

Reagan Stymied in Beirut—Watch Out World!



Cambio 16



Der Spiegel

Reagan's Terror U.S.A.

JUNE 24—From the day he moved into the White House, Ronald Reagan has been America's "terror" president. His first secretary of state, General ("I'm in charge here") Haig declared that henceforth "Soviet-sponsored international terrorism" would "take the place of human rights in our concern." Reagan vowed to returning Iran hostages that the U.S. would respond to future threats with "swift and effective retribution." So when Shi'ite terrorists seized TWA Flight 847 from Athens, Greece on June 14 he was up against it.

As the Boeing jetliner went on a merry-go-round trip from Athens to Beirut to Algiers to Beirut to Algiers and back to Beirut again, many of his own

supporters concluded that Reagan's policy is no different from "wimpy" Democrat Jimmy Carter's. The *Wall Street Journal* (20 June) titled an editorial "Jimmy Reagan." Gung-ho New Rightists are demanding action, now. But this administration already tried and failed miserably to impose a "Pax Americana" on the feuding ethnic communalists in Lebanon, and they're probably not anxious to repeat that fiasco. So since he's in hot water in the Near East, Reagan looks half-way around the globe to Central America for his target.

Right now the U.S. government is at its most dangerous. Determined to show it's not a paper tiger, it acts like a

Israelis round up Shi'ite Muslims in Lebanon, March 1985.



wounded tiger. Somewhere on the globe, Reagan will lash out against the Soviet Union or those he calls its

"surrogates." A military blockade of Lebanon, air strikes against the
continued on page 4

Congress Votes for "Contra" Aid

U.S. Poised to Attack Central America

Defend Nicaragua! Military Victory To Salvadoran Leftists!

JUNE 24—In trouble over hijacking in the Near East, afraid of looking "weak" like Jimmy Carter over the Teheran embassy seizure, Ronald Reagan has announced he will strike back...in Central America. "Our limits have been reached," the U.S. president threatened last week. Asked to explain, White House spokesman Larry Speakes said, "It means that we are now drawing the line, we are laying out a specific plan of action, first in Central America," by upping military aid to El Salvador. Reagan was even more specific, saying he expected Congress to back steps he intended to take "to end the external support the Salvadoran terrorists receive from Nicaragua and the Communist bloc" (*New York Times*, 21 June).

Reagan has good reason to be optimistic about Congressional support, for on June 12 the United States Congress lifted a four-year-old ban on U.S. military action to overthrow the

government of Sandinista Nicaragua. The issue wasn't the paltry \$28 million for the CIA's counterrevolutionary ("contra") mercenaries. As the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (14 June) put it: "Congress buys a ticket for war in Nicaragua." In the guise of voting for "humanitarian" aid to a gang of murderers, *Republicans and Democrats alike have already given the green light for a U.S. invasion of Central America.* From here on in, it's a matter of time, and not very much time. As Speakes ominously noted, "The planning will take place in the next, in the coming days and weeks..."

The quick turnaround by the House of Representatives took the Sandinistas by surprise. They figured that class conciliation paid off last April when the Democratic-controlled House voted against contra aid. But their nationalist politics have blinded them to the anti-Soviet consensus shared by both U.S. capitalist parties. Democrats fearful of



Franken/Sygma

U.S. military in "Fort Honduras" is getting ready for invasion of Nicaragua.

being labeled "soft on communism" caved in when Daniel Ortega went to the Kremlin asking for aid. And the Reagan administration adroitly exploited this by adopting the *Democrats'* program for trade sanctions. Now leading liberal "doves" like Brooklyn Democratic Congressman Stephen Solarz are calling for sanctions against both South Africa and Nicaragua. A Managua

official reportedly said, "Our shock was very strong. We totally misread the reaction to the Moscow visit" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 June).

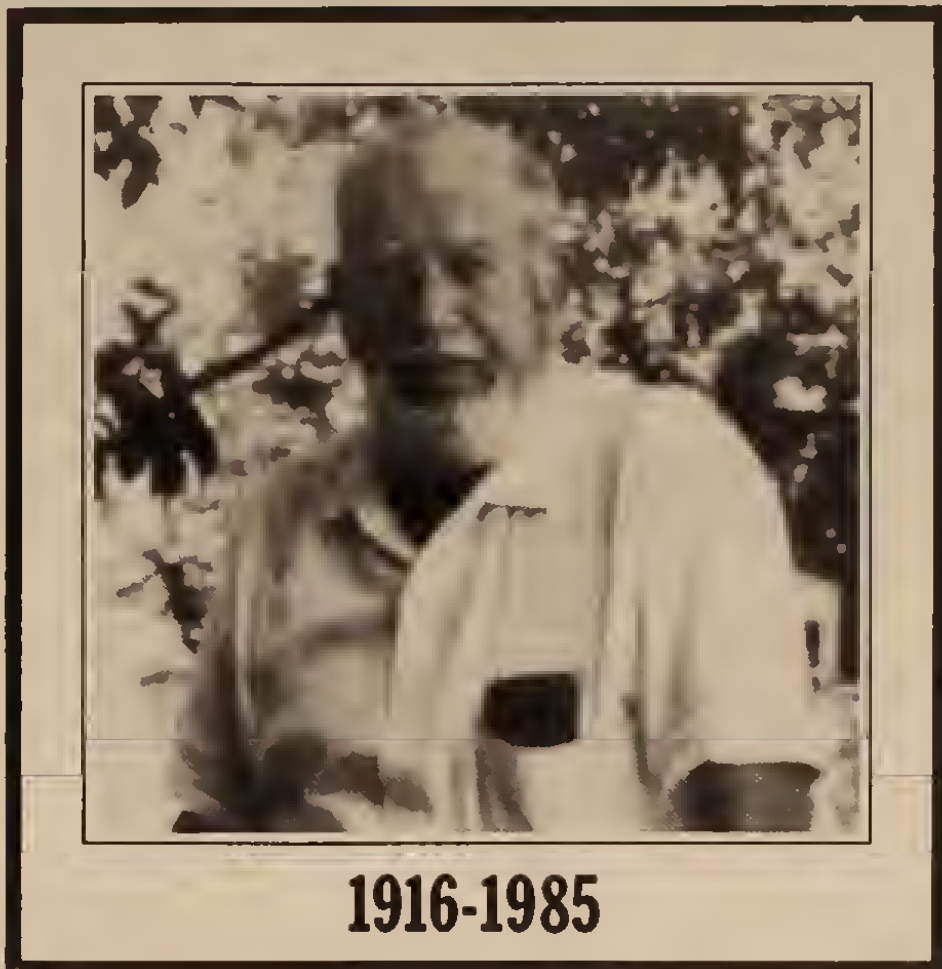
So the Sandinistas say, "Now we have to write off Congress and go directly to the [American] public." Their supporters are caught in a quandary. For half a decade the Latin American "solidarity"
continued on page 11

GEORGE LAVAN WEISSMAN, Veteran Trotskyist

George Lavan Weissman, a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and a Marxist for almost 50 years, died on March 28 of a heart attack. On May 25 in New York 130 of Weissman's friends and comrades gathered to honor him at a memorial meeting organized by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. The FIT was constituted by a group of primarily old-guard SWPers, including comrade Weissman, after they were bureaucratically expelled from the SWP in 1984. The range of speakers and letters of greetings to the meeting—from a grandson of Leon Trotsky, ex-SWP leader Myra Tanner Weiss, United Secretariat head Ernest Mandel, Trotskyist scholar Pierre Broué, and the Spartacist League's James Robertson, to mention a few—are a powerful testimony to Weissman's long and dedicated commitment to the Trotskyist movement.

Surviving Weissman are his second wife, Muriel McAvoy, and three stepchildren from his first marriage; his first wife, Connie, died in 1972.

Born in 1916, Weissman was won to Marxism as a student at Harvard University during the Depression. In 1936 he joined the Boston branch of the Socialist Party (SP) youth organization, the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL). At that time the SP and particularly the youth had moved leftward and the Trotskyists had entered aiming to recruit the best militants to Trotskyism. The Boston Trotskyists regarded winning over Weissman as key. And he soon joined the Trotskyist "Socialist Appeal" Caucus and was expelled from the SP with the Trotskyists in 1937. Soon Weissman had recruited an entire branch at Harvard. Weissman was a founding member of the SWP at its first conference in January 1938. And unlike so many of the ex-YPSL petty-bourgeois intellectuals who dumped the defense of the Soviet Union and Trotskyism in the 1939-40 Shachtman faction fight and split, Weissman stuck with the SWP's proletarian majority.



1916-1985

no credit

As a Trotskyist, Weissman was active in trade-union organizing: in a 1937 Boston seamen's strike, a Maine shoe workers' strike and a Rhode Island textile workers' organizing drive. He served briefly as SWP organizer in Boston and, later, Youngstown. In the late 1930s he sailed as a member of the National Maritime Union and once during the Spanish Civil War he tried to jump ship in North Africa to fight against Franco's fascists. Although he

never made it to Spain, he delighted in describing his adventures to younger comrades in later years. In 1941 Weissman was drafted into the U.S. Army; he left the army in 1946 as a captain of artillery.

Weissman played a key role in preserving the heritage of revolutionary Trotskyism through his work as a director and editor of the SWP's Pioneer Publishers and Pathfinder Press and as a member of the committee which supervised editing and publishing Trotsky's works. He later served as the director of Trotsky's literary estate in the United States. At the time of the opening of the closed section of the Trotsky Archives at Harvard University in January 1980, Pathfinder Press sent up a team to examine the new material. Weissman's knowledge was such that he was the natural leader of the team.

Not only a leading intellectual and editor, Weissman was also an important activist in many SWP campaigns. He was a key functionary in the American Committee for European Workers' Relief after World War II; in the Kutcher Civil Rights Defense Committee, which won back the civil service job of SWPer Jimmy Kutcher, the "legless veteran" fired by the government for being a communist; and in the campaign to fight the deportation of Carl Skoglund, a long-time SWP leader who organized Teamster drivers in Minnesota and helped lead the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike.

Weissman was also key in establishing SWP work with Robert F. Williams, the militant civil rights leader who organized blacks for armed self-defense in North Carolina (Williams was later forced to flee to Cuba and China to escape a "kidnapping" frame-up). When two black schoolchildren, Hanover Thompson, age 9, and Fuzzy Simpson, age 7, were jailed on a charge of attempted rape for being kissed by a white playmate in the infamous "Kissing Case" in Monroe, the boys' mothers called on Williams for help. When civil rights lawyer Conrad Lynn flew to North Carolina to represent the children

in court, Weissman came along. His article, published in the *Nation*, was the first real publicity the case received. Weissman served as secretary to the Committee to Combat Racial Injustice formed around this case. He continued his work with Robert F. Williams through the Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants, which defended the right of black self-defense.

In a telephone interview with *WV*, Robert F. Williams paid tribute to Weissman: "I remember him as a dedicated revolutionary and a person who really was a friend to all people struggling for liberation. He was instrumental in mobilizing a lot of support for our struggle in Monroe.... He also was friendly to people even though he might not have been of the same political persuasion. I think it would be good for young people today to study his life."

For many years comrade Weissman was a member of the SWP's leading bodies, the National and Political Committees. He wrote regularly for the *Militant* and served as its editor from 1961 to 1966. Speakers at the memorial meeting testified to Weissman's profound knowledge, especially of American history, which not only imbued his own writing but enriched that of his comrades. Weissman was a voracious night-time reader and he was usually unable to make it to the editorial office much before late afternoon. According to speakers at the memorial meeting this caused a lot of friction with the rest of the editorial staff.

