

13,000 Bus Drivers Fired

Mexico City: Union-Busting at Gunpoint



Victor Mendiola/La Jornada

APRIL 17—On April 8, the government of Mexico City declared the capital's publicly owned bus company, Ruta 100, "bankrupt." This left 3 million daily riders without transport, most of them from outlying working-class *colonias* (neighborhoods) of the Federal District (DF) and the state of México. Simultaneously, the government fired all of Ruta 100's nearly 13,000 workers, who are organized in the independent SUTAU-100 union. To replace them, the DF brought in cops to operate rented buses and drastically slashed the number of routes.

To enforce this vicious attack, hundreds of heavily armed security police cordoned off Ruta 100 bus barns, maintenance depots and the union's headquarters. Warrants were issued for a dozen union leaders on trumped-up charges of corruption and "breach of trust." Ricardo Barco, one of the founders of SUTAU and its legal adviser, was surrounded by 60 submachine-gun toting police as he came out of a Sanborn's restaurant and beaten into unconsciousness. Six of the union leaders are presently behind bars, and union funds have been frozen. Meanwhile, bail has been set at 10 million new pesos (*US\$1.5 million*) per person! Mexican and U.S. labor must demand: Release the arrested SUTAU leaders—Drop the charges! Stop the destruction of Ruta 100!

The firings and arrests have been met with defiance. When the government offered to "re-hire" fired drivers and maintenance mechanics, almost none accepted the offer. There have been huge outpourings of public protest. On April 10, a Mexico City demonstration

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Espartaco

Mexico City, April 10: Over 150,000 protest mass firing of bus drivers and jailing of union leaders, including Ricardo Barco (top).

Guatemala

CIA's Mass Murder Inc.

For nearly three years, with remarkable courage and determination, Jennifer Harbury struggled to discover the fate of her husband, Guatemalan guerrilla leader Efraín Bámaca Velásquez. Known as Commander Everardo in the ORPA (Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms), Bámaca had disappeared in Guatemala on 12 March 1992 in an ambush by the notoriously brutal Guatemalan military. Later that year, another captured guerrilla escaped and told of seeing Bámaca in July—horribly tortured but alive—at a secret prison camp. The officer he saw bending over the torture table was one Colonel Julio Roberto Alpírez. Harbury badgered U.S. and Guatemalan officials, defying death threats and a stream of lies, camping out on a hunger strike outside government offices in Guatemala City last year, demanding the truth.

Harbury returned to Washington when offered a meeting with National Security Adviser Anthony

Lake, only to be stonewalled by the Clinton administration. Then, on March 22, a week and a half into Harbury's second hunger strike, this time outside the White House, U.S. Democratic Congressman Robert Torricelli—a member of the House intelligence committee—revealed in a letter to Clinton that Bámaca had been tortured and murdered under the supervision of Guatemalan army Colonel Alpírez, who was a paid agent of the CIA.

Moreover, Torricelli said, the same Colonel Alpírez was also responsible for the June 1990 assassination of Michael DeVine, a U.S. citizen who ran an inn in the town of Poptún, in the northern rain forest region of El Petén. DeVine's body was found with hands bound and head nearly severed after he was abducted by a death squad operating from a nearby military base commanded by Alpírez. Torricelli charged that official State Department statements concerning the murders of Bámaca and DeVine "show a consistent and deliberate pattern of misinformation," and indeed, "Almost nothing the United States government has revealed

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Perkins/Washington Post

Jennifer Harbury holding photo of husband, Guatemalan guerrilla fighter Efraín Bámaca, tortured and murdered by CIA's paid assassins.



Racist Travesty of Justice

James Frazier Sentenced

On April 6, in a tenth-floor courtroom of the Brooklyn Criminal Court, black transit worker James Frazier was sentenced to 90 days in jail and five years' probation for surviving a cop's bullet to his head. As court officers slapped handcuffs on him and led him out of the courtroom, more than 30 supporters, many of them fellow members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, expressed shock and outrage that he received any jail time or probation. "This is a nightmare," Frazier's lawyer told his supporters. The nightmare began in October

1993, when Frazier's left eye was shot out by a New York cop. The cops reported Frazier "DOA" (dead on arrival) at the hospital, where they later brutally beat him while spewing racist slurs.

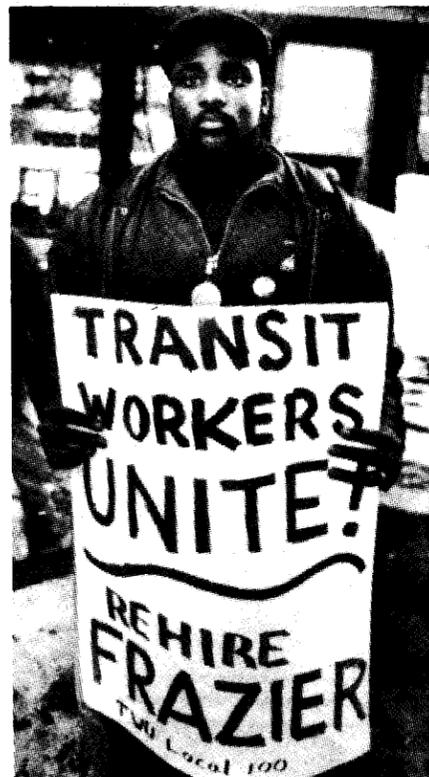
The police failed to kill Frazier on the streets of Brooklyn. But in a blatantly racist case of injustice, he was convicted in late February on the lesser of two counts of gun possession. Despite the incredible adversity he has faced—losing first his eye and then his job with the Transit Authority—Frazier is currently employed in a trade and supporting his

family. He will serve his jail time on weekends. Frazier's lawyer has announced that the conviction will be appealed.

One measure of the grotesque injustice meted out to James Frazier is to try to remember the last time a cop was sent to jail—or even removed from the police force—for killing an unarmed civilian. Lately, at protests against cutbacks of social programs, youthful demonstrators have been on the receiving end of NYPD attacks. Meanwhile, police brutality complaints have skyrocketed—up nearly 50 percent during Mayor Giuliani and Police Commissioner Bratton's first six months. We won't forget their many victims, such as 16-year-old Asian honor student Yong Xin Huang, who was shot dead last month in Brooklyn for playing with an airgun, or Anthony Baez, choked to death in December in the Bronx after his football landed on a patrol car.

At Frazier's sentencing, his lawyer invited the judge to look around the courtroom at the family, friends and transit workers who turned out in support to see the "obvious devotion that James inspires among his co-workers and others." Several sections of Local 100, including Frazier's own Track Division, as well as the motormen's and conductors' units, called for the charges against him to be dropped and for him to be reinstated in his job. While Judge Goldberg acknowledged the support and the numerous letters he received for Frazier, which he said were "written from the heart," he still imposed a prison sentence. No doubt, Frazier is being jailed in part as retribution for his pending police brutality civil suit and his defiance in the face of this racist cop frame-up.

In his brief remarks during the sentencing, Frazier told the judge that he needed his freedom to support his family, but he did not and would not apologize



Lisa Terry

James Frazier

for a crime he didn't commit. When Frazier appeared in the Brooklyn Criminal Court lobby after being sentenced, he thanked his supporters, telling them that he "would have been locked up for a lot of time" without their dedicated support. If not for this support, Frazier might well have been slammed with the D.A.'s initial slew of frame-up charges, including attempted murder of a police officer. And the jury rejected the more serious charge of possession with intent to use, while the prosecution was unable to get the seven-year maximum sentence it sought.

The Committee for a Fighting TWU and other union militants, including some officials, as well as the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Black League for Social Defense, mobilized transit workers, students and anti-racist activists to support Frazier by regularly attending the trial proceedings. As Marxists, we understand that the working class can place no faith whatever in the "justice" of the capitalist courts. What happened to James Frazier is just more proof that the courts, prisons and police exist to maintain racist class rule through organized violence and terror. ■



TROTSKY

Vietnam Was a Victory for All Working People

Twenty years ago, on 30 April 1975, the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front moved into Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City. In contrast to almost the entire American left, which confined itself to social-pacifist calls to "end the war" and "bring our boys home," the Spartacist League forthrightly called for "Military Victory to the DRV/NLF!" To this day, the "Vietnam syndrome,"



LENIN

the legacy of Washington's humiliating defeat on the battlefields of Indochina, continues to haunt America's rulers. However, as we warned at the time, the nationalist policies of the Stalinist bureaucracies in Moscow, Beijing and Hanoi posed a danger to the revolutionary gains secured by the Vietnamese masses at such great expense. Today, with the Soviet Union destroyed by counterrevolution and the fate of the Vietnamese and Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers states hanging in the balance, we again underscore the urgent need for world socialist revolution as the only road forward for humanity.

The military victory of the DRV/NLF marks the end of 30 years of civil war against colonialism and imperialism and their local allies. It means the overthrow of capitalist rule in South Vietnam, a historic conquest for the working people of the entire world and one which must be unconditionally defended by class-conscious workers against imperialist attack.

We hail this stunning defeat of U.S. imperialism, the first in a major war during this century, and greet the victory of our class brothers and sisters in Indochina with internationalist proletarian solidarity. The struggle against the imperialists' Vietnam war has also been a major task of socialists in the imperialist centers, dominating the political experience of a whole generation of young aspiring revolutionaries. And it is as fellow combatants in the international class struggle that we warn the Indochinese masses that they must place no confidence in their Stalinist leaders....

The recent events in Indochina fully confirm the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution, which holds that in the backward countries even the democratic tasks of national emancipation and agrarian revolution can only be solved by the dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the peasantry. The weak bourgeoisies of these areas, closely linked to domestic feudal reaction and imperialism, are incapable of carrying out a bourgeois revolution....

The task of Marxists in Vietnam and Cambodia today is to take forward the revolutionary struggle by fighting for a workers' political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy, demanding the creation of democratic workers councils as the basis for the new state apparatus, and freedom for all parties which defend the revolution against counterrevolutionary attack. Above all, the struggle to go forward to final victory over capitalism requires the construction of Trotskyist parties, in Indochina and throughout the world, as part of a reborn Fourth International....

For Political Revolution in Cambodia and Vietnam (North and South)! All Indochina Must Go Communist!

—"Capitalist Class Rule Smashed in Vietnam, Cambodia!"
WV No. 68, 9 May 1975

WORKERS VANGUARD



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21 April 1995

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Protests Against Ukraine Anti-Trotskyist Witchhunt

On April 1 the *Vremya* "news" broadcast on Russian television purveyed outlandish claims by the Ukrainian SBU secret police, purporting to have unearthed a plot to "overthrow" the Ukrainian government by four Moscow supporters of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). This was presented as justification by the SBU for confiscating Trotskyist literature and barring these comrades from further travel to the Ukraine. The *Vremya* broadcast, we have since learned, was preceded by a lengthy smear piece in the Russian-language Ukrainian tabloid *Kievskie Vedomosti* (30 March), whose front page screamed, "Overthrow Government in Ukraine, Intended Touring Trotskyists."

The Ukrainian capitalist authorities' attempt to criminalize Marxist ideas has been met with protests from around the world. The ICL immediately launched a campaign of protest and exposure against the sinister slanders. Our April 3 statement proclaimed, "Reviving Stalin's Smears in the Service of Impoverishing the Working People—Protest Outrageous Slanders Against Trotskyists in Moscow!" (WV No. 620, 7 April). On April 5, some 50 people picketed near the Ukrainian UN Mission in New York. The next day, demonstrations were held outside Ukrainian embassies and consulates in Chicago, London, Berlin and Toronto. Further protests were mounted on April 7 in Paris and Melbourne, Australia.

The protests also indicted the Russian authorities' willful failure to investigate the February 1992 murder—under sinister and mysterious circumstances—of our comrade Martha Phillips in Moscow. Protesters carried signs reading, "Reopen the Investigation of the Murder of Martha Phillips!" In Berlin, protesters stressed the connection to the Fourth Reich's vindictive persecution of former officials of the East German deformed workers state, with signs reading, "Against the Witchhunt—Defend the Former DDR Bureaucrats: Mielke, Wolf, Kessler" and "Against the Witchhunt—Defend the Real Communists of the ICL!"

Following press conferences in Moscow on April 3 and 4 attended by a range of Russian and international media, an ICL spokesman was interviewed on the BBC Russian-language radio program *Argument*. On April 4, the Russian Interfax news agency ran a dispatch headlined: "One of the Leaders of the Trotskyist International Communist League Accuses the Ukrainian Powers of Suppression of Dissent." An April 12 article by leftist journalist Renfrey Clarke, based in Moscow, linked the Ukrainian slander campaign to growing repression by the

**New York, April 5:
One of seven demonstrations internationally protesting slanders by Ukrainian authorities against International Communist League.**



Yeltsin regime: "Russia: Slander Against Trotskyists a Danger to Whole Left" (reprinted below).

This point was stressed as well in a moving protest from Mexico City by Esteban Volkov, grandson of Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky:

"As the descendant of one of the families most slandered and which suffered most from Stalinist terror, and without belonging to any political organization, I energetically protest against the resurgence and use of methods from the Stalinist school of falsification in support of terror of a bonapartist or fascistic type, the objective of which is to prevent any defense of the exploited and oppressed classes."

From France, leftist writer Gilles Perrault wrote that the Ukrainian smear campaign's "grotesquery is surpassed only by its odiousness" and "inevitably conjures up the ways of the Stalinists, who repressed Trotskyist members and sympathizers for so many years." Perrault is the author of *The Red Orchestra*, an account of the heroic World War II anti-Nazi Soviet espionage network set up by Polish Jewish Communist Leopold Trepper.

Israeli civil libertarian and concentration camp survivor Israel Shahak added his voice to "condemn without reserve the dictatorial attitude of the Ukrainian government." Another former victim of racist repression, Baruch Hirson, editor of the journal *Searchlight South Africa*, wrote:

"We are reminded of similar campaigns in South Africa, under its apartheid regime, which used the same methods to target all those who dared to criticise its arbitrary methods of rule and control. Some of us were victims of that government and I personally spent nine years

in prison for my activities against the state....

"Furthermore, although we are not connected with the International Communist League, we believe that they have the right to criticise your government and call for the restoration of the legacy bequeathed by Lenin and his comrades in 1917. The hope that Lenin inspired when his party took power is in urgent need of renewal...."

The *Kievskie Vedomosti* article, while vilifying our comrades as "conspirators," in fact revealed a wide-ranging conspiracy by the Kiev secret services against our supporters and those interested in our Trotskyist views. A "dossier" on the ICL in the *Vedomosti* report included the full names and nationalities of several of our comrades, the name of the street of a Kiev apartment where they had stayed and a photograph, taken at a birthday party more than two

years ago, "supplied by" the SBU.

This surveillance and harassment were clearly ordained at the highest levels of the state security apparatus. *Vedomosti* extensively quoted the director of the Kiev SBU, Lieutenant General Vladimir Likhovozov, and First Deputy Prosecutor Sergei Vinokurov. Likhovozov intoned, "In the instance of the Trotskyists, we are talking not of persecuting dissent for political motives—the SBU does not engage in that." Likhovozov's fatuous assurances to the contrary, *Vedomosti* itself reported SBU persecution of Ukrainian leftists who "had fed on the ideas of Trotskyism," noting they were subjected to inquisitorial "preventative discussions" by "counterintelligence agents."

The SBU well knows, and even

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Russia Slander Against Trotskyists a Danger to Whole Left

By Renfrey Clarke

The author is the Moscow correspondent of the Green Left Weekly of Sydney, Australia.

MOSCOW—In Russia, April 1—the "Day of Laughter"—often comes as a shock to people used to its tame counterpart in the English-speaking world. On this particular day, journalists are allowed to subvert their own profession, presenting elaborate and outrageous hoaxes designed to trip up the credulous.

So when the television news program *Vremya*, which can be seen throughout most of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, reported on the evening of April 1 that four foreign Trotskyists with 50 kilos of agitational literature had been banned from Ukraine for plotting the overthrow of the Ukrainian government, that was a joke, right?

Foiled again. For once, an improbable story put to air on April 1 was totally serious, and for left-wing opponents of the governments in Russia and Ukraine, thoroughly menacing.

"The overthrow of the government in Ukraine was planned by four ideo-

logical Trotskyists representing the International Communist League," *Vremya* stated in its 53-second clip.

"They passed themselves off as scholars wishing to study in archives. At one of the apartments of the visitors in Kiev, the Struggle Against Terrorism Division of the Ukrainian Security Service seized approximately 50 kilograms of propagandistic literature....

