

# Young Spartacus

NUMBER 125

25 CENTS

X-523

MARCH 1985

## Go to Hell, Uncle Sam!

William F. Gentile



Nicaraguans mobilize against Yankee threat—Defend, complete, extend the Nicaraguan revolution!

## Defend Nicaragua—Crush the Contras!

With his re-election out of the way, Reagan is eager to get "shake, rattle and rolling" on his anti-Soviet war drive through Central America. Step One is pushing through his war budget, starving the ghettos to bankroll \$300 billion for the Pentagon. Step Two is smashing the Nicaraguan revolution. The Reaganites have launched a campaign to convince Congress—which has regularly dispatched hundreds of millions to the bloody Salvadoran butchers—of the "moral and practical necessity" of approving \$14 million in frozen "covert" funding to the "contras," the murderous Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries. "We've got two options," explained David Durenberger, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. "We can do it openly or do it covertly. The only difference is that when we do it covertly, we lie a lot" (*New York Times*, 2 February). And lie they will, since, administration aides explain, "open" aid to the contras would be "close to a declaration of war" and

could lead to a break in diplomatic relations that would cost the U.S. "an important intelligence platform," its Managua embassy (*New York Times*, 25 February).

Even by standards of imperialist hypocrisy, the Reagan team is piling it high and deep. According to George Shultz, the Reagan administration is worried that Nicaragua is falling behind the "Iron Curtain." Intervention may be in the works to prevent "consigning Nicaragua to the endless darkness of Communist tyranny." Reagan boasts his intention to "remove" the Sandinista regime, yet Bush denounces "Sandinista militarism and corruption" as "paranoid." Reagan proclaimed the leprous contras "our brothers" and "the moral equal of our Founding Fathers and the brave men and women of the French Resistance." These CIA mercenaries and sadistic somocista torturers and killers certainly *are* Reagan's brothers, but if he had wanted an accurate historical comparison he should have

used Hitler's murderous henchmen.

The Sandinistas have tried to appease Reagan with an offer to declare a moratorium on weapons purchases and to expel 100 Cuban military advisers. But Reagan means business and is determined to strangle the Nicaraguan revolution until the Sandinistas "say uncle." He has marked Central America as the front line in his war against Communism, against Cuba and the Soviet Union. Now more than ever the Nicaraguans need the firepower to defend themselves and rout the contra scum. And a political fight must be waged against the Sandinistas' conciliation to the imperialists. It's because the Sandinistas *haven't* destroyed the capitalist "fifth column" inside the country, because the Kremlin *hasn't* extended military protection to Nicaragua that today the Sandinista government is tops on Reagan's hit list. Defend, Complete and Extend the Nicaraguan Revolution! Kill the Invaders!

Reagan's "brothers," the contras, are

typical of U.S. imperialism's "democratic revolutionary" allies, from the feudalist reactionaries in Afghanistan to the remnants of the genocidal Pol Pot forces the Vietnamese are mopping up in Cambodia. The contra "freedom fighters" are mostly either mercenary trash who will fight anywhere the price is right and the cause is anti-Communist, or ex-members of Somoza's National Guard. They are psychopathic sadists who thrive on rape and mutilation, torture and murder. Just as there's no honor among thieves, there's not much unity among such killer filth and that's one of Reagan's problems. The CIA recently strong-armed them into a "coalition" to make them look more like a respectable political opposition, but as "El Traidor" Edén Pastora put it, they are nonetheless the CIA's "dobermans"—unsavory, unstable mad dogs.

Responsible for the deaths of nearly 8,000 civilians since 1981, the contras

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Lessons of the Class Struggle, 1919-1933

**Germany: Revolution and Counterrevolution** see page 6

## EDITORIAL NOTE

# Guardian: The Ready-for-Teddy Club

In our last issue we slammed the rad-lib *Guardian* for its slimy cop-baiting of the Black Consciousness Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) which protested Teddy Kennedy during his recent visit to South Africa (see "U.S. Rad-Libs Lie for Kennedy as Black South African Militants Protest Imperialist Swine," *YSp* No. 124). AZAPO's just denunciation of Kennedy as a hypocritical imperialist politician and its stated intention to give Democratic Party hustler Jesse Jackson the same treatment discomfited not only the "liberal" capitalists but the fake-lefts who tail them. After the AZAPO protests, which struck a chord of militant sentiment among black South Africans, most of the American reformists found silence expedient or just fawned over Teddy's new-found resolve to "fight apartheid." But the *Guardian* couldn't take this affront to Teddy lying down and proceeded to bare its yellow teeth in a "Big Lie" story which suggested that AZAPO was in an alliance with the apartheid regime and bantustan chief Buthelezi.

We're pleased to report that some *Guardian* readers found this too much to swallow. We have as many differences with the Third Worldist Revolution in Africa Action Committee (RAAC) on program and strategy as we do with AZAPO, but the RAAC makes some sound points in its letter (*Guardian*, 13 February). The AZAPO protests, RAAC notes:

"...are a welcome relief to imperialism's movements in Africa. Their placards and chants were on target about Sen. Edward Kennedy.... Obviously the racist South Africans and AZAPO members did not object to Kennedy for the same reasons. Would you say that the left has a political alliance with Posse Comitatus or right-wing survivalists? Both hate the FBI, but that doesn't mean a political alliance exists."

The letter concludes with the pertinent question: "Is the *Guardian* endorsing



South African militants tell Kennedy where to go; *Guardian* covers for its Teddy with slanders against AZAPO.

Kennedy for 1988?" We wouldn't be surprised; it supported Mondale in 1984.

Another letter (*Guardian*, 6 March) points out that the African National Congress (ANC), whose support for Kennedy's visit the *Guardian* echoes, had talks with Buthelezi itself several years ago. The letter justly condemns the *Guardian's* attack on AZAPO as "outrageous and flagrantly unethical." As to the *Guardian's* contention that AZAPO's anti-Kennedy protests discredited it among black South Africans—the opposite seems to be the case. According to the London *Guardian* (22 February)—no relation to the rad-lib rag—black consciousness' "re-emergence as a potentially powerful force owes much to the recent visit to South Africa of... Kennedy." Said a "prominent member" of the United Democratic Front, the ANC-backed popular frontist formation which hosted Kennedy, "Most of us are now wishing that he had never come" (*Los Angeles Times*, 16 January).

So far the *Guardian* hasn't had the political forthrightness to answer the letters, nor our article. But we surmise that their printing these critical letters indicates they've received a decent amount of flak. The *Guardian* has printed, in lieu of an open response, a lawyer's letter for their shameful, cop-baiting coverage by James Cason and Mike Fleshman of the (defunct) mainstream rad-lib *Southern Africa* magazine. To RAAC's complaint that "News is news—but the *Guardian* wrote an editorial" they reply: "The *Guardian* wasn't editorializing about AZAPO's politics, it was describing a widely held view among black South Africans that AZAPO's decision to picket Kennedy... played into the hands of the racists." What disingenuous garbage! Cason and Fleshman alibi the *Guardian's* slander and Kennedy's junket to boot, informing us that the "intention... was to use Kennedy to heighten the emerging split within the imperialist camp on what to do about the South African revolution." Very

clever. After some soothing phrases about their respect for AZAPO (this after repeating the *Guardian's* lie about "a strange alliance with the government of South Africa"! the "lawyers" admonish the RAAC to "stop trying to impose leadership on the South African struggle and support all revolutionary forces"—like Kennedy? This is the talk of guilty liberals and unserious Third World cheerleaders. It's also an apt bloc with the *Guardian*, whose guiding principle has long been strident anti-Leninism and hostility to the construction of *any* revolutionary leadership (which after all might disrupt the *Guardian's* cozy armchair enthusing for "struggle"—as long as it is far away—and their smug, petty-bourgeois "radical" role as *hommes de plume*).

The Cape Action League, which joined in AZAPO's anti-Kennedy protests, touched the heart of the issue (*London Guardian*, 22 February):

"Imperialists throughout the so-called Free World are becoming worried that the working class will make good their demand for a socialist South Africa where there will be no exploitation and oppression." CAL did not want liberalised capitalism, mere civil rights, or American-style democracy: "We want real change."

We suggest the *Guardian* embark on an in-depth self-criticism session, preferably one that lasts several years, and start "learning from the people." While they're at it, they can ponder their revolting capitulation to a very un"liberal" bourgeois politician—Reagan—when it took them a year to acknowledge (and only after the *Nation* had printed the story) that KAL 007 was a U.S. Cold War spy provocation against Russia.

For our part, we will continue to fight for international labor action against apartheid and for the building of a revolutionary Marxist (i.e., Trotskyist) party in South Africa to ensure that the black proletariat realizes its demand for socialist revolution. ■

## SYL at Howard University: Racist INS Thugs Off Campus!

When the Spartacus Youth League at Howard University discovered that the racist Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was setting up a recruiting table in the student center, the comrades refused to let this provocation go unanswered. We are pleased to print the leaflet distributed the day the INS came to Howard, which has over 2,000 foreign students and was the scene of last October's outrageous INS arrest of former Grenadian ambassador Dessima Williams. Over 900 copies of the leaflet were distributed. During the course of our agitation against the INS, two new subscribers joined the readership of Young Spartacus.

Howard students, beware: Reagan's hated Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) cops have slunk into Blackburn Center today setting up a "Justice" Department recruiting table for their murderous Mexican border patrol! These are the same thugs who, as part of Reagan's sick anniversary "celebration" of the U.S. rape of black Grenada, invaded campus last October 25, seized and manhandled former Grenadian ambassador Dessima Williams outside Cramton Auditorium and are now threatening her with deporta-

tion. These are the same racist cops who are working hand-in-hand with the bloody apartheid rulers of South Africa to deport Howard graduate student Twigg Xiphu, leader of the U.S. branch of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, repeatedly denying him political asylum. This is an outrage! Racist INS thugs off campus!

Every year millions of desperate, half-starved Central American refugees make their perilous journey across the U.S.-Mexico border, braving the notoriously corrupt, sadistic INS border patrol to live in hellish "barrios" and slave away at minimum and sub-minimum pay in the sweatshops, restaurants and factories, deprived of the most elementary democratic rights. When these so-called "illegal aliens" are no longer needed by the bosses, the INS launches Gestapo-style raids, rounding up tens of thousands of Latin workers each year for deportation.

The Yankee imperialists, both Democrat and Republican, scream about hordes of brown-skinned "feet people" supposedly overrunning the U.S.' southern border, which was seized through bloody expansionist wars last century. Not only does this provide a convenient scapegoat for the endemic

unemployment of the capitalists' sick economy. It's also a great way to whip up racist, chauvinist hysteria behind the anti-Soviet war drive as Reagan steps up efforts to overthrow the Sandinistas and crush the left-wing insurgency in El Salvador. That's why anti-communist Polish emigres get the red-carpet treatment while Coast Guard ships ram boats full of Haitian refugees and thousands of Salvadorans are sent back each year to face possible imprisonment, torture and even death at the hands of U.S.-backed butchers. U.S. get your bloody hands off Central America! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for foreign workers and students!

On November 27, 1982 the race-terrorist Ku Klux Klan threatened to march through Washington, D.C. to demand the deportation of foreign-born workers. The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth League (SYL) showed how to stop these fascist goons when we initiated a 5,000-strong demonstration of predominantly black workers and youth, backed by seventy trade unions and union leaders, and took over the KKK's planned parade route. In the interests of revolutionary internationalism we fight for organizing the millions of immigrant workers into trade unions



Haitian refugees locked up in INS concentration camps.

on both sides of the border.

How dare the Klan's INS buddies come to Howard to recruit to their racist border patrols! The main enemy is at home: U.S. imperialism! Join the SYL and fight for a future under socialism, where national oppression will be a thing of the past and no one will be known as an "illegal alien," just comrade. Workers of the world, unite!

Spartacus Youth League  
7 March 1985.

# Social Democrats on the Red Avengers

Reprinted from "Xandra, the Red Avenger" By Dennis King, *New America*, Jan.-Feb. 1985

(In the spirit of Saturday Night Live rather than Joe McCarthy, this new column will report on the antics of the ultraleft fringe of American politics. Readers are invited to send in clippings from the newspapers of the various self-proclaimed vanguards. Or send an account of your own experiences of harassment.)