Weissman's hours would cause no problem with the *WV* staff—for us, politics is not just a daytime job. Such a concept of a "9 to 5" regular schedule in the SWP was perhaps symptomatic of the wearing out of the SWP old guard of which Weissman was so prominent a member. By the early 1960s the SWP had begun to degenerate politically, hailing Fidel Castro as an unconscious Marxist and refusing to fight for Trotskyist leadership in the civil rights movement. By 1965 the party was thoroughly reformist and the "best builders" of the pro-Democratic Party antiwar movement, and the old boys were for the most part content to live in a party which kept the Trotskyist label only on paper. But the new boy to whom they turned over the leadership of their party, Jack Barnes, junked their Trotskyism



TROTSKY

Blacks in the Proletarian Vanguard

In his 1939 discussions with a delegation from the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) on the black question, Trotsky underlined its strategic importance for the American workers revolution:

We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class. What serves

as the brake on the higher strata? It is the privileges, the comforts that hinder them from becoming revolutionists. It does not exist for the Negroes. What can transform a certain stratum, make it more capable of courage and sacrifice? It is concentrated in the Negroes. If it happens that we in the SWP are not able to find the road to this stratum, then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and all the rest would be only a lie.

—Leon Trotsky, "Discussion at Coyoacán, Mexico" (11 April 1939)



LENIN

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28 June 1985

This letter was sent to the May 25 memorial meeting to honor George Weissman by SL national chairman James Robertson.

17 May 1985

Dear Comrades:

I too cherish the memory of George Weissman and also of his wife Connie. Several years ago I belatedly heard that Connie had died; I have had no opportunity until now to express my sorrow at the passing of this really fine woman.

In the course of my not always entirely pleasant years in the Socialist Workers Party, George and Connie were almost unique in the friendship they extended me. This is a thing that one does not forget. Now they are gone.

George taught me something very important about the class struggle when once he described to me the reactions of a young socialist college student to a bitterly hard fought strike that he found himself supporting.

Fraternally,
James Robertson

Mayor Goode: "Reagan's House Tom on Philly Plantation"

Cliff Carter, a black trade unionist, is a guest contributor to WV.

By Cliff Carter

A home in Philadelphia was bombed to kill all the people inside. This date was May 13, 1985, one day after Mother's Day. And too, in Philadelphia, Home of Brotherly Love. In America, Home of the Free and Land of the Brave, or vice versa.

Nothing can be said by Police Commissioner Gregore J. Sambor and Mayor W. Wilson Goode to justify themselves in the bombing; because what other reason would the police bomb a building with people inside except to kill them?

Who made the decision to bomb and burn down the neighborhood? Was it Sambor or Goode, or was it the CIA, FBI or the Reagan Administration with a special meeting held by Congress?

"Willie" Wilson Goode-man was placed in charge of the Philadelphia Plantation by the capitalist rulers. Goode was told to go along with the bombing and make things look as though he gave the orders. City mayors are nothing but fronts for the ruling class, and Goode falls in that category. Is Goode a House Negro playing the part of a House Tom on the Philadelphia Plantation?

The MOVE people were used as guinea pigs. The bombing of their home was a demonstration and lesson to show all left groups and militant labor union locals what will happen if they step out of line. This murder was well planned. The police chief ordered the fire fighters not to shoot one drop of water until the MOVE people were well fried, and the other homes completely beyond saving.

What's next on the agenda, or rather,



Meyers/NY Times

Mayor Goode, Police Chief Sambor carry out Reagan's program for black America: bombing of MOVE, West Philly.



Mittler/Woodfin Camp

who is next? Will the plantation owners send their House Toms (city mayors, black and white) after the militant trade union locals next? Is the black church next? This is just the beginning. Mayor Goode would set himself on fire first before he would take part in bombing a white neighborhood. Along with the chores given Goode (such as what to do, how to do it and who to work and where to work them) he was told who to bomb.

Malcolm X said in one of his speeches (from *Malcolm X Speaks*), "If the master got sick, the house Negro would say, 'What's the matter, boss, we sick?'" Now when Mayor Goode was told by cop Sambor that he (Sambor) had planned to bomb the MOVE home, Goode said, "Boss, make sure I know the time so I can see us bomb the MOVE people together."

The Philadelphia bombing was a product of black people being forced to live in segregated neighborhoods. A segregated neighborhood means a neighborhood that is controlled by city officials who have no real interest in it whatsoever. The same principles that

apply to a neighborhood, apply to schools also. If the water, gas, electricity and the allowed money for repairs and operating the neighborhood are controlled by the city officials, then the people are at the mercy of the officials.

The United States government prefers black people to live in segregated neighborhoods and schools. With this, the U.S. could cut off money and miseducate anytime it (U.S.) pleases. And too, *drop a bomb anytime*.

The whole world watched the bombing in Philadelphia, and I am sure the working people from all "walks of life" are still stunned from what happened. In cities around the country, they read in the newspapers the Associated Press saying: "The radicals might have engineered their own deaths.... They're insane."

This murder in the black community is no different from any other murder done by the police in the past. Black people are murdered (by the police), put on trial (yes, dead men and women have been tried by the United States courts) and found guilty of attempted murder

(against the police), and murder (their own). We must not forget that the police have always had "open season" on the black neighborhoods ever since the ending of the Civil War. But now, the police departments have had an amendment added to their "license to kill." They (police) have been given black mayors to justify each and every murder committed on black people. The "sell-out, sold-out" Goodes are with us and increasing with every election, parading as Democrats and Republicans.

Eleven people were murdered and 61 homes completely destroyed. What have the AFL-CIO heads said concerning this? Are they too busy bread-breaking with the bosses? The AFL-CIO should break away from the Democratic Party and start working for the working people.

Police brutality in the black community will only be stopped by decent and concerned people free of the ties with the Democratic and Republican parties. A change of things (socialist revolution) will be done by the same people. ■

and junked them too. In 1982 Barnes explicitly disavowed the theory of permanent revolution and attacked Trotsky as a hopeless sectarian, in order to move closer to the Cuban Stalinists (and Nicaraguan Sandinistas) for whom the party had long served as cheerleaders. Barnes expelled virtually every remaining veteran of the old party when they protested his open repudiation of Trotsky.

Why did the generation of revolutionaries trained by James P. Cannon in the class and factional struggles of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s allow the likes of Barnes to take over the SWP? Well, Farrell Dobbs hand-picked Barnes; probably he liked the results. Joe Hansen simply acquiesced while Cannon, in retirement, made a little trouble for Dobbs and Barnes from the sidelines. For the rest of them, maybe they thought they had a "doomsday machine": that when the time came someone would push the button and eject them from a degenerating party. They would say that the Revolutionary Tendency (RT, precursor of the Spartacist League), which fought the degeneration of the SWP and was expelled for it, pushed the doomsday button too early. But later there was nobody to push it (though Tom Kerry, to his credit, tried)—the veteran cadres who had known and cared about what Trotskyism was had been shunted off into "advisory" status, to be held in barely veiled contempt by Barnes' "insiders" and sycophants. The long-time party veterans had been deprived of any real

influence in the SWP; by the time the final chop came, age and illness and death had claimed too many and what was left of this layer, represented by the FIT, could only protest honorably but hopelessly the open repudiation of them and their history by Barnes' party.

Jim Robertson recalled one indicative experience from 1960: "The SWP was running Farrell Dobbs for president and I was assigned to drive him to some campus appearances. In the car I was talking about the Lenin volumes that had just come out. Moscow was bringing out the full *Collected Works* and I couldn't wait to get my hands on each new volume. I was dismayed that Dobbs was simply not interested." For the SWP central leadership, Lenin and Trotsky had ceased to be centrally relevant to formulating political program. The old cadres were looking for something "new"—what they got turned out to be Barnesite anti-Trotskyism. The destruction of the SWP as a revolutionary instrument was accomplished programmatically in the early 1960s, expressed organizationally by the SWP's first-ever political expulsion—the purge of the RT solely for its "disloyal" political ideas. This expulsion was codified in the SWP's 1965 document on "Organization," written by Dobbs and accepted by Cannon, which has been the touchstone for every Barnesite purge including the final, contemptuous ouster of the veteran party members who recoiled from spitting on their memories of Trotskyism.

We remember that George Weissman

was the only member of the SWP Political Committee to vote to hear the appeal of the RT to the SWP's 1965 convention. And we think that Weissman, in later years, might have appreciated Jim Robertson's statement, printed in the *New York Times Magazine* (25 April 1965) as: "We want to be a Trotskyite party that Trotsky would recognize." (Bitter note: In the interview, Robertson certainly used the term "Trotskyist." But back then the *Times* editors preferred the classic Stalinist pejorative "Trotskyite" and enforced this style across the board up until the late '70s.) To Barnes, Weissman and his generation were so much garbage. The

SWP was conspicuous by its absence at the memorial meeting and the *Militant*, in Harry Ring's dishonest obituary of Weissman, reports that he "left" the SWP in 1984!

When Barnes' minions came to interrogate Weissman for "disloyalty" in January 1984 he threw them out of his house with the words, "I'm a Trotskyist; I still believe in Permanent Revolution and I refuse to regress to the Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry." For this defiance on the eve of his expulsion from the SWP, and especially for his years as a leading American Trotskyist, we honor the memory of George Lavan Weissman. ■

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Reagan's Terror...

(continued from page 1)

Bekaa, fostering a "pro-NATO" coup in Greece, sending the Marines and the 82nd Airborne into Central America to establish a *cordon sanitaire* around Nicaragua and even an invasion—it's all possible. From Moscow, *Pravda* warned on Saturday that Washington circles "wish to use to the maximum the incident with the U.S. plane in Beirut and the murder of six Americans in the Salvadoran capital to substantiate fresh dangerous militaristic actions."

Such behavior has already become a pattern. When Reagan took a beating in the opinion polls over his attempt at reconciliation with Nazi SS stormtroopers at Bitburg, we wrote: "The last time he was in trouble was over Lebanon, and he responded with the invasion of Grenada. What will it be this time?" (*WV* No. 378, 3 May). The answer was trade sanctions against Sandinista Nicaragua, a deliberate act of war. This time around it looks like he's planning to send in the troops and planes to stop the "Communist/terrorist menace" in



Montecinos/AFP

El Salvador: U.S. Marines were legitimate targets of guerrillas in bloody civil war.

Central America. Asked about U.S. actions in response to the TWA hijacking, White House spokesman Speakes replied, "Wait and watch." We say, watch out for Reagan's "Terrorism Made in U.S.A.!"

Imperialist Provocation and Hysteria

The imperialist machinery of provocations and military hysteria has been put in motion. To justify it, Reagan lumps together three sharply different situations: Beirut, San Salvador, Frankfurt. The Beirut hijacking by Shi'ite Muslims is an ambiguous situation. Taking random travelers hostage is a repulsive action, in particular the brutal beating and then murder of a Navy diver. Yet those 700-plus Shi'ites being held hostage in some Israeli concentration camp didn't exactly get due process either! And sadly one nationalist atrocity invites another. In contrast, in El Salvador, where over 50,000 have died at the hands of U.S.-armed death squads or from U.S.-supplied bombs, four Marines were killed by an urban guerrilla commando—a legitimate act of war. And then there is the Frankfurt airport bombing which killed two Australian babies and wounded scores of people—some kind of weird attempt at mass murder for no known purpose, by an unknown group.

Ronald Reagan and the American government, who have armed and trained murder squads from Nicaragua to Afghanistan, have no right to say

anything about "human rights" or morality. They are dripping with blood. The American president claims it's a crime against civilization that those Marines were shot in San Salvador. Yet thousands upon thousands of Salvadoran peasants are being slaughtered in savage carpetbombing, indiscriminate shelling and sweeps by the U.S.-aided and "advised" puppet army of death squad "democrat" Napoleón Duarte. More than a fifth of the population of five million has been turned into refugees by this "free world" terror. As Radio Venceremos of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front put it, "Did Ronald Reagan think that he would come to make war in El Salvador and that his soldiers were not going to die?" (*Washington Post*, 23 June). But that's what the rulers of this irrational system do think.

