

Young Spartacus

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SEPTEMBER 1985

Reagan/Botha: "Free World" Butchers

Apartheid Regime Digs In, Black Revolt Spreads



Der Spiegel



Schiasson/Gamma

Security forces for apartheid, left, at Johannesburg rally of black trade unionists. Right, defiant black youth.

South Africa is a powder keg, ready to explode into civil war. It was just a year ago that the latest anti-apartheid revolt began, triggered by rent increases in the black townships and the establishment of a phony tricameral parliament, excluding blacks and instituting token separate bodies for Indians and "coloureds" (mixed race). Since then, over 700 black people have been killed. And since the imposition of an "emergency" decree in July, thousands of blacks have been rounded up and "detained" by the white racist authorities to meet fates that range from a few hours or days of torture before release to being savagely murdered and dumped into makeshift mass graves. To Pretoria's police, every black is a target for repression; they even hauled in over 800 black children—literally dragging some of them out of their schools—many of whom are as young as seven and eight years old!

So far, though, the "State of Emergency" declared in the industrialized Transvaal around Johannesburg and in the Eastern Cape around the auto center of Port Elizabeth has not been able to contain the massive outpouring of black anger. In fact, the crackdown has only fueled further protest, which spread from one end of the country to the other.

Bury Apartheid— For Workers Revolution!

The wave of protest also has triggered widespread response in the United States, having a political impact not seen in this country since the Vietnam War. A sense of solidarity with the struggle of the black masses of South Africa has sparked protest action here. The American bourgeoisie is stymied and split over how best to continue backing its junior imperialist ally while chastising Botha and trying to distance itself a bit from the "evils" of apartheid, mostly for domestic consumption.

Reagan's "sanctions" are precisely a product of this dilemma. Economically virtually meaningless, they are Reagan's latest stab at fending off domestic critics of "constructive engagement." There can be no question that Klan-endorsed Reagan, the man who announced with a straight face that segregation had been abolished in apartheid South Africa, doesn't have the interests of the black

masses in mind. Despite "friction" with Botha over the latter's intransigent refusal to pretend to give a little, the defense of the status quo in South Africa is the primary concern of Reagan as well as his junior partners in Pretoria. Congress, meanwhile, is looking for a way to appease some of the popular anger over the U.S.' open support to the bloody South African racists. Some wrist-slapping economic sanctions might take off some of the heat at home, not to mention help in the reelection of certain incumbents. No doubt there's a buck to be made as well by enterprising coin designers in Canada and the U.S. while the Krugerrand's circulation is curtailed.

Advocates of stronger sanctions are playing a dangerous game. We do not believe in "the worse, the better" in South Africa or elsewhere. The isolation of South Africa from the world market,

except in a period when the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid system is immediately posed, is likely to result in massive dislocation and deprivation of the black masses, weakening their capacity to struggle. Botha & Co. are acutely aware that a little reform here and there is not going to stem the tide of black revolt. They're gearing up for repression and massacres on a very big scale and to go it alone if need be. Unidentified "experts" in the *New York Times* believe "the sanctions could encourage the country to redouble its effort to build a self-supporting economy, leaving it free to pursue its segregationist policies" (10 September). South Africa's economy depends on apartheid and the superexploitation of black workers in the mines and factories. If this six-million-strong force is organized to lead the battle against apartheid slavery and for workers rule, the horribly one-sided bloodbath Pretoria has in mind can be averted, the apartheid state smashed.

Every act of repression by the white racist rulers of South Africa has been met with defiance. A ban on outdoor funerals, previously the only "legal" avenue of anti-apartheid protest, was

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EDITORIAL NOTE

Young Spartacus **BANNED** in South Africa

Young Spartacus has been banned in South Africa. The "Government Gazette" (26 July)—a truly remarkable publication of the apartheid regime updating the regulations for detainees, the banning and un-banning of written material and graphics—announced that Young Spartacus No. 120 (September 1984) and No. 126 (April 1985) were deemed "undesirable within the meaning of section 47(2) of the said [Publications] Act." Two other Spartacist periodicals, an issue of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand's *Australasian Spartacist* (4 June 1985) and another Spartacist publication listed from London—which we have been unable to identify with the given date and issue number—were also contained on the banned list, as was an issue of the Healyite *Bulletin*.

The "Government Gazette" is a revealing piece of Pretoria's state machinery. In the cool bureaucratism of institutionalized mass murder and slavery (in English and Afrikaans), it devotes page after page to the regulations governing "detainees," i.e., those opponents of apartheid imprisoned without the formalities of charges or trials. Among the "disciplinary" measures listed are "corporal punishment, not exceeding six strokes," "solitary confinement in an isolation cell" and "confinement with "dietary punishment combined." For the latter purpose, a chart is provided, listing the period of punishment and corresponding numbers of days of "spare" or "reduced" or



kaart)
 Waterfall—PH820-100 (Greeting Card/Groetekaart).....
 Heart in your hands—V701-90 (Greeting Card/Groetekaart)
 Sketch of male genital (Sketch/Skets).....
 Make a wish and blow BD269-100 (Greeting Card/Groetekaart)
 Young Spartacus—No 120, September 1984.....
 Young Spartacus—No 126, April 1985.....
 Bulletin—Vol 21, No 38, Tuesday, 14 May 1985.....
 Spartacist—4 June 1985.....
 Spartacist—Winter 1973-1974, No 22.....

Young Spartacus Nos. 120 and 126, Australasian Spartacist (4 June): banned by South African government. Anti-apartheid publications are "political pornography" in Pretoria.

"full" diet.

South African novelist Nadine Gordimer described a recent conversation with "detained" anti-apartheid social worker and officer of the United Democratic Front Cassim Saloojee. When Gordimer spoke with him, Saloojee was home on bail after being formally charged with high treason:

"He has only one complaint, which is expressed in a way that catches me out—I've been spending my time watching pornographic films," he says. "With my tactfully unshockable laugh, I suddenly remember that active resis-



tance to apartheid is 'political pornography.' The films he has been viewing are video cassettes of public meetings made by the United Democratic Front as records of their activities. They have been seized by the state. For the purposes of their own defense, the accused must study what may now be used as evidence against them. 'Ninety hours of viewing....'

—New York Times Sunday Magazine, 8 September

Both of the *YSp* issues singled out for government censorship contained lead articles on South Africa (see above). Our call that "Black Workers Take the Lead: Bury Apartheid!" no doubt brought down the censor's ax. But our revolutionary working-class anti-apartheid stance is not the only material Pretoria proscribes as "political pornography." In Botha's corner of the "free world," any anti-government criticism in print or deed is subject to harsh state reprisals.

It might also be the case that South African authorities disapproved of our article—prominently advertised on the front page of *YSp* No. 120—"Reagan to Youth: No Sex, No Booze, No Fun—Big Brother Is Out to Screw You!" The "banned" list contained in this particular issue of the "Government Gazette" consists—other than the publications listed above—entirely of sketches and greeting cards considered obscene. The same regime which declares "No detainee shall be entitled to receive or to have in his possession any reading

matter except the Bible or any other Holy Book of religion" imposes the most stringent anti-pornography laws on the planet. Today's U.S. anti-porn totalitarians of the feminist/Moral Majority stripe find themselves in real bad company on this question. Apartheid South Africa magnifies and institutionalizes all that is backward, brutal and sick in capitalist society. Accompanying the virtual enslavement of the black majority is systemic government repression in all spheres of life, not least in the sexual realm since the racially "homogenous" family is a key prop of white minority rule. While apartheid regulations against black-white marriage have recently been abolished, it is still the case that such couples cannot by law live in the same neighborhood, that their children automatically are victims of the racist codes governing, for instance, education.

We certainly hope that *YSp*, *Workers Vanguard* and the Marxist program put forward by all the publications of our international tendency have made their way into the hands of the future leaders of the workers revolution which will bury apartheid. We will continue to win young militants to our fight against racist terror from Soweto to Harlem. Our banning by the South African government only strengthens our determination to fight for international socialist revolution. ■

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Young Spartacus Photo



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YSp 129

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LETTER

"Yale Six" Demand: Hands Off Guillermo!

July 21, 1985

Dear Friends,

Back in March six anti-imperialist students tried to run a CIA recruiter off his favorite campus here at Yale. We too had to face bogus criminal charges and a secret inquisition style hearing as the university attempted to defend its most notorious alumni club. The legal frame up fell flat but the old star chamber put us on "probation," i.e., shut up or we'll kick you out. No problem. The university's repression brought out alot of support for our action and next time the CIA or any other counter-revolution-

aries stick their noses in here, we'll have enough people out so there won't be any "recruitment" or disinformation sessions to be interrupted. We just won't let them on campus. Drop the charges against Guillermo and all other student protesters! Stop the cops! Stop the campus inquisitions!

In solidarity,
 Nick Jaffe,
 for the Yale six

P.S. please find enclosed twenty dollars, ten for Guillermo's defense and ten for the defense of Nicaragua.

Free Speech Under Attack at Berkeley

All Out to Defend Guillermo!

Cops inflicting choke holds, billy-club beatings, busting up peaceful demonstrations, throwing students into maximum security cells, banning leftists—what sounds like the nightly news of police-state terror in South Africa or San Salvador is in fact happening right here on the UC Berkeley campus. Guillermo Bermúdez, a prominent victim of the massive police crackdown will soon go to trial to fight a cop frame-up that could send him to the slammer for nearly three years. Guillermo, a Hispanic student and member of the Spartacus Youth League, was grabbed by UC cops last January in a potentially lethal choke hold, dragged by the throat for 30 feet and had his arm broken by three of UC's "Finest." Guillermo was assaulted by the police for his leading role in a demonstration which successfully drove Marine recruiters off campus. In a standard cop

Montague/Grassroots



Berkeley cops use choke hold to "remove" student at anti-apartheid sit-in, December 7, 1984.

frame-up, Guillermo now faces lying charges of "assaulting a police officer." In the birthplace of the "Free Speech Movement" the campus cops and their higher-ups hope to freeze resurgent student protest through brute force. They want to make an example out of Guillermo, a scalp to wave in order to intimidate others from protesting the war aims of this government and turn the campus into the docile, mindless mass the administration longs for. We can't let them get away with it! All Out to Defend Guillermo!

Support for Guillermo's defense has come from campus organizations, professors, area trade unionists, and as far away as Nicaragua. In a statement of solidarity, the Juventud Sandinista 19 Julio (the Sandinista youth organization), expressed a particular interest in comrade Guillermo's case, extending "special recognition to compañero Guillermo Bermúdez and solidariz[ing] with his exemplary action in the tasks of solidarity with the people of Nicaragua." Howard Moore, prominent black civil rights attorney, who just successfully concluded the "Perry County 3" voting rights case in Alabama and in the early 1970s an attorney for black Communist Party spokesman Angela Davis, has taken on Guillermo's case.

From Cornell to Harvard to UC Berkeley, campus administrations are setting into motion the repressive machinery to purge student protesters as part of the regimentation of youth for war. The U.S. government has made Central America the front line in its anti-Soviet war drive. As they prepare to invade Nicaragua, they must carry out a war here at home. That means bombing black babies (MOVE), smashing unions (PATCO) and squashing student protests.

