nature for Stalinism (*counter-revolutionary through and through*), has led to softness and accommodation to social-democratic reformism...."

But in practice, on every contemporary issue, *Workers Power* ends up refusing to defend the deformed/degenerated workers states. And elsewhere WP asserts: "Essential to Pablo's position was a revision of the Trotskyist understanding of Stalinism, i.e. that it is invariably a counter-revolutionary force" (*The Death Agony of the Fourth International*, 1983).

This is hardly an original thesis. Workers Power's Cliffite godparents

like to claim occasionally (when overt anti-Sovietism is not in vogue) that they originated in a fight against "the shamelessly opportunist support for Tito's Yugoslavia by the rest of the Trotskyist movement" (*International Socialism* No. 76, March 1975). The Cliff group fought against Trotskyism, not Pablistism, arguing as early as 1948 that the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states were "state capitalist." They got themselves expelled from the Fourth International in 1950 for publicly repudiating the FI's defense of the North Korean deformed workers state against U.S. imperialism. And it is precisely in the period 1948-51 that WP locates the definitive "collapse" into centrism of the FI.

Seizing upon the disorientation that gripped the entire world Trotskyist movement in the face of the post-WWII Stalinist overturns of capitalism in East Europe, *Workers Power* contemptuously dismisses the Trotskyists who fought the liquidationism of Michel Pablo, albeit belatedly, partially and primarily on their own national terrain, and who reconstituted themselves as the IC. Cannon just isn't up to snuff for *Workers Power*, because it took him a few years to catch on. But he led a fight to preserve Trotskyism against those who sought to destroy it. *Workers Power* takes no side in this struggle for revolutionary continuity, and they can hardly claim Cliff as the continuity of Trotskyism.

To believe WP/MRCI, from the FI's "collapse" until WP emerged full-blown on the scene like Athena from the head of Zeus, there existed no real Trotskyists on this planet. It requires a big dose of hubris for a group to anoint itself the first Trotskyists since Trotsky. We can only lay claim to continuing, as best we can, the struggle passed on to us by Cannon, and to him by Trotsky. We can, however, boast that we make available 25 years of our written material in bound volumes for critical examination by the working-class public. *Workers Power*, like all centrists, is loathe to deal honestly with its own heritage. ■



Ouvrière, which has been linked to the notorious CIA operative Irving Brown going back to 1947.

Applied to the U.S. the Northites' resurrection of this slogan leads straight to the State Department "socialism" of Norman Thomas and Max Shachtman in his later years. The *Bulletin* writes that "Gorbachev's policies of *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness) are the road to the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and the transformation of Stalinist bureaucrats into capitalists." Evidently, for the Northites, no counterrevolution to overthrow the remaining gains of the October Revolution would be required, just a cold transformation of the Soviet degenerated workers state into a capitalist state imposed from the top. As Trotsky argued, this is to run the film of reformism in reverse, positing a peaceful transition from a workers state to capitalism.

The Northites' "analysis" of where Gorbachev's Russia is going is unmitigated Third Campism, which parenthetically is a quintessential expression of petty-bourgeois American chauvinism—the charge which Healy came up with and North continues to trumpet against the Spartacist League. North's view is reality seen through the prism and under the pressure of U.S. imperialism. As Trotsky argued against Shachtman and Burnham in "A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers Party":

"A vulgar petty-bourgeois radical is similar to a liberal 'progressive' in that he takes the USSR as a whole, failing to understand its internal contradictions and dynamics. When Stalin concluded an alliance with Hitler, invaded Poland, and now Finland, the vulgar radicals triumphed; the identity of the methods of Stalinism and fascism was proved! They found themselves in difficulties however when the new authorities invited the population to expropriate the landowners and capitalists—they had not foreseen this possibility at all!"

—L.D. Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism*

Healy and North also charged the Spartacist League with being "agents" of Joseph Hansen because we were among the first to protest Healy's despicable "Security and the Fourth International" slanders. In protest demonstrations outside Workers League meetings we defended Hansen as "an honest revisionist." That's more than we can say for North and his gang who have grievously crossed the class line so many times that who, what or where they are is forever a subject for debate.

