

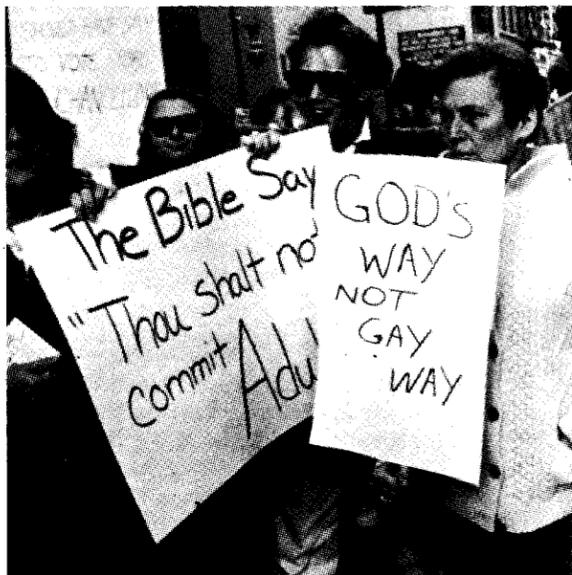
Right-Wing Bigots Mobilize Against Gays in the Military

Clinton Bows to Anti-Gay Hysteria

The current furor over Clinton's campaign promise to drop the U.S. military's ban on homosexuals reflects this society's vicious anti-gay social climate, led for over a decade by White House-sanctioned religious fundamentalists. Of course, gays and lesbians have always been in the military, just as they exist—mainly "closeted"—in all areas of society. Despite media claims that gays are now "entering the mainstream," open homosexuals remain prey to ignorant prejudice at best and at worst deadly beatings and even murder.

Navy Seaman Allen Schindler, serving on the USS *Belleau Wood*, was brutally beaten to death by shipmates last October, shortly after he "came out." Schindler had complained of harassment previously, having been subjected to deadly taunts like, "There's a faggot on this ship and he should die." And a few weeks ago three Marines from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina dragged a man out of a local gay bar and beat him while shouting, "Clinton must pay!"

In fact, Clinton's hesitant, on-again, off-again line on ending the anti-gay ban was an invitation for the right-wing backlash. Head of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell, Republican Congressional leaders and the rabidly militarist wing of the



Donna Binder/Impact Visuals

Bible-thumping bigots demonstrate against gay rights in New York, October 1992 (left). Protesters demand end to ban on gays in armed forces (right).



Mark Ludak/Impact Visuals

Democratic Party around Georgia Senator Sam Nunn provided moral support for the gay-bashers in khaki and navy blue. Clinton quickly backed off and agreed to a six-month moratorium on ending the ban to allow Congress to "study" the question.

To assert his credentials as a "responsible" CEO of American capitalism, Clinton vows to end "welfare as we know it" and even to slash Social Security. Clinton's entire campaign was geared to distancing himself from the traditional identification of Democrats with a "welfare state," itself a racist code word for anything perceived as beneficial to blacks. At the same time, he exploited the opposition of women from

all social layers to the Republican right's campaign against abortion and sexual equality in general. The chauvinist demagoguery of the two Pats, Buchanan and Robertson, outraged even wealthy heiresses and women business executives who are as racist as Jesse Helms and as greedy as Michael Milken. Clinton got campaign contributions from businesswomen who had bankrolled right-wing Republicans since the days of Barry Goldwater.

Clinton's campaign promise to end the ban on gays in the military was part of a strategy of appealing to the bourgeois feminist milieu, and "respectable" gays. Such rad-lib types as *Village Voice* columnist Donna Minkowitz dusted off her

tux to celebrate Clinton's inauguration: "At the Triangle Ball, kicked-out marine Joe Steffan sang the national anthem while an honor guard of homosexuals purged from the military carried in the flag. I had to keep reminding myself that the military was at that moment bombing hotels in Iraq" (2 February).

The history of America's wars (with the exception of the Civil War) is a history of racist injustice, from its origins in the mass murder of the native Indian population, to colonial massacres in the Philippines, to the imperialist slaughters of World Wars I and II, to Vietnam. As socialists fighting for the abolition of the capitalist system of exploitation,

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Supreme Court Executioners

Innocence Is No Defense

For over a dozen years the Supreme Court has been greasing the assembly line of death—discarding judicial precedents, shredding what reality there was to the Bill of Rights, even stripping a federal appeals court of power in order to "get on with it." The handwriting had been on the wall for quite some time, but in late January the high court of American capitalism spray-painted in blood-red capital letters: innocent or not, let them fry.

On January 25, the Supreme Court rejected Mexican American Leonel Herrera's claim that newly discovered evidence of his innocence required he be granted a hearing before execution. With barely disguised

venom for the country's heavily black death row population, Rehnquist & Co. refused to review Herrera's death sentence even after he had presented new evidence that he was not guilty of the crime for which he is to die. Innocence is no defense, decree the haughty high court butchers in black robes.

The Rehnquist Court had already pronounced Herrera dead last February, when it agreed to hear his appeal but refused to stay the execution. If a state court had not intervened to issue a stay, Herrera's body would have been long cold before the Supreme Court ever decided whether or not he had a right to a new hearing! At the same time as it issued the Herrera decision, the high court ruled on two other death penalty cases. In one, the justices invoked the "no new rules" doctrine to declare that a black man convicted for a crime he

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Gallows at Washington state prison, where the first legal hanging in 28 years was carried out this January.



Free Sundiata Acoli!

After 20 years of prison hell, former Black Panther Sundiata Acoli will make his first appearance before the parole board on February 22. Like Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) and so many other former Panthers behind bars, Acoli's "crime" was to survive a murderous cop assault which left one of his comrades dead and another severely wounded.

As a Black Panther Party militant at the height of the FBI COINTELPRO vendetta, Acoli was no stranger to brutal state repression. Then known as Clark Squire, he and 20 other Panthers were charged in 1969 with plotting to blow up, among others, the Bronx Botanical Garden, Macy's and Bloomingdale's—charges so ludicrous that the jury took only 90 minutes to acquit the Panther 21 in May 1971, after a nine-month trial.

The cops got their shot at Acoli two years later, in May 1973, when he, Zayd Malik Shakur and Assata Shakur (Joanne

Chesimard) were flagged down by state troopers who immediately started blazing away with their guns, killing Zayd Shakur. One of the troopers was killed in the crossfire, by a bullet from a police revolver. Assata Shakur, shot by the cops while sitting in the back of the car with her hands over her head, barely survived. In a classic example of racist capitalist "justice," she and Acoli were then convicted on charges of killing the cop and their own comrade! Assata Shakur escaped from prison in 1979, and was given asylum in Cuba.

Despite 20 years of imprisonment—including eight years in 23-hour-a-day lockup in the notorious Marion prison—Acoli remains politically active. In 1991 he was one of over 100 prisoners who signed a statement demanding "Stop the Legal Lynching of Mumia Abu-Jamal!" Consistently favorable prison work reports have finally made him eligible for



Courtesy Jaan Laaman

Sundiata Acoli (standing, second from right) with fellow political prisoners in Leavenworth, including Ohio 7's Jaan Laaman (standing, far left) and Leonard Peltier (standing, center).

parole. But it will take a massive outpouring of support to win Sundiata's freedom. We urge readers to send letters demanding his release to: New Jersey State Parole Board, CN-862, Trenton, NJ 08625. Send copies and write for more information to: Sundiata Acoli Freedom Campaign, P.O. Box 5538, Manhattanville Station, New York, NY 10027.

Party, Geronimo has spent over 22 years behind bars, framed by the FBI and Los Angeles Police Department for a murder they know he did not commit. Mobilize now to demand Geronimo's freedom! We urge you and your organization to send letters of support. Address them to the California Board of Prison Terms and send them to the PDC, P.O. Box 77462, San Francisco, CA 94107.

Free Geronimo!

Even as his supporters stood assembled outside Tehachapi prison and ABC News waited to tape the proceedings, the parole hearing for Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) scheduled for January 29 was postponed at the last minute. The new hearing is scheduled for May 21.

A former leader of the Black Panther

We encourage WV readers to continue to support and build the PDC. Become a monthly sustaining contributor. Send a donation of \$5 or more and receive a subscription to *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*. For a single copy send \$1 to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10013. ■



TROTSKY

Malcolm X Against Capitalism and Imperialism

A new generation is discovering in Malcolm X an outspoken and courageous fighter for the liberation of black people. The mass media seek to portray him as an example of individual advancement and a precursor of so-called "black capitalism," who moreover was supposedly moving toward a reconciliation with the pro-Democratic Party liberal pacifism of Martin Luther King. This is a lie! Until he was cut down by assassins'

bullets in February 1965, Malcolm X retained his intense hatred for capitalism and American imperialism. As Marxists, we understand that capitalism will not simply collapse but must be smashed by anti-capitalist revolutions, extending from America to Zimbabwe, through the leadership of an international communist vanguard.

It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck. Capitalism used to be like an eagle, but now it's more like a vulture. It used to be strong enough to go and suck anybody's blood whether they were strong or not. But now it has become more cowardly, like the vulture, and it can only suck the blood of the helpless. As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker. It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely.

—Malcolm X, "Young Socialist Interview" (January 1965)

This society is controlled primarily by the racists and segregationists who are in Washington, D.C., in positions of power. And from Washington, D.C., they exercise the same forms of brutal oppression against dark-skinned people in South and North Vietnam, or in the Congo, or in Cuba or in any other place on this earth where they are trying to exploit and oppress. That is a society whose government doesn't hesitate to inflict the most brutal form of punishment and oppression upon dark-skinned people all over the world.

Look right now what's going on in and around Saigon and Hanoi and in the Congo and elsewhere. They are violent when their interests are at stake. But for all that violence they display at the international level, when you and I want just a little bit of freedom, we're supposed to be nonviolent. They are violent in Korea, they are violent in Germany, they are violent in the South Pacific, they are violent in Cuba, they are violent wherever they go. But when it comes time for you and me to protect ourselves against lynchings, they tell us to be nonviolent.

—Malcolm X, "After the Bombing," (February 1965)



LENIN

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12 February 1993



WV Photo

Martha Phillips

10 March 1948 – 9 February 1992

It has been a year since our comrade Martha Phillips was murdered in Moscow. At the time of her death, Martha was the most visible fighter for the program of Trotskyist internationalism in the former Soviet Union. The destruction of the Soviet workers state and associated ravages of capitalist restoration cry out for the construction of a party that can organize and lead the urgent battle against fratricidal nationalism, chauvinism, and all forms of bigotry. Martha Phillips dedicated her life to building such a party, a Leninist tribune of the people.

Our anguish over the irreplaceable loss of a beloved comrade and cherished friend is compounded by the fact that we still do not know who murdered Martha, or why. Our efforts to press for a serious investigation into this tragedy continue to be met with utter indifference by the American consulate and deliberate evasion and incompetence by the Moscow authorities.

As stated in the preface to the document of our recent international conference, "the International Communist League dips the red banner of the Fourth International in honor of comrade Martha Phillips, who died on the front lines of the struggle to reimplant Lenin and Trotsky's communism in the homeland of the October Revolution." On this first anniversary of her death, we salute our fallen comrade. We honor her spirit, tenacity, courage and intelligence in our resolve to continue the struggle.

Lynch Mob Atrocity in Florida

On New Year's Day, Christopher Wilson, a black stockbroker from Brooklyn, was on working vacation in Florida and visiting his girlfriend in Tampa. On his way to pick up a newspaper that day, Wilson was seized in broad daylight by three white racist thugs. He was forced at gunpoint to drive 16 miles on a winding road to a remote farm area near Fort Lonesome. Stopping in a field, the racists robbed Wilson, doused him with gasoline and set him on fire. "You're going to die, n-----," they taunted as they laughed and drove off. The would-be killers, Jeff Ray Pellet, Mark Kohut and Charles Rourke, left a note behind signed "KKK," reading: "One less n----- and one more to go."