"According to information from operatives, four foreign citizens, two from Germany, one from France and one from America, attempted to organise in Ukraine a section of the International Communist League....

"Furthermore, they called openly for the overthrow of the constitutional order in Ukraine and for the seizure of power....

"As a result, travel into Ukraine for the four revolutionary leaders from abroad is officially closed."

Better known to Western leftists as the Spartacists, the International Communist League has made perhaps the most determined effort of any international left tendency to set up national sections and recruit members in the former Soviet Union. Although this effort has not been

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Ukrainian newspaper *Kievskie Vedomosti* (30 March) purveys outlandish smears portraying Marxists as putschists. Front-page headline reads, "Overthrow Government in Ukraine, Intended Touring Trotskyists."

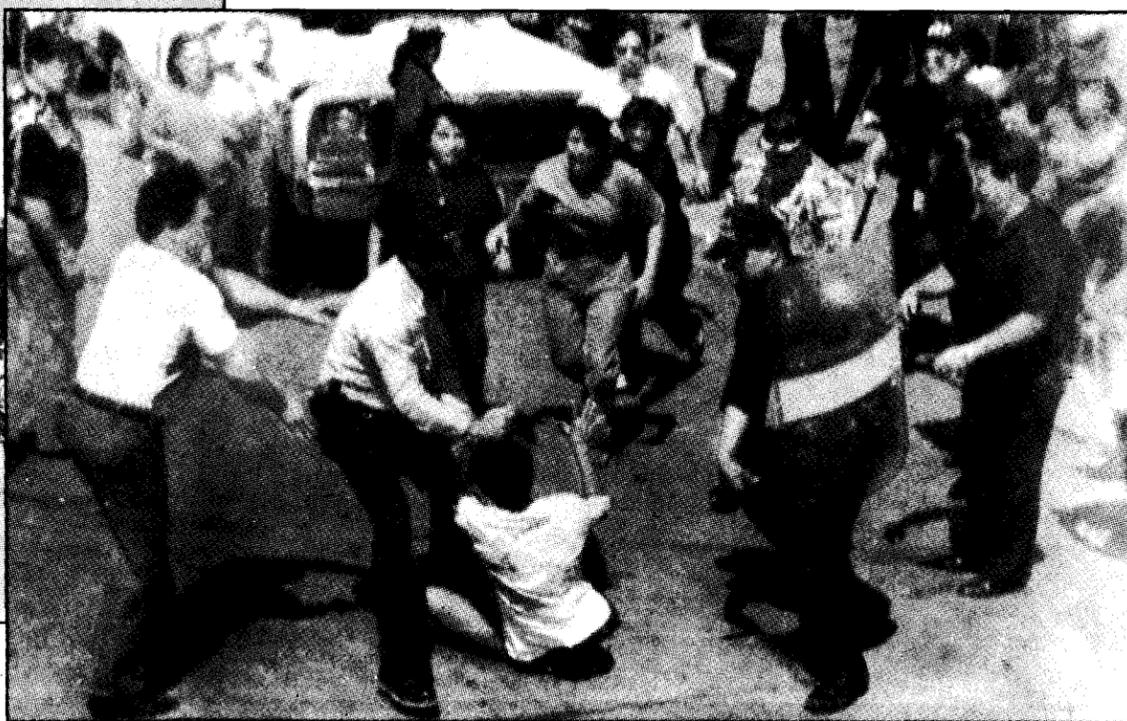


NAFTA's Mexican Sweatshops

Labor Organizing in the Maquiladoras



WV Photo
Sign over Sony plant in Nuevo Laredo reads, "Everything Under Control," even as militant workers defied brutal cop assault against April 1994 strike.



El Mañana (Nuevo Laredo)

This article is the product of a trip to Mexico's northern border region last summer by a joint reporting team from Workers Vanguard and Espartaco, the newspaper of our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México. The team spoke with workers from several maquiladora "free trade" plants in the area along the lower Rio Grande (Rio Bravo in Mexico). Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), all of Mexico has become, in effect, a giant maquiladora zone, with sweatshops superexploiting Mexican workers at starvation wages, producing for the U.S. market. Part one of this article, dealing with recent strikes and the development of the growing industrial belt in northern Mexico, was published in WV No. 620, 7 April.

Independent union organizing under the harsh conditions in the maquiladoras is extremely difficult, requiring great care. There are huge concentrations of young, low-paid, potentially militant workers: in Reynosa, for example, a city of some 300,000 inhabitants, there are more than 30,000 workers in 52 maqui-

ladora plants; in Matamoros, in 1992 there were 93 maquiladoras employing 36,000 workers. Companies like TRW, Deltronics and Sony often have half a dozen plants or more in one city. The young workers are also literate for the most part, and a number of companies

erate explosive protest weighs heavily against militant organizing in a thousand ways. This not only produces anger, but also desperation and resignation; those who must constantly worry about how to pay for their next meals and those of their children are often worn down by

the Zapatista revolt in Chiapas.

There have been numerous small struggles. For example, at a TRW plant that makes seat belts there was a successful 15-minute work stoppage in 1993 demanding chairs. (The company demanded women sew standing up.) But one of the most effective ways that the bosses try to prevent class and union consciousness is to cut off the memory of past struggles. This is accomplished by periodically firing (laying off) every worker who has been in the plant for any length of time. Due to this kind of "age purge," there are few production workers over the age of 24 in the plants. Thus at Zenith in Reynosa workers knew little of the 1983 walkout there that was the first major strike in the maquiladoras. So we will briefly recount it here. The story of that strike is told in the book *Sangre joven* (Young Blood), a 1986 collection of accounts by maquiladora workers.

The walkout began after workers found out that in Matamoros Zenith was paying almost double the wages they were receiving. In October 1983, informal meetings after work began to grow from 20-30 people to 100. A commission was formed to speak with the company and the CTM. But in early November, the leader of the commission, Rufino, was kidnapped. The strike broke out spontaneously to demand that Rufino be returned alive. A makeshift red-and-black flag, the traditional strike symbol in Mexico, was stitched together from a slip and a blouse. Commissions were sent to other plants, and in less than two hours the whole industrial park, 14 plants with about 10,000 workers, was stopped:

"Never before had the people ever met like this. We were all there.... By the middle of the day the whole city had found out about the affair, and by 2 or 3 in the afternoon we had a lot of people from the other shifts.... Moreover, there were people there from the colonias [neighborhoods], and from many places;

Part Two Women Workers Revolt

even find it profitable to sponsor primary and secondary school classes in the plants. On the other hand, there is extreme repression, with the huge industrial parks run like little police states. Militants must worry about pervasive surveillance, as well as goon squads organized by the bureaucrats of the corporatist CTM "unions."

And the very poverty which can gen-

erate explosive protest weighs heavily against militant organizing in a thousand ways. This not only produces anger, but also desperation and resignation; those who must constantly worry about how to pay for their next meals and those of their children are often worn down by



Ramos/El Mañana (Nuevo Laredo)



Ruben R. Ramirez

Women workers are central to labor organizing in maquiladora belt. Left: Sony workers' sign reads, "Company Provokes Violence." Above: RCA Thomson workers in Ciudad Juárez ousted corporatist "union" leadership in week-long strike in February.

some brought us coffee and food, others money and what they call leaflets, giving us support, saying that our cause was just and so on.

"I had never seen such papers before, but by the next day we were distributing them...."

"The press, forget about them; they spewed epithets about us, saying we were nothing but 'crazy girls who don't know what they want'; they also said that we were driven by 'mysterious forces'."

—Sangre joven

On the fourth day, the local CTM boss finally appeared, amid catcalls from the strikers, and later that day Rufino was released.

"By then, the whole city was in suspense, businesses were closed, saying that there were no sales because of the *maquiladora* movement.... We had made two demonstrations, and the press was hurling epithets at us like 'communist agitators.'"

"Obviously we weren't agitators or communists, we didn't even know what that was."

The strike was settled with the appearance of CTM leader Fidel Velázquez in person. "Don Fidel" spoke paternalistically to the "*niñas*" (little girls) and then signed an agreement to hold new union elections. The elections were held, and the militants who had formed a Democratic Committee were elected. But the company refused to grant the increase, the CTM brought in *porros* (thugs) from the oil workers union in Tampico, and within a few months many of the strike leaders were gone.

That was a little over a decade ago, yet to Zenith workers today this experience is not ancient history—it is *non-history*, and its lessons are buried. However, a revolt by women workers last year in Nuevo Laredo has again starkly posed many of the same issues. This was a series of protests over the imposition of a *charro* (bureaucratic) leadership of the CTM *maquiladora* union at Magnéticos de México, owned by Sony, which is the largest manufacturer in the city. MDM has seven plants in Nuevo Laredo, which produce 2.5 million audio tape cassettes a day. At the beginning of 1994, the local CTM union chief, José María (Chema) Morales, had himself named head of the Maquiladoras Union and began to impose delegates (shop stewards), overruling the membership's choices. In January, some workers protested, went on hunger strike and were fired. Meanwhile, the company introduced Sunday work without extra pay. Then in mid-April, the CTM announced that snap elections would be held, within 24 hours, to prevent the opposition from organizing.

This provocation led to a demonstration by over 1,000 out of the 1,800 Sony workers in the city, along with a half-hour work stoppage in another *maquiladora*, Lamosa. CTM union leader and state deputy Maricela López warned that "we don't want strikes because they hurt the *maquiladoras* and the investors" (*El Mañana* [Nuevo Laredo], 16 April 1994). The next day, Saturday, several hundred workers, mostly women, stopped work on the first shift demanding democratic union elections, and blocked entrances to MDM's Plant 1 in downtown Nuevo Laredo. The company called in the mayor and police chief, who sent cops in through the plant and attacked the strikers without warning from behind. At least a dozen women were severely beaten, and several male workers were arrested as they sought to come to their aid. Ironically, on top of this plant is a big sign proclaiming: "SONY—Everything Under Control."

This assault only strengthened the strikers' resolve. On Sunday, some 200 women were sitting down, "guarding" the plant and blocking strikebreakers with human chains. A number of union leaders in Nuevo Laredo signed a manifesto denouncing the interference of "Chema" Morales. By Monday, the round-the-clock plant gate blockade had grown to 300 workers. The CTM unsuc-

Mexican workers must break straitjacket of state control. Company finks (behind fence) record workers' votes in "election" between state-run union and independent federation at Plásticos Bajacal factory in Tijuana, December 1993.



David Maung/Impact Visuals

cessfully tried to run scabs in with "union" buses. The company announced it was suing 30 workers for lost production amounting to \$250,000 a day. The local paper, *El Mañana* (18 April 1994), worried that "Women Workers of Magnéticos Could Turn to Violence." Finally, after five days on strike, a shock troop of state and city police dispersed the picket at 5:30 a.m., pursuing them through the streets and parks of the city.

In repudiation of these strong-arm tactics, the militants announced that they would abandon the ruling PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and vote for Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution, a bourgeois populist "opposition") in the August 1994 elections. They also refused to march in the CTM's May Day demonstration. Then, to make sure they didn't, the CTM lined the march route with squads armed with clubs. In mid-June, a "constituent congress" of the Maqui-

required to state their vote out loud, and right behind the vote counters stood company representatives writing down the names of those who voted for the independent union!

This bitter experience only underlines that reliance on the bourgeois state will not advance labor's cause. It is by mobilizing the workers' power, such as through organizing strikes extending beyond individual factories and directly challenging the capitalists' property "rights," that fighting unions will be won and fortified. This is what built the CIO industrial unions in the U.S. in the 1930s, and it will take no less today.

Revolutionary Leadership Is Key

The recent limited victories in Ciudad Juárez (see part one of this article), as well as the defeats in Nuevo Laredo and Tijuana and the 1983 strike movement in Reynosa whose temporary success

fascism invents nothing new; it merely draws to their ultimate conclusion the tendencies inherent in imperialism."

In Mexico, he noted, the unions were formally turned into semistate institutions, and even though this arrangement was presented as aiding the workers, it would be turned into a weapon against them. This was particularly true under bonapartist rule, and because imperialist capital dominates the Mexican state.

There is no lack of sympathy with or expressions of support for the Mexican *maquiladora* workers. Last June, a Japanese leftist activist staged a hunger strike to protest the repression of the Sony workers in Nuevo Laredo. In Mexico and from the U.S., a certain number of groups have sought to aid independent organizing of the *maquiladoras*. Among these is the Comité Fronterizo de Obreras (Border Committee of Women Workers), which works with the American Friends Service Committee, educating the workers as to their rights under Mexico's laws. But even with their "advanced" social clauses, Article 123 of the Mexican constitution and the Federal Labor Law which implements it are a straitjacket of state control of the unions. Moreover, as we have shown, these laws are routinely ignored, particularly in the border region. Marxists understand that laws are the product of the balance of class forces. And to organize the potential power of women workers in the *maquiladoras* as well as the rest of Mexico's millions-strong proletariat, what is needed is a leadership that carefully prepares a struggle that must inevitably take on the capitalist state.

In the past, particularly during the late 1970s, there were numerous "democratic" oppositions in Mexican unions. Yet these were absorbed by creating or reviving other federations parallel to the CTM (such as the CROC and CROM) and drawing them under the control of a new umbrella group, the Congress of Labor (CT). It will take a class-struggle opposition fighting consciously for the independence of the unions from the bourgeoisie to break the corporatist stranglehold of the PRI-government and its CTM/CT labor cops. The present period of decomposition of the regime is a key moment to fight for such a program. In a special election supplement last summer, the Grupo Espartaquista de México urged:

"Worker militants should *elect workers committees* independent of state controls and all of the bourgeois parties (including the PRD), to drive out the *charro* bureaucrats and lay the basis for genuine unions as organs of struggle of the workers. In *maquiladora* industrial 'parks' such committees cannot be limited to individual plants but must be spread through the area to mobilize the concentrated proletarian power. In border regions and against 'multinational' companies, there must be appeals for real international solidarity through industrial action by workers on the other side of the line."

—WV No. 604, 5 August 1994

In the course of the sharp battles needed

continued on page 6



Diego Rivera

Mural by Mexican artist Diego Rivera depicts Trotsky and his supporters holding up banner of Fourth International along with Engels and Marx (right). Revolutionary internationalist leadership is needed to organize workers on both sides of the border.

ladora Union was held in the presence of "Don Fidel" Velázquez. Again, CTM *guaruras* (goons) kept dissidents out, even those with delegates' credentials, and "Chema" Morales' slate was duly "elected."

A few months earlier, in Tijuana, Baja California, workers at another *maquila* plant, Plásticos Bajacal (a subsidiary of the Boston-based Carlisle Plastics) sought to oust a similar company "union," affiliated with the CROM (Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers, which is similar to the CTM and also linked to the ruling PRI), and replace it with the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers (COR). The latter was backed by a number of U.S. unions. In December 1993, just three weeks after the U.S. Congress passed NAFTA, the 450 workers at this plant participated in an "election" supervised by the local Arbitration and Conciliation Board. But halfway through the vote, the COR asked to call it off, when it was clear that company intimidation would spell defeat. Workers were

was quickly dissipated, show the same fundamental elements which confront efforts to organize the cruelly exploited and oppressed *maquiladora* workers. As we wrote in WV No. 617, "Key is throwing off the stranglehold of the corporatist CTM 'unions' which are directly integrated into the capitalist ruling party and the elaborate 'conciliation and arbitration' mechanisms of state control." This is part of a broader international phenomenon, which Leon Trotsky, who together with V.I. Lenin led the Russian October Revolution of 1917, pointed to over half a century ago. In a 1940 essay (left unfinished when he was struck down by a Stalinist assassin in his Mexican exile) on "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," Trotsky wrote:

"There is one common feature in the development, or more correctly the degeneration, of modern trade union organizations throughout the world: it is their drawing close to and growing together with the state power.... By transforming the trade unions into organs of the state,

Maquiladora...

(continued from page 5)

to build such organizations of labor struggle, tactics such as plant occupations backed up by workers defense committees and mass workers mobilizations against repression would be needed, the GEM emphasized.