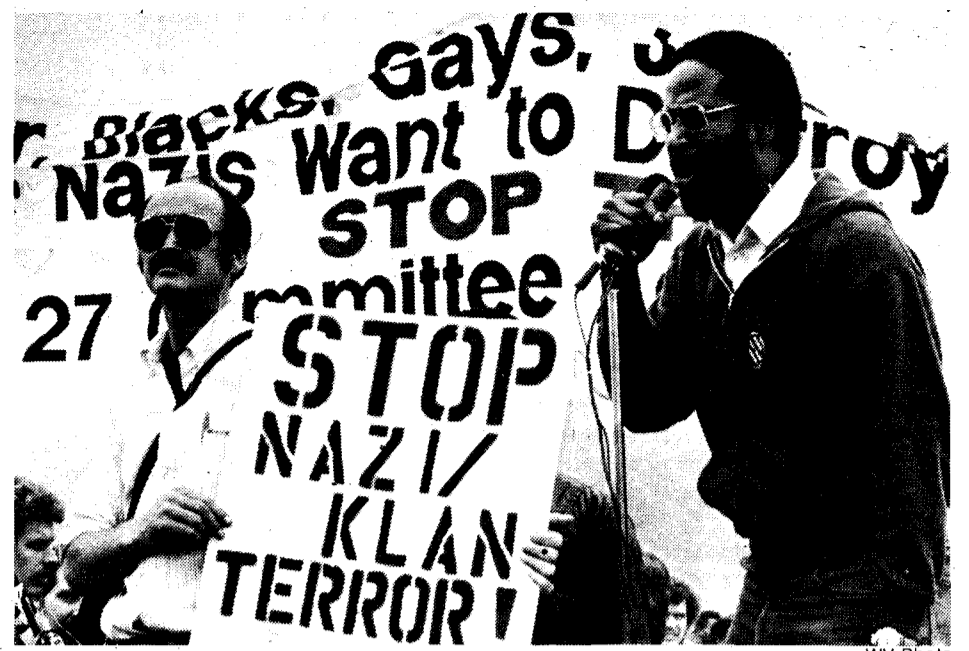
We waged a relentless political struggle against Hansen's anti-Trotskyist revisionism. Healy could never have done so because it would mean confronting his own politics. So he "explained" the SWP's degeneration by slandering Hansen as a government

agent who was hired to infiltrate and destroy the SWP. Yet here is North peddling Hansen's "counterrevolutionary through and through" line. Any of the WL leader's acolytes who accept the demented logic of his "Security" scam ought to be asking some nervous questions. How did it happen? Did Hansen secretly recruit North? And who will the next "great leader" be?

Consider the fate of North's former *lideres máximos*. Yesterday's self-declared "founder-leader" Gerry Healy is today's KGB agent, according to the *Bulletin*. In North's eyes, every one of Healy's lieutenants (except North himself, of course) has become a demoralized renegade—from Banda to Cliff Slaughter, the longtime "theoretical" mouthpiece for Healyite crimes, who now admits that the "Security" slanders were a fraud. And let's not forget Tim Wohlforth, Healy's former hapless American toady, who warmed the seat North now occupies at the head of the Workers League. Wohlforth was axed amidst allegations of CIA connections through the family of his girlfriend Nancy Fields. Actually, to say he was axed is unfair to the real character of Wohlforth—he even voted for his own expulsion. Truly the son of "the god that failed," in 1981 Wohlforth resurfaced in the pages of *New Left Review* in the role of saved-again social democrat denouncing Soviet totalitarianism.

Stalin never claimed that *all* the Bolshevik Central Committee at the time of the October Revolution were counter-revolutionary spies and traitors. Exempted were Lenin, a few who died early and a couple who lucked out and died a natural death at old age. David North, the new boy of the IC leadership, declares that *every* well-known leader of the British Healyites (SLL/WRP), and not least the leading American satellite, Wohlforth, are degenerate if not deeply flawed or downright wrong from the beginning. Thus North claims that he is the legitimate heir to what? At least Stalin, by hiding Lenin's break with him, could claim the great Lenin. Moreover, Stalin could cite himself as an "Old Bolshevik." But North, until the final implosion of the WRP, was a self-confessed toady to the "great" Gerry Healy and the heir to Tim Wohlforth.

Only someone who wanted to be "the leader," no matter of what, would be so desperate to claim the heritage of authentic Healyism. To any rational elements in North's WL and IC we can only say: Your organization is rotten through and through and to the core! North is attempting to secure his position at the head of an organization with a heritage of corrupt links with various murderous Arab colonels and sheiks. That this is not a suitable vehicle for the socialist liberation of mankind is a vast understatement. ■



Don Alexander addresses Spartacist-initiated mobilization to stop Nazi provocation against Gay Pride Day in Chicago, 1982.

## Unchain Labor/Blacks...

(continued from page 1)

a monstrous FBI/Meese/L.A. Police Department frame-up. Jackson must remain silent about these issues, he must not make a stink about this, because that would alienate the white racist Southern votes the Democrats are after, the Dixiecrat vote.