Remember the Spartacists? That redoubtable Trotskyist splinter group which, in the 1960s, with an estimated membership of 50, went forth to do battle against the evil empire of the Wohlforthites (est. membership 12)? Remember the dreary polemics of the "Sparts" and the "Woolies" as they accused each other of Pabloism, hooliganism and crypto-Stalinism?

Well, a curious thing has happened to the Sparts during the 1980s. They are as obnoxious and disruptive and self-important as ever—witness their attempt last year to prevent Eden Pastora from speaking at Columbia University—yet someone extremely intelligent has insinuated himself/herself into the

Sparts' structure and is using their off-the-wall ideology, consciously or not, to conduct a subtly satiric running commentary. I recall recent articles in the Spart newspaper—the so-called *Workers Vanguard*—hailing John and Christine DeLorean as virtual martyrs of the people's struggle and urging Vanessa Williams to strike back against the imperialist Miss Amerika committee. Both articles, although wacky, scored some valid points.

Someone in the Sparts even displays a deliberate sense of humor. For instance, there is the Sparts' reaction to the latest savage blow from the Class Enemy. On November 16, the student government at San Francisco State University passed a resolution censuring the campus Young Spartacist League (SYL) for "belligerently and violently disrupting the meetings and functions of other campus organizations." The resolution also stripped the Sparts of access to student activities funds and recommended that their charter be revoked. One of the incidents that triggered the wrath of the usually tolerant student government was the Sparts' alleged disruption of a forum at the campus Women's Center, which had

resulted in intervention by the campus cops.

In a Nov. 20 article, *Workers Vanguard* announced: "Young communists are being hunted down, chased, beaten and arrested for distributing Marxist literature. No, this is not Chile or South Africa, but the supposedly liberal 'marketplace of ideas,' San Francisco State University..." Of course, even the Sparts don't really compare the situation with South Africa. Instead, it's the "beansprout totalitarianism" of the "me generation."

In "willful mockery," the campus Sparts announced the launching of "undergroundism beansprout style." They became the "Red Avengers of the Underground SYL," promising "appropriate tactics like communiqués and guerrilla theater."

The SYL began to wear bandannas over their faces, Groucho Marx noses, and tee-shirts with the slogans "Go Underground with Xandra the Red Avenger!"

Alas, underneath the fun and satire, the Sparts retain their totalitarian mentality. The Red Avengers denounced the officials of the Women's Center as "rabid doberman pinschers of

the female persuasion crawling between the toes of the FBI" and vowed to "hold up for scorn the strutting little junior-grade book-burners who are replicating in the confines of their campus sandbox the panoply of sinister forces whose intent is to set up and destroy revolutionary Marxists with lies and cops."

At last word, the Red Avengers had announced a rally at the campus plaza "for military defense of Nicaragua against Yankee imperialism."

"We will be soliciting funds," the announcement said, "for the Nicaraguan government to purchase the most advanced anti-aircraft missiles from the Soviet Union, especially the Soviet equivalent of the Stinger." According to *Workers Vanguard*, the funds would be used "for SAM-7s so Nicaraguan soldiers and Salvadoran leftist guerrillas can shoot down Yankee planes..."

The Sparts took note that other radical groups consider this a "provocation," but retorted: "What does this make Daniel Ortega, who's trying like hell to buy every SAM that he can get his hands on?"

In its own way, the retort is irrefutable. Xandra the mysterious satirist strikes again.

## An Answer to

# Views from Fortress Amerikkka

### Young Spartacus Comments

In the movie *Sleeper*, Woody Allen awakes to another century; he asks how World War III started and someone says that all he knows is that someone named Albert Shanker got the bomb. When Shanker's "CIA socialist" outfit—Social Democrats, USA—ran an article in their publication *New America* (Jan.-Feb.) on the struggle of the Red Avengers of the Underground SYL, we were a bit surprised. After all, *New America* is hardly a wacky, mad-cap outrageous sort of paper and yet, from the standpoint of these rabidly anti-Communist social democrats, the coverage of Xandra's Underground at San Francisco State University was virtually laudatory. Dennis King introduces the column as being "in the spirit of Saturday Night Live rather than Joe McCarthy" and while most groups claiming even vague adherence to some brand of socialism would not feel compelled to disavow McCarthy's

spirit—in SDUSA's case, it's called for.

Remember, SDUSA originated as the far right wing of a three-way split in American social democracy after Nixon's 1972 landslide election. While Michael Harrington's group (now Democratic Socialists of America) wanted to

of Teachers (UFT) headquarters was made home base for Solidarność in the U.S. and we are proud to have protested that prostitution of the U.S. labor movement as well. Indeed, our demonstration at UFT headquarters provoked the *Wall Street Journal*

against us in San Francisco. It's probably in part due to a certain distance from the "progressive" Mondale-loving (you remember—Fritz Mondale, the Democrat?) fake-left milieu that *New America* is capable of seeing the humor in our mock underground tactics. Too, the

Young Spartacus Photo

Red Avengers say "sit on it" to San Francisco State University "ban" of campus Marxists.



refurbish the "liberal" wing of the battered Democratic Party, Shanker & Co. took the hard Meanyite line (then-AFL-CIO chief Meany supported Nixon). Even after Nixon gave up Vietnam as a lost imperialist cause, SDUSA was an unashamedly pro-war hawk. Today, Shanker joins fellow labor bureaucrat Lane Kirkland on the right-wing "Committee on the Present Danger," i.e., he's for nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union. For the Shankerites, if you don't have Jeane Kirkpatrick's line on Central America, you're coddling "red totalitarianism."

SDUSA won the title "CIA socialists" the old-fashioned way—they earned it. When King refers to the public appearance of Nicaraguan turncoat Edén Pastora at Columbia University, it should be understood that this event took place under SDUSA's auspices (we are proud to have protested along with other leftists against this blood-drenched counterrevolutionary, but modestly refuse credit for shouting him down). And when other social democrats contented themselves with flowery accolades to Lech Walesa and the CIA/Vatican/Western bankers' "union" for capitalist rollback in Poland, Solidarność, Shanker put his money where his mouth was. Shanker's United Federa-

(another lover of "freedom" in Poland) to print a threatening editorial against those who would cast aspersions on the pure motivations of the AFL-CIO; the *Journal* was particularly reactive to our and others' charges of the well-known collaboration between the CIA and AFL-CIO abroad. As we stated in our reply:

"Simply put, the *Wall Street Journal's* line is: CIA? Sure, but so what? Albert Shanker, in his 'Where We Stand' column in the October 4 [1981] Sunday *New York Times* 'Week in Review' section, takes the same tack. Shanker quotes Radio Moscow's charge that Shanker's union annually receives \$100,000 from the CIA for international contacts and activities. 'Totally false,' says Shanker, who goes on to boast of the money he gets from the Agency for International Development, frequently a conduit for CIA 'counterinsurgency' which has financed operations from Guatemala to Thailand. For Shanker, there's nothing unholy about an alliance between the American labor tops and the American government; it's a legitimate anti-Communist united front stretching from the UFT office to Langley, Virginia and blessed by the *Wall Street Journal* to boot."

—*Workers Vanguard* No. 290, 9 October 1981

For us, King's article is amusing and a damning indictment of the reformist "leftists" spearheading the witchhunt

conclusion of the article is obviously intended as a jibe at their larger opponents, like Harrington's DSA, who have not yet signed up for pro-contra PR duty. It has been rumored that other staid social dems (for instance, Socialist Action) have vicariously enjoyed our underground struggle against beansprout totalitarianism, but in the main the reformists have reacted with horror and/or disapproving silence. The best example of this popular-front finger wagging at us for the "crime" of not laying down and dying, compounded by not being boring about it, is the so-called "External Tendency" (a coterie of embittered white ex-members of the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League). To hear the ET tell it, the Red Avengers are politically incomprehensible and represent our most extreme degeneration. They issued a ponderous warning to "those Spartacist comrades who still believe in the validity of Leninism that the 'Red Avengers' leaflet is something else. It is the road to Jimstown." We replied: "Frankly we doubt the ET really believes that guerrilla theatre equals counterrevolution or even 'cultism,' it's just that Xandra's Underground SYL does not appear stodgy and sober and would not

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### Young Spartacus

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

Editorial Board: Bonnie Brodie (editor), Dorie Reed, Alison Spencer

Production manager: Dorie Reed

Circulation manager: Irene Gardner

Nine issues yearly; published monthly except December/January and June/August, by the Spartacus Youth Publishing Co., 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: 732-7867 (Editorial, Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 3118, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008. Domestic subscriptions: \$2.00 per year. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Young Spartacus*, Box 3118, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008.

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

No. 125

March 1985

## "Ignorance Never Did Anybody Any Good"—Karl Marx

# Reagan Nukes Education

"Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read.... These words sank deep into my heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence an entirely new train of thought.... I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty—to wit, the white man's power to enslave the black man.... From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom.... Though conscious of the

teaching the bulk of the population started to decline when the American bourgeoisie realized that they were no longer the hegemonic power in the capitalist world. One could place the date in August 1971—when Nixon let the dollar float free against gold (and continued to lose in a dirty colonial war against the Vietnamese people—a people, we will add, who wiped out adult illiteracy two years after they drove the U.S. imperialists from their country). In a word, the people that rule this country just quit on education then.

Under Reagan's administration, a full-scale mobilization is underway to dismantle what's left. Recalling the

Helmuth Kurth



**Organized by Nazi Goebbels, German students burn books by Freud, Zola, Proust, Upton Sinclair, among the 20,000 volumes destroyed. Will Moral Majorities repeat this scene to rid the schools of "secular humanism"?**

difficulty of learning without a teacher, I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read."

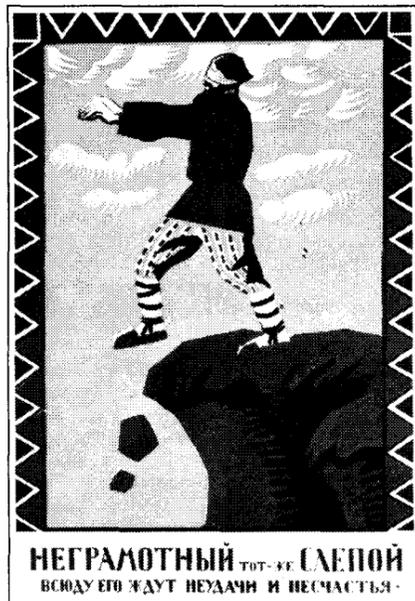
—Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave*

Ignorance is always weakness. For that reason, one of the hallmarks of any struggle for social emancipation is the struggle of the oppressed against the internal, mental stripes left by the master's whip: the fight for knowledge and for access to the culture hoarded by the ruling class. The black slaves of the American South, the peasants of tsarist Russia, the veiled young women of Afghanistan—all these risked their lives to learn to read under conditions of extreme repression. Today in the United States, a bourgeois "democracy," one in every five Americans is functionally illiterate—according to the government. Educator Jonathan Kozol puts the real figure at one in every three—16 percent of white, 44 percent of black and 56 percent of Hispanic adults are total, functional or marginal nonreaders. Indeed, the "land of opportunity" has succeeded in producing a generation of young "citizens" lacking the most elementary knowledge of history, culture and science. The inner-city schools are literally prisons patrolled by cops toting guns and metal detectors and the suburban enclaves have "country club" schools that don't teach much either. The result, even taking into account the gross class and race inequality, is roughly the same: ignorance is guaranteed.

Ronald Reagan did not start the calculated abandonment of public education, but he's taking it further down the road with a vengeance. The last half-serious effort to improve education came after the Russians launched the Sputnik satellite in 1957—a wave of hysteria in the government produced, among other things, a concerted push to teach more math and science in the schools. Commitment to

slogan of the Spanish fascists "Down With Intelligence, Long Live Death!" the budget ax is wielded, the Bible is to replace Darwin, the courts and cops are mobilized to keep "order" in the schools—holding pens for students stripped of elementary civil liberties. At a New Right conference held last November in that living testament to capitalist decay, Detroit, one Samuel L. Blumenfeld (author of *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education*) put it bluntly: "Public education is a great experiment that has failed." Instead he advocated private academies, "Christian schools" and teaching children at home.