An integral part of U.S. imperialism riding high in the saddle is getting the military back on campus in a big way. Last January, Guillermo led the protest



Jane Scherr

UC Berkeley—SYL member Guillermo Bermúdez brutally attacked by UCPD. Cops broke Guillermo's arm during arrest.

against Marine recruiters in solidarity with their victims, from Vietnam to Central America. Six months later the campus has begun to look like a proxy war between radical student protesters on one side and the cops, administration and right-wing yahoos on the other. On August 27, SAICA (Students Against Intervention in Central America), CAA (Campaign Against Apartheid) and the SYL effectively stopped an "orientation" session for the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). Now some 50 protesters face disciplinary and legal action for supposed violations of the right to "free speech" for these future butchers for the bourgeoisie. ROTC cadets are trained to "speak" with M-16s, napalm and Huey gunship helicopters—and you can be sure that their victims face a fate far worse than catcalls. These junior Lieutenant Calleys have already trained in "practice sessions" with the UC cops on how to employ "pain compliance techniques," i.e., the potentially lethal choke hold inflicted on comrade Guillermo. What's

next for these sadistic swine? Goose-step rehearsals with the San Francisco police who provocatively brandished a poster of the Nazi swastika flag with the slogan "Einsatz" (action) while "covering" a demonstration called by the Spartacist League to protest the threatened hanging of African National Congress militant Benjamin Moloise? ROTC Off Campus! No Reprisals Against Anti-ROTC Protesters!

In addition to Guillermo Bermúdez, there are many other anti-imperialist students still facing jail time: Michael Donnelly and José Carrasco, arrested during anti-apartheid protests; 22 students busted in a sweep of Biko (Sproul) Plaza; and Kyle Reniche, arrested while defending SAICA's lit table from wanton cop attack. The mass demonstrations against apartheid last spring were essential to the successful defense of many of the student protesters. What's urgently called for now is a mass united-front mobilization of students, Bay Area labor and black organizations to stop the cop rampage. At issue is the right to protest without being framed up and beaten to a pulp by UC's "Finest." An Injury to One Is An Injury to All! Drop the Charges Against Guillermo Bermúdez, and All Anti-Imperialist Protesters!

Defense efforts cost big bucks. *Young Spartacus* readers are urged to make a much-needed contribution to Guillermo's defense. Make checks payable to the Guillermo Bermúdez Defense Fund. Mail to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 5555, San Francisco, CA 94101. ■

Defend Nicaragua! Join the SYL!

Daily World

Upcoming SYL Forums

Defend, Complete, Extend the Revolution! Nicaragua Besieged

Eyewitness report: Jane Clancy, editor, *Spartacist Canada*, recently returned from Nicaragua

Thursday, September 19, 7:30 p.m.
See "Today in the Union" for room
UW-Madison

For more information: (608) 257-8625

Saturday, September 21, 7:30 p.m.
Second Unitarian Church
656 West Barry St.

For more information: (312) 663-0715

MADISON

CHICAGO

Nicaragua Under Siege: Eyewitness Report

Speakers: Andre Weltman, SYL, Harvard student just returned from Nicaragua
Diana Coleman, SL; SL candidate, San Francisco Board of Supervisors, 1980, 1982, 1984; 1960s activist, SNCC/civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movement

Tuesday, September 24, 7:00 p.m.
Sever 213, Harvard University

For more information: (617) 492-3928

Speaker: Liisa Martin, SYL National Committee, just returned from Nicaragua

Saturday, September 28, 7:30 p.m.
Wilder Hall
Room to be announced
Oberlin College

For more information: (216) 621-5138

BOSTON

OBERLIN



EYEWITNESS REPORT

Defend Nicaragua! Smash U.S. War Moves! Complete, Extend the Revolution!

Speaker: Stefan Arnold, SYL member, recently returned from a two-month trip to Nicaragua

Friday, September 27, 7:30 p.m.
10 Evans Hall
University of California, Berkeley

For more information: (415) 835-1535, 863-6963

BAY AREA

Young Spartacus

Young Spartacus (ISSN 0162-2692) is the newspaper of the Spartacus Youth League. The Spartacus Youth League, youth section of the Spartacist League, is a socialist youth organization which intervenes in social struggles armed with a working-class program, based on the politics of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

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

Apartheid...

(continued from page 1)

answered the very next day by over 8,000 blacks who defied the ban to attend a funeral in Tumahole township, just outside the "emergency" area. After the murder of prominent black civil rights lawyer Victoria Mxenge, black upsurge spread well beyond the prescribed "emergency" areas. In Cape Town on August 28 the police battled over 5,000 protesters of all races, blacks from the outlying townships, students from area universities and white opponents of apartheid, who in spite of an official prohibition attempted to march to Pollsmoor Prison to demand the release of jailed African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela. On September 6, the government announced it was closing down over 400 schools attended by mixed-race youth; a day later, a whites-only school in a suburb of Cape Town was gasoline-bombed and numbers estimated at as high as 10,000 came out for a funeral rally. Protesters raised banners demanding the legalization of the outlawed organization of high school students, the Congress of South African Students, unfurled ANC banners—an illegal act under South African law—and draped them over the coffins of the eleven dead.

On September 1, the National Union of Mineworkers, South Africa's most strategic black union, declared a strike at five gold mines and two coal mines. But South African capitalist rule was prepared to defend its most valuable industry and launched what NUM head Cyril Ramaphosa described as "total

Magubane/Gamma-Liaison



August 28—Anti-apartheid white students tear gassed in Cape Town; portrait is that of jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela.

warfare" against the strikers. With armored trucks, helicopters and a strategy of cutting off food to the mineworkers, the strike was defeated after two days. The mines were sealed off, 35 were arrested, 14 injured and at one mine alone, 300 were forcibly evicted—sent back to the bantustans to lives of unemployment and starvation. A strike of the gold mines is a strike at the heart of South African capitalism. And the apartheid rulers know it only too well, recognizing that the black proletariat has the power to shut down the mines, which account for one-fifth of the gross national product, and to halt the extremely profitable export of gold. As a London representative of an international stock brokerage noted, "If the mines shut down completely, the country would go bankrupt" (*New York Times*, 30 August).

The last time that South Africa issued a state of emergency was in 1960, in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre. Sixty-nine unarmed blacks were killed by the police during a protest of the hated pass laws. For almost six months a reign of terror followed, during which 11,000 militants were arrested and every major anti-apartheid organization, including the ANC and the Stalinist Communist Party, was driven underground, their leaders killed, imprisoned or forced into exile. For a decade, every vestige of



Soweto, August 23—Black students rounded up for boycotting classes.

black resistance to apartheid was crushed. But the recent consolidation and organization of a six-million-strong black proletariat has changed things in South Africa.

South Africa is not like the United States during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, as U.S. liberals are wont to insist. Here some concessions to blacks could be granted without threatening the status quo. In South Africa, blacks are not an oppressed *minority*; there are over 26 million blacks, coloureds and Indians and only 4.5 million whites. Thus, even the question of "one man, one vote" challenges the foundation of South African capitalism. Like the black American slaves, South African blacks cannot be freed short of a civil war.

But any fight along strictly nationalist, black-white lines can only result in a bloodbath for the oppressed. The white population is not simply going to give up its power and all the privileges that go along with it. A major difference between South Africa and its neighbors to the north is that the white minority is about 20 percent of the population and has been there for a good 300 years, practically as long as white people have been in what is now the United States. They are there to stay. *And they have the guns.* In just the past week, applications for weapons permits by whites shot up 70 percent. Not only is apartheid defended by a massively armed state, but by a well-armed white population, many of whom are quite prepared to fight to the bitter end. Botha said it in his August 15 speech: he is "not prepared to lead white South Africans and other minority groups on the road to abdication and suicide" and now "there can be no turning back" (*New York Times*, 16 August).

In the short run, black resistance could possibly be militarily smashed if the white rulers do what the Americans did in Vietnam, bombing and napalming the hell out of the population. It is not difficult to imagine the apartheid government taking that course. But it cannot simply wipe out the black working class. Apartheid began in order to meet the needs for low-wage labor for the English mining interests in South Africa, and it needs for its survival the very force that can destroy it.

Such is the contradictory nature of South African apartheid, and the contradictions are coming to the fore and tearing the country apart at the seams. On August 28, one of the protests during the attempted march to Pollsmoor Prison was at the University of Cape Town where white students gathered on a grassy bank overlooking a highway and held up portraits of Nelson Mandela. They were met not only with a "mixture of bafflement and obscene gestures" (*New York Times*, 29 August) by passing white motorists, but also with an attack by the police. A number of white youth are refusing military service. Security forces have "detained" four leaders of the anti-conscription campaign which is demanding a withdrawal of troops from the black townships. "A spokesman for the group said the Government's actions can be seen as nothing but a response based on fear, a fear that their system of conscription and the deployment of troops in the

townships is meeting with growing opposition, even within the white community" (*New York Times*, 10 September).

For the fight against apartheid rule to succeed, it is crucial to go beyond black-white lines and to break through the framework of nationalism which still dominates black opposition, politically reducing the proletariat to one of many "constituencies." Only a working class struggle can defend against communalist attacks like the murderous raids on the Indian community of Durban last month by thugs of Zulu chief and black demagogue Buthelezi. While black unions are the key to a successful struggle against apartheid, simple economic militancy is not the solution. What is necessary is a revolutionary party capable of drawing together the ethnically diverse workers of South Africa, the rural masses starved for land, the township youth, the women—in short, all the oppressed and exploited—in a proletarian-led fight to smash apartheid capitalism and establish a black-centered workers government. Such a party must also take advantage of fissures within the white population—aiming to neutralize a section.

For Labor Action Against Apartheid Butchers!

Particularly now, as Botha & Co. gear up for an all-out assault on the black masses, the international labor movement must act. It is a burning indictment of the labor misleaders of the U.S. and European proletariats that they have done little but support imperialist sanctions. Nonetheless, dock workers in Australia, Britain and Vancouver, Washington have recently hot-cargoed (refused to load or unload) ships. In the Bay Area, longshore militant and Spartacist supporter Stan Gow put forward a motion in his local calling for his local to "refuse to handle any ships carrying South African cargo from now until the September meeting." In an open letter to fellow members of ILWU Local 10 urging passage of the motion, Gow stressed the connections between the U.S. and South African ruling classes:

"The imperialist and racist governments of the United States and the other NATO powers fear that the social upheaval in South Africa could lead to such a working class victory there. They fear not just for their investments, but

for the impact such a powerful social revolution would have on their 'own' working class at home, especially the black workers in the U.S. All the talk by both Republicans and Democrats here about 'sanctions' is an attempt to prevent *labor action* here in solidarity with the black workers and youth of South Africa."

The impact of labor actions around concrete, limited demands such as an end to the "state of emergency" would be enormous, galvanizing the workers of the world, not least in South Africa itself. For a labor boycott of all arms shipments to the apartheid butchers! For political strikes and hot-cargoing actions! Not "sanctions" with a labor face—but real class-struggle aid to the embattled black workers of South Africa.

The struggle against apartheid has awakened a desire to fight among the black workers and youth of this country. In New York on August 13 contingents from largely minority unions were prominent among those who came out to the first mass anti-apartheid protest initiated by organized labor. In Atlanta on August 27 well over 1,000 students from the city's black campuses protested in the first major anti-apartheid action in the South (see page 10).

Take A Side Against Imperialism!

Most of the anti-apartheid protests in this country have occurred on college campuses. While largely focused on the demand for university administrations to divest themselves of stocks in corporations that do business in South Africa, the demonstrations this past spring went beyond this utopian and impotent demand. Taking on the character of referendums on apartheid, the student protests on many campuses became massive and militant. Thousands of students across the country received an object lesson in the nature of the capitalist state as they found their heads acquainted with police billy clubs, as they were hauled off to jail—and in some cases even to solitary confinement—for the "crime" of participating in protests.

The demand for divestment, along with its sidekick, the call for U.S. sanctions against South Africa, is still a force among the campus anti-apartheid milieu. Behind these demands is a reliance on the racist U.S. ruling class to act in a "morally responsible" fashion. "Boycott South Africa, Not Nicaragua!" has become the latest call of the divestment liberals and craven reformists like the Workers World Party/All-Peoples Congress and the Stalinist Communist Party. As if the American bourgeoisie, which fears more than almost anything else the spectre of revolution aflame in its Central American "backyard" and is dedicated to overthrowing the Sandinistas, would suddenly see the "error of its ways," turn its back on one of its strongest partners in the anti-Soviet Cold War drive and pour in aid to Sandinista Nicaragua!