So they're trying to out-Reagan Reagan, talking about the global war against drugs, the sanctity of the family and American values, and the need for more budget cuts. Dukakis, the other day, he said, well, look, he's more conservative than Bush. And Mr. Anti-Struggle, Jesse "I Have a Scheme" Jackson, is an important component in a Dixiecrat Democratic Party to rope in the working people, to deliver blacks to the highest bidder, come Atlanta in July.

Now he wants something in return for his role as black fireman in extinguishing the flames of revolt in the past and in the present. Maybe he'll get the position we've talked about, as head narc coordinating the war against drugs globally. Or maybe he'll get a post as head of the Department of Education in order to complete the drive for school segregation, which he favors.

Malcolm X, who had x-ray vision in terms of the Republican foxes and Democratic wolves—though he was not a revolutionary Marxist with an understanding that class struggle is the motor force of history—could nonetheless, given his militant hatred of the racist status quo, put his finger on the various self-serving schemes of the petty-bourgeois black hustlers. I just want to quote, he was trying to sum up the prospects in 1965 for the fight for black freedom. The Voting Rights Act had been voted in, etc. And he was talking about these black misleaders who played a role of front man.

"What will they give us in 1965? I just read where they planned to make a

black cabinet member. Yes, they have a new gimmick every year. They're going to take one of their boys, black boys, and put him in the cabinet, so he can walk around Washington with a cigar—fire on one end and fool on the other. "And because his immediate personal problem will have been solved, he will be the one to tell our people, 'Look how much progress we're making: I'm in Washington, D.C. I can have tea in the White House. I'm your spokesman, I'm your, you know, your leader.'... But will it work? Can that one, whom they are going to put down there, step into the fire and put it out when the flames begin to leap up? When people take to the streets in their explosive mood, will that one, that they're going to put in the cabinet, be able to go among those people? Why, they'll burn him faster than they burn the ones who sent him."

Now, you have a lot of misleaders running around, duping the black masses once again. They're fearful of any type of social explosion in this country, talking about, "Well, you better vote, black people died for the vote." But the question is, vote for what? And will that save us from the rope? We in the Spartacist League say that it will take a new mass movement for black rights, linked to and led by a revolutionary labor movement and a revolutionary party fighting for workers power, in order to smash the chains of racial oppression.

Our political track record speaks for itself. The several anti-fascist mobilizations, labor-centered, that we initiated in Northern cities several years ago, which stopped Klan/Nazi provocations. Not to mention the latest extremely important victory in Segregation City, Chicago. Cassandra Seay, a black transit union driver beaten up by the police, she and her mother; they tried to frame up the family and her, to put them away for a long, long time. And the Spartacist League and class-struggle militants in the unions there, and others, mobilized the power of the labor movement and stopped that frame-up. So there's an alternative to this Democratic Party liberalism and the petty-bourgeois separatism as reflected in the politics of black

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1987 Oakland rally demands freedom for framed-up former Black Panther leader Geronimo Pratt, America's foremost class-war prisoner.

# Unchain Labor/Blacks...

(continued from page 9)

demagogues, anti-Semitic and Hitler-loving demagogues like Farrakhan.

## Black Overseers on Reagan's Plantation

So Jackson invokes the memory of the civil rights movement only to preach reconciliation between the bosses and the workers, the oppressed and the oppressors, the capitalist exploiters and all those whom they oppress, rob, enslave and destroy. Jackson came to prominence in Chicago as a product of the defeat of the civil rights movement, after Martin Luther King signed the Palmer House agreements acknowledging the failure to integrate Segregation City. What conclusion did Jackson draw from this? That the struggle for integration and black equality should be abandoned. So he built his Operation Breadbasket, which became PUSH, to get his cut by brokering black business in the ghetto. Except, in this deeply racist society there's no space for a black bourgeoisie. So Jesse's brand of black capitalism was to push or boycott, depending on the percentage in it for him and his own, white corporate giants like Coca-Cola and Burger King.