Now, enter William Bennett, Reagan's new education secretary. He's against education and made his debut by announcing that too many people go to college. It's right out of Orwell; what's next, Lieutenant Calley for human rights adviser? Bennett has a nasty task. It has occurred to Reagan that he can't squeeze enough out of welfare mothers



**Болшевик poster: "He who is illiterate is like a blind man. Failure and misfortune lie in wait for him on all sides." —Alexei Radakov, 1920**

and kids' school lunches to pay for his insane "Star Wars" arms buildup, so he has to turn on the middle class as well as the desperately poor. The new budget submitted to Congress proposes to limit total federal aid to any one student to \$4,000 a year and to cut aid entirely to families with annual incomes over \$32,500. Bennett's job is to justify and oversee these attacks on education. In a statement which wins him the "Let Them Eat Cake" award for the month, he blithely declared that the cuts "may require from some students divestiture of certain sorts: stereo divestiture, automobile divestiture, three-weeks-at-the-beach divestiture." In fact, the proposal is an outright denial of higher education to millions of U.S. youth; experts estimate that over 30 percent of students currently enrolled in college will be affected. Bennett belied his own trivializing of the situation when he held up Great Britain and other European countries as some sort of model. This is particularly insidious in the case of Britain—notorious for the extreme class bias of its school system. Students attending state-run schools are tracked from a very young age through the "11 plus" examinations which keep all but an infinitesimal percentage from getting into college. In general, one is born and dies in the same rigidly enforced class-divided "order" for which Britain—monarchy and all—is famed.

Perhaps dying empires have a proclivity to emulate their predecessors. This country used to be notable for the relatively democratic nature of public education—largely a product of the Civil War and struggles by an ethnically diverse working class for social reform. Reagan's proposal to slash college funding is an automatic rationing program designed to cut social expenditure for higher education to the level capitalism needs. They are here thinking in market, not moral, categories. There are no jobs for black and other minority youth, so why teach them anything? Reagan doesn't need more physicists for "Star Wars"—so public education can continue to rot, producing a generation of ignoramuses. This is the solution of a moribund, reactionary ruling class to what it sees as the problem: it has to spend too much money to educate people it doesn't need.

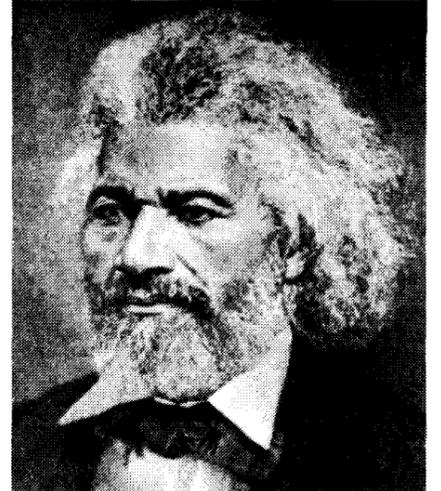
The Reaganites are mobilizing ideologically as well: is the theory of the flat earth going to make a comeback, perhaps as a substitute for anti-fluoridation? They are driving hard and not slowly to turn the clock back on one of the greatest scientific discoveries of human history—Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Congress has passed a law banning the teaching of "secular humanism" in schools receiving funds for desegregation. What's "secular humanism"? It's anything the Moral Majority and like-minded book-burners don't like: from "atheism to the United Nations, from sex education to the theory of evolution to the writings of Hemingway and Hawthorne" (*New York Times*, 22 February). If Reagan & Co. want to revile Darwin, Freud, Marx (naturally) and Einstein as "subversive" then a lot of people in this country ought to be looking for the nearest subversive.

Comrade Leon Trotsky had the following to say about the importance of Darwin, in remarks Trotsky made at Sverdlov University in post-revolutionary Soviet Russia, June 1923:

"I must say that it was only at that moment, when considering the tail of the peacock from a theoretical perspec-

tive in Darwin's interpretation, that I felt that I should be an atheist.... Several months later, when I read Darwin's autobiography—all this is firmly embedded in my memory!—where there is a phrase something like this: Although I, Darwin, have rejected the Bible's theory of creation, I still preserve my belief in God—I was deeply affected, for Darwin's sake, not my own. And I still do not know whether this was a conventional lie or a diplo-

Historical Pictures Service



**For Frederick Douglass, learning to read was a giant step in his road to liberation from slavery.**

matic tribute to the social opinions of the English bourgeoisie, the most hypocritical in the world; or was it really that in the brains of this old man—one of the most ingenious in the history of humanity—there remained little cells unaffected by Darwinism, where a religious faith was lodged during his childhood when he was studying to be a priest? I decided not to pursue this psychological question, Comrades. But does it matter? Even if Charles Darwin, as he himself asserted, did not lose his belief in God, Darwinism itself is nonetheless entirely irreconcilable with this belief.

"In this, as in other respects, Darwinism is a forerunner of Marxism. Taken in a broadly materialist and dialectical sense, Marxism is the application of Darwinism to human society."

Where would you rather go to school—Sverdlov U. in 1923 or the public equivalent of Bob Jones University where you learn the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers" but never the history of the Protestant Reformation?

Schools are so bad now in this country that, according to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, in a report issued in April 1983:

"Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling and computation. The Department of the Navy, for example, reported to the Commission that one-quarter of its recent recruits cannot read at the ninth grade level, the minimum needed simply to understand written safety instructions."

Surveys testing the general knowledge level of even college youth reveal the same story. In a statewide college exam in North Carolina last year, only 27 percent of the students knew the correct answer when they were asked to name the country drained by the Amazon River.

Small wonder. The priorities of the local gendarmes of capitalist rule were made clear by New York City mayor Koch when he announced that he'd rather build more prisons than schools. Koch has roughly the relation to the people of New York City of a Zionist mayor to an Arab town—but his statement is by no means unique. In Detroit, \$2,670 is spent annually per student while Michigan spends \$13,000

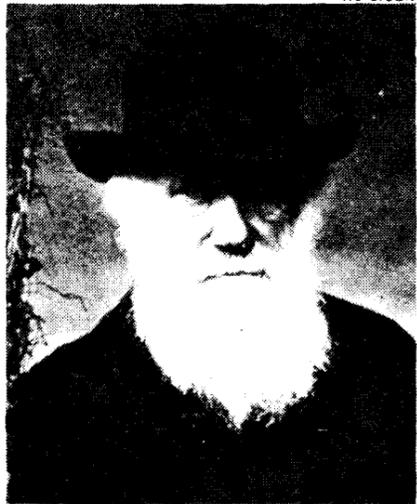
in that same time on each prison inmate. One needs a lot of prisons if proposing to throw an entire generation of poor and black youth onto the streets. Then there's always the army.

The growth of private schools, especially fundamentalist Protestant ones, has soared in the period from 1970 to 1980. It began with "white flight" from integration in the cities; now inner-city schools are increasingly black and the money is getting turned off. Thus the tuition tax credits, which historically were held to be in violation of the First Amendment guarantee of the separation of church and state (85 percent of private schools are religious). Kozol writes that "Today, because most of those who can afford to have fled to the suburbs or removed their children from the public schools, we see an integrated underclass in Boston in the process of gestation. Poor whites, poor blacks and

the treacherous leadership of the labor movement bears no small responsibility. When the full-scale attacks on the minimal gains won during the civil rights movement came down, most violently around busing, the labor movement had both the power and the immediate interest to mobilize a counteroffensive. Those poor white Irish in South Boston who were mobilized by reactionary, racist demagogues not only defeated busing—they sealed the fate for their own children. The Democrats and "liberals" who stood by while racist mobs rampaged against busing and who, of course, refused to extend integration to their own lily-white suburbs, killed busing in most cities. And as the cities further decay, it is the Democratic mayors who implement and enforce Reagan's "austerity" measures against the working class and minorities. In the one city where desegregation efforts have not been defeated—Norfolk, Virginia—the black trade unionists have been key.

Historically, advances in education have been won through class struggle; universal education began in earnest after a fight was waged to protect children in industry. The child labor laws, a product of the struggles of the dawning union movement, freed children from the horrors of working in the mines and factories, enabling them to go to school. Today, the labor movement faces a capitalist assault on its very existence—from the smashing of PATCO to union-busting attacks on the Pan Am workers. Teachers are being driven from the profession in droves; starting salaries for teachers in New York City are \$14,500. Meanwhile, Reagan's proposed "merit pay" scheme is an attack on what's left of union protection. Only if the encrusted, do-nothing bureaucrats who sit atop the unions are replaced with a militant, class-struggle leadership can a counter-offensive be waged in defense of working-class people on all social fronts—including the right of their children to an education.

Decaying capitalism wastes entire



no credit

**Charles Darwin, whose theory of evolution transformed man's view of himself and nature.**

poor Hispanics now become illiterate together" (*New York Times Book Review*, 3 March).

It should be obvious that there's a connection between the defeat of busing as a means to achieve integrated education and the wholesale scratching of funds for public education. And here

## Fortress...

(continued from page 3)

find favor with the AFL-CIO executive board" (*Young Spartacus* No. 123, December 1984/January 1985). Now, bless our souls, the right-wing water-boys of the AFL-CIO admit there's something humorous about the Red Avengers campaign. (How does it feel to be outdone in the humor department by those wild and crazy guys over at *New America*, ET?)

However, our CIA socialist with a funny bone makes a revealing error. We do not refer here to the predictable counterposition he made between "the usually tolerant student government" and our allegedly "totalitarian mentality." It is standard fare for social dems to proclaim the "democracy" of the bourgeois state (and its junior conduits) even as young Marxists are beaten and hauled off to jail for distributing communist literature. But King tries to manufacture a discontinuity between a new-found sense of humor in our political work now and an ostensibly "dreary" political history. To make his case, King sneers at our polemics against the Wohlforthites.

In fact, we had a sense of humor even then (in dealing with Tim Wohlforth, it was a useful attribute). First, let's define "Wohlforthite." The left opposition within the formerly Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) was principally led by and composed of the leaders of the SWP's youth group—including Tim Wohlforth, Shane Mage and Jim Robertson. This opposition—the Revolutionary Tendency—was split by Wohlforth right in the midst of the RT's fight against the rightward plunge of the SWP—a degeneration which finished

the SWP off as a revolutionary organization. Wohlforth's split of a minority of RT comrades was actually engineered in Britain by one Gerry Healy. It had the effect of discrediting the opposition in its entirety as unserious among the SWP cadre. Then, in deliberate collusion with the SWP majority, Wohlforth & Co. helped frame up the RT leadership for expulsion. Not long thereafter, the Wohlforthites engineered their own expulsion.

The original split had been unprincipled, and the apparent political programs of the two groupings continued to be sufficiently close to demand fusion. Both groups looked to the leadership of the Healyites, a current with an inconsistent history which was currently trading on its participation in the International Committee, the orthodox tendency which had in the 1950s combatted the Pabloist revisionism which the RT had opposed in the SWP. In 1965 the Spartacist group led by Jim Robertson undertook unity negotiations with Wohlforth. But Healy, who was looking for an American satellite of



Workers Vanguard Photo

**Norfolk, Virginia: Union contingent marches for busing, May 1983.**

generations throughout the world—and is doing it at home now. Education and knowledge is linked to social progress, the need to mobilize the entire gene pool of a society. Consider the Scots nation, a small country, and the overwhelming contribution made by Scots in the fields of medicine, philosophy, engineering. Fundamentally, this is because the Scots Presbyterians deeply believed that to understand the word of god all boys and girls should be taught to read and write. So world culture benefited from a gleaning of the best from a few million people. Contrast India (or the Newark ghetto)—how many Einsteins have died at the age of three due to malnutrition?

Vietnam may be a poorer country than Haiti, but the people can read and there's no creationism crap in their classrooms, either. Indeed, a basic education is provided for all in the Soviet Union, in Cuba, in Poland and in all the deformed and degenerated workers states where the profit system has been abolished. Literacy in these states is near 100 percent. The Red Army in Afghanistan is fighting against Muslim mullahs who routinely slaughter teachers for instructing women—only 5 percent of Afghanistan was literate at the time of the Soviet intervention.

As revolutionary Marxists, we are profoundly committed to education and learning. The Bolsheviks understood, faced with vast backwardness in Russia, that as the "tribune of the people" a

revolutionary party must combat ignorance. Lenin's companion Krupskaya, for instance, was a teacher of newly urbanized young Russian peasants when she first met Lenin. These young people thirsted for knowledge; they had a purpose. They hated the landlords, the tsar, the bosses and wanted to be armed with an understanding of the world in which they lived in order to change it. It is particularly crucial for those who would lead the workers and oppressed in a successful revolution to themselves have a basic understanding of history and human culture. We are faced ourselves with the result of capitalism's retrograde educational system: massive ignorance, particularly among the youth.