Divestment is now happening as much as it ever will short of the South African black proletariat "divesting" white apartheid rule. The South African

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Spartacist Forums

Smash Apartheid—For Workers Revolution! South Africa: Razor's Edge

Speakers:

Reuben Shiffman, Co-Chairman,
Partisan Defense Committee; member,
Transport Workers Union, Local 100
Ed Kartsen, Spartacist Candidate for
Manhattan Borough President,
SL Central Committee

Tuesday, October 1, 7:00 p.m.
Canterbury Center, 791 Fair Street
Atlanta University

For more information, call SYL National Office:
(212) 732-7867

ATLANTA

Thursday, September 19, 7:30 p.m.
516 Hamilton Hall
Columbia University

For more information: (212) 267-1025

NEW YORK CITY

Friday, September 20, 7:00 p.m.
Douglass Hall, Room 143
Howard University

For more information: (202) 636-3537

WASHINGTON, D.C.

From Soweto to Harlem: Smash Racist Terror!

Bolsheviks on the Ballot in NYC

"From Soweto to Harlem—Smash Racist Terror!" "New York City: For the Working People!" That's the theme of the Spartacist Party campaign in New York City. Candidates Marjorie Stamberg for mayor and Ed Kartsen for Manhattan borough president are using their campaign to mobilize labor and minorities against racist police bonapartism "at home" and the bloody apartheid regime backed by the U.S. abroad. New York itself is one lousy "home" for the poor and working-class population. From the mean streets of the ghetto under siege by killer cops to the filthy, dangerous subways flooded with homeless victims of "gentrification" to the City Hall cabal which pulls the strings for the bankers and real estate barons—the place is a gigantic advertisement for the necessity for socialist revolution. Spartacist campaign workers petitioning over the summer got more than 20,000 signatures for Stamberg (7,500 were required) and over 12,000 for Kartsen (5,000 required). If you're not filthy rich, if you're black, if you're gay, if you're a unionist or a radical student—New York's "system" is out to get you.

The Democrats won't touch the key issue here: cop terror. They run it. Mayor Koch, known in Harlem and the other black neighborhoods as a racist swine, incites his cops to kill black people with impunity. District Attorney and "old boys' club" brahmin Morgenthau along with the ghoulish city coroner Elliot Gross cover it up. All the major Democratic mayoral contestants are for more cops, though they've been too busy trying to knock each other off the ballot in a squalid primary fight to say much on any issue.

Time and again, people on the streets would take a copy of the Spartacist brochure, then double back and sign our petition after seeing the pictures of Edmund Perry, Michael Stewart and Eleanor Bumpurs. These are three of the most recent victims of racist cop killings; Perry, prep-school graduate and bound for Stanford, was shot for being on the "wrong" side of the Harlem/Columbia University line; Stewart, a young black artist, was beaten to death by transit cops; Mrs. Bumpurs, an infirm grandmother, was blown away by a SWAT unit in the Bronx for being behind in her rent. "I'm scared," one woman from Harlem told us, "I'll sign for someone who supports Eleanor Bumpurs. I don't want to end up like her."

Spartacists Stamberg and Kartsen call for integrated, armed workers defense guards, drawn from responsible union men and women, to smash racist terror—in and out of uniform. Kartsen, until recently a signal maintainer and militant in the transit union, was the class-struggle oppositional candidate for Transport Workers Union Local 100 president in 1983, calling for "a fighting TWU!" When black TWUer Willie Turks was beaten to death in a gruesome, racist mob killing in the Gravesend section of Brooklyn near his Coney Island shop in 1982, Kartsen called on the 33,000-strong union to patrol Gravesend in flatbed trucks. While the union tops did nothing, Kartsen organized a protest of 100 transit workers and supporters against the slap-on-the-wrist sentence given to one of the racist punks in the lynch mob. In a statement issued on July 23, Kartsen compared the Turks and Stewart cases. Now underway, the trial of several cops responsible for Stewart's death is a grotesque farce. "Prosecution" and defense attorneys work hand-in-hand to turn it into the



Vote Margie and Ed—Vote Red! Spartacist candidates Kartsen (second from left) and Stamberg, New York City, August 13.

"trial of Michael Stewart" (our emphasis), as the *New York Times* accidentally called it on September 2. Kartsen stated:

"The so-called 'investigation' into the killing of Michael Stewart... has been a whitewash from Day One. More than 40 witnesses saw at least eleven cops kick and bludgeon Stewart to death, but only six [cops] will stand trial, and not for murder but criminally negligent homicide and even lesser counts. All these racist killers should be locked up in Attica and throw away the key! But the capitalist courts and Koch's killer cops will never deliver justice for blacks in this racist society."

So, demanding "Gross the Ghoul Has Got to Go!" the SL has called a labor/black protest on October 3 when the State Department of Health opens hearings on the coroner. He is charged with gross incompetence and negli-

While Democratic pols pontificated from the platform and the cops were called out in provocative force on August 13, the labor/black crowd wanted some serious answers; over 850 pieces of Spartacist literature were sold.

In Brooklyn on August 31, Stamberg addressed Haitian protesters recently attacked by the NYPD cossacks. "If you're a Polish anti-Communist you're welcomed into this country. But if you're a black Haitian and you manage ...to make it to the shores of this country, you're locked up in the concentration camps in Krome Avenue in Miami.... This city was built on the sweat and the blood of immigrant labor. We say 'No Deportations! Full Citizenship Rights for Every Foreign-Born Worker!'"

The Stamberg-Kartsen ticket is effec-

Party brochure notes: "Koch 'divests' city funds from South Africa while his cops are shooting down blacks at home." Not surprisingly, the CP doesn't have any revolutionary answers for the victims of race-terror here, either. Tyner's "solution" to rampaging killer cops is to call for "democratization of the police by instituting civilian control." Certainly, some public scrutiny of the bonapartist thugs in blue is a useful, minimal check on them—but that's about it. It's no more possible to "democratize" the cops—whose purpose it is to terrorize labor and the oppressed on behalf of the ruling class—than it is to get the capitalists to put anything before their profits.

The CP and its youth group, the Young Communist League—veteran reformists with plenty of experience in quashing struggle and diverting potential militants into harmless electoralism—are active "divesters" at Columbia, too. Last spring, anti-apartheid students blockaded Columbia's Hamilton Hall, demanding that the university divest its South African stock. The Columbia action sparked protests on campuses throughout the country and despite its mushy liberal program, we considered it to be a referendum on apartheid. No sooner had Columbia won a court injunction against the students than the blockade "leadership" announced the end of the protest. Over 1,000 students rallied to cut the chains they had themselves placed on the hall and were then marched through Harlem to a Baptist church where one C. Vernon Mason announced his candidacy for D.A. Mason, a black Democrat, was a popular attorney for the blockaders. His message: put down your picket signs and pick up your petitions. Columbia has since announced it is favorably considering plans to fully "divest"—the

Michael Stewart, Eleanor Bumpurs, Edmund Perry—Victims of racist killer cops will be avenged by multi-racial working class. For labor/black mobilizations against NYC cop rampage!



gence, but the man is a criminal. As Marjorie put it, Gross is "Koch's Dr. Mengele" and "symbolizes everything repulsive in New York City that will be expunged by socialist revolution." Indeed, Gross dug out Michael Stewart's eyes and soaked them in a solution to expunge the tell-tale blood specks proving strangulation.

The Stamberg-Kartsen campaign has made proletarian internationalism its calling card. An August 13 anti-apartheid protest brought out 30,000, many of them black unionists. Stamberg said:

"It is the international working class which is the real ally of the enslaved black masses in South Africa. There is a crying need for New York City labor and minorities to mobilize against racist police terror, not just in the South African black townships but also right here.... They didn't need a 'state of emergency' to firebomb black babies and burn down a black neighborhood in Philly. The New York unions sponsoring the August 13 rally could shut this city down with a one-day political protest strike."

tively the only socialist campaign in the city election. The Communist Party is running Jarvis Tyner for mayor—not in its own name but on a "People Before Profits" ticket. Andrea Gonzalez of the Socialist Workers Party is running for mayor in a perfunctory campaign invisible even in the SWP's *Militant*. Something called the New Alliance Party is running...in the Democratic Party primary. A peculiar amalgam of lower level Democratic ward activists and a psychotherapy cult, New Alliance presents itself as the NYC branch of Jesse Jackson's defunct "Rainbow Coalition." Jackson's campaign was never anything but a cynical hustle to deliver the black vote for Mondale and New Alliance is doing a hustle of its own on anti-Koch black youth.

The CP, left tail of the Democrats, pushes reformist illusions in "pressuring" the capitalist state to act in the interest of the oppressed. Thus the CP's anti-apartheid "strategy" is divestment, i.e., pressuring "moral" imperialists to pressure Pretoria. As the Spartacist

trustees have seen the light and are doing the "moral" thing. Meanwhile Columbia continues its historic slum-lording in Harlem, driving out residents of Morningside Heights. The trustees are the same racist, capitalist swine they have always been.

It would be a valuable lesson for anti-racist students in what this state is all about to attend the so-called trial of the cops who killed Michael Stewart. No "reform Democrat" in the D.A.'s office is going to bring justice to this criminal capitalist system. Only when the workers take state power will racist injustice cease.

In running Marjorie and Ed in the NYC elections, we look to the example of the early Communist International, which used the capitalist elections and parliaments as a forum to mobilize the masses around the slogans of proletarian revolution. A vote for Spartacist is a vote for the program of workers power—from South Africa to the U.S.!

2, 3, Many Defeats for U.S. Imperialism!

AFP/Pictorial Parade



April 1975: Victorious Vietnamese troops (above). Women played leading roles in Vietnamese Revolution.



Tiziano Terzani

VIETNAM WAS A VICTORY!

Young Spartacus prints below the second part of a presentation by Spartacist League central committee member Joseph Seymour commemorating the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution. This presentation was given at UC Berkeley on April 27, 1985—the month of the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City).

Part I (which appears in YSp No. 128, Summer 1985) debunked the widespread myth, obscenely captured by the right-wing fantasy film Rambo, that



Part Two of Two

U.S. imperialism was defeated on the home front due to biased media coverage, radical protesters and liberal politicians. It explained how and why the U.S. armed forces in Vietnam disintegrated as an effective fighting force; how the triumph of the Vietnamese Revolution furthered the victory of national liberation struggles in southern Africa and stayed the hand of U.S. imperialism during the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution.

Like Part I, this second and last part of the presentation is an edited version of the original talk. It deals with the heroic and decades-long history of Vietnamese struggle against French and U.S. domination. In sponsoring and printing this presentation of our side of the victory represented by the Vietnamese defeat of U.S. imperialism, the Spartacus Youth League seeks not only to educate student youth but also to mobilize them in the inevitable anti-imperialist struggles to come. As our brothers and sisters in South Africa daily combat the white supremacist butchers in Pretoria, as the youth of Nicaragua ready themselves to defend their revolution against Yankee invasion, we must seriously undertake the task of undermining and finally overthrowing the wretched and cowardly capitalist system here in the belly of the beast.

The Vietnamese Revolution not only liberated its own country from imperialist domination but has since proved an enormous force for social and national liberation around the globe. The events we are commemorating today are truly world-historic. And this was recognized at the time. When the North Vietnamese army marched into Saigon, millions of people throughout the world—socialist militants, class-conscious workers, fighters for national liberation—celebrated this victory as their victory. Even in this country there were at that time tens of thousands of young radicals who saw this as their victory, not in the sense that they had directly fought, but that they identified with the struggle. It was common in the antiwar marches to chant, "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh! NLF is Gonna Win!"