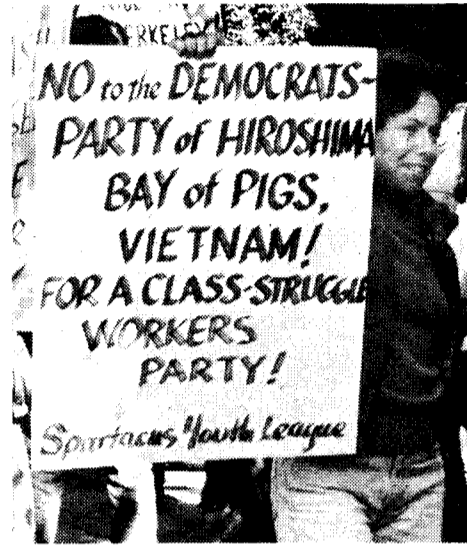
Now, a comrade once told me that a Russian anarchist, I believe it was Bakunin, was told by another anarchist comrade of his that there was this prominent black leader in the United States that was a conservative. And Bakunin responded by saying, but what is there to conserve? Well, for the pro-capitalist black misleaders of America, from the standpoint of the defense of their interests, a lot. Because, of course, the civil rights movement opened up the gates for today's black overseers on Reagan's plantations. So when there are strikes that need to be broken in the big cities, cops to be unleashed against rebellious blacks, red carpets to be rolled out for the Klan and Nazi scum in order to organize for racist murder and terror, they've done it all. Coleman Young in Detroit; Andrew Young in Atlanta; Harold Washington in Chicago, before he died; Tom Bradley in Los Angeles.

As for the white counterparts of these black Democrats, look at the racist pig Koch. You know, the police department in New York ought to open up a cemetery just to be prepared for the future victims of racist police murder. Eleanor Bumpurs, Michael Stewart, this Latina [Lydia Ferraro] that they recently killed, the list just goes on and on. Look at Art Agnos in San Francisco, so-called friend of labor: first thing he did was sic his cops and these bloody scabs on striking workers—a rampage, an assault against city labor.

The bourgeoisie learned a lot from the ghetto explosions of the '60s: Harlem, Watts, Detroit, Chicago. They learned that they could keep the lid on better if they had black faces in high places presiding over the deteriorating ghettos. So they began actively cultivating and co-

opting a layer of blacks who were active in civil rights struggles, to carry out the necessary attacks on the democratic aspirations and just demands of the ghetto masses. And the Panthers began to challenge the so-called "liberal" pro-capitalist black misleaders, like King. Now, tragically, these militants were isolated in the ghetto and they were not armed with a revolutionary program and perspective to link the struggle of the ghettos to the factories, to link the struggle for black rights to the powerful organized integrated labor movement. And it made it much easier for the racist bourgeois state to kill these militants with impunity.

But mobilizing the power of labor under a class-struggle leadership was the key then, and it's the key today. The unleashing of labor/black power can



**Spartacists say: Party of imperialist war uses black front men to enforce racist terror at home. Jackson embraces Philadelphia's Mayor of Murder Wilson Goode, who unleashed MOVE massacre, and transit union local president Roger Tauss (far right) in Pennsylvania primary.**



only come about by fighting within the unions to dump the labor lieutenants of capital, and the fight to forge a class-struggle leadership that will forge a workers party that will fight for a workers government. And we're not just fighting for working people and oppressed here, but internationally, where the black front men have played a very vital role for the bourgeoisie. Jesse Jackson shares fundamental political agreement with both capitalist parties. He supported Reagan's attempted ouster of Noriega. He denounced the Soviet Union for shooting down the KAL spy plane, which was a Cold War provocation by the U.S. He opposes independence for Puerto Rico. And of course, he supports racist protectionism and he's a self-described general in the war against drugs.

## Down with Anti-Drug Witchhunt!

Now, in the name of waging a war on drugs, the Democratic Party Congress and the Republican White House are declaring a war not only on the American people, but a war on the world. The bourgeoisie in this country is increasingly taking police-state measures. Their sinister anti-drug campaign must be seen in that light, in terms of preparation for war. It's a hypocritical sham from beginning to end. It's widely known that the CIA are the biggest drug dealers in the world. Their Nicaraguan contras and Afghan mullahs and their Third World dictators over the years are the biggest drug peddlers.

U.S. imperialism thinks they can just stalk over in places like Bolivia. But they got run out; the masses there had a general strike against the U.S. Army being there, and also in protest against the IMF. So they think they can slash and burn their way throughout the Third World countries. Ultimately, Russia is what they want. They want to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union—the first and only successful workers revolution in history.

The anti-drug witchhunt is laced with racism. A few years ago, Peter Ueberroth, the baseball commissioner, spearheaded it, particularly targeting black athletes, and in order to break the players union. With the death of black basketball star Len Bias it began to pick up some steam and now it's running in full gear. Jackson showed up at Len

ist state. So what we say is, the laws against so-called crimes without victims—drugs, gambling, prostitution, sodomy and homosexuality—threaten the privacy and rights of everyone and should be abolished!