To be effective, a revolutionary party must be a very conscious entity, composed of informed cadre capable of understanding society and dedicated to liberating it from the chains of an irrational, dying ruling class. Will is not enough. As Trotsky concluded in his remarks on Darwin:

"To comprehend the world from such a broad materialist point of view signifies the emancipation of one's consciousness for the first time from the legacy of mysticism, securing both feet firmly on the ground. It means knowing that for the future one has no inner subjective hindrances to the struggle, but that the only resistance and opposition is external, and must be undermined in some cases, circumvented in others, smashed in still others—depending on the conditions of the struggle." ■



Workers Vanguard Photo

**NYC, 1981: Spartacists protest at Shanker's headquarters, housing Solidarność, Polish company union for the CIA and Western bankers.**

lackeys, and program be damned, broke with us again in 1966. Soon the IC's zigzagging political motion veered sharply rightward as Healy embraced Mao's Red Guards and the myth of the "Arab Revolution"—prefiguring later descent into prostration before the despotic capitalist "People's Jamahiriyyah" of oil-rich Muammar el-Qaddafi in Libya.

As we state in the preface to *Marxist Bulletin* No. 3, Part IV, "Conversations with Wohlforth," containing the unity negotiations minutes: "The negotiating sessions themselves have something of an abstract quality. To the Wohlforthites they were just a game, as Wohlforth did not seriously intend to unify." Indeed, SDUSA now echoes the Wohlforthite charges that our insistence on political accountability and programmatic clarity was just so much "book-keeping" and "archaeology." Try this: at the time, the Wohlforthites were entranced by the document of a certain Lyn Marcus—still then in the SWP—who represented in their view a "conscious Trotskyist force." They announced that they were in "99 percent agreement" with him "on all questions." Comrade Robertson replied that "before long you will find out that the one percent is an extremely large one percent," and remarked of Marcus' document:

"...I'm afraid I must confess that I too have not understood a word of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky if this is the

continued on page 10

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## Lessons of the Class Struggle, 1919-1933

# Germany: Revolution and Counterrevolution

W.W. Norton



Berlin, January 1919—Street fighting between Freikorps troops and radical workers.

The article printed below, the second of two parts, is based on presentations by Spartacist League Central Committee member George Foster at Spartacist educational gatherings held in late April and early May 1984 in New York, Chicago and Berkeley. Entitled "Germany: 1919-1933: Revolution and Counterrevolution," comrade Foster's talk was one of three presentations devoted to the question of "Wars and Revolutions." Part One was run in YSp No. 121, October 1984.

### Part Two of Two

The revolutionary wave that swept Germany in 1918-1919 ended with the bloody suppression of the Bavarian Soviet Republic in May. The acutely revolutionary situation had passed, lacking above all a Leninist party. The newborn Communist Party of Germany (KPD) experienced rapid growth but emerged from the events of 1918-1919 still weak and politically immature. The problems confronting the young party were compounded by the murderous deeds of the counterrevolution which deprived the KPD of its most experienced and capable leaders—Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Jogiches and Leviné.

The KPD held its Second Congress in October 1919. At the First Congress Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Jogiches and Leviné had all correctly argued for KPD participation in the first postwar parliamentary elections. They were voted down by the overwhelming majority of the delegates (Leviné, himself carried away by the impulsive revolutionary fervor of the delegates, ended up voting with the boycottists). At the Second Congress the question arose again in a

KPD now led by Paul Levi and Klara Zetkin.

This time the boycottists—ultralefts who rejected participation in bourgeois parliaments "on principle"—were in the minority. This minority nonetheless commanded the allegiance of tens of thousands of left-syndicalist workers. Winning the day against the boycotters, Levi made this a split issue expelling those who opposed his positions. Much of the expelled opposition went on to form the ultraleft Communist Workers Party of Germany (KAPD).

As subsequent events confirmed, Levi's precipitous and hysterical action did little to cure the KPD of infantile leftist disorders. Its main effect was to cut the KPD's size in half, gutting it of much of its working-class base in Berlin and north Germany which was now left in the political clutches of its muddle-headed "Left Communist" leadership.



American Heritage

The Comintern, concerned that the split with the "lefts" not impede the amalgamation into one party of all in the workers movement who stood for Soviet government and the dictatorship of the proletariat, invited the KAPD to attend, with fraternal status, the Second Congress of the Communist International held in Petrograd and Moscow in the summer of 1920. A similar overture was made to the left wing of the much larger centrist Independent Socialist Party (USPD), also with the hope of facilitating a Leninist polarization and thereby forging a unified German Communist Party.

By the end of 1919 the struggles of the proletariat were at an ebb across Germany. The Freikorps and their Social Democratic henchmen had done their bloody work. Now the bourgeoisies of the victorious Entente, who had looked with approval on the Freikorps'

counterrevolutionary deeds in the Baltic and Germany in "stemming the tide of Bolshevism," demanded that these units be disbanded and the Reichswehr limited to the 100,000 troops set at Versailles. When Ebert attempted to comply, his erstwhile rightist allies decided to dispense with his services and with the Weimar Republic.

On 10 March 1920 the Nationale Vereinigung (National Association), an ultraright organization made up of the likes of the wartime general Ludendorff and the worst Freikorps scum, presented Ebert with a series of ultimatums: Ebert's Social Democratic-dominated Weimar Coalition was to be replaced by a government of "neutral experts" (i.e., the Prussian Civil Service); the Reichstag was to be dissolved; and Ebert was to "retire" to be replaced by a new president elected by a plebiscite. An offer was made to make Noske dictator! When Ebert refused their conditions, a Prussian civil servant named Kapp and a dimwitted general named Lüttwitz marched Freikorps troops into Berlin on March 13 and declared a Nationale Vereinigung government.

In desperation Ebert turned to the Reichswehr to defend the republic, only to find the Reichswehr would not lift a finger against the Freikorps. The government had to flee Berlin. Only then did the SPD leadership appeal to the proletariat. The German working class responded, staging a massive general strike that paralyzed the country and spiked the rightist plot in four days.

Disoriented, the KPD at first stood aside from the conflict claiming it had no interest in the outcome of a fight between two wings of the bourgeoisie. But confronted with the massive strike action they belatedly and somewhat ineptly corrected themselves, in the face



AIZ

German social democracy, "stalking horse for bourgeois reaction": Ebert (at left) with Reichswehr generals and Berlin mayor. Demonstrator arrested in Berlin, 1929 (above).

of this Kornilov-like move by the far right of the German bourgeoisie.

In the Ruhr, mobilizations against the Kapp putsch led to localized seizures of power by the workers. By March 20 insurgent workers were in control of the entire region to the east of Düsseldorf and Mülheim. To suppress them Ebert now turned to the very man who had stood aside with folded arms during the putsch, General von Seeckt. Ebert appointed von Seeckt commander of the armed forces. Von Seeckt then proceeded to use the Freikorps to suppress the Ruhr workers with bloody efficiency! While Kapp failed in Berlin, in Bavaria the rightists and local Reichswehr commander von Mohl forced the Social Democrat Hoffmann out of office and installed a far-right government in power.

Shortly after the tumultuous events surrounding the abortive Kapp putsch the attention of all Germany fixed upon the Polish-Soviet War of 1920. In May 1920 the right-wing Polish nationalist leader Pilsudski, a creature of Entente imperialism, decided to realize his aspirations for a greater Poland and invaded the young Soviet Republic when he thought it to be weakest—at the end of the desperately fought civil war. Initially Pilsudski's armies made rapid and deep incursions into the Ukraine, seizing Kiev. But Pilsudski's appetites for a Poland with shores on the Black Sea proved his undoing. In June the tide of battle turned and the Poles were forced to evacuate Kiev. The Polish armies streamed back to the borders of ethnographic Poland with the Red Army in hot pursuit.

A decision had to be made whether to continue the offensive and carry the war into Poland. Lenin urged the war be continued, prevailing over the opposition of Trotsky, Dzerzhinsky, Radek and Rykov and initially Stalin. In carrying the war into Poland Lenin expected the Polish workers would not follow their bourgeoisie, but instead rise up, linking hands with the Red Army as it marched on Warsaw. Trotsky, correctly it turned out, was skeptical of such a development because of the wide support of the Pilsudski regime in the newly independent Poland and the deep anti-Russian sentiments of Polish nationalism.

Lenin's main concern however was not Poland but Germany. He hoped to effect a juncture between the Russian and German revolutions, thereby giving enormous impetus to German communism and vastly facilitating the possibility of a successful outcome to the revolutionary struggles of the German proletariat. The Red Army offensive into Poland took place during the sessions of the Second Comintern Congress whose delegates intently followed the battles.

As comrades know, Lenin's historic gamble "to probe Europe with the bayonets of the Red Army" failed. The Red Army was defeated at the gates of Warsaw. A major factor in this military defeat was Stalin. The Red Army advanced into Poland in two columns. The northern column under Tukhachevsky's command drove toward Warsaw. The southern column under the effective control of Stalin was assigned to cover Tukhachevsky's flank. Stalin, certain Tukhachevsky would seize Warsaw and eager to feather his own cap, disobeyed instructions to cover Tukhachevsky's advance and instead diverted his forces to capture Lvov. General Weygand, the French officer advising the Poles, and Pilsudski took advantage of the gap between the two armies created by Stalin's grab for Lvov and struck with devastating results, forcing the Red Army into hurried and disorderly retreat back to the Soviet Union. Had Pilsudski been defeated and the Red Army reached the German borders world history since would likely have had a far different and better outcome.

The SPD's treacherous role in the aftermath of the Kapp putsch led to big

setbacks for it in the Reichstag elections of 6 June 1920. Eighteen months earlier, in the first postwar elections, the SPD had won 11,500,000 votes and 163 seats in the Reichstag. In the June elections its vote dropped to 6,100,000 corresponding to 102 seats. In contrast the USPD, which grew rapidly in 1919, increased its Reichstag representation from 22 to 84 seats, while the KPD in its first time out won four.

Along with the rapid growth of the USPD went a deepening polarization between the right and left wings of that party as leftward moving workers, disgruntled with the SPD, swelled its ranks. This process reached a culmination at the historic Halle Congress of the

with other left and labor organizations on a number of key issues facing the workers—from wages to the necessity for organizations of proletarian self-defense.

In February 1921 Levi petulantly resigned from the KPD Central Committee following its rightful condemnation of his deeply rotten role in blocking with the centrist Serrati, who refused to split with the reformists at the just-concluded PSI (Italian Socialist Party) Congress held in Livorno. Levi was joined in his resignation by Zetkin, Däumig and two others. KPD leadership was now centrally in the hands of Ernst Meyer, Heinrich Brandler, August Thalheimer and Paul Fröhlich.

offensive." Bukharin was its ideological inspirer. Even at the Third Congress of the Communist International after his views had been put to a test in Germany and failed, he was still spouting his "theory"—"Since capitalism had exhausted itself, therefore the victory must be gained through an uninterrupted revolutionary offensive."

The test of the "revolutionary offensive" was of course the 1921 March Action. Labor militancy in Germany in early 1921 centered in the Mansfeld coal fields of central Germany. Previously backward and lacking in class consciousness, the miners had, in belated response to the revolutionary wave that had swept Germany and was now on the



Ullstein



French soldier guarding coal during Ruhr occupation (left). Profound economic crisis ravaged population with inflation and unemployment. In October 1923, a U.S. dollar was worth 75 billion marks; a postage stamp cost 200 million marks.



W.W. Norton

USPD held in October 1920. This congress met to consider the USPD's affiliation to the Communist International. Speaking on behalf of the right wing were Hilferding and the Russian Menshevik Martov. Answering Hilferding was Zinoviev whose impassioned and brilliant four-hour speech won the day. The majority of the delegates opted for the Comintern. The fusion between the KPD and USPD left, consummated in December 1920, transformed the KPD from a party of 50,000 to one of 350,000 with powerful roots in the unions. The KPD had become a mass party.