Such a class confrontation cannot be won on the program of simple trade unionism, but must go beyond the limits of the capitalist system. In the face of the brutal attack on workers' living standards, labor militants must demand a *sliding scale of wages*, a wage "escalator" to fully compensate for the spiraling inflation. Against the mushrooming layoffs, workers must fight for a *sliding scale of hours*, to divide the available work among all those seeking it. And a class-struggle opposition cannot be limited to economic demands, but must respond to all forms of oppression, notably of women. Thus, particularly in the *maquiladoras*, demands must be raised for 24-hour day-care services, for workers safety committees empowered to stop production, and for an end to all pregnancy tests, which are used as grounds to refuse to hire and grant permanent status to women workers. A strike demanding reinstatement of a woman fired for being pregnant could have international impact.

Of particular importance in the *maquiladoras* and throughout Mexico in the wake of NAFTA is a fight for solidarity labor action in the U.S., and linking strike actions on both sides of the border. This is not "pie in the sky, by and by" but a very real possibility and necessity. In 1987, workers at Volkswagen's giant plant in Puebla got tremendous help during a hard-fought strike when the unions at VW's main plant in Germany refused to work overtime to make up for production lost in Mexico. In 1991-92, a militant eight-month strike by El Paso garment workers, who occupied the sweatshops, ended in a victory that was quickly followed by a strike against U.S.-owned *maquiladoras* in Matamoros. Workers must not allow themselves to be divided by the border.

Indeed, they must fight to forge an internationalist workers party. Lenin emphasized in his book, *What Is To Be Done?* that one function of the party of the revolutionary vanguard is to act as the *memory* of the proletariat. How crucial this is can be seen in the experiences of the Mexican *maquiladora* workers recounted above, who have repeatedly gone through the same brutal experiences without the lessons from them being passed on. What is needed is a *revolutionary* leadership of labor and the oppressed. In his 1940 essay, Trotsky noted:

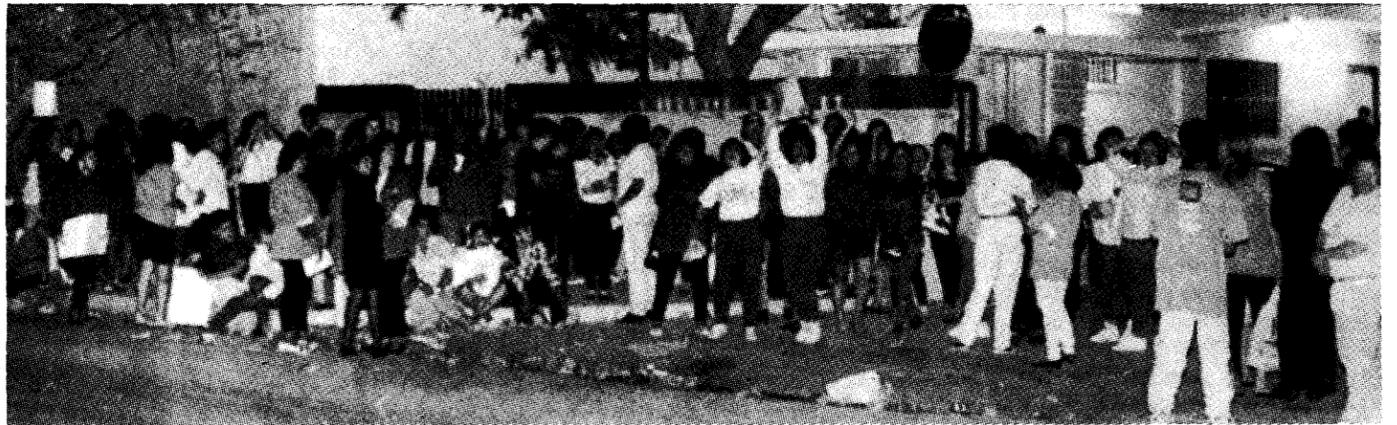
"In other words, the trade unions in the present epoch cannot simply be the organs of democracy as they were in the epoch of free capitalism and they cannot any longer remain politically neutral, that is, limit themselves to serving the daily needs of the working class.... They can no longer be reformist, because the objective conditions leave no room for any serious and lasting reforms. The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

Workers' Hands Across the Border

This is all the more the case when we are talking of Mexican industries and workforces that are increasingly integrated into the U.S. economy. Faced with the passage of NAFTA and the increasing "globalization" of industrial production, liberal- and reformist-led U.S. unions have lately been making a show of "solidarity" with independent union organizing in Mexico. Often this "support" is a thin veil for outright protectionism. Thus, following the Zapatista Indian

uprising on New Year's Day 1994, a resolution was passed by the San Francisco Labor Council protesting the Mexican government attack on Chiapas and calling for a "boycott of Mexican goods." This was so patently protectionist that it was later dropped. In the Northern California East Bay region, the Alameda County Central Labor Council passed a similar resolution calling for "the Clinton Administration to establish an independent commission to investigate the alleged human rights violations in Chiapas." Both of these have in common that they look to the imperialists to support "human rights," labor rights, or whatever.

While the Machinists and some other unions have sponsored trips to the *maquiladoras*, and United Auto Workers locals in St. Paul and Kansas City have taken steps like contributing to supporting organizers for a "democratic" union contesting the CTM tops in the Ford Cuautitlán plant near Mexico City, the only sustained effort at "cross-border" organizing by a national union has been by the United Electrical Workers (UE).



El Mañana (Nuevo Laredo)

Combative Sony strikers block plant gate in Nuevo Laredo, April 1994.

The UE has established a "strategic organizing alliance" with the small FAT (Authentic Workers Federation) in Mexico. It has even launched a fund drive to "Sponsor an organizer in Mexico." Their first target was the five General Electric plants in Ciudad Juárez. A UE delegation visited with GE workers in Juárez in a high-profile tour including reporters from the MacNeil/Lehrer news program. But a week after their photo appeared in the *UE News* (19 November 1993), General Electric fired three of the workers the delegation spoke with. That same week, Honeywell fired 21 women workers from their Chihuahua plant for union activities with the FAT, which had been supported by the UE and the Teamsters.

In response, the UE and Teamsters tops took the U.S. companies to the bogus "labor court" set up by NAFTA, the San Antonio-based "National Administrative Office" (NAO). This bureaucratic agency was set up to piece off the AFL-CIO in the labor "side deal" to the "free trade" agreement. The labor tops wanted some government body to appeal to, just as they crawl to the National Labor Relations Board in the U.S. So subordinated to the capitalist state are the reformist union leaders that when there is no existing agency of government labor control, they rush to create one!

The "NAO" was soon revealed as nothing but a front for the companies. In October, it threw out workers' complaints about the firings of FAT supporters at GE and Honeywell, even while admitting that "the timing of the dismissals appears to coincide with organizing drives by independent unions at both plants." Having sufficiently intimidated its workers with firings and a barrage of anti-union propaganda, GE allowed a representation election to be held last summer, which the FAT lost by a whopping six-to-one margin. In the aftermath, the UE tried to play up the "first-ever secret ballot election in the maquiladora zone." This is just a cover for the stinging defeat which their strategy of appealing to the imperialist state has produced.

Now the "National Administrative Office" is deciding on a complaint filed against Sony for the attack on and dismissals of the women workers in Nuevo Laredo last April. While the company boycotted a February 13 NAO hearing in San Antonio, Texas, this toothless board already dismissed the workers' protest against Sunday work and their demands for guarantees of the right to organize independent unions. Where the hidebound main-line AFL-CIO tops, who don't even know how to organize a strike, declare Mexican (or Japanese) workers the enemy, for the "progressive" labor bureaucrats, "solidarity" is sending a few hundred bucks, posting a notice on the Internet, and appealing to an administrative agency of Yankee imperialism! The legalistic cretinism of capitalism's labor lieutenants knows no bounds.

Thus a social-democratic "dissident" union grouping in the U.S., Labor Notes, has been among those calling for "creative strategies to build links of solidarity across our U.S.-Mexico-Canada borders." Hailing union leaders who were "quick to rise to the new challenges"

posed by NAFTA, a December 1993 Labor Notes letter cites Morty Bahr, head of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), on the need to promote "human rights, and free union development...in all three countries." What a travesty! For decades the CWA bureaucracy has been at the forefront of CIA-sponsored union-busting in Latin America, from Guyana and Chile (where they helped engineer the bloody overthrow of leftist governments) to El Salvador, where they backed the junta against militant phone workers! The "free trade unions" sponsored by the "AFL-CIA" are vehicles for imperialist domination. This is what the reformists' "creative strategies" lead to.

Moreover, even the most liberal and "progressive" labor reformists necessarily appeal to the same kind of protectionist chauvinism as the more crass business unionists. Thus the *UE News* (16 September 1994) wrote: "Helping Mexican workers organize helps them while safeguarding our jobs and living standards. If Mexican workers do not have a chance to build strong democratic unions, they will not be able to demand better wages and benefits from the U.S. companies gaining superprofits from their labor." What the UE is arguing for here is to raise Mexican wages so U.S. companies won't "run away" to cheap-labor Mexico. With that kind of argument, it was easy for GE to appeal to Mexican workers' suspicions that labor "support" from U.S. unions was only designed to deprive them of jobs.

The paucity and repeated failures of "cross-border organizing" by U.S. unions are concrete proof of the bankruptcy of simple trade unionism in this epoch, and how it serves imperialist state control. In the face of a *ten-to-one* wage differential, there is no way that liberals and reformists—who accept the framework of capitalist rule—can lay the basis for trust and common struggle between Mexican, U.S. and Canadian workers. It is by linking the day-to-day issues to broader social and political questions in the fight against capitalist oppression and posing a transitional program for socialist

revolution that national divisions among workers can be overcome, particularly between imperialist countries and their neocolonies. As Trotsky wrote in the May 1940 "Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution": "Only under its own revolutionary direction is the proletariat of the colonies and the semicolonies capable of achieving invincible collaboration with the proletariat of the metropolitan centers, and with the world working class as a whole."

The growing interpenetration of the U.S. and Mexican economies; the presence in the U.S. of several million Mexican and Central American workers as a human bridge, bringing with them more militant traditions of labor struggle, such as in the case of Los Angeles janitors, truckers, drywall construction workers, hotel workers, etc.; the development of a huge industrial belt across northern Mexico, with auto plants and *maquiladora* factories producing for the U.S. market—all these factors provide a tremendous opportunity for labor organizing across the international borders. *But*

it will not be accomplished by simple (reformist) trade unionism, and even less by legalistic philanthropic advisors. As with the 1906 Cananea copper miners strike, organized by the American syndicalists of the IWW and Mexican anarchists, the industrial organization of the maquiladora belt will be through stormy struggles which must be led by those who fight for a revolutionary overturn of the capitalist system on both sides of the border.

The anarcho-syndicalist prejudices of the IWW led them to ignore the decisive importance of the state and to fail to build a party like the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky. While many "Wobblies" went on to join the young Communist Party in the U.S., the absence of a revolutionary workers party in Mexico sealed the fate of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17, as the peasants rose up but found no proletarian vanguard to lead them. As Trotsky wrote in 1940, "The independence of the trade unions in the class sense, in their relations to the bourgeois state, can, in the present conditions, be assured only by a completely revolutionary leadership, that is, the leadership of the Fourth International." It is to reforging a Trotskyist Fourth International that the Mexican and U.S. sections of the International Communist League dedicate their efforts. ■

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Young Spartacus

After NCAA Victory

Cops Riot Against UCLA Students

LOS ANGELES—On the night of April 3, UCLA students took to the streets to celebrate the Bruin victory in the NCAA basketball finals. Thousands of students poured into the streets of Westwood for a good time, only to be met by a line of baton-wielding cops, a barrage of rubber bullets, stinging pepper spray and tear gas. In one letter written to the UCLA *Daily Bruin*, some students described that night:

"We barely escaped the human stampede and then saw the news coverage of the Westwood 'riots.' The news anchor informed us that the police had been acting for our safety.... Thanks to the 'protection' of the police, however, we were shot at with rubber bullets, nearly trampled and barred from returning to our apartments."

The Monday night cop riot in Westwood—the mostly white residential area surrounding UCLA—was a direct provocation by the LAPD against UCLA students. The LAPD is now outrageously seeking to press a lawsuit against UCLA fraternities, claiming that the frats were largely responsible for the cops' rampage and that some parties over the weekend point to "a continuing problem" which is a "nuisance to the community." The cops are threatening to shut down any frats or apartment buildings "causing the problems." The LAPD is also going over videotapes to "identify and locate people who assaulted officers" and says they are "pursuing these students with felony charges" (*Daily Bruin*, 11 April).

The attack was also part and parcel of the ongoing crackdown against the presence of any blacks and Latinos in yuppie Westwood. According to one report, more than 20 mostly black and Latino youth were arrested, and one black Los Angeles Community College student, Billy Ray Bolden, was beaten up in the County Jail and his legs and face were so swollen he had to be hospitalized after his release. The Spartacus Youth Clubs say: Hands off the students!



Won Woo/Daily Bruin photos

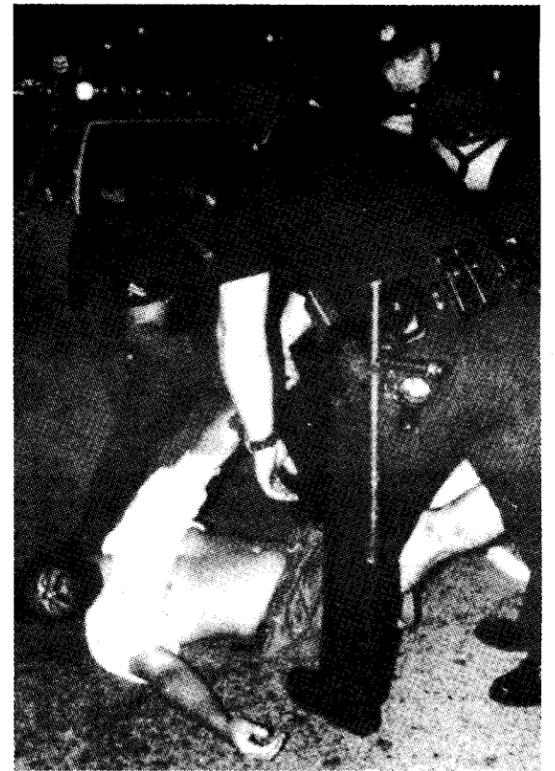
UCLA students brutalized by LAPD riot cops during celebration of NCAA basketball championship, April 3.

A more massive cop rampage took place only two days earlier in South-Central Los Angeles, flashpoint of the 1992 L.A. upheaval. Over 800 cops and FBI agents were mobilized in a massive predawn raid, arresting 60 people and trampling through over 130 homes in order to terrorize and subjugate the black and Latino ghettos under the guise of "stopping gang violence"—scapegoating "gangs" for the misery and poverty of capitalism. At one woman's home, the cops used a battering ram to smash through the front door, joking afterward that at least they hadn't demolished the entire house.

After the Bruin victory, UCLA students found out firsthand about the terror the ruling class regularly metes out to enforce its racist rule. The cops and

courts are the armed fist of capitalism, a system whereby the wealthy few—like L.A.'s billionaire Republican mayor Richard Riordan and the millionaire UC Regents—live off the profits that are generated by the labor of working people. As V.I. Lenin wrote, "The state is an organ of class domination, an organ of oppression of one class by another."

Both acts of police terror last week were carried out with the intention of smashing heads and sending a bloody message, but the ruling class has ominous plans for inner-city youth. After the siege in South-Central, black LAPD chief Willie Williams made these intentions clear when he said, "This isn't a sweep. This is done to put people in jail" (*Los Angeles Times*, 2 April). We say: Drop all the charges!



The huge contradiction between the misery and poverty generated by capitalism and the enormous social power of the workers is the system's Achilles' heel. As the U.S. economy becomes less reliable, the bourgeoisie can no longer afford to use Band-Aids of reform in order to appease social unrest. Increasingly, the ruling class will rely more heavily on the repressive apparatus of the state to maintain its dominance over the toiling masses. Students and inner-city populations are particularly vulnerable to police repression because they don't hold much social power. The labor movement is key to stopping racist cop terror.

Impotent calls for civilian review boards, like those put forward by lawyer Michael Zinzun's Coalition Against Police Abuse, or demands for "community control" of the cops sow the illusion that through pressuring the bourgeoisie, the forces of state terror might somehow change their stripes. But the LAPD is one of the more graphic examples that the cops are the armed fist of the capitalist rulers. It's a particularly brutal, paramilitary police force because of the historic weakness of organized labor in this anti-union, "open shop" city.