When an American major was shot sticking his head in a Soviet tank shed in East Germany, for Washington that qualified as "terrorism." Now the U.S. is complaining that some leaders of the anti-Soviet Polish Solidarność, Reagan's favorite "union," have been locked up. But what about when the entire leadership of the Salvadoran center-left was brutally hacked to pieces by the security forces as they tried to hold a political meeting in a Catholic high school in 1980? If that's not terrorism, what is? According to U.S. standards, when Cuha aids black Angola in fighting off an invasion by white supremacist South Africa, that's "terrorism." But the no less than *eight* separate attempts by the CIA to assassinate Castro, the bombing of a Cubana airlines plane, the assassination of Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier—by the lights of Reagan's America that's all legitimate defense of the "free world" against "godless communism." This government sends a civilian airliner with over 200 innocent hostages aboard on a spy mission to provoke Soviet air defenses, then when the plane is downed screams about Soviet "barbarism."

Administration spokesman Larry Speakes declares, "We must act against those who have so little regard for human life and the values we cherish." As there isn't enough "terrorism" around to feed the "anti-terrorism" war crusade, on March 8 a car bomb attack on a pro-Iranian Shi'ite clerical leader, killing 75 people in Beirut, was organized by a hit squad contracted by the CIA. In turn, the Israel-sponsored "South Lebanon Army" recently took 21 Finnish United Nations soldiers hostage in order to pressure the Amal militia to return some of their men who had defected. But now the Shi'ites have taken on the biggest terrorists of them all, and Reagan & Co. would love to use the big stick. Already the aircraft carrier *Nimitz* and its battle group are cruising off the Lebanese coast with a Marine amphibious force on hand, and a unit of the "anti-terrorist" Delta Force is reportedly in Cyprus, only 100 miles from Beirut.

Beirut Terror Tangle

The present "terrorist crisis" was all too predictable. The Shi'ite seizure of the TWA airliner is indefensible, but they had plenty of reason to do it. When the Israelis literally kidnapped 1,100 men and boys as they were retreating from Lebanon this spring, dragging them off to prison camps in Israel, we wrote: "Each Shi'ite killed by the Israeli army creates more sons, brothers, sisters and grandfathers willing to be martyrs in the fight against the Zionist Satan" (*WV* No. 377, 19 April). Now the chickens come home as Shi'ite terrorists have seized American hostages, demanding the release of 766 of their co-religionists held by Israel.

The "moderate" Shi'ite group Amal, headed by Nabih Berri, is willing to do business with Israel and the United States. When the Israelis launched their 1982 *Blitzkrieg* invasion of Lebanon to "purify" it of Palestinians, the Shi'ites

were more than willing to cooperate. They recently launched a murderous onslaught against Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut and southern Lebanon in an attempt to disarm the PLO. Israel, which engineered the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians at Sabra and Shatila by the Christian Phalange, says it was planning to release the Shi'ite prisoners anyway, to *unleash them on the Palestinians*. The Zionists said they were "impressed with the way Amal had been fighting the Palestinian guerrillas in Beirut and wanted to add to Amal's strength by sending back some of its most able fighters" (*New York Times*, 19 June).

The Israelis now say they can't release their hostages, because to do so would give in to "international terrorism." The U.S., in turn, says it won't "cave in" to the hijackers' demands. Meanwhile, Reagan is discovering the problem Carter faced—how to take action without being blamed for getting the hostages killed. The American public may applaud Sylvester Stallone's *Rambo* on the screen, but pulling off a commando raid or some other military stunt or act of mindless vengeance could easily backfire. An Indiana audience



Reaganites use "terror scare" to regiment U.S. population for war.

broke into chants of "U.S.A.! U.S.A.!" when Reagan proclaimed he would not yield. But almost six out of ten Americans polled said the main thing is to save the hostages.

The press is full of "America held hostage" headlines. Flag-waving super-patriots, Reagan's constituency, are tying yellow ribbons around everything in sight. TV commentators ask, "Is this America standing tall?" Yet the American people still manifestly don't trust their government when it comes down

U.S. Bars Jewish Red Army General

On June 6, three prominent Soviet Jews were excluded from the United States. Invited by *Jewish Affairs* magazine to a celebration of the 40th anniversary of V-E Day, Soviet general David Dragunsky, a Red Army war hero twice decorated with the Hero of Soviet Union medal, Lev Kaufman, chairman of the Jewish Autonomous Region, and historian Andrei Belav were denied entry visas. Condemning the exclusion as "a blatant act of anti-Semitism and anti-Semitism," General Dragunsky added, "We see this act as linked to President Reagan's laying of a wreath at Bitburg Cemetery where 49 members of the SS are buried" (*Daily World*, 12 June). The Partisan Defense Committee sent the following telegram condemning this outrage:

Telegram

11 June 1985

Secretary of State George Shultz
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Condemn exclusion from U.S. of three prominent Soviet Jews, Andrei Belav, Lev Kaufman and hero of Red Army triumph over Hitler, Colonel General David Dragunsky, whose family fell to Nazi terror. Reagan salutes SS at Bitburg, brings Nazi-style racist murder to Philadelphia as he prepares nuclear "Operation Barbarossa." This exclusion is outrage to every victim of and fighter against fascist terror.

Partisan Defense Committee

to it. They sympathized with Allyn Conwell, spokesman for the hostages, when he warned Reagan against intervening militarily, and said with dignity:

"We understand that Israel is holding as hostage a number of Lebanese people who undoubtedly have as equal and as strong a desire to go home as we do."

—*New York Times*, 21 June

Administration spokesmen initially attacked the hostages' eloquent and sensible plea, but then quickly backpedaled. White House advisers no doubt remember that when a lone Shi'ite fanatic drove a truck bomb into Marine HQ in Beirut in October 1983, killing 241 U.S. soldiers, public opinion rightly blamed *Reagan* for sending American troops into this slaughterhouse in the first place.

Reagan's back in the Lebanese swamp again. Washington is frustrated, so *watch out world!* When they start talking about "terrorism" in Washington, it's time to hit the deck. When Reagan invoked emergency powers to order a trade embargo of Nicaragua, we warned: "How long before Democratic House speaker 'Tip' O'Neill looks out the window of his Capitol office to see it surrounded with dump trucks, supposedly to avert a 'terrorist threat'?" ("Defend the Nicaraguan Revolution!" *WV* No. 379, 17 May). The answer: one month. The 21 June *New York Post* reported in blaring headlines: "SWAT Teams Ring Capital. U.S. on alert for terror attacks here." And when some guy shot his mom in the State Department building they went crazy with security measures, turning the building into something like the Beirut Airport. Why? Evidently, the Reaganites are expecting to be treated like they treated the black MOVE group in Philadelphia.

For the current gang in power in Washington, "terrorism" is any perceived threat or serious resistance to what they consider the interests of the U.S. government. And "terrorists" are anybody they intend to destroy. After Reagan ripped up the PATCO air controllers union, striking Continental Airline pilots were hauled into court charged with "terrorism." When they firebombed that back-to-nature black commune in Philly, killing eleven people and incinerating an entire neighborhood, naturally their victims are proclaimed "terrorists." Salvadoran guerrillas, the democratically elected government of Nicaragua, staid bureaucrats in the Kremlin—these are all "terrorists" in Reagan's book. And the Nicaraguan "contras," who specialize in rape, pillage and grisly murder, are "freedom fighters." The big terrorists, armed and dangerous, are in the White House, fighting against freedom all over the world. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Ali Agca and the Preposterous "Bulgarian Connection"

Shot Pope, Thinks He's Christ

Billed as the "trial of the century," purporting to show a KGB link to the shooting of the pope in May 1981, it has certainly been a spectacle. But like the Nazis' show trial half a century ago over the burning of the Reichstag, this effort to conjure up a Communist connection to the papal assassination attempt has backfired spectacularly. On the very first day of the trial in the giant Foro Italico courtroom bunker, Mehmet Ali Agca, the Turkish fascist fanatic who shot the Polish pope John Paul Wojtyla shouted out: "I am Jesus Christ! I am omnipotent, and I announce the end of the world!" As Agca raved on before hundreds of journalists and TV cameras, the anti-Soviet inventors of the "Bulgarian connection" like long-time CIA groupie (and sometime *New York Times* correspondent) Claire Sterling could only cringe in their ringside seats. The prosecution may have "god" on their side, but their case is unraveling day by day.

For the past three and a half years, Sterling's "terror network" crowd has been churning out classic CIA "black propaganda" with lurid stories of a Soviet hand in the "pope plot." From the beginning, as a *Le Monde* (26-27 May) article noted, "The 'Bulgarian connection'... rests essentially on Agca's say-so." And Agca has been saying the most contradictory things—whatever he has been fed and/or his interrogators want to hear—hoping to get released. Now in open court this madman sounds like a certified Reaganaut railing against the Soviet "evil empire." "I can say with certainty that the political and financial center of world terrorism is the Soviet Union," proclaimed the convicted assassin. Agca claims the Bulgarian secret service also ordered the bombing of Radio Free Europe, and hired him to gun down Polish Solidarność leader Lech Walesa, Tunisian president Bourguiba and the prime minister of Malta.

At one point Agca shouted out, "The order to kill the Pope came from the Soviet embassy in Sofia," the Bulgarian capital. But when it comes to proof for these bombastic charges, the peddlers of the "Bulgarian connection" lie have produced a big fat zero. When the judge expressed frustration at the frequent alterations of his testimony, Agca replied that he would raise up a dead man in the presence of President Reagan and the UN secretary general, "provided the Vatican tells the absolute truth that I am Jesus Christ," and that the Bulgarians were guilty (*New York Times*, 25 June). And last week the case was blown wide open when a major

organized crime figure who has turned state's evidence, Giovanni Pandico, declared that Agca had been coached in jail by underworld figures and Italian intelligence. Pandico is the star witness in a trial against 251 suspected mobsters of the Comorra, the Neapolitan equivalent of the Mafia.

In an interview with the weekly news magazine *L'Espresso* (23 June), Pandico said that General Musumeci, former

prison (where he was jailed for murdering a liberal Turkish newspaper editor) in November 1979, just as John Paul II was about to visit Turkey and almost a year before Solidarność emerged from the Polish strikes of August 1980. Even top CIA officials have doubted that the Russians would use an unstable element like Agca on such a mission. And the whole history of the "pope plot" has been as a stick with which to beat the

plus Grey Wolf plus mafioso equals Soviet plot! The only tenuous link between Agca and Bulgaria is his claim that he stayed in Sofia for 50 days in 1980. Yet the passport he was carrying when arrested shows him entering and leaving the country in a single day, as hundreds of thousands of Turks do yearly in transit between West Europe and their homeland. And the "vast" quantities of money Sterling claims Agca spent (roughly \$50,000) could easily be payments from his Turkish underworld associates for services rendered as a professional hit-man.

On the dubious basis of Agca's testimony, 18 months after he was convicted for the crime, three Bulgarians were also indicted: former Rome embassy personnel Todor Aivasov and Major Zhelyu Vassilev, and the hapless Sergei Antonov, the Balkanair official who has been under arrest for the last two and a half years in Italy. While the professional killer became a media star and even received a visit in his comfort-



Pope meets Agca (left): My son, just stick to the story, for god's sake! May 1981 assassination attempt (below).



deputy chief of SISMI, the Italian military intelligence agency, met in March 1981 with the jailed head of the Comorra, Raffaele Cutolo, and made a deal to get Agca (who was being held in the same prison) to implicate the Soviet bloc in the shooting of the pope. Two months later the Turkish gunman, who previously denied having any accomplices, suddenly became "cooperative" and told investigators that the plot was hatched by Bulgarian intelligence officials. Musumeci, a member of the anti-Communist Propaganda 2 (P-2) "masonic" lodge, was arrested last fall on charges of setting up a secret "Super-SISMI" (Super-S) tied to organized crime and fascist groups.

The Many Lies of Ali Agca

During pre-trial interrogation, Agca's testimony went through more recantations and "refinements" than most cats have lives. And now every time he opens his mouth in court this convicted assassin, who faces a life sentence in Italy and a death sentence in Turkey, tells a different story. Tiring of the cat-and-mouse game, Judge Santiapichi last week asked in frustration, "How do I know which are the lies: the old version or the new?" The version we've been told to believe by the *New York Times* (10 June 1984), that pillar of establishment respectability which has been serving as a mouthpiece for terror "expert" Claire Sterling, is that "the Bulgarian secret services recruited the man who shot Pope John Paul II in 1981 in a plot to weaken the Solidarity movement in Poland." But now even the *Times* is bailing out. After four weeks of the trial, reporter John Tagliabue wrote a "news analysis" (22 June) noting that "Mr. Agca has, by his own hand, inflicted crucial damage on his credibility," that he "seems to gamble with the truth like a bargaining chip."