Christopher Wilson did not die, but he now suffers excruciating second and third degree burns on 40 percent of his body. He narrowly escaped being burned to death, managing to reach neighbors who used a hose to put out the fire.

In an outrageous display of official racism, authorities first labeled the atrocity a routine "robbery." This attempted cover-up of a savage, murderous racist attack is not surprising, despite efforts to paint Tampa/St. Petersburg as a fun-in-the-sun tourist spot in "the Sunshine State." Despite the cosmetic overlay of the "New South" touted by capitalist politicians, the lynch mob terror of the Old

South remains. Plenty of black and working people know the Florida coast as the "Redneck Riviera," and lots of white racists across the "cracker belt" are proud of it. A couple of years ago, some of these types pushed for a referendum for the northern part of the state to secede from the heavily Jewish and Hispanic southern region and join Alabama.

Florida has always been a Klan stronghold, ranking right up there with Georgia and Alabama in numbers of cases of KKK violence, surpassed only by Texas and Oklahoma. Tampa Bay was one of the main KKK centers for decades and currently has the highest rate of hate crimes in Florida. In the years before World War I, the state had the highest per capita rate of lynching in the country. Now, like the attempt to cover up the torching of Christopher Wilson, a cover-up was recently revealed of the lynching of an entire black community in Florida, on New Year's Day 1923. The only two remaining survivors of the Rosewood massacre, Lee Ruth Davis, 77, and Minnie Lee Langley, 88, are demanding that the state legislature reimburse them for property loss and memorialize the massacre.

Rosewood was a thriving town 75 miles north of Tampa, where black homesteaders worked for the area's pencil factories and turpentine mills. The Klan



New York Newsday

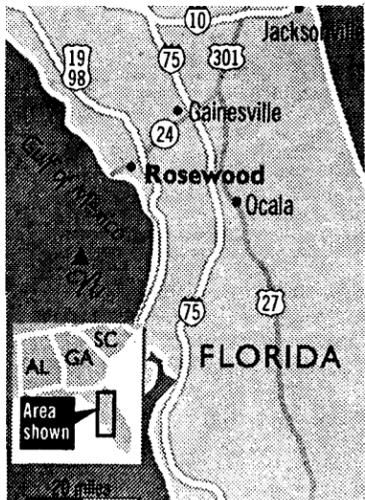
Christopher Wilson, nearly burned to death in racist attack.

marauders on that January day showed up under pretext of searching for a black man alleged to have raped a white woman—long the rallying cry for lynch mob frenzy. Drove of Klansmen from all over Florida and as far away as Georgia rode against Rosewood, killing dozens of black men, women and children, and torching the town. "All that remains of Rosewood," a recent UPI (29 December 1992) account notes, "is a green and white sign with the name of the town on it and a two-story white clapboard house. It was owned by the only white resident, which is why it was spared."

Lee Ruth Davis and Minnie Lee Langley were only children when they witnessed the bloody massacre. Their stories are searing—a partially paralyzed black man was forced to dig his own grave, then was shot and shoved into it. Another man was hanged from a tree, a pregnant woman was shot as she crawled under a porch to hide. Bloodhounds bayed as the lynch mobs hunted down fleeing men, women and children, and gunmen were waiting at the railroad to kill anyone escaping. "We had all our property there, and they took everything they didn't burn," recalls Langley. "They even took it off the map" (*Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 17 January). The Rosewood massacre was so obliterated from history that no one even knows how many people were killed in the rampage.



Knight Ridder/Tribune



Atlanta Journal and Constitution

Lee Ruth Davis, survivor of 1923 Ku Klux Klan massacre which obliterated black town of Rosewood.

Newspaper accounts vary from 7 to 21. A lawyer representing the two survivors puts the number closer to 100.

The '20s were years of rampant racist terror throughout the U.S., as white soldiers demobilized after the war were set against the black population. In 1921, an aerial police bombing obliterated the black district of Tulsa, Oklahoma, killing 75 people, mostly black, while 4,000 more blacks were thrown into concentration camps. Florida was notable for the fact that its various KKK chapters did not go into decline after the "roaring twenties" as in other states.

As documented in David M. Chalmers' history of the KKK, *Hooded Americanism*, the racist terror—assaults, floggings, murders, bombings—went on unabated through the decades: the dynamiting murders of state NAACP leader Harry Moore and his wife in 1951, the 1960 "Ax Handle Saturday" mob attack against lunch counter sit-ins in Jacksonville, the bloody St. Augustine siege in 1964 against Martin Luther King led by local cops and Georgia Klan killer J.B. Stoner, who also carried out the bombing murder of four young black girls in a Birmingham, Alabama church. Just last year the Klan paraded in the Tampa Bay area. Meanwhile, official racist government policy is to keep thousands of Haitians—fugitives from junta terror made in America—languishing in dungeons like Miami's notorious Krome Avenue Detention Center.

The destruction of Rosewood and the obliteration of black Tulsa were echoed in 1985 with the bombing of Philly MOVE by Reagan, the FBI and black mayor Wilson Goode. In all these cases of state-sanctioned or state-engineered mass murder, the racists in suits or sheets wanted to make sure no one got out alive.

The integrated labor movement, in particular longshoremen from Jacksonville and the Tampa Bay area, has the power to put an end to the reign of terror by the KKK and their allies. But for the real power of the multiracial labor movement to be wielded in defense of the workers and oppressed minorities requires a combative labor leadership fighting for power against the racist status quo. It will take socialist revolution to sweep away this system of racist terror and finish the Civil War. No blank pages in the history books—Remember and avenge Rosewood! Full restitution to the survivors of the Rosewood massacre! ■

Down With the Flag of Slavery!

Furor Over Georgia State Flag

Atlanta, Georgia is the showcase city of the supposed "New South," a town that dubs itself "the city too busy to hate." But in recent weeks black Atlanta has been made to suffer the indignities and threatening reminders of a past of chattel slavery and a present of racist violence and inequality. A proposal by Georgia governor Miller to finally remove the Confederate battle emblem from the state flag has roused a storm of protest by Klansmen and their "civilized" auxiliary, the Sons of Confederate Veterans (they wear ties instead of hoods), to preserve this banner of racist terror *North and South*.

In a provocation deliberately timed to spit on the observance of Martin Luther King Day, five enormous billboards displaying the Confederate flag were placed within a mile of the state capitol, like monster Nazi flags at Hitler rallies. One billboard was appropriately defaced and removed. And on January 19, 300 Sons of Confederate Veterans rallied at the capitol to "save" the banner of slavery. Blaring *Dixie* at top volume, racist losers

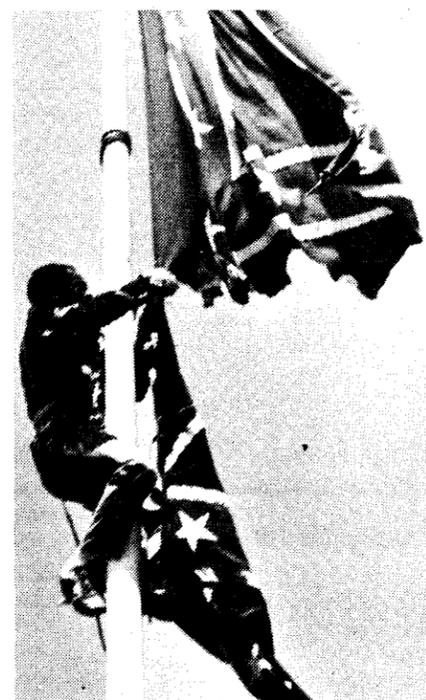
dressed in Confederate uniforms fired frighteningly real-sounding gun volleys in the direction of city hall's black administration.

As a columnist in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* wrote, "Just when you think the New South is all set—a gloss of skyscrapers and canny businesses—the Old rises again, like something undead in a Stephen King novel." Undead indeed. Some of the most sinister racist creeps in America are fighting to preserve the battle flag of slavery, including Vietnam war criminal General Westmoreland, ultra-right powerbroker and fascist presidential hopeful Patrick Buchanan, segregationist Lester Maddox, and two dozen members of the Georgia state legislature!

While black Democratic Party hacks applaud Miller's "change of heart" in proposing to replace the flag (he wants the Confederate "Stars and Bars" instead!), we remind people that this racist pig launched his political career campaigning against the 1964 Civil Rights Act. His "change of heart" is a cynical

move to protect the big bucks that are expected to flow into Georgia when Atlanta hosts the 1996 Olympics. It finally dawned on profit-conscious racists that flying the Confederate flag over an international sports competition dominated by the world's best black athletes might be bad for business—after all, the city's new "official" VISA credit card might balk at carrying the flag as its logo. Meanwhile, under the cover of the flag flap, Miller is trying to ram through a welfare "reform" that would deny aid to children born to women on public assistance—the vast majority of whom are black.

Every time and everywhere the Confederate flag is raised is a burning reminder of the unfinished business of the Civil War. The Georgia state legislature dug up the battle flag and slapped the state seal on it in 1956 as a gesture of open defiance of the Supreme Court's order to desegregate public schools. From capitol domes across the old Confederacy, to KKK cross-burning rallies, to marauding white ethnic mobs in Howard Beach, New York, the Confederate flag is a symbol and rallying point for murderous racist terror. The fight for black freedom requires a socialist revolution to *finish the Civil War*. Then the



WV Photo

Spartacist League supporter Richard Bradley tears down the Confederate flag in front of San Francisco's Civic Center, 1984.

red flag of liberation will fly from the state capitol and we can set to work sandblasting Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson from the granite face of Stone Mountain, and put an end to the night of the living Confederate dead once and for all. ■

U.S. USec Supporters: It's a Dog's Life

Being an adherent of Ernest Mandel's "United Secretariat" (USec) has never been a particularly happy lot for his followers in the U.S. In the early 1970s, militants who saw the European Mandelites' enthusiasm for Third World guerrillaism and chants of "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh!" as a left-wing alternative to the stodgy reformism of the Socialist Workers Party anxiously awaited each USec World Congress in the hope that Mandel would finally dump the SWP as the American section. Instead, when the SWP expelled these left-wing oppositionists, such as the Internationalist Tendency, Mandel ordered them to crawl back and "reintegrate" themselves into the SWP. Rather than do so, some even chose political emigration as the only way out—fleeing to more hospitable environs in then-centrist USec affiliates in Canada, Mexico and elsewhere.

Mandel never dumped the SWP. Instead, two decades later, the SWP split from the USec. Already by 1983 SWP leader Jack Barnes had brought in the New Year by publicly denouncing the theory of permanent revolution as "ultra-left" and overtly renouncing even the pretense of Trotskyism. This was accompanied by mass purges of SWP oppositionists in the mid-'80s, particularly aimed at dispatching the last remaining veteran cadres of the old, revolutionary party of James P. Cannon. While the USec leadership made some disapproving noises over this, they did not find it cause to sever relations with Barnes' SWP. To piece off those who were expelled from the SWP, this time Mandel simply granted USec recognition to the various outfits they set up—Socialist Action, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and the Fourth Internationalist Caucus of "Solidarity," that collection tank of anti-Soviet leftovers of the defunct International Socialists.

In Europe and elsewhere, youthful leftists of the '70s who once cheered the Viet Cong came of age in Cold War II as cheerleaders for social democracy, hailing virtually every counterrevolutionary force in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In the U.S., the two-and-one-half USec outfits were never leftist. Despite somewhat divergent political appetites, they all yearned for the "golden age" of the SWP when it operated as the "mass movement" brokers for the Democratic Party in the Vietnam antiwar mobilizations. During the Persian Gulf War, they tripped all over themselves trying to replay this "tradition"—with Socialist Action, in particular, acting as the "best builders" of the yellow-ribbon popular-front demonstrations which demanded, "Support Our Troops—Bring Them Home Now!" But their hoped-for "mass influence" was cut short by the

one-sided slaughter of over 100,000 Iraqis by "our troops."

