

Black Unions Debate "Divestment"

South Africa: For Workers Power!

South Africa's six-million-strong black working class will be the gravedigger of apartheid capitalism. The black union movement remains defiant and militant despite savage police-state repression under Botha's "state of emergency." Hundreds of union organizers have been jailed and many killed. Metal workers leader Moses Mayekiso faces the gallows under "treason" charges. Last April armed police stormed the Johannesburg headquarters of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions), the main black labor organization, and terrorized the unionists who were there. The following week the headquarters was bombed. Yet in the face of all this the black union movement, which also contains a sizable number of coloured (mixed-race) and Indian workers, has stood out, even more strongly than before, as the main force against white racist rule.

The power of black labor was demonstrated in a protest against the whites-only elections in June when a two-day stayaway brought out half a million workers and students, including white university students. That action followed a six-week rail workers strike which paralyzed the apartheid state's commercial center. The strike ended in a victory when the state-owned railway agreed to rehire the 16,000 unionists it had previously fired. Another sign of the

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Smash Apartheid — For Permanent Revolution!



Miller/Impact Visuals

Founding of South African union federation COSATU: Black workers have the power to smash apartheid capitalism.

Reagan Kicks Persian Gulf Minefield

Lame Duck in Troubled Waters

AUGUST 4—Desperately seeking to extricate itself from the Iran/contra quagmire, the Reagan administration may have capsized in the Persian Gulf. To stabilize their own tottering regime, they decided to destabilize one of the most explosive areas of the globe. And in pursuing their anti-Soviet bugaboo the warmongers in the Oval Office could trip over the trip wire for World War III.

After their secret arming of Khomeini's Iran with Hawk and TOW missiles was exposed, last May Washington tried to regain "credibility" by

"showing the flag" with beefed-up U.S. Navy patrols in the Gulf. The result was 37 sailors killed when two Iraqi Exocet missiles slammed into the frigate USS *Stark*. So the White House went full steam ahead with a plan to list even more heavily toward Iraq in the squalid seven-year-old Iran-Iraq war which has already taken more than one million lives.

The U.S. would "reflag" eleven oil tankers of Iraqi ally Kuwait with the Stars and Stripes so Navy ships could justify escorting the supertankers

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"Great Helmsman" plays chicken with Ayatollah Khomeini.

Der Spiegel

Black Worker Killed, Woman Bus Driver Beaten

Chicago Cops Invade Black Homes

Labor, Blacks Must Mobilize!

CHICAGO—On July 27, four white Chicago cops barged into the South Side home of disabled black auto worker Larry Hawkins and blew him away in cold blood. The police were called to the scene following a minor neighborhood scuffle allegedly involving Hawkins. After cornering their victim in the basement of his home, according to his niece Yvette Hawkins, who witnessed the killing, "One of the officers said to Larry, 'Didn't I tell you that the next time I saw you I would shoot you?'" Then a shot was fired. Larry fell down screaming, "Help me, I don't want to die!" (*Chicago Defender*, 29 July).

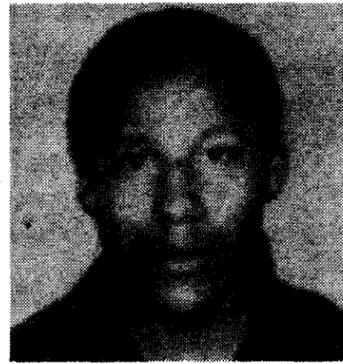
But the cops made damn sure Larry did die. As he bled to death, the racist scum prevented Yvette or Ethel Lee Hawkins, Larry's mother, from calling an ambulance for 45 minutes! According to a press release issued by the Hawkins family, the cops spent this time scouring the basement for a "weapon" to alibi their crime. They finally came up with a garden rake to place in the dead man's hands. Larry's mother told *Workers Vanguard* that the cops then tried to cover up this calculated assassination by moving the body and wiping up the pool of blood. Later, William Estay, a white neighbor, heard a cop in front of the Hawkins' house say, "Damn—why

didn't you kill all of them? Now we have to deal with these f----- witnesses" (*Defender*, 3 August).

Larry Hawkins, a Navy veteran, worked at General Motors until 1982 when a heavy object fell on his head. Left permanently disabled and relying on continuous medical care, Hawkins received a paltry \$7,000 settlement from the auto giant. Unemployed, disabled, defenseless—Larry Hawkins was fair game for the uniformed thugs with their .38 caliber "final solution." This hideous atrocity must be avenged!

In racist, segregated Chicago, for a black person to make a wrong turn down a street, picnic in the "wrong" park or move into a new neighborhood is to be at risk. Now the uniformed racists don't even wait for you to leave home before they gun you down or beat you senseless. Black Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus driver Cassandra Seay was sitting in her West Side home July 21 when five Chicago cops kicked in the back door looking for two teenagers who allegedly broke a car window. The cops kicked and punched Mrs. Seay and her mother, Callie Bryant, a state unemployment counselor, before arresting both of them along with Seay's two sons. Mrs. Seay was hospitalized for more than a week with back and neck injuries, blurred vision and internal bleeding. Seay and her mother face frame-up charges, including assault.

As we go to press, militants in the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 241 are fighting for their union to use its muscle on behalf of their sister



Jahtova/Chicago Defender Photos

Disabled auto worker Larry Hawkins (above), gunned down by racist Chicago cops. Larry's mother and niece share their grief and outrage.



Cassandra Seay and to mobilize to stop this wave of police murder and brutality. On August 3, outraged Local 241 members put forward a motion in their union meeting demanding:

"BE IT RESOLVED: That ATU Local 241 call on all Chicago labor and minorities to join in a mass protest rally at Daley Plaza to stop police terror by Chicago cops and demand: Jail the cops who killed Larry Hawkins and throw away the key! Drop all the charges against Cassandra Seay, her children and Callie Bryant!"

Encouraged by the growing wave of "official" cop terror, violent racist scum have gone into action from one end of the metropolitan area to the other. On July 26, three black Continental Can Company employees were brutally assaulted by racist creeps wielding pool cues when they entered a tavern after attending a union meeting in the same building on the all-white Northwest Side. The next day a CTA driver living in the suburb of Riverdale was forced to defend his family from a bat-swinging racist; a white cop later advised him to move "because you know niggers are not wanted here" (*Defender*, 1 August). Later that week race-hating nightriders staged a cross-burning against a black family that had moved into an all-white Northwest Side neighborhood.

It's useless to rely on the police department whose "Office of Professional Standards" already whitewashed the murder of Larry Hawkins. Chicago cops carried out Boss Daley's infamous order to "shoot to kill" blacks in the streets following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1969, "Chicago's finest" together with the FBI stormed a Black Panther Party apartment in the dead of night, murdering Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in their beds. In 1983 the cops were at the center

of the racist backlash during the election of Mayor Harold Washington, threatening to arrest black voters and vowing never to call a black man "boss."

Harold Washington, mayor of "Segregation-City" for the Democratic Party of racist American capitalism, is betraying the aspirations of black Chicago. Like Democratic mayors across the country, Washington's job is to stifle social struggle as the ruling class drives down living standards and takes aim at the rights of minorities, women and unions. Thus in June 1986 Washington told black and working-class Chicago to stay home rather than protest a Klan rally in Marquette Park. When the KKK mobilized a racist mob of 3,000, the cops attacked anti-racists who didn't heed Washington's "advice," beating and arresting a number of Progressive Labor Party supporters who took action against the Klan.

To fight racist terror, whether its perpetrators wear blue uniforms or white sheets, it's necessary to mobilize mass labor/black power. The cops who beat Cassandra Seay and her mother weren't counting on her being a member of a powerful integrated labor union capable of shutting this city down! Two years ago, hundreds of ATU members demonstrated this potential when they massed in front of police headquarters on South State Street and successfully squashed the racist frame-up of driver David Johnson. Carried out against the will of the ATU tops, that demonstration was but a small taste of the power of Chicago transit workers. In alliance with teachers, steel and auto workers and the rest of Chicago labor, and leading the oppressed of the black ghettos and Hispanic barrios, that power must be unleashed. For mass labor action to stop racist terror! ■



TROTSKY

For Permanent Revolution!

In countries of belated bourgeois development, genuine national liberation and democratic rights can be achieved only through socialist revolution. In South Africa, black toilers rightly identify the hated apartheid system with capitalist superexploitation, while the nationalist ANC and Stalinists preach "democratic revolution." Trotsky fought against the Menshevik-Stalinist dogma of "two-stage

revolution" which subordinates the proletariat to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism.

7. The Comintern's endeavour to foist upon the Eastern countries the slogan of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, finally and long ago exhausted by history, can have only a reactionary effect. Insofar as this slogan is counterposed to the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it contributes politically to the dissolution of the proletariat in the petty-bourgeois masses and thus creates the most favourable conditions for the hegemony of the national bourgeoisie and consequently for the collapse of the democratic revolution. The introduction of this slogan into the programme of the Comintern is a direct betrayal of Marxism and of the October tradition of Bolshevism.

8. The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfilment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a permanent revolution.

—Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution* (1930)



LENIN

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Smash Death Squad Terror From El Salvador to U.S.!

San Francisco Protest

SAN FRANCISCO, July 30—Three hundred demonstrators marched here today from the CIA offices to the Salvadoran consulate. The demonstration was called by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) to protest the shooting down of striking workers by the police and army of Salvadoran puppet president Duarte and the recent wave of kidnappings and death threats by murderous Salvadoran terror squads in Los Angeles. The appearance of death squad terror in California has graphically brought home the bloody reality of the U.S.' dirty war in Central America. Only the day before the march the Catholic Social Services center in San Francisco, which runs a sanctuary for Central American refugees, also received a death threat.

Yet after murder threats against more than 30 Central American solidarity activists, two kidnappings and a brutal rape, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) regional director Harold Ezell grotesquely claimed these death squad activities are an "orchestrated PR campaign" by the religious sanctuary movement! Asked about the Salvadoran woman who was beaten, burned with cigarettes, cut with a knife on the tongue and sexually assaulted repeatedly with a stick by masked thugs who interrogated her about "communist" associates, Ezell replied: "One was molested...but that happens all over the state" (*Los Angeles Times*, 28 July). This same racist Reaganite *migra* boss says hunting undocumented workers is



In protest called by CISPES, Spartacists call for labor/black/Hispanic defense to smash rightist terrorists.

"fun," and "if you catch 'em, you ought to clean 'em and fry 'em"!

A Spartacist League contingent participated in the SF protest, calling for labor/black/Hispanic defense to smash the rightist terrorists. SL supporters chanted, "Leftist rebels win the war, workers take San Salvador!" to put an end to decades of terror in that death squad "democracy." SLers also raised our call to "Defend, complete, extend the Nicaraguan Revolution!" and "Defense of Cuba/USSR begins in Central America!" Our chant of "Hail Ben

Linder, Kill the Contras!" drove the CISPES/APC popular-frontists wild. While we Trotskyists take a side for the victory of the workers and peasants of Central America facing the guns of U.S. imperialism, they appeal to the Democrats, who in support of the anti-Soviet war drive arm the contras from Afghanistan to Angola to Central America.

As if to drive the point home, Democratic mayor Dianne Feinstein's cops surrounded the demonstrators, clubs in hand, waiting to pounce. When a small group of protesters tried to march on the

sidewalk in front of the consulate, Feinstein's cossacks jumped them and clubbed them back behind the police barricades. Six years ago when Duarte came to San Francisco, mounted cops repeatedly charged the crowd, injuring more than a dozen. Feinstein stands by Reagan's butchers.