The problems for Sterling's "theory" only begin with the fact that Agca publicly threatened to assassinate the pope immediately after escaping from

Kremlin. The "Bulgarian connection" was launched by Sterling in a September 1982 *Reader's Digest* article as Soviet leader Brezhnev lay on his deathbed, soon to be succeeded by KGB head Andropov. And a quick glance at the dramatic personae in this elaborate production shows that the connections are primarily with the Turkish fascist right. Agca's reputed accomplices include:

- Omar Bagci, who set up a right-wing Turkish émigré organization in Switzerland; he delivered the Browning 9 mm. pistol which Agca used on his murder mission.

- Musa Serdar Celihi, the head of the "Grey Wolves," terrorist arm of the Turkish fascist National Action Party, in Frankfurt, West Germany; he supplied the cash for Agca's peregrinations in Europe in the months before the assassination attempt.

- Oral Celik, a "Grey Wolf" from Agca's hometown who arranged his escape from a Turkish maximum security prison in 1979; he was identified by Agca as the second gunman in St. Peter's Square on 13 May 1981.

- Bekir Celenk, according to Agca one of the heads of a reputed "Turkish Mafia" in Sofia, wanted on drug and arms smuggling charges in Italy and Turkey; he is the putative link to Bulgaria.

So Agca is tied to Grey Wolf Bagci, to Grey Wolf Celihi and Grey Wolf Celik, while Celenk—currently under surveillance in the Bulgarian capital—insists he never met the would-be papal assassin. Sterling & Co. would have us believe that Grey Wolf plus Grey Wolf

able cell (complete with a TV set) from Pope John Paul II himself, who forgave the assassin, Antonov was denied bail even though he never tried to flee the country; was held behind bars for months, transferred to house arrest because of physical and mental exhaustion, then thrown into jail again.

Sergei Antonov resembles nothing so much as a character in a 1930s Eric Ambler spy novel, an innocent accidentally caught in a grotesque web of intrigue. He is described as "thin and haggard" and "almost expressionless" as he stands with dignity in a cage in the Foro Italico listening to the interminable legal wrangling. Will he be thrown to the lions in this Cold War judicial circus? We demand that Antonov be freed at once and all charges be dropped against the three Bulgarians, against whom there is not a shred of evidence, only the absurd and totally unsubstantiated fabrications of the assassin, who has admitted to lying repeatedly and "playing a double game."

Examining magistrate Ilario Martella, who presented the 1,243-page indictment of Ali Agca's alleged confederates last October, made much of the gunman's ability to "remember" details of the Bulgarians' physical features and descriptions of their apartments. But in every case, the slightest examination exposes glaring contradictions:

- *Plots and plans:* Agca claimed a planning meeting took place on 10 May 1981 at Antonov's flat (described in detail) with his wife and daughter present to serve tea. But when Rositsa Antonova presented documentary

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Free Sergei Antonov, Bulgarian official framed up in anti-Soviet "disinformation" campaign.

Geronimo Pratt Speaks From San Quentin

America's foremost class-war prisoner, former Los Angeles Black Panther Party leader Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt, has been behind bars for 15 years, including *six in solitary*, for a crime he did not commit. America's monstrous, racist rulers, who relish incinerating black babies and an entire black neighborhood in Philadelphia, have mobilized their murderous resources to "neutralize," to crush or kill this black militant as they did the rest of his Panther comrades. But Pratt has survived.

He grew up in Klan-infested southern Louisiana. Given the lack of job opportunities Pratt joined the army at the age of 17, serving two tours of duty in Vietnam where he was a highly-decorated paratrooper. Like many veterans radicalized by the Vietnam War, Pratt returned to racist America and sought in the Panthers the vehicle through which he could place his experience at the service of the black liberation struggle.

Pratt immediately became a prime target for the FBI's "Counterintelligence Program" to exterminate black activists. Of the 293 COINTELPRO "operations" against black groups, 233 were against the Panthers. In the ensuing government terror campaign, Panther offices were smashed, hundreds railroaded to prison, and 38 Panthers mowed down in the streets. In the 4 December 1969 massive FBI/cop raid in Chicago, Panther leaders Mark Clark and Fred Hampton were murdered in their beds. Four days later they came for Pratt in L.A. In a pre-dawn raid, hundreds of LAPD Metro Squad and SWAT team commandos, armed with M-60 machine guns, tear gas launchers and dynamite, surrounded the Panther headquarters where Pratt was living. As helicopters circled overhead they subjected the house to a five-hour barrage. Due to his war wounds, Pratt was sleeping on the floor and survived, only to be arrested for "conspiracy to assault policemen"! The violent *police conspiracy* was so obvious that even an overwhelmingly white jury threw the charges out of court. However, Pratt was sent up on the more minor weapons charges.

While Pratt was in jail on these charges, the government—unable to kill this Panther militant in bed—decided to subject him to a "legal" lynching. Based

Victim of COINTELPRO Frame-Up—Free Former Black Panther Leader!



on the "testimony" of one Julio Butler, an LAPD agent and FBI informer who lied on the stand about his relation with these agencies, Pratt was framed up for the 1969 murder of a white Santa Monica schoolteacher. The government suppressed FBI wiretaps that would have shown Pratt to be 500 miles away at the time of the crime, visiting Panthers in Oakland. Recently, retired FBI special agent Wesley Swearingen, formerly assigned to the Los Angeles office, has come forward to say straight out: "Pratt was set up." Combined with evidence of the frame-up released by the government under the Freedom of Information Act, Pratt won a new evidentiary hearing in federal district court this past January; the judge's

decision is still pending.

The Panthers of the late 1960s were deeply committed to black liberation but they lacked a proletarian perspective to show them the road. They glorified the ghetto uprisings as a mass revolutionary onslaught that would liberate the black community from the "pig," requiring only their heroic example to extend and organize. Inspired by the heroic examples of Castro's Cuba and Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam fighting racist American imperialism abroad, the Panthers believed the black ghetto could be a base for guerrilla warfare against the American state. But against the concerted terror of that state they never had a chance. Under the withering repression of the bourgeois state the Panthers split: the Huey Newton wing (under the influence of the Communist Party) descending into sniveling reformism while the Eldridge Cleaver wing supported by Pratt expended its cadre in the dead end of "urban guerrillaism." Today, Newton and Bobby Seale are immersed in the same Democratic Party the black power movement once despised, while Cleaver turned to the sinister ultrarightist Moonie cult.

What is outstanding about Pratt is that he has maintained his dignity and remains unbroken and committed to the principles of black freedom which imbued the best fighters of his political generation. Barred from the prison library, Pratt nevertheless managed to read widely giving himself a university-level education. Throughout all his years behind bars, even from the hellhole of solitary, he has refused to seek parole because it would require an admission of guilt, and he has vigorously pursued every legal avenue to win his unconditional freedom and expose the FBI/LAPD frame-up which put him in chains.

Pratt's freedom must become the

cause of every enemy of racial oppression and every class-conscious worker in the U.S. and abroad. Drawing the lessons of his political generation is indispensable to forging an integrated revolutionary workers party that can smash this racist capitalist system once and for all. The Spartacist League is proud that through our press the silence of prison walls can be broken and the voice of this courageous black militant will be heard. The following interview with Pratt took place at San Quentin on March 13. SL central committee member Al Nelson conducted the interview for *WV*.

Nelson: Now, the hearing is over. What are your thoughts about what came out of the hearing in court?

Pratt: First of all, there was a lot of lying, deception, cover-up again. You had a lot of fear and intimidation that seemed to be coming from the counselors of the FBI who were trying to cover up what this one FBI [ex-agent] Swearingen, who had been in for a long time, had exposed. So they grouped together and developed a systematic attack or refutation of his testimony. It left it in the balance, whether he was telling the truth or whether all these dudes were lying.

The information came out in '76 via the Freedom of Information Act, all of this information from different angles showing that I couldn't have done this murder. And they continue to ignore it. They continue to stonewall and drag it on. I think that up to this point it's been very clear that what they've been doing, the government and their courts, is to continue to stretch out the lie of this criminalization. I'm not a criminal, never been a criminal, never consider myself a criminal. This *criminalization* process of the movement of the '60s that I come out of, right?

Airtel to SAC, Alusoy
RE: COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM
BLACK NATIONALIST-HATE GROUPS

nationalist activity, and interested in counterintelligence to coordinate this program. This Agent will be responsible for the periodic progress letters being requested. Agent working this type of case should participate in formulation of counterintelligence operations.

GOALS

For maximum effectiveness of the Counterintelligence Program, and to prevent wasted effort, long-range goals being set.

1. Prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups. In unity there is strength; that is no less valid for all its triteness. An coalition of black nationalist groups might be the step toward a real "Mao Mau" in America, the beginning of a true black revolution.

2. Prevent the rise of a "messiah" who would unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement. There might have been such a "messiah" in the party of the movement today.

All aspire to this position. He is less of a threat because of his age. He is a very real contender for this position should he abandon his supposed "obedience" to "white, liberal doctrine" (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism. He has the necessary charisma to be a real threat in this way.

3. Prevent violence on the part of black nationalist groups. This is of primary importance to the success of our program.



COINTELPRO memo (left) targeted Panthers for assassination and frame-ups. Chicago Panther leader Fred Hampton was murdered in his bed by massive cop/FBI onslaught in 1969.

Nelson: Yes. It was part of the government's COINTEL Program, and it became public and it was known then explicitly that the FBI had a whole program to hush up the Black Panther Party and so-called "neutralize" its principal leaders, like yourself.

Pratt: What does "neutralize" mean? You know what I am saying? It means to kill. In that situation they mean to kill you, if they can't get you run out of the country, straight up kill you.

Nelson: We were very concerned ourselves about what you described as the attempt to criminalize political organizations. The post-Watergate reforms didn't put to rest COINTELPRO police-state methods. Now these methods have been given a more open and sinister expression by the attempts of the Reagan administration to criminalize political organizations. We recently won an important victory for democratic rights in a successful settlement in our suit against the FBI.

Pratt: It means a lot to every prisoner of war who is victimized out of that war of the '60s, the '70s, every political prisoner.

Nelson: In our publicity about these new FBI Domestic Security/Terrorism Guidelines, we often used the example of the Black Panther Party, referring to these new guidelines as "the new McCarthyism with a drawn gun." It was with the Panthers in mind that we determined to challenge these new FBI guidelines that make all political dissent some kind of "terrorism."

Pratt: Very much needed.

Louisiana "Klan Country"

Nelson: Let's talk some about your background. You said you're from Louisiana.

Pratt: I'm from Africa by way of Louisiana.

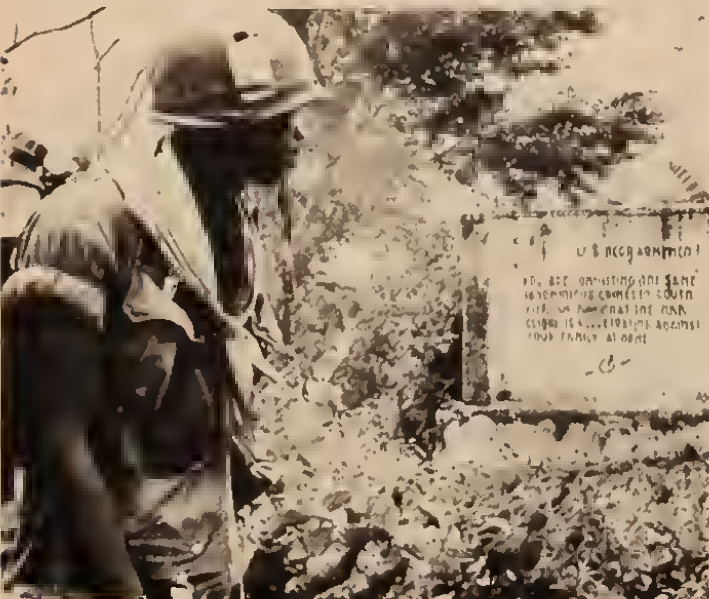
Nelson: It's a very racist Klan-infested area, Louisiana. What were some of your experiences growing up?