Now it's really the end of the line. With the terminal collapse of Stalinism and the victory of the very forces they spent a decade championing, the USec's chickens are coming home to roost, with massive political disarray and the wholesale liquidation of various of its affiliates into social-democratic and ex-Stalinist organizations internationally. What use is there today for this sham "Fourth International" which peddles social-democratic "anti-Stalinism" as "Trotskyism"? Last September, the FIT threw in the towel, voting by a narrow margin to

of world capitalism, and the profound degeneration and default, and utter bankruptcy of the various labor bureaucracies.... This is most directly and immediately embodied in the discussion, motivation and gut feeling articulated by the proponents of this so-called fusion, most especially the feeling that nothing much is going to change for an indefinite period and we therefore must seek refuge in some more benign and hospitable political atmosphere."

Now those FITers, who in their younger years enthused that Castro's guerrillas were the modern-day equivalent of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, are in the same organization as the heirs of Max Shachtman, who supported U.S.

water boys for American labor tops—as evidenced by their organizational debut during the 1983 Greyhound strike, where they served as the unpaid goons for the union bureaucrats in blocking militant workers from stopping scab buses. At the same time, the primary underpinning of Socialist Action's politics was virulent anti-Sovietism. In 1981, Nat Weinstein, then still a member of the SWP and later the central leader of Socialist Action, was caught in a widely published picture picketing together with East European "captive nations" reactionaries and the right-wingers of the Libertarian Party in a Bay Area rally in support of "AFL-CIA"-backed Solidarność counterrevolutionary bid for power in Poland.

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the Weinsteinites echoed the most right-wing revanchists in championing "German reunification." The cause of "German unity" impelled Alan Benjamin, then editor of *Socialist Action*, and a half dozen or so of his supporters out of the USec and into the arms of Pierre Lambert's virulently Stalinophobic Liaison Committee for a Workers' International. Today, Socialist Action continues to hemorrhage as members seek greener (and bigger) pastures where they can pursue their reformist appetites free of the yoke of Socialist Action's nominal label of "Trotskyism."

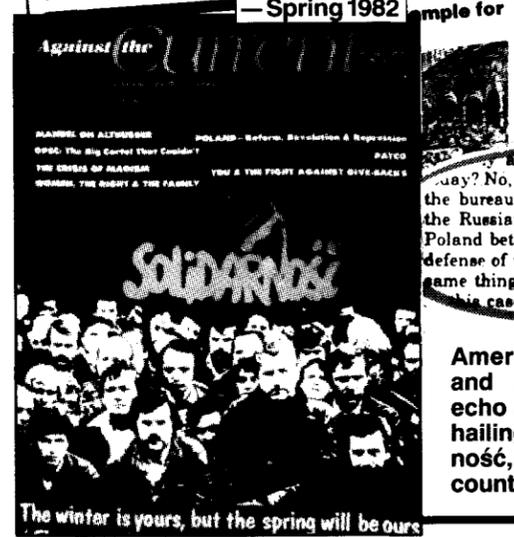
At Socialist Action's national conference in August, a faction led by none other than the despicable Barry Sheppard split, taking 12 members out. The all-purpose hatchet man for the Barnes leadership during the 1980s purges in the SWP, a few years later Sheppard himself got axed. He went sniveling to Socialist Action, which took him in. Now Sheppard et al. have established themselves as "Activists for Independent Socialist Politics." Another smaller tendency based in Chicago also walked out of the organization at the Socialist Action conference.

Now an increasing number of these Trotskyoid lonely hearts seem to be looking to find a "home" in the Committees of Correspondence (CoC), a collection of "dissident" members of Gus Hall's Communist Party who found in the collapse of the Soviet Union the occasion to split to the right of the CPUSA in unbridled pursuit of the Democratic Party. One thousand people attended the CoC national conference in mid-July, where the ex-Stalinists in charge urged support for Bill Clinton as part of their plan to build a left pressure group in the Democratic Party (in the name of "independent politics," of course).

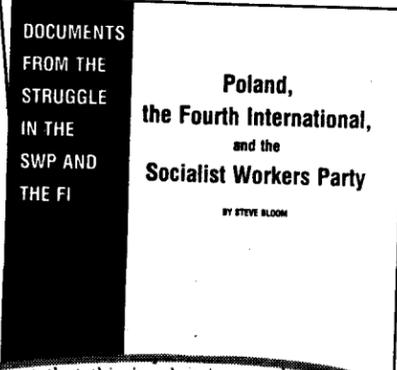
In an article in his new journal *Independent Politics* (Fall 1992), Barry Sheppard (who is identified as a member of the Oakland CoC) applauds the leaders of the CoC for "seeking to create a real center for the whole left to join together in common action and debate." Solidarity members and some other ostensible Trotskyists have also begun to take out dual membership in the CoC.

While the former CPers were unabashed in boosting the Clinton-Gore ticket, the denizens of the so-called "far left" latched on to the presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson's former campaign manager, Ron Daniels. Probably 99.9 percent of the American population didn't even know of Daniels' candidacy. But it was a *cause célèbre* in the press of various fake-leftists for whom the campaign of this black liberal, which was aimed at pressuring the Democratic Party from the "outside," was the occasion to huddle together

—October 1984



—1982



...assert that this is what is at stake...? No, we are 100 percent in favor of the overthrow of the bureaucracy by Solidarity, by the Polish workers, by the Russian workers. There is no contradiction today in Poland between the defense of the workers state and the defense of the Solidarity movement. They are one and the same thing. To talk about subordinating one to the other in this case only obscures the issue.

American Mandelites of Socialist Action and future FIT leader Steve Bloom echo anti-Trotskyist "Third Campists" in hailing clerical-nationalist Polish Solidarność, spearhead of Washington-backed counterrevolution in East Europe.

dissolve into Solidarity, where they will join the "Fourth Internationalist Caucus" (which exists in name only). Socialist Action continues to boast lamely of its ties to the disintegrating USec. But there is nothing in this that politically separates them from Solidarity—which seems to be becoming the elephants' graveyard for American USecers.

Mandel's American Orphans

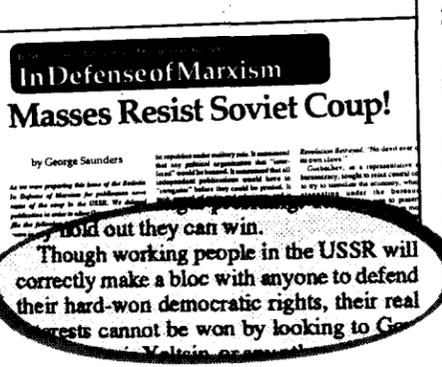
In an internal letter opposing the "fusion" with Solidarity, David Riehle, a longtime leader of the FIT, captured the general spirit of demoralization:

"What is happening in the FIT is a subset of what is happening world wide to the radical, socialist and communist movements as a result of the collapse of Stalinism and 'real, existing socialism' and its repudiation by millions of people, as well as the general stagnation and decline

imperialism's "Bay of Pigs" invasion of Cuba! In his younger days, Solidarity leader Kim Moody used to publish something called *Wildcat*; his current publication, *Labor Notes*, could aptly be named *Bureaucrat*. Among the SWP veterans who were the founders of the FIT are some who go back to the days of the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike; they doubtless found Jack Barnes' notions of "talking socialism" trade-union work to be rather peculiar. Now they're in an organization whose "union" work consists mainly of operating as finks for the feds through outfits like "Teamsters for a Democratic Union"—one of the moving forces in the Reagan government's takeover of the Teamsters union.

But who is Socialist Action to sneer over the "FIT's dissolution into Solidarity"? They have long aspired to serve as

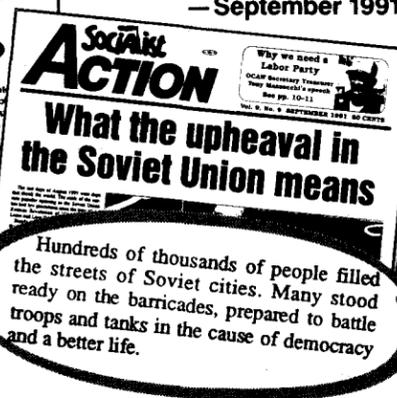
—September 1991



—November/December 1991



—September 1991



Hundreds of thousands of people filled the streets of Soviet cities. Many stood ready on the barricades, prepared to battle troops and tanks in the cause of democracy and a better life.

On the barricades with Yeltsin/Bush: Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Against the Current and Socialist Action celebrate August 1991 victory of open counterrevolutionaries in the USSR.

under the umbrella of the popular front in the name of "unity."

The FIT—No Reason to Be

Those who are looking for a larger and more hospitable emporium to peddle their reformist wares will hardly find it among the ex-Stalinists of the CoC. This crew wants to get in on the ground floor of the Democratic Party and they don't want some leftover "Trotskyites" getting in their way. One is reminded of the old cartoon of the cop beating a man with a billy club. The man yells, "But I'm an anti-Communist!" To which the cop responds, "I don't care what kind of Communist you are." And the CoC doesn't care what kind of "Trotskyite" you are. But the prospect of seeing Barry Sheppard getting trampled on in the CoC is not an unhappy one. It couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

We feel rather differently about the fate of those FITers who were veterans of Cannon's SWP and who now have put themselves at the tender mercies of Solidarity's leadership. An article in *Socialist Action* (October 1992) reports that only those FITers who voted for unity will be allowed into the organization, provided the local Solidarity branch doesn't object. Those who make it in will be joining with the Fourth Internationalist Caucus—a tendency which only meets every two years at Solidarity national conferences and even then only to hear "informational" reports. But it wasn't enough to make the FITers get on their knees and beg, the Shachtmanites ordered the former Cannonists to crawl on their bellies.

While the proponents of this "fusion" made much of Solidarity's agreement to allow for continued publication of the FIT's journal, *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* (*BIDOM*), the rules are that it cannot be published any more frequently than Solidarity's *Against the Current* nor can *BIDOM* "publish any criticism of Solidarity projects." Further, "the network of the magazine's supporters will not be organized to carry out any distinctive political activities in any social movement or organization"! *BIDOM* will henceforth exist at the pleasure of the Solidarity leadership.

According to the *Socialist Action* article, a few FITers refused to sign on as *BIDOM* supporters, "questioning the lack of any organizational control and the largely ceremonial role to which both the editorial board members and supporters would be relegated." Indeed, "disputed questions" and other editorial policy are to be determined through mail polls of subscribers who pay an

"In a Very Small Teacup"

The following remarks about strange goings-on among American supporters of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat (USec) were made by comrade Jim Robertson at the conference last fall of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Something odd happened lately to the variety of groups that split away—well, were expelled away—from the Socialist Workers Party when they decided essentially to disappear Trotsky and Cannon. So that now the revolutionary line of descent is Lenin, Farrell Dobbs, Jack Barnes. And the people who objected to this pantheon were done away with. They ended up in three different groups: Socialist Action, a sort of heavy-handed trade-union-bureaucracy-oriented group, led by Nat Weinstein; the FIT—Fourth

Internationalist Tendency—which old George Breitman set up to try to get back in the SWP by way of being a USec loyalist.

This perspective they pursued for some years, but then two things happened: the SWP walked out of the USec, and George Breitman died. So the FIT thought about it for a year, and has liquidated into the third group, which is a composite group, called Solidarity. Its senior figure is an old-time Shachtmanite-type social democrat named Kim Moody, but they do admit people into it who pretend to a Trotskyist persuasion—if they never, ever act on it or speak about it. So that's where the FIT went.

Meanwhile, Peter Sollenberger [ex of the RWL] is fooling around, sniffing at these various motions. And

something quite large—but probably rather transient—has been formed, the Committees of Correspondence (CoC). The people who got tired of being in Gus Hall's party when the Soviet Union wasn't around anymore formed a more petty-bourgeois wing, which the Gus Hall people—in good Stalinist-proletarian fashion—dumped unceremoniously and fairly physically. Some people from Socialist Action decided that Nat Weinstein was about as tough as Gus Hall, so they went to the CoC.