With our placards and chants, and selling nearly 100 pieces of Spartacist literature to demonstrators and interested onlookers, we put forward the program of international socialist revolution. ■

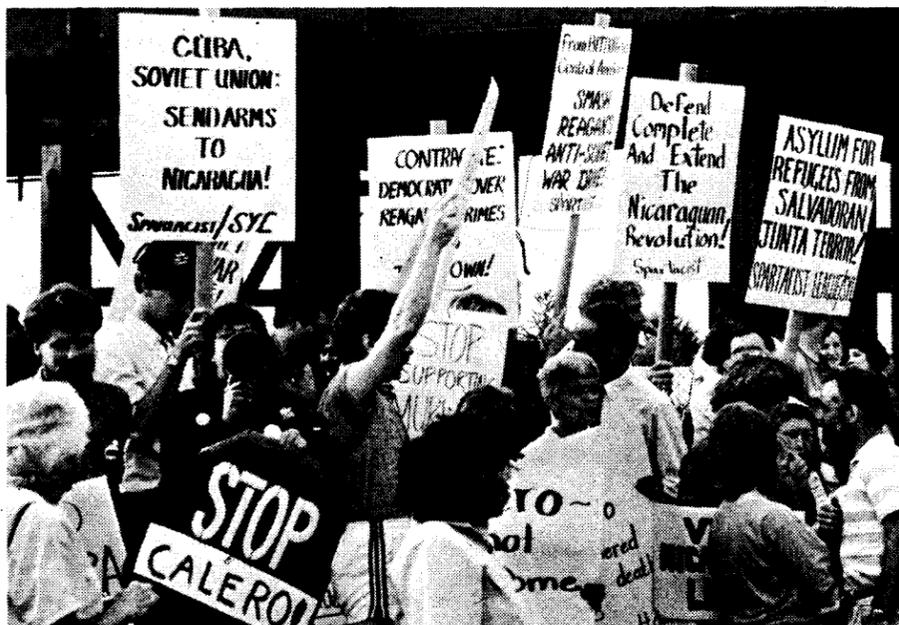
Chicago Protest Against Contra Criminal Calero

"Shred Ollie!"

CHICAGO—When contra scumbag Adolfo Calero made a fund-raising trip to Chicago last week attempting to capitalize on Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North's congressionally sponsored pitch for contra aid, instead of "Olliemania" he encountered angry protest demonstrations. Without the heavy police protection and carefully managed security preparations supplied by black Democratic Party mayor Harold Washington's cops, this mercenary war criminal would have gotten the reception he richly deserved.

At a July 18 luncheon meeting of the Chicago Executive Club, Calero stated with visible relief, "This time at least I managed to get more words across than I did last time around." He was referring to his 1985 speaking appearance at nearby Northwestern University, where he was spattered with symbolic blood and driven off-stage by angry protesters. As about 200 protesters chanted, "Hey, hey, Uncle Sam—we remember Vietnam," outside the Palmer House, Calero continued, "I'm happy to fight communists wherever they are in Nicaragua or here in the United States." Two protesters in the audience were arrested.

A larger and more militant demonstration protested the dinnertime "contra cruise" sponsored by the United



Spartacists at anti-Calero protest chant: "1, 2, 3, 4, Smash Reagan's contra war!—5, 6, 7, 8, Defend the Soviet workers state!"

Republican Fund in a vain attempt to attract yuppie contra-lovers. The protest, initiated by the Chicago Pledge of Resistance, was prevented by police bar-

ricades from getting near Calero. As posters of North autographed by Calero were auctioned off, shouts of "Mine the lake!" alternated with "Shred Ollie!"

and "Country club contras!" The Spartacist League contingent's chants of "Contras no, obreros si, overthrow the bourgeoisie!" and "Remember Bay of Pigs, remember Vietnam—Democratic Party, we know which-side you're on!" were picked up by sections of the demonstration, but "1, 2, 3, 4, Smash Reagan's contra war!—5, 6, 7, 8, Defend the Soviet workers state!" drew gasps from the crowd.

Police arrested a female demonstrator and *WV*'s photographer was manhandled as he successfully resisted a cop attempt to grab his camera. In spite of the evident outrage of the crowd, the most prominent among the banners of the reformists was the slogan "No more Vietnams," a sentiment the white-suited young Republicans on the "contra cruise" could agree with. Vietnam was a defeat for U.S. imperialism: as Che Guevara said, we need two, three, many Vietnams. In the heart of the rust belt, in Segregation City USA, it's no secret that the U.S. war in Central America is also a war on the workers and black and Hispanic poor at home. And if the ruling class shuddered at Chicago '68, wait till they see the Loop filled with hardhats determined to take back the giveaways and smash a Yankee invasion of Nicaragua. ■

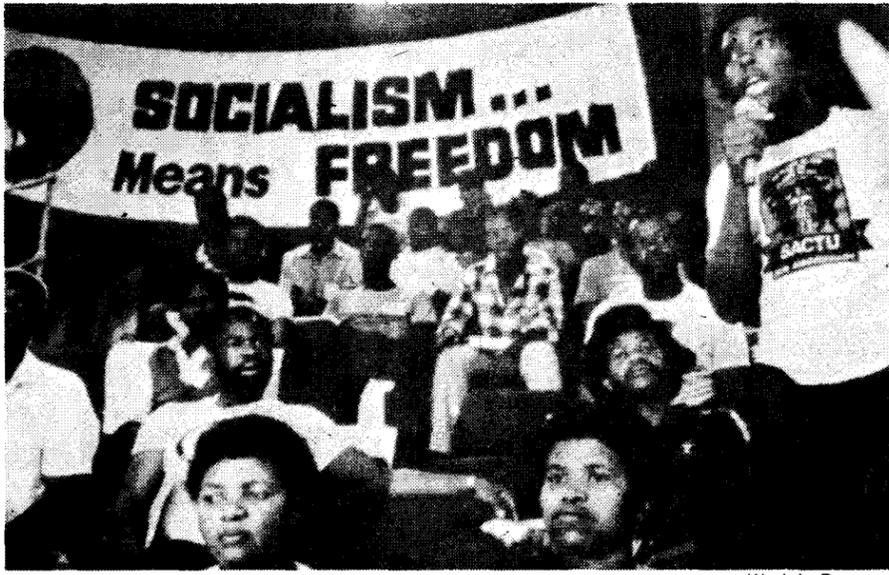
South Africa...

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vitality of the black labor movement was the formation in May of a 140,000-strong metal workers union in a fusion including the combative Port Elizabeth auto workers. The new union flexed its muscle last month when 50,000 metal workers in 500 shops across the country walked out in an illegal one-day strike. Now 200,000 gold and coal miners are threatening to shut down the strategic heart of apartheid capitalism.

"South Africa's Black Unions Take Anti-Apartheid Lead," headlines an article in the *Wall Street Journal* (22 July). The *Journal* quoted white South African academic Tom Lodge: "The conflict in South Africa is shifting from the townships to the shop floors." While the 13-month "state of emergency" has crippled black organization in the segregated townships, the article went on, "This politicalization of the unions elevates South Africa's crisis to a new level. It raises the specter of a large-scale withdrawal of black labor from a modern economy utterly dependent on black sweat and skills." From Wall Street to the exile headquarters of the petty-bourgeois nationalist African National Congress (ANC) in Zambia, it is now recognized that the politics of the black union movement hold the key to the future of South Africa.

The second congress of COSATU, held in mid-July at the largely white



South Africa's black workers identify apartheid slavery with capitalist superexploitation. Work In Progress

proclaimed, "the black majority will have to seize power from this intransigent government" (*Washington Post*, 16 July). But the decisive question is *which class shall rule*.

COSATU Delegates Question Freedom Charter, Divestment

The debate at the COSATU congress was conditioned by two major factors. One, the movement of black resistance to apartheid is now at an impasse. A few years ago, when the revolt in the black townships was at its height, there was widespread expectation that the racist police state was about to fall. An ANC

The revolutionary temper of the black masses conflicts with the ANC's strategy of collaboration with "progressive" sections of the white ruling class, such as the bosses of the giant Anglo American mining and manufacturing conglomerate. At funerals for the victims of apartheid terror, defiant protesters carry red flags with the hammer and sickle. Communism is a positive word among the South African black masses, symbolizing opposition to the hated system of apartheid capitalism. This sympathy for Communism is further reinforced by the war in Angola, where Soviet-backed Cuban troops are defending a black African state against the South African army.

At the same time, the African National Congress and its long-imprisoned leader, Nelson Mandela, continue to enjoy great moral authority among the South African black masses, including unionized workers. COSATU president Barayi, himself an old ANC militant from the 1950s, declared at the union congress: "There can be no freedom in this country unless the African National Congress is involved." However, the liberal content of the Freedom Charter, the ANC's basic program, does not speak to the revolutionary spirit and socialist aspirations of millions of black unionists. This "moderate" nationalist document calls for a democratic state uniting all men of good will, from "progressive" white capitalists to their superexploited workers. It lacks even the vague socialist rhetoric common to Third World nationalist movements.

Opposition to the Freedom Charter was especially strong in the newly formed National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), the second largest union in the COSATU federation. It was only accepted "as minimum demands for a democratic society" and combined with a "Workers Charter." According to the *Johannesburg Weekly Mail* (19 June), NUMSA's stand "was designed to appease those 'workerists' in its ranks who opposed the adoption of the Charter." NUMSA president Daniel Dube declared that the union was committed to fighting for the workers' demand "to build a democratic and socialist country." Another COSATU affiliate, the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union, refused to adopt the Freedom Charter and instead issued a "socialist programme of action."

While the COSATU congress finally adopted the Freedom Charter, the delegates clearly were *not* interested in fighting for some kind of liberal, non-racial capitalist order. Thus Barayi, who had pushed for adopting the Charter, felt a need to denounce capitalism and not simply apartheid. When he proclaimed, "We produce the wealth of South Africa, yet we are victims of a brutal and exploitative system of apartheid and capitalism," the delegates shouted back "Viva!"

The debate over "stages" of revolution and the leadership of the working class in the struggle for democratic

rights and national emancipation is not a new one. During the Russian Revolution of 1917 it was the dividing line between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. It is today in South Africa and throughout the colonial and semi-colonial world a dividing line between revolutionary Trotskyism and the nationalist/Stalinist betrayers.

Thus Soviet academic Victor Goncharov, deputy director of African Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, insists:

"Firstly it is necessary to settle the problems of the liberation struggle, and then to come to the next stage of the social revolution in South Africa...."

"Yes, I believe that in the end South Africa will become socialist, maybe not in 25 years but in a century.... I am an optimist."

—*Work In Progress*, July 1987

But South Africa's black workers want socialism now, not in a century. When the exiled Stalinist South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) said in a message of support to the COSATU congress that "although it welcomes the widespread discussions on socialism, this should not be elevated and adopted as a Cosatu policy," there were "many gasps in the audience" (*Weekly Mail*, 17 July).

Socialist aspirations and revolutionary spirit are not enough. As we have noted before, only when the organized working class ceases to haul the ideological cart of petty-bourgeois nationalism can the liberation of South Africa's black toilers be achieved. From what can be gleaned from a considerable distance, many black unionists now organized in COSATU are indeed straining against the weight of hauling that alien class cart. It is urgently necessary to forge in South Africa a genuine Bolshevik party which can break the workers and all the black African, coloured and Indian oppressed from the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the ANC and its Stalinist hangers-on.

The Bitter Fruits of Divestment

American and European liberals and radicals will doubtless be surprised—not to say shocked—that black unionists are questioning the whole policy of divestment/economic sanctions. For years rad-lib and reformist activists have held as an article of faith that to be against apartheid means to be for divestment and sanctions. In 1985-86, big student protests swept U.S. campuses demanding that university administrations sell off their financial holdings in corporations operating in South Africa. The Spartacist tendency alone stood up and told the truth: divestment was at best an empty moralistic gesture, and if foreign corporations did withdraw productive assets from South Africa this would hurt black workers and weaken the black union movement. Almost two years ago we wrote:

"The flight of capital can only further depress the South African economy. As revolutionaries, we do not believe in 'the worse, the better' in South Africa or elsewhere. Except in a period when the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid system is immediately posed, isolation from the world market is likely to result in massive dislocation and deprivation of black toilers, weakening their capacity to struggle."