But where are all these people today? Last time we looked, most of them were working for Jesse Jackson, who was the front man for Walter "Quarantine Nicaragua" Mondale in the last elections. By and large, the "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh" enthusiasts of the 1960s have become the yuppies of the Reagan years. Mr. Yuppie-for-President, Gary Hart, was a liberal antiwar activist. I suppose the quintessence of yuppieism, at least in the rad-chic milieu, would be Jane

Fonda and Tom Hayden. During the Vietnam War Jane Fonda—she was a big star then, too—went to North Vietnam and denounced American atrocities. There was a small item in the newspaper today that the Vietnamese government had invited her to Ho Chi Minh City to commemorate the tenth anniversary of its liberation, and she refused. In this she's characteristic of that entire milieu.

It's not merely that these people have turned their back on the Vietnamese Revolution, but they're on the *other side*. For example, almost all of them have the same line on Cambodia as Ronald Reagan. They all denounce Vietnam for saving the Khmer people from the genocidal maniac Pol Pot. If anything, we would criticize the Hanoi regime for helping this guy come to power in the first place, because they pretty much knew what he was about. The Hanoi Stalinists had a hands-off attitude toward Cambodia until the Khmer Rouge started killing Vietnamese. The Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia has proved to be an act of liberation, not to be condemned.

Let me give you another example of 1960s radicals turning sour on the Vietnamese Revolution. One of the

Young Spartacus Photo



Spartacists at Oakland demonstration, 1975—taking a side with the Vietnamese workers and peasants against U.S. imperialism.

standard slogans in the antiwar protests was taken from Che Guevara: "Two, Three, Many Vietnams!" We all knew that the Vietnam War was *weakening* U.S. imperialism, not least unsettling it internally. And this was a very good thing for the exploited and oppressed the world over. But today many of the same people who once shouted *this slogan* now proclaim: "No More Vietnams!" When "No More Vietnams" was first developed a couple of years ago, mainly in the El Salvador protest milieu, we said it was a counterrevolutionary slogan. And our rad-lib opponents protested, "No, no, how can you say that?" Because Vietnam was and was seen as the greatest defeat U.S. imperialism has ever suffered directly at the hands of social revolution. Richard Nixon may have been kicked out of the White House ten years ago, but that bastard can still play dirty tricks on his rad-lib foes. What does he title his latest anti-Communist diatribe? *No More Vietnams*. So here is a slogan embraced by everybody from the Communist Party to the mad bomber of Hanoi, Richard Nixon.

The point we're making is not to wax sentimental about the antiwar radicalism of the 1960s and its glorification of the North Vietnamese regime and South Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF). Quite the contrary. One of our major political struggles at the time was against the adulation of Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese Stalinists. We pointed out that this was a bureaucratic and nationalist regime, which had in the past betrayed the struggle for social revolution and national liberation and could do so again. In Vietnam, as in all the deformed and degenerated workers states ruled by privileged, nationalist Stalinist castes, we revolutionary Trotskyists call for proletarian political revolution—for a return to the path of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. These great standard-bearers of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution stood unflinchingly for *international socialist revolution*. In stark contrast to Stalin and his followers, genuine Leninists know no higher cause than the emancipation of the world working class. We warned that the New Left radicals' identification with a Stalinist movement could well serve as a bridge back to (American-style) bourgeois liberalism from which

these young radicals had only recently and rather superficially broken:

"There has been an understandable but nevertheless unfortunate tendency on the part of the American left to idealize Ho Chi Minh and the leadership of the NLF, and for radicals to turn their correct demands for military victory against imperialism and its puppets into uncritical political support for these leaders and their politics. This is a grave error, for not only do these would-be revolutionaries not understand the deformities of those they support—and are extremely likely to feel personally betrayed when the inevitable occurs—but are likely to carry over the Stalinist hallmarks of class-collaboration and murderous opportunism into the American revolutionary movement."

—"NLF Program: Fetter on Victory," *Spartacist* supplement, May 1968

Unfortunately, this prognosis has been borne out with a vengeance.

To some people, it may seem paradoxical that the Spartacist League, which in the 1960s and early '70s was known among antiwar radicals for criticizing the Hanoi regime and NLF from the left, is today almost unique in the U.S. in commemorating the historic victory of the Vietnamese Revolution, while the "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh" enthusiasts of yesteryear are today saying, "No More Vietnams." But in reality there is no paradox. It is our Trotskyist understanding of capitalist imperialism and the *contradictory* nature of Stalinism that has made us the best defenders of the Vietnamese Revolution, both then and now.

Roots of the Vietnam War

What Americans call the Vietnam War is actually the second Vietnam war. It arose directly out of the defeat of French colonialism by the Stalinist-led Viet Minh in 1954. Vietnam was conquered and colonized by the French during the nineteenth century. In World War II the French were driven out and the country was occupied by the Japanese. When the Japanese were defeated by the Americans in 1945, they pulled out of Vietnam, leaving a power vacuum.

That power vacuum was filled by the Stalinists led by Ho Chi Minh, who were the strongest, but by no means only, force in the country. They established a provisional government in Hanoi. Their aim was *not* to carry out a social revolution or even to end French colonial rule. Rather it was to negotiate a neocolonial deal with the French, who were preparing to reoccupy the country.

It is also important to understand that Vietnam was one of the very few countries in the world where the Trotskyist movement had a mass base, which is an index of the political radicalism and advanced consciousness of the Vietnamese toilers. In 1945 the Trotskyists in alliance with certain nationalist groups organized an insurrection in Saigon with the aim of resisting the reinvading French army. That insurrection was suppressed by the Stalinist Viet Minh aided by some French and British troops who were on the scene. In the aftermath the historic leadership of Vietnamese Trotskyism was murdered.

On this basis Ho Chi Minh negotiated an agreement with the French, which allowed the French army to reoccupy Vietnam. Once the French returned in force, they naturally turned on the Stalinists, smashed them, killed their cadres and drove them from power. Thus began an eight-year war of national liberation, which ended with the historic battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

As the French were worn down by this war, American imperialism moved in to replace it. In the last year of the war the U.S. Treasury financed 80 percent of French military expenses. More ominously, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff seriously proposed using tactical nuclear weapons against the besieging Viet Minh forces at Dien Bien Phu. Then vice president Richard Nixon supported



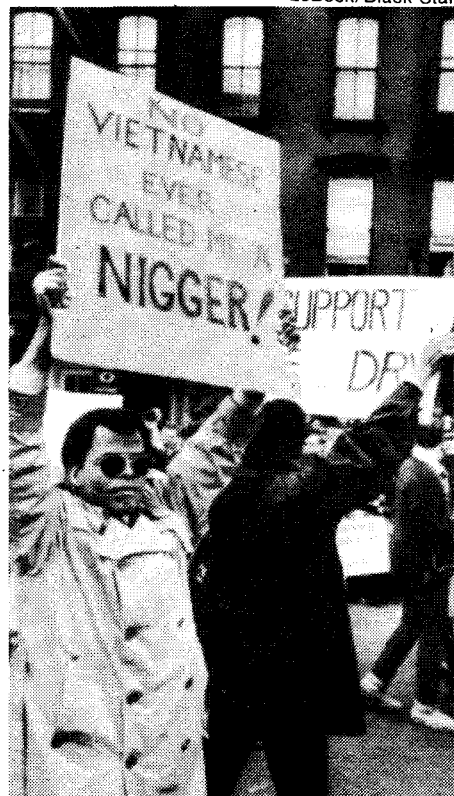
Sailors from the USS Constellation protest Navy racism, 1972 (above). Militant blacks take to the streets against Vietnam War in New York City, 1967 (right).

this proposal. But President Eisenhower thought that such a drastic step might provoke the Russians and Chinese into a general war, and he didn't dare take that risk. So Western imperialism decided it would have to compromise with the Vietnamese Stalinists, who had basically won the war militarily. That compromise was ironed out at the 1954 Geneva conference.

When the Viet Minh went into that conference, they controlled almost all of northern Vietnam and much of southern Vietnam. Their allies controlled Laos and Cambodia. When they left the conference, they controlled only North Vietnam, which quickly became a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The country was partitioned, with U.S. imperialism controlling South Vietnam. Laos and Cambodia likewise became neocolonial puppet regimes. The Vietnamese Stalinists were fobbed off with the promise that a few years down the road there would be unified national elections. Even Eisenhower admitted that had such elections been held, Ho Chi Minh would have won easily. Needless to say, there were no such elections.

One of the main reasons the Vietnamese masses lost at the Geneva negotiating table what they had won on the battlefield of Dien Bien Phu was the pressure of their great-power allies, Russia and China. There was, however, a difference in motive between the Russian and Chinese Stalinists, which had an important portent for the future. The Kremlin bureaucracy didn't particularly care one way or the other what happened in Indochina. They were interested in good relations with Western imperialism on a global scale, and were prepared to sacrifice their Vietnamese comrades to that end. The Peking regime under Mao considered Southeast Asia its natural sphere of influence (it had been that way under the Manchus) and did *not* want a strong, unified Vietnam—even, or perhaps especially, under a Communist government. Thus, the Chinese were even more conciliatory to the imperialists at the '54 Geneva conference than were the Russians. At one point, when Chou En-lai proposed that the southern border of

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North Vietnam be moved north about 200 kilometers, the Viet Minh delegation became so angry they stormed out of the conference room.

During the Vietnam War naive New Left radicals bought the official line that Mao's China and Ho's Vietnam were "as close as teeth and lips," a typical Mao slogan. After the war Hanoi prime minister Pham Van Dong told American academic Stanley Karnow bitterly, Mao "was always ready to fight to the last Vietnamese." Preferably to the last Vietnamese. So China's hostility to the Vietnamese Revolution is not some recent development of the post-Mao regime but goes back to the inception of the war.

What happened to American-dominated South Vietnam after 1954? Because the country had long been a French colony, the most right-wing, pro-imperialist section of the Vietnamese upper classes converted to Roman Catholicism, the religion of their colonial masters. The masses, by contrast, continued to practice traditional Eastern religions. When the Americans wanted a reliable, anti-Communist dictator, they chose a personal protégé of New York cardinal Spellman, one Nguyen Diem, whose brother was the archbishop of Saigon. Diem had sat out the war against the French in a seminary in New York state.

The Diem regime was by its very nature a regime of bloody counter-revolution. The long war against French colonialism had been not only a national liberation struggle but also, especially in the countryside, a social revolution. The peasants had seized the land from their landlords, who were predominantly French, or their local puppets. The Diem regime forced the peasants to pay for this land, and, since most of them were too poor, it was taken over by a new class of landlords drawn from the Saigon officialdom. Many of these were Diem's relatives. Being Catholic, you know, he had a large family. At the same time, the Diem regime systematically murdered anyone who had been a former Viet Minh fighter, even those who were no longer politically active and simply wanted to live in peace.

So there was an enormous popular base for resistance to the American puppet regime. And in the late 1950s an insurrection began in the Vietnamese countryside led in the main by former Viet Minh cadre. It's important to point out that at that time the North Vietnamese leadership *opposed* this insurrection. They sent formal instructions to the cadre in the South, that now was not the time for armed struggle. But the militants fighting the Diem regime disregarded these instructions. In effect, they said: "If we don't fight back, they will kill us." This was literally a situation of revolution or death. That's not hyperbole. Since the Hanoi Stalinists could not halt the insurgency in the South, which was making dramatic gains, they moved to control it. In 1960 they created the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, which the Americans called the Viet Cong.