Pratt: The Klan killed a friend of mine. I think we were about nine or ten, swimming in the Atchafalaya River. See, I was born and raised on the Atchafalaya River in the town they call Morgan City, 50 miles from the Gulf of Mexico in the swamplands of the Mississippi delta.

First time I went to jail was for speaking to a white woman, first time I ever saw the inside of a jail. I was about 11 or 12. Something, again, I didn't even do because I grew up down there. I knew the rules.

So you're talking about experience. I've seen things firsthand. My brother was attacked by the Klan. We were attacked by the Klan three or four years later while we were out "trick-or-treating" one day. Until this day my brother has—he suffers from blackouts and migraine headaches from the beating that he got that night. My whole family was right there to repel that situation or he might have been killed. We've been in a lot of situations in the South, confrontation with the Klan. I grew up in that situation.

When people refer to the South they



Vietnam. Sign reads, "U.S. Negro Army men! You are committing the same ignominious crimes in South Vietnam that the KKK clique is perpetrating against your family at home."



Black Panther Party defended right to armed self-defense, protested gun control bill in Sacramento, May 1967.

automatically say, "It's the racist South." That's true, but since I have been out of the South it seems like the racism out here is far more lethal, it's far more difficult to deal with. Down there it's more straight up. You know what's happening, and they attack you, you attack them, you have a right to. Nobody blames you. You know the law can come with their laws and their manipulations, but the rules seemed to be more understandable.

I grew up in a very tightly knit family, you know. But the militancy was always there in me and I've been rebelling against those evils all throughout my life. That feeling of community that you grow up in, you go out and you catch 50 catfish, you come back. Everybody in the community was going to eat catfish.

Nelson: Did you know about the Deacons for Defense and Justice? We ourselves publicized and supported the Deacons for Defense and Justice when they were first formed in '64-'65 because we supported the right of organized, armed self-defense. And at that time, and now, we are somewhat unique in that respect.

Pratt: Sure. They were our heroes. The biggest influence in that area had come from the Marcus Garvey movement in the '20s. You've always had a lot of militancy in that area where I'm from. You got the Indians, you got the Africans, the mulattos, you got the mestizos, you got the Creoles, the Cajuns. You got a lot of diverse situations and a lot of ways it's been dealt with throughout history.

And family members, they were all very touched by the Garvey movement and it had still existed, the aftermath of that, even though technically—the FBI did Garvey the same way they did the

Panthers and are doing people today with the same programs. Strangely enough, started by J. Edgar Hoover himself when he was about 20-something years old, against Garvey.

Nelson: As a young man in those days, were you influenced by the speeches and ideas of Malcolm X?

Pratt: Yes, very much so. But when I was talking about Garvey, I was talking

Detroit, July 1967: National Guard tanks and 82nd Airborne fresh from Vietnam sent in to crush black ghetto explosion.



about the older generation. When you are with the older people you listen to them talking, and you would hear something about the African Blood Brotherhood, every now and then. You would hear about the Liberty Party every now and then. Also, the Maroons [descendants of escaped black slaves]. The Deacons were well-loved, and it was a situation that really nurtured me in a very nationalistic sense in which I'm criticized a lot.

I call myself Jaga, not Pratt, right? Pratt is the alias that's on me. The Jaga people never submitted to slavery. They preferred to die. They preferred to attack—you know, sacrifice themselves to death rather than submit to slavery. And this trend is consistent throughout our history, but it's distorted by the major media, by the black bourgeoisie and media hoth. historians, who are basically ignorant of the truth, who do not go and do scientific research....

Nelson: I don't think it's so much a question of ignorance as the attempts by all these you refer to, to discourage independent political struggle on the part of working people and black people. That's how we see it. Malcolm X criticized the "respectable" black leaders for deceiving people with their views of pressuring the government.

Pratt: Yes. You have those problems too. I look at that as non-antagonistic

contradictions that can be struggled with through a non-antagonistic criticism/self-criticism situation.

But when you have a long trend of a historical pattern that starts before Jamestown... And we have actual examples from archives, i.e., of African prisoners of war in 1525-1526, how long after Columbus is supposed to have discovered this place? They tried to enslave them up near the Pedee River, in what is now called South Carolina. They rebelled, ran the Spanish back to Haiti, back to Hispaniola, and the POWs were accepted by the native peoples here, probably early Tuscarora.

Now, here are 100 Africans, POWs captured in war way back in the early 1500s, as opposed to 20 Christianized Negroes in 1619 in Jamestown, Virginia nearly 100 years later. And that's where, according to shallow historians, our history is supposed to begin. It's not supposed to begin with any militancy. Our history has been that of very militant stands and trends. That's why I'm not ashamed of anything I have done. I'm proud of it, in fighting against these injustices. For I am a continuation of that spirit and legacy....

Blacks and the Vietnam War

Nelson: The Vietnam War had a strong impact in the black movement in this country. Muhammad Ali said, "No Viet Cong ever called me a nigger." Many Vietnam vets, I understand, also joined the Panthers. What was the war's impact on your own political development?

Pratt: Tremendous. It's hard to find a place to begin.

Nelson: I understand that at one point in 1967 you were part of the troops that were sent into Detroit, to quell the riots.

That itself must have been the most extreme kind of contradiction.

Pratt: Yes. I was a sergeant and I had done the year over there [Vietnam] that was required. And they sent us back, but before we were sent back they had the situation in Detroit. And they called the paratroopers in to quell it because the National Guard couldn't do it. It just so happened that the paratrooper unit they sent out, our unit, were something like 60-70 percent black and quite—immediately they pulled us out of there. We stayed there about two weeks.

Nelson: What was the reaction of yourself and other black soldiers in that situation?

Pratt: It was almost like R&R. In my platoon everyone was pretty supportive of the movements that were going on, very understanding. See, you have to understand we were nothing but street people, country people in uniform. We were following everything just as closely as anyone else during that time, and in the position to help do things about it, you know. That's why we were pulled out of Detroit quick. They claimed quite a few weapons and munitions were stolen, and a lot of suspicion occurred, and some National Guard troops were shot by army weapons, and they couldn't figure out where they were coming from, the troopers or the rioters.

continued on page 8

Pratt...

(continued from page 7)

So it was a lot of suspicion, a lot of investigation.

Shortly thereafter we were sent against our will back to Vietnam during the height of the Tet Offensive, right in the middle of it when the Marines were pinned down in Hue. We had to go and save them, then march down the street, you know, like we took over the city. It was a very manipulated situation, since the North Vietnamese Army was already withdrawing when we arrived.

Nelson: You were a much-decorated Vietnam veteran, I understand, including two purple hearts, two bronze stars, one silver star, three combat infantry badges, a soldier's medal and a master paratrooper, etc., so you must have seen a lot of very heavy fighting yourself.

Pratt: Yes. We were always in what was called the boondocks, right? And it was always contact. Not every day. Sometimes it would last for two and three days at a time. Sometimes it would go, I don't think no longer than four days without some kind of fire. So it was constant.

Nelson: The contradiction of fighting in Vietnam and then coming home to a situation where there was such continuous and deep racism in this country



8 December 1969: 300 cops assault L.A. Panther headquarters (left). Pratt (right, in 1971) was targeted for "neutralization."



for the summer. And I drove her back to Los Angeles, and it was with the intention of coming back.

I never joined the Panther Party. I was going to enroll in school in the South. I never intended to enroll in school here. But the night I came—I'm going through Watts to see a friend of mine, who I had known in D.C. And I saw the police had some blacks, a whole family straddled against the car and a helicopter going overhead with a light, a big bull-light. And right away I had a Vietnam flashback. It was just like Vietnam, you know? And seemed like everything I would see, every corner I

But I'll tell you one of the main things that really turned my head. I was standing on campus at the dormitory, and Bunchy and some Panthers would come up, and some Muslim members and stuff. There was a lot of activity during those days. And I had this car. I would let them use the car for community programs. We wanted to do things and be active in the community, right? We were students. And we started a free clothing program. This is during the time we came up with the idea of the free breakfast program, but that didn't materialize until later. Then we started free ride programs for old people, and making some positive contributions, and the feeling was beautiful.

Then all of a sudden, LAPD started jacking people up, whipping people, shot a brother with his hands cuffed behind his back. Understand what I'm saying? These things are very provocative. And I'm an able-bodied member of the African race who is being attacked. So therefore I'm their soldier.

Nelson: The Panthers were the best expression of the black power movement in this country, who in a contradictory fashion fought to remain independent of the bourgeois establishment. What do you see as the legacy of the Panthers? For instance, I understand that there was a great deal of discussion about the question of the lumpenproletariat versus an orientation toward the organized working class.

Pratt: For the first part, we did have a policy of not fraternizing or communicating with the government, because they had a program of going around co-opting or buying off movements, and we were offered quite a few million dollars, quite a few, by various agencies from the federal government. And we refused to talk to them. I remember one day I was in the office with Eldridge and two of them came in. They offered \$20 million for a program under the guise—now this is how they would get the money to us—of community programs, right? And Eldridge immediately jumped up and kicked them out of the office.

We had a policy of not doing that. In fact, until this day I have never talked to the FBI. This is one of the main things that they like to throw in my face all the time. I'm proud of it. They used to say that the reason why I'm still on their active index file, even though I've been in prison all these years, and I don't have

any reason to talk to them, is because I view them as my enemy. So that policy still holds true with me.

Nelson: What are some of the political issues that were heavily debated within the Panthers?

Pratt: Well, the one you just mentioned, the problem that we had is that basically the movement was comprised of people who had come from the, what you would call the downtrodden sectors of the cities, or the country boys out of the swamps, like me, who had different views, or who viewed it that if you work "within the system," you're helping this dude make money off of you, and hadn't had too much refined understanding of this.

But we learned through study that this element or this strata of society was called lumpen, and so we began to identify with the lumpen as being the most advanced sector of our society, and the most able-bodied to set the spark that would start the prairie fire that would wake the sleeping masses, you know?

Nelson: Yes, I'm familiar with it.

Pratt: Erase all the apathy and get our people to understand the situation that we were in. We can get into a lot of discussion about Fanon—his book *Wretched of the Earth* was like a bible to us. Mao Tse-tung, and his works on that subject, Marx, Nkrumah, Cabral. It covers a lot. And we had a lot of ideological struggle about this.

Nelson: Were there those who argued for an orientation towards the organized working class?

Pratt: This was the overwhelming view. We couldn't deny that. We couldn't overlook that. Stevie Wonder could see that, you know. And it's very clear that the working class is the most dynamic thing in society, if you call it that. Back then it was largely debated. Always the argument would go to the support of the fact that the working class was the most important class in society. In other words, the lumpen could go either way. You can turn a snitch, or you can turn to one of the best fighters and patriotic fighters for the movement there is.

The sisters were very dynamic, in that our sisters were very progressive Panther sisters, especially in fighting and correcting macho attitudes, etc. When I say "Panther," I don't like to confine that because the movement was broad, way broader than the Panther Party.



12 December 1969: Thousands of demonstrators jam L.A. Hall of Justice demanding freedom for Pratt and other Panther leaders arrested in cop seige.

must have been a heavy influence on a lot of your generation, and particularly black men.

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

During the second tour I was standing on a bunker right outside of Hue, in a town called Phu Bai when Martin Luther King was killed. And a friend of mine, Sergeant Brown was sitting over there. He was crying and I was standing on the bunker overlooking this old cathedral that had been bombed—been there since the 1400s, just the foundation—when we got the news. That was right before I left the army.

Black Panthers in Los Angeles

Nelson: When you left the army you eventually found your way to Los Angeles. Is that when you became a supporter of the Black Panther Party?