—*Wall Street and the Apartheid State*,
WV No. 387,
20 September 1985

In the past it was cheap to advocate divestment since there wasn't any. But in the past few years over 100 U.S. multinationals—among them Kodak, Coca-Cola, IBM, General Motors and Ford—have sold out to South African businessmen. American investment in South Africa has been cut almost in half, from \$2.3 to \$1.3 billion, since 1982. But as a report prepared for the COSATU conference noted, this is not the result of pressure from divestment activists:

"The Cosatu report says that companies which have disinvested from South Africa have mostly done so for economic reasons and not because their consciences were pricked. The return on



Cape Town university students—black, white and coloured (mixed-race)—protest apartheid, support workers' struggles. Independent

Witwatersrand University, was the scene of intense debate as many delegates questioned two sacred cows of liberal/nationalist politics in South Africa: support for the ANC's Freedom Charter and advocating economic sanctions by South Africa's imperialist allies and divestment by foreign business. COSATU president Elijah Barayi vowed to "bury" apartheid president Botha and

"council of war" in June 1985 stated that "the possibility of victory was greater now than at any other time in our history." Yet Botha's "state of emergency" demonstrated that the white military apparatus remained intact and would not be overthrown by atomized revolts in the townships. Thus South African black militants are asking anew: what is the road to liberation?

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

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Persian Gulf Minefield...

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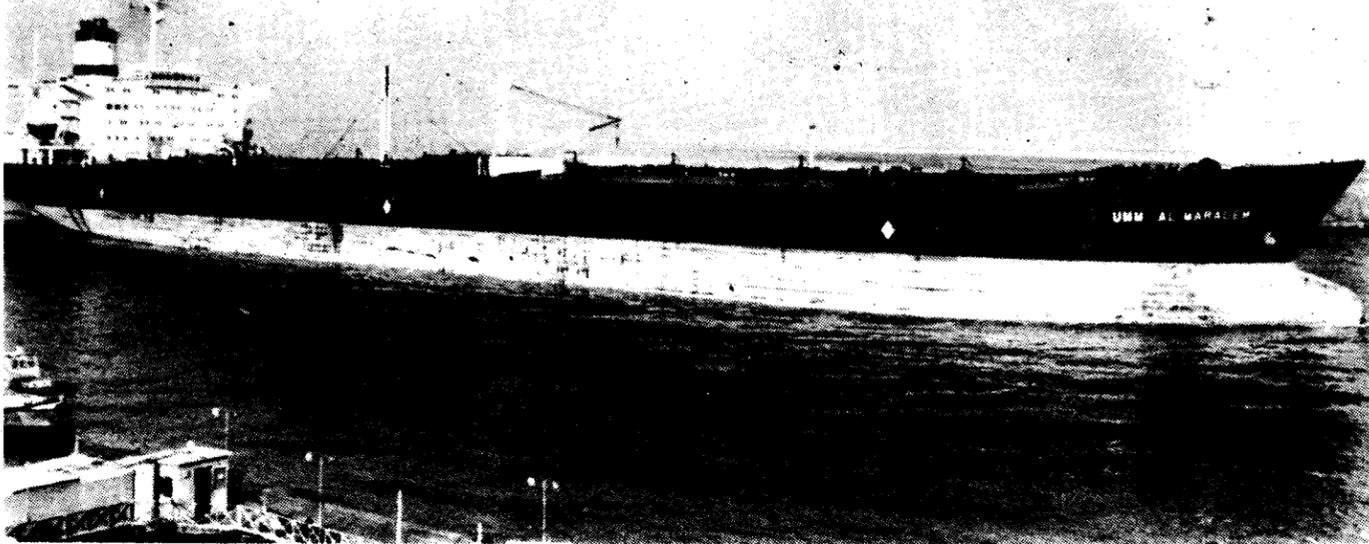
through the Gulf. But the very first Kuwaiti tanker to be escorted, the *Bridgeton*, had a big hole blown in its hull in late July by an anonymous mine, presumed to be Iranian. Belatedly it dawned on the Pentagon that they had neglected to bring any minesweeping ships with them in a region known to be plagued by mines.

But the U.S. has no modern minesweepers in service—it doesn't fit in with the Reaganites' offensive "forward strategy" for World War III. So they decide to call in Sea Stallion minesweeping helicopters with 200 personnel to run them. Promptly a Naval helicopter crashed while trying to land on the command ship in the Gulf. It's the Keystone Cops during the ayatollah to attack so they can "retaliate." Even Margaret Thatcher, Reagan's closest NATO ally, turned down Washington's request for aid.

With the U.S. increasingly a laughingstock, Khomeini is urging Muslims to "Break America's teeth in its mouth." Instructed by Teheran, Iranian pilgrims staged a provocative anti-U.S. demonstration at the site of the holiest Islamic shrine in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The feudal pro-U.S. Saudi monarchy responded to the bait with characteristic bloodthirstiness, reportedly slaughtering 600 as police fired on the crowds.

Saudi Arabia, for whom the hajj (Muslim pilgrimage) is the biggest industry after oil, is Contragate "Country 2" (Zionist Israel is Country 1), bank-rolling U.S.-backed kill-crazy mercenaries from Afghanistan and Angola to Central America. But this country, the only one in the world named after its ruling family, which uses advanced weaponry to impose 9th century law, is politically very fragile.

Now Iranian military maneuvers (code name "Martyrdom") are scheduled to begin in the Gulf. The U.S. aircraft carrier *Constellation* sits just outside the Strait of Hormuz as a Navy flotilla prowls the region, with the battleship *Missouri* due to arrive soon. France, with its own building confrontation with Iran, is sending a battle group centered on the aircraft



Kuwaiti supertanker Umm Al Maradem, now "reflagged" as *Sea Isle City*. The first of the eleven tankers to be escorted by U.S. Navy in Persian Gulf hit a mine.

carrier *Clemenceau*. The stage is set for a confrontation with unpredictable consequences.

Desert One, Gulf Two

When Jimmy Carter's Iranian "rescue" mission for U.S. hostages crashed in a jumble of helicopters at Desert One in 1980, it marked the end of his administration. These days Rambo Reagan is looking a lot like Wimpy Carter.

As usual, the Reagan gang is presenting its latest military adventure in the Persian Gulf as a front-line battle in the Cold War with Russia. Kuwait had cleverly invited the Soviets in to protect their ships, thereby giving Washington the usual pretext to "keep the Soviets out." A think tank expert from the Brookings Institution commented, reflecting the administration mindset: "If we blow this one, we won't be a superpower anymore."

So in the words of the *Los Angeles Times* (12 July): "Like a gambler who doubles his bet after each loss in the hopes of getting even on the next throw of the dice, the Administration has responded to each setback by increasing the stakes." In order to "roll back" the Soviets they're jumping into a maelstrom of religious *jihads* (holy wars). And they're risking a thermonuclear holocaust.

Spartacist League Central Committee member George Foster noted at a

July 25 Bay Area SL forum:

"If it weren't for the innocent lives that would be forfeited, it's sort of nice to see the Reaganites bogged down on two fronts. If they get into it in Iran, it makes it a little more difficult to get into it in Central America. I think Reagan's real problem is going to come when he orders an air strike against Iran and some of the Hawk missiles he sent them are going to shoot down American planes.

"All well and good, if it weren't so extremely dangerous, because Iran borders on the Soviet Union, and how close to the Soviet border can they carry out 'surgical' air strikes without provoking countermeasures? And this ruling class has shown itself repeatedly to be willing to use nuclear weapons. There have been a number of instances, from Dien Bien Phu to the Korean War to Vietnam, in addition to the Cuban Missile Crisis and during the Yom Kippur War, that the U.S. imperialists have come within an inch of using their weapons."

Theodore Draper, in his recent essay, "American Hubris: From Truman to the Persian Gulf," has been warning against a looming debacle for U.S. imperialism as the Reaganites "cast about for a quick fix for a nasty, little war." To "seek a showdown with the Soviet Union in the Persian Gulf," he writes, is "a sure recipe for disaster.... We are heading into the wrong confrontation at the wrong place at the wrong time for the wrong reason." But rationality is increasingly hard to find in the upper layers of this decaying ruling class.

In fact, there is growing evidence suggesting secret Reaganite arms deals with "terrorist" Iran going back to 1980, in exchange for the ayatollahs' promise *not* to release the hostages until after the elections. (Contragate special prosecutor Walsh now reports that the Reagan team did indeed meet with Iranian agents during the campaign.)

Reagan and Khomeini are really brothers under the skin, waving their holy books against the "satans" of science and progress, and secretly allied in a "holy war" in Afghanistan against their ultimate nemesis, the Soviet Union. But religious fanatics don't always get along with each other.

Will the world go up in radioactive smoke all because of Reagan's dare to Khomeini, as pundit Russell Baker put it, to knock the ship off his shoulder? Today, for different reasons, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union are tilting toward Iraq in the Gulf war. But as we wrote in "U.S. Up the Persian Gulf?" (WV No. 429, 29 May):

"For both Iraqi and Iranian workers in this reactionary war the main enemy is at home. The world proletariat must have no illusions in a 'peace' brokered or imposed by the bloody U.S. imperialists.... Defense of the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state can only be assured through world proletarian revolution, to sweep out the war-crazed nuts in the Pentagon and White House whose Persian Gulf antics threaten to blow up all humanity." ■

investment in South Africa for American companies had dropped from an average of 30% in 1980 to just 7% in 1983.

—London *Sunday Times*, 21 June

So divestment has become good business. But it is *not* good for South Africa's black workers.

The bitter fruits of divestment were strikingly demonstrated in the case of General Motors. Last fall GM announced it was selling its plants in Port Elizabeth to a consortium of its white managers. The black unions demanded that the divestment deal include guarantees of job security and union rights. When GM refused, union militants occupied the plants. Management then called in the apartheid state's police. Some 500 militants were fired, and GM announced it would hire scabs and continue production "with or without the unions." And GM continues to profit from the Port Elizabeth operation. Its subsidiaries in West Germany and Japan sell parts to the new South African firm, the Delta Motor Corp. Delta, meanwhile, now sells its products directly to the South African armed forces, which the former GM management regarded as too politically embarrassing to do.

Especially after the GM disaster, South African black unionists are disillusioned, to say the least, with the divestment strategy. According to the *Sunday Times*:

"The Cosatu report suggests that economic sanctions could make an

Spartacists expose "divestment" as liberal moralism, call for class struggle to overthrow white racist rule.



additional 2m people unemployed.... The report says that the initial 'quick fix' that many opponents of apartheid believed sanctions could provide, was illusory."

Nonetheless, the COSATU congress endorsed divestment while at the same time declaring that "the wealth created by workers must remain in South Africa and be controlled by workers." Certainly, but how? COSATU is demand-

ing that companies negotiate the conditions of divestment with the trade unions involved. These bloodsucking multinationals are not about to let the unions of South Africa control their assets. The divestment that revolutionaries want in South Africa is the divestment of the capitalist bosses—foreign, English-speaking and Afrikaner—by the workers and oppressed.

If ever a country screamed for work-

ers revolution it is South Africa—a monstrously racist society where capitalist superexploitation is integrally tied to the enslavement of the great majority of the population. The emergence of COSATU as a super-union of the black proletariat highlights the vacuum of revolutionary *political* leadership. Even through the distorted prism of the recent COSATU congress it is clear that an advance detachment of black workers are groping toward a program for their own class interests, a program necessarily counterposed to the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the ANC and "two-stage" reformism of the Stalinists.

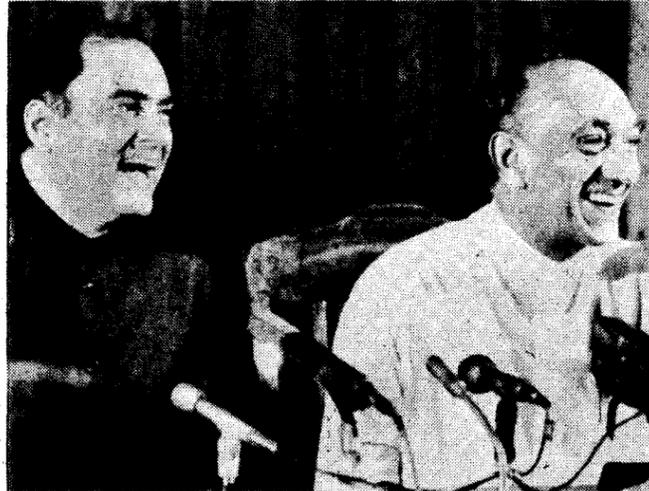
What is lacking today in South Africa is a Bolshevik (Trotskyist) party armed with the program of *permanent revolution*, capable of establishing the powerful black proletariat as leader in the liberation struggle against apartheid capitalism, uniting the workers' allies among the oppressed coloured and Indian populations, the youth, the unemployed, the women, the bantustan and peasant populations, and, not least, those whites who do not want to live under nor serve the racist police state. The resistance to conscription among white youth and anti-apartheid activism in the white student milieu indicate there are indeed fissures in the white *laager*. Key to the South African workers revolution is forging a racially integrated communist vanguard party infused with the understanding that those who labor must rule. ■

Anti-Tamil Lankan Regime Bows to Rajiv

Sri Lanka: India Takes Charge

LONDON, August 4—On Wednesday, July 29 Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and president J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) signed an agreement "to establish peace and normality in Sri Lanka." The next day the agreement's provision that an Indian peacekeeping force "may be invited" was translated into reality as thousands of Indian troops began disembarking in the Tamil-populated Jaffna Peninsula. At the same time, Indian aircraft began transporting Sri Lankan army units out of Jaffna to quell rioting by Sinhalese opponents of the treaty in the south.