**The "Revolutionary Offensive" and the March Action**

With the successful fusion came a mood of revolutionary expectation and impatience. The members expected action. This mood found reflection in and was reinforced by large sections of the KPD leadership who felt compelled to lead the vastly expanded party in mass action against the bosses. It was further reinforced by the failure of the 8 January 1921 Radek/Levi open letter, which sought to initiate a united front

Together with the KPD left wing, centered in Berlin, of Ruth Fischer and Arkady Maslow, they all espoused in one or another variant the so-called "theory of the offensive."

The new leadership had its prejudices reinforced by the arrival on the scene of Comintern representatives Bela Kun and Joseph Pogany (aka John Pepper of subsequent CPUSA infamy). Kun was the pre-eminent partisan of the "revolutionary offensive." Like the bankrupt officers of the French General Staff whose strategic and tactical wisdom boiled down to the command "Attack!", Kun and his German co-thinkers, convinced that proletarian revolution was imminent, advocated arousing the proletariat through a succession of uprisings, strikes and insurrections. The situation was still further exacerbated by the urgings of Zinoviev and Bukharin.

Zinoviev and Bukharin had both vehemently argued against the January open letter when Radek first proposed it at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI). Lenin defended Radek and the tactic was approved. If Kun was the pre-eminent partisan of the "revolutionary

ebb, become extremely militant. They had flocked to the banners of the KPD. Strikes, stop-work meetings and plant occupations rolled across the region.

On March 16 the Social Democrats Hörsing, governor of Saxony, and Severing, Prussian minister of the interior, sent troops and police into the region to disarm and suppress the workers. The KPD leadership replied to this provocation with a call for armed resistance. In areas of central Germany the workers heeded the call and fought heroically but even in such places the fighting was sporadic and by no means generalized. In the rest of the country, with the exception of some clashes in Hamburg, the KPD's call went unanswered. When, a week later, it became clear that the would-be insurrection was aborting, the KPD then issued a call for a general strike. But this too did not come about. What ensued instead were scattered strikes by KPD supporters. Efforts to shut down factories whose workers were under the influence of the SPD or USPD right wing only resulted in bitter clashes between the workers.

By March 31 the action had fizzled

*continued on page 8*

"We need first and foremost, comrades, to point to the map... without it, your agitation will be, if you will pardon the expression, so much claptrap."

—Leon Trotsky, October 1923



Young Spartacus

Central Europe in 1923

## Germany...

(continued from page 7)

and was called off. The costs were high. Casualties were heavy and thousands were arrested including numbers of KPD leaders. The bourgeoisie and its SPD running dogs launched a major anti-communist propaganda barrage, charging the action was "made in Moscow." Within three months KPD membership dropped by half.

As Trotsky later pointed out, the events in central Germany in March 1921 did indeed demand a more active policy from the KPD. But he stressed the defensive nature of the situation:

"The offensive was in reality launched by the Social-Democratic policeman Hörsing. This should have been utilized in order to unite all the workers for defense, for self-protection, even if, to begin with, a very modest resistance. Had the soil proved favorable, had the agitation met with a favorable response, it would then have been possible to pass over to the general strike. If the events continue to unfold further, if the masses rise, if the ties among the workers grow stronger, if their temper lifts, while indecision and demoralization seize the camp of the foe—then comes the time for issuing the slogan to pass over to the offensive. But should the soil prove unfavorable, should the conditions and the moods of the masses fail to correspond with the more resolute slogans, then it is necessary to sound a retreat, and to fall back to previously prepared positions in as orderly a manner as possible."

—Trotsky, *Speech at a General Party Membership Meeting of the Moscow Organization, July 1921*

Instead of utilizing the moral element of defense the KPD led its followers in an action counterposed to the majority of the workers before the majority had a chance to grasp what was at stake in central Germany.

In the immediate wake of the action the KPD leadership was unrepentant, defending its policies as an attempt to "seize the revolutionary initiative." Thus Thalheimer wrote: "The March action as an isolated action of the party would be—our opponents are right to this extent—a crime against the proletariat. The March offensive as the introduction to a series of constantly rising actions, a redeeming act."

The KPD's most vociferous critic was Paul Levi who, having resigned from the Central Committee at the end of February, now sanctimoniously washed his hands of any responsibility for the March events. Levi's fundamental political critiques of the "theory of the offensive" and the March Action as a putschist adventure were sound. However, panic in the face of outraged Social Democratic hysteria against "Moscow communism" led him to an act of renegacy. Falsely claiming that he was unable to present his views to the party rank and file, Levi went public with his criticisms.

The March Action was a dimwitted



New York Public Library

**Revolutionary internationalist and organizer of the Red Army, Leon Trotsky fought against capitulation of German Communists, for a workers united front against fascism.**

response to a gross provocation against the militant workers of central Germany by the bourgeoisie. Yet it mobilized tens of thousands of workers who engaged in heroic and bloody struggles to defend their class against its oppressors. In these circumstances Levi's public criticism of this action, a criticism which was moreover malicious, one-sided, exaggerated and showed no sense of solidarity with the party or the Communist International, only accomplished, in Lenin's words, "a cruel mangling of the party." His critique was seized upon by the reformists to fuel the bourgeoisie's anti-communist propaganda offensive and campaign of persecution aimed at the KPD. In addition Levi's cowardly and spiteful act of indiscipline so inflamed the party that his critique far from clarifying the issues succeeded only in muddying the questions and further disorganizing the KPD. For his indiscipline Levi was quite correctly expelled from the party.

The German March Action naturally occupied the central place of the Third Comintern Congress held in Moscow during the summer of 1921. Trotsky observed that the German July Days of January and April 1919 were followed not by an October revolution but by more July Days—March 1920 and March 1921. As he put it: "No, there are too many 'July Days' in Germany, what we want is—October."

Using the March Action as an example of the fruit of the "theory of the offensive" Lenin and Trotsky were able to win the day both in the Russian party and the Comintern against the "left" partisans of Bukharin's version of "uninterrupted revolution." The German March events were a painful lesson that determination of leadership and dissatisfaction of the masses are not sufficient conditions for victory. As Trotsky noted, "There must obtain a number of other conditions, above all, a close bond between the leadership and the masses and the confidence of the latter in the leadership. This condition was lacking at that time."

The central slogan of the Third Congress was: "To power through a previous conquest of the masses!" It marked a recognition that the political and organizational resources of the communist parties were not yet sufficient for the conquest of power. The various parties were thus directed to carefully study the real situations in their respective countries and to turn their attention to agitation, propaganda, organization and the conquest of the confidence of the workers in the day-to-day struggles. These lessons were further refined and codified shortly afterwards in Comintern theses outlining the communist tactic of the united front.

The KPD leadership returned to Germany in an uneasy truce. The left wing, fully a third of the party concentrated in Berlin, Hamburg and the Ruhr, remained enamored with the "revolutionary offensive" and critical of united-front activity. Leadership of the party continued under Ernst Meyer, and the KPD under the slogan "To the masses!" tried to carry out the preparatory work outlined by the Third Congress. But stung by the experience of March 1921 the efforts to carry out this work led to a right deviation. Thus in 1923 the KPD let pass by the premier revolutionary opportunity which presented itself to German communism.

### Germany 1923: Bourgeois "Order" in Crisis and...

In late 1922 Germany defaulted on the reparations imposed upon the country by the victorious Entente at Versailles. In response on 11 January 1923 French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr. The German government, with Ebert as president and the big industrialist Cuno as chancellor, in turn replied by ordering German officials, railway and factory workers to refuse to cooperate with the occupiers. Strikes swept the Ruhr.

French troops were mobilized against the strikers. German bank reserves and factory inventories were seized and the flow of coal (85 percent of German production), iron from the Ruhr and steel (80 percent of German production) ceased. Fascistic and nationalistic elements moved in short order from the government's proclaimed policy of passive resistance to guerrilla warfare against the French troops. Yet by May during the massive Ruhr general strike fraternization developed between strikers and French troops leading to troops joining demonstrations of German workers.

The occupation of the Ruhr and the government's response to it touched off a profound economic crisis. Unemployment soared. In January 1923 unemployment stood at 4.2 percent. By April it had risen to 7 percent, in September to 9.9 percent, October—19 percent, November—23 percent and December—28 percent. To these figures must be added those of the semi-employed, the percentage of workers who worked only part-time. In January the percentage of semi-employed was 12.6 percent. By October it jumped to 47 percent.

So in Germany in October 1923 something like two thirds of the German proletariat was either unemployed or working only a few hours a week! These figures should be contrasted with those of earlier years. In 1913 unemployment was 2.9 percent. In 1921 it was 2.8 percent, and in 1922 unemployment actually dropped to 1.5 percent.

Along with this enormous rise in unemployment, inflation ran amok. By 18 October 1923 one dollar would buy four billion marks. That's in the morning. By evening the same dollar cost six billion marks. Two days later the rate was 15 billion marks for the dollar and by evening the rate had risen to 19 billion. In two more days the rate was 46 billion and on October 23 a dollar could buy 75 billion marks. This is what comrade Seymour would term hyperinflation.

The effect of the economic crisis was massive impoverishment of the working class and petty bourgeoisie. Conditions of life were not simply appalling. By the fall of 1923 they were impossible.

By the end of June 1923 the Cuno government nearly ceased to function. A profound political crisis of the bourgeoisie paralleled the economic collapse. In May 1923 a general strike erupted in the Ruhr, growing into armed insurrection in the town of Bochum. Between June and August an immense strike wave ripped across Germany culminating in a strike by Berlin typographical workers who ran the presses that printed the government's worthless paper money. The strike became general and the Cuno government fell. Cuno was succeeded as chancellor by Stresemann who, as he entered office, opined that his would be the last bourgeois government in Germany. Stresemann's abandonment of the tactic of passive resistance to the Ruhr occupation on September 26 was a desperate gamble and only an acknowledgment of the "hopeless" situation of the German bourgeoisie.

### ... An Acutely Revolutionary Situation

But as Trotsky pointed out, the German bourgeoisie's position was "hopeless" only if the KPD realized in due time that this was the case and took the requisite revolutionary measures demanded by the situation. Unfortunately the KPD responded to the revolutionary events of 1923 in an irresolute and sluggish fashion. The party leadership, since January in the hands of Brandler and from May including two of the lefts (Ruth Fischer and Thälmann), burned by the March Action, plodded along as the revolutionary crisis developed around them.

Thus both Brandler and Fischer condemned the spontaneous armed rising in Bochum denouncing it as "objectively a provocation to the German bourgeoisie." Brandler's 1923 slogan was "In the framework of the Weimar constitution, towards the workers' government of all Germany!" It was Trotsky who, from afar, concluded probably in July 1923 that Germany had entered upon an acutely revolutionary situation that demanded the German party work out a clear plan of action culminating in the seizure of power through armed insurrection. Trotsky insisted that a date be set in advance in order to turn the KPD to the political, organizational and military tasks necessary for the realization of the German October.

The main obstacle to prodding the Comintern and the KPD to action was Stalin, who argued in an August 1923 letter to Zinoviev and Bukharin that "In my opinion the Germans should be restrained and not encouraged." Commenting on this letter Trotsky stated:

"Stalin bears the main responsibility for letting slip the revolutionary situation in Germany. He supported and encouraged the weaklings, the skeptics and the temporizers in Germany. He did not accidentally assume an opportunist opposition on this question of world-historic importance: he was in essence

### Spartacus Youth League Directory

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

Ann Arbor: SYL, P.O. Box 8364, Ann Arbor, MI 48107, or call (313) 961-1680

Atlanta: SYL, Box 4012, Atlanta, GA 30302

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

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

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

Detroit: SYL, Box 32028, Detroit, MI 48232, or call (313) 961-1680

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Trotskyist League of Canada

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

only continuing the policy that he had followed in Russia in March 1917."  
 —*The Draft Program of the Communist International—A Criticism of Fundamentals* (1928)

In August, following the Berlin strike that toppled the Cuno government, the Comintern finally decided that Germany was indeed in an acutely revolutionary situation. Brandler journeyed to Moscow to consult on the preparations for the struggle for power. There Brandler was skeptical and only reluctantly committed himself to prepare for the German October. In his own words, some thirty-six years later: "Thus I did not oppose the preparations for the uprising of 1923. I simply did not view the situation as acutely revolutionary yet, reckoning rather with a further sharpening."