Pratt: No. I got out of the army and went back home to Louisiana. My sister was going to college at USC [University of Southern California]. She was home

would turn in Los Angeles was pathetic.

I began to have discussions with brothers and sisters that I would meet about this. Eventually, my sister talked me into enrolling in UCLA, which I did, and the discussions grew. I met Bunchy Carter who was a Panther, but I never did join. After Bunchy, a highly revered Black Liberation Movement leader and founder of the Los Angeles Black Panther Party, was assassinated he left a tape. And on the tape he suggested that if anything happened to him—he had suspected because the feds had indicated that they would kill him—that I would be the best person to take his place in the organization. I didn't find this out until a month later Bobby Seale called me up to Oakland and played the tape for me. And I first refused, because I wasn't intending to do that. But I went back to Los Angeles, and I think Kathleen Cleaver called. She came down and we talked. And it wasn't until a few months later when Bobby and Eldridge came to talk at the college.

I would be with them, but I would never say, "Okay, I'll take this position." But I finally did because of the cold stuff that the police were doing to the remnants of the party in Los Angeles. And when I saw that I could be effective, I could do some good.... I had no real intentions of staying with the party that long, or joining the party. You know, making a commitment for that long.

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and we supported each other. We were active participants in the struggle, and so we were very aware of the infighting, such as the Black Panther Party vs. "US" [the L.A. black nationalist group headed by Ron Karenga] and there was a lot of effort to resolve those differences and struggle together in unity.

Nelson: If you look at the left these days and think back on those years you're describing, it's striking how far to the right the existing left organizations have gone. Many of the groups—at least of those who still remain—who used to support the victory of the NLF in Vietnam, now say in Central America, "No more Vietnams!" We considered that Vietnam was a victory for the whole working class, but now a lot of the groups, under pressure of Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive, want to stay away from the issue of revolution. For instance, we think that a military victory of the rebels in El Salvador would open the road to socialist struggle.

What are your views on the question of the Vietnam Revolution and military victory for the leftist rebels in El Salvador today?

Pratt: When I'm asked questions about things that have been going on since I've been in... these prison camps, I have a tendency to hesitate because I was out there in the movement when we were supporting a lot of political prisoners in here, and I know how alienated one can get in these situations, however much you read. But it's still clear, I'm still principled in that the revolutionary should always win.

I've been trying to create dialogue with people as much as I can, with people from your organization and trying to get understanding about what's happening out there, at the same time trying to deal with the heavy burden of my present situation. It's not easy, you know. That's why I don't want to pretend to be any good spokesman about the situation.

Nelson: Just asking your personal views.

Pratt: I support the revolutionaries, those who are moving against exploitation, against oppression, against man's inhumanity to man. And usually the United States, from the best evidence I've always known, is behind those kind of exploitations and oppressions of people of the lower classes especially, and of all classes.

Nelson: Since the Panthers were repressed by the state there has been no organization to take its place. Instead, it seems that for every new black face in a high place, like Tom Bradley or Coleman Young or Harold Washington, there has been a corresponding reversal of even the small gains of the 1960s. Jesse Jackson simply hustled black votes for Mondale, who didn't even pretend to stand for black rights. What are your opinions on the current crop of so-called "respectable" black leaders?



Detroit, 1979:
Labor/black mobilization to stop Klan. Black workers will be in vanguard of American socialist revolution.

Pratt: You cover a lot. Old Bradley. I think that what you have is the realization of the very predictions that Fanon made, that Nkrumah and others made. What you have is a neocolonialist situation where you have a new kind of colonialism, like Du Bois used to talk about, the 10 percent of the Negroes who would be miseducated and their minds manipulated in order to support the existing structure at the sacrifice of the movement, you know.

Nelson: There is a program to keep the struggle for black liberation confined to the Democratic Party and subordinate to the government, which has been a dead end for black people.

Pratt: It is. I know Jackson, when he would come to the Panthers. I'm still an old disciple of Malik El-Shahazz, Malcolm, when it comes to criticizing people in the movement openly. Like Malcolm would say, we should discuss these things in the closet. But it's a problem in the entire movement throughout our history. That's why I talked about the history of what I would call the black bourgeoisie's misrepresentation of history.

Nelson: Well, the strong point of the Black Panthers, at least as we saw it, in those days was its arguments against what used to be called porkchop nationalism, that is, against the ethnic reformism of supporting the Democratic Party.

Pratt: Right. We didn't believe in the electoral process, period, because of gerrymander, because of a lot of reasons. When we ran Kathleen [Cleaver] for something, ran Eldridge [Cleaver] for president, it was part of our movement, to get issues across to the people.

Nelson: Well, as you know, Edwin Meese has now become U.S. Attorney General. He had a big hand in setting up the Los Angeles PD's "Black Squad" which targeted the Panthers for destruction. Are you at all familiar with the case

of Lauren Mozee and Ray Palmiero, those two phone workers?

Pratt: I read about the situation.

Nelson: They were themselves the victims of collusion between the police and FBI because of her background in the Panthers. It took militant integrated working-class struggle to keep those two out of jail. Do you think the strategy could be important for your struggle for freedom?

Pratt: Working people, working-class people, they can effect change when organized quicker than anything and more justifiably than anything that I know of. So, sure, that's always effective, and in fact, the most effective tool, demonstrations, protests and what not. And I'm sure quite a few people are being educated by continued government harassments and oppression.

I wanted to mention, we didn't talk about the vast reservoir of rats, snitches and agents that were infiltrated into the movement back in the '60s, you know, all aspects of the movement. There's thousands of them. They're out there killing people. They're pushing drugs. They have a license to do these things because they had worked with the government before. And these people are continuing to destroy the inner structure of the black community, and I don't see too much written about it, and I don't see too much exposure on them. In Los Angeles alone there were 5,000 under the Ghetto Informant Program; 5,000, the GIP program; 5,000 in Los Angeles alone against the Panthers and US, and other progressive organizations.

Nelson: One of the most insidious aspects of these new FBI guidelines is the ability, this time legally, to infiltrate, with these kinds of agents, political organizations. That's one of the reasons we filed the court suit—the outcome of which declared that Marxists are not terrorists, we thought it was very important to get that across.

Edmund Perry...

(continued from page 12)

carrying an American flag-covered coffin. As on Tuesday, the Guardian Angels acted openly as a police auxiliary, while the uniformed cops kept a discreet distance. At the stationhouse of killer cop Van Houten, Mason addressed the "brothers in blue." The "protest" ended in an obscene spectacle as the crowd was told to get down on their knees and pray in front of the smirking cops, pleading for the police to "respect us in spite of the color of our skin."

The Perry family will make its grief and anger heard. All power to them. But the black Democrats, offering themselves up as Harlem's "alternative" to Koch, carry out their cruel hoax. The spectacle of the black capitalist pawns vying to prove they can best control America's ghettos for the ruling class

was carried to its grotesque conclusion in the Philadelphia MOVE massacre where black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode approved the bombing of black babies and vowed "I would do it again."

The "BEOs" are against struggle: last month Vernon Mason led anti-apartheid protesters away from their sit-in at Columbia University to fill the church for a press conference announcing his campaign for district attorney. Now he channels the righteous anger of Harlem into bourgeois electoralism and impotent "vigils." Having a black as top prosecutor will no more protect black people than having a black top cop, Benjamin Ward, has "controlled" the killer cops' murderous rampage. Spoilers like Herman "Denny" Farrell play ethnic politics, nothing but pawns in racist pig Ed Koch's game. As Malcolm X said, "You put the Democrats first and the Democrats put you last."

In last year's presidential elections, the reformist left covered up for Jesse Jackson and for loser Mondale. Now, coming into the New York mayoral

race, they're the "radical" cover for the Harlem Democrats' anti-Koch campaign. The Communist Party's legal-defense group, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, calls for fighting police brutality with a civilian review board—these bodies at best function as a safety valve, and are manifestly inadequate to stop rampaging cop terror. And like the rest, a leaflet handed out at the Friday vigil by the Marxist-Leninist Party, U.S.A., criticized the cops, but had not a word to say against the Democrats.

While the Democrats seek to corral blacks into their electoralist shell game, we communists participate in elections as a platform from which to rally the mass organizations of the working class and the oppressed, in the plants and on the streets, in a powerful mobilization of social power! The transit worker brothers from the Local 100 "Committee for a Fighting TWU" are calling on their union, the powerhouse of NYC labor, to join with all city unions in a mass rally at City Hall against Koch's killer cops.

Pratt: Yes, I understand. At one of the hearings I was called a "terrorist" by the attorney general. It's just the same old propaganda game—like they used to redbait everybody, communists under every rock. I think it's growing weak on them, weaker and weaker. They are the highest terrorists in the world, and I think it's becoming clear to people.

Nelson: In fact, that point has been made in our publications, that the government is resorting to these heavy-duty regulations precisely because they don't have the support of wide sections of the population.

Pratt: I was a terrorist in Vietnam. Spread a lot of terror.

Nelson: They don't count that.

Pratt: A lot of terror.

[Prison guard states interview must end.]

Nelson: If there was something you wanted to say, just in conclusion....

Pratt: We didn't talk about the situation in South Africa and it's really a situation that upsets me. You know, how we were real active in the '60s with training brothers and sending them to Africa, and travels that I did over there. I think it's good that it's finally hitting the media, but I think it should be more direct action. I think it should be politicized more, dealt with more. And I think parallels should be drawn, more parallels to this country, and the situation in South Africa. And I think it would be a very good rallying point and educational tool, education situation for all strata of society, here and abroad.

I want to mention Nelson Mandela because he inspired me long before I was ever incarcerated. I didn't know if I was going to wind up dead, in prison, or run out of the country. I knew it was going to be one of those three. And he inspired us back then, and he's still in prison today, Brother Nelson Mandela. And his wife is going through these same situations that my wife is going through, out there with the children. It's so many parallels, you know, and not just the South Africa/San Quentin parallel, but throughout the class situation, how the workers are being very effective over there and causing a lot of change.... And due to lack of time, I'll just suggest to your readers Brother Walter Rodney's book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, in order that they may obtain deeper dimensions in understanding the catastrophic famine ..

Nelson: This just opens up a whole interesting area of discussion which I wish we had more time to get into.

Pratt: I'd like to really thank the Spartacist League for their support. And I have been thanking people so much. Makes me think of an old comrade brother, very venerated, George Jackson, when he was trying to express gratitude in his letters. And it's not easy to do because you feel it so deeply. I'm going to continue doing what little and what more I can do. ■

Such a show of force would electrify decent people in this city who have had more than enough of Koch's racist rampaging cossacks.

Gilted young Edmund Perry was admired as a ray of hope for black youth in ghettos where half can't find a job and two-thirds drop out of the hellish schools. But the .38 police slug that cut him down gives the lie to the modern-day Booker T. Washingtons whose stock-in-trade is the myth that any black person can "make it" in racist capitalist America if he really tries. To the racist rulers who burned out Philadelphia homeowners in the MOVE massacre, their lives and property were cheap because they are black. We say: Break the stranglehold of the two capitalist parties—for a multiracial vanguard party to lead the struggle to smash the whole racist, capitalist system! We will not forget Edmund Perry nor those responsible for his death. Avenge Edmund Perry, Michael Stewart, Eleanor Bumpurs! Black liberation through socialist revolution! ■

Thinks He's Christ...

(continued from page 5)

proof that neither she nor her daughter were even in Italy at the time, Agea "refined" his story, admitting that he had never been in Antonov's apartment at all. At another point the killer claimed the Bulgarians had hired him to kill Solidarność leader Walesa during a trip to Rome. Martella dutifully "investigated" this canard, but had to abandon it when Agea retracted the whole story a few months later.

• **Another Bulgarian mole:** Agea described a mole on Vassilev's cheek, which Sterling calls "barely visible," supposedly proof they had met. But the mole is clearly visible in Vassilev's passport photo, which was shown to Martella when he visited Sofia. Agea described Aivasov as shorter than Vassilev, yet the latter is a head taller than the former. Recently Agea claimed that the mysterious Soviet diplomat who supposedly put up more than \$1 million to rub out the pope went under the name of "Milenkov or Malenkov." Earlier, however, the trigger man had identified "Malenkov" as a *Bulgarian* spy who allegedly introduced him to a Soviet attaché in Teheran.