Jackson went to Watts with his anti-drug message. There was a certain amount of cynicism involved in it. He went into the gangs' territory—the Reds, the other gang didn't show up. He's lucky he got out of there alive, especially since as the self-proclaimed general in the war against drugs, he has a deep responsibility for the thousands of minority youth who have been swept up in the mass roundup by Bradley's killer police. Even [LAPD chief] Darryl Gates said, yes, I love you, Jesse! And that's the point of this phony war, to bring blacks and working people more

Bias' funeral where there were a lot of mourning blacks. He said that [KKK lynch] ropes never killed as many of our young people as the pushers of drugs. Now that's really obscene, when you think about the hundreds of years of lynching in this country, and racist murder and terror. Not to mention what's going on currently: you know, MOVE! This is a disgusting apology.

But that won't save Jackson's ass. This is a deeply racist country. Even his own party rebaits him and race-baits him. And there have been various threats on his life. Now the whole spectrum of black capitalist politicians have jumped on the "Crackdown" bandwagon. So-called radicals of yesteryear who were writing these pamphlets about "Capitalism Plus Dope Equals Genocide," are now carrying out these little vigilante sprees. It's got so bad that ex-Panthers in New York City are hooking up with Al Sharpton, a self-admitted FBI informant, and a man who has led marches against Arab merchants. And of course, Farrakhan's outfit is involved.

This whole campaign has a certain amount of support among working people, black people, because of the desperate conditions. Phony leftists go along with it. But the hopelessness and the unemployment, the despair in the ghetto, and the glaring absence of black struggle, that's what leads people to destroy themselves. And all of this serves to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the viciously racist capital-

ism. So what we say is, the laws against so-called crimes without victims—drugs, gambling, prostitution, sodomy and homosexuality—threaten the privacy and rights of everyone and should be abolished!

## Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

So what we're talking about is socialist revolution. From our inception the Spartacist League has fought for the program of black liberation through socialist revolution, for revolutionary integrationism, which means integrated, revolutionary class struggle for the assimilation of blacks in a socialist society. The struggle for the most elementary democratic aspirations and just demands poses the question: *which class will rule*. It poses directly the need for united working-class struggle of black and white workers fighting for power. And that struggle has to be and can only succeed under the leadership of a multiracial Trotskyist vanguard party which has a large black component to it.

The kind of party we need is a party like Lenin and Trotsky built, a Bolshevik party to smash the capitalist system, establishing a workers government and a planned economy. And in fighting for the rebirth of the Fourth International, we call on revolutionary-minded Russian workers to oust the bureaucracy as part of defending the Soviet Union and fighting for the international extension of the gains of October, and return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky. Let all of those who are here tonight, who would have a better life for all of oppressed humanity, join with us and help finish off the imperialist beast. ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

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## PDC Notes...

(continued from page 2)

immediate positive response to our campaign to save Mumia. The PDC has collected over 1,500 names on petitions and individual letters to the Governor of Pennsylvania, demanding that he act to stop the legal murder of Mumia Abu-Jamal. New signatories to individual letters include: Neil Gleason, President, AFSCME Local 144; Lennox Hinds, Permanent United Nations Representative, International Association of Democratic Lawyers; Chokwe Lumumba, Chairman, New Afrikan Peoples Organization (NAPO); Conrad Lynn, Mid-Hudson Regional Counsel, NAACP; Norman Roth, former President, UAW Local 6; Mark Thomas,

President, AFSCME Local 171; Howard Zinn, Professor of Political Science, Boston University [organizations listed for identification purposes only]. Thousands more are needed. Please help us bring Mumia Abu-Jamal's case to your union, civil rights or community organizations.

\* \* \*

We encourage *WV* readers to continue to support and build the Partisan Defense Committee. Send a donation of \$5 or more and receive a subscription to *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*. For a single copy send \$1.00 to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, New York 10013. Send for additional newsletters and Mumia petitions. Be a PDC sustainer! Build the PDC! ■



# Mexican Elections...

(continued from page 12)

latifundista, Manuel Clouthier, for president, and receiving a good deal of clerical support. As recently as this spring, 150,000 Catholics marched in Mexico City against "sacrilegious" modern art (a painting which put Marilyn Monroe's face on the Virgin of Guadalupe). And in the Caribbean oil town of Villahermosa, the archbishop led a parade shouting "¡Viva Cristo Rey!" (Long live Christ the King—the battle cry of clerical reaction in the civil war which shook Mexico in the 1920s) as people gave the Nazi straight-arm salute.

