

## 1.5 Million Black Workers Strike

# May Day in South Africa

On the 100th anniversary of May Day in the racist hellhole of South Africa 1.5 million black workers risked their jobs and very lives to join with workers around the world in celebrating the holiday of the international working class. They were joined by more than one million black and other non-white students. From Durhan to Cape Town and especially in the heavily industrialized and mining region of Transvaal around Johannesburg the strike was reportedly 70 to 100 percent effective. A survey of 86 companies in the auto center of Port Elizabeth reported only six out of 11,000 black employees were working! "Without doubt this is the biggest nationwide work stoppage South Africa has had," exclaimed a spokesman for the Association of Chambers of Commerce, the main organization of the apartheid bosses.

The May Day general strike dramatically exposed the total dependence of white South Africa on superexploited black labor. Perhaps for the first time in their lives whites had to cook in restaurants, pump gasoline and repair broken water pipes. In Johannesburg white supervisors had to wrestle with "the unaccustomed complexities of supermarket cash registers because the blacks who usually operate them stayed home" (*New York Times*, 2 May).

The magnificent May Day general strike in South Africa displayed the strength and growing organization of black labor, reflected by the formation last December of the 650,000-member Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Coming after 21 months of continuous nationwide revolt it was an inspiring demonstration of the determination and capacity of South Africa's brutally superexploited black proletariat to break the chains of



Massive union rally in Soweto marks largest political strike in South African history.

Wide World

apartheid capitalism. The May Day strike was seen as a trial run for COSATU's call for a three-day general strike planned for June 16-18, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising. By bringing the South African economy to a halt, the black working class poses the question of *political power*. What's urgently needed is an internationalist

revolutionary workers party to lead all the oppressed with the mandate that those who labor must rule—a black-centered workers republic.

### For Proletarian Political Leadership!

While May Day in South Africa showed the power and combativity of the black workers movement, it also

brought to the surface the danger of tribalism. In Durban, the major city of Natal province, Zulu chieftain and apartheid puppet Gatsha Buthelezi staged a "union" rally of 70,000 supporters armed with spears and clubs, who trampled on a black coffin with the initials COSATU. Buthelezi's Inkatha thugs have repeatedly attacked COSATU union organizers and offices in the Durban area. Now the sinister Zulu chief has launched a "union" of thugs to destroy the real South African black workers movement. And it's not

*continued on page 4*

## Media Meltdown on Russia

MAY 5—It is a sign of the war mania rampant in the U.S. ruling class that a tragic industrial accident in the Soviet Union is turned into anti-Soviet hysteria. Lacking any hard information when the accident developed at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant near Kiev, the American "news" media simply conjured up the wildest stories imaginable. Typical of the "Killer Cloud Heads West" headlines were this week's crop from the *New York Post*: "The World Trembles—2,000 dead, 25,000 flee, N-cloud is spread-

ing," "Out of Control—2nd meltdown spews new death cloud," "Winds of Death," "Mass Grave for 15,000 N-Victims" and so on *ad nauseam*. Then, after shamelessly conjuring up a "Red Nukemare," they have the gall to denounce the Russians for covering up!

And it wasn't just the sensationalist tabloids going berserk. Howdy Doody Koppel on ABC-TV's *Nightline* asked endless "what if" questions of "nuclear experts" who knew nothing about the accident. Local TV weather reports

showed satellite photos of cloud movements over the European regions of the Soviet Union. The staid *New York Times* spread scare stories about "2,000 dead," Pacifica radio played end-of-the-world music while reporting the nuke news. It was an across-the-board media panic, from ultra-right Reaganites to rad-lib eco-freaks. The only thing we were spared was those Long Island high school kids kissing the ground, Grenada-style, when their parents rushed them back

*continued on page 10*

### Labor History:

### Red Purge Means Union-Busting

Page 6

### Smash Union-Busting and Racist Terror!

### Labor Must Fight for Black Freedom!

Page 7



## More Bloodthirsty ET

# Palme Assassination: Crime Against Workers Movement

27 March 1986  
Oakland, Cal.

To Whom It May Concern:

...I was also disgusted by your teary-eyed, ass-licking response and telegram concerning the Palme assassination. Palme was the political boss and maintainer of a capitalist nation, intertwined to the world capitalist order. Capitalism maintains itself through a variety of forms and chameleon-like masks from paramilitarism on the right to degenerated bourgeois workers parties on the "left"...but you rip off the mask of those in power in a capitalist country, and you find they all have one purpose and history—to maintain capitalism and drown this workers movement in blood when it becomes necessary. The left masks (during a relatively peaceful period of a particular nation) are particularly devious, and make for great capitalist propaganda to the world, showing the system to be capable of "modernizing, reforming, and unbloodying itself."

Palme in power in a capitalist nation is a leader of the forces of my class enemy and *I do not mourn his death...* (nor do I gloat over it, and believe it is the duty of the Swedish and international workers movement to see that the fascist scum who killed him are prosecuted to the fullest.)