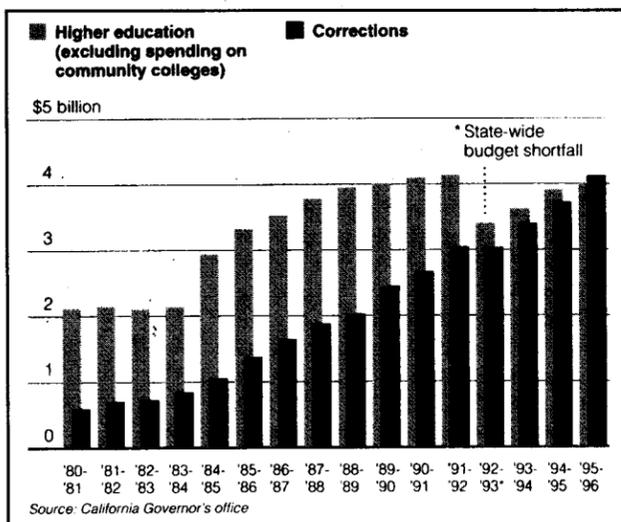
This legacy has been challenged by the militant struggles of the predominantly Latino unions like H.E.R.E. Local 11 and SEIU 399, Justice for Janitors. Linked in a class-struggle fight with historically powerful and combative unions like the Teamsters and Longshore—all of which have faced cop assaults as well—these forces could easily be a spark for struggle in the U.S. and Mexico. What is urgently posed is the need for a multiracial, revolutionary workers party that will ally students and the oppressed ghetto populations with the real social power of labor. We want to forge a workers party to organize students and labor with a revolutionary program for class struggle that fights against racism and police terror on the road to a socialist revolution! ■

Lockdown U.S.A.—Incarceration Over Education

We have previously noted that as American capitalism gets more desperate and vicious, an entire generation of black youth are consigned to poverty and prisons. Over 1.5 million men and women are languishing in America's dungeons as inner-city youth face a future of no education and no jobs. Recently, even the *New York Times* (12 April) remarked on this trend. An article reported that for the first time, California this year will spend more money on prisons (over \$4 billion) than on the state university system (see graph, right).

Billions will be spent to construct new prisons to house the expected hundreds of thousands more people that will be ensnared by the American "justice" system—particularly through California's draconian "three strikes" law, whereby ripping off a slice of pizza can get you a 25-years-to-life sentence. As a result, according to projections in a Rand Corporation study, by the year 2002, California's spending on higher education will get just one percent, while prisons will capture 18 percent of the state budget.

Just about the only growth industry in the U.S. is the construction of new high-tech prison hells to incarcerate what the racist bourgeoisie regards as a "surplus" population. The bipartisan assault on the oppressed that produces more prisons, more racist "legal" lynchings and more pov-



Source: California Governor's office
New York Times graph

erty can only be defeated through sharp class struggle against the whole system of capitalist repression. The fight for free quality education for all takes a socialist revolution to get rid of this system.

CUNY...

(continued from page 16)

antagonizing even broader layers of the population. The latest target is the city's 6,000 public school bus drivers, mechanics and escorts, mostly organized in Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181, who are threatening to strike when Easter break is over April 24. The city is threatening to bust the union by tearing up its contract guaranteeing jobs and wage levels. On April 13, union members and students gave Pataki a big Bronx cheer when he addressed a community meeting in the overwhelmingly white, conservative borough of Staten Island.

Giuliani can be defeated! What is required is to use the muscle of NYC's powerful, integrated labor movement, particularly transit workers, who could bring Wall Street to its knees. The New York Spartacus Youth Club has fought at teach-ins, meetings and rallies for *students to unite with labor in a one-day citywide strike to shut down NYC*, as part of the struggle for jobs and free, quality education for all. And we have pointed out the main obstacle to this: the labor bureaucrats and politicians who tie students and labor to the Democratic Party. The call to strike against the cuts has been featured prominently on SYC signs and banners at the demonstrations, striking a chord with many CUNY students, who in their vast majority come from working-class families and who themselves often work full-time.

On March 23, after hearing only empty rhetoric about taking the fight to Wall Street and then being subjected to the violent cop attack, hundreds of students marched to nearby Borough of Manhattan Community College to debate what happened and what to do next. Frustration and anger boiled over as students shouted, "We need a leadership!" But the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which earlier on played a prominent role in the CUNY coalition, made sure there would be no such debate. While students were clamoring to get a chance to speak, ISO spokesman Joan Parkin, who was on the "tactics" committee for the demonstration, grabbed the bullhorn to close the meeting, saying, "It's time to leave, it's time to go."

From the beginning of the protests, there has been a strong impulse to march on Wall Street, the center of American capitalist finance. So, at the coalition meeting following the March 23 protest, representatives of Local 1199, president Dennis Rivera and Democratic Party pol (and former FBI fink) Al Sharpton showed up to say they had the clout to pull it off. But any such march would necessarily be under their tight control. Billed as a "nonviolent" commemoration of the murder of Martin Luther King Jr., the April 4 demonstration was designed to *derail* the impulse toward class-struggle action against the bankers and brokers and their twin capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

On April 4, Local 1199 members and students alike cheered verbal attacks on Wall Street and even one leftist's call for an "independent party" representing workers' interests. But Rivera made *his* allegiance clear by threatening to walk the union out of the protest after speakers denounced the vicious cop attack the week before. Sharpton, who put on a left face to call for a "new system," saying, "I used to think we can reform it," cynically smeared radical speakers critical of the cops and the Democrats as "working for the other side." For all their talk of fighting Wall Street, Rivera & Co. won't fight to mobilize their ranks to *shut the city down*.

Rivera and the other union bureaucrats want the city's hard-pressed workers and youth to *beg for crumbs*, not

fight for power. They won't and can't lead a real fight against the corporate bosses demanding cutbacks because they are beholden to the Democratic Party front men for Wall Street rule. While Rivera is a popular union leader with a "militant" image, his first loyalty is to his position as vice president of the state Democratic Party—and as protégé of arch-reactionary, anti-abortion bigot Cardinal O'Connor.

Many CUNY students were around to see how Rivera "supported" their 1991 struggle, when more than a dozen campuses were occupied by students protesting cutbacks and tuition hikes mandated by Democratic governor Mario Cuomo. When militants appealed for Rivera's



Young Spartacus

Following police attack on March 23 demonstration, hundreds of protesters poured into Borough of Manhattan Community College for intense debate over how to wage struggle against assault on education, social services.

help, all he offered was advice to end the building occupations and have "faith that we can get the governor to come back to traditional Democratic values." The fight for jobs, education and medical care for all requires a political fight against the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats of all stripes, to *break* the Democratic Party stranglehold on independent working-class struggle.

You Can't Fight Wall Street with the Democrats

Many student activists understand that to fight the attacks on higher education, they have to link up their struggles with the city's powerful unions. Various self-styled socialist groups have played up to this sentiment with radical-sounding rhetoric. While the reformist ISO hasn't even made a pretense of raising socialist politics, restricting itself to pushing its "connections" with Rivera and Sharpton, groups like the Revolutionary Socialist Group (RSG) and the League for a Revolutionary Party (LRP) have raised calls for strikes against the cuts, and even for a labor party independent of the Democrats.

At the April 4 rally, CUNY Coalition speaker Shaista Husain, who reflected the views of the RSG, drew cheers when she said that "the Democratic and Republican party system will not work for us. We must build an independent party that will represent our interests and interests of working people, of women." Walter Daum, a teacher at City College and LRP supporter, raised the need to build a revolutionary party. In its leaflet for the April 4 march, the RSG (a self-described Trotskyist group based on Staten Island) called for "militant mass actions, up to and including a *general strike by all city workers*." The LRP has chimed in by calling for a student strike to spark the labor movement into a general strike.

Nice words, but what stands in the way of real labor *action* against the cutbacks are the very same labor misleaders like Dennis Rivera who led the April 4 demonstration. Rivera was right

up on the podium that day, but the "revolutionaries" who stood beside him did not so much as mention the role of the union bureaucrats. And for all the anti-Wall Street, anti-Pataki rhetoric, not one speaker dared to utter the name of Bill Clinton for fear of alienating their Democratic "allies." Because the RSG and LRP, like the ISO, have as a key part of their strategy a *de facto* bloc with the labor fakers, like Rivera—and his Democratic Party masters.

The SYC has consistently pointed out the need to break from the Democrats and forge a revolutionary workers party which can unite the oppressed behind the working class in a fight for socialist revolution. The RSG's call for a labor

party is something else entirely, reflected in its support for "Labor Party Advocates" (LPA). But while the LPA wants to talk about a labor party, it does not even call for forming one, but simply seeks to pressure Clinton's Democrats to become more labor-friendly. At its recent conference in California, the podium was graced by assorted labor bureaucrats and one Jerry Brown, former Democratic governor and presidential candidate. The LPA refuses to run its own candidates so as to remain free to work for the Democrats.

While the RSG is capable of mouthing anti-capitalist verbiage, its leaflet for the April 4 march calls on this rich man's government to... "tax the rich, cut the military budget." Their demand to "make the bosses take the losses" was reflected in the March 1995 issue of *The College Voice*, the student newspaper at the College of Staten Island, which featured a two-page spread on "a proposal for a fair and progressive New York City tax policy" alongside the demand to "shut the city down" to protest the cuts. In the same issue, there's a protest against the administration for not funding "independent student action"!

The RSG's calls to tax the rich and cut Pentagon spending rehash the liberal notion that this racist capitalist state can be pressured into serving the interests of workers and the oppressed. The call for *cutting* military spending means accepting the existence of the *imperialist* armed forces, although a bit "streamlined." Whatever happened to the communist position of *not one man, not one penny* for the imperialist war machine? And who do they expect will tax the rich—the bourgeois politicians who are bought and paid for by Wall Street?

Echoing the stale reformist slogan of taxing the rich is the RSG's way of giving "leftist" window-dressing to Democratic Party hustlers like Sharpton, who toss off empty denunciations of "corporate welfare" to shore up their "populist" credentials. Like the reformist Communist Party, whose banner on April 4 read, "No Cutbacks! Jobs for All! Tax the

Rich!" the centrists of the RSG sow the illusion that the decay of U.S. society—from the blighted urban centers to the destruction of industry—can be solved short of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. The essence of their politics is to put pressure on the bourgeois state.

Rivera's role in the anti-cutbacks protests shows the crying need to oust the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy and replace it with a class-struggle leadership. Despairing of this perspective, the RSG looks instead to a wing of the bureaucracy, for example, the New Directions (ND) outfit, which controls the subway division and nearly half the executive board of NYC's Transport Workers Union (TWU). But nowhere in its leaflet building an April 18 protest against cuts in transit does ND give even lip service to strike action, just as it refused to call for a strike when the TWU contract with the Transit Authority expired last June. To use the strike weapon would mean challenging New York State's Taylor Law forbidding public workers' strikes. But these aspiring labor statesmen had no problem hailing *Rikers Island prison guards* for their 1990 "job action." ND has also dragged the TWU into the bosses' courts to settle union affairs. As Leon Trotsky said, labor's independence from the capitalist state is a *precondition* for union democracy and militancy.

The nature of the cops and courts, which are not neutral arbiters but are instruments of racist capitalist rule, comes up in every struggle against the exploiters, and the CUNY protests are no exception. At an April 15 meeting of the CUNY Coalition, SYC supporters successfully fought for the meeting to expel a cop who tried to speak. Our comrades reminded students of the cops' headbusting on March 23. We call for cops off campus and out of the workers movement!

The LRP has also sounded a leftist note in the protests, repeatedly calling for a "general strike." Yet they, too, refused to speak against the labor misleaders and Democratic Party hacks from the podium on April 4, rendering their "general strike" rhetoric hollow indeed. This is not surprising given the LRP's history of capitulation to racist American imperialism. In the 1970s, they *opposed* school busing for integration in Boston, at the very time the buses were being attacked by violent racist mobs. The LRP also bowed to imperialist Cold War hysteria, refusing to defend the Soviet Union, Poland and other bureaucratically deformed workers states, where, by the way, free education was the rule until such gains were destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution.

While posturing to the left of the ISO reformists, the RSG and LRP fundamentally share their appetite to cozy up to the pro-Democratic Party labor fakers. But from the attacks on welfare and affirmative action to the killer cuts in city services, there is a *bipartisan* war on workers and the poor. As the SYC wrote in a leaflet at the height of the 1991 student protests:

"What we need is a class-struggle workers party, one that doesn't 'respect' the property values of the bourgeoisie, a party that says to the exploited and oppressed: we want all of it, it ought to be ours, so don't beg, *take it*."

* * *

The New York Spartacus Youth Club urges all students, teachers and trade unionists to fill the courtroom at 346 Broadway, the morning of May 8 in solidarity with the protesters arrested on March 23. We also urge everyone to come out for court hearings for other demonstrators, some facing serious felony charges, beginning Thursday morning, April 20 at 100 Centre Street. ■

Fact vs. Fiction at Berkeley

How Hitler-Lover David Irving Was Routed

Last October 14, a hundreds-strong mobilization stopped Hitler-lover David Irving from appearing at the University of California at Berkeley and then broke up his meeting when it was moved off campus to the Berkeley YWCA. In the weeks and months following, the Spartacus Youth Club, which initiated this united-front protest, has been at the center of a continuing controversy. On the one hand, David Irving, the *Daily Cal*, misguided liberal "free speakers" and the sinister anti-Semitic "Berkeley Free Speech Coalition" all condemn us, and the hundreds of other anti-fascist protesters, for denying Irving—a "scholar" who praises Nazis and says the Holocaust never occurred—a supposed "right" to organize for racist terror. A member of the International Socialist Organization even got in on the act, obscenely arguing that the demonstration was the work of a "few bad apples."

On the other hand, hundreds of black, Latino, Asian and white students, gays, unionists and leftists from across the Bay Area all say it was a damn good thing that Irving and his Nazi rat pack were so dramatically stopped. From as far away as London, this victory was saluted in the pages of *Searchlight*—a journal that has well documented Irving's activities in inciting fascist terror gangs around the globe.

Although coming from counterposed vantage points, both sides of this controversy share a similar perception of what happened: Irving's meeting was broken up; swastikas and other Nazi paraphernalia on display in the room were scattered and destroyed; several aging but quite real Nazis, including Irving himself, found out that a new generation of anti-fascists is determined to stop them. The Islamic fundamentalists of the "Free Speech Coalition" were so burned by this victory that they tried to bring Irving back on campus in January, with the assistance of the UC Berkeley administration. Although they weren't run out, Irving and his Nazis were shut down again by anti-fascist protesters.

Now the self-described Revolutionary Trotskyist League (RTL), a tiny group in the Bay Area which had three or four members at the October anti-Irving protest, has entered the fray with a completely contrary and mythical rendition of events. In the Winter-Spring 1995 issue of their journal *International Trotskyist*, an article purporting to be an "eyewitness account" argues that the widely acknowledged events of the October anti-fascist protest *never happened*. Under the heading "Antifascist Showdown in Berkeley" comes the kicker: "Spartacist League Prevents Victory by Left Against Neo-Nazi Meeting." From there the fabrications simply gallop along.

A Real "Eyewitness" Account

From beginning to end, it is difficult to find one accurate fact in the RTL's "eyewitness" account. The article opens by saying that it was "a large mobilization consisting of hundreds of leftists"; then later, we read that the anti-Irving demonstration was organized by the SL and "consisted of large numbers of their own members, supplemented by other individual leftists and organizations." Then, when it suits a different aim, it's "hundreds of students, leftists and anar-



Young Spartacus
Spartacist-led demonstration disperses nest of Nazis at David Irving meeting in Berkeley, October 14. RTL "anti-fascists" claim it never happened.

chists were greeted with the spectacle of an anti-Irving demonstration under the full control of *one* organization—the SL!" The story twists and turns depending on the lie.

For starters, the RTL asserts that the SL/SYC uniquely knew of Irving's intended meeting a week before, claiming that we used this information to our "own sectarian advantage" and "failed even to inform most other Left organizations." In fact, the SYC spent a week distributing thousands of copies of its united-front call to "Stop Hitler-Lover David Irving!" We also sent letters to the Revolutionary Workers League and the International Socialist Organization underlining the need for a "broad-based, militant and united protest by all opponents of fascist terror" and urging them to mobilize their own supporters, bring their own placards, select a speaker, etc. The RWL and ISO issued their own leaflets. If the RTL was out of the loop, this simply speaks to their own isolation and their whining reflects their seemingly accurately perceived irrelevance.