The Diem regime was so universally hated that the South Vietnamese puppet army (known as ARVN) could not suppress the Communist-led insurrection. The ARVN soldiers, overwhelmingly young conscripts, refused to fight and in many cases simply deserted. So to keep South Vietnam in the "free world," U.S. imperialism had to send in its own combat troops. At first they were called "advisers." There were 50,000 U.S. "advisers" in South Vietnam by early 1965.

In 1964 a little-known but important incident occurred. Washington sent a Canadian diplomat, James Seaborn, as an emissary to Hanoi with the proverbial carrot and stick. The carrot was that if Hanoi liquidated the insurgency in the South, the U.S. would give North Vietnam some money as economic aid. And if they didn't, the U.S. was going to bomb the hell out of them. Seaborn gave this message to Pham Van Dong, who was known as a "moderate" in the Hanoi regime, meaning he was more interested in "building socialism" in half a country than in aggressively aiding the revolution in the South. Here is how Pham Van Dong replied:

"It's impossible, quite impossible—excuse me for saying this—for you Westerners to understand the force of the people's will to resist, and to

continued on page 8
Nihon Denpa News, Ltd.



Victories are won on the battlefield. Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap (left) led defeat of French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Fourteen years later, Tet Offensive (above) turned the tide against U.S. imperialism.

Vietnam...

(continued from page 7)

continue. The struggle of our people exceeds the imagination. It has astonished us, too."

—quoted in Michael Maclear, *The Ten Thousand Day War: Vietnam 1945-1975* (1981)

"Us," meaning the North Vietnamese leadership.

These words were not just rhetoric. American journalists who visited North Vietnam during the war, would talk to, say, 50 different people, and they would all tell them: "Maybe I will not live to see the liberation of the South, the unification of our country, the victory of the revolution; but my children will, or their children will." But the American ruling class did not believe this, so in 1965 they massively escalated the war by sending in hundreds of thousands of U.S. combat troops and by terror-bombing North Vietnam. Thus began the longest war in American history.

How the Vietnamese Won

I don't have time to give you a blow-by-blow, year-by-year account of the war. Nor would this be all that useful. What I want to do is focus on how the Vietnamese were able to defeat the greatest military power on earth.

It was common among American troops, whenever they went out into the countryside, to say: "We're heading into Indian country." By this they meant two things, one of which was true, and the other of which was not true. One, they meant that they were fighting a hostile population, that the enemy was, in fact, the Vietnamese people. Two, they thought they were fighting a substantially backward people, technologically and culturally vulnerable to genocide. But that was *not* true. Vietnam was an ancient civilization. For centuries the Vietnamese had been far in advance of Europeans in science, technology and culture. They were producing literature and building impressive architecture when General Westmoreland's forebears were still running around in pelts. There is a high degree of literacy in Vietnam. So they were capable of mastering the modern weaponry they received, most of it from the Soviet Union.

Let me give you a couple of anecdotes. The American troops in Vietnam were one of the most pampered armies in the world. They would hire the Vietnamese to do everything for them, wash their clothes, cook their food, shine their boots, even clean their rifles. After the war one U.S. Vietnam vet recalled how he paid a seven-year-old kid to clean his rifle. This kid could take apart and put back together an M-16. The former U.S. soldier remarked: "I couldn't do that. This should have told us something about the Vietnamese."

U.S. military intelligence planted very sensitive listening devices along the so-called Ho Chi Minh Trail on which supplies and troops were brought from North to South Vietnam. Every few days these listening devices would be picked up and flown to Washington, where language experts would try to make out the conversations of the North Vietnamese soldiers. After a while they discovered a weird sound that they couldn't make out. Finally they figured it out. The North Vietnamese soldiers were peeing on these U.S. listening devices.

While the ability of the Vietnamese to master modern military technology was vital to their defeating the Americans, it was not the decisive factor. The Vietnam War was, as the U.S. commander William Westmoreland put it, a war of attrition. The American command even turned it into a verb: "we've gotta attrit the enemy." The main criterion for success became the body count. After every engagement American soldiers would be assigned to count the dead Vietnamese on the battlefield. The higher the body count, the closer the

American command thought they were to winning.

Only it didn't work out that way. No matter how many casualties the Vietnamese took, they just kept coming. They fought like Marvin Hagler. Nothing could stop them. The Americans would wipe out half a Viet Cong unit, and the next month the unit would be back at full strength and just as combative as ever. This first confounded and then demoralized the American military command. By the standards of previous wars they should have won. An enemy army on which this level of casualties was inflicted should have collapsed. Only the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese did not collapse. General Maxwell Taylor, a major architect of the war and one-time ambassador to Saigon, exclaimed in dismay:

"The ability of the Vietcong continu-

Vietnamese army were at *twice the rate* of the Japanese army in World War II. And that was an army with a martial tradition, which gave the world the term *kamikaze* (suicide mission). North Vietnam suffered 600,000 *battlefield* deaths—we're not talking about civilian casualties. This would be equivalent to 10 million Americans, given the difference in population!

There is no more dramatic example of the Vietnamese will to prevail against the Americans than the 1968 Tet Offensive, the turning point of the war. During 1967 the U.S. military command more or less convinced themselves they were winning, that they were grinding the enemy down. In December 1967 Westmoreland declared: "I am absolutely certain that whereas in 1965 the enemy was winning, today he is certainly losing" (W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson Frizzell, eds., *The Lessons*

Then the U.S. military command says, the enemy has sustained a great defeat, but we need 200,000 more troops. After Tet the American people became basically cynical and disbelieving toward pronouncements of success in Vietnam by the Pentagon and White House.

At the same time, a wave of defeatism swept through the American ruling class. Then-secretary of defense Clark Clifford exclaimed, the war "was a loser." All of a sudden major bourgeois politicians became "doves" over Vietnam. First, Democratic Senator Eugene McCarthy decided to run for president against Lyndon Johnson on the program of a negotiated settlement. Then Bobby Kennedy, who a few years earlier had boasted in Saigon, "we are going to win," decided he, too, would challenge Johnson as a "dove." And then Johnson got on television and told the American people that he was through, he wasn't going to run for re-election. He left the White House a broken man psychologically. Tet broke him.

After Tet everyone knew that the U.S. was not going to win the war and it was just a matter of negotiating the terms of withdrawal. Yet the war dragged on for another five years. In fact, more American soldiers were killed after Tet than before. This seemingly endless, dirty and losing war produced an explosive situation within American society, the very heartland of world imperialism.

The Vietnamese Revolution and the American Black Ghetto

At no point since the beginning of the Cold War in the mid-1940s has internal opposition to militarism and anti-Communist crusading been greater than in the late '60s-early '70s. By about 1970 probably an absolute majority of the American people wanted to get out of Vietnam no matter what, even if it meant that the Commies were going to win, which is exactly what it did mean. The antiwar protests began to spread beyond their original student/campus base. A number of important trade unions, especially those with heavily black memberships, took antiwar positions. Had the war dragged on much longer, there would have been labor *political* strikes against the war—something we in the Spartacist League had long been agitating for. We were just at the edge of that.

What made this period especially explosive was that the growing opposition to the war coincided with a mass black radicalization having its origins in the civil rights movement. The years of the Vietnam War were also the years of the ghetto rebellions. Black America hated the Vietnam War. Muhammad Ali's statement, "No Viet Cong ever called me nigger," expressed the feelings of millions of black youth. In fact, some black soldiers in Vietnam had stenciled on their helmets, "No Viet Cong ever called me nigger" or "Power to the people," the Black Panther slogan.

Although blacks constituted only 10 or 11 percent of the American population, they sustained *almost a quarter* of the casualties in Vietnam. Because the closer you got to combat, the closer to the front, the blacker it got. And this further spurred the radicalization of many black soldiers. There's an interest-

Saigon 1968—summary execution of suspected Viet Cong by U.S. puppet and top cop Nguyen Ngoc Loan.



Ronald Haebertie

Lt. Calley's civilian victims. "Free World" terror—as American as the My Lai massacre.

ously to rebuild their units and to make good their losses is one of the mysteries of this guerrilla war.... Not only do the Vietcong units have the recuperative powers of the phoenix, but they have an amazing ability to maintain morale."

—quoted in Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (1984)

The "mystery" is that American imperialism was fighting a revolutionary people.

There's a recent book, *The 25-Year War* (1984), by retired general Bruce Palmer, who was a top-level commander in Vietnam in the late 1960s. This book has become a Pentagon best-seller, considered the latest word on what went wrong for the U.S. military in Vietnam. Palmer's bottom-line conclusion is that "for Hanoi, the struggle was a test of will rather than of strength" and that "their will to persist was inextinguishable."

The "will to persist" is a vague term. Let's try to concretize it. In some ways Vietnam became a statisticians' war, beginning with Pentagon chief McNamara's ghoulish fixation on body counts. Reading about this war is sometimes like reading baseball statistics. You know, who was the winningest left-handed pitcher in the American League of Hungarian descent? However, one American scholar, John Mueller, did a very interesting statistical study, which went to the heart of the matter. He reviewed the major wars of the past 150 years and concluded, "*the military costs accepted by the Communists in Vietnam were virtually unprecedented historically*" (emphasis in original, "The Search for a 'Breaking Point' in Vietnam," *International Studies Quarterly*, December 1980). For example, the casualties taken by the North

of Vietnam [1977]). Three weeks later 80,000 men, mainly Viet Cong forces, hit every major city in South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese captured the city of Hue, the ancient capital of the country. Viet Cong units took over most of Saigon. A suicide commando mission penetrated the holy of holies, the U.S. embassy in Saigon, and fought the Marines right on the embassy grounds.

Westmoreland claimed—and still claims—that the Tet Offensive turned into a great defeat for the "enemy." He then requested an additional 200,000 troops, that is, a 40 percent increase in U.S. forces in Vietnam! According to Westmoreland, whose figures on such matters are not exactly bankable, 37,000 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese were killed during Tet, 2,500 Americans. But even if these figures are accurate, Tet was still a major defeat for U.S. imperialism. As one North Vietnamese leader explained:

"The American command had always been under the illusion that victory was in the palm of their hands. Tet destroyed that illusion. As to the actual losses in human life on our part, I don't recall the exact number, but... that was the price that had to be paid to win this strategic victory."

—quoted in Michael Maclear, *The Ten Thousand Day War*

This actually understates the impact of the Tet Offensive. It did not simply destroy the illusion of imminent victory by the U.S. military command. It also produced an explosion of antiwar sentiment on the home front. First the American people are told that we're winning the war, it's winding down, there's light at the end of the tunnel. Then the Vietnamese Communist forces launch an offensive far greater than anything that had been seen before.

Spartacist League/ Spartacus Youth League Public Offices

Bay Area

Fri.: 5:00-8:00 p.m., Sat.: 3:00-6:00 p.m.
1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor (near 17th Street)
Oakland, California
Phone: (415) 835-1535

Chicago

Tues.: 5:00-9:00 p.m., Sat.: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
161 W. Harrison St., 10th Floor
Chicago, Illinois
Phone: (312) 663-0715

New York City

Mon.-Thurs.: 5:00-8:00 p.m., Sat.: 1:00-5:00 p.m.
41 Warren St. (one block below
Chambers St. near Church St.)
New York, NY
Phone: (212) 267-1025

ing book, *Brothers: Black Soldiers in the Nam*, by two black Vietnam vets, Stanley Goff and Robert Sanders. Here is what they say:

"And it was obvious that we were the aggressors because we were fourteen thousand miles from home rather than vice versa. We were fighting Charlie [the Viet Cong] in his own backyard. We didn't really feel that we were fighting for our country; half the brothers felt it wasn't even our war and were sympathetic with Ho Chi Minh.