Far more ominous for Mexico's capitalist rulers was the growing labor militancy. Following Reagan's example with PATCO, when uranium workers of the left-led SUTIN union struck in 1983, De la Madrid simply shut down the state-owned Uramex plant. In following years, while many strikes were declared illegal, working-class struggles kept spreading...and occasionally winning. So in order to really clamp down, when 7,500 workers at Aero-méxico struck this spring, the government simply "liquidated" its flagship airline. Now the government is attempting to sell off the Cananea copper mines in Sonora, birthplace of unionism in Mexico and site of the 1906 massacre of striking workers by Mexican and U.S. police.

And with the PRI in trouble, bonapartist terror is mounting, giving the lie to the regime's democratic pretensions. Teachers on strike for months in the southern states of Oaxaca and Chiapas have seen 60 of their fellow unionists killed by PRI union gun thugs in recent years. And last week two members of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party), Mexican affiliate of Ernest Mandel's "United Secretariat of the Fourth International," were killed by pro-government *pistoleros* in the state of Puebla. The victims were Alvaro Zamora and Melitón Hernández Velasco, a veteran Indian peasant leader and PRT candidate for federal deputy (*La Jornada*, 26 June).

But in addition to terror, the Mexican bourgeoisie also needs an escape valve to let off the pressure of mass discontent. This is the job of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the former PRI governor of Michoacán who decided to go "independent" when the governing party turned down his reform candidacy last fall. So now there is a division of labor: the gray flannel technocrat Salinas to win back votes from the PAN; Cárdenas for the impoverished masses, implicitly promising a reconstituted PRI and reviving the populist traditions of yesteryear. As a *popular front* has formed with myriad "socialists" flocking to the new tri-color coalition, the urgent need is for independent, authentically communist leadership to break the Mexican working class from the strangle-



Chile 1973: Allende's Unidad Popular paved way for bloody Pinochet coup (left). Mexico City 1968: Mexican army kills over 500 in Tlatelolco massacre (right). Popular front and bonapartist repression, last resort of capitalism in crisis.

hold of bourgeois nationalism, which has kept the proletariat chained to the "national" exploiters and their program of starvation and repression.

## Cárdenas and the New Popular Front

Today Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas denounces the government's electoral fraud, yet his co-leader of the National Democratic Front (FDN), Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, is a former president of the PRI, well known for stealing the election in the state of Nayarit in 1975. Cárdenas makes clear his loyalty to the established order, meeting with army leaders and flattering the bloodstained officers who carried out the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre. At his June 25 Mexico City rally, Cárdenas declared: "The people have faith that the Armed Forces will be the first guarantee of legality...." Yet the bulk of the Mexican "left," steeped in class collaboration and parliamentary cretinism (in a country where "parliament" is a fig leaf for semi-bonapartist rule!), rushed to embrace Cárdenas.

When Cárdenas formed a "Democratic Current" inside the government party, fake-lefts began salivating. Then he split from the PRI to run for president with the endorsement of several of the PRI satellite parties. The PARM, PPS and PST (now rebaptized the Cardenista Front of National Reconstruction) put him on their tickets. Next was a split from the fake-Trotskyist PRT. PRT parliamentary deputies and student leaders followed "theoretician" Adolfo Gilly to form a new pro-Cárdenas group, the MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo—Movement Toward Socialism). Then leaders of many "independent" trade unions climbed on board. Soon ex-guerrillaists, syndicalists, local leftist coalitions, Social Democrats, Greens and a host of neighborhood associations abandoned their abstentionist "principles" to join the Cárdenas popular front.

And the pressure kept building on the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS) to withdraw its presidential candidate Heberto Castillo. Castillo had laboriously cobbled together a lash-up of his

nationalist outfit with the remnants of the Mexican CP (both old-line Stalinists and "Eurocommunists"), hoping to become a pole for left regroupment. But on June 7, the PMS sealed a "long-term political, programmatic alliance" with Cárdenas' Democratic Current, with a 13-point accord calling for "suspension" of the foreign debt, Mexico's traditional "mixed economy," a "purged and reorganized" police force, "resuming" "Mexico's historic military doctrine, based on national defense," etc. (*La Unidad*, 12 June). For the Stalinists, it was their yearned-for chance to "unite" with the "progressive, national bourgeoisie."



PRT presidential candidate Rosario Ibarra, head of committee for the defense of the disappeared.