Olof Palme was killed by a crazed and hideous product of capitalism—a system Palme sought to manage and maintain *against* the efforts of people

like you and me. If I have any weeping or mourning to do, it is not for capitalism's "good" cops—it is for the coal miners who die of black lung, Hispanic families slaughtered by contras, and the dozens of children who have starved to death while you were reading this letter—all victims of a dying social system Olof Palme gave his life to maintain and defend.

Sincerely,  
Bill Savery

P.S. I now consider myself a supporter of the Bolshevik Tendency.

*WV replies:* Olof Palme was the social-democratic prime minister of capitalist Sweden. Therefore Bill Savery does not mourn his death. Orlando Letelier was a social-democratic minister of Allende's Unidad Popular government in Chile, which blocked the road to socialist revolution and thus delivered the Chilean workers to Pinochet. Presumably, therefore, Bill Savery shed no tears for Letelier when the latter was assassinated by a DINA death squad with the aid of CIA-trained gusano terrorists in Washington in 1976.

We did mourn the murder of Letelier, not least because he had helped us free Chilean workers leader Mario Muñoz from the grip of the bloody Argentine junta. And we expressed our condolences over the wanton assassination of Olof Palme, who gave asylum to American draft resisters and soldiers

who fled from the imperialist army in horror against its crimes in Vietnam. It appeared at the time, and appears now, that whoever shot Olof Palme thought he was shooting Rosa Luxemburg. Palme certainly wasn't gunned down because he was a "good cop" of Swedish capitalism. So whose ox is being gored here?

One recalls Trotsky's attitude toward French socialist Jean Jaurès. By no means a revolutionary, Jaurès in fact, during most of his career stood in the anti-Marxist right wing of the French Socialist movement, which spawned the "socialist ministerialism" of Millerand, an early version of the popular front. But when Jaurès was assassinated on the eve of World War I, Trotsky wrote a moving tribute to "the greatest man of the Third Republic," noting that Jaurès was shot because his pacifist opposition was seen as an obstacle to French intervention in the war:

"It was considered in certain circles that the war of 'liberation' could not commence its march other than by stepping over Jaurès' dead body."

—Political Profiles (New Park Publications, London, 1972)

Olof Palme was a thorn in the side of the Swedish bourgeoisie which wanted to effect a Reaganite turn in domestic and foreign policy. The assassination came in the aftermath of a bitter election campaign; following the murder of Palme and his replacement by reputedly more pro-business Socialist Carlsson, the Stockholm stock market soared to its highest level in history, with a record volume of trading. Even the *New York Times* (4 March) noted that Palme was under attack for being:

"...too quick to criticize the United States and too quiet about such matters as human rights in the Soviet Union, the Soviet military campaign in Afghanistan, the crushing of the Solidarity labor union in Poland, and, above all else, the repeated incursions of Soviet submarines into Swedish waters."

The American ruling class hated his guts. Our article (which we're happy to note was reprinted by the *Lanka Guardian* of 1 April) recalled Lyndon Johnson's fury after Palme marched alongside the North Vietnamese ambassador protesting the U.S.'s Indochina war, and Nixon's wrath when Palme compared the carpetbombing of Vietnam to Hitler's atrocities. While yesterday's liberal "doves" had long since lined up behind the anti-Soviet war drive, Washington was livid over Palme's recent renewal of multimillion-dollar Swedish financing for Vietnam's industrial programs, and his aid to Sandinista Nicaragua in the face of Reagan's economic boycott.

But we don't expect that to impress Savery and his friends of the former External Tendency. The ET/BT not only tails after the "No More Vietnams"

liberals, they denounced the SL for carrying "the flags of the Cuban and Vietnamese Stalinists" in protests against U.S. intervention in Central America. They boycotted the 27 November 1982 labor/black mobilization that stopped the Klan from marching in Washington, D.C. and shrieked in horror when we dubbed an SL contingent the "Yuri Andropov Brigade." To say the least, these renegades from Trotskyism don't have a very well-developed sense of siding with the victims and targets of U.S. imperialism.

But where the workers don't have a side, oh boy! We have commented before on the vicarious bloodthirstiness of the ET/BT, such as their call "U.S.



Olof Palme marches with North Vietnamese ambassador against U.S. imperialism's dirty war, 1968.

Marines: Live Like Pigs—Die Like Pigs" when 240-plus Marines were blown to bits in Beirut, in a godawful mess where there was *no just cause* and every faction from Islamic fanatics to the fascist Christian Phalange were jockeying for U.S. support (see "Marxism and Bloodthirstiness," *WV* No. 345, 6 January 1984). If ET/BT loved the Beirut bombing, they must really be grooving on the bombing of La Belle disco in West Berlin—after all, the patrons were predominantly U.S. servicemen!