What is posed is nothing less than overt Indian overlordship of the island. The presence of Indian troops in the north, removing the Lankan armed forces from the area, seals the de facto partition between north and south established by the anti-Tamil pogroms of July 1983, which aimed at destroying the Tamil business layers in the south and forced hundreds of thousands of terrified Tamils to flee to Jaffna (and to India). The new pact, while a long way from granting the Tamil state of "Eelam" which the separatist rebels have been fighting for, establishes a federated administrative unit combining the Northern and Eastern provinces. For the Sinhalese chauvinists, this link-up between the north and east is a



Independent

Sri Lankan navy.) Having made the deal with India, the regime's last hope of survival may now be the looming presence of the Indian army and navy. There have been at least two military coup attempts since independence and the current situation appears ripe for another. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* (2 August) wrote of an attempted coup reported in the *New Delhi Statesman*:

"The Statesman said the dissident government ministers abandoned the planned coup against Jayewardene when India dispatched troops to the Jaffna peninsula and ships to the port of Colombo."

Gandhi (above left) and Jayewardene announce accord in Colombo, July 29. Indian troops in Jaffna Peninsula, July 31.



Mydans/NY Times

only work on the basis of continuing bloodshed and suffering.

Indian Overlordship

Since independence from Britain in 1948, Sinhalese politics has seen the bourgeois parties vie with each other in communalist hysteria directed against the Tamils and also other minorities like the mixed-race Burghers. The July 1983 anti-Tamil pogroms, instigated and orchestrated from within Jayewardene's UNP, were a watershed, marking the de facto partition of the island. Since then the government has escalated a bloody war of suppression against the Tamil population of the north and east, associated with increasing communal atrocities on both sides.

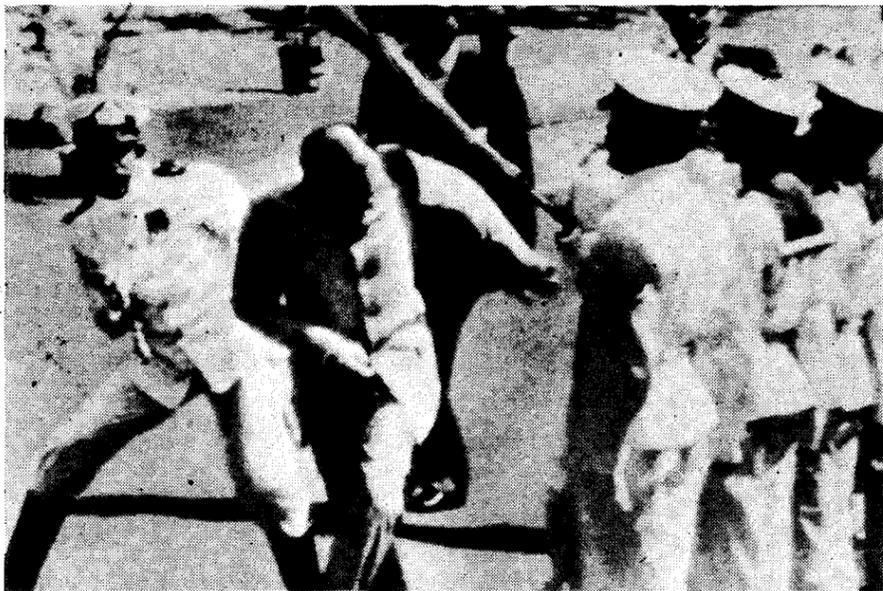
In late May the Sri Lankan army undertook a brutal offensive in the Jaffna Peninsula which had effectively been under the control of the main Tamil guerrilla group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This offensive was decisively stymied when the Indian air force flew in relief supplies to besieged Jaffna. As we wrote at the time: "With its act, the Indian government asserted suzerainty, posing possible annexation of northern Sri Lanka. New Delhi is determined that henceforth the bloody Sinhala-chauvinist

regime of president J.R. Jayewardene will heed India's dictates regarding the Tamil areas or face more decisive military measures" ("Indian Jets Over Jaffna," *WV* No. 430, 12 June).

The presence of Indian ships and planes bringing relief supplies concretized the Indian threat against any further Sri Lankan offensive operations in the north. Jayewardene says that the agreement was all due to "the stars and planets," but it is more the case that he at least appears to have realized the geopolitical realities of the region. India, with its 700 million people, including 50 million Tamils in the south, would not forever acquiesce to the continued mass slaughter of Lanka's Tamils, which has already claimed an officially estimated 6,000 lives.

The *New York Times* (31 July) reported that the influential Indian high commissioner in Colombo, Jyotindra Nath Dixit, said on July 30 that "the peacekeeping contingent, which brought its own equipment and transport, would answer only to him and to the Indian Government, independent of the Sri Lankan military." The next day, as UNP politicians cringed at the clear acknowledgement of Sri Lanka's status as an Indian protectorate, Dixit

continued on page 8



Reuters

A dramatic outburst of Sinhalese hostility: Gandhi is clubbed with rifle butt by Lankan honor guard during Colombo ceremony. He's lucky there are no Sikhs in the Lankan navy.

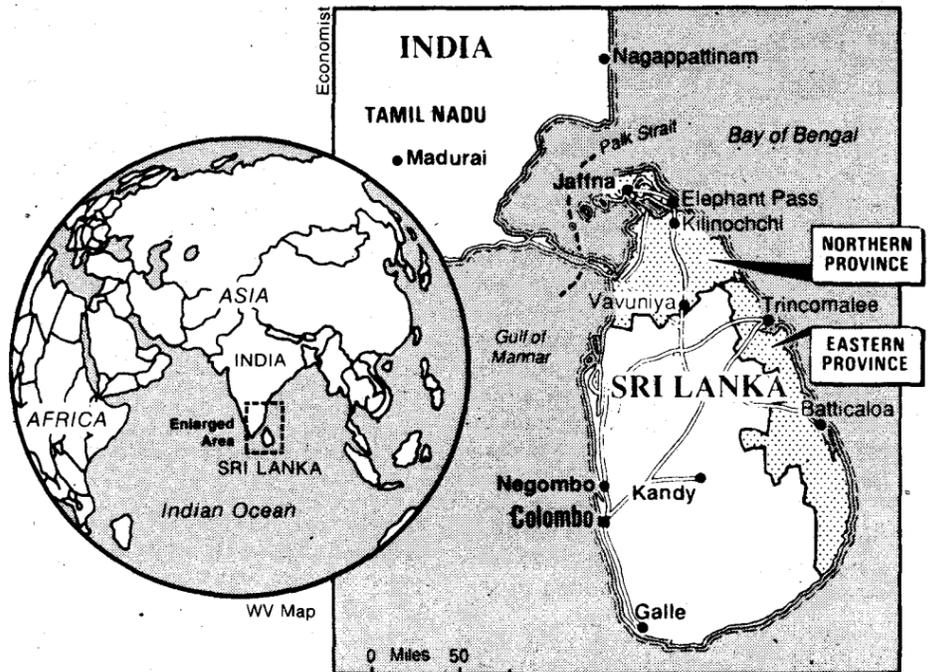
"sellout" to "Tamil terrorism," and powerful forces within and outside the government are threatening to blow the whole thing sky high.

The Colombo regime is deeply divided over the pact. Prime Minister Premadasa, whose base is among the Sinhalese urban and rural poor, and the more patrician "national security" minister Athulathmudali, who orchestrated the anti-Tamil military campaign in the north, both dramatically boycotted the ceremonies with Gandhi. These sections of the ruling United National Party (UNP) could serve as a lightning rod to unite ultra-racist forces including the ex-New Left Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), the Buddhist clergy and the bourgeois Opposition SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) in a bid for power.

A big question is to what extent the Lankan government can count on the armed forces, especially the embittered veterans of the anti-Tamil slaughter. As Gandhi was leaving Lanka one sailor from the naval guard of honour clubbed him with his rifle butt. (Gandhi ought to be thankful that there are no Sikhs in the

Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel, a staunch backer of the pact, called for the removal of Athulathmudali but remarked that the cabinet is united on the main issue of the accord especially now that it is a fait accompli. Moreover an evidently well-informed article in *India Abroad* (7 August) states that SLFP leader Mrs. Bandaranaike, who has publicly denounced the agreement, has privately assured the Indian government "she will honor the accord if she returns to power.... The Indian High Commission sought to keep Bandaranaike posted on the developments at every stage of the negotiations."

In preparation for Gandhi's arrival in Colombo to sign the agreement, a curfew had been slapped on the whole island and police were given orders to shoot any violators on sight. In the two preceding days police killed at least 38 people during anti-government protests led by Buddhist monks and Sinhalese communalists. This agreement between capitalist rulers is intended to end the bloody conflict between the Sinhala-chauvinist Jayewardene regime and the oppressed Tamil minority but it will



WV Map

0 Miles 50

Bolshevik Revolution Smashed the Anti-Semitic Black Hundreds

Pamyat: Russian Fascists Raise Their Heads

Nativist fascism has raised its head in Moscow and other cities of the Soviet Union. Fascism is death to the working people of the world. Its ideology in every country is vulgar chauvinism and racism. It represents a particular mortal threat to the Soviet Union, where the victorious Bolshevik Revolution, forged on the program of revolutionary internationalism, transformed the tsarist empire, that prison house of peoples, into a "close voluntary union of the Soviet republics of all nations" (Lenin).

With the advent of Gorbachev's *glasnost* (openness), everything from leftist currents to sinister ultranationalists are coming out of the closet. Among the latter are "Fatherland" in Leningrad, "Salvation" in Sverdlovsk, and the most prominent, Pamyat ("Memory"), in the Soviet capital. Under a thin cover as a "patriotic" outfit concerned with the preservation of old monuments and churches lies rabid anti-Semitic Great Russian chauvinism. On May 6, Pamyat held a demonstration of about 400 people at the Kremlin Wall with signs proclaiming "Legalize Pamyat" and "The Memory of the People Is Sacred."

Pamyat demanded a meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev and Moscow party chief Boris Yeltsin. They were immediately invited in to speak with Yeltsin, and for two hours complained to him about degenerating Soviet morals, rock music, alcohol and drug use. Calling for "national self-consciousness," they warned about "cosmopolitanism," the infamous Stalinist code word for Jews. Yeltsin praised their "patriotism for our motherland" and assured them there would be "no wild outbursts of permissiveness alongside with democratization and *glasnost*."

One cannot take lightly a fascist demonstration such as occurred in Moscow. More ominous still is that a member of the Communist Party Political Bureau politely hosted the people whose brethren lynch black people, in the American South, and who turned the skies of the western Soviet Union black with smoke in the summer of 1941, when the Nazis and their Russian collaborators carried out the slaughter of Jews, Communists and Gypsies.

Le Monde (24 June) printed an



Russian fascists of Pamyat demonstrate on Karl Marx Prospekt, Moscow, in May.

interview with Pamyat leader Dmitri Vassiliev, in his headquarters adorned with ikons and pictures of the last tsar, Nicholas II, the tsarina and their bloody premier Stolypin. The only thing missing is a portrait of Rasputin. Vassiliev vituperated, "They want to destroy our past... they construct factories on the tombs of our saints," and denounced "cosmopolitanism gnawing at the soul and heart of our people."