So how *did* Agea get the details that so impressed Magistrate Martella, such as the description of Antonov's apartment? In a detailed four-part investigation of the "Bulgarian connection" (*Washington Post*, 14-17 October 1984) correspondent Michael Dobbs has documented how in his jail cell Agea had access to numerous magazines, newspapers and TV news which had already publicized much of this information. And whatever "facts" he didn't read could have been supplemented by coaching, either directly by intelligence agents who visited the prison on several occasions or through "Super-S" underworld connections on the inside. The Turkish gunman even wrote a letter to the U.S. military attaché in Rome, in August 1983, saying "You told me to talk, and I talked" and suggesting how they could blame then Soviet leader Yuri Andropov for the attempted assassination. But while Agea's undocumented charges are enough to hold Antonov behind bars and stage a giant show trial, this letter is simply dismissed by the prosecution as a joke.

Agea's testimony has repeatedly been produced on cue from his interrogators. So when the presiding judge sought to calm the tumultuous court proceedings last week, asking defense lawyers for patience ("*pazienza*" in Italian), the convicted killer responded, "Yes, Dr. Francesco Pazienza." Asked what he meant, Agea replied, "I met Francesco Pazienza. He asked me to collaborate.... He promised me freedom and a

French passport." Pazienza is a former top aide to the deputy director of SISMI and a member of the sinister P-2 lodge. He has also been connected to the "suicide" of Roberto Calvi, former head of the bankrupt Banco Ambrosiano, responsible for the disappearance of more than \$4 billion in Vatican funds, reportedly channeled to Polish Solidarność and Latin American death squads. When the Rome courtroom exploded in laughter at Agea's declaration, the judge suspended the proceedings—this was getting too deep.

The Bulgarian Concoction

Occasional frictions between the capitalist press and the capitalist government should not obscure how the "Fourth Estate" regularly serves as a mouthpiece for its imperialist masters. And the story of the "Bulgarian connection" is a textbook case of journalistic prostitution. Not only notoriously anti-Communist outfits but the most "authoritative" news media have lent their name and services to this classic disinformation operation. Even before the ink was dry on Claire Sterling's *Reader's Digest* piece that launched the "pope plot" ploy, on 21 September 1982 NBC's Marvin Kalb aired a lurid "documentary" announced with full-page ads blaring, "Did the Russians Plot to Kill the Pope?" *CovertAction Information Bulletin* (Spring-Summer 1983) did an analysis of the most egregious errors in Kalb's broadcast showing: 10 cases of pure innuendo, 11 inferences based on no known evidence, 13 items of pure opinion or speculation, 16 conclusions based on ignoring facts, 19 deceptive statements based on suppressing facts, and 6 direct "misstatements of fact." NBC's consultant for this blatant manipulation? Claire Sterling.

Most persistent in peddling Sterling's Bulgarian concoction has been that self-proclaimed paragon of "objectivity," the nation's newspaper of record, the *New York Times*. Shortly after General Haig announced that under the new Reagan administration, terrorism would replace human rights as Washington's main concern, the *Times Magazine* (1 March 1981) published a cover story by Sterling on "Terrorism: Tracing the International Network" claiming to show that "the Soviet Union and its surrogates" have set up "a worldwide terror network aimed at the destabilization of Western Democratic society." And they have kept up a steady stream of Reaganite "terror" propaganda ever since. Last year the *Times* (27 October 1984) found it fit to print a piece on "Agea's Other Story: The Plot to Kill Walesa"—a year after Agea had retracted his story. The by-line: Claire Sterling. And who should co-author the *Times* article on the opening of the "Bulgarian connection" trial last month? Claire Sterling, of course. Sort of like having Joseph Goebbels cover



Pioneer of Claire Sterling's "Big Lie" techniques—Nazis' Goebbels at the Reichstag fire show trial, Leipzig, 1933.

the Reichstag fire trial.

There is a connection here, all right: a network of right-wing Reaganite think-tankers fanning the anti-Soviet flames with a concerted campaign of speculation, leaks and outright lies. Oddly enough, and much to Sterling's chagrin, the CIA has taken up the cudgels against the "Bulgarian connection." The March-April 1984 issue of the Agency's house organ *Problems of Communism* printed a review by "veteran" OSS and CIA man William Hood of two books on the "pope plot": Claire Sterling's *The Time of Assassins* and Paul Henze's *The Plot to Kill the Pope*. (Henze is the former CIA station chief in Ankara, Turkey.) Hood's article, appropriately titled "Unlikely Conspiracy," pokes numerous holes in her "theory." To wit: (1) If the KGB really wanted to bump off the pope, why would they choose Agea, Turkey's most notorious terrorist, whose description was on file with Interpol? (2) Why would his Soviet "controls" let Agea galavant around Rome, including repeated "reconnaissance" forays with Bulgarian officials who would presumably be watched by Italian counterespionage? (3) Why didn't they arrange to have Agea conveniently eliminated before he could spill the beans? (4) Why would the KGB and the Bulgarian Darzhavna Sigurnost allow Antonov to remain in Rome for months after Agea's arrest? If Sterling were right, the KGB would have to be run by Inspector Clouseau!

The Company's refusal to buy the "KGB pope plot" has enraged important sectors of the Reagan establishment in Washington today, including New Right-wingers, Catholic ultra-conservatives, *Commentary* Zionists and *New Republic* Cold War liberals. Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser under the Democratic Carter administration, fumes that "senior officials in the C.I.A. were unwitting or in some cases, perhaps, even witting tools" of a sinister Soviet campaign to discredit the "Bulgarian connection." And former presidential adviser/flack William Safire has been bellowing for years that something's rotten in the state of Virginia. Shades of James Jesus Angleton, the CIA *éminence grise*, who was obsessed with the notion that Langley is riddled with KGB moles (and also called the Sino-Soviet split a "hoax"). But, somehow, we doubt that the CIA has gone "soft on communism." Perhaps they've been caught too many times in the past believing their own psy-war propaganda.

Behind the "Bulgarian connection" media hype is the deadly campaign by Reagan & Co. to mobilize American public opinion behind their anti-Soviet war drive. What better demonstration that the Soviet Union is the "source of all evil," especially for hundreds of millions of Catholics around the world, than to find a Kremlin hand in the attempt to assassinate the pope? That

mouthpiece of American finance capital, the *Wall Street Journal* (22 December 1982), ran an editorial on "Andropov as Henry II," alluding to the murder of Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury in 1170:

"Italian Defense Minister Lelio Lagorio, a Socialist, has likened Bulgarian complicity in the shooting of Pope John Paul II to an act of war. Those are strong words, and while nobody thinks it likely or even very desirable that Italy or the rest of the West should embark on an armed assault against Bulgaria and the East bloc, Mr. Lagorio has uttered an important truth."

How comforting—they say they're not going to launch World War III over their phony "KGB pope plot."

Yet the whole purpose of this exercise is to create a war psychosis. And they're not spending billions of dollars on all those shiny missiles just to decorate a future Smithsonian exhibit on "arms control." The real, *nuclear* terrorists are sitting in the White House and the Pentagon. Only the U.S. has ever used atomic bombs for war, and both Republicans and Democrats yearn for the days when the United States had a nuclear monopoly so they could dictate their terms. Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade carried over into Reagan's anti-Soviet "terrorism" campaign, all in the name of the anti-Soviet war drive. The gang in power in Washington today wants to replay the Cuban missile crisis, only this time they're going to make the "Russkies" (and the Cubans and the Nicaraguans) "cry uncle." They think.

Ali Agea and Ronald Reagan: two anti-Soviet nuts, both of them killers, both of them obsessed with the end of the world. But one of them is only an instrument of sinister powers, while the other has his finger on the button. When Hitler staged his show trial of Bulgarian Communist leader Dimitrov, accusing him of burning down the German parliament, it was a prelude to the Anti-Comintern Pact and ultimately World War II. The result: a global holocaust that produced 50 million dead. Behind this "Bulgarian connection" is the spectre of nuclear Armageddon that could spell curtains for all of humanity. ■

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Courts Are Bosses' Tool

UAL Workers Shafted

When the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) ended its 29-day strike against United Airlines, it wasn't the union-busting, PATCO-style outcome that UAL boss Richard Ferris was looking for but it was a real defeat for labor. The pilots are saddled with a two-tier wage system under which new-hires will be paid barely half what veteran pilots make. And while returning ALPA members headed back to their old jobs, those workers who respected ALPA's picket lines are getting the shaft. Ferris is adamantly refusing to take back the 570 pilot trainees who refused to scab. Meanwhile, the Association of Flight Attendants, which called on its ranks to respect the picket lines, returns with *no contract* and its members threatened with layoffs and/or forced transfers to accommodate newly hired scabs. ALPA broke its pledge not to return to work unless the jobs of these workers were guaranteed; instead, it left it up to the labor-hating capitalist courts to decide these issues, as well as the question of "superseniority" for scab pilots. It's shaping up as a particularly dirty deal, with the bosses indicating they'll go soft on ALPA while throwing the book at those who supported them.

But first prize for backstabbing goes

to scabherd William Winpisinger of the Machinists union. Had the strategic IAM respected the pilots' picket lines, United would quickly have been brought to its knees. But "Wimpy" all but ordered his members to strikebreak, and the machinists scabbed en masse. In contrast, the majority of the flight attendants, who are far less skilled and therefore far more vulnerable than the machinists, honored the picket lines. And the pilot trainees, taken on by United as a strikebreaking force a few months before the contract expired, refused almost to a man to scab. If the United pilots didn't end up like PATCO, it was in no small measure due to the courage of these trainees who have no union protection. Forced to curtail its services drastically, the company was faced with an expensive strike and was hurting particularly on its profitable Hawaii run. The stah in the back to the trainees and flight attendants is even worse than accepting the divisive two-tier scheme; should these workers be victimized, it will make union solidarity that much more difficult in an industry where there's been precious little of it.

Crying poverty, Ferris demanded two-tier wages to keep United "compe-

titive." Yet the strike was barely over when he announced the company's plan to buy Hertz, the largest car rental company in the world, for \$587 million. Earlier this spring United took over Pan Am's Pacific routes for another \$750 million. Ferris candidly stated that the buy-out of Hertz would put only a "small dent" in United's available cash (*New York Times*, 19 June). After selling off a few hotels and "revising" (ripping off) its "overfunded" employee pension fund UAL will have a sweet \$3 billion to play its monopoly acquisitions game.

Despite United's obvious wealth, ALPA's leadership admitted defeat before the battle was on by accepting the "two-tier" pact out of concern for the company's competitiveness. Now these bureaucrats have thrown those principled unionists who honored the picket lines upon the none-too-tender mercies of the capitalist courts. But the government and its courts are not neutral—they are the instruments of the bosses. It was Reagan and the government whose smashing of PATCO spearheaded the whole union-busting drive. The union bureaucrats who refused to shut down the airports to defend the air traffic controllers justified it by claiming PATCO's strike was "illegal." In turn, the scoundrel Winpisinger justified his scabbing on the United pilots by claiming the no-strike clause made it "illegal" for the mechanics to honor ALPA's lines.

Labor has never won a lasting victory in the courtrooms of the class enemy. Kowtowing to the bosses' law has meant one defeat after another in the face of the capitalists' divide-and-



WV Photo

Flight attendants backed ALPA, now shafted by union tops.

conquer tactics. Now the airline industry threatens to become an open shop. The second largest airline is now the newly formed Texas Air/TWA combine, run by labor-hater Frank Lorenzo, who busted the unions at Continental. It's hardly a secret that Lorenzo's next target will be the unions at TWA. The bosses are playing hardball—it's high time that labor did too if it wants to break the string of lost strikes, broken contracts and busted unions. For mass picket lines that no one dares cross! Dump the Winpisingers and the scabherding traitors! For a class-struggle leadership in the unions! ■

U.S. Poised...