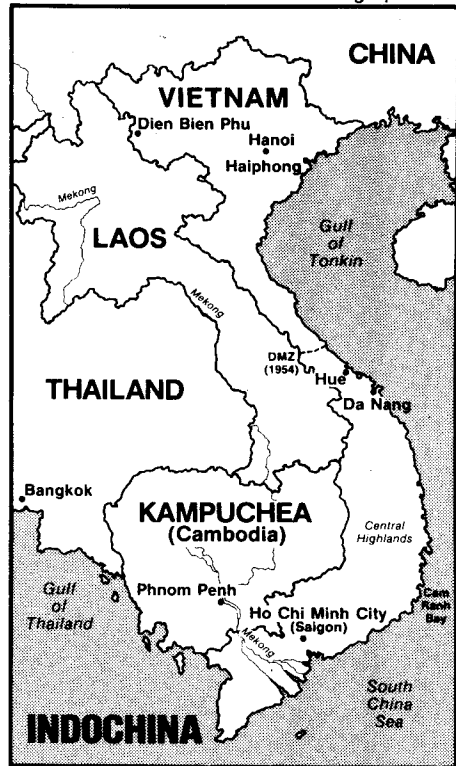
"When I was in the Nam, Mohammad Ali was refusing to take the oath [upon being drafted]. Our reaction was we shouldn't have taken it either. We felt the American Dream didn't really serve us. What we experienced was the American Nightmare."

It's probably an exaggeration to say that half the black soldiers in Vietnam sympathized with Ho Chi Minh, but a hell of a lot of them did. And this was not merely a passive sentiment. For example, in 1968 some 40 black GIs at Fort Hood, Texas refused orders to go to Chicago to suppress antiwar demonstrators at the Democratic Party convention. In Vietnam itself in 1969 black troops at Qui Nhon base staged a demonstration and battled with local police, demanding an end to U.S. aggression.

When these black Vietnam veterans returned to the States, they felt angry and used, but also grateful that they had acquired military skills. Many of them joined what they saw as the most revolutionary organization of black people in the country at that time, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. The large number of black Vietnam vets in its ranks was a major factor giving the Panthers their militancy and combativity.

The Panthers are important, because they represented the highest point of

Young Spartacus

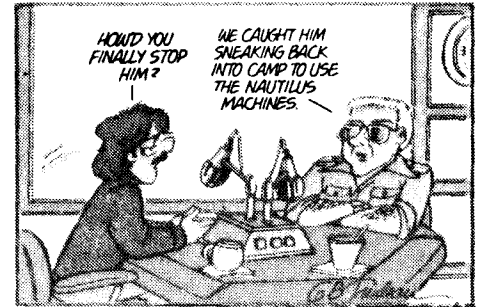
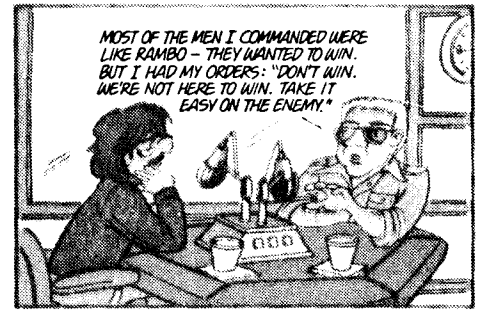
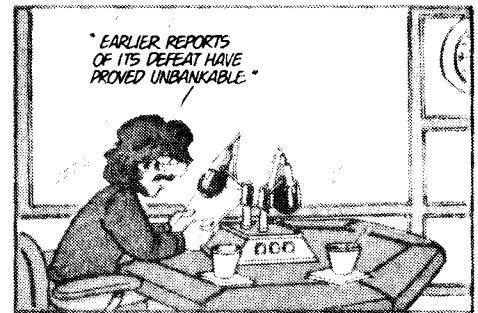
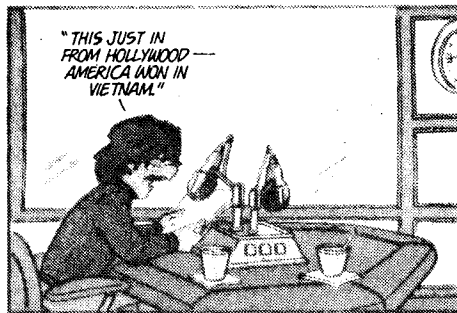


black radicalism in the 1960s. They rightly saw that black Democratic Party politicians—mayors like Cleveland's Carl Stokes and Newark's Kenneth Gibson, hustlers like Jesse Jackson—were the white rulers' puppets in the black ghetto. These Democrats were the black American equivalent of the Thieus and the Kys in Saigon. At the same time, the Panthers condemned what they called porkchop or cultural nationalism. They saw themselves as anti-capitalist revolutionaries. But they viewed the American revolution through the distorting prism of nationalism. They considered blacks to be an internal colony and the Panthers as something like the American version of the Viet Cong.

In this they were fundamentally wrong. Black people in this country are not a separate nation which can liberate itself independently of a general social revolution. The real lever of black power in this country is the power of the black proletariat within the organized working class. The black question is the key to the American revolution. There can be no social revolution in this

Doonesbury

G. B. TRUDEAU



country without the united struggle of black and white workers led by a multiracial vanguard party. And nothing short of a socialist revolution will liberate black people from oppression and desperate poverty. There is no future for blacks under capitalism.

One of our hardest and most important fights during the 1960s was against what we called "sectoralism," the notion that left-wing organizations should be based on racial, ethnic, sexual, etc. constituencies. We said, no, what is needed is a multiracial working-class vanguard based on a revolutionary program. Only such a party can channel the explosive revolutionary potential of the black masses in a way that can push forward the more backward white workers.

The Panthers paid a terrible price for the nationalist disorientation of their politics. Because the American ruling class understands and fears the revolutionary potential of the black masses, they determined to simply wipe the Panthers out. Leading cadre, like Fred Hampton in Chicago, were killed by the cops and FBI. The Panthers had neither the social base, nor the program, nor the internal cohesion to stand up to the massive campaign of state terror which hit them. Under that pressure they split and engaged in a literally murderous internal fight. In the space of a year or so an organization which had numbered thousands of black militants, especially here in California, simply disintegrated. Most of the rank and file returned to apolitical workaday life. Much of the surviving top leadership—the big names—degenerated in the most extreme and grotesque ways. Huey Newton is today a petty criminal, Eldridge Cleaver is a Moonie.

There is, however, a man who can be called the last of the Black Panthers. The foremost political prisoner in the United States today, not only according to us, but also Amnesty International, is Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt. He was grossly framed up and sent to prison in 1970. He's been there ever since, six of these years spent in solitary confinement. Like many of the Panther militants, Pratt was a Vietnam vet. He was in an elite paratrooper unit, was wounded twice and won a whole chestful of medals. Obviously, he is an exceptionally courageous man. He served two tours of duty in Vietnam, which was very unusual. After his first tour he was sent Stateside, and in 1967 his unit, mainly black paratroopers, was ordered into Detroit to suppress the big ghetto rebellion there. While this unit was in Detroit, the authorities suddenly dis-

covered that army-issued weapons and ammunition were getting into the hands of the black ghetto population. And autopsies done on National Guardsmen killed showed they had been shot with army-issued bullets. So after ten days they pulled Pratt's unit out of Detroit and sent them back to Vietnam. This was a *punitive* action, because Pentagon policy was that troops only served one one-year tour of duty unless they volunteered for a second. We recently interviewed Pratt and he recalls:

"I ended up in a lot of situations in Vietnam where I talked to North Vietnam soldiers, regulars. They talked English just as good as I did, and talked very knowledgeably of our history and struggles, the contradictions, and they even knew things about Louisiana. I was enlightened a lot in Vietnam, a hell of a lot."

—"Geronimo Pratt Speaks from San Quentin," *Workers Vanguard* No. 382, 28 June

Now, Geronimo Pratt is not particularly close to us, to Trotskyism, politically. He is, as if caught in a time warp, a

revolutionary black nationalist of the late '60s. He is, however, a deeply principled, a deeply courageous man, and he views himself as an enemy of American imperialism, including its black front men and flunkies. Pratt stands as a living symbol of the black militancy of the 1960s and a living link between the Vietnamese Revolution and the American black ghetto. So we very much want to see and will do what we can to see that this man is set free. And you should, too!

During the Vietnam War the Spartacist League was too small, too little known to prevent the mass of newly radicalized youth and militant blacks, like Geronimo Pratt, from being drawn into the dead-end of black nationalist or New Left or Maoist/Stalinist movements. This time around, however, it can and must be different. So if you want to build a party which will rid this world of the mass murderers of the Vietnamese and the jailers of Geronimo Pratt, then join us! ■

Learn About Marxism! SYL Class Series

CLEVELAND

Trotskyism: Revolutionary Marxism Today
Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.
October 9, 16
Wilder Hall, Room to be announced
Oberlin College
For more information: (216) 621-5138

BOSTON

The Fight for Socialism
Alternate Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.
September 26, October 10
Emerson 305, Harvard University
For more information: (617) 492-3928

LOS ANGELES

Revolutionary Trotskyism Today
Alternate Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.
October 10, 24
Ackerman Union, Room to be announced, UCLA
For more information: (213) 384-9716

Spartacus Youth League Directory

SYL National Office: Box 3118, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008

Atlanta: SYL, Box 4012, Atlanta, GA 30302

Boston: SYL, P.O. Box 1644, Cambridge, MA 02238, or call (617) 492-3928

Chicago: SYL, Box 4667, Main P.O., Chicago, IL 60680, or call (312) 663-0715

Cleveland: SYL, Box 6642, Cleveland, OH 44101, or call (216) 621-5138

Detroit: SYL, c/o SL, Box 32717, Detroit, MI 48232

Los Angeles: SYL, Box 29115, Los Feliz Station, Los Angeles, CA 90029, or call (213) 384-9716

Madison: SYL, Box 2074, Madison, WI 53701, or call (608) 257-8625

New York: SYL, Box 444, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013, or call (212) 267-1025

Norfolk: SYL, c/o SL, P.O. Box 1972, Main P.O., Norfolk, VA 23501

Oakland: SYL, Box 273, Civic Center Station, Oakland, CA 94604, or call (415) 835-1535

Oberlin: SYL, Box 58, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH 44074, or call (216) 775-6067

San Francisco: SYL, Box 11685, San Francisco, CA 94101, or call (415) 863-6963

Washington, D.C.: SYL, P.O. Box 75073, Washington, D.C. 20013, or call (202) 636-3537

Trotskyist League of Canada

Toronto: Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X6, or call (416) 593-4138

Atlanta University Students Rally Anti-Apartheid Protests Hit American South

ATLANTA—Resistance to apartheid slavery in South Africa is stirring black college students in America as nothing else has since the civil rights movement a generation ago. At Atlanta University's prestigious Morehouse College on August 27, a vigil called by the SCLC, Young Democrats and the student government drew well over a thousand students who filled the block in front of the King Chapel from 9:30 p.m. until 1:00 in the morning. Many were eager for something better than the liberal pacifism preached from the podium.

Inside the chapel a press conference was being held featuring daughters of three Nobel "peace prize" winners: Bernice King, Mpho Tutu and Tandi Gcabashe, daughter of former Zulu chief Albert Luthuli. Outside at the rally, speakers included the three daughters, who were warmly received, the Morehouse College president, who was roundly booed, a lone white preacher and some former civil rights leaders who are now black elected officials: Atlanta mayor Andrew Young, Julian Bond, city councilman John Lewis. It was a long rally made monotonous by the lack of answers emanating from the speeches, which instead offered: "we shall overcome," "the hands that once picked cotton now pick the president" and countless appeals to the morality of "our freedom-loving country." As the liberals bored, depressed and alienated the best of the crowd, the team of Spartacist supporters found many students who were eager to talk politics, and over 150 bought copies of our newspapers.