The *New York Times* (26 July) printed excerpts from a taped meeting in which Vassiliev rails against the "insidiousness of the Jews," and "Jewish infiltration of the Orthodox Church." "How do we tolerate people like that among us?" he adds, a call for anti-Semitic pogroms. The article indicates a bizarre, anachronistic side to this movement as their leader talked of Muscovy's 13th-century fight against the Swedes:

"During those times, they didn't worry about what kind of pants to wear, what kind of songs to sing... They didn't create artificial problems like listening to disco, roller skating."

But it's no joke when Vassiliev demands that "all the true patriots of the fatherland" battle "the insidious hydra of world Masonry, Zionism and imperialism."

Moscow News (17 May) dismissed Pamyat's raving about the "monster of world Masonry and Zionism" as "absurd fiction." But this paranoid demagoguery is far more sinister, lifted wholesale from the infamous bible of anti-Semitism. As the *Times* noted: "Pamyat's conspiracy theory, like those circulated in the United States by such right-wing groups as the Order, the Aryan Nations Church, Posse Comitatus and the Ku Klux Klan, is based on the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion'." This tsarist police fabrication blaming all historical progress on a Jewish anarcho-communistic conspiracy was a prime source for Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

Historian Norman Cohn, in his 1981 study *Warrant for Genocide*, notes that the *Protocols* were first publicized in Russia in December 1905 together with

the appearance of the fascistic Black Hundreds gangs who carried out murderous pogroms against the Jewish ghettos. The Black Hundreds were the spearhead of tsarist reaction against the 1905 Russian Revolution. How revolutionary Russian workers dealt with them is described by Trotsky in his book, *1905*:

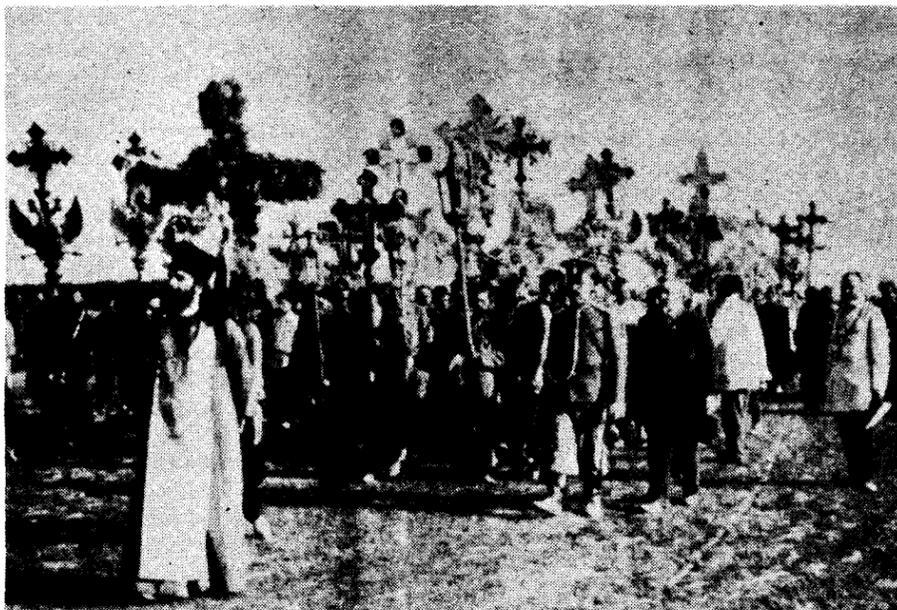
"No pogrom took place in Petersburg. But overt preparations for a pogrom went on at full strength. The Jewish population of the capital was in a state of constant dread... The workers made active preparations to defend their city... In the factory areas, beyond the Nevsky Gate, they organized a real militia with regular night watches... By arming itself against the Black Hundreds, the proletariat was automatically arming itself against Tsarist power."

What Stalin's Heirs Have Wrought

Meeting with Moscow party boss Yeltsin, Pamyat leader Vassiliev said, "We want deep communist morality to be the foundation of every work of art." One of their slogans at the Kremlin Wall was "Down with the Saboteurs of *Perestroika*" (restructuring). This is an appeal to elements of the Soviet bureaucracy who have in fact been protecting Pamyat and its predecessors for years. Indeed, Gorbachev's industrial reforms, if carried out, would mean increased economic anarchy and social discontent at the base of Soviet society, providing a breeding ground for fascist movements like Pamyat. Two Russian émigré journalists in the 1970s reported that "The Russian party [Slavophile nationalists] is the only unofficial and even oppositionist ideological group which enjoys increasing freedom for chauvinist propaganda and active recruitment of adherents" (quoted in Alexander Yanov, *The Russian New Right* [1978]).

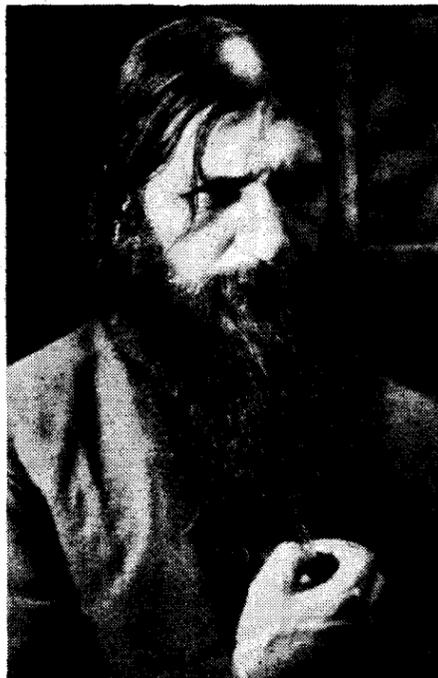
Such tendencies exist also within the bureaucracy. In the late 1960s a functionary of the Moscow Komsomol

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International Publishers Photos

Mad monk Rasputin (right) symbolized last days of tsarist autocracy. Russian Orthodox priests march at head of Black Hundreds pogromists, 1907.



Sri Lanka...

(continued from page 6)

downplayed the controversy surrounding his statement and said the Indian troops were "at the disposal" of Jayewardene. But the relationship of forces between the island and its giant neighbour is clear. Now Palali air base, formerly the hub of the Sri Lankan military operation in the north, is an Indian air base, with the Sri Lankan armed forces a diminishing presence. The original Indian force of 3,000 men in the north has already been doubled and their field of operations extended into the Eastern Province, occupying Trincomalee harbour. And two Indian frigates loom off Colombo.

Setback to Imperialist Appetites

India, a diplomatic ally of the Soviet Union, fears a U.S.-brokered encirclement including Pakistan, China and Sri Lanka. Part of the current arrangement, wrapped in diplomatic niceties, is that Sri Lanka's advisers—Israeli, British SAS mercenary and especially Pakistani—will have to go. As well Sri Lanka has pledged to reconsider the installation of the powerful Voice of America transmitter at Chilaw intended to beam counterrevolutionary propaganda to the Indian subcontinent and Soviet Central Asia.

But the crucial question is the strategic harbour of Trincomalee, which the U.S. imperialists have had high hopes of getting their hands on under the auspices of the rightist, pro-U.S. Jayewardene. India has forced Sri Lanka to agree not to let any foreign power use the port for military purposes "prejudicial to India's interests." An Indian presence is underlined by an agreement to jointly restore Trinco's oil storage facilities. Earlier the United States tried to get a foothold by volunteering to undertake exactly the same project. Another provision entrusts India with providing all future training facilities and military supplies for the Lankan armed forces. These developments are to some extent a setback for the imperialist designs on Trincomalee as part of the Americans' war plans against the Soviet Union. While the U.S. has said it supports the pact and has offered military assistance to Jayewardene, the terms can hardly be to America's liking.

As we go to press, the situation is still unfolding and many interesting questions remain unanswered. Among them: How did Rajiv Gandhi get J.R. to go along? And how was the Indian occupation kept secret until the ships and troops were already in place? India could have annexed Ceylon at any time, but the normal expectation would have been that the U.S. would go to war rather than see Lanka go this route. But somehow, Gandhi has pulled off a real diplomatic coup and has slithered past the Americans to assert India's interests while the attentions of U.S. imperialism were overcommitted elsewhere. Champagne must be flowing in Delhi, and in Moscow too.

At the same time we have repeatedly warned that the Tamils' illusions in the Indian bourgeoisie are deadly dangerous. It is clear that wide sections of the Tamil community welcome the arrival of Indian troops as ending the bloody onslaught of the Lankan armed forces.

The bourgeois parliamentarian TULF has always centred its hopes on Indian intervention and they will try to use the Indian presence to reassert leadership of the Tamil population. TULF leader Amirthalingam has in the past explicitly identified with the Bangladeshi leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who rode to power on the back of the Indian invasion of East Pakistan in 1971. The guerrilla groups too, along with their armed struggle strategy, have equally appealed to India. The Tigers' increasing recourse to indefensible terror against Sinhalese civilians has been aimed precisely at provoking bloody retaliation by the J.R. regime, to force India to intervene in response. Now they

that a general amnesty will be granted to all prisoners held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and other "emergency" laws: However, joint patrols were immediately instituted in the Palk Strait to interdict Tamil guerrilla supply lines and India has promised to crack down on the militants' bases in south India.

The Indian army is ready to do the Tigers what it did (with the assistance of the Pakistani army) to the Mukti Bahini in Bangladesh—wipe them out. One reporter drily commented that at Palali base it is difficult to tell the Sri Lankan and Indian officers apart since "Their British-style uniforms are almost identical" (London *Guardian*, 1 August). If the Tamil Tigers refuse to come to

mob violence that has left parts of Colombo looking like battle zones. The government's hold in the southern part of the country seems tenuous."

With the arrival of the Indian troops and the communalist frenzy in the south, the reactionary logic of nationalism/communalism has taken its predictable course. The whole Indian subcontinent is a seething prison house of its various nations, exploited classes, oppressed castes, minority religions. It is a bitter irony that many of the Indian troops in Lanka are Sikhs, a minority community which faces harsh repression from the Indian government. Gandhi badly needs a foreign policy "triumph" to divert attention from his troubles at home: corruption scandals, recent electoral setbacks and the multifaceted horror of life in capitalist India.

A *New York Times* report from Jaffna quoted a Tamil school principal who welcomed the arrival of Indian troops: "Many of the Indian soldiers who have arrived here are from southern India, where Tamil is spoken, and Mr. Balasingam said they might have better relations with residents" than the Lankan army (*New York Times*, 1 August). The Sinhalese are reaping the bitter fruit of "Sinhala Only," the chauvinist campaign spearheaded in the mid-1950s by the SLFP (and criminally tailed by the class-collaborationist "left" which claimed to find in the SLFP a "progressive" or "lesser evil" section of the ruling class).

The Tamils' superiority in English, a legacy of British "divide and rule," had placed the majority Sinhalese at a disadvantage in the professions, universities, government bureaucracy, etc. Under the cover of "anti-imperialist" rhetoric, the Sinhalese dethroned English and got preferential access to masses of jobs, from humble clerks on up. The 1972 Constitution, which officially mandates the protection of the Buddhist religion, even changed the name of the country to a Sinhala word, complete with an honorific with religious connotations. The provision of the new Indo-Lankan agreement restoring Tamil and English as official languages alongside Sinhalese is an elementary democratic measure.

Severing their children's links with English through the Sinhala education system, the Sinhalese made themselves an enclave cut off from India and the rest of the world, and split the island's populations apart, for English is the lingua franca between national/religious communities throughout the Indian subcontinent. In the sequel, the Sinhalese troops who went north to combat the separatist insurgency had no shot at "winning the hearts and minds" of the Tamil civilians; they could be only an army of alien occupation.

Revolutionary Marxists, unlike nationalists and their "left" apologists, take no pleasure in the reversal of terms of oppression. Ceylon has been "Ulsterised." Within the nationalist frame of reference, which confers on whole peoples a supposedly "reactionary" or "progressive" status, the Tamils, especially those in Jaffna, are now the favoured "reactionary people" and the racist Sinhalese the new oppressed, in roughly the unenviable position of Cypriot Greeks after the arrival of the Turkish army. "President Jayawardene is now being protected by the empire of beggars," one Sinhalese man remarked bitterly (*Independent*, 1 August).