So now we have a situation on the left in the United States where Bill Clinton, a Democratic Party candidate, has petty-bourgeois support from the CoC, and "proletarian" support from Gus Hall. All in a not-very-large teacup.

additional \$20 a year for the privilege! But it was the last part of the motion on the publication of *BIDOM* passed at the Solidarity convention that has the ugliest undertones. It notes that "at a time when Solidarity is near financial implosion, we are approving a project with a funding base many times the existing Solidarity reserves."

motivated by visions of getting their hands on the *BIDOM* trust fund.

The FIT "Opposition"

The FIT's dissolution into Solidarity was opposed by 39 percent of the organization. Last August, an internal document called "Against Fourth Internationalist Tendency Entry into Solidarity,"

populist, 'progressive' third party of ambiguous class character, 'independent of the Democratic Party'." FIT leader Steve Bloom responded to opponents of the FIT's dissolution into Solidarity:

"Because no matter what terrible utterance—about rejection of program, about 'Leninism leading to Stalinism' or about anything else—Marilyn can quote from some source in Solidarity, I can guarantee you that exactly the same ideas are being expressed in various sections of the Fourth International around the world, even in its leadership bodies!"

While the opposition charged that entering Solidarity was "liquidationist"—what was there to liquidate? The FIT is giving up its name. But that's all it was, a name. Their "perspective" was to "rejuvenate" the SWP—and Jack Barnes pulled that rug out from under them when he split with the USec. As Bloom put it, "When we formed the FIT we explicitly stated our intention of going out of business as soon as possible." Now they are doing just that.

Other FITers objected to surrendering their editorial control of *BIDOM*. For our part, we appreciated the journal's "Archives of Marxism," which featured material from Cannon's SWP and the series "Notebooks for the Grandchildren" by Mikhail Baitalsky, a member of Trotsky's Left Opposition who was imprisoned in one of Stalin's labor camps. But otherwise there was nothing in *BIDOM* that would politically distinguish the FIT from the anti-Leninist, anti-Communist denizens of Solidarity.

continued on page 7



Le Bolchévik

Together again at 1988 Paris confab: Ernest Mandel (left) and one-time mentor Michel Pablo destroyed Fourth International in 1950s and have dragged the banner of Trotskyism through the mud.

Reportedly the main opposition to continued publication of *BIDOM* centered on its "funding base," with speakers arguing that the magazine should be disbanded and the FIT should turn over the money to solve Solidarity's "financial crisis." One is led to wonder, not unreasonably, if Solidarity's sudden interest in the FIT's "unity" appeals was

signed by 14 FIT members (including veterans of the old Socialist Workers Party, who retain a sentimental if completely attenuated attachment to "Trotskyism"), argued: "Solidarity sharply and conclusively rejects the model of the Cannonite SWP; affiliation with the Fourth International; the centrality of the goal of a labor party, as opposed to a

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As Fascists "Celebrate" Hitler's 1933 Takeover

Berlin: Militants Defend Immigrant Hostels

BERLIN, February 4—On Saturday evening, January 30, some 100,000 anti-Nazi protesters took part in a "string of lights" centering on the Brandenburg Gate, the symbol of German nationalism. It was the 60th anniversary of Hindenburg's naming of Adolf Hitler as Reichskanzler, which led straight to the Second World War and the Holocaust. Bourgeois politicians piously intoned "Never again." Yet last year, official statistics recorded almost 2,300 incidents of right-wing terror, including 17 murders. Nazi attacks have become an everyday affair in oh-so-democratic Germany.

In the past week alone, fascists in Schwerin burned down a hostel for foreigners seeking political asylum, while another in Düsseldorf was surrounded by a mob of skinheads hurling stones and screaming racist epithets. And Berlin's Jewish community reported being bombarded by anonymous threats demanding they "leave Germany by Saturday." Meanwhile, the Bonn politicians—from Free Democrats to Christian Democrats (CDU) to Social Democrats (SPD)—are preparing to carry out the fascists' program of "foreigners out" by gutting the right of asylum.

At the same time, the Nazi pogrom in Rostock last summer and the fascist murders of a Turkish family in Mölln have produced a wave of indignation, including against the hypocrisy of the bourgeois/reformist refugee deporters—the skinheads "with tie and a hair part," as novelist Günter Grass described federal interior minister Seiters. And they have galvanized an upsurge of leftist youth protests. The Komitee für soziale Verteidigung (KfsV—Committee for Social Defense), supported by the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), with which it is associated, called for united-front action to mobilize the power of the workers movement against Nazi terror. Under the headline "Workers, Immigrants, Anti-Fascists: Defend the Hostels!" a January 20 KfsV leaflet noted:

"In some places unions have already signed up as 'sponsors' for nearby hostels or, as in the case of Hoesch in Dortmund, organized telephone trees to protect threatened immigrant colleagues. This is a beginning, but what is necessary is determined, organized workers defense groups in front of the hostels and

massive worker/immigrant mobilizations to prevent fascist provocations."

The KfsV call was supported by numerous trade unionists from the Berlin area and from Halle-Bitterfeld in the ex-DDR (East Germany).

As the candles were being lit on Unter den Linden on the 30th, scores of people, mostly youth, met at the KfsV banner in order to organize the protection of a large immigrant hostel in the Berlin area that night. "Candle chains don't defend immigrants," a bullhorn called out: "Put the hostels under workers defense!" Well over 100 people participated in the successful defense action, primarily youth from several districts of Berlin, as well as from Halle, Leipzig and Hamburg. In addition to the SpAD there were members of the Lichtenberg branch of the Party for Democratic Socialism (PDS) and other leftist and anti-fascist organizations. A KfsV press statement on January 31 reported:

"The immigrants were able to have a peaceful night and socialize with the defenders. But in the early morning

hours, after Nazis had circled the hostel several times, fascist provocateurs shot a gas pistol at the guards at one of the entrances to the hostel. The guards were immediately reinforced, and during the next provocation a Nazi car was decisively forced away. Some Nazis left their boots and bomber jackets behind."

On the previous night, the KfsV organized patrols on short notice when reports were received of a possible fascist attack on the hostel. And on the night of January 30-31 there were patrols around a smaller hostel in an outlying area notorious for Nazi attacks on immigrants and other residents. Residents of the hostel complex later thanked the KfsV for the defense, noting that there had been rightist threats in recent months and that the police had previously raided the dormitories on numerous occasions.

Popular Front: Candle Chains and Cops

The deadly fascist assaults and pogroms have polarized Germany, and the sharpening of social tensions has put

increasing pressure on the reformists. The SPD is mainly concerned to demonstrate its "ability to govern" in a bourgeois government. So while SPD chief Engholm and his consorts previously spoke of "expedited processing" of refugees (along with concentration-camp-like "collection camps"), now, under pressure from Kohl's CDU, they have come out directly against the right to asylum. The Social Democracy reacted when a significant number of trade unionists endorsed the KfsV call for workers defense of the immigrant hostels, particularly in the key ÖTV public workers union, which gave Kohl a slap on the ear with its powerful strike last spring. So SPD union bureaucrats mobilized to prevent formal endorsements from turning into real union participation in the defense action.

For its part, the PDS, rather than mobilizing against the Nazis on January 29-30, was involved in wrangling over participation in competing demonstrations. (Nevertheless, some PDS districts actively supported the January 30 hostel defense action, including the PDS faction in the Bitterfeld city council.) Having been excluded from the speakers list at the January 30 popular-front demonstration, the PDS tops discovered that "Lights Don't Replace a Wrong Policy" (*Neues Deutschland*, 1 February). The leaders of the JRE (Youth Against Racism in Europe), on the other hand, declare that the "chain of lights were an impressive sign of protest" and eagerly join in. While PDS youth have joined the JRE in the East, its leadership lies in the hands of the Voran group (associated with the social-democratic Militant group in Britain), which for decades has been a loyal "left" house opposition within the SPD.

"Chains of light" and the police—these are what the reformists today call for against the fascists. Even many youth who orient to the Autonomie have illusions in the police, at least the Berlin police, thinking that when they are there,



At January 30 Berlin demonstration, militants gather under KfsV banner calling for workers defense of immigrant hostels against Nazi terror.

Spartakist



Nazi skinheads wreak murder and terror throughout German Fourth Reich. House in Mölln firebombed by fascists last November, killing a Turkish family.

the fascists won't attack. This echoes the Social Democrats in the 1930s, who appealed: "Staat, greif zu!" (State, intervene!). Then many thought that police recruited from the SPD wouldn't go after workers; today some feel that police taken over from the DDR won't support fascists. But just look at Rostock, where the police made a deal with the fascists to carry out their pogrom and bottled up the leftists.

The PDS calls for more cops against Nazis. Voran has called for "trade-union control" of the police. We Trotskyists, in contrast, uphold the basic axiom put forward by Marx, Engels and Lenin, that the bourgeois state is the core of capitalist class rule, the fascists are the shock troops of capital, and thus the cops and courts will inevitably be used against the left, the workers movement and the oppressed.

As for the "chains of light," these only serve to chain the oppressed to their oppressors in one big people's front, extending from the pseudo-Marxist left through the PDS and SPD to the coalition government in Bonn, all serving to improve Germany's image abroad, and not incidentally the export earnings of German capital. Meanwhile, the Spartakists, who tore down the huge Nazi flag at the Brandenburg Gate last June, are being hauled before the judges in the same Moabit court building where the Honecker show trial has been taking place, charged with destroying an "object of art"!

Build a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

Our organization of the immigrant hostel defense of January 30-31 was an *exemplary action*, seeking to put into practice the Trotskyist program of workers mobilization against the fascist threat. As a result of the social-democratic blowback and countermobi-



Residents of Berlin immigrant hostel participate in united-front action against Nazi threat, January 24.

lization against the KfsV initiative, we were not able this time to achieve a full-fledged *workers defense* including organized trade-union participation. The bulk of the participants were working-class youth, including those who look to the Autonomie as a radical rejection of bourgeois society. But in sharp contrast to the semi-anarchistic Autonomie, the KfsV-initiated united-front hostel defense was characterized by effective proletarian discipline.

Today the fascists don't dare to show their heads openly in Berlin except under direct cop protection. Should the Nazis attempt to stage an open provocation, there must be a united mobilization of the workers movement to disperse these deadly terrorists and to root them out of their rat holes. That is what the SpAD and KfsV sought to do against the Nazi march in Halle on 9 November 1991, and what we continue to fight for today.

And this is what our Canadian comrades did last month in Vancouver, when 3,000 trade unionists, leftists and minorities put the Nazis on the run.

Before Hitler's columns reached the portals of power, Trotsky repeatedly called for a workers united front embracing the principal organizations of the German proletariat, such as in his pamphlet *What Next?* (January 1932), which was distributed in the tens of thousands. It is a commonplace today that if Trotsky's policy had been followed then, the Nazis would never have come to power.

The key is the question of the revolutionary party, which learns from the experience of the class struggle, educating the cadres to appeal to the most conscious layers of the workers and galvanize them behind their class interests. The German Trotskyists in the 1930s were weak and isolated. But even so they sought to put their class-struggle pro-

U.S. USec...

(continued from page 5)

For that matter, the FIT outdid these Shachtmanites as PR agents for any and every reactionary nationalist movement in the former Soviet Union.

As for the "model of the Cannonite SWP"—the revolutionary politics that animated Cannon's party had been thrown out the window two decades before Jack Barnes officially renounced Trotskyism and initiated his purges of the last vestiges of the old SWP. The SWP consolidated on a thoroughly reformist basis in the late 1960s/early 1970s when the organization worked to contain opposition to the Vietnam War within the framework of capitalist politics. Yet for the FIT, like for Socialist Action, these are the "good old days" of the SWP.

It's hardly a far cry from acting as the brokers for the Democratic Party "doves" in the Vietnam antiwar movement to giving electoral support to a "third party of ambiguous class character." Indeed, it was precisely the question of both organizations' support to Ron Daniels' presidential campaign that the FIT's unity mongers pointed to as evidence of the increasing "political convergence" between themselves and Solidarity.