Brandler, stating that he was not "a German Lenin," requested Trotsky be assigned to lead the insurrection. Trotsky's opponents on the Politburo, already maneuvering against him, instead delegated Radek, who was skeptical about the revolutionary possibilities, and Pyatakov. When Brandler returned to Germany he proceeded to carry out preparations in the spirit of his above-quoted 1959 statement. Like the French Bourbons he forgot nothing and learned nothing.

Thus despite considerable Soviet financial, technical and political assistance the preparations for insurrection had an irresolute and often unreal quality. The KPD leadership was unable to make the necessary turn. The party had to shift the center of gravity of its work from practical agitation around day-to-day issues toward immediate preparations for insurrection, including when to give the masses such slogans as to set this in motion. Revolutions have to be organized. Intrinsically favorable situations do not suffice. But Brandler's temporizing, shared by the way by the Maslow/Fischer/Thälmann left wing, carried the day.

The rising was to begin in Saxony and Thuringia where the KPD had its strongest support. On October 10 the KPD entered into a coalition government with the SPD lefts in Saxony and, a day later, in Thuringia. The intent behind the formation of these "workers' governments" was to use them as a springboard for the arming of the proletariat and the launching of the insurrection. The target date was set for early November. The issuing of a call for a general strike was supposed to be the signal to commence the uprising.

The bourgeoisie was beginning to regain its head. Three days after the KPD entered the Saxony government Ebert ordered the Reichswehr to occupy the region. To pave the way General Mueller, commandant of the district, ordered the dissolution of the Proletarian Hundreds. The Saxony government defied this order and a week later Mueller, who expected stiff resistance, ordered troops to march on the province. In this period Brandler did nothing to accelerate the arming of the

proletariat or to prepare to engage the Reichswehr.

Brandler instead decided to put his faith in the KPD's coalition partner, the left Social Democrat Zeigner. The KPD put a proposal for a general strike, the sign to begin the insurrection (!), to the vote of a conference of Saxon workers' organizations which met in the town of Chemnitz on October 23. The delegates to the conference were elected before the Ruhr occupation and were in no sense representative of the mood of the German proletariat in October 1923. Thus when Brandler put forward his call for a general strike Zeigner balked... and the KPD leadership, including the lefts, backed down.

Only in Hamburg, through a panicked and light-minded decision by the KPD *Zentrale* [the leadership center] and a cascading series of errors, did an attempt at insurrection take place. Here, with no serious preparation of the workers and only last minute planning some 600 fighters with a handful of pistols were initially successful in gaining control of the proletarian district of the city. This isolated pocket of revolution was subsequently suppressed, but not before the insurgents gave a good accounting of themselves and disengaged their forces in an orderly way.

By its shameful capitulation the KPD leadership let the revolutionary situation slip out of its hands. The bourgeoisie regained the initiative. It was a defeat of world-historic proportion. The workers of the Soviet Union had followed the revolutionary developments in Germany in 1923 with keen interest. They knew victory for the revolution meant the beginning of the end of economic scarcity in the Soviet Union and a powerful extension of the international revolution.

The aborting of the 1923 German October gave enormous impulse to the crystallizing Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR. It marked a divide—in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and in the Comintern. As Trotsky noted in *The Third International After Lenin*:

"The *fundamental* cause of the crisis of the October Revolution is the retardation of the world revolution, caused by a whole series of cruel defeats of the proletariat. Up to 1923, these were the defeats of the post-war movements and insurrections confronted with the non-existence of the communist parties at the beginning, and their youth and weakness subsequently. From 1923 on, the situation changed sharply. We no longer have before us simply defeats of the proletariat, but routs of the policy of the Comintern."

With the bourgeoisie recapturing the initiative in Germany in late '23 the way was paved for the one period of stability in the Weimar Republic—the period from '24 through '28. The ebbing of the revolutionary wave was reinforced by large infusions of American capital, mostly in the form of short-term loans. This is also the period of course in which the German Communist Party, along with the rest of the Comintern, was politically subordinated to the narrow

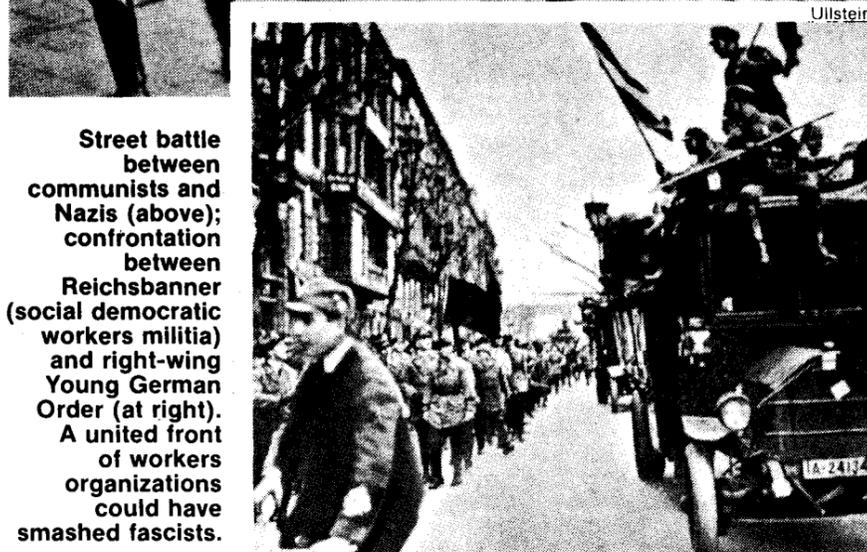
W.W. Norton

**October, 1931: Hitler and his stormtroopers gain following. Failure of proletarian leadership led to fascist victory and all of its death-camp horrors.**

Progress Publishers



Bruckmann



Ullstein

**Street battle between communists and Nazis (above); confrontation between Reichsbanner (social democratic workers militia) and right-wing Young German Order (at right). A united front of workers organizations could have smashed fascists.**

national caste interests of the burgeoning Stalinist bureaucracy.

The KPD's history in this period is chiefly of interest as an example of the left-right zigzags of the nascent Stalinist bureaucracy. Brandler was ousted at the end of '23 and at the Fifth World Congress, convened eight months after the German defeat, scapegoated for the shameful capitulation of the entire KPD leadership. The entire matter of the German October was in any event passed off as an "episode" and "mistake in tempo." The high point of the German crisis was claimed to be still ahead and the situation was held to be pregnant with revolution.

**KPD Enters the "Third Period"**

In '26 the party swung sharply to the right in belated discovery of a purely objective "capitalist stabilization." Then in '28-'29 the Comintern veered sharply to the left again, emerging from the July 1929 Tenth Plenum of the ECCI embracing the doctrines of the "Third Period" and "social fascism." United-front agreements or activities with Socialist parties were banned. The Third Period was to be the final period of capitalism throughout the world, that could and would end only in the victory of proletarian revolution which was the immediate task of the Comintern and its parties. In the Third Period Social Democracy became the left wing of fascism, i.e., "social fascism," and the main enemy. Embraced by the KPD, which operated in a country where fascism was becoming a deadly menace, these policies led to a frightful calamity.

The doctrine of social fascism was scarcely new. It had been advanced by none other than Stalin in 1924: "The social democracy is objectively a moderate wing of Fascism." Indeed, in his infamous "the Germans should be restrained" letter of 1923 Stalin was also to write: "The Fascists of course are not napping, but it is to our advantage to let the Fascists attack first: this will fuse the entire working class around the Communists (Germany is not Bulgaria)." Echoed nine years later by Thälmann as "After Hitler, us!" this was to become the epitaph of the Communist International.

The worldwide depression that hit Germany in late 1929 slipped a noose around the neck of the Weimar Republic. Unemployment rose to three million in 1930 and over four million next year. German society was again thrown into

profound economic and political crisis posing anew the question—Which class will rule?

The KPD's doctrine of social fascism put a brick wall between it and the key revolutionary task of winning the proletariat away from the pro-capitalist SPD. The SPD was still the largest party in the Reichstag, still the majority party of the German workers, still the dominant influence in the powerful trade-union movement and still therefore the largest objective obstacle to a successful proletarian revolution.

The election of September 1930 revealed an ominous trend. The Nazis, who in 1928 polled 800,000 votes, jumped to 6.4 million votes! In the same election the SPD vote dropped 800,000 from its 1928 total of 9.2 million. The KPD vote jumped 1.3 million to a total of 4.6 million. The Stalinists, blind to the meaning of the huge vote for the fascists, dismissed the Nazi surge and instead deluded themselves with their great electoral "success."

It remained for Trotsky and the International Left Opposition to sound the alarm. For the big bourgeoisie the fascist surge posed one question. Should they try to continue to rule by the old methods of Weimar, relying on the Social Democrats? Or was it necessary to use the fascist gangs to crush the proletariat, scattering its organizations to the winds? The bourgeoisie for the time being vacillated. Meanwhile the petty bourgeoisie, increasingly desperate in the face of capitalist crisis, were turning not to the proletariat but to the forces of violent counterrevolution and extreme imperialist reaction.

This situation was conditioned by an impotent bourgeois regime solidly supported by the conservative SPD (which still commanded the support of broad sections of the working class). The weakness of the KPD vis-à-vis the SPD was above all a consequence of the accumulated powerlessness of the former. The working masses of Germany after the experiences of 1921, 1923 and the intervening years did not believe in the ability of the Communist Party and its leadership to gain a revolutionary victory. If the KPD was to break the petty-bourgeois masses from fascism it had to win the proletariat to its banners, to politically conquer it.

To do this it was necessary to face reality squarely and to learn to think. The surge in votes for the Nazis was a

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# Nicaragua...

(continued from page 1)

are despised by the Nicaraguan population. Resistance has been so fierce that despite an original \$80 million from Reagan's Murder, Inc. and an estimated \$1 million a month from "private sources" the contra operation is becoming a "slow-motion equivalent to the Bay of Pigs" (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 February). According to the *New York Times* (25 February), "For many months the Administration has also urged the rebels to seize a Nicaraguan city, where they could set up a provisional government the U.S. could then recognize. But the rebels have been unable to capture and hold any territory outside the jungles of eastern Nicaragua.... The Sandinistas are now using heavy artillery against the rebels and 'it scares the hell out of them!'"

The contra stalemate plus the escalating U.S. war preparations (in "new-speak" called military "exercises" and naval "maneuvers") point to the continuing threat of a Yankee invasion. But Reagan's got some stumbling blocks on his path to war. Polls show that 70 percent of the American population oppose aid of any kind to the contras, much less an invasion. The ghetto youth, a disproportionately large chunk of the U.S. military, are not eager to die for racist American capitalism. Corporal Griffin, the black Marine who refused to go to either Lebanon or Grenada, is indicative of the problems the imperialists will have using their highly black and Hispanic army to put down a "colonial rebellion" in Central America. As with the Vietnam War, where black youth took 23 percent of the fatalities in the war and got nothing but race-terror and unemployment upon returning home, blacks have no interest in defending racist Yankee imperialism.

Today as the U.S. imperialists plan their new adventures in Central America and elsewhere, they are haunted by the "Vietnam syndrome." After two decades of being sold out through negotiated settlements of the type that the anti-interventionist "left" is pushing for in Central America today, the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants *defeated* U.S. imperialism *on the battlefield!*

During that war the Spartacist League called for internationalist class-struggle action, such as labor strikes against the war. As opposed to the social-patriotic cries of the CP and SWP to "bring our boys home," we said "All Indochina Must Go Communist!" "Our boys" were the North Vietnamese troops who won the war and consolidated a workers government. This was a great victory for the world's working people, striking a vital blow to America's ambitions for world imperialist domination. It stayed their hand in Angola in 1975, where the U.S. would have liked to send in the Marines to help South Africa smash the anti-colonialist revolt there. The Vietnamese heroic effort has given the working class some breathing space by forcing U.S. imperialism to back up in its drive toward World War III against the Soviet Union. We say: "Vietnam was a victory! Two, three, many defeats for U.S. imperialism!" We would like to see the scene, where the U.S. personnel in Saigon grabbed desperately for helicopters from the embassy roof in April 1975, repeated at the U.S. embassies in both Managua and San Salvador!