The event was built by the college administration and the city fathers in

the hope of corralling the "talented tenth" of today for a new "movement" modeled on the pro-Democratic Party civil rights liberalism of the sixties. As students chanted "Down with apartheid, up with freedom," they were lectured: "Most of you did not experience the civil rights movement, most of you did not suffer. And now we want you to identify with those who suffer in South Africa." But some students are looking to do more than suffer together, and our salesmen's slogans for workers revolution and "labor action, black workers take the lead!" had heads turning.

The black Dems think these kids can simply be co-opted—and they know how it's done. John Lewis, for example, once represented a wing of civil rights activists who had become alienated from the pro-Democratic Party preachers of the civil rights mainstream. In 1963 Lewis, then the chairman of SNCC, had his speech censored at the "March on Washington": the march officials insisted he delete his conclusion that "We cannot depend on any political party for both Democrats and Republicans have betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence."

The ex-activists who became servants of the system may have some trouble convincing the kids awakening politically today to follow in their footsteps. The civil rights movement did abolish the most blatant and official forms of Jim Crow segregation, giving the "talented tenth" a shot at making it into professional, middle-class respectability. But the movement had promised a great deal more to the SNCC militants and Freedom Riders,

the idealistic black and white college kids who risked beatings and death when they undertook such activities as voter registration. They and millions of others wanted and expected to see a rooting out of racist oppression afflicting the black masses: joblessness, segregation, poverty and crime, the whole bundle of degradation. When yesterday's "talented tenth" went from sitting-in and marching to being black history professors and elected officials, many really thought they were spearheading the advancement of black America as a whole. They believed that from the achievement of "black faces in high places" a whole panoply of social and economic consequences would logically follow in our "great society" democracy and the American dream would open up for the ghetto masses.

It's a lot harder to sell that line today. The desperation of the ghetto is unalloyed and intensified; the reason why big cities today tend to have black mayors is that the steady diet of cutbacks, cop terror and strikebreaking that capitalism is dishing out to the inner cities seems to go down better that way. John Lewis or Andrew Young couldn't "serve the people" and serve the system at the same time, because it's an anti-human system. Today, some of the black college kids are worried about that and open to real answers. It's the job of the SYL to supply those answers. Break with the Democrats! In South Africa and the U.S., black liberation requires integrated working-class struggle to smash the chains of racist capitalism. We want to win youth to the party that fights for that program of liberation—join us!

Apartheid...

(continued from page 4)

economy is in one of its worst crises ever. In reaction to the year-long wave of black protest, the international capitalists have gotten jittery about the profitability of their investments in South Africa. They are hardly succumbing to a campaign of public pressure against the "immorality" of having invested in South Africa; rather, capital is fleeing because the capitalists quite rationally figure that a country headed toward civil war is somewhat of a risky place to put one's money and plants and that they'd be better off investing elsewhere. The flight of capital caused the rand to fall to a low of 33 cents to the U.S. dollar, half of what it was valued at a year ago. Bankers began to call in repayment of short term loans—commonly extended without question—and South Africa responded by refusing to repay any principal due for the next four months and is now negotiating its loan repayment with international banking firms.

Columbia University, infamous slumlord of Harlem, is the first Ivy League university to favorably consider plans to divest stocks in companies with business in South Africa. The arrogant and myopic pro-divestment leadership of the spring's anti-apartheid protests at Columbia immediately claimed victory. Well, we can't help but wonder: what happens now? So far this year, 18 U.S. corporations have either withdrawn or limited their operations in South Africa. Apartheid has not crumbled and it hardly seems likely that the divestment (and, no doubt, the subsequent buying up by other interests) of Columbia's \$39

million in South Africa-related holdings will be the straw that breaks the apartheid camel's back. The Columbia student newspaper, the *Spectator*, was quick to editorialize in a special edition (29 August) that the university Board of Trustees took a "courageous stand." And the paper quotes divestment activist David Goldiner in laying out the plan for the future: "Our job now is to join together with the administration to influence other universities."

The SYL has intervened in the anti-apartheid struggles to "divest" students of these dangerous illusions in the "morality" of the racist ruling class, their university intermediaries, the banks and corporations. We fight to win students away from the dead-end of Democratic Party "pressure" politics to a program for workers power. There can be no "morally responsible" investment policy under capitalism—a system based on the ruthless exploitation of labor for the profit of the capitalist class. While Columbia's fat cats have had some success in pacifying and co-opting student protest, the Cornell University administration, which ordered the arrest of some 1,200 students last spring, has now enacted a new "conduct code" which apes Botha's state of emergency decree. In a similar attempt to quash protests at Berkeley, the administration "bans" the cops bash, and the courts slam leftists into jail.

Fortunately, there are a lot of students who only recently have become politicized and are neither so naive nor so cynical that they can bask in a meaningless "victory" while the youth of South Africa—many less than half the age of U.S. college students—are being subjected to *sjamboks* (whips) for singing "We Are The World" and fleeing

from the apartheid troops amidst screams of "They want to kill us all!" Solidarity with the black workers and youth of South Africa should encourage American youth to look beyond the sandbox parochialism of their campus divestment "leaders"—to study the world and, most importantly, to *take a side*. The Spartacus Youth League is an organization of young communists who fight on the side of the oppressed masses around the entire planet. And in this epoch, that struggle necessarily means workers revolution. From Central America to South Africa to right here in the U.S., the answer to capitalist exploitation and its accompanying brutal oppression lies in the working class, the one group in society that by the very nature of its relationship to production, the heart of capitalism, could wrest power from the bourgeoisie and organize society on a rational basis. This prospect will take much more than spontaneous and scattered upsurges by the oppressed, as is all too painfully clear in South Africa. As Leon Trotsky, a leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and head of the Red Army in the post-revolution Russian civil war, noted, "The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership" (*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*). What is desperately necessary is the formation of a proletarian leadership, of a communist party along the lines of the Bolsheviks who led the Russian Revolution of 1917 and led the Russian working class to power.

In the final analysis, only proletarian revolution can end the barbaric rule of imperialism from the United States to South Africa. Smash Apartheid! Workers to Power! ■

Crush the Contras...

(continued from page 12)

and people gave generously, tossing dollars and change into the buckets. A mother of an American GI said that she didn't want her son sent to Nicaragua, and "it would be good if the Nicaraguans were strong and made Reagan afraid of them." A Salvadoran refugee, who lost a brother and a cousin to the death squads, dug into her purse, explaining that her daughter had joined the leftist guerrillas and "I'm proud of what she's doing." A laid-off shipyard worker noted that we're fighting on the same side—against the bosses at home.

The SYL's "Nicabucks" campaign was a token of what could happen on the home front in the event of a U.S. invasion of Sandinista Nicaragua. Thousands of Americans are ready and eager to give material aid to the courageous fighters the Pentagon calls "the enemy." One woman said she wanted to help "even the score, since Reagan gave the contras millions." This sentiment has not been lost on the American bourgeois establishment. The *New York Times* (30 August) editorialized against "private" fundraising for the CIA's contra mercenaries by the Nazi-infested World Anti-Communist League, worrying that "Sandinista supporters are matching General Singlaub's campaign with their own...." They remember how Washington's dirty war on Vietnam tore this country apart, inflicting a humiliating defeat from which U.S. rulers are still trying to recover.

For the past six years, the strategy of the Central American "solidarity movement" has been to lobby the U.S. Congress, pressuring the Democrats to "moderate" Reagan. But after Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega's trip to Moscow, Democratic "doves" started screeching like hawks, voting for aid to the bloody contra mercenaries and embracing the "Reagan Doctrine" of sponsoring anti-Soviet counterrevolutionary terrorists around the world. Incapable of opposing the *bipartisan* anti-Soviet war drive whose front line is drawn in Central America, the phony "friends of Nicaragua" have barely raised a finger to defend Nicaragua from the Yankee war moves. The very impact of the \$25,000 we raised—which is but a drop in the bucket—is itself an indictment of the pusillanimous "solidarity" movement. The Spartacus Youth League, in contrast, forthrightly proclaims, "Defense of Cuba and the USSR Begins in Central America!" We take a clear side against imperialism in Central America.

For our part, this campaign was an elemental act of class solidarity. As revolutionaries "in the belly of the beast," we have a special responsibility to organize against the capitalist criminals who salute Hitler's SS killer elite at Bitburg, who firebomb black babies in Philadelphia and threaten to plunge the world into an anti-Soviet nuclear holocaust. Despite the major political differences that separate us Trotskyists from the nationalist Sandinistas, defense of Nicaragua against Yankee aggression is our internationalist duty. And Nicaraguan officials expressed warm appreciation for our active solidarity with the Nicaraguan Revolution, especially now when the going gets tough.

Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega, foreign minister Miguel D'Escoto and interior minister Tomás Borge were presented with the SYL's fundraising button by Spartacist militants who recently visited Nicaragua. Borge, the sole surviving founder of the Sandinista Front, immediately pinned the button to his fatigues. Father D'Escoto, then fasting as a protest against Reagan's terrorists, warmly embraced our comrade. Young soldiers in the war zones of

Matagalpa and Jinotega gave broad grins and eager handshakes when our slogan, "Defend Nicaragua! Crush the Contras!" was translated. In a field hospital, soldiers wounded by the contras listened eagerly to stories of the enthusiastic response the fund drive had met from youth, workers and minorities across North America. In the Augusto Sandino museum at Niquinohomo, the birthplace of the "General of Free Men" who fought the Marines in the 1920s, the SYL button was given a place of honor, front and center among the many insignias of solidarity.

The Spartacus Youth League takes this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to this campaign and made it a striking success. In addition to the efforts of the SYL and Spartacist League, the Trotskyist League of Canada went all-out in this drive. Those who gave substantial donations and the many hundreds who generously contributed their lunch money and bus fare joined hands in a powerful act of solidarity. Every penny you contributed is going to the urgent defense of embattled Nicaragua against Yankee aggression—all administrative expenses are being paid by the SYL.

Let this outpouring of support be a warning to the warmongers in Washington. In Managua on July 19, half a million voices answered Reagan's threats with chants of "We won't sell out, we won't give up! They shall not pass!" From our posts here in the imperialist heartland, we say: *Smash U.S. war moves! Defend, complete, extend the Nicaraguan Revolution!* ■

Brigadista...

(continued from page 12)

year-olds. They were naked and rolling around in the dirt with distended bellies and eyes swollen almost shut from infection. There were five families consisting of 47 people living in a few buildings which looked like broken down barns. We stayed in a couple of small rooms where the floors were part tile and part dirt. There was hardly any furniture, no running water or electricity and one smelly outhouse. Each family had a cement fixture where they burned wood in order to cook their food. And because of the CIA-backed "contra" war and the U.S. trade embargo, even the basic food that they did have—rice, beans and tortillas—was rationed by the government.