(continued from page 1)

milieu has oriented toward pressuring Congressional liberals. Last year they called off their protests and threw everything into campaigning for Democrats Jesse Jackson and then Mondale, who then advocated a "quarantine" of Nicaragua. At a recent CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador) convention in Washington, a leadership proposal continued to urge "tactical alliances with those forces whose ultimate interests are not necessarily the same as those of the Central Americans." CISPES has mobilized goons and even called on the capitalist cops to keep "reds" like the Spartacist League out of demonstrations, all in the name of "tactical alliances" with the Democrats. It's a wonder they don't denounce Daniel Ortega as an "ultra-leftist" for his visit to Moscow.

Fight Imperialist War with Class War!

The Pentagon's preparations for an invasion of Central America are "largely complete," according to a two-part article in the *New York Times* (4-5 June). Taking out the Sandinistas would be as easy as "falling off a log"; "two weeks," in and out, to install a "contra" government with its own army—these were some of the self-deluding estimates by top U.S. military men of what's involved. Two retired military officers of the Center for Defense Information, Rear Admiral Gene La Rocque and Lieutenant Colonel John Buchanan, take a much different view in a recent article in the *Village Voice* (25 June) titled "Blueprint for Disaster." In evaluating a hypothetical "Operation Founding Fathers" they calculate that a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua would cost 9,000 American casualties in the first two weeks, and another 5,000 in the next three months.

Estimated Sandinista losses would be far higher—44,000 and 24,000 in the same time periods. And there would be continued guerrilla warfare for years. With an army of 40,000, another 70,000 in the militias and active reserves, and tens of thousands of armed civilians who are prepared to fight to defend their



WV Photo

Nicaraguans protest Reagan's embargo, Managua, May 16.

revolution, *Nicaragua will be no Grenada*. Their defense plans in the face of a Yankee invasion are simply to prolong the battle as long as possible and produce the maximum number of American casualties. "We are not just going to abandon the cities," Sandinista Army commander Hugo Torres told the *Voice*. "We're going to fight in the capital, in the cities, on the highways and in the mountains."

Defense Ministry spokesman Guillermo González emphasized the moral factor in such a war of resistance: "We're going to bury our people as heroes, but they'll bury their people as victims of a policy." Even in the halls of Congress this has been noticed. In the "contra aid" debate, Congressman Hank González of San Antonio, Texas noted:

"The significant thing is that the people support the regime.... No government that does not feel secure would hand out the arms in the variety, quantity as the Nicaraguan Government has done to the peasants up in the north fighting against the invasions...."

"Also every single household in Managua, if you... go into the barrios and the neighborhoods you will see sandbag shelters, you will see buttwarks of resistance and every household armed with a heavy-caliber gun. There is no reason, if the people wanted to, they could not rise and overcome the regime in Nicaragua. But the reason they are armed is they are fully expecting the North American invasion."

—*Congressional Record*, 10 June

As the Congressman pointed out, the U.S. has invaded Nicaragua eleven times, six of them in this century. And who would Reagan put in the Sandinistas' place? The contras, "the ex-

Somocistas, the ones who were hated and reviled and kicked out.... It is going to set up that whole region in flames," he concluded.

The U.S. cannot be appeased with concessions to domestic capitalists and negotiations in the "Contadora process." It is necessary to *defend, complete and extend the Nicaraguan Revolution* if it is to survive. But there are hard facts that must be faced. As U.S. officers La Rocque and Buchanan point out, "Nicaragua has no equivalent of Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh Trail, which can be used to deliver significant amounts of arms and ammunition to the Sandinistas." The country can be isolated and taken by overwhelming military force. Thus the defense of the Nicaraguan Revolution will take place crucially not only in the slums of Managua and the hills of Matagalpa, but also in the capitals and industrial centers of Latin America, *and in the streets, ports and factories of the U.S.*

Coming from a regime which directed the bombing of a black neighborhood of Philadelphia, which killed two million peasants and workers with its carpet-bombing in Indochina, the U.S. government's cynical attempt to whip up an anti-Soviet holy war against "international terrorism" is the height of hypocrisy. But it is real. From the beginning of the Reagan administration, the Spartacist League insisted: "Defense of Cuba/USSR Begins in Central America!" It was there that the warmongers in the White House were "drawing the line" in their insane drive for a global nuclear showdown with Russia. But the reformist left didn't want to touch the "Russian question," the question of communism. And now, four years of anti-Soviet war provocations and one trillion dollars worth of military buildup later, the U.S. is poised for invasion of Nicaragua.

In order to regiment the American people for war abroad the Reagan regime, with the complete cooperation of the Democrats in Congress and city halls across the country, has also waged war at home against labor and blacks. Just as breaking the PATCO air controllers union was Reagan's message to labor, the bombing of MOVE in Philly is the government's message to all blacks and anyone else who might get

"out of line" in Reagan's America. Thanks to the belly-crawling treachery of America's Cold War labor bureaucracy, the bosses have been largely successful in straitjacketing the unions. Even the most limited defensive struggles were met with massive union-busting state terror. Yet today, from New York hotel workers to Appalachia coal miners, there is a renewal of union struggle, however uneven and hesitant. And with its "hardball" tactics, the government itself has politicized labor struggle. The task of the proletarian vanguard is to arm *our* side in the class war politically with a program to fight the sinister war mobilization.

"Hot-cargoing" military goods bound for U.S. puppets and mercenaries in Central America, labor political strikes against an escalation of U.S. intervention in the region, material aid to Nicaragua in the face of imperialist economic and military aggression, militant mass mobilization against the bipartisan anti-Soviet war drive—these are urgent tasks for the American working class. And while the "solidarity" milieu is mired in internal squabbling and still crawling after the Democrats, the Spartacus Youth League has launched a fund drive to defend Nicaragua. The Yankee overlords who want to bring back "moderately authoritarian" dictators like Somoza must be fought by organizing Leninist-Trotskyist parties to establish workers rule from Managua to Manhattan, from San Salvador to San Francisco. If you take the side of social liberation from Central America to the U.S., *join us* in this fight for world socialist revolution! ■

Nicaragua Needs \$\$\$

The Spartacus Youth League is raising dollars for the urgent defense of Nicaragua against Yankee economic and military aggression. Every penny you give goes to Nicaragua. Take a stand: make your "anti-contra" button today. Make checks payable to the Student Committee to Defend Nicaragua, and mail to: SYL, Box 3118 Church St. Station, New York, NY 10008.

Harlem: Thousands Turn Out For Perry Memorial

NYC Cop Kills Black Scholarship Student

After a string of wanton police killings, the shooting of a gifted black student by the racist NYC cops has sent a wave of outrage through Harlem. It was around 9:30 p.m. on June 13 when white undercover cop Lee Van Houten gunned down 17-year-old black honor student Edmund Perry on Morningside Drive. Van Houten says he was on decoy patrol on the street which is the "border" between the ivory towers of Columbia University and Harlem, and Edmund Perry was on the "wrong side" of the line. The cop claims he was jumped from behind by Perry and another youth, that the youths had him on the ground when he pulled his service

neighborhood for generations. Edmund had just graduated from the exclusive Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, which he attended on a scholarship from the Harlem community. He had a summer job at a prestigious Wall Street brokerage house, and was on his way to Stanford University this fall, again on full scholarship. It is said he wanted to be a doctor and return to serve his people. Some "mugger"!

Within minutes word of the shooting had spread to the Perrys' block on 114th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, and the family rushed to the hospital. But the cops had sealed off the room and refused to let Edmund's

been shot at the close range that would be necessary in the hand-to-hand struggle cop Van Houten claimed. There were no abrasions on Perry's body, such as would occur in a fight. There were no drugs; there were no brain tumors. Meanwhile, Mason reports numerous complaints to his office of Harlem residents being dragged in by the cops and given the third degree in order to dig up some "eyewitnesses" to corroborate the cops' story.

The racist killing of Edmund Perry must be answered by a powerful voice of black protest out of Harlem that is taken up by the city labor movement and all victims and opponents of Koch's cossacks. Jail killer cop Van Houten—Lock him up and throw away the key! Down with Koch's killer cops! For mass militant labor/black defense against racist terror! There is a need for armed patrols all right—integrated, armed workers defense squads to defend the people of Harlem from the marauding race-terrorists in blue!

Perched on the border of the huge ghetto, Columbia University's message to Harlem blacks has always been the same: "Keep Out!" The 1968 "Columbia Revolt" was sparked over the refusal to permit community access to a proposed university gym in Morningside Park. Koch's cops on Morningside are there to preserve by force the racist status quo, the same way the stun-gun cops at the 106th "Torture Precinct" in Queens were trying to keep Ozone Park white. Now they're passing laws to take stun guns away from citizens, who want them to protect against muggers, while the cops keep on killing with abandon.

Harlem turned out in the thousands

on Tuesday, June 18, jamming into Memorial Baptist Church on 115th Street to pay their last respects to Edmund Perry. Hundreds stood outside on the street in a quiet, tense crowd. The assembled black Democratic Party politicians urged turning outrage to prayer, periodically going out on the steps to make sure things were calm. Rev. Preston Washington, pastor at Memorial Baptist where the Perrys had worshipped for years, denounced the mayor, the black police commissioner, the cops "who are so often an occupation force," and called for the churches to become "citadels of revolution."

Edmund Perry, Eleanor Bumpurs, Michael Stewart, Arthur Miller, Randy Evans—the litany of black people killed by the NYPD cops was recited in and outside the church that night. The pews came out and told everybody to go home and come back Friday for a rally and march to the 26th precinct. About 500 people did return and this time when they came out of the church they got handed a candle and an election palm eard. The entire Harlem black Democratic Party machine turned out, with aspiring candidates Vernon Mason, Denny Farrell, David Dinkins denouncing Koch and Morgenthau. Hazel Dukes of the NAACP stated it's not enough to march: "Go to the polls on September 10 [Democratic Party primary day] and pull the lever."

When the candlelight vigil to the precinct finally got underway, the "black elected officials" had their "photo opportunity" in the front rank, followed by a big contingent of the vigilante "Guardian Angels" gang

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Edmund Evans Perry
1967-1985

The Perry Family



WV Photo

Hundreds pack street as Perry family emerges from memorial at Harlem church June 18. Edmund Perry ... we will not forget!

revolver from an ankle holster and fired to fight them off. A squad car rushed cop Van Houten to St. Luke's Hospital where his alleged injuries were treated. They left Edmund Perry lying on the ground, bleeding profusely from a gunshot wound in his stomach. The hospital told WV that Perry wasn't admitted until 9:55 p.m.—almost half an hour after he was shot—although the hospital was less than a block away. Three hours later he was dead.

Just as when an NYPD "Emergency Service" squad hlew away black Bronx grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs last fall, the killing of Edmund Perry was ruled "within departmental guidelines." But this time the cops struck at a family which is a pillar of the Harlem black establishment. Edmund's mother, Mrs. Veronica Perry, is a member of Community School Board 3 in Manhattan, and an assistant teacher in a Headstart program at the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association. The Sojourner Truth Democratic Club was "home" for the family, which had been active in the

mother see her dying son. Even after he died, the family was not permitted to see the body which was whisked off to the city morgue. Mrs. Perry contacted prominent black lawyer Vernon Mason, who is currently running for Manhattan district attorney against incumbent Robert Morgenthau in the Democratic Party primary. Suspecting a cover-up, the family insisted on having an independent pathologist present when Koch's coroner, Dr. Gross the ghoul, performed the autopsy. Gross cut the body apart from head to toe, searching for evidence of drugs or anything else to "prove" the victim caused his own murder, then in a final insult didn't even sew the body back up. "In my 40 years as a mortician, I have never seen a body as badly mutilated and butchered as this," said funeral director Chester J. Trumbo.

In his *Daily News* column June 18, Jimmy Breslin reported the independent pathologist's preliminary findings, and hlew the cops' story out of the water. There were no powder burns on Perry's body or clothes, indicating he had not



Victim of COINTELPRO Frame-Up—Free Former Black Panther Leader!

Geronimo Pratt Speaks From San Quentin

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