The rest of the left, from the Workers World Party, the Communist Party to the Socialist Workers Party, to name a few, are afraid to say outright that only the victorious social revolution of Vietnam—breaking imperialism's stranglehold and collectivizing industry and agriculture into a centrally planned economy—brought peace to Indochina. In the reformists' ever more hopeless search for some imperialist "doves," their counterrevolutionary battle cry has been "no more Vietnams." On 3 May 1981 they mobilized one hun-

dred thousand in a live "letter to your Congressman," crawling through Washington, D.C. begging Reagan to leave El Salvador alone. In sharp contrast was the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League, which organized a hundreds-strong Anti-Imperialist Contingent, marching with the flag of the FMLN and banners that read, "Military Victory to Salvadoran Leftists!" and "Defense of Cuba, USSR Begins in El Salvador!"

The Spartacus Youth League has consistently stood up to Reagan and the Democrats' anti-Soviet war drive. At Harvard, two SYL members successfully fought an attempt by the school to expel them for their participation in a protest against War Secretary Caspar Weinberger; at UCLA we led a demonstration of students to stop Rivas-Gallont, the Salvadoran ambassador of death, from speaking; at UC Berkeley, we led a demonstration that sent Marine recruiters scurrying off campus. And Spartacist supporters in the trade unions fight for labor to "hot-cargo" military goods headed to the Salvadoran butchers and for political strikes against a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua. But since March 1982, the rest of the left has been in hiding. They argued that a vote for their loser Mondale would give some "breathing space" to Nicaragua and the Salvadoran left, but the only beneficiaries of the "left's" total prostration have been the U.S. imperialists who have had a "breathing space" from protest of their murderous policies in Central America! Meanwhile, Mondale campaigned for a quarantine of Nicaragua!

While during the last days of the Vietnam War there was a defeatist wing of U.S. imperialism that wanted to cut the U.S. losses by pulling out, today the Democrats have lined up behind Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive in Central America. Reagan says, "You can say we're trying to oust the Sandinistas." And where Reagan wants to smash the Nicaraguan revolution outright, the Democrats want to find a more palatable way to do it. Every major war drive expenditure during the Reagan administration has had *bipartisan* support. Since the gun-point "election" in El Salvador last year he's been able to ram through millions more in aid for the Butcher Duarte, and for Nicaragua the Democrats want to offer "humanitarian" aid to the mass-murdering contras.

Now that the elections are over, the pro-Democratic Party "left" has taken off its Mondale/Ferraro buttons and is calling an "emergency" mobilization for April 20. In fact, the mobilization has its roots in an "emergency" conference of the "solidarity" swamp held in Cleveland *last September!* The express purpose of the Cleveland conference was to delay any Central America actions that might embarrass Walter "Quarantine" Mondale until after the elections. They voted *down* a wimpy motion supporting the "just struggles of the Central American people" and didn't vote on a motion condemning the "AFL-CIA's" instrument for the disruption of Latin American trade unions—the AIFLD—because it might "alienate" labor!

According to César Chavez, April 20 represents a "springboard for the resurrection" of the "movement." What a resurrection! The Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party and their various split-offs and factions displayed their organic inability to lead revolutionary struggle by herding the anti-Vietnam War movement into the dead end of the Democratic Party. Older but no wiser, here they come again—"The League of Squeezed Lemons"—decked out with pre-appointed staffs, "advisory boards" and voting procedures that could teach General Zia a thing or two, united for quashing class struggle and elbowing out anyone they fear may be too red for Ted.

What's wrong with these class-collaborationist coalitions and their

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"Vietnam was a victory! Two, three, many defeats for U.S. imperialism!"

politics is that they paralyze effective action by workers and youth by tying them to their class enemy. To make it explicit, this "emergency mobilization" comes complete with a field trip to Capitol Hill to lobby "anti-intervention" Senators. The choice is between preaching faith in the Democratic wing of the capitalist warmongers or building a massive anti-imperialist movement in the struggle for workers revolution in Central America and at home. The reformist charlatans *oppose* the defeat of the blood-soaked Salvadoran regime, *oppose* the completion and extension of the Nicaraguan revolution because it threatens their alliance with imperialist "doves" who above all fear the spectre of revolution. We say, "Remember Bay of Pigs, remember Vietnam, Democratic Party—We know which side you're on!"

We stand in solidarity with youth who have given U.S. imperialism the finger by defying the U.S. government and

## Fortress...

(continued from page 5)

ABC of Marxism. In fact, in rereading the document, I thought of a cartoon that is a favorite of mine. Several workmen have just unwrapped a very large canvas and the art dealers are looking at it. In the middle of the large white canvas is a perfect black dot. And one of the art dealers is saying to the other one, "I don't care if he is the world's greatest painter, I still think he's kidding"—this is the quality I carried away from reading the L. document."

Marcus took his crackpot economic theories through several left organizations, including ours and SDS, until he emerged as Lyndon LaRouche—the name by which he is now known—head of the National Caucus of Labor Committees. Today, LaRouche's NCLC is universally regarded as a group of pro-government provocateurs, "deprogrammers" and outright crazies whose conspiracy theories represent rather the perfect paranoid worldview. (At one point LaRouche was convinced that Kissinger was an agent of the Kremlin, then the NCLC called for jailing anti-nuke protesters and striking miners—both "agents" of some strange energy cabal that only LaRouche really understands, or ever will.) A very big one percent indeed—it encompasses a variant of psycho-fascism. Ask the Communist Party about LaRouche's gangster "Operation Mop-Up."

Everyone knows what became of Marcus/LaRouche—the truly horrible example of cult-degeneration leading straight out of the workers movement—but Wohlforth's own fate is also worth recording. For over a decade, he was Healy's minion in the U.S. and his Workers League undertook in earnest several of the more bizarre Healyite schemes: 1) a perverse and slanderous campaign against the SWP leadership as agents of the Russian secret police (and/or FBI) responsible for abetting and then covering up the murder of Leon Trotsky; 2) the total subordina-

tion of the Healyite organizations to the regime of Libyan strongman Qaddafi. In the former effort, they gave Marcus a run for his money on paranoid "conspiracy" theories. In the latter, Healy alibied the Iraqi regime's murder of 21 members of the Iraqi Communist Party, Iraq being for Healy the very "bastion of the Arab Revolution." Wohlforth and his companion Nancy Field were terminated as leaders of the Healyite satellite in 1974. Following his purge, Wohlforth crawled back into the SWP for a brief interlude, leading us to ask what the SWP was going to do with a super-cynical squeezed lemon and "Can Tim and Nancy Find True Happiness in the SWP?" It didn't last long—Tim and the SWP, that is. Wohlforth now hangs out in the Bay Area, where as of last reports he was giving classes for the DSA's "Socialist School." Given his friendly relations with the Harringtonites, the last laugh may be on the SDUSA—Wohlforth seems to have become one of "yours."

"Consciously or unconsciously," King touched upon a fundamental difference between revolutionists and all brands of reformists, i.e., those who seek to reform this system from within its rotting corpse. What to him is an exercise in trivial, hair-splitting debate was for us a defense of the Marxist program against charlatans, fakers and far, far worse. For Albert Shanker in the board rooms of the capitalists, the basement of Langley, Virginia, or on the "Committee on the Present Danger," such a consideration is obviously moot. But just as Lenin's early battles against Menshevism, which were often denounced similarly as the worst sort of silly purism, created the Bolshevik organization capable of leading the Russian masses in the great October Revolution, so our early political battles have made us what we are today. As the only Leninist organization dedicated to workers revolution in this country, we are also capable of having a little fun à la Xandra's Red Avengers at the expense of this manifestly crazed ruling class. ■

## Germany...

(continued from page 9)

defeat for the working class and a warning. Trotsky and the International Left Opposition, which considered itself a faction of the Communist International, insisted upon the necessity of scrapping the idiotic doctrine of social fascism. In its place they advocated a policy of closing ranks with the majority of the German working class, forming a united front with the Social Democratic and non-party workers against the fascist danger. In particular Trotsky urged the KPD to struggle to mobilize the workers and unemployed around the slogan of extensive planned economic collaboration with the Soviet Union to combat unemployment and lay the basis for reorganizing the German economy. This directly posed to the working masses the necessity of seizing power.

Instead the KPD persisted in its Third Period orientation and deepened its errors. Thus Thälmann attempted to compete with the fascists by adopting their slogan of a "people's revolution," thereby erasing the demarcation between Marxism and fascism and helping reconcile part of the workers and petty bourgeoisie to fascist ideology. This error was capped by another, the so-called "red referendum." Here the KPD joined with the fascists in urging support for the Nazi-inspired recall of the Social Democratic/Center Party coalition government in Prussia. By raising this call when, given the relationship of forces, it could only mean the replace-

ment of the Social Democratic coalition by one of Hitler and the German right, it made the KPD appear in the eyes of the masses as aiders of reaction. The referendum failed but the KPD's willingness to bloc with the fascists under these concrete circumstances was a measure of their failure to understand that fascism is a razor held to the throat of the workers.

As comrades know, Hitler was able to come to power, defeating the most powerful and organized proletariat of the European labor movement, without a shot being fired in resistance. The responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of the Social Democracy and the Stalinists. To the very end Social Democracy played the role of a parliamentary stalking horse for bourgeois reaction. One of the last acts of the SPD in the Reichstag, when the Nazis were in power and Hitler was chancellor, was to vote credits for Hitler's war budget! Immediately afterwards the Nazis carted them off to jail.

Trotsky and the Left Opposition struggled might and main to break the KPD and Comintern from their suicidal course, a course which foreclosed the possibility of proletarian revolution and paved the way for the victory of fascism. The KPD's policies, inspired by Stalin & Co., resulted in the biggest defeat for the proletariat in history. There is no need to reappraise this statement in light of the wars, revolutions and counterrevolutions of the past 50 years. We would live in a very different world if the outcome in Germany in 1933 had turned out to be in

favor of the working class.

Stalinism and Social Democracy served up the German workers, heads on the chopping block, for the fascists. The organizations of the proletariat were smashed and shattered. The Comintern blindly defended the policies that led to this debacle, echoing Thälmann's reaction: "After Hitler, us!" The Comintern and KPD had committed a historic betrayal of the proletariat, and after the fact defended their actions before the masses. It was this that led Trotsky to declare the Third International politically bankrupt and dead as a revolutionary force.

### 1933: The Necessity for a New International

With the death of the Third International Trotsky proclaimed the necessity to struggle for the creation of a new revolutionary international, the Fourth International. That struggle began in his lifetime; it's not yet complete. It is the banner which has been taken up by the international Spartacist tendency.

The lessons of revolution and counterrevolution in Germany in the period from 1919 to 1933 must be studied in far more detail than is possible in a not-so-brief talk. They have a burning relevance for us today. We still live in the imperialist epoch and today as in 1923 the critical task remains—the forging of a revolutionary party with a leadership capable of recognizing a revolutionary situation and rapidly reorienting the party to take on the struggle for power. Temporizing at the wrong moment for even a few

days may lead to a missed revolutionary opportunity that will not recur for a generation. In the present circumstances history may not present us with a second chance.

In closing I would like to make two points. The various contenders can't foresee at the outset of a social conflict what exactly the outcome will be, otherwise you wouldn't have to struggle. But as revolutionary Marxists it is both possible and necessary to make calculations and on that basis to fight. I think our victory in tearing down the racist Confederate flag shows on a very small scale that such important questions for the proletariat are resolved through struggle. By engaging in such battles one becomes a part of the outcome rather than remaining a mere observer.

Finally, if Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev had been in command of the Bolshevik Party in 1917 I can assure you that a lot of learned bourgeois professors would be telling us that what happened in Russia was not a revolutionary opportunity for the proletariat but only a democratic revolution against tsarism.

It's most gratifying that we have a German section of the international Spartacist tendency, the Trotskyist League of Germany. It is above all they who must grapple with these questions and in light of the experience of the 1917 Russian Revolution come to understand and apply the lessons they learn from that study to the class struggle in Germany. The German question was and remains one of the key questions of proletarian revolution in the modern world. On it may well hinge the fate of mankind. ■

## Berkeley...

(continued from page 12)

streets, marching from the Berkeley BART station to the campus, with a cop car following, ramming them in the back of the legs. As the march turned into the campus, cops swarmed out of everywhere flailing nightsticks and clubbing dozens to the ground. Here, students fought back, some surrounding a cop car demanding the release of a "detained" student, others chasing away the thugs in blue.