Grasping at straws, the only thing the FIT oppositionists could dredge up as a "principled" issue for not dissolving into Solidarity was the question of which popular-front antiwar coalition to capitulate to during the Persian Gulf War! "We had a clear and unambiguous difference with Solidarity on this crucial question," opined David Riehle in his letter. The difference? The FIT called for both coalitions to "unite" to build a mass social-patriotic mobilization, while Solidarity opted to build only one of these red-white-and-blue demonstrations.

While the proponents of dissolving

into Solidarity attempted to portray this as some kind of present-day equivalent of the "French Turn"—when the Trotskyists entered Social Democratic parties in the 1930s to win leftward-moving youth and workers to revolutionary politics—Riehle complained, "I'm too old to join the YPSL's," referring to the Young People's Socialist League, youth group of the American Socialist Party.

To compare the YPSL of the 1930s with the aging, "Big Chill" social democrats of Solidarity is, in a word, grotesque. The intervention of the American Trotskyists into the Socialist Party in the '30s, which ripped out a whole layer, was aimed at forging a revolutionary leadership of the workers movement. In contrast, the FIT is hoping to cash in on Solidarity's "influence" in labor, i.e., on these Shachtmanite castoffs' operation as social-democratic braintrusters for a middle layer of the trade-union bureaucracy, for whom the U.S. Justice Department and the capitalist courts are the main arenas for "struggle."

As we wrote of the FIT in our article "Barnes Axes Last Veterans of the Old SWP" (WV No. 353, 27 April 1984):

"It's no accident that those of us who go back personally to the SWP have feelings of affection for some of these comrades and no sympathy whatever for the Weinstein crowd. This is a modest psychological reflection of the political realities. The FITers' impulse to cling to Cannon and Trotsky is not so much a program as an act of nostalgia, but an honorable act nonetheless. We have to have some considerable respect for their decades in the Trotskyist movement and for the evident sincerity of their effort not to betray Trotskyism as they understand it—a pale pink attempt at red orthodoxy."

But blinded by their own politics, the old-timers from the SWP who went on to establish themselves as the FIT could not see that the decisive break in the revolutionary continuity of Cannon's party had come some 20 years before Jack Barnes overtly wrote off Trotsky as an "ultraleftist."

However much they wanted to deny

it, these FITers were part of an SWP which began to abandon Trotskyism in 1960—a slide which began with abstentionist tailing of black nationalism in the civil rights struggle and embrace of Castro's petty-bourgeois guerrillas as the equivalent of the proletarian internationalist leadership of the Bolshevik Revolution, and ended in the SWP's decisive degeneration into reformism around the Vietnam antiwar movement. The party the FIT sought to "rejuvenate" had long been dead to revolutionary politics. Now these SWP veterans have reached the end of the line.

Even those who went along with the "fusion" with Solidarity were not particularly sanguine about it. As FIT leader Frank Lovell, a longtime cadre of the old SWP, put it in a letter responding to Riehle's objections to the "fusion" with Solidarity: "It is not an inspiring picture. But we must look at it for what it is, and try and figure out if there is anything we can do to influence the course of change that is going on within these remnants of the radical movement."

Revolutionary Continuity

The origins of the Spartacist League are in the Revolutionary Tendency, a left opposition within the SWP in the early 1960s which fought to reverse the party's slide into centrism. The RT, centered in the SWP's youth organization, sought to win a chunk of veteran party members. We recognized in them the living continuity with the revolutionary party of James P. Cannon, which, despite some weaknesses easier to see in hindsight, we believe possessed the capacity to lead a workers revolution in this country if such an opportunity had opened during the effective political lifetime of its central cadre. The RT's bureaucratic expulsion in 1963, which was the organizational handmaiden to the decisive slide of the SWP into reformism, frustrated our attempt to win these veterans.

The ex post facto justification for the

gram into practice. A Workers Struggle Committee, initiated by the Trotskyist Left Opposition, was founded in early 1932 in Oranienburg near Berlin, embracing the KPD (Communist Party), SPD, unions and unemployed committees; that summer it set up a workers *Schutzstaffel* (defense squadron).

The workers united front for which the Trotskyists fight is the application of the lessons of the successful organization of the proletariat by the Bolsheviks in the Russian October Revolution of 1917. Today the revanchist German bourgeoisie is seeking to rewrite history to wipe out Bolshevism, and in particular to reverse its own defeat at the battle of Stalingrad. The surrender of the German Wehrmacht in Stalingrad on 31 January 1943 marked a heroic Red Army victory demonstrating the vitality of the conquests of October, even after two decades of Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration. But five decades later, counterrevolution has triumphed in the former Soviet Union, as it did in East Germany before that, without decisive resistance by the working class.

The SpAD, which alone said "no" to capitalist reunification, without any ifs, ands or buts, today continues to fight against the devastating consequences of that counterrevolution—not least of which is the upsurge of Nazi terror. As the German bourgeoisie tries to shove the costs of their victory down the throats of the workers, East and West, through the lie of a "solidarity pact," the SPD, PDS and other reformists haggle over the terms of the wage cuts and dismantling of social programs. In contrast, the Spartakists call for sharp class struggle by the working class, including its strategic immigrant component, to defend their interests against the common enemy, and to sweep away the fascist plague by bringing down the capitalist system that breeds it. ■

purge of the RT—the first-ever political expulsion in the history of the SWP—was codified in a 1965 organizational resolution which effectively prohibited factional rights in the SWP. Two decades later this resolution was wielded by Barnes in the mass purges of the mid-1980s which ousted the last cadres of the old party. Lacking a revolutionary program, these veterans couldn't understand what hit them, and now the last of them have reached the end of the road.

As we wrote in "Barnes Axes Last Veterans of the Old SWP":

"...of all the significant splits from the SWP in past decades, only the Spartacists have persisted for more than 20 years as an effective national organization of ostensible Trotskyism.... It is because we know where we came from, because of our political roots in the fight against the disintegration of the SWP as a revolutionary instrument, that we are here. We stand on the shoulders of the old revolutionary SWP—the American Trotskyist organization founded by Jim Cannon and a cadre of comrades who split out of the early Communist Party in defense of Leninism, the organization through which Trotsky led the Fourth International directly until his assassination by Stalin in 1940. That's *our* SWP; it's not Barnes', and it never was." ■

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"Willie Horton Socialists"

Cops, Crime and the BT

The multiracial explosion which erupted in Los Angeles last May, following the acquittal of the racist cops who beat black motorist Rodney King, was a demonstration of deep-seated outrage over cop terror. The videotape of the lynch mob in blue uniforms methodically, repetitively and sadistically torturing King as he lay helpless on the ground drove home the searing image of the racist police brutality that is everyday reality in America. The L.A. upheaval sparked an outpouring of protest across the country.

The ruling class sent in an army of cops and troops to suppress this explosion of plebeian rage, while orchestrating racist hysteria against "criminal elements." California's Lalaland yuppies, who already had "armed response" signs all over their neatly manicured front lawns, reacted with heightened fear and loathing of "mob violence." And on the left, one dubious little outfit rushed in to offer a "socialist" cover to the "anti-riot" hysteria. As tens of thousands took to the streets against cop terror, the so-called "Bolshevik" Tendency issued a leaflet which raised the call for "workers defense guards" as a way to "expose the futility of individual terrorism, and thus prevent bloody spontaneous explosions, like riots!"

From appealing for labor auxiliaries to police the ghettos and barrios, the BT has now gone a bizarre step further, devoting a four-page issue of its *1917 West* (October 1992) to the question of "Cops, Crime & Capitalism." Here we read: "The police occasionally do useful things, of course, such as directing traffic, comforting children and even risking their lives to rescue victims of disasters." The BT's "evenhanded" portrayal of the police would surely come as news to the mother of five-year-old Patrick Mason, the black child gunned down in his own home by an Orange County cop in 1983, or to residents of the poor, black West Oakland neighborhood who tried to rescue survivors of the 1988 earthquake and were driven off by gun-wielding cops.

To be sure, the BT article also denounces "police brutality," and even genuflects to the Marxist understanding that the cops are "the armed fist of the ruling class"—enough at least to cover its ass with a veneer of orthodoxy. But occasional Marxist phraseology notwithstanding, what agitates these "Marxists" is not the rampant police violence which sparked mass upheavals and drew international attention, but random street crime. The BT article goes on and on about "fear of crime," how "crime is an explosive issue," how the U.S. "has one of the world's highest rates of violent crime"—even providing an Interpol readout of statistics for murders, rapes and robberies.

"Crime in the streets" is stock in trade for every racist bourgeois politician in this deeply racist society, the "genteel" way to play the race card. In 1988, George Bush rode into the White House on the "Willie Horton" affair, as Democrat Dukakis was excoriated for paroling a black convict who allegedly went on to commit a rape. Bush couldn't pull it off in '92, running against "Governor Death Penalty" Clinton. But that didn't

"Nonviolence Guidelines," "We must recognize that just as all panhandlers are not aggressive, all cops are not into police brutality."

Extending the hand of recognition, the BT writes: "Even if some cops are not subjectively racist.... The conditions in which the police perform their function of controlling people who live in brutally dehumanizing conditions on the margins of society, require and reproduce police

huge (and economically irrational) investments in the machinery of repression which would further erode the competitive position of American capitalism." There you are, the problem with a police state is...it's too expensive!

The BT obviously hasn't noticed, but a virtual reign of police-state terror already exists in the inner cities, while a wholesale legal counterrevolution has gone a fair way in turning the entire country into some kind of "democratic" police state. The racist American rulers aren't as "rational" as the BT would have them be. Having looted the productive wealth of this country, they seek to preserve the "competitive position of American capitalism" by throwing their military firepower around abroad and spending billions upon billions on more cops and prisons to maintain their decrepit rule at home.



BT panders to "law and order" racism typified by vigilante "Citizen's Crime Watch" in Florida. Cops, armed thugs of the capitalist class, set to attack Latino janitors in Los Angeles, 1990.

stop the BT from making "crime" its issue during the election campaign!

The Labor Aristocracy and Liberal Reformers

What's going on here? The BT has for years tried to sidle up to the racist labor bureaucracy, exhibiting arrogant indifference to the hideous oppression of black people in this country. When the Spartacist League initiated a massive labor/black mobilization that stopped the Ku Klux Klan from marching in Washington, D.C. in November 1982, this crew of embittered ex-members sneered that this was evidence of our turn "away from the unions" to "ghetto work." A couple of years later, the BT's model of a "trade-union militant," Howard Keylor, sought to give a labor face to the longshore bosses' anti-drug witchhunt by calling for "union discipline as part of the effort to help the brothers overcome their problems."

Of late, the Bay Area BT has thrown itself into a Berkeley outfit called "Copwatch," whose declared aim is to "reduce police violence and harassment through accountability." Of course these liberals have no argument with the capitalist cops per se—just with the "excesses" they perform "in the line of duty." Or, as Copwatch puts it in its

forces which are brutal and racist institutions." The cops don't mean to be racist pigs, says the BT, it's just the "brutally dehumanizing conditions on the margins of society" (read: the ghetto streets) they're subjected to. If this has a familiar ring, recall that LAPD cop Stacey Koon justified his role in the Rodney King beating by telling the all-white Simi Valley jury: "Sometimes police work is brutal. That's just a fact of life." Meanwhile one of the defense lawyers explained that the cops were "part of the line between society and chaos."

Brandishing a fig leaf, the BT cautions against any illusions that police "abuses" can be eliminated under capitalism. Nonetheless, they argue, "depending on the political composition and effective powers given to it, establishing a civilian police review board with a real measure of independence from the cops is a demand which Marxists can support." Indeed, the BT boasts of its own role "in presenting individual cases of police misconduct before the Berkeley Police Review Commission."