At the initial demo site in front of Alumni House we actively solicited speakers from other organizations, including the RTL. Now they claim that "the SL leadership changed their minds and prevented one of our members from articulating our position." What actually happened is that we had confirmed that Irving's meeting had been moved to the YWCA and the rally took off. A demonstration in front of a building where he wasn't became an opportunity to stop the Nazi meeting where it was, requiring a leadership that could quickly make a decision to change tactics. That leadership was there, the cops were caught off guard and what was a rare window of opportunity to stop the fascists was seized. Perhaps this sudden turn of

events was unsettling to the RTLers, who might have preferred the crowd to stay behind and listen to their leader, Dov, hold forth on a "dialectical" approach to stopping the fascists.

The RTL's current account allows that: "After learning of a last-minute change of location, the crowd of about 300 anti-fascists converged on the new off-campus forum site (the YWCA) and angrily confronted Irving and a small ratpack of his supporters in a meeting room on the ground floor." But a couple of paragraphs later, they claim that "over a dozen SL members in the front stopped at the door to the meeting room and (behaving as if they were 'parade marshals') prevented other leftists from entering." So now it's anti-fascists confronting Irving and his Nazis in a room that they were supposedly prevented from entering by the SL!

Anti-fascist militants *did* rush into the room, with SL supporters in the lead, making short work of Irving and the tables of Nazi paraphernalia. While most of the Nazis were cowering in the corner, a fierce fight broke out after some of Irving's goons attacked protesters. Meanwhile, Spartacist supporters were helping others in trying to wrench open the second of the double doors into the meeting room, which Irving's goons were trying to prevent. But how would the RTL know any of this? A videotape of the protest shows two of their members much farther back in the YWCA lobby, far from the action.

It's the State, Stupid!

The first two cops then entered the room from the rear and began driving protesters out with their riot sticks. But, according to the RTL, these were the "crucial minutes" when there were "only a few cops and a dozen or so fascists"

during which "the antifascist militants could have stormed the room and chased out the Nazis"! In reality, what this would have meant is for the protesters (presumably led by the SL since for some reason the RTL's leadership couldn't quite make it to the front) to attack the two cops, where the purpose was to break up the fascist meeting. Two months after the fact, these Monday morning quarterbacks are willing to fight to the last drop of...somebody else's blood.

The first two cops were soon joined by six to eight others who began viciously clubbing the protesters, driving them out of the tightly packed lobby into the street. Having succeeded in breaking up Irving's meeting and with the police now fully in command of the YWCA, demonstrators started to drift away. The protest dwindled to about half the size it had been at the point the meeting was stormed. More cops arrived on the scene and soon the ratio of cops to protesters posed a potentially threatening situation. A Spartacist spokesman took the bullhorn. Congratulating everyone for a good night's work, he told the remaining demonstrators that it had become a dangerous situation and advised people to leave the area.

This was an act of responsible leadership. We had issued a call to "Stop Hitler-Lover David Irving!" and that's what was done in rather dramatic fashion. The point was not to get beaten up and arrested by a phalanx of cops who were furious at seeing the Nazis run out and itching for a fight after having been caught with their pants down. But by the RTL's lights, it wasn't the cops who broke up the protest. It was the Spartacist League! "By prematurely declaring victory, the SL opportunistically and criminally demoralized and dispersed our side's forces," they opine. On the other hand, the RTL, by its own account, demonstrated their "militant" credentials by hanging around long after "the crowd of the antifascist fighters was...too small and scattered."

Sneering at the real victory that took place against Irving and the fascists in Berkeley on October 14, the RTL declares the protest "did not achieve the objective of putting an end to the meeting." On the contrary, as it was perceived by all sides (with the exception of the RTL) this was a stunning blow against the fascists' efforts to organize for racist genocide. Or as Trotsky put it, the "whole point" is to give the fascists "a good beating in full view" of the cops "without directly taking on the state itself." The RTL's after-the-fact posture as a bunch of real right-on, street-fighting revolutionaries who would have rolled over the cops is not only criminally idiotic, it is manifestly fraudulent. Indeed, the fact that they condemn the Spartacist League for safely ending the demonstration, with its mission accomplished, is born of their apparent belief that the racist rulers' cops are no kind of threat.

Among the more grotesque expressions of the RTL's touching faith in the "democratic" credentials of the bourgeois rulers was their response to the U.S. government's mass slaughter of 86 men, women and children near Waco, Texas in 1993. RTL leader Dov raved at

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David Irving...

(continued from page 9)

a public forum in May 1993 that the Branch Davidians were a "right-wing reactionary cult" and declaimed, "we don't defend such scum." Another RTLer accused the SL of actually "defending fascists" because of our protest demonstrations against Bill Clinton and Janet Reno's Texas bloodbath.

A racially integrated religious sect, living together communally in Texas—are fascists?! There are plenty of Klansmen in Waco, but the KKK kills people who live in integrated communes. In this case, they didn't have to—Clinton and the FBI did it for them. The Branch Davidians, a fundamentalist Christian sect with a 50-year history, harmed no one. Their "crime" was to legally acquire more guns than the federal government thought they should have. The RTL's obscene alibis for this government atrocity gives the lie to its claim to a "proletarian" strategy to fight fascism: a) they don't know what a fascist is; b) they alibi the bourgeois state as a force that will "disarm" the fascists; c) they apologize for mass murder perpetrated in the name of "gun control," i.e., of disarming the population leaving only the cops, criminals and fascists armed.

Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It

Out of their own tissue of self-contradicting fabrications over what happened last October, the RTL advances the political conclusion that what is needed is a "permanent organization to coordinate the work of the antifascist united front." Recently, they established the Bay Area Coalition Opposing Fascism (BACOF) which is billed as a "new, broad-based coalition opposing racist, neo-Nazi hatemongers such as British Holocaust revisionist David Irving."

In its advertised activities—setting up a system to "monitor" fascist activities, "share this information" and develop a "method of outreach"—this coalition sounds like a left version of the liberal "Klanwatch." As for any kind of action to stop the fascists, BACOF says its "aim [is] to coordinate common strategies for

Anti-Klan Protesters Framed

Defend the Cincinnati Six!

On May 1, International Workers Day, three anti-fascist activists will go on trial to face outrageous felony charges stemming from their participation in a December 17 anti-Klan demonstration. The cops whipped up bogus "assault" charges against Kate Frei, Rob Grossman and Adam Johnson, threatening each with up to five years in prison. Their real "crime" in the eyes of the racist bourgeois state was the commendable act of tearing down a "Christmas cross" erected by the Ku Klux Klan at Fountain Square in downtown Cincinnati. Three other demonstrators, Sam Blankemeyer, Doug Mehring and Matt Siegfried (a supporter of Peter Sollenberger's Trotskyist League), will go to court in June on misdemeanor charges. The KKK is also filing charges against anti-Klan demonstrators for "destruction of property." This naked attempt at intimidation by the cops and Klan must be defeated!

This was the fourth year in a row that the KKK has tried to place its cross in Fountain Square. This obscene fas-

cist provocation occurred in the midst of a recent upsurge of racist terror in Cincinnati, coming right on the heels of a KKK-connected firebombing in nearby Covington. The Klan cross received the official blessing of the city, and was erected under heavy police protection at 3 a.m. on December 17.

Later that morning, 150 anti-fascists organized by the Midwest Anti-Fascist Network (MAFNET), including radicals from Anti-Racist Action and the Trotskyist League, held a demonstration against the cross display. As demonstrators protested this fascist provocation, dozens of cops moved in to bust up the rally with horses and riot gear. When protesters responded to the police attack by tearing down the cross, the cops charged again, throwing demonstrators to the cement and spraying mace in their eyes. One mounted cop ripped a handful of hair from a demonstrator's scalp. While in police custody, a protester was deprived of epilepsy medication and had to be hospitalized for seizures. The cops

arrested six and then set the KKK cross upright. As a popular chant put it: "The cops and the Klan go hand in hand."

Through this case the state is sending a message to anti-racists: anyone who wants to stop Klan terror will be met with the armed fist of the cops and courts. These anti-fascist protesters must not stand alone. The intended victims of Klan terror—unionists, blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Jews, homosexuals—must rally to their defense. We urge readers to fill the Hamilton County Courthouse on May 1 at 9 a.m. to demand: Drop the charges against the Cincinnati Six!

Defense of the Cincinnati Six is being coordinated through Anti-Racist Action by attorney Jim McNamara, who also plans to file a civil suit against the city on the defendants' behalf. Contributions for the legal defense of the anti-fascist militants should be earmarked "Cincinnati Six" and sent to: Columbus ARA, P.O. Box 02097, Columbus, OH 43202.

physically defeating the fascists." What common strategies?

The SL strategy is to mobilize all the opponents of fascist terror behind the power of organized labor in mass actions to stop the fascists. We've applied it across the country: in Washington, D.C. in 1982, Philadelphia in 1988, Atlanta in 1989 and recently in Springfield, Illinois. To this end, we will make alliances in action with the RTL and any other left organizations. But most self-proclaimed "socialist" organizations are contemptuous of our proletarian-centered strategy and, in general, have chosen a sectarian route—abstention from the many SL-initiated mobilizations that have stopped the fascists.

The united front is a tactic to bring together the broadest forces in action, while maintaining complete organizational and political independence. This is the point behind the Communist slogan: "march separately, strike together." To the uninitiated, it might appear that the statement in BACOF's "Basis of Unity" which says that "each organization and individual in BACOF has the right to openly differ" is an application of this slogan. But differ over what—sharing "information," "outreach"? In the absence of any concrete action against the fascists, this coalition has nothing to do with fighting racist terror. It's just a talk shop.

Should David Irving, for example,

attempt to make another appearance in the Bay Area, we're for the broadest possible mobilization to stop him and his Nazi-loving followers. In that context there should be the widest possible appeal, or "sharing of information" if you will, to bring together all opponents of racist terror as one united fist. On the spot, all efforts should be coordinated militarily to this effect.

But this is a rather different perspective than that of BACOF. This coalition is simply an attempt by the RTL not only to compensate for its small forces through organizational means, but to find an ongoing, "permanent" political unity between various contending tendencies. It is what Trotsky described in his polemic against the German SAP (Socialist Workers Party) in the 1930s as a propaganda bloc calling itself a "united front":

"The united front is to unite the Communist and Social Democratic working masses and not to patch up an agreement with political groups that are without the masses.

"We shall be told that the bloc...is only a propaganda bloc for the united front. But it is precisely in the sphere of propaganda that a bloc is out of the question. Propaganda must lean upon clear-cut principles and on a definite program. March separately, strike together. A bloc is solely for practical mass actions."

—What Next? 27 January 1932

A key purpose of the united front, in addition to broadly organizing all the opponents of fascist terror, is also to provide a test in action of the various programs and strategies of the contending claimants to leadership of the proletariat. In short, it is a tactic for building the revolutionary party.

We have a "permanent anti-fascist organization" which is committed to sweeping away capitalism—the system that breeds fascism. It is called the Spartacist League. Doubtless this will be met with howls of "sectarianism" from the RTL. Given their smear of the SL as the force which stopped the "real" anti-fascist militants at last October's anti-*Irving* protest, we find it curious indeed that the RTL has made repeated verbal appeals to us to take part in their "anti-fascist" talk shop. Maybe even they have trouble believing their own lies. ■

National Guard Readied for Black College Students

Hands Off "Freaknik" Fest!

ATLANTA—Thousands of Georgia National Guard troops have been put on call in an ominous provocation against Freaknik, the annual spring break festival which last year drew 200,000 black college students here. The *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* (12 April) reveals that Democratic governor and Clinton pal Zell Miller has delayed travel plans to be in town to sign mobilization orders. An atmosphere of racist hysteria has been whipped up against black students, who are dubbed "unwelcome guests"! Under the "zero tolerance" policy announced by black Democratic mayor Bill Campbell, an army of police agencies promise to block streets to traffic, check IDs, mobilize helicopter patrols and tactical squads, impound student vehicles and arrest anyone even caught jaywalking.

State police plan to stop Freaknik "caravans" on stretches of the interstate in rural Georgia! "Comdex (computer convention) participants will be able to get downtown and Freaknik cruisers won't—at least that's what police hope" (*Atlanta Journal and Con-*

stitution, 19 March). The city has denied permits to all vendors who wish to cater to the students. Traffic plans call for keeping students circling in vehicles outside the city on Perimeter highways. Campbell has refused permit requests for city parks and facilities. These measures set the stage for a police provocation against the students. Remember Greekfest in Virginia Beach in 1989, when cops and troops rioted against black students, arresting 1,235 and turning the entire area into a war zone.

The racist, puritanical attack on Freaknik (black students are reviled for "lewd behavior"), which only last year Mayor Campbell had touted as a big moneymaker for the city, is part of a campaign to get rid of "undesirables" in preparation for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. Contrast Atlanta's response to Freaknik to the warm reception given the mainly white St. Patrick's Day celebrants in the qualitatively smaller coastal town of Savannah, Georgia, where 250,000-plus revelers puke on sidewalks and pee into a river dyed green!

The city, which is home to five historically black colleges at the Atlanta University Center, sent letters to 140 black colleges urging students to "stay away." The police are testing out a new detention center. Hundreds of white youth were arrested at recent Grateful Dead concerts and at the annual Pot Festival calling for marijuana legalization. Black students are declared persona non grata. But the German automaker Daimler-Benz—known for its links to Hitler's Nazis—becomes a "good corporate citizen" by donating \$5 million to renovate the Atlanta home of Margaret Mitchell, celebrated for her homage to slavery, *Gone With the Wind!* The city is a "mecca" for the black middle class so Campbell has tried to lower confrontational rhetoric even as police-state measures are readied. Atlanta—whose corporate boosters proclaim it "the city too busy to hate"—with its pretentious aspirations to be a major "international" city, is being made "safe" for mainly tourists, conventioners and capitalist investors. Hands off Freaknik! ■

Mexico...

(continued from page 1)

called to commemorate the 1919 assassination of peasant revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata turned into a pro-union protest of over 150,000 in the Zócalo, the huge square in front of the presidential palace. Demonstrators roared "SU-SU-SUTAUR!" and "Barco, hold on, the people are rising up!" Six days later, on Easter Sunday, some 20,000 SUTAUR members and supporters rallied again in the Zócalo vowing to resist the destruction of Ruta 100.

The dissolution of Ruta 100 was deliberately decreed just before Holy Week, during which most businesses are shut down and traffic in Mexico City is minimal. Today, the DF began operating a skeleton "emergency" bus system, using scab drivers (200 of them cops). On the buses were menacing plainclothes police, while 1,500 patrol cars rode alongside and helicopters flew overhead. In addition, "special personnel sought to recover 200 buses which leaders of Ruta 100 are using for protests" (*Ultimas Noticias*, 17 April). Altogether, one-quarter of the DF's regular police force was involved in this mammoth union-busting operation.

The attack on the Mexico City bus drivers comes straight from the top of the long-ruling PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). It is part of the PRI-government's massive austerity onslaught against the living standards of the workers and poor in the wake of the peso crash. Even as it fired the Ruta 100 workers, the regime suddenly raised the price of tortillas, the staple food of millions, by 26 percent! This anti-worker offensive is also supported by the right-wing PAN (National Action Party), which is now in a de facto coalition with the PRI.

SUTAUR-100 is a special target because it is the largest and most militant of the few independent unions that are outside the official, PRI-government federations. The PRI's corporatist "unions" are the historic instrument of its stranglehold over Mexican workers. The government of President Ernesto Zedillo has accused SUTAUR and the MPI (Independent Proletarian Movement) to which it adheres of diverting public funds to the Zapatista rebels in the southern state of Chiapas. Zedillo knows that the whole country is seething with discontent. Thus the attack on this nucleus of class-conscious workers is meant to be a blow against the extension of revolt to the powerful proletariat of the nation's capital.

PATCO, Mexican-Style

This is the opening shot of a full-scale war on Mexican labor. The Mexican government's action recalls the destruction of the PATCO union in the U.S. The firing of 14,000 air traffic controllers by Ronald Reagan in 1981, as the AFL-CIO bureaucracy stood by and watched, opened the door to a brutal decade of capitalist union-busting, layoffs and roll-backs which left the American labor movement reeling. By busting SUTAUR-100, Zedillo thinks he can replay the PATCO disaster, Mexican-style. Especially under NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), a defeat for Mexican workers will also be felt well beyond the Rio Grande/Río Bravo. Mexican, U.S. and Canadian workers must come to the aid of the embattled SUTAUR union!

In the largest city in the world, the unionized workers who run the DF transit system have enormous potential power. Working-class discontent is so manifest that the PRI-loyal union federations have canceled this year's official May Day demonstration in Mexico City for fear of unleashing a protest which they would be unable to control. By going after SUTAUR-100, the Mexican bourgeoisie aims to snuff out any idea of organized, independent proletarian

struggle—not least in the *maquiladora* zones of the northern border states, where sub-poverty wages and brutal working conditions have propelled aggressive union organizing drives (see article, page 4).

SUTAUR was forged in a bitter struggle in 1981-82, shortly after Ruta 100 was formed with the municipal takeover of the hated bus monopoly held by a consortium of private owners, popularly known as the *pulpo* (octopus). In order to enforce its control over the bus drivers, the PRI attempted to install the pro-government CTM federation. This was resisted by the workers, who affiliated with an independent union federation. Although they urged the angry drivers to cool off, union leaders including Barco were jailed. They were finally released and their union was recognized, but the government achieved its objec-

timated \$20 million into various SUTAUR trust funds—used to buy land for housing, build union headquarters and a vacation center—suddenly began denouncing "union corruption." The workers, who had achieved what for Mexican conditions are relatively high wages, were now decried as an overpaid aristocracy.

Politically unable to quell the uprising in Chiapas by force of arms, Zedillo has now cajoled Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) leaders into "talks." (On April 10, Zedillo spoke at Chinameca, at the exact spot where Emiliano Zapata had been murdered by federal soldiers 76 years before. Zapata, too, had accepted a presidential invitation to "talk"—and rode into an ambush.) The move to smash the MPI through the liquidation of Ruta 100 was, in part, calculated and timed to isolate the EZLN

dent protesters during the 1968 movement which ended in the Mexican army's Tlatelolco massacre in Mexico City. More recently, in the 1980s the PRI-government resorted to wholesale firings and closing down enterprises in order to get rid of militant unions at the Mexicana airline (1982) and Aeroméxico (1988).

Such iron-fisted state repression is an inescapable reality of capitalist rule in Mexico. Yet in response to the crack-down by Zedillo, MPI/SUTAUR leader Ricardo Barco has once again called on the workers to exercise restraint. While many at the Easter Sunday protest were chafing at the bit to shut down the bus depots, in an interview in *La Jornada* (17 April), Barco announced that the workers "will not try to confront the scabs" and would limit themselves to fighting "within the legal framework." At the same time, he backed away from



MPI in march against repression, Mexico City, July 1994. Government is now moving to smash MPI and SUTAUR bus drivers union.

ive by declaring the bus workers government employees without the right to strike. A 1987 study by Octavio Lozaga de la Cueva, *El estado como patrón y árbitro: El conflicto de la Ruta 100* (The State as Boss and Arbiter), noted:

"The stability of the Mexican political system rests on the control that the state has over the labor sectors...which is maintained in the first instance through the corporatist organisms which it runs from the top."

A couple of years later, the Ruta 100 union decided to set up the Independent Proletarian Movement as a kind of "political arm" of SUTAUR. The MPI was left-talking and militantly syndicalist, denouncing the bourgeois electoral farce. It maintained its separation not only from the PRI-controlled "labor" bodies but also from the various independent unions which in 1988 sided with the former PRI leader Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who headed a "popular front" coalition linking various leftists and labor organizations to a wing of the Mexican ruling class. But there was always a big gap between the MPI's rhetoric in periodic marches of several tens of thousands of workers and *colonos* (urban squatters) and its conservative union policies. On the eve of last August's presidential elections, Barco visited President Salinas in Los Pinos, his official residence, to receive the "gift" of 70 buses for Ruta 100. In return, he gave a big wink, stating that while the MPI and SUTAUR did not endorse candidates, many individual members would vote.

Over the past year, the union's non-aggression pact with the government has become increasingly strained, largely in response to the Indian peasant insurgency in Chiapas. The Zapatista rebellion has shaken both the Mexican government and international "investor confidence," even as it has inspired the solidarity of millions of workers, peasants and student youth. The MPI and SUTAUR joined the National Democratic Convention, a popular-front formation aligned with the rebels, where they led its left wing. PRI tops, who had earlier funneled an es-

in advance of "negotiations," and to weaken its organized urban base of support. After earlier floating accusations that the MPI was financing the EZLN (which many in Mexico City would hardly consider a crime), the government is now charging the leadership of SUTAUR-100 with financial corruption. To this end, they resuscitated a denunciation from four years ago, which had been thrown out by a judge.

Union-Busting, Privatization and NAFTA Rape of Mexico

The liquidation of Ruta 100 has nothing to do with "bankruptcy." The "scandal" over misappropriation of public and union funds is a fabrication. There is widespread suspicion that the government plans to privatize heavily subsidized Mexico City transport. Popular hostility to this runs so deep that all four Congressional parties, including the PRI itself, signed a joint statement rejecting the idea. But wholesale privatization of Mexico's public corporations and industries was the price demanded by Wall Street for entry into NAFTA. The ultimate prize is PEMEX, the state petroleum company which is the fifth largest oil corporation in the world. Even as Ruta 100 was being liquidated, the government announced 30,000 layoffs at the oil giant, and declared that all of PEMEX's secondary petrochemical production would be put up for bids. Marxists oppose these privatizations and call for international class struggle against the NAFTA rape of Mexico.

While Zedillo (like his now-estranged predecessor Salinas) talks of "democratization," this semi-bonapartist regime sitting astride a social volcano cannot dispense with the "old" methods of police-state violence and intimidation. Indeed, the Easter offensive against SUTAUR has evoked the memory of the 1958-59 rail strike, which was savagely broken by federal troops during Holy Week. Thousands of workers were fired and their leftist leaders were jailed for over a decade. Release of the jailed railroad unionists was a demand of the stu-

dent protesters, not only denying the frame-up charges of funding the rebels, but stating that SUTAUR-100 "never took any position of support to the EZLN." At no point has the SUTAUR leadership sought to mobilize other unions in support action.

In an April 9 statement, portions of which were read out from atop the SUTAUR bus which served as a platform at the Easter Sunday Mexico City protest, our comrades of the Grupo Esparquista de México emphasized: "What's needed is a mobilization of the power of the Mexican proletariat. In the DF this means united strike action, by transport and other workers, to smash the bourgeois regime's attack on the great majority of the capital's population and the attempts to silence the voice of workers' protest."

A number of ostensibly Trotskyist groups in Mexico have called for a "National Strike" (POS—Z), a "24-Hour National Strike Now!" (Militante), a "National General Strike" (OSRT) and the like. Such general-strike fetishism ignores the fundamental fact that the bulk of the Mexican working class is straitjacketed by the PRI's corporatist "union" federations, and that a real general strike would quickly pose the question of power. These pseudo-Trotskyists seek to hide behind such seemingly militant demands in order to avoid the central question of revolutionary leadership and the need to break from the *cardenista* popular front. (Militante is actually part of Cárdenas' bourgeois PRD.) In contrast, the GEM stated:

"Unleashing the strength of the proletariat urgently requires breaking with the bourgeoisie in all its variants (PRI, PAN, PRD, etc.) and forging a revolutionary workers party, which will fight for a workers and peasants government, against capitalism which is drowning the overwhelming majority of the population in misery."

Such a leadership would join with its comrades in the U.S. and Canada in an internationalist fight for workers revolution extending into the heartland of imperialism. ■

Guatemala...

(continued from page 1)

about either case has been true."

What does appear to be true, from details leaked in the following days, is that the U.S. government had known about Alpírez all along. On the CIA payroll from 1988, Alpírez received a lump sum "severance" payment of \$40,000 from the CIA shortly after supervising the torture and murder of Bámaca in July 1992. The CIA continued paying him long after the agency admits it learned of his connection to DeVine's murder. On March 28, Torricelli released an anonymous letter from within the National Security Agency (Washington's massive, secret electronic spy outfit) claiming eavesdropping records showed both the CIA and the U.S. Army were directly involved in both crimes, and warned moves were afoot to destroy the evidence (*New York Times*, 29 March).

According to the *Times*, Alpírez had been a U.S. protégé for much longer. He twice attended the U.S. Army's School of the Americas (now located in Fort Benning, Georgia), a veritable finishing school for reactionary butchers. Other alumni of this "School for Assassins" include Roberto D'Aubuisson, godfather of Salvadoran death squads; 22 Salvadoran soldiers variously responsible for massacring priests and raping and murdering nuns; Haiti's General Raoul Cédras; former Bolivian dictator Hugo Banzer; and General Noriega of Panama, a CIA "asset" until he fell afoul of his paymasters. Alpírez served as an officer in the notorious "counterinsurgency" unit known as the Kaibiles, set up by and modeled on the Green Berets; in the Guatemalan military intelligence unit, G-2; and in the central secret police agency known as the Archivo.

Writing in the *Nation* (17 April), Allan Nairn lists half a dozen top Guatemalan officers paid by the CIA including at least three recent chiefs of the G-2, a former army chief of staff, and General Hector Gramajo, who was defense minister when Dianna Ortiz, an American nun, was raped and tortured by the Guatemalan military. Nairn quotes the former U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency chief in Guatemala, Colonel George Hooker: "It would be an embarrassing situation if you ever had a roll call of everybody in the Guatemalan Army who ever collected a C.I.A. paycheck."

Gramajo is a case in point: this mass



Simon/Visions

Former U.S.-backed dictator Rios Montt, psychopathic killer whose "scorched earth" offensive killed thousands in Mayan Indian villages.

murderer, who was brought to Harvard's Kennedy School of Government on a fellowship in 1991, was quoted in an article in the *Harvard International Review* saying that he was in charge of a commission that devised the "70-30" program: "You needn't kill everyone to complete the job. We instituted civil affairs which provide development for 70 percent of the population while we kill 30 percent. Before, the strategy was to kill 100 percent" (quoted by columnist Alexander Cockburn in the *Los Angeles Times*, 13 April). Last week a federal judge ordered Gramajo to pay \$47.5 million to Ortiz

and nine Guatemalan victims of military abuse.

Since such murderous actions by Latin American armies and their CIA godfathers have been so pervasive for decades, one has to ask why this is coming out. In the case of Bámaca and DeVine, a corner has been lifted on this bloody history only because the crimes involve U.S. citizens. Harbury herself underlined

toward the border with Chiapas. While they are talking of peace and human rights, the imperialists and their semicolonial vassals are setting the stage for a new bloodbath of Mayan insurgents.

For its part, the *New York Times* (9 April) ran a lengthy apology for Yankee imperialism, arguing that since massacres of peasants have been going on in Guatemala since the 1760s, "Guate-

Cambio 16



Guatemalan army, trained and equipped by U.S., has slaughtered over 150,000 Mayan peasants and leftist insurgents.

this in her March 23 statement on CIA involvement in her husband's death: "I am but one of hundreds of thousands of women across Latin America who have suffered the grim experience of searching for a loved one who has been 'disappeared' by the authorities.... I am saddened but not at all surprised to hear of the direct link with the CIA in the assassination of my husband." Indeed, when Alexander Gómez Virula, a local leader of UNSITRAGUA (Union of Guatemalan Workers) at a Korean-owned *maquiladora* "free trade" plant, was abducted, and his tortured, bullet-riddled body was found on March 19, this was "no news" in the imperialist press.

And why now? Behind the self-righteous condemnations by Torricelli, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* is a move by influential circles in the U.S. ruling class to cut the CIA budget. With the Soviet Union gone, El Salvador's rebels demobilized, Nicaragua's Sandinistas ousted, and Cuba on the ropes, they feel they've won. Torricelli is a vicious anti-communist who authored the notorious "Cuban Democracy Act" reinforcing the U.S.' brutal starvation embargo of Cuba. This line was summed up in an editorial by the liberal *New York Newsday* (16 April). Under the title "Heel!" it compared the CIA, "plagued by internal scandals, shamed by sordid connections with Central American death squads," to "a Doberman pinscher that has bitten the mailman once too often." "What's needed is a reformed and much slimmer CIA," *Newsday* argued, "one cleansed of superannuated cowboys" in the post-Cold War world.

Moreover, Washington is now trying to "wrap up" the Guatemala insurgency by inducing the remaining guerrillas to disarm—particularly in light of the Zapatista uprising of desperately poor and exploited Mayan peasants across the border in Chiapas, Mexico. On March 31, the Guatemalan government signed an "Accord on the Identity and Rights of the Indigenous Peoples" together with the UNRG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union) promising an end to ethnic discrimination. As a result of this pact, the Mexican government dumped 1,000 Guatemalan refugees back across the border. Meanwhile, as the Mexican army launched a manhunt against Zapatista leaders in early February, 10,000 Guatemalan troops were moved up

malans do not need prompting to kill one another," regardless of how much "American agents supported or condoned" the Guatemalan military. And the *Washington Post* (7 April) cites a "congressional source" in 1989: "We finally realized that three hours of classroom experience was not going to correct 15 centuries of Latin American culture." This refers to so-called "human rights" training offered as a fig leaf for "Torture 101" at U.S. counterinsurgency schools. Such lying, racist arrogance is a liberal cover for the policy espoused by Reaganite Jeane Kirkpatrick of backing "moderately authoritarian" death squad regimes.

The truth is that for 40 years, Washington did far more than simply "aid" Guatemala's brutal military gang in enforcing the rule of the local *latifundistas*, capitalists and their Wall Street masters. Left to their own devices, these butchers would have been plenty barbaric. The characters in Guatemalan writer Miguel Angel Asturias' famous novel *Señor Presidente* are all-too-real distillations of Guatemala's rulers and their hired killers; he portrays a system in which the secret police are everywhere and "the annihilation of one of his fellows was the clearest proof of a citizen's complete adherence to the President." But it was the United States government which purposely and deliberately planned, financed, supplied, trained and directed the transformation of a monstrous but inefficient gang of thugs into a modern, scientifically organized machine of systematic mass murder, torture and terror. U.S. imperialism inflicted on the desperately poor and exploited working people and the Mayan Indian majority of this small country horrors with few parallels in history. Estimates range from 150,000 up to 200,000 dead and "disappeared" since 1960 out of a population of 8-10 million.

"Operation Success"

In 1954, under the orders of President Eisenhower, the CIA carried out what it now considers the textbook example of a "pro-democracy" coup, overthrowing the reform-minded Guatemalan government of Colonel Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán. "Operation Success" was run directly by the sinister Dulles brothers, CIA head Allen and Secretary of State John Foster. Part of the Cold War drive to "contain"

and "roll back" Soviet influence, the coup was precipitated when Arbenz' land reform threatened big tracts of land belonging to the United Fruit Company. (John Foster Dulles was general counsel of the bank which handled the UFC's affairs in Guatemala.) Arbenz was denounced as a Communist for offering to reimburse United Fruit for the paltry amount it declared its holdings to be worth for tax purposes. Almost immediately, the regime of the CIA's puppet "Liberator," Colonel Castillo Armas, reversed the land reform and began murdering union organizers and protesting students.

Seven years later, Armas' successor, General Ydígoras, turned over Guatemala to his CIA sponsors to use as a staging ground for the Bay of Pigs invasion of revolutionary Cuba. When a group of nationalist Guatemalan officers rebelled in protest, Cuban *gusanos* flying CIA B-26s bombed them. Fearing the spread of the Cuban Revolution, the liberal Democratic Kennedy administration used its "Alliance for Progress" program to pump in money, weapons and advisers with experience in Vietnam to build up a model "counterinsurgency" program. After sponsoring a military coup replacing the corrupt Ydígoras with a fanatical anti-communist officer, the U.S. systematically planned and prepared a "counter-terror" offensive scheduled to follow phony "elections" in 1966.

Washington's installation of the machinery of mass murder in Guatemala has been amply documented. In his book, *The American Connection: Volume Two, State Terror and Popular Resistance in Guatemala* (1985), Michael McClintock details this systematic transformation of the Guatemalan repressive apparatus. The first anti-communist death squad to appear in Latin America, the Mano Blanca (White Hand), announced its presence in June 1966. These ostensibly independent "vigilantes" were run by the military, while drawing in members of fascist organizations. After the chief of the U.S. Military Mission in Guatemala, Colonel John Webber, was brought to justice by guerrillas in 1968, *Time* magazine eulogized: "it was his idea and at his instigation that the technique of counter-terror had been implemented by the Guatemalan Army."

According to Susanne Jonas in her book *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads and U.S. Power* (1991), "U.S. Embassy personnel were allegedly involved in writing an August 1966 memorandum outlining the creation of paramilitary groups." Later, the "cashiered" Salvadoran military intelligence leader D'Aubuisson went to Guatemala to learn how to organize death squads for El Salvador. His ARENA party was modeled on the fascistic Guatemalan MLN (National Liberation Movement). Under the "civilian" cover of the Agency of International Development (AID), a massive "Public Safety Program" was instituted in the early 1960s and run by the CIA. This established an integrated intelligence agency with a center operating out of the National Palace compound, the precursor to the "Archivo," originally known as the Centro Regional de Telecomunicaciones. McClintock writes:

"It is beyond dispute that US security assistance between 1963 and 1966 was directly responsible for creating the Regional Telecommunications Center; that US Investigations Advisers were assigned to the National Security Service operating from the Regional Telecommunications Center; and that, since 1966, this...agency has continuously been the centre of command directing covert state terrorism."

—*The American Connection*

A 1981 Amnesty International report concluded the center coordinated "routine assassinations, secret detentions and summary executions" as part of a "clearly defined program of government." The center maintained daily radio contact with the Southern Command of the U.S. Army in the Panama Canal Zone. Its new computerized intelligence data bases represented the kind of "modern public administration" promoted by

Witchhunt...

(continued from page 3)

Vedomosty's sensationalist "exposé" makes patently clear, that the ICL was engaged only in lawful and open propagandistic activity. Indeed, *Vedomosty* reports that "SBU investigators have not opened a criminal case in connection with the members of the ICL" because, according to prosecutor Vinokurov, "seizing power was talked about only theoretically." What this slander campaign is all about is precisely an attempt to persecute left-wing political dissent—and nothing else.

We noted in our earlier statement, "The urgent social and political discontents of the peoples of the former Soviet Union are being falsely converted into a monumentally microscopic conspiracy.... We are Marxists, not putschists; we rely on the forces of the working class." The widespread discontent of the working masses is self-evident. On April 12, one million people across Russia took to the streets or went out on strike in protest against non-payment of wages. In Moscow, the notorious OMON riot police charged into a student demonstration that day, arresting some 35 protesters. In Chechnya, the Yeltsin regime continues its brutal "mopping up" operation, wiping out entire villages.

At the two Moscow demonstrations, protesting workers and students bought dozens of pieces of Trotskyist literature, including our Russian-language supplement on Chechnya and Leon Trotsky's *The Communist International After Lenin* (published by the ICL for the first time in Russian); many also received the April 3 protest statement. In the ICL protests internationally, demonstrators carried signs denouncing Yeltsin's invasion and calling for a plebiscite on national affiliation in Chechnya, as well as in the Crimea.

In his article, Renfrey Clarke notes that in Russia, "the *Vremya* slanders fit into an unnerving pattern that has emerged recently as the government

Clarke...

(continued from page 3)

particularly successful, the Spartacists have nevertheless come under repeated attack from people hostile to their ideas.

In February 1992 a member of the tendency, Martha Phillips, was murdered in her Moscow apartment. Police showed little interest in mounting a serious investigation.

"We have...been subjected to the most invasive surveillance and police attention," members of the organisation noted in a recent statement. "Those Russian and Ukrainian youth who have expressed interest in our literature and political views have been subjected to harassment, interrogation and threats."

The *Vremya* segment appears to herald a further escalation of these attacks, directed not just against the Spartacists but against broad sections of the left. The immediate choice of target—a tiny group composed largely of foreigners—might seem improbable, but is not in fact so mysterious.

Concentrating their initial fire on an organisation in which Westerners fig-

ure heavily, the instigators of the attack hope to brand leftist ideas as alien and unpatriotic. Starting with slanders against a small tendency with few defenders, the people responsible for the *Vremya* clip evidently hope to work their way up to staging successful attacks on large political parties and trade unions.

Vremya viewers, meanwhile, are supposed to accept without regret the loss of their right to consider ideas from any source, including small political groups with foreign members. Viewers are also supposed to ignore the absurdity of *Vremya's* underlying claim: that the threat allegedly posed by four Spartacists to the constitutional order in Ukraine justifies the police bursting into a private apartment and seizing political literature.

The real danger to the constitutional order in Ukraine—starting with the constitution's guarantees of human rights—obviously comes not from the left, but from a chaotic state apparatus anxious to divert attention from its own looming collapse.

In Russia, meanwhile, the *Vremya* slanders fit into an unnerving pattern

that has emerged recently as the government has prepared new restrictions on political rights. While these initiatives have been trumpeted as blows aimed against fascism, they are obviously intended to be equally useful against organisations opposing the government from the left.

February saw the beginning of discussion in the Russian parliament of a law "On the Prohibition of the Activity of Extremist Organisations in Russia." Under this law, Russian courts would be able to order the dissolution of organisations deemed extremist, and to confiscate their property.

More recently, the parliament adopted a new law granting extraordinary powers to the Federal Security Service (FSB), the successor to the KGB. Under the law, the FSB will receive the right to run its own jails, to establish widespread networks of informers, and to enter premises without a warrant, a provision which appears to violate the Russian constitution. The "means, methods and tactics" employed by the FSB will be immune to scrutiny by the General Prosecutor's Office.

12 April 1995

has prepared new restrictions on political rights." Clarke documents some of these repressive measures in his article, including a proposed law banning "extremist organizations" and the strengthening of the Federal Security Service (FSB), whose activities will now be virtually free of any legal or parliamentary restraints.

Decades of heavy-handed Stalinist bureaucratic repression buried the understanding in the former Soviet Union that communists see the fight for basic civil liberties like freedom of speech as an integral component of the proletariat's struggle. In the context of the drive toward a "strong state," the attack on the ICL is a test case for the country: will Russia become a tinpot dictatorship

where intellectual life is stifled?

Particularly since its bloody assault on the former Russian parliament in October 1993, endorsed by the Western imperialist rulers, the Kremlin regime has been moving ever more openly toward naked bonapartist dictatorship. Dmitry Volkov, political editor of the Moscow daily *Sevodnya*, reports: "There is a long list of top-ranking officials"—ranging from Yeltsin's closest advisers to "powerful Muscovite bankers"—"who publicly and privately speak in favour of cancelling elections" (*London Financial Times*, 10 April). As ICL spokesman Len Meyers declared at the New York City protest on April 5:

"If there is a conspiracy, it is among the ruling circles in Kiev and Moscow. It is

they who have something to hide, as they plot the exploitation and starvation of the working people, of the young and the aged, as they make deals with the imperialist politicians and bankers behind the backs of the population, as they incite nationalist fratricide in the Crimea, as they fan the flames of anti-Semitism, as they send thousands of people to their deaths in Chechnya.

"We Trotskyists have nothing to hide. We follow in the footsteps of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, of V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky. We are for the reconstitution of the working class of the former Soviet Union as a class capable of taking power and reorganizing society on the basis of soviet democracy, of central planning and of revolutionary internationalism. We are for the rebirth of the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky. Down with the slanders against the ICL! For workers rule in the Ukraine and Russia! ■

AID. Paramilitary units were set up; "elite" military units including the Kaibiles were financed, equipped and trained by the U.S. Military Assistance Program. After a phony "election" in June 1966, a civilian front man was installed as president and a long-prepared offensive was launched in the guerrilla stronghold of Zacapa department. Hundreds of Green Berets trained and led the campaign which killed some 8,000 peasants in less than a year. U.S. planes flying out of Panama dropped napalm on suspected guerrilla concentrations. The commander of the slaughter, Colonel Arana Osorio, the "Jackal of Zacapa," became the next president.

As in Vietnam, "strategic hamlets" were set up and the Indian population driven into them. Under the tutelage of some of the same U.S. "advisers" responsible for Operation Phoenix in Vietnam—which rounded up, tortured and individually murdered some 30,000 Vietnamese to "eliminate the Vietcong infrastructure"—in Guatemala "a new weapon was also introduced: political assassination on a mass scale" (Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* [1983]). Horribly tortured and mutilated victims of death squads littered the country in a manner calculated to maximize terror. This was an integral part of the U.S. "counterinsurgency doctrine."

In preparing the groundwork for Cold War II, Democratic president and professional imperialist hypocrite Jimmy Carter made a show of cutting off aid to the Guatemalan officers in protest of "human rights" abuses. But this was nothing but a cynical maneuver. McClintock writes: "Dealings between the military of each country continued...and, simultaneously, close U.S. allies (particularly Israel and Argentina) were increasingly involved in taking up the slack in mili-

tary assistance—with the apparent encouragement of the U.S. military and intelligence establishment." By 1980 the dollar value of Israeli assistance was estimated at \$90 million.

In 1982, yet another coup brought to power the megalomaniacal general Efraín Ríos Montt. A fundamentalist Protestant and graduate of Fort Bragg, who also had served as a department head at the Interamerican Defense College in Washington, Ríos Montt's main qualification was that he had the stomach for the dirty work. He launched a "scorched earth offensive" (with the Kaibiles in the forefront) against highland Mayan villagers among whom leftist guerrillas had won support. A survivor of one massacre told Americas Watch:

"Guatemalan army soldiers entered their village and began shooting men, women, children and livestock. Soldiers murdered children by cleaving their heads with machetes, strangling them with rope, and throwing them in the air and then bayonetting them. Women who did not escape were raped. Those who survived fled to the hills.... [In the following months] the army again returned to the village and burned crops that the survivors had recently cultivated."

—quoted in *The American Connection*

In a couple of years, they had killed or "disappeared" well over 100,000 people, entirely destroyed 440 villages, and displaced more than a million Indians, driving 200,000 across the border into Chiapas. In this truly genocidal rampage, whole Mayan tribes were virtually wiped out, such as the Ixil people of El Quiché, who numbered some 45,000 in 1969.

Today, imperialist mouthpieces like Torricelli and the *New York Times* profess to be horrified that Bush "suspended" aid to the Guatemala junta over the killing of DeVine only to resume it "secretly" through the CIA. But from Carter to Reagan to Bush, Washington has consistently used public displays

of feigned shock as a screen when the atrocities of its puppets become an international embarrassment. Aid is "suspended" by one hand and reinstated by the other. Clinton is no different. To appeal to the capitalist state to clean up its act is both futile and creates dangerous illusions.

Grisly repression is a fundamental feature of the U.S. empire, which repeatedly drives the workers and peasants in its neocolonies to desperate uprisings as Wall Street literally drains their lives to fill its coffers. In the four decades since 1954, the Guatemalan countryside has been the scene of almost uninterrupted guerrilla struggles. But the death squad regimes also direct their terror at the small urban working class. A heroic fight by the workers of the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Guatemala City, lasting from 1976 to 1985, saw three general secretaries of the union assassinated, while other members and their families were arrested, kidnapped, tortured, shot or forced into exile (see Latin American

Bureau, *Soft Drink, Hard Labour: Guatemalan Workers Take on Coca-Cola* [1987]).

The tentacles of the octopus (as United Fruit was known throughout Central America) can be cut off, as in Cuba, but Yankee imperialism will continue to strangle the hemisphere until it is struck in the heart. It is up to the U.S. working class to come to the aid of their class brothers and sisters fighting to throw off imperialist slavery and landlord-capitalist rule. Today, when sections of the ruling class so desire for their own ends, we may get a glimpse of the crimes perpetrated by this system. But it is only when the working class, led by its internationalist vanguard party, takes power that the secret archives will be opened from Washington, D.C. to Guatemala City and justice will be meted out against the hitmen of the international Murder Inc. and their paymasters. The hundreds of thousands of victims of imperialist slaughter *will be avenged*, through socialist revolution. ■

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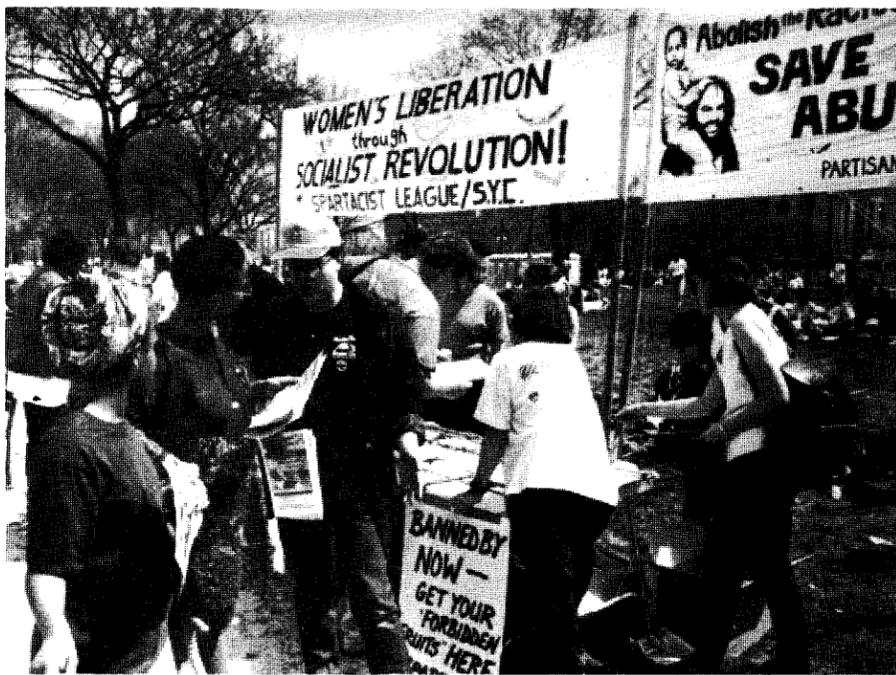
NOW Censorship Flops

As thousands turned out for the "Rally for Women's Lives" in Washington, D.C. on April 9, NOW censors failed in their attempt to ban leftist literature on the Washington Mall. When the Spartacist League found out about NOW's outrageous plan to ban non-NOW "vendors," we immediately issued an "Open Letter to All Participants in the Rally for Women's Lives" (printed below) to expose this threat to use the forces of the capitalist police against political opponents. Our protest embarrassed the feminist thought police enough that SL supporters distributing our revolutionary literature were not harassed by the Park Service cops, as NOW had threatened.

NOW did not hesitate with others, however. Despite being listed as a "national endorser" of the rally, the reformist Socialist Workers Party, which has been cravenly tailing the bourgeois-feminist NOW for over two decades, had one literature table shut down by Park Police. Other vendors selling buttons and T-shirts were deemed to be competing with NOW's profit-making enterprises (featuring a specially produced "Stop Violence" T-shirt) and were chased off NOW's "territory"!

As the Clinton White House has backed off the abortion question in response to right-wing pressure, NOW has shifted its attention to individual domestic violence, taking the focus off the fascists and the state. Meanwhile, these bourgeois feminists prevent militants from organizing effective defense of abortion clinics against the "right to life" terrorists, while portraying the genocidal bipartisan assault on welfare as solely the fault of the Republicans. NOW & Co. wanted only to make the rally safe for the Democrats, by limiting all politics to mobilizing voters to "Stop Newt" (Gingrich) in 1996 and campaigning for more police and more laws to "stop violence."

Despite the NOW threats, hundreds of young demonstrators got Spartacist literature: 665 copies of *WV* with the headline "Defeat Racist Assault on Affirmative Action!" and 445 copies of



Washington, D.C., April 9: Spartacists assert right to sell Marxist literature and petition against the racist death penalty at rally on Capitol Mall, defying feminist censors.

Women and Revolution were sold, with our class-struggle program for women's liberation through socialist revolution.

Open Letter to All Participants in the Rally for Women's Lives

Imagine a mass protest where the only literature available for sale must be approved by the government and its police forces. No Virginia, it's not a Nuremberg rally or a bookburning in Bangladesh, it's the National Organization for Women's "Rally for Women's Lives" in Washington, D.C. on April 9—and it's a scandal!

Today, we socialists of the Spartacist League/U.S. were informed by one Cindy Hanford of NOW that *only* NOW could have literature tables at the Sunday rally on the Washington Mall. Ms. Hanford added that, "if you try to vend, the Park Service will arrest you." While Ms. Hanford feigned the role of a powerless woman obeying the diktats of manly

police agencies, the truth of the matter is that NOW has made this rule and will use the cops to enforce it. NOW has a long and sordid history of promoting the cops and suppressing the left. At the huge marches for abortion rights in 1989 and 1992, NOW goons tried to shut down socialist literature tables and unleash the cops on militants who declined to be segregated from the main rally in NOW's demeaning penned-in "ghetto" for left groups. NOW's most blatant dive into the sewers of bourgeois state repression was their open invitation to the FBI—the agency whose purpose is to destroy the work and the lives of black militants, leftists, union organizers, homosexuals—to set up a recruitment booth at NOW's July 1991 national convention in New York City!

Thus this threat of police censorship at NOW's behest against the left is not a surprise to us Marxists. Still, it is deeply ironic that at a "rally for women's lives" we shall have to dodge the feminist

thought police of the National Organization for Women in order to distribute our journal *Women and Revolution* which features an exclusive interview with the courageous Bangladeshi woman writer Taslima Nasrin whom Islamic fundamentalist thought police have vowed to kill for "blasphemous" views.

NOW will not succeed in their attempt to spawn a seamless mass of bourgeois-feminist conformity. Their scandalous censorship only emphasizes the huge gulf between the politics of those who fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution and those middle-class feminists who repress the left and sacrifice the interests of poor and minority women in order to advance their own positions in the capitalist order. In this regard it is instructive that since "Billary" took the White House, NOW has mounted no mass protests in defense of abortion clinics for fear of alienating their Democratic Party masters. Even after the chilling murders of abortion clinic workers in Brookline, Massachusetts, abortion is "hush, hush"—yet NOW loudly howls alongside the Republican far-right about "pornography" and fuels the "sex abuse" hysteria which results in the persecution of day-care workers and teachers.

For our part, we believe that political censorship, whether emanating from Ayatollah or Cardinal, "born-again" bigots or bourgeois feminists, is all equally loathsome. The Spartacist League has consistently fought to mobilize the working class to defend the rights of women and all the oppressed. Against those who attempt to channel struggles into the dead end of Democratic Party electoralism (which maintains the capitalist status quo by chaining the exploited to their exploiters) we fight to build a revolutionary party which will serve as a Leninist "tribune of the people," fighting all forms of social oppression as we organize to sweep away this whole system of race, sex, and class oppression.

• Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party!

• Free Abortion on Demand!

• Defeat the Racist Attack on Affirmative Action! Jobs and Free Quality Education for All!

• Women's Liberation through Socialist Revolution!

Look for the forbidden fruit on April 9! Don't let NOW tell you what you can and can't read! Don't go home without your very own copy of *Workers Vanguard* and *Women and Revolution*!

Spartacist League
7 April 1995

Jamal...

(continued from page 16)

month, permitted only legal visits and prohibited from receiving books other than legal or religious materials. They are already restricting Jamal's contact with his legal team and supporters outside prison walls in order to isolate Jamal and prevent him from assisting in the preparation of a petition for a new trial being prepared by his attorneys led by Leonard Weinglass.

Partisan Defense Committee counsel Rachel Wolkenstein said, "They are trying to entomb Jamal even before a death warrant is signed. State Representative Michael McGeehan, the FOP and prison officials are incensed that support for Jamal around the world keeps growing. This is a transparent effort to prevent Jamal from breaking the wall of silence and intimidation put up by the FOP and overturning his conviction and death sentence."

Jamal, a former spokesman for the Black Panther Party, supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization and renowned journalist who was president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists at the time of his arrest, has been a target of the Philly cops and government for over 25

PEN/Faulkner prize-winning author John Edgar Wideman writes in the introduction to *Live From Death Row*, "Mumia's words are clarified and purified by the toxic strata of resistance through which they must penetrate to reach us. Like the blues. Like jazz." The book includes comments by such notable figures as actor Ossie Davis, who is co-chairman of the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, and author E.L. Doctorow. Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple*, writes, "A rare and courageous voice speaking from a place we fear to know: Mumia Abu-Jamal must be heard." Prominent attorney William Kunstler adds, "Everyone interested in justice should read the words of this innocent man."

years. In 1982, Jamal was framed on charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer. Wolkenstein pointed out:

"Heavily edited files recently obtained from the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act document that the government was targeting Jamal from the time he was a teenager. As a 16-year-old leader of the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party, Jamal became a marked man. He was placed on the FBI's

Administrative Index of 'subversives' and recommended for the Security Index of those deemed to pose a 'threat' to the government. Many other Panthers given that designation ended up either dead or locked away for many years on racist frame-ups as part of the COINTELPRO vendetta against black activists."

Jamal wrote of the efforts to silence him by the same Philly cops and state officials responsible for the bombing of the MOVE home on 13 May 1985, which killed eleven blacks, five of them children: "Does the First Amendment, which allegedly guarantees Freedom of the Press, apply behind prison walls? Does it truly apply to all within America? We shall see...."

"I, after having had one court-appointed lawyer (who was later disbarred), and another on appeal, am fighting, quite literally, for my very life, against an unjust and an illegal Death Sentence, have decided to finally try to hire a good lawyer, and the buzzards of the FOP and political hitmen screech their objections.

"If Stacey Koon [LA cop convicted on civil rights violations in the beating of Rodney King] is entitled to a direct mail solicitation for legal funds and family assistance in an amount upwards of \$4 million, and he is fighting a less than 3-year federal sentence for a crime that was videotaped and televised internationally, why the squawk over a book

deal with the writer for \$30,000?

"The squawk, upon reflection, is utterly reasonable, for one man served the interests of the system all of his professional life, while another man opposed the interests of the system all of his professional (and indeed teenage) life.

"You decide who you would rather read, and refuse to let baby-killing cops, or their political lackeys tell you what is, or isn't verboten to read.

"Isn't that the very essence of the 'Freedom of the Press'?"

* * *

Make the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the voice of the voiceless that the police want to silence, the rallying cry against the racist death penalty. Deborah Mackson of the PDC stressed, "Jamal's victimization throws a spotlight on what the death penalty in this deeply racist country is all about. In fighting the legal lynching of Jamal we will strike a blow against the entire apparatus of capitalist repression."

For more information about the campaign to save Jamal, contact the Partisan Defense Committee at P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013, (212) 406-4252. *Live From Death Row* can be purchased for \$20 from Addison-Wesley, 170 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010. ■

California Supermarket Strike Beats Back Attack on Health Benefits

Union Tops Agree to Three-Year Wage Freeze, Raid on Union Trust Fund

OAKLAND—On April 15, some 32,000 supermarket workers ended their nine-day strike against grocery chains in Northern California. The strike—which hit over 200 Safeway stores, while Lucky and Save Mart declared a lockout—was immensely popular. For an entire week, TV news showed empty aisles at struck stores as shoppers refused to patronize the grocery chains which gouge increasingly large chunks out of their paychecks. This time, the bosses miscalculated in declaring war against workers who the public at large sees as struggling just like them—kids trying to make it through school, single mothers, young black, Asian and Latino fathers stocking shelves and bagging groceries to keep their children fed. “Everybody’s tired of the corporations taking away from the working people,” said a bartender in the one-supermarket town of Guerneville.

The strike began on April 6 when 18,000 clerks, baggers and butchers belonging to the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) struck Safeway. The bosses’ Food Employment Council was out to eliminate medical benefits for part-timers, jack up premiums for everyone else and slash overtime and holiday pay. The employers went all-out, locking out 14,000 Lucky and Save Mart workers and hiring 10,000 scabs to work in struck stores from Fresno to the Oregon border. But they didn’t count on the tremendous echo this strike had among working people: if a picket line was up, the aisles were empty.

One week into the strike, nearly a thousand workers protested outside Safeway world headquarters in Oakland. Grocery workers were joined by hotel, civil service, machinist and longshore unions in a powerful display of multi-

racial and multiethnic unity. The bosses’ divide-and-conquer strategy can be transcended in *class struggle*. With booming chants of “Hey, say it loud, we’re union and we’re proud!” it was the voice of militant women, minorities and young workers which injected the most heartfelt urgency. They represent the thousands of part-time and lowest-paid workers whose health benefits the bosses want to take away.

After a deal was struck between the UFCW tops and the bosses the night of April 14, union reps rushed to picket lines to gather up signs and order strikers back to work without details of the proposed contract. At one Safeway picket line in Oakland, strikers argued strongly that they should vote *before* going back. Now the agreement is supposed to be ratified by mail ballot, which could take weeks.

The Food Employment Council bragged that they had won a “cost-neutral” contract, meaning that the profit-bloated supermarket chains won’t have to cough up one extra cent for their workers. Increased medical costs (projected to rise by 12-15 percent over the life of the contract) will be stolen right out of the union’s health and welfare trust fund. On top of that, wages—for some as low as \$6.75 an hour—will be frozen for the next three years! The union tops are throwing away the enormous support for the strike.

From the beginning, the UFCW strike “strategy” was to target only Safeway, while allowing many stores to go without pickets and even encouraging consumers to shop at Lucky stores. The supermarket bosses were acting in complete unity to crush the strike. Chuck Mack, the president of Teamsters Joint Council 7 who acted as the UFCW’s main adviser, cas-



Mangelsdorf/SF Examiner

Strikers picket Safeway supermarket in San Francisco.

ually predicted that the strike would last “a month, maybe two,” which would have left strikers trying to make ends meet on \$60 a week strike benefits. Yet he and the UFCW misleaders never shut down the key supermarket distribution centers, like Safeway’s gigantic facility at Tracy, organized by the Teamsters. This would have *shut down the supermarkets* overnight, scuttling the plans to run scab stores.

In fact, Mack allowed Teamster drivers to continue hauling groceries to the supermarkets, allowing management and scabs to unload trucks in the street. He didn’t lift a finger when Safeway bosses “temporarily replaced” as many as 300 Teamster drivers at the Tracy facility with scab owner-operators in the first days of the strike! Mack mouths support for the “armed struggle” of Zapatista rebels in Chiapas (in his column in the February 1994 *Northern California Teamster*). But at home he lets grocery store strikers and his own members hang out to dry.

The labor sellouts’ game is hitching the unions to the Democratic Party politicians, who were invited to speak at the April 13 rally. The Democrats are no

“friends of labor.” With their immigrant-bashing, assault on welfare and attacks against affirmative action, they are enemies of workers’ struggle and minority rights.

On the picket lines during the supermarket strike there were white, black, Latino and Asian strikers fighting together against the wage-gouging companies with their divide-and-rule strategy. Safeway was among the biggest financial backers of California’s 1992 Proposition 165, an early attempt to drastically cut welfare benefits on the grounds that they are a “disincentive” to seeking work. Supermarket owners want people to “seek work” at poverty wages and are guilty of every form of discrimination. In 1993, three women who worked at Lucky won a class-action lawsuit worth \$107 million on behalf of 14,000 women workers denied promotions due to sex discrimination.

The rulers’ attacks on immigrants and affirmative action are aimed at dividing the working class. To win the battles ahead, workers need their own party, a class-struggle workers party fighting to realize the program *those who labor must rule*. ■

Prepare for Emergency Demos!

THE CAMPAIGN IS AT A CRITICAL POINT—YOU CAN HELP!

At any moment, Pennsylvania’s pro-death penalty governor, Tom Ridge, could sign Mumia Abu-Jamal’s death warrant. Ridge has already signed warrants for five death row inmates, and the state’s first execution in 30 years is set to take place this month. Jamal is in imminent danger—if a warrant is signed, emergency demonstrations will be held the next day in New York City, Oakland and elsewhere. Get on the Partisan Defense Committee phone tree and help organize to make these urgent demonstrations the loudest possible outcry against the racist death penalty!

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN: take petitions; ask your friends, neighbors and co-workers to sign and get involved. Organize a showing in your union, community group, church or school of the PDC video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*. Send letters and get Jamal’s powerful columns into your local newspapers, school or union newsletters; raise motions in your union or at your school to send a letter to Governor Ridge demanding “Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die!” Contact the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99,

Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013, or call (212) 406-4252.

SEND PROTEST LETTERS TO: Governor Tom Ridge, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

WRITE TO JAMAL to express your solidarity: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA 15370-8090.

SEND \$\$\$ FOR JAMAL LEGAL DEFENSE NOW! Funds are urgently needed to wage the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal’s life. All money being raised through these rallies and forums organized by the Partisan Defense Committee goes directly to Jamal’s legal defense. Since February 9, nearly \$15,000 has been collected or pledged. More is needed now! Jamal’s legal team initiated the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, co-chaired by actors Ossie Davis and Mike Farrell, to help raise funds. Make out your tax-deductible contribution for the defense to: Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked “Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense,” and send it to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Ave., No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001.

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Jamal Book, *Live From Death Row*, to Be Published May 2

Cops Escalate Vendetta Against Mumia Abu-Jamal

Despite a frenzied campaign by the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) to block its publication, *Live From Death Row*, a collection of writings by political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, will be released by Addison-Wesley Publishing Company on May 2. Announcing the publication, Addison-Wesley stated, "*Live From Death Row* adds immediacy, depth, and passion to the nationwide controversy surrounding race, capital punishment, and freedom of speech.... Abu-Jamal's commentaries illuminate the conditions inside death row and the racial inequities of the United States judicial system, a system recently indicted by Amnesty International for its treatment of racial minorities and inadequate legal representation of poor defendants."

Since taking office in January, Penn-

sylvania governor Tom Ridge has already signed five execution warrants, bringing closer the state's first execution since 1962 and placing Mumia Abu-Jamal's life in immediate jeopardy. In the past two months, rallies to save Jamal were held in more than a dozen cities internationally, drawing representatives of labor, community, student and left organizations representing hundreds of thousands. As support for Jamal has grown worldwide and particularly with the publication of Jamal's book, the state is seeking to make it ever more difficult for Jamal's powerful voice to be heard and to prove his innocence. Requests for interviews with Jamal by *People* magazine, France 2 TV, German Public TV Channel 1, Connie Chung of CBS, Gramercy Pictures and National Public Radio, among others, have been denied by prison

officials. The state has seized upon publication of Jamal's book as the bogus pretext for placing Jamal in "investigative" status and denying the press access to him.

The Philadelphia cops and their friends in the state government have been on a vendetta to censor the book and to seize the \$30,000 advance to the author. They are using the publication of Jamal's writings to escalate their efforts to silence Jamal by execution. As Jamal recently wrote, "They are trying to build a climate of death, with me as a mute bystander." Retaliating against Jamal for speaking out from behind the walls of death row, prison officials have threatened him with disciplinary proceedings on the pretext of carrying on "commercial activity" while in prison.

As they conduct an "investigation,"



COC Productions

Mumia Abu-Jamal

prison officials have already abrogated Jamal's lawyer-client privilege, confiscated his legal correspondence and prevented visits by legal assistants. If found "guilty," Jamal will be placed in disciplinary custody, where he will be limited to two phone calls per *continued on page 14*

Young Spartacus

Break with the Democrats—Unleash Labor's Power!

CUNY Students Debate How to Fight the Cuts



Young Spartacus

New York City, March 23: More than 10,000 students and teachers protest vicious cuts in higher education. SYC called for students to unite with labor in one-day citywide strike against cutbacks.

In recent weeks, New York City has been swept by a wave of angry demonstrations protesting drastic cutbacks ordered by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Governor George Pataki. On April 4, some 5,000 trade unionists and students marched on Wall Street. Two weeks earlier, over 10,000 City University (CUNY) and high-school students defied a massive cop mobilization to demonstrate outside City Hall, chanting, "Education is a right—Fight, fight, fight!" On March 1, New York hospital workers union Local 1199 led a march of 30,000 health care and city workers to protest cuts which would eliminate up to 80,000 hospital jobs.

Students are literally being bludgeoned by the Giuliani administration. On March 23, as a spirited, multiracial crowd sought to step off from City Hall Park for a march to Wall Street, the cops unleashed a brutal assault lasting over an hour, pulling students over barricades to pummel them and spraying the crowd with Mace. More than 60 students and others were arrested. Last week at City College, cops arrested 47 people, including hunger strikers and their supporters, mostly black and Hispanic. Student protesters at other campuses have also been arrested. At a meeting of the CUNY Coalition Against the Cuts two days after March 23, Spartacus Youth Club members fought to mobilize to fill the courtroom in defense of the protesters. With hearings coming up on April 20, we say: Drop the charges!

Labor Misleaders: Roadblock to Struggle

CUNY students are not alone. There is broad recognition that the assault on education, public health and mass transit requires a unified struggle drawing on the power of the trade unions. Giuliani, narrowly elected as the cops' candidate in 1993, is already despised by masses of blacks and Hispanics. Now the arrogant attacks on municipal unions are

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