Protesters rallied the next day against the cop rampage and circulated a resolution calling for the formation of a police review commission with "democratically elected student representatives," and demanding the release of all police surveillance materials on political demonstrators to those involved. This while a campus cop tried to videotape the rally! The Livermore Action Group ludicrously offered to train UC police in "nonviolence" in order to make them more "responsible professionals."

We certainly solidarize with the sentiment of these students to end cop brutality, but their illusions in review boards, the courts, or teaching cops to be "nonviolent" range from futile to absurd. What should be clear to Berkeley students now is that the cops and the courts are not neutral. The cops are a body of armed men whose purpose is to defend capitalist "law and order." From smashing union pickets to

terrorizing the ghetto poor to clubbing leftist students—that is the "responsibility" of these "professionals." And a look at the courts tells the same story. Nearly half of the 38 anti-apartheid protesters who were arrested last December for staging a sit-in at University Hall have been sentenced to three days in jail. Others who struck a "deal" have been effectively banned from participation in future demonstrations or they too will be sent to the slammer. Reagan's war against communism has come home to the Berkeley campus with a vengeance. What's necessary is to mobilize students to the side of the working class to fight for a workers government that will break the rule of the bosses, their cops and courts.

### Berkeley Review: How Much Do Amerikkka's Fat Bosses Pay You?

The ultraright-wing *Berkeley Review* sought to whip up hysteria against the SYL by not very subtle insinuations that we torched Callaghan Hall. In an article on campus funding (*Berkeley Review*, 4 March) they describe the SYL with the following adjectives: "fiery, inflammatory, incendiary [sic], burning, smoldering, explosive," thereby proving their ability to wield a thesaurus. (As to the question of funding, we don't take one dime from the student government—a



Sherbell/Picture Group

**Yankee  
Marines  
rape black  
Grenada.  
U.S. get your  
bloody hands  
off the world!**

training bra for youth to suck on the mammary glands of the bourgeoisie. Of course the *Berkeley Review* is rolling in dough from the likes of Irving Kristol, long ago exposed as a beneficiary of CIA monies, whose pet project is funding these right-wing racist rags on campuses coast to coast.)

Perhaps these right-wing wimps congregate at Berkeley because they see all the wheelchair ramps. You see, most of these ideological defenders of ROTC and the Marines have no intention of actually enlisting and fighting for U.S. imperialism. The bulk of them probably couldn't make it through basic training. Aside from the odd intersection with a *Soldier of Fortune* type who really grooves on killing blacks in Angola, this crew is headed straight for the corporate board rooms or the CIA. Maybe if they're really lucky they'll marry a juicy tomato like "moderate authoritarian" Jeane Kirkpatrick. In the meantime, these junior G-men are trying to cut their teeth on our necks.

In an article proving their access to good legal advice and the ability to cast nasty slurs just this side of libel, the *Berkeley Review* ("The Shame of Callaghan Fire," 4 March) states, "But even if the SYL is innocent of the arson itself, they are guilty of propagating the kind of oppressive beliefs and prejudice mentality that results in incidents like

the Callaghan fire."

Will Guillermo Bermúdez be the next Van der Lubbe? We are referring here to the infamous Reichstag fire of 1933. The Nazis found the ashes of parliament the necessary pretext for the wholesale roundup of communists, suppression of all civil liberties and consolidation of the Third Reich. There was no evidence against the communists, but it didn't matter. Hitler's intent was to create a climate of opinion where every communist was responsible for the fire, a red scare to justify a social order unfettered by the trappings of bourgeois democracy.

Now, we have no proof that Martin Bormann, Goering, and Goebbels are paid ghostwriters for the *Berkeley Review*. Nor have we substantiated the rumor that the *Review's* editor was seen roaming the campus with a lit cigarette the night of February 18 when Callaghan Hall burned. You see, two can play this game, but one of us is going to win.

Militant, mass, united-front protests of students with support from labor and the black community would stop the cop rampage in its tracks. The cop assault and frame-up of Guillermo Bermúdez is the most serious and violent incident on the Berkeley campus thus far. They went for him first because he's a red, in their eyes, a surrogate Russian to be shot on sight. But if they get away with putting Guillermo behind bars, a dangerous precedent will be set for persecution of any students who engage in political activity scorned by the Dr. Strangeloves running this country.

Berkeley students who value their democratic rights had better defend Guillermo. What's at stake is the right to fight Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive without being labeled a criminal or a "terrorist." If you stand with the workers and peasants of Central America against imperialist aggression; if you stand with the black masses battling the brutal apartheid regime in South Africa; if you defend the Soviet Union against the U.S. drive for nuclear war; or if you simply stand against attempted assassination of leftists by "Choke Hold" Johnson—then join us in fighting the administration/cop attacks! Drop the Charges Against Guillermo Bermúdez! Cops Off Campus! ■

### Spartacist League/ Spartacus Youth League Public Offices

#### Bay Area

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

#### Chicago

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

#### New York City

Tues.: 6:00-9:00 p.m., Sat.: 12:00-4:00 p.m.  
41 Warren St. (one block below  
Chambers St. near Church St.)  
New York, NY  
Phone: (212) 267-1025

# Young Spartacus

## Berkeley Students Demand:

# Cops, Marines Off Campus!

The *Sturm und Drang* of cops choking, clubbing and hauling away students has become an almost routine occurrence at UC Berkeley. The campus Gestapo is out to crush *all* political protest—from seizing a divestment group's literature table, to brutally attacking SYLer Guillermo Bermúdez for leading a militant protest against Marine recruiters, to drawing guns and rioting against a student march opposing U.S. war threats on Nicaragua. Berkeley students are learning what every ghettoized black in America knows: cops are pigs.

The UC police take their cues from Reagan's new top cop, Ed Meese. A former Alameda County assistant D.A., Meese openly stated during the old Free Speech Movement at Berkeley that anyone attending a political demonstration deserves to be shot. Now Meese and his underlings in the campus PD act as if Berkeley is their test run for Armageddon with the Soviet "Evil Empire." Indeed, as far as Meese is concerned, Berkeley has always been "enemy territory," and a haven for "subversives." But if the campus cops' strings are pulled from on high, they've also received vigorous assistance from the lowly sewers of the Buckleyite *Berkeley Review*, a newspaper that's J. Edgar Hoover's wet dream come true (more on these rodents later).

As the tension mounts on the Berkeley campus with leftist students battling cop attacks, the police have targeted a Hispanic communist, SYLer Guillermo Bermúdez. On January 29 Bermúdez led a spirited protest to drive recruiters for imperialism's strike force, the Marines, off campus. As students surrounded the recruiters' table, the cops moved in. One burly sadist, Officer Joe Johnson (6'3") grabbed Bermúdez (5'5", 129 lbs.) from behind in a deadly choke hold. As he was dangling in the air, Guillermo landed a swift kick to the Marines' table, collapsing it and sending them packing. The cops then wrenched Guillermo's arm behind his back, dragged him off in a "hammer lock," *breaking his arm.*

On top of the potentially lethal physical assault on Guillermo by "Choke Hold" Johnson comes the cops' deadly lies. Guillermo faces lying charges of battery of the burly police officer, resisting arrest, vandalism and disturbing the peace. In this frame-up, a 22-year-old Berkeley student now faces



U.C. cop "Choke Hold" Johnson mauls Guillermo Bermúdez, SYL student leader of protest against bloody Marine recruiters.

## Drop the Charges Against Guillermo Bermúdez!

nearly *three years* in jail and a lifetime of jeopardy knowing that anytime, anywhere, some killer cop could blow him away because he's been framed as a "cop beater." As comrade Guillermo stated, "They're turning the victim into the assailant!"

We consider Guillermo a *hero* for his action in leading student antiwar protest against the bloody Marines. And we are determined to fight this deadly frame-up with every legal, moral, political and financial resource at our disposal. On February 19, over 150 students turned

out for the rally, called around the demands: Drop the Charges Against Guillermo Bermúdez! Drop the Charges Against the Anti-Apartheid 38! Cops/Marines Off Campus!

Callaghan Hall, home of Berkeley's Navy ROTC program, burned to the ground on the eve of the SYL rally and Guillermo's first court appearance. No tears were shed for Callaghan Hall at the rally. We don't know who did it, but the timing was suspicious—and convenient for those who seek to fan the flames of Reagan reaction. The *Berkeley Review* bunch began cooking up inflammatory lies about us.

As SYLer Stephan Arnold, a UC student who was recently carded by the cops for the "crime" of passing out Marxist literature, told the crowd:

"This campus is quickly turning into a South African bantustan with an enforced pass law system. This is not 'democracy,' this is the dictatorship of the capitalist class at work. So the question is 'Why now?' The answer is that the state machinery is gearing up for world war. And this war is ultimately directed against the Soviet Union. Reagan and the Democrats and the cops want a consensus behind this war drive. So they are bent on harassing, intimidating and repressing anyone who opposes this consensus. That's why Jeane Kirkpatrick got driven off campus two years ago. And all the crocodile tears that were shed for Kirkpatrick and 'free speech' were really shed because it showed that this campus, the students, the youth, were not ready to go to war.... Jeane Kirkpatrick got what she deserved and the Reaganites were embarrassed and they want to make sure that no one gets the Kirkpatrick treatment again. They want the youth ready for war and they are willing to break some arms and some heads to do it."

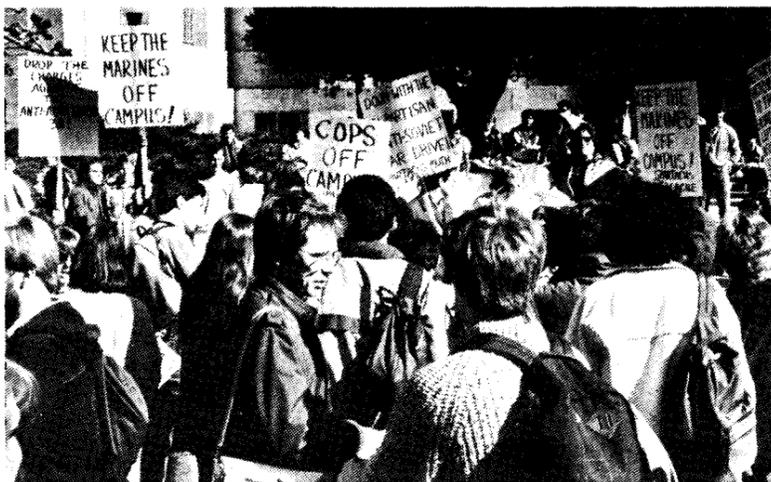
### A Picture Worth A Thousand Words

The photo splashed across the front page of the *Daily Californian* (reprinted above) showing Johnson choking Guillermo prompted the Berkeley City Council to at last ban the use of the choke hold in the city after years of talking about it. In the ghettos and barrios across America the choke hold is synonymous with racist cop terror. Also known as the "carotid restraint," the cops attack their victim from behind, cut off the flow of blood to the brain by squeezing around the neck and use their elbow to pinch the carotid artery. If sustained for more than 15 seconds it can be fatal.

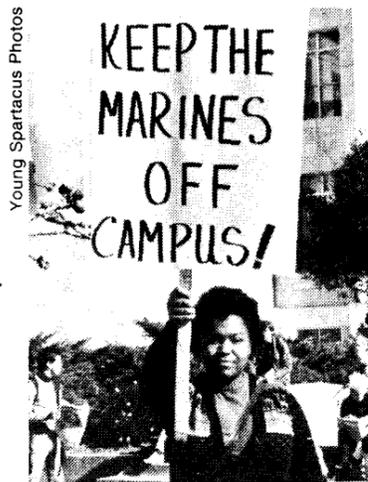
The Berkeley cops' chilling reply to the City Council's ban was, "the only way to stop them without the chokehold is to shoot" (*Daily Cal*, 21 February)! Moreover, this ban has no effect whatsoever on the campus cops. They goose-step under the aegis of Governor Deukmejian, whose own views on democracy stem not from that well-known commie tract, the Bill of Rights, but from some banana republic.

To underscore their bonapartist intent and defiance at being placed under any public scrutiny, the campus cops staged a full-scale riot on February 27. In response to Reagan and Shultz's escalating war threats against Nicaragua, hundreds of students took to the

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Sproul Plaza, February 14—Berkeley students at SYL-initiated rally against cop rampage.



Young Spartacus Photos