At a PMS rally the next day, chants rang out: "Unity, unity! The people united will never be defeated!" This was the slogan of Allende's Unidad Popular in Chile—"People's Unity" with the bourgeoisie—which by holding back and suppressing the struggles of the workers led to bloody defeat in September 1973 at the hands of Pinochet and his "constitutional" army. Now Cárdenas and his reformist allies are preaching faith that "the armed forces can never again be used against the people." Yet who in Mexico can forget the black night of Tlatelolco on the eve of the 1968 Olympics when the army, under orders of PRI interior minister Echeverría, massacred hundreds. When Echeverría became president two years later, the head of the PRI was Muñoz Ledo, the same one who now heads the "Democratic Current."

## Reformists on the Hot Seat

Now the PRT was on the hot seat, as Cárdenas, the PMS and the left-liberal press appealed to them to drop their presidential candidate, Rosario Ibarra, leader of the courageous committee for the defense of the disappeared. The parliamentary "socialist" PRT was ill-prepared to resist the siren song of the new "progressive" coalition, being themselves inveterate "unity"-mongers with all and sundry. Some of the smaller

components of the PRT's own Unidad Popular electoral lash-up had begun drifting over to the Cárdenas camp. Now a number of well-known PRT members demonstratively quit, denouncing the party for "isolating" itself from "the great mass movement which Cárdenas is generating."

After a two-day meeting, Central Committee spokesmen announced the PRT's decision to maintain its presidential candidacy. It declared with a tone of reluctance that "We cannot join those who support Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas," while "appreciating" Cárdenas' gesture in "not pressuring the PRT further for a single candidacy." While proclaiming itself to now be "the only independent socialist option," the PRT would seek "deeper" ways to "hook up" to "establish fraternal links with the national movement which has been formed against the PRI" (*La Jornada*, 12 and 13 June). What this is all about is the PRT's call for a "pact of democratic solidarity," "a great front of opposition parties" to "defend the vote" (*Bandera Socialista*, 6 June). Like the PRT's participation in the Assembly for Effective Suffrage with rightist parties, and its joint actions with the PAN (most recently blocking highways in the northern town of Monclova).

The PRT's election campaign is "independent" only by default. Month after month these reformists appealed to the PMS for a "single candidacy" of "unity of the left." But PMS caudillo Castillo had bigger fish to fry. The PRT reaped what it had sown when the MAS split off to bask in "unity" with Cárdenas. The PRT's statement criticized the idea of "an alliance with the national bourgeoisie," but declared "the present phase we are going through...is fundamentally democratic." Indeed, the electoral platform of the PRT's Unidad Popular is *purely bourgeois-democratic*. It's easy to see why they have difficulty saying no to Cárdenas: there's nothing in their own program that a bolder bourgeois nationalist politician—like Cárdenas senior—couldn't support!

The PRT/UP's platform is filled with vague calls for "a national and popular banking system," "rational use and exploitation of the oil," etc. While calling for "refusing to recognize the foreign debt" (compared to Cárdenas' "suspension"), this is no more "anti-imperialist" than when most of Latin America defaulted during the '30s Depression. Rather than calling for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the PRT/UP is for "nationalization of priority industries"—in a country where well over half of industry is already nationalized! It calls for a sliding scale not of wages (desperately needed in the face of 177 percent inflation last year) but of prices for agricultural products. In fact, the only demand that goes one millimeter beyond what the bourgeoisie could grant is its call (in a "sewer socialism" program for Mexico City) for "clean air"! That will take a socialist revolution, and then some.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

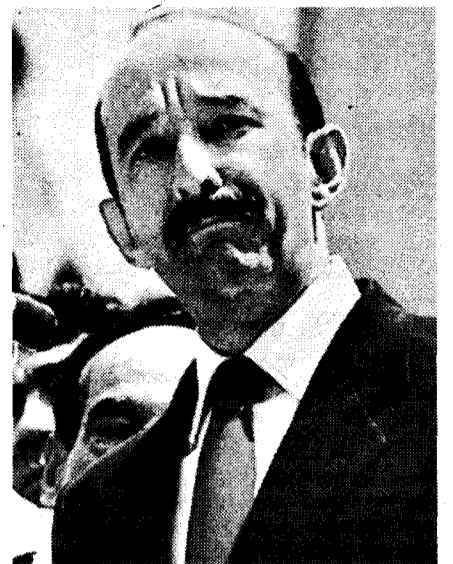


For proletarian internationalism, not bourgeois nationalism! Banner of militant nuclear energy workers in 1988 Mexico City May Day march says, "Workers of the World Unite!"

# WORKERS VANGUARD



Perez/Syigma  
Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. At right, skilled workers beg for jobs.