The working masses of India and Ceylon need Bolshevik parties to lead the workers and peasant masses in the struggle to overthrow capitalism through socialist revolution. No confidence in the blood-soaked Indian rulers! Defeat U.S. imperialism's sinister plans for Trincomalee! Down with the Prevention of Terrorism Act! Free all victims of J.R.'s terror! For the federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka, part of the socialist federation of South Asia! ■

Australasian Spartacist



Melbourne, Australia, February 21: Spartacists join with Tamil demonstrators protesting visit by Lankan minister Athulathmudali, demand Lanka army out of Tamil areas.

are getting what they wanted... and they won't like it.

Before Gandhi and Jayewardene signed their agreement, Tiger leader Prabhakaran was fetched out of Jaffna "for talks" by an Indian helicopter. He was held under virtual house arrest in a Delhi hotel, surrounded by members of the "Black Cats," an elite Indian security unit. Prabhakaran talked initially of "an act of betrayal" and said that "It appears now that we have walked into a trap" (*London Times*, 28 July). But following the arrival of the Indian military force in Lanka, the Tigers issued a statement that "We are satisfied that Mr Gandhi understands our fears and is fully sympathetic to our Tamil aspirations." And by August 3, reportedly in exchange for the promise of a top position in the newly created Tamil province, Prabhakaran had fallen into line and returned to his men in Jaffna to promote the accord and urge the surrender of weapons. British television reported that Prabhakaran, addressing a rally of 100,000 people in Jaffna today, did indeed tell his "boys" to turn over their arms. He still cherishes the dream of an independent Eelam, he said, but "the war is over."

The Tigers' Dilemma

In Jaffna the Tiger militants had adamantly refused to turn in their arms until the return of their leader. A crowd surrounded and rocked the jeep of the commander of the Indian forces Maj. Gen. Harkirat Singh in a village near Jaffna when he met with Tamil leaders there on July 31. If the Tigers and other groups do not hand in their arms, Singh said, "my charter is, yes, to go and look for them" (*New York Times*, 1 August). And to underline the point, big Indian air force Soviet-made jets have been landing armoured personnel carriers and tanks equipped with anti-mine flails at Palali. It was agreed

terms, they are likely to find the Indian army a far more formidable proposition than the Sri Lankan forces.

But it is not just the Tigers' blood that will run. The Eastern Province is heavily interpenetrated, more or less evenly among Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims. A referendum is proposed to be held later next year on whether the Eastern Province should remain linked to the Tamil Northern Province. This arrangement is a recipe for massive communal bloodletting and forced population transfers as the different communities fight to control the province. And, while the agreement will repatriate 130,000 Tamil refugees who have fled to India, some sources report that 100,000 Tamils from the plantation areas of the central highlands will be sent to India. These low-caste, horribly exploited "stateless" workers of the tea plantations, who have historically produced most of the wealth of the island, have always been ignored by both the reformist, Sinhala-chauvinist "left" and the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Tamil liberation groups. In any case, the Sinhalese communalists, impotent before the power of India, are likely to turn their frenzy against the plantation workers and against Tamils in Colombo and the south.

The Sinhalese communalist forces which the UNP government has fomented for so long are enraged at the settlement, seeking to tap racist xenophobia and Sinhalese fears of being engulfed by the greater masses of Tamil and other Indian Hindus across the Palk Strait. Buddhist monks have been in the forefront of the protests. On July 29, with central Colombo deserted, police and troops battled enraged Sinhalese communalist mobs in the suburbs. In Ratnapura, one government MP has been assassinated. The *Washington Post* (3 August) reported:

"Hundreds of buses, government vehicles and buildings have been burned in

CORRECTIONS

In *WV* No. 431 (26 June) the article "SS-U.S. Rat Line" referred to the Bolivian Barrientos dictatorship of 1971-78. The dictator at that time was Hugo Banzer.

In *WV* No. 427 (1 May) the article "Labor: Smash Racist Immigration Law!" reported that 56 percent of all public school students in California are Hispanic. It should have said in Los Angeles.

Longshoremen Turn Thumbs Down on Sellout Contract

Defend the ILWU! Shut Down the Coast!

OAKLAND, August 3—Opposition to the takeaway West Coast longshore contract is so widespread that it looks like this sellout has been voted down. What the rotten "deal" boils down to is longer hours, harder work, less pay and speedup conditions, all under a rule of fear and harassment. International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) president Jimmy Herman and vice president Rudy Rubio have negotiated the worst contract since the 1961 "Mechanization and Modernization" deal that slashed jobs on the waterfront.

The sellout starts with a whopping \$5.43 pay cut for all new-hires, new "flexible" starting times and loss of the six-hour day. Vicious disciplinary procedures are being instituted centering on "safety" and drug testing. This will encourage finking to intimidate and even deregister (throw off the docks) any longshoreman who doesn't jump when a supervisor says so. And there is a letter of agreement with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) to "investigate" getting rid of the union hiring hall. The clocks have been turned back to 1934 and the ranks don't like it one bit.

The Herman/Rubio fink contract gives the companies a free hand, surrendering major areas of union control and leading to intensified exploitation. "Judas" Herman sent a clear message to the maritime bosses when he sabotaged the Inland Boatmen's Union strike against Crowley Maritime—still going on after 25 weeks, almost *half a year*. Whenever they wanted to move cargo, labor-traitor Herman ordered picket lines taken down to demonstrate his loyalty to the bosses. That's why such a stinking contract is in front of the ILWU membership today.

But the longshore ranks have been itching for a fight. They showed this determination back in March when their 1,000-strong picket line shut down the Redwood City port. They're showing it again now by registering impressive "no" votes. When Herman showed up in L.A. the Local 13 membership booed and catcalled for 45 minutes before he could take the floor. After delivering a boring speech defending this betrayal he quickly exited to avoid the question-answer period. Down the street at the clerks hall the Local 63 membership nearly booed Herman off the stage.

This rotten deal has produced a deluge of leaflets and "open letters" roundly denouncing the contract. This many leaflets from the membership haven't been seen in years. The word on the waterfront is that the contract was voted down by a 3-to-2 margin in the Bay Area, defeated in Los Angeles, and among the clerks the vote has been running 30-to-1 "no" in some areas! What

Dental, Vacations, Holidays or anything else."

Flexible start times, linked to the elimination of the six-hour day and mandatory one-hour overtime, will drive many longshoremen out of the industry. This same Local 10 member's leaflet states: "Under the present agreement the companies achieve 21 hours of ship work in three shifts. Under

World (8 July) didn't even oppose the Herman/Rubio deal ("Tentative Longshore Contract Reached").

West Coast maritime is not the rust belt of the Midwest. The bosses are raking in the profits as tonnage has been on a five-year increase for every major port! Now is the time to squeeze the arrogant waterfront employers and teach them a lesson. A little class struggle that shuts down the shipping industry will go a long way in re-establishing fear and respect for the union. The ILWU is not an isolated weak union like PATCO or the Hormel workers, but a powerful social force that, linked to transport and other waterfront workers, can smash this takeaway contract and bust the union-busters.

Longshoremen must know who their friends and enemies are. Arrayed against them are the bosses, the Democratic Party politicians who run the big cities, and the labor lieutenants of capital who run the unions today. During the Reagan years especially, any strike on the waterfront will quickly become a political struggle against the entire rul-



Fink/Times Tribune

ILWU pickets rout scabs at Redwood City port, March 20.

now? The union must be mobilized for a *solid strike to win!*

Union Work Conditions Threatened

Since *Workers Vanguard* exposed Herman's sellout ("Two-Tier Contract Threatens ILWU," *WV* No. 432, 10 July), the details have been published and they are every bit as rotten as we reported. The wage cuts are for all new longshoremen who have worked under 5,000 hours regardless of registration status. With "A" men in the Bay Area and L.A. averaging 1,300-1,600 hours per year, one can't imagine a single "casual" reaching the 5,000-hour level during the life of this contract. As a Local 10 member succinctly stated:

"What the PMA appears to have in mind for the future is 200 or 300 skilled longshoremen working steady, and 600 casuals doing the lashing for \$14 an hour, and probably hating your guts because they won't have Medical,

the new agreement they will get 21 hours of work in two shifts."

Enforcing these union-busting conditions are draconian disciplinary measures that quickly set up veteran longshoremen for deregistration. On the fourth violation of "safety" regulations you're out of the industry! If these rules don't get you then the drug and alcohol testing will. The International piccards and the PMA have agreed to set up a method of "identifying substance abusers." This vicious drug and alcohol witchhunt opens up every longshoreman to be bullied, harassed and fired by any drunken or enraged PMA boss.

These new concessions are designed to pit the older workers against the younger newcomers who are to a great degree black, Hispanic and some women. These social divisions are potential tinder for the PMA's long-time goal of destroying the hiring hall and with it the union. The letter of agreement that proposes an "investigation" is the first step in management re-creating the hated steady-man system that will return the waterfront back to the days of the "shape-up." The International paved the way for this betrayal with Rudy Rubio's participation in the bosses' "Committee of Productivity of Marine Terminals."

A Solid Strike to Win!

During the Reagan years the labor traitors like the Herman gang have preached that strikes can't win. Herman is counting on this defeatist attitude to wear down the membership's resolve through "new" votes on the same rotten deal. And the International gets a little help from its fake-left friends. The Communist Party's *People's Daily*

ing class. The Republicans and Democrats are bipartisan in their hatred of the Soviet Union and venomous desire to crush the revolution in Nicaragua, as is crystal clear to every viewer of the Iran/Contragate hearings.

The Spartacist League has said on many occasions that anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home. The labor skates like Herman want to sink any labor fight here to prop up their buddies in the racist, strikebreaking Democratic Party. Look at the pathetic seven dwarfs the Democrats are trying to run for President in 1988. Among them is one "friend of labor" Bruce "Scabby" Babbitt who called out the Arizona National Guard to dismantle the mass picket lines of the militant Phelps Dodge copper strikers.

Now is the time for some hard class struggle that can dump the Reagan/Meese/Rehnquist gang and bust the union-busters. For a militant coastwise strike that links up with rail, airport and trucking workers! Form a solid union front by immediately organizing all the casuals into the ILWU and fighting for a sliding scale of hours and wages to provide work for all with no loss in pay. Smash the PMA's multi-tier wage system and all the other union-busting schemes. Now is the time for a big labor victory that can reverse the defeats up and down the coast! ■

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips an issue in August. Our next issue will be dated September 4.

FORUM

For International Class-Struggle Defense!

Sponsored By: Partisan Defense Committee
Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense

Speakers:

Don Alexander, Spartacist League Central Committee
will speak on the case of Geronimo Pratt (America's foremost class-war prisoner)
This forum will also include speakers on behalf of a number of defense cases.

Friday, August 21, 8:00 p.m.

Hotel and Restaurant Workers Local 28 Hall

528 20th Street

OAKLAND

For more information:
(415) 839-0852

Pamyat...

(continued from page 7)

(Communist Youth), Valerii Skurlatov, distributed a leaflet demanding:

"Love for the motherland is a necessary and sufficient condition for citizenship. A cult of the ancestors must be set up.... Every person must be saturated by the cult of his own clump of native earth, soaked with the sweat and blood of his fathers."

—*ibid.*

About the same time the official central organ of Komsomol, *Molodaia gvardia*, ran an article praising the efforts of Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible as "something majestic, which inspires even our thought."

Fifty years ago, Trotsky pointed out that the bonapartist bureaucracy contained within it elements which could become capitalist restorationist or even fascist. At the time of the Moscow Trials, he noted the tremendous centrifugal forces in the bureaucracy, writing in the *Transitional Program*:

"The public utterances of former foreign representatives of the Kremlin, who refused to return to Moscow, irrefutably confirm in their own way that all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko). The revolutionary elements within the bureaucracy, only a small minority, reflect, passively it is true, the socialist interests of the proletariat. The fascist, counter-revolutionary elements, growing uninterruptedly, express with ever greater consistency the interests of world imperialism. These candidates for the role of compradors consider, not without reason, that the new ruling layer can insure their positions of privilege only through rejection of nationalization, collectivization and monopoly of foreign trade in the name of the assimilation of 'Western civilization,' i.e., capitalism."