At times, the issue of a civilian review board essentially becomes a referendum on racism and cop bonapartism, as it did in New York City last year when 10,000 cops stormed City Hall against a bill to replace cops on the sham Civilian Complaint Review Board with civilians. But this is not a demand which Marxists espouse. As we wrote then: "Civilian review boards are designed to curb the independent mobilization of workers and minorities against police terror by fostering illusions that 'neutral' government can 'moderate' the 'excesses' of the police" ("NYPD Lynch Mob Frenzy," WV No. 560, 2 October 1992).

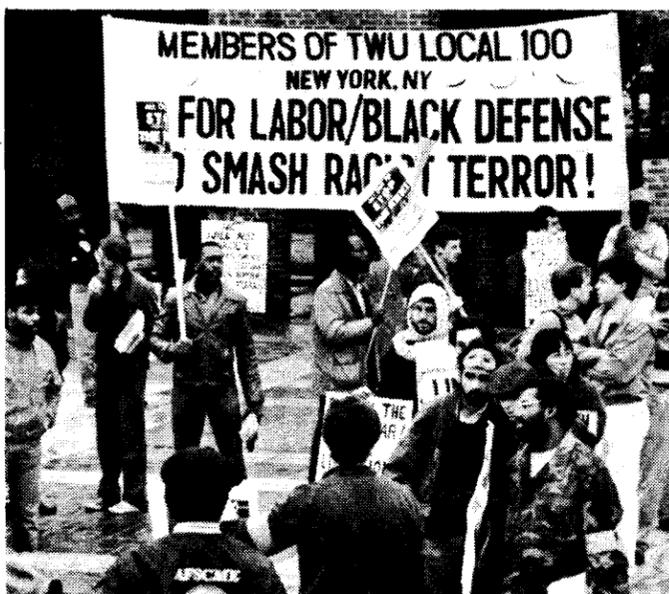
Consistent Crime-Fighting Leads to Socialism?

The BT is intent on proving to its liberal colleagues in Copwatch that "socialists" are the most consistent fighters against "crime." To this end, they plumb the depths and "expose" all the options available under capitalism. And we do mean all: "the institution of a police state might at least in the short term, substantially reduce crime—but it would require

Capitalism can't stop crime, concludes the BT, so "What can be done?" As a "proletarian" answer, they offer up the model of the February 1917 revolution, which "created the most 'crime free' period in modern Russian history up to that time." So apparently the real gain of the February Revolution was not the overthrow of tsarist despotism, not opening the road to soviet power, but a successful fight against street crime! Remarkably, in all three volumes of Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, this point is never made. And while reducing the February Revolution to the most successful "crimebuster" in history, the BT studiously neglects to mention the October Revolution, which smashed the criminal rule of the bourgeoisie and brought the working class to power.

Capitalist America is a vicious, violent society, where many people are afraid to walk the streets at night. Indeed, a system based on wholesale theft of the labor and lives of working people, on economic coercion and vicious class inequality and racism, cannot but give rise to violence and fear. But the BT article, while pushing notorious racist buttons like drugs and prostitution and declaring homeless people "less socially acceptable," is completely oblivious to lynch mob murders like Howard Beach and Bensonhurst. And while the BT rightly opposes gun control, in its own "colorblind" manner, it conspicuously avoids taking a stand against the racist death penalty. Indeed, their article devotes barely a sentence to the big-time criminals—the capitalist rulers who A-bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, who slaughtered two million Vietnamese in a dirty imperialist war, who rained down death on more than 100,000 Iraqis only two years ago.

The BT writes that its "Marxist analysis of a class-divided community has at times been a point of debate within Copwatch." Copwatch and the other "good civilians" of the Berkeley Police Review Commission needn't worry. Any "Marxism" the BT raises, it doesn't really mean. On the contrary, "Cops, Crime and Capitalism" is simply their attempt to give a "proletarian" facelift to liberal "law and order" reaction. ■



Labor/black mobilizations, such as that which stopped the Klan and skinheads from parading in Philadelphia in 1988, are disparaged by the BT as Spartacist turn to "ghetto work."

Gays...

(continued from page 1)

we carry on the tradition of militant Marxist opposition to imperialist war, as expressed in the slogan "Not one man, not one penny!" for the imperialist army. At the same time, the military is a microcosm of society as a whole, and just as we fight against racist atrocities and discrimination in "civilian" society, so we oppose it in the armed forces.

Open gays and lesbians have just as much right as anyone else to participate in the armed forces. The "Dreyfus Affair" of the 1890s in France became a key test for socialists then on the question of democratic rights. Captain Alfred Dreyfus was a Jewish career army officer who was framed up on espionage charges and sent to Devil's Island in a frenzy of vindictive anti-Semitism. The Dreyfus affair brought France to the brink of civil war between the bourgeois right—the officer caste and Catholic hierarchy—and the socialist-led workers movement.

Since practically everyone admits that gays have always served in the military, the screeching opposition now coming from the military brass reeks of hypocrisy. While anti-homosexual exclusion in the military goes back decades, an executive order banning gays outright came with a 1982 Reagan directive stating, "Homosexuality is incompatible with military service." In the 1980s, anti-gay purges surpassed even the World War II period or the 1950s, when Cold War witchhunts against both suspected Communists and homosexuals reached a crescendo. Yet such stalwart anti-Commie witchhunters of the period as Roy Cohn and J. Edgar Hoover participated in gay parties at NYC's Plaza Hotel, where Hoover reportedly sported high heels, wig, black chiffon and "Under his dress he was wearing a little, short garter belt" (*New York Post*, 5 February). Gives new meaning to the phrase "G-man."

Everyone knows that sexual orientation has nothing to do with fighting capacity. Every cadet in every military academy in the world studies the battles



of Alexander the Great of Macedonia and Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia. All students of military history know that these two commanders were openly homosexual. And Alexander could have taken apart the entire U.S. Joint Chiefs in single combat, for in those days commanders led their men into battle.

Gays and Blacks in World War II

When the U.S. entered WW II, the massive need for manpower temporarily overwhelmed more "normal" prejudices. Toward the end of the war, some blacks began to be integrated into white fighting units, both blacks and women joined military units and became industrialized in unprecedented numbers, and many conscripted gays and lesbians found themselves for the first time thrust into a broader social milieu, discovering there were many others across the nation like themselves, as Allan Bérubé noted in his history of gays in the World War II military, *Coming Out Under Fire* (1990). However, black soldiers continued to be victimized by white racist officers. Almost four times as many black GIs as whites were executed in Europe by military courts, even though they made up only 10 percent of the troops.

Toward the end of the war, tens of

thousands of veterans—disproportionately gay and black—were drummed out of the service with "blue" (undesirable) discharges, which not only stigmatized them in efforts to get civilian jobs, but cut them off from GI benefits. Military apologists for the gay ban deny any connection between gay rights and the struggle leading to the 1948 racial desegregation order. But in fact black civil rights activists at the time, in addition to fighting Jim Crow in the military, also championed the cause of the discharged homosexual soldiers. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, then the most widely read black newspaper in the U.S., campaigned "in behalf of veterans who are holders of blue discharges," specifically including homosexuals, asserting it was "fighting for the rights of the 37,000 white veterans involved as well as for those of the 10,000 Negroes involved."

The U.S. ruling class has always been deeply ambivalent about arming blacks. While the "volunteer" American army overwhelmingly relies on black and Hispanic, as well as white working-class, soldiers to carry out its racist wars of conquest overseas, at the same time the integration of blacks into the armed forces is a potentially powerful base for struggles for black emancipation.

Allowing gays into the military with

full rights is a simple democratic demand. However even if the formal ban is dropped, gays will still face harassment and violence at the hands of bigoted officers and fellow soldiers in this bigoted society. Career military types bluster that allowing gays in will undermine the "morality" of the military—that piggish, male-chauvinist "morality" exemplified by the Navy Tailhook affair, where drunken officers mauled any woman in the vicinity. Gay oppression is rooted in the ideology of the family, an institution which is a bedrock of capitalism.

In sweeping away capitalism and tsarist autocracy, the Russian Revolution also eliminated all laws against homosexuality. We would also note that it was the Soviet Red Army which in practice solved the apparently thorny problem U.S. military types can't seem to figure out: Can women really fight? The "Night Witches" women's units in the Soviet Union's World War II air force struck terror into the Nazis' air aces. These female bombers and fighters were defending not just their homeland, but a workers state, albeit deformed, against imperialist attack. When we have our own American workers state to defend, our army will be in the forefront of eliminating discrimination and oppression. ■

Supreme Court...

(continued from page 1)

carried out when he was 17 years old could not retroactively appeal for leniency on the basis of a later precedent. In the other case, it held up a "new rule" to dismiss an appeal based on an old precedent. By the macabre Catch-22 of the high court executioners, the only "rule" that counts is the one that sends you to the chair!

In an angry dissent, Justice Harry Blackmun denounced the Herrera ruling as being "perilously close to simple murder." Rehnquist & Co. are more than "perilously close"—they're over the precipice. Last April the Rehnquist Court explicitly ordered an appeals court to stop issuing stays of execution, so that the California gas chamber could claim its first victim in 25 years. A month later, the Supreme Court refused to halt the execution of Virginian Roger Coleman despite substantial evidence of innocence. It is a measure of the scope of the Reagan/Bush legal counterrevolution that only one of the nine judges could bring himself to make the simple statement: "I believe it contrary to any standard of decency to execute someone who is actually innocent."

With legal constraints disappearing and bipartisan legislatures expanding the list of crimes punishable by death, the death toll grows higher each year. Last year, 31 people were executed in the U.S., the greatest number since 1962. And with Democrat Bill Clinton in the White House, the assembly line of death is likely to be moving even faster. Just in the month Clinton was inaugurated, there were three executions:

- On January 9, the State of Washing-

ton carried out the country's first legal hanging in 28 years, as Westley Allan Dodd swung through a trapdoor with a noose around his neck.

- On the eve of the inauguration, disabled Virginia prisoner Charles Stamper was rolled into the electrocution chamber and strapped into the chair.

- A week later, a Missouri executioner injected poison into the arm of 35-year-old Martsay Bolder.

While anti-abortion and anti-gay reactionaries rail at Clinton as a hopeless "liberal," when it comes to legal lynching the Dixie yuppie is at one with the "right-to-lifers." During the election campaign, a Clinton spokesman boasted his boss "is the only candidate in the race who has carried out the death penalty." Clinton ostentatiously took time out from the campaign to return to Arkansas to oversee the legal murder of a brain-damaged black man. The brutal reality of Clinton's "New Arkansas" was in full view when a racist backlash was unleashed against the first black man to serve as acting governor in the state. When Dr. Jerry Jewell used his four days as governor (while Clinton's successor attended the inauguration) to grant clemency to two inmates and pardon two parolees, white legislators erupted in indignation, while Jewell was besieged with phone threats and racial slurs.

In this capitalist system based upon social inequality, the government's only answer to the growing crime rate bred by its decaying economy and racist oppression is greater state repression. The U.S. leads all industrialized countries, including racist South Africa, in executions. In fact, the semi-bonapartist Salinas regime in Mexico, which normally goes out of its way to lick Washington's boots, has been forced by a wave of popular outrage to protest the

threatened executions of 18 Mexican immigrants on death row in the U.S.

The racist American rulers don't just use the death penalty—they revel in it. San Quentin prison actually has a museum (!), whose greatest attraction is the death penalty wing (situated next to the gift shop). The ghoulish exhibit includes replicas of the old gallows and the current gas chamber, a "personal collection" of miniature nooses tagged with the victims' ID numbers which are "souvenirs" of 150 "successful" executions, and other grisly displays. Kids can't go into an R-rated film, there are fewer and fewer libraries and museums open, but parents can always take them for an "educational" outing to San Quentin's hall of death.

We do not accord this racist capitalist state the right to say who lives and who dies. As the Herrera case shows, to the rulers of this country innocence doesn't matter when the victim of "legal" state murder is poor, black or Hispanic, like

most of the over 2,500 men and women crowded into death rows across the country. Ultimately the death penalty is intended for those who fight against the depravity of this vicious system—Sacco and Vanzetti, the Rosenbergs, and current Pennsylvania death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, a lifelong fighter for black equality and a piercing critic of the bourgeoisie's racist hypocrisy, inequality and barbarity. Save Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!