Larry Reider  
PRI's Carlos Salinas orders austerity for Mexico's workers.

## Left Peddles "Unity" with Cárdenas Popular Front

# Mexico: Starvation Elections

MEXICO CITY—Every six years, a new president of Mexico is selected by a procedure that makes the selection of the Pope look downright democratic. The outgoing ruler picks his successor by pointing a finger (*el dedazo*). Instantly, walls all across the country are painted with his initials and portrait in red-white-green, the colors of the flag and of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), whose iron-fisted rule has administered Mexican capitalism for decades. In 59 years, it has never lost a single presidential, senatorial or gubernatorial election. But as the July 6 vote approaches, with the country mired in its worst economic crisis of the century, the PRI is facing its first serious competition.

On June 25, half a million people packed Mexico City's *Zócalo*, the huge square in front of the presidential palace, to hear the populist candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. The challenger is the son of former president General Lázaro Cárdenas, who ruled Mexico in the late 1930s. Cárdenas senior nationalized the oil industry, infuriating British and American imperialism. Cárdenas junior is a pale reflection of his nationalist father, calling only for "democratization" and "renegotiating" the debt to New York banks, and accusing *current* (but not former) PRI rulers of "betraying the principles of the Mexican Revolution." But this, plus his legendary name and Indian features, has turned Cárdenas II into a rallying point for opposition to the pro-Washington technocrats now running Mexico.

President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado is a Harvard-trained economist who has responded to the "debt crisis" by carrying out brutal austerity, ordered by the IMF international bankers cartel. So far in his six-year administration more than 1,000 industrial enterprises have closed, more than four million workers have been thrown out of their jobs, and real wages have been slashed by more than 50 percent (*La Jornada*, 27 April). This record has only been equaled by Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile and Argentina during the generals' "dirty war." No wonder that when hundreds of thousands of work-

ers marched through the capital on February 18, accompanied by Cárdenas, signs with the president's initials read "MMH: México Muriendo de Hambre" (Mexico dying of hunger).

De la Madrid's hand-picked successor is Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the former budget minister who is derided as Carlos Recortari—"Charlie Cutbacks"—for his brutal economic policies. CSG is another "Harvard boy" economist who openly favors "private enterprise" over Mexico's traditional "mixed economy" in which the capitalist state controls large sectors of indus-

try, banking and commerce. When the president "unveiled" his successor, the wizened leader of the pro-government CTM union federation, Fidel Velásquez (a veteran kingmaker who likes to say "I am the PRI"), ostentatiously walked off the stage. So unpopular is the government's wage-freezing Economic Solidarity Pact with workers that the PRI didn't dare put its candidate on the presidential balcony to review the 1.3 million-strong May Day parade. Yet labor boss Velásquez still defends the starvation "pact," protesting against employers who wanted to raise wages a

few percentage points instead of "holding the line"...at 0 percent!

For the first time ever, it appears that a lot of people are going to vote for the "opposition" in Mexico's rigged elections. Of course the PRI will win. Already, both left- and right-wing parties are denouncing massive vote fraud (a secret "ballot factory" was recently exposed in the capital). Yet Mexico is not a parliamentary democracy but a semi-bonapartist regime in which elections are really *plebiscites*—for or against the PRI. What counts is by *how much* the government party wins. With rampant discontent extending from the huge poor and working-class "lost cities" to middle-class *colonias*, too big a margin could spark anti-fraud protests while a bare majority would give the impression that the "strong state" is on the brink of collapse.

From the 1930s on, Mexico has been ruled not by the rubber-stamp parliament but through a system of mass organizations tightly controlled by the "PRI-government." These "institutions" into which the Mexican Revolution is supposed to have congealed have confined the working people in a corporatist straitjacket. With a combination of populist-nationalist demagoguery, fear and corruption, the formula has worked for decades—sometimes drenched with blood, sometimes greased with oil profits. Hungry peasants, striking workers or rebellious students were crushed or co-opted. But then Mexico's oil boom went bust, and when the Reagan depression took hold the banks and corporate conglomerates tottered, producing the debt crisis which broke out one month after De la Madrid's election.

As the government cut back tortilla subsidies, fired workers wholesale and impoverished the middle class, discontent turned against the PRI. In the border states near *El Norte* (the U.S.), the rightist National Action Party (PAN) gained support ranging from businessmen and farmers to slum dwellers. The PAN, which was mixed up in Oliver North's schemes to finance the Nicaraguan contras, is running a millionaire



Xavier Audiffred  
May Day 1987: 100,000 workers in independent union marches in Mexico City protest PRI union-busting and austerity.