In the conditions of backward Russia, and the isolation of the revolution surrounded by hostile imperialist states, the Stalinist Thermidor represented the triumph of Great Russian chauvinism and Russian nationalist traditions over the Bolshevik program of international

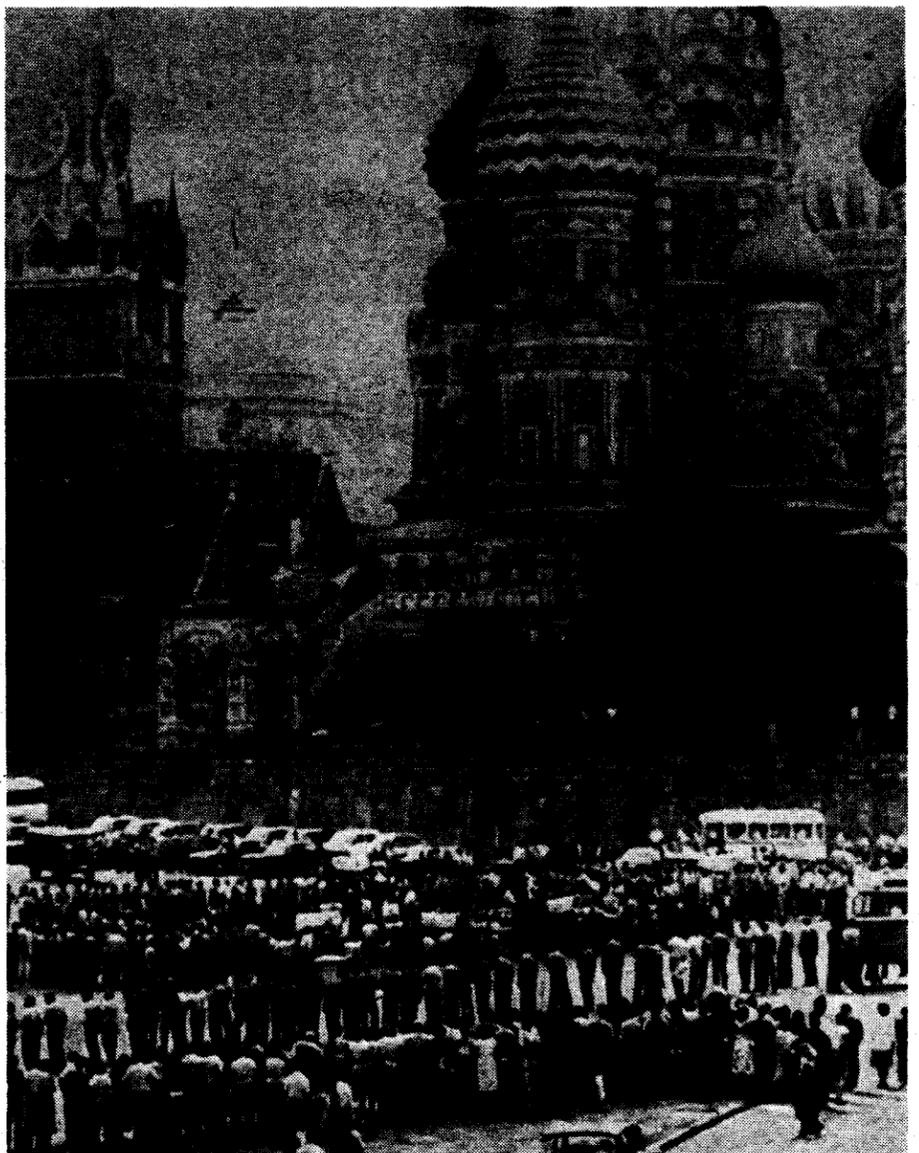
involved a large-scale purge of Jews from the party, government and academic posts.

There's plenty that's peculiar about Pamyat. They're trying to be fascists while upholding the sacred motherland against the German invasion in WW II—and on behalf of all Soviet peoples, which also screws them up. They're a hodgepodge, but that's not unusual—fascist ideology is everywhere based on impulse and prejudice. According to the *Times*, they think that everybody who's fled to the West is part of a "Judaic-Masonic pyramid including the dissidents Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Andrei D. Sakharov," and fantasize that there is a plot to blow up the Moscow subway (a fiction lifted from the *Protocols*).

Solzhenitsyn is their spiritual godfather, but they don't even know that. In his book *August 1914*, this reactionary mystic who longs for the return of the tsar characterizes Jewish villains as "cosmopolitans" with "nothing Russian either in [their] blood or [their] character." In his Harvard commencement speech in 1978, Solzhenitsyn spoke for the Vietnam War, and denounced television, rock music, "Western well-being" and all "modern civilization."

Solzhenitsyn may cause his Cold War sponsors some discomfort when he lets loose against "Western democracy," but his Russian-chauvinist coreligionists are egged on by the CIA. It's no secret U.S. imperialism has embraced the hoary Nazi collaborators who escaped Soviet justice after the Second World War. From its broadcast station in Munich, "Radio Liberty" beams anti-Semitic filth into the Soviet Union (via transmitters in Israel!), obscenely apologizing for the pogroms and praising Ukrainian Nazi collaborators as "freedom fighters." In late 1985, Russian Orthodox xenophobes ran out Jews from this CIA station, accusing them of a creeping conspiracy to sap the "Russian spirit."

Big events are under way in the Soviet Union. As *glasnost* lifts the lid on 60



Crimean Tatars, brutally driven from their homeland by Stalin during World War II, protest near the Kremlin in July. UPI

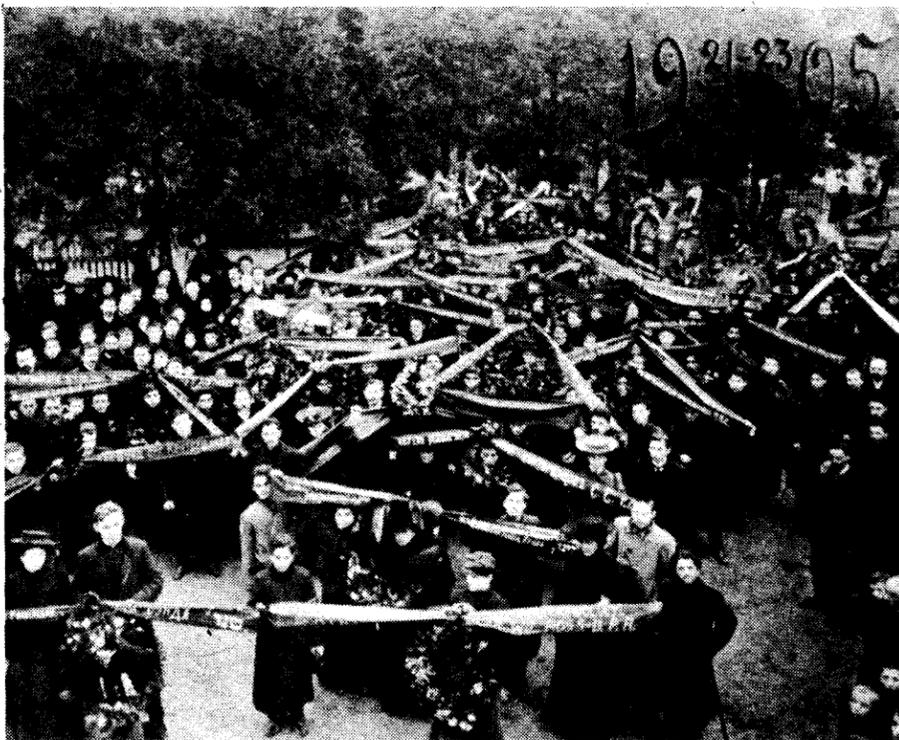
Meanwhile, a *New York Times Magazine* (26 July) article on Russia's alienated youth refers to a "budding back-to-Bolshevism movement in Leningrad and Minsk, with young people carrying books of quotations from Lenin and Trotsky." *Der Spiegel* (27 July) writes that "Trotsky's spirit still haunts the universities and studies of Russia, where men recall the ideas of the world revolutionary as if they were legends." The article reports on a recent Moscow Komsomol meeting where Yuri Afanassyev, director of the Institute for History and Archives, was asked if he favors publication of Trotsky's works. When Afanassyev answered "yes," older listeners were aghast. In the intellectual ferment in the USSR today, with the emphasis on stripping away the Stalinist falsifications of history and returning to the sources of Leninism, the revolutionary-minded will discover the continuity of Bolshevism in Trotskyism.

And they will discover the sharp discontinuity between the party of Lenin and Trotsky, and the Stalinist bureaucracy. The heirs of Stalin can't tell the difference between Tatar irredentism and Great Russian fascism. It would be foolish to call upon the bureaucracy to carry out workers justice and undertake political suppression of the nativist fascist scum, whom they have encouraged and conciliated in myriad ways with their own Great Russian chauvinism. The Bolshevik Revolution broke the back of the Black Hundreds, put an end to the bloody pogroms against the ghetto, and freed all the peoples of the Russian Empire from the grip of tsarist mysticism and feudal obscurantism. But the Soviet workers have been politically expropriated. The fact that fascist scum are now growing back like poisonous weeds after having been uprooted by the victorious socialist revolution is a telling condemnation of Stalinist rule.

Resurgent nativist fascism is a deadly threat in the United States as well. The Reagan counterrevolution was ushered in under Democrat Jimmy Carter in the 1979 daylight KKK/Nazi massacre of five leftists, blacks and labor organizers in Greensboro. Emboldened, the fascists crawled out into the open, flaunt-

ing their white robes and swastikas in open provocations in the black proletarian strongholds of the Northern cities. In November 1982, when we gauged we had the strength among the black working masses, and taking advantage of the sometime showcase democracy of the imperialist centers, the Spartacist League successfully confronted and stopped Pamyat's cothinkers, the Ku Klux Klan, mobilizing more than 5,000 working people in Washington, D.C.

In November of 1917, comrade V.I. Lenin led the Soviet peoples to power. Our party is a party in the spirit of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. We have defended the just cause of the Vietnamese people against French and American imperialism, the present struggle for the social emancipation of Afghanistan, and the suppression of clerical counterrevolution in Poland. Today we fight to defend Nicaragua and complete the revolution. And we ask—on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution—what have the heirs of Stalin wrought? Neo-Black Hundreds openly massing at the Kremlin Wall? Fascists in Red Square—in a country where 20 million died defending the land of the October Revolution against the Nazis! The working masses must deal with this fascist excrescence, as part of the struggle for the return to genuine revolutionary communism in the Soviet Union. ■



Schocken Books

1905—Russian and Polish socialist workers commemorate victims of anti-Semitic pogrom in Vilna.

proletarian revolution. An important component of this political counter-revolution was the weapon of anti-Semitism lifted wholesale from the tsarist Okhrana and Black Hundreds and used against the Bolsheviks. Stalin's attacks on the "Jewishness" of Trotsky and other Bolshevik leaders served to isolate the Left Opposition from the workers by inflaming prejudice and backwardness. In World War II Stalin embraced the pogromist Russian Orthodox church in order to foster Russian nationalism. Similarly, after World War II, Stalin's crackdown on the intelligentsia took the form of a campaign against "cosmopolitanism" and in-

years of Stalinist rule, many forces are rising to the surface of Soviet society. On July 25, several hundred Tatars demonstrated in Red Square demanding restoration of their Crimean homeland. The Tatars, descendants of the Mongols who under Genghis Khan conquered Russia in the 13th century, were brutally expelled from the Crimea in 1944 on charges by Stalin (now admitted to be false) that they were all Nazi collaborators. Over 40 percent of the Tatar population, about 110,000 people, perished during the forced march to Central Asia in one of the most shameful acts of national oppression by the Great Russian-chauvinist bureaucracy.

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Eyewitness Nicaragua...

(continued from page 12)

the economic crisis. Just getting to work is a major effort. Every bus stop looks like a mass demonstration and every bus is packed to overflowing. Simple things we take for granted just don't exist. The whole country is like one big Transit Authority storeroom: "No stock." You hear it all the time—*No hay*—there isn't any. No parts, no tools, no wire, no terminals, no electrical tape, no screws, no nuts.