Ultimately it is only socialist revolution that can end the system of capitalist lynch law and guarantee the rights of the oppressed. And for that it is necessary to build a revolutionary party which will lead the working class and its allies in overthrowing capitalist class rule. Then and only then will the Supreme Court of capitalist injustice join the other relics of the barbaric past, the medieval rack and the modern death chamber. ■

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Black Teenager Gunned Down in Bay Area

Racist Killer Cop Walks

OAKLAND—The Alameda County D.A.'s decision on January 22 not to press any charges against the killer of 19-year-old Jerrold Hall has fueled widespread anger in the East Bay black community. Last November 15, Bay Area Rapid Transit cop Fred Crabtree leveled a 12-gauge shotgun blast at the back of the black teenager's head. Obscenely, while the killer cop walks free, Hall's friend John Henry Owens was initially charged with being an "accomplice" to the "murder" of his friend—by the cop! He now faces a six-year sentence for felony robbery.

Crabtree claims he stopped Hall and Owens outside the Hayward BART station on suspicion of having robbed a passenger at gunpoint. His shotgun loaded, the cop ordered the two youths to drop spread-eagle on the ground. When Hall objected, Crabtree slammed his head with the shotgun with such force that a piece of the stock broke off. As the young men walked away

from him, Crabtree fired his shotgun twice; the second blast left Hall dying in a pool of blood. According to the D.A., the cop used "reasonable force." Yet not one person saw Hall with a gun that night, not even Crabtree, who says only that the young man *could* have had one. After a brief "internal investigation," Crabtree was returned to duty.

The cover-up began immediately. BART officials lied that Hall had been shot in the chest while attacking the cop. Now the D.A. endorses Crabtree's claim that the 6'4", 225-pound cop—who was armed with a shotgun, pistol and mace and accompanied by an attack dog—felt his life threatened by an unarmed 5'6", 135-pound black teenager! This is the same Alameda County D.A.'s office which was in the front line of the FBI's war against the Black Panthers and whose most notorious alumnus was Reagan's top cop, Ed Meese. Now, seeking to quell outrage over Hall's murder, the FBI has an-

nounced an "investigation" to determine if the killer cop "violated the young man's civil rights"!

The obscene murder charge against Owens was dropped after 72 hours. But he was kept in jail for *two months* on the felony robbery charge, until bail was finally reduced to \$1,000, a tacit admission that there's no case against him. Another hearing has been set for March 16, though the cops have yet to produce the purported robbery victim. Owens now faces six years in prison, his only "crime" being that he survived Crabtree's murderous assault. Drop the charges now!

Jerrold Hall's father is an Alameda fire captain and human rights commissioner in nearby Union City where he lives. Every black person in the East Bay knows it could have been their son. During and after World War II, black workers came to the Bay Area by the thousands to work in the Kaiser shipyards. Today Oakland has the larg-

est proportion of blacks of any California city. The cities of the Bay Area are overwhelmingly presided over by Democratic Party administrations, and Oakland's mayor is a black Democrat. Yet little has changed; Oakland's mainly white police force is notorious for racist brutality.

The FBI "investigation" is nothing but eyewash. Just look at the farcical federal prosecution of the racist cops who beat Rodney King which is taking place even as the virtual police-state siege of South-Central Los Angeles is strengthened. Yet the demand for a federal investigation into the murder of Jerrold Hall, together with calls for impotent "civilian review boards" to curb the mad dog cops, is the sum total of the response of various radlibs and fake-leftists. They look to the racist Dixie "yuppies" in the Clinton White House for "justice."

The integrated unions of the Bay Area have the power to organize a massive display of the social power of labor and minorities to demand the jailing of the killer cop and that the charges be dropped against John Henry Owens. Only when this racist capitalist system is swept away by socialist revolution will Jerrold Hall and the other already too numerous victims of cop terror be avenged!

Steel Strike...

(continued from page 12)

home and hit with frame-up charges of "discharging a firearm and reckless endangerment." Drop the charges! No victimizations!

"We Are Union! We Are Union!"

Less than a month after the strike began, the company tried to reopen the plant with scabs. On a Sunday night they brought in hired thugs from the Special Response Corporation (SRC), infamous for their strikebreaking in the New York *Daily News* strike two years ago. These company cops, clad in full riot gear, erected two "observation towers" outfitted with video cameras and tear gas.

But when two carloads of SRC goons approached the gate on the morning of October 12, they were met by over 500 pickets, as the strikers' ranks were bolstered by steel workers and miners from the area. Chants of "We are union! We are union!" rang out from the picket line. The strikebreakers unleashed a barrage of tear gas, but as one group of strikers retreated, another took their place. The guard towers came down—one with an SRC thug still in it—and for three days nothing moved in or out. But a county



Local 9226 members put the match to company letters firing over 50 strikers.

judge handed down an injunction on October 14 limiting pickets to ten per gate. The company has since moved in scabs, although Local 9226 president James Allen told *WV* they have not shipped any rail cars out.

The strikers are demanding parity with UAW workers at Trinity's other rail car plant in Greenville, Pennsylvania. But

the UAW tops refuse to pull out the Greenville plant in solidarity, even with Trinity set to target the local when their contract is up in March. The last thing the pro-capitalist union tops want is some hard class struggle that disrupts the honeymoon of their anti-union, right-to-work Democrat, Bill Clinton. And despite the strikebreaking role of the cops and courts, the reformist SWP continues to alibi the union tops and push illusions in the neutrality of the capitalist state. The SWP's *Militant* (30 October 1992) declared that strikers "scored a victory" when the judge restricted the company's use of the Special Response goons (but not the scabherding cops) and *simultaneously* enjoined the union from mass picketing.

The strikers won the battle of October 12 because *mass pickets* stopped the scabs—and that is exactly what the bosses' courts want to outlaw. That is the lesson of the lockout of Ravenswood, West Virginia steel workers, who held out for 19 months in defense of their union, but were forced to return alongside scabs after the USWA International sabotaged their fight by pushing an impotent consumer boycott, instead of the mass pickets and hot cargoing needed to win. Now Ravenswood worker Bob Buck sits in a federal prison for the "crime" of refusing to fink for the feds on his union brothers. Freedom for Bob Buck!

"Cauldron of Class Conflict"

The Bessemer-Birmingham area is no stranger to class war. In this area rich

in coal and ore, the capitalist class sought to guarantee a cheap labor force by keeping the workers unorganized and racially divided. But under the leadership of Communist Party militants who fought against all-sided racist oppression, Birmingham became "a cauldron of class conflict," as Robin Kelly called it in his history of Alabama Communists during the Depression, *Hammer and Hoe* (Chapel Hill, 1990). It was here that courageous black Communist Angelo Herndon organized black and white miners and the unemployed in the late 1920s.

In 1936 black steel workers in Birmingham, led by Communists Joe Howard and C. Dave Smith, won a strike by organizing Alabama's first sitdown. This challenge to the capitalists' precious private property terrified the bosses—and the labor tops in the Alabama CIO, who fired Howard and Smith as Steelworker organizers. Communist union organizers were beaten, jailed and tortured by the Klan and cops, but their defiance attracted the downtrodden black masses. When the fascists warned, "Negroes Beware—Do Not Attend Communist Meetings—The Ku Klux Klan Is Watching You," black Communists responded with their own leaflets declaring: "KKK! The Workers Are Watching You!" Birmingham blacks saw the fight for industrial unions "as a crusade for racial justice," and poured into the new CIO unions.

In order to forge the multiracial unity necessary to win strikes, you need a class-struggle leadership willing to go up against the whole system of racist oppression, from the company judges to the Klan to the racist Democratic Party. In the Deep South in the 1930s there were thousands of subjectively revolutionary black—and white—workers who fought for an end to the capitalist system they recognized as the bedrock of the deep racist oppression of blacks. In the words of one Communist, "The first Civil War didn't free them, but this one will." It is one of the greatest crimes of the reformist CP that they betrayed this struggle on the altar of their popular-front alliance with the Democratic Party. What is needed is a revolutionary workers party, in which the combative black proletariat will play a leading role.

Today in Bessemer, the courage of the integrated Trinity strikers should be an inspiration to the rest of Birmingham labor, and workers throughout the South. Mobilize mass pickets to win—Victory to the Bessemer strike! ■

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Coal Strike...

(continued from page 12)

And the rest of labor had better stand with them. Thousands of tons of Peabody and Eastern coal are sitting on the docks in Newport News, Virginia and at the Great Lakes ports of Sandusky and Toledo. Union workers on the Norfolk Southern and CSX railroads haul tons of coal every day. Rail workers, longshoremen, power workers—don't touch scab coal!

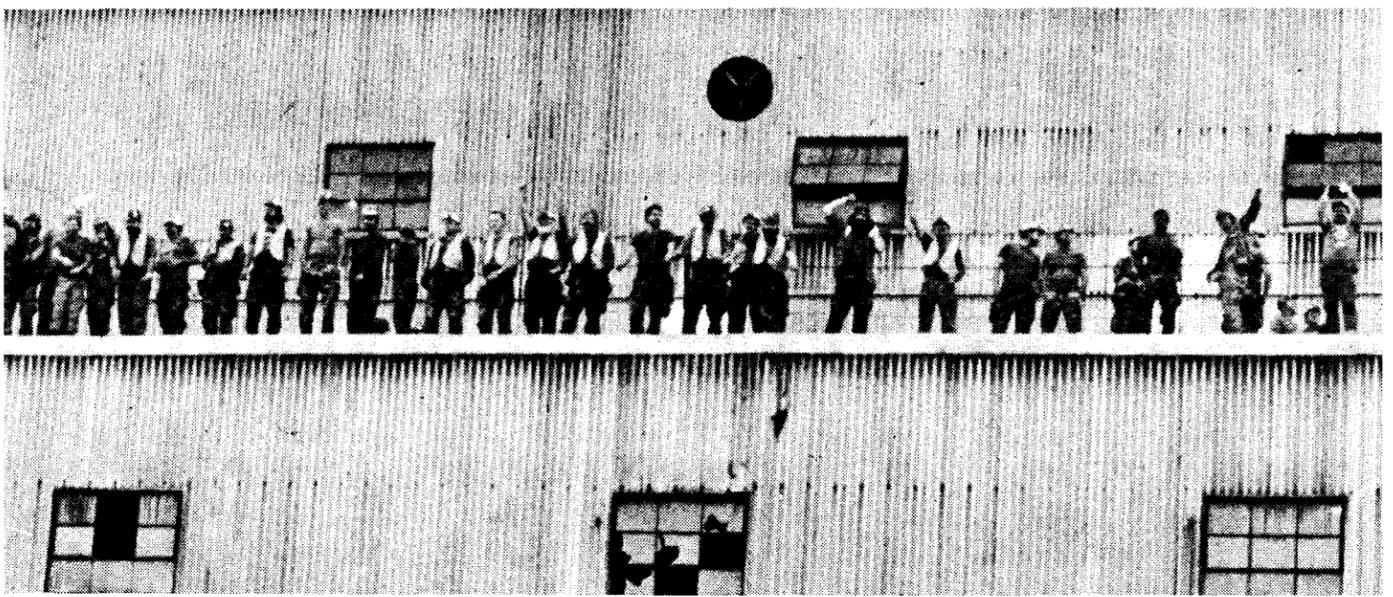
The best way to organize the unorganized is through a solid strike that *wins*. Miners: Fight for a national coal strike! For an industrywide contract! Organize the unorganized!

Pittston Strike Was Betrayed

In the first days of the strike, Eastern has already thrown down the gauntlet to the union, reopening the Harris No. 1 mine in Bald Knob, West Virginia, in the heart of UMW District 17. Another 13 independent mines have locked out their workers. Only *one* member of the BCOA coal bosses is being struck—and just over half of Peabody's coal production is shut down, as Trumka exempted operations in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and Arizona. Mine No. 10 in Pawnee, Illinois, continues to supply Illinois Power under a no-strike agreement.