From the picket line to imperialist war, the class line escapes them. To side up to "divestment" liberals over South Africa, the ET/BT calls on students to menace workers unloading South African ships, an anti-union provocation. But when hundreds turned out in Berkeley (on March 25 and again on April 15) to protest Reagan's attacks on Libya, we didn't notice any ET/BTs there. Nor was Howard Keylor present at the ILWU Local 10 exec board meeting April 24, where Stan Gow's motion condemning the murderous U.S. bombing raid against Libya was unanimously passed. Wherever the U.S. war drive is hot and the least little bit of real pressure is on, the "leftism" of the ET just melts away. ■



TROTSKY

### 100 Years of May Day

The hanging of the Haymarket labor martyrs in Chicago 100 years ago by the American government gave birth to May Day, the great demonstration of the international working class. In the revolutionary ferment of tsarist Russia in 1904, Lenin explained why May Day symbolizes the future emancipation of the exploited and oppressed.



LENIN

Comrade workers! May Day is coming, the day when the workers of all lands celebrate their awakening to a class-conscious life, their solidarity in the struggle against all coercion and oppression of man by man, the struggle to free the toiling millions from hunger, poverty, and humiliation. Two worlds stand facing each other in this great struggle: the world of capital and the world of labour, the world of exploitation and slavery and the world of brotherhood and freedom....

But now these disinherited toilers have declared war on the moneybags and exploiters. The workers of all lands are fighting to free labour from wage slavery, from poverty and want. They are fighting for a system of society where the wealth created by the common labour will go to benefit, not a handful of rich men, but all those who work. They want to make the land and the factories, mills, and machines the common property of all toilers. They want to do away with the division into rich and poor, want the fruits of labour to go to the labourers themselves, and all the achievements of the human mind, all improvements in ways of working, to improve the lot of the man who works, and not serve as a means of oppressing him.

—V.I. Lenin, "May Day" (April 1904)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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*Workers Vanguard* (USPS 098-770) published biweekly, except 2nd issue August and with 3-week interval December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: 732-7862 (Editorial), 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. Domestic subscriptions: \$5.00/24 issues. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

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

No. 403

9 May 1986

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# Apartheid Butchers Repeal Pass Laws

The South African police state maintains white *baasskap* ("boss rule") through naked racist terror. It occupies the rebellious black townships with tanks and personnel carriers; every month it kills scores of unarmed black protesters and tortures black children with electric shocks and steel whips. All the while the white supremacists in Pretoria and their big brothers in Washington tell the world that they are "reforming" apartheid away. It is a "new era of freedom" and the "emancipation from guardianship of the black and the brown," declared South African strongman P.W. Botha when his government repealed the hated pass laws last month. The Reagan White House echoed Botha, calling the measure "a major milestone on the road away from apartheid."

Liberals in the U.S. and South Africa have also hailed the repeal of the pass laws governing the movement of blacks as a significant step toward the dismantling of apartheid. John Kane-Berman, director of the South African Institute of Race Relations, ranks it along with the limited legalization of black trade unions in 1979 as "the most important reform in South Africa since World War II." The *New York Times* (26 April) editorialized: "By abolishing South Africa's pass laws, President P.W. Botha has taken a tangible step away from the state-sponsored racism that sets his nation shamefully apart.... This is finally a reform worthy of the word, evidence that apartheid is untenable."

But repeal of the pass laws will not touch the rigid separation of the affluent white suburbs from the desperately impoverished black townships. Whites will continue to play golf and tennis in their exclusive clubs while a few miles away blacks bury their martyred dead in segregated cemeteries. Black children will continue to go to segregated schools where only one-sixth as much is spent for their education as for white children's. Blacks will continue to die because of chronic lack of medical care while whites are treated in ultra-modern, racially exclusive hospitals. And, of course, the black African majority—75 percent of the South African population—will continue to be stripped of all political rights in their own country.

What then of the pass laws? In recent decades these laws aimed to restrict the

movement of blacks from the rural "bantustans" to the segregated townships which surround the cities of the "white homeland." This was called "influx control." The apartheid regime is almost certainly not going to abandon such controls entirely. Liberal Bishop Tutu commented: "The release of the pass-law offenders can only be welcomed. But I hope there is not a sting in the tail" (*Newsweek*, 28 April). The sting



The hated pass (right) was a symbol of black enslavement in apartheid police state.



is that while blacks now have the legal right to move into the desperately overcrowded townships, they cannot live there without "approved" housing. So blacks will still be killed, beaten and imprisoned for violating "anti-squatter" laws, which have now been strengthened. Witness the savage police attacks on the squatter community of Crossroads near Cape Town.

Nonetheless, as revolutionary socialists we do not dismiss the repeal of the pass laws as meaningless or insignificant. Historically, the pass was the symbol of apartheid slavery just as chains were the symbol of chattel slavery in the antebellum American South. Over the years 18 million blacks were imprisoned for violating these laws. They were the main target of the ANC's mass Defiance Campaigns in the 1950s. When the COSATU federation of black