Every job takes six times as long because first you have to dig up the parts and materials. While cutting some tubing to install fluorescent lights the 16-year-old helper broke the hacksaw blade. It was the only blade in the entire shop for some 220 employees. Before we hung the lights in the machine shop we had to craft our own ladder. Less than half their work plan was accomplished this year because of lack of parts, lack of skilled personnel, workers mobilized for the war, and "discipline" problems. A



NICAT

Hail Ben Linder, heroic American volunteer in Nicaragua killed by Reagan's contras!

lot of these have to do with being late for work, partly because of impossible transportation problems and partly because they're doing some work on the side, in order to survive.

I was constantly impressed with the youth of the people who were running things. The *responsable* for the shop was only 31 years old. There is very little division between the workers and management. Once or twice a month there are assemblies of all the workers to discuss problems in the shop. This is in stark contrast to the days when Somoza ruled. My partner told me how Somoza's OSN finks used to infiltrate union meetings to identify the leaders and have them killed. "Now," he said, "we have liberty."

Yet there is clearly a pressing danger of the working class dissolving as the black market overwhelms the official economy. It has become an act of political consciousness for workers to remain in the government sector or industrial enterprises. The income of those in the speculative economy is much higher than that of the salaried workers. Almost *half* of the entire population of Managua is involved in the "informal" section of the economy. The newspapers carry stories of people using CAT tickets to get goods at subsidized prices or simply stealing goods to resell on the black market at many times the cost. Government attempts to control this have not met with much success.

The government has come up with

various voluntaristic proposals to deal with the economic crisis, demanding even greater sacrifices of the workers. Workers are expected to participate in the *rojinegros* ("red and black" Saturdays), voluntary days of unpaid work. They have also begun to form economic brigades in various enterprises which are groups of exemplary workers whose job is to spur productivity. Despite the workers' willingness to sacrifice, one detects a sense of weariness after eight years of struggling simply to survive. The need to expropriate private property (disarming the fifth column) and to institute a real economic plan effectively utilizing the scarce professional/technical resources is painfully obvious.

In central Managua there's a huge socialist realist type statue of "The Fighter" inscribed with a quote from Augusto César Sandino, who led the resistance to the U.S. Marines in the 1920s and early '30s. "Only the workers and peasants will go to the end," he said. But today the Sandinista regime, wedded to its principles of "political pluralism, mixed economy and nonalignment," is actually preventing the working masses from carrying the revolution through to the end, to the destruction of capitalism.

In fact the best thing they have going for them is the assistance of the Soviet Union, the Eastern bloc countries and Cuba. Sturdy Soviet-made tractors, reportedly admired even by Midwest U.S. farmers, are everywhere. Most of our equipment at the machine shop was from East Germany, though some was from the Scandinavian countries. Many of the mechanics had been sent to the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Cuba for anywhere from three months to six years for technical training. Of course the military aid from the Soviet Union has been crucial. The Soviet helicopters have been key to routing the contras and I certainly felt more secure as they patrolled the hills surrounding Matagalpa during the Eighth Anniversary celebration.

Yet the government recently announced that the Soviet Union is cutting back its oil shipments to Nicaragua to about 40 percent of the country's needs. With their sources of hard currency curtailed by the U.S. embargo, the Nicaraguans can't afford to buy crude oil from Venezuela and Mexico even at concessionary rates, and their requests for favorable terms were rebuffed. This development is truly ominous. With repeated massive U.S. military "exercises" on Nicaragua's borders, like "Solid Shield," it's clear that they're not just aiming at the Sandinistas. The defense of Cuba and the Soviet Union itself is posed.

Despite the poverty and hardship, Nicaragua has become a beacon of hope for the struggling masses throughout Central America. One of my compañeros was a refugee from El Salvador who was hounded by the Salvadoran army. He has two brothers who were members of the militant telephone workers union and are now in exile in the U.S. They face possible deportation to death squad terror in the wake of the new racist immigration law in the U.S. The papers carried extensive coverage of the upsurge of class struggle in El Salvador. These events showed the urgency and possibility of extending revolutionary struggle throughout the region, as opposed to the Contadora and Arias plans which are designed to thwart revolution and preserve the interests of the imperialists.

International workers can help develop consciousness of the need to complete and extend the revolution. I ate lunch with a Cuban who was there to work on equipment maintenance. He had also worked in southern Angola and said that there, as in Nicaragua, there was a lot of misery and suffering. He compared the South African attacks on Angola to the U.S.-backed contra war in Nicaragua and spoke of how conditions are much better in Cuba, citing



Mary Jo Marino

Portraits of martyred union members killed by contra terrorists displayed at maintenance workers union hall.

in particular education and health care.

There is an avid curiosity about life in the U.S., and in particular a concern for the condition of black people. A number of the workers asked about Jesse Jackson—is he some kind of socialist? I had to explain how in the last election he had acted as a shill for Mondale whose program was "Quarantine Nicaragua" and how the Democrats and Republicans are both parties of war and racism. One of the automotive electricians also asked about Jesse Jackson and said he also knew about someone named Abraham Lincoln. He said he'd read some about the Civil War. He also wanted to know who really killed Martin Luther King, which sparked a conversation about the FBI's COINTELPRO and the destruction of the Black Panther Party.

What this revolution promises more than anything is the possibility of a future and they're willing to fight to the finish, house to house if necessary, to defend that. The position of women in Nicaraguan society is a real indicator of the contradictory, uneven, incomplete nature of the changes that have occurred. Under the pressures of the Catholic church and rampant *machismo*, the government has refused to legalize abortion, a point which was evidently hotly debated around the new Constitution.

Even so, there's no question that there have been significant changes for women, who were among the most valiant combatants in the insurrection. Many women are now attending the universities, entering professional and technical occupations in unprecedented numbers. For the most part women have not moved into nontraditional occupations, yet at the shop where I worked there were two women in the training class for mechanics, which would have been unheard of before.

I noticed a particularly warm regard for Ben Linder among the Nicaraguans. I attended the *Misa Campesina*, a peasant mass with music written and sung by popular singer Carlos Mejía Godoy with his brother Luis Enrique and a visiting Swedish chorus. During the portion honoring the dead, mothers called out the names of their sons who fell in combat. One woman shouted out "Benjamin Linder!" and the entire congregation responded "*¡presente!*" The week that I left there was to be a tombstone laid at Ben's simple grave in Matagalpa. The residents of the dirt-poor barrio neighboring the grave site contributed 100,000 córdobas to the effort.

In the U.S., the House recently passed a bill to ban travel to Nicaragua for anyone going to help the Sandinista government militarily. Well, I certainly hope that the work that I did contributed in some way, no matter how small, to the defense and development of Nicaragua in the fight against U.S. imperialism. And campaigns on the home front, like the Spartacus Youth League campaign that raised over \$25,000 for material aid to defend Nicaragua, are inspiring to the people I worked with. There's now a "Nicabucks" button hanging in the union hall.

The work of many of the internationalists like Ben Linder has been very important. But you come away with a sense of the urgency of organizing a revolutionary political opposition to the U.S. war moves here at home in the belly of the monster. If Reagan invades Nicaragua, American society could explode. The possibility exists for working-class action, for labor political strikes against the war. But that will only happen if there is a party of the working class prepared to fight for and lead such actions. ■

JUST OUT!

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WORKERS VANGUARD



Maintenance welding shop named after Francisco Rojas, worker killed in contra war.



Managua railroad workers repair scarce rolling stock. Photos: Mary Jo Marino

Eyewitness Nicaragua

Survival Under Reagan's Guns

We print below a report by Mary Jo Marino, a New York City subway worker and member of Transport Workers Union Local 100, who recently returned from Nicaragua.

While Lt. Col. Oliver North was using the Iran-Contra "investigation" as a platform for glorifying the sadistic contra killers, I had the privilege to be in Nicaragua working shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters as an expression of solidarity against the murderous crimes of the U.S. government. I witnessed firsthand the toll of the U.S.-backed contra war and the human cost of the attempt by the U.S. to strangle this popular revolution. The faces of the young compañeros who fell fighting the contras flash through my mind and the memory of my fellow workers, who can't get enough to eat and work long hours in brutal conditions because of the war and the blockade. I have deep admiration for the heart and spirit of these people who have fought and sacrificed in the face of incredible hardship, for their revolution which to them represents a deep-felt hope for a better future.

While in Nicaragua, I worked as an industrial electrician at the Plantel Central "Jackson Jacomo," named after a leader of the union who was killed by the murderous National Guard during the 1979 insurrection which overthrew the dictator Somoza. At the Plantel they repair the city's construction vehicles, garbage trucks and other small vehicles used by the mayor's office. A big sign over the truck maintenance shop reads: "Heroes in Combat, Heroes in Work." As you walk in the plant gate there's a beautiful mural promoting Patriotic Military Service (the draft) with the slogan: "Al costo que sea, vamos hasta el fin" (No matter what the cost, we're going to the end).

This shop was my first exposure to the reality of the contra war. Nearly all of my compañeros had fought in the insurrection, done their military service and were currently active in the militias of their respective barrios. Every section of

the shop is named after someone who died in combat. Over 20,000 have died in the contra war. When I visited the union hall, the front wall was covered with pictures of the martyred dead—33 members of this union alone, so young (17, 18, 24 years old), and they died so recently. The area where I worked was plastered with decals of Che Guevara.

Our TecNica delegation also had the opportunity to meet with the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs in León. Many of the women were almost stoical but others were reduced to tears as they described the savaging of their children at the hands of the National Guard. One mother told of her 14-year-old son whose job was to find safe houses for the *frente*, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). He had been denounced and seized by the Guard 15 days before the insurrection. He was lashed, had electric shocks placed on the bottom of his feet, was strangled and tossed into the garbage underneath a

bridge where his mother found his body.

In spite of the pain, these women are proud of their children because they died for a noble cause. At lunch I got a chance to speak to Berta, who lost one son but is proud to have five boys in the military now. She has a little sewing shop in her house but is presently not working because she can't get any cloth, and is supported by relatives and a small pension from the death of her son. She described the harsh conditions—no parts in the industries, the black market. Some people, she said, are falling away from "the process," as they call it. She hasn't much tolerance for such people, just has nothing to do with them.

The remnants of Somoza's Guard are the backbone of the contras, the sadistic killers the U.S. bankrolls and hails as "freedom fighters." Strategically the contras are washed-up and that's understood on all sides. Still their cowardly hit-and-run tactics continue to take a toll in human lives and drain the

economy. The working class is literally unable to make ends meet. Fifty percent of the national budget and 25 percent of the country's material production goes to defense. Inflation is skyrocketing at a rate of 30 percent *per month*. At my shop, the *responsable* (shop organizer) made about 100,000 córdobas (about \$25) per month and a mechanic made 79,000 (about \$20). While I was there they raised the salaries 55 percent, yet real wages continue to fall. Obviously nobody can live on this little, so everybody in the family has to scrounge for work to make ends meet.

What's available to eat changes from week to week. There's no meat, no cooking oil, no butter. Shortly after I arrived they received a big shipment of potatoes from one of the Soviet-bloc countries. So "papas" were news. There was a special spot on the TV news: "101 ways to prepare potatoes." The women in our guest house watched with great interest, dragged the cook out of the kitchen and chatted about the various recipes. Whereas potatoes are not an ordinary staple of the Nicaraguan diet, rice is. Yet the papers carried a story and pictures one day that showed shelves and shelves of bags of rice in the supermarkets and government subsidized "CAT" stores (workers supply centers) which went unsold because wage earners couldn't afford the 8,300 córdobas in the supermarkets or even the 7,500 in the CAT.

I ate in the workers' *comedor* (cafeteria) at the shop one day. It was stark, dirty, all the lights out. Everyone brings his own plastic bowl and cup. As part of the productivity drive they're supposed to have a half-hour lunch, yet we stood in line for at least 50 minutes. By the time we reached the front of the line there were no tortillas or beans left. Lunch was a small piece of fried fish—good, but not much. These guys are all young, 16-25, doing hard physical labor. They had some appetites. I know they went hungry.

You have to work down there to experience the impact of the blockade and



Carlos Durán

Sandinistas capture American contra mercenary Eugene Hasenfus.

continued on page 11