Under the hammer blows of the coal operators, and betrayed by a union leadership which looks to the bosses' courts and labor boards, the UMW is in desperate straits. Only one in three miners today is a union member. And the companies, increasingly dominated by big multinational holding companies, have wiped out thousands of union jobs under the practice of "double breasting"—closing union mines, laying off union labor and opening up new mines under the control of non-union subsidiaries. But Trumka *invited* this attack to continue with his 1988 contract, which lets operators hire two non-union miners for every three UMW members when they open up "new" mines.

Trumka has further divided the union's forces, giving a 60-day contract extension to a four-company group of "Independents" in the hopes of brokering labor peace in the coal fields through corpo-



Pittston miners' occupation of Moss No. 3 plant in 1989 shut down company's scab operations; UMW head Trumka called it off. Joe Baker/Cumberland Times

ratist "labor-management" cooperation. But the bosses aren't buying, as the biggest coal companies, like Ashland Oil and Consolidated Coal, are opening scab mines in the heart of the Appalachian coal fields. It is the *union* which is being eliminated—not the profits. After World War II, 320,000 miners produced 480 million tons of coal annually in the U.S. In 1991, more than *one billion* tons were extracted by just over 100,000 miners.

When the picket lines went up at Peabody, Trumka bragged that this strike may "dwarf" Pittston, referring to the 1989-90 strike against the southwest Virginia company. For ten months, Pittston miners faced coal company thugs, thousands of arrests and millions in fines. During the summer of '89, 50,000 miners wildcatted in solidarity with the Pittston strike, but Trumka ordered them back to work and then stopped the powerful occupation of the Moss No. 3 processing plant that September. Not *once* did the UMW call on railroad workers to "hot cargo" the scab coal which was rolling to the ports.

In January 1990, Trumka rammed through a contract which allowed the company to buy its way out of the health benefit funds at bargain basement prices. We warned at the time:

"Trumka is trying to sell a contract which threatens everything the Pittston strikers

have fought for.... This will open the floodgates to a coal company offensive against the health and pension funds and industrywide bargaining, endangering the very existence of the union."

—"Pittston Miners: Rip Up

Trumka's Sellout!"

WV No. 494, 26 January 1990

Incredibly, Trumka *paid Pittston millions of dollars in union money* to settle the strike on the company's terms. Like the A.T. Massey strike in 1984-85, in which the UMW tops abandoned victimized Kentucky strike militants who remain in jail to this day, the Pittston strike was *betrayed*. And the medical benefits which the UMW tops vowed would be "saved" through Congressional legislation are now threatened, as companies have filed suit to be exempted from funding the insolvent health benefit funds.

Don't Play by the Bosses' Rules!

From the Labor Department campaign of Arnold Miller, to Carter/Mondale's use of Taft-Hartley against the long, bitter 1977-78 strike, to Trumka's bowing before the injunctions of the coal company judges during the Pittston strike, the miners' historic militancy has been throttled in the service of the bosses' parties and the capitalist state. Now

Trumka has bowed to court orders that miners undergo mandatory "strike training" to teach them to be "peaceful, legal." Militant miners got *their* strike training at Bloody Harlan and Blair Mountain, and the lesson of those struggles is: You can't win if you play by the bosses' rules.

The key is leadership. The same Taft-Hartley "slave labor" law which outlaws real solidarity action was the bosses' weapon to purge the labor movement of the reds who built it. In the early 1920s, when the labor movement was under assault as it is today, veteran Communist labor organizer and Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon pointed the way forward:

"Let the labor unions put aside their illusions; let them face the issue squarely and fight it out on the basis of the class struggle. Instead of seeking peace when there is no peace, and 'understanding' with those who do not want to understand, let them declare war on the whole capitalist regime. That is the way to save the unions and make them grow in the face of adversity and become powerful war engines for the destruction of capitalism and the reorganization of society on the foundation of working class control in industry and government."

—"Who Can Save the Unions?"
James P. Cannon and the
Early Years of American
Communism (1992) ■

Black History Month Spartacist ⁴ Forums

The Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Era

Malcolm X: The Man, the Myth, the Struggle

Speakers: Don Alexander and Joseph Seymour,
Spartacist League Central Committee

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Speaker: Peter Atkins, Spartacist League Central Committee

Friday, February 26, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 27, 7:30 p.m.

UC Berkeley
126 Barrows

First Unitarian Church
1187 Franklin (Fireside Room)

For more information: (510) 839-0851

For more information: (415) 777-9367

BERKELEY

SAN FRANCISCO

Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste Forum

3,000 Drive Off Fascist Skinheads

Labor/Minority Mobilization Stopped Nazi Provocation in Vancouver!

Eyewitness accounts by participants in January 22 demonstration

Saturday, February 20, 7:30 p.m.

For more information: (416) 593-4138

University of Toronto
International Student Centre
33 St. George Street
(just north of College St.)

TORONTO

Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

There Is No Justice in Capitalist America

Speaker: Ray Bishop, Spartacist League Central Committee

Thursday, February 25, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, February 26, 7 p.m.

Harvard University
Emerson Hall, Room 305
(in Harvard Yard)

Columbia University
Schermmerhorn, Room 614
(#1 train to 116th St. and Broadway)

For more information: (617) 492-3928

For more information: (212) 267-1025

BOSTON

NEW YORK CITY

WORKERS VANGUARD

Organize the Unorganized!

Coal Miners: Fight for a National Strike!

FEBRUARY 8—Over 5,000 members of the United Mine Workers (UMW) at 21 mines in West Virginia, Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky struck at midnight on February 1 against Peabody Coal and its subsidiary, Eastern Associated Coal. The strikers are up against the largest coal producer in the U.S., with profits of \$260 million last year and coal reserves of eight billion tons. Peabody, owned by the giant British conglomerate Hanson Industries, mines 10 percent of all coal in this country. The picket lines outside Peabody pits are today the front line of a fight for the future of the UMW.

This is the first big labor confrontation of the Clinton administration, and UMW president Richard Trumka has no intention of embarrassing his friend, the yuppie Democrat. Trumka was among the union presidents who traveled to Clinton's "labor summit" in Little Rock in December to hear the right-to-work president-elect demand "sacrifice" from the working class.

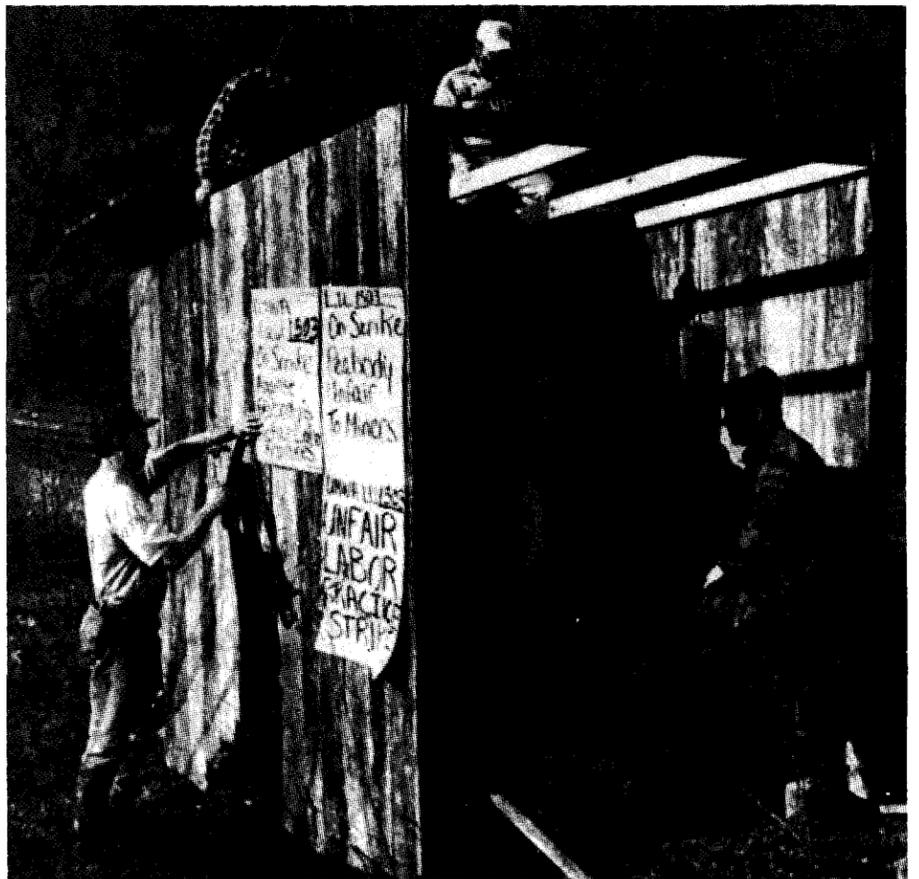
Trumka said at the outset, "I didn't want to strike to begin with"—and that's how he's running it. The Peabody strike is the continuation of the union bureaucracy's disastrous "selective strike" strategy which has divided and weakened the union, leaving isolated groups of miners to go it alone against the bosses and their cops and courts. This is particularly

suicidal given that Peabody and the power companies have amassed huge stockpiles of coal, while over 70 percent of the country's coal is mined by non-union labor. As the strike broke out, the bosses' *Journal of Commerce* (2 February) gloated: "The prevailing calm Monday reflects the loss of clout the union has undergone. Fewer than one of three Eastern mines is organized by the once-powerful union, and these produce a little less than half the coal mined."

But the mining bosses can be made to eat their words. The UMW still has a lot of muscle and a long tradition of militant struggle. The miners are the historic shock troops of the American labor movement. A strike committee member and 16-year UMW militant in Boone County, West Virginia, invoked the miners' historic watchword "No contract, no work!" He told WV: "If we lose this one, they're just going to take everything, that's the way I feel about it. So we're going to have to make a stand now and go for it.... I think that everybody ought to be out right now."

That's right! Every UMW member ought to be out right now, on mass picket lines that nobody crosses, and with a strategy aimed at extending the strike to non-union pits. It's time for the UMW to reclaim the coal fields—all of them.

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West Virginia miners set up picket shed for strike against Peabody Coal. No contract, no work! Pull out the entire UMW! Ferrell/ NY Times

Bessemer

Victory to Alabama Steel Strike!



Jeff Roberts

Mass picketing by steel workers and supporters stops scabs and company thugs last October.

BESSEMER, Alabama—A sharp class battle is being waged here at the Trinity Industries rail car plant, by 800 members of United Steelworkers (USWA) Local 9226. They are in a fight for survival against Trinity, the largest manufacturer of rail cars in the U.S. In early January, one striker was shot and a second pistol-whipped by a scab. Since the strike began on September 19, workers have withstood almost six months of attacks by scabs, company goons and cops. There have been drive-by shootings at the picket line and union hall, while three strikers were pulled from their car at a Shoney's at gunpoint. Over 50 workers have been fired for defending their picket lines; nine face charges from the Bessemer police.

In the face of this union-busting assault by Trinity and the bosses' state, all Birmingham labor must come to the aid of the strikers. Weeks into the strike, USWA District 36 director Dick Davis blustered that "Had we wanted it, had it been necessary, we could have had

50,000 people out here." It was necessary from the start! The integrated labor power—in the steel mills, railroads and mines—of this "Pittsburgh of the South" must be mobilized in mass militant picket lines that no scab would dare cross! Victory to the Trinity strikers!

The Bessemer plant, site of the former Pullman Standard factory, was organized after a bitter six-week strike in 1988. In open shop Alabama, 98 percent of the workers here have joined the union. They are angry at the high injury rates and unsafe conditions, and at wages that average only \$9.80 an hour. On top of this, workers have to pay \$53 a week for medical insurance—and Trinity now wants to raise that to \$71. The company refuses to even discuss a settlement unless the union drops its demand for amnesty for the 53 fired workers. After the company offered a \$5,000 reward for the names of "violent" strikers, Raul Gonzalez, a supporter of the Socialist Workers Party, was dragged from his

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