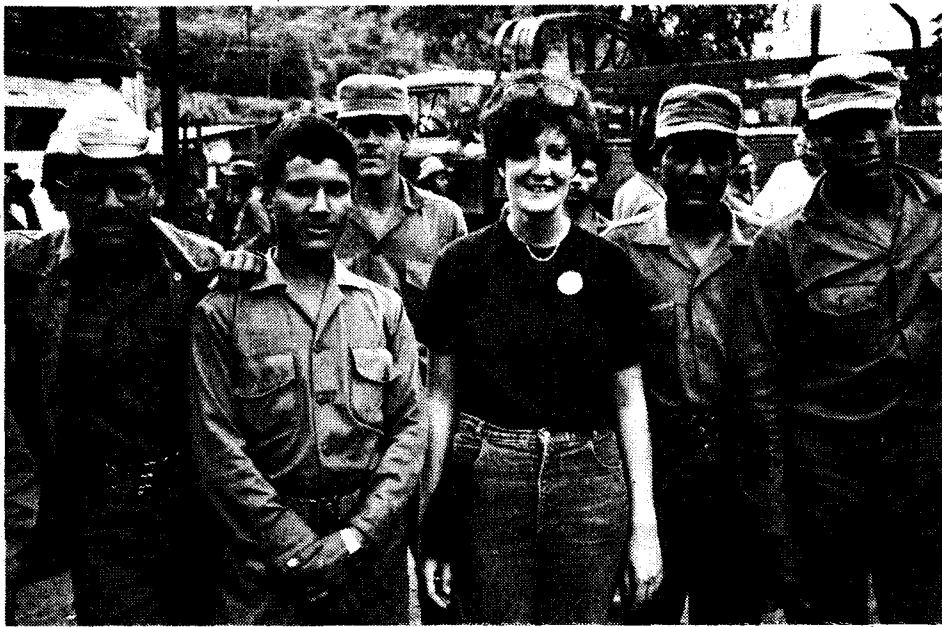
While we were on the farm we worked hard every morning, planting sorghum, corn, wheat and eucalyptus trees and cleaning the weeds from around the



Young Spartacus Photo

SYL brigadista Liisa works the land in Las Colinas.

trees. We worked union hours: 5:30 till 11 a.m., and we had every afternoon free so they took us on various trips during the afternoon and evening. One evening we went into León for a Santa María festival. It was a mixture of Halloween and Christmas (you pray to the Virgin Mary for your treats). As we were sitting in a bar waiting for the festival to begin, two truckloads of militia rolled in from the front. The soldiers were waving their



Comrade Jane in Matagalpa with compañeros of the Sandinista militia.

AK-47s in the air and yelling. As they arrived at the nearby army headquarters, their families were waiting for them. It was a very emotional experience for them as no one knew who would return and who would not.

We also visited a state-run tractor repair shop. Having just experienced planting sorghum by hand in half-mile long furrows, I could appreciate how nice it would be if they had more tractors in operation! They said they needed \$20,000 and they could fix all 200 plus tractors for use. We asked if it is easier for the private owners to obtain farm equipment. They answered that it was because they had more access to U.S. dollars and could buy more on the black market. So the 20 percent privately-owned lands are the most productive while the workers on the state-owned farms use oxen and walk up and down the furrows with twigs attached to their behinds to cover up the seeds!

"War communism without the communism" is hard to defend to underfed peasants when the bourgeoisie in Managua is parading around in Mercedes Benzes and eating at fancy restaurants. Of course, some of the Sandinista youth have particular ideas about that; they had scrawled "Muerte a la burguesia" ("Death to the bourgeoisie") on the walls of the one of the capitalists' homes in Managua near our hotel there. The young people there are certainly the most enthusiastic supporters of the revolution, reading Lenin and Marx, and talking of the class struggle in expectation that at some point in the future capitalism will be eliminated in Nicaragua. Of course, the FSLN leadership is unabashed in their capitulation to the capitalists that are still there. Comandante Olga Aviles complained that the campesinos just wanted luxury items (like their own homes and more corn tortillas!), while admitting that the Sandinistas were bending over backward for the capitalists, giving them as much money as they need because "they're just looking for a provocation!"

After a week of work we traveled to Poneloya, a beach town on the Pacific coast. The first night we went out to a bar and danced with a group of militiamen who were headed out to the Atlantic coast on Monday. They were very enthusiastic about defending the revolution and about international solidarity. I also found it very sad though, because they impressed me as very young people who were desperate to live it up as they expected to die very soon.

Another striking thing about being in Nicaragua is the attitude toward the Soviet Union. One wall mural at the Huembes market in Managua depicts a young girl (Nicaragua) about to be attacked by a large eagle (the United States), but a bear (the Soviet Union) steps in to save the young girl. The reforestation agency also had a big poster celebrating the victory in 1945 of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany. The aid given to the revolution by Cuba and the Soviet Union in terms of

medicine, education and military aid is appreciated across the board by the people in Nicaragua, even by the most backward peasants. Nicaragua is on the front line of the anti-Soviet war drive; and here in the belly of the beast we must do whatever we can to aid their struggle. ■

Under Fire in Estelí...

(continued from page 12)

Hospital and several barrio headquarters (*puestos de mando*), rolling bandages, translating instructions to clinical lab tests for technicians. And I helped organize first-aid supplies all night when the contras attacked close to town during their thwarted offensive in late July.

I went to several funerals, including a big one the third day I was in Estelí when seven soldiers were buried. Standard procedure is that when the contras come upon wounded soldiers lying on the ground, they douse them with gasoline and torch them. For a mother to have her son come home as ashes in a shoebox is especially awful considering the importance of funerals there. At this funeral, several hundred people marched slowly to the edge of town with the coffins, shouting defiant slogans and yelling out the names of the soldiers followed by "¡presente!" One old lady pulled me aside and said, "when you have seen two of these, you will understand our struggle a little better."

One of the most interesting Nicaraguans I met was Gloria, a 42-year-old woman who had five kids, seven miscarriages and lost two sons in the war—and she says she would give up all her children if need be to defend the revolution. The first day I met her, Gloria was wearing a Lenin pin and talking about the day we would not need passports to come to Nicaragua. By 1976-77 her sons were doing clandestine propaganda work with the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front]; they told her not to lock the front door at night so they could sneak in very late. She was very afraid for them. Gloria herself started to become involved, organizing the "pots and pans brigades." Late at night while the whole town slept, the women would bang their pots and pans and make a huge noise all over town. Her first son was killed in an ambush—quartered like a chicken and burned. The Guardia Nacional also cut off his arms and removed his jaw. Gloria heard of his death and went looking for his remains, accidentally ending up in the house of a Guardsman who boasted about the incident while she could only sit there and show no emotion.

One day a contra was caught in town trying to buy fruit. A soldier walked into the market, the contra got scared and ran. People in the next barrio caught him, and in the confusion a pig grabbed the contra's knapsack, which made everyone stop and stare. Apparently,

[interior minister] Tomás Borge had just made a speech in which he said that even the cats and dogs would fight the Yankees and contras, and here was proof that he was right!

An important and regular part of the defense of the town is "vigilancia," the revolutionary guard duty which is supposed to be shared on a regular basis by everyone who is able. Part of it consists of just sitting up at night in the doorways and watching for anyone walking the streets. But during the first week, when Estelí was under fire, people stayed up, talking loudly, to give the contras a very clear idea that the town was not asleep. Here is the entry I made in my notebook one of those nights:

It's midnight at the puesto de Igor Ubeda, which like all barrios in Estelí is named for a fallen Sandinista combatant. I talk for a long time with the regular army type who seems to be in charge of the puesto. While we talk about the world, a 14-year-old sleeps on a bench, his arms wrapped around his AK-47. On the street corner outside sits a 16-year-old who says that all he does now is go to school in the morning and vigilance all night, every night. His name is "Lenín." Eventually the older soldier goes home and turns command of the puesto over to Lenín. A pot of horrible coffee simmers perpetually on a wood fire behind the puesto. The puesto is a room in the front of a bombed-out house with bullet holes all over the walls, but a new corrugated iron roof has been put on.

Around 2:00 a.m. we hear someone coming down the street. Without a word, my compañero picks up his AK and swiftly stands up. A drunk comes into view, stumbling through the otherwise deserted streets. We laugh for a moment and regain our seats on the wall. Several rounds are fired somewhere in the next barrio—nobody even stops talking. By 4:00 a.m. the patrol returns. The rest of the kids go to sleep. Lenín and I chitchat a while, and then he



Young Spartacus Photo

Comrade Andre, who visited Estelí, in Boston raising funds for defense of Nicaragua.

decides to teach me how to load and strip an AK. I manage my task with only a little bumbling. Dawn is just breaking. In the house next door, two women begin to make tortillas, and the sound of their hands slapping the dough competes with the roosters crowing all over Estelí.

On my way home I pass one of my favorite slogans spray-painted on a wall, "Yanqui, hijo de puta, aquí te esperamos... de aquí saldrás como en Vietnam" ("Yankee, son of a whore, we're waiting for you here... you'll leave here like in Vietnam"). As I walked around Estelí, I was often asked about my SYL "Nicabucks" button—"Defend Nicaragua! Crush the Contras!" The slogan was very popular, and so was the fact that Americans are raising dollars to defend Nicaragua against Reagan. I remember what my Nicaraguan friend Antonio said. "Don't be like those 'We Are The World' artists who feel good after singing one song and go back to their usual lives. Go back to the U.S. and struggle instead." ■

Young Spartacus

SYL Raises \$25,000 to Defend Nicaragua

Thousands Contribute to Crush the Contras

The following press release was issued by the Spartacus Youth League National Office on 3 September:

In the wake of the U.S. trade embargo against Nicaragua, decreed by Ronald Reagan last May, the Spartacus Youth League undertook an urgent fundraising campaign for material aid to defend the Nicaraguan Revolution. Calling the embargo an *act of war*, and warning that a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua could be the next step, the SYL hit the streets, campuses and factory gates with an appeal to "Donate Dollars! Crush the Contras! DEFEND NICARAGUA!" In six short weeks, while Washington was making daily war threats against the Sandinistas, by July 19, the anniversary of the overthrow of the hated American-backed Somoza dictatorship, we raised \$25,800. This money has been transmitted to the Nicaraguan government. The "anti-contra" contributions made by students, workers and minorities across North America are already helping—in a small way—to provide Nicaragua with some of the hard currency desperately needed for everything from arms to medicine and spare parts.

This was no charity drive. While Reagan dreams of divisions of "Rambos" fighting a holy war against Communism, the students, young workers and ghetto youth who are slated to be the cannon fodder for this war drive are not itching to die in the jungles of Central America. They know the stakes

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SYL fundraisers (right) on the street. "Nicabucks" campaign raised modest sum for defense of Nicaragua. Above, Sandinista youth at FSLN youth headquarters examine YSp.

To get your "Nicabutton" send \$2 to the Student Committee to Defend Nicaragua, c/o SYL, Box 3118, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008.



Young Spartacus Photos



Nicaragua Eyewitness Accounts

SYL Brigadista in Las Colinas

In Nicaragua I worked with a reforestation brigade for a month on a state farm in Las Colinas, just north of León. I went there both to learn about the revolution there so as to aid our struggle for workers revolution in this country, as well as to offer concrete aid through my work, in defense of the revolution. The leader of our group had a slogan which he repeated ad nauseam: "Norteamericanos con palas, no balas" ("North Americans with shovels, not bullets"). I argued against this, saying that if an Abraham

Lincoln type brigade was formed to go down to Nicaragua and fight to defend the revolution, that I would like to go on that type of brigade as well. The difference between me and the invading U.S. troops is not shovels versus bullets, but which side we are on—I defend the revolution.

When we first arrived at the state farm where we stayed the poverty was quite shocking. One of the first things we saw were the twins. They were six years old, but as small as many two-

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Under Fire in Estelí

I flew to Nicaragua on the Honduran airline, TAN/SAHSA. I asked a stewardess what "SAHSA" stood for—"Stay at Home, Stay Alive," she said. Our flight was held up at the airport in Tegucigalpa until a drab olive American Huey helicopter took off, heading south. I also noticed an unmarked DC-3 sitting on the runway in Tegucigalpa. It was almost certainly the DC-3 used by the "contras" to drop supplies into Nicaragua as even press reports have mentioned that their plane "can be seen occasionally" in

Tegucigalpa. I was pleased however that most of the graffiti in the airport bathroom was pro-Sandinista.

In Nicaragua I lived with a family in Estelí for five weeks. I had language classes for four hours every morning at the Nuevo Instituto de Centroamérica (NICA). We learned more than grammar, as the teachers were as likely to chat about the insurrections in Estelí, a stronghold of the revolution in '79, as they were to teach a new verb tense. At various times I helped out at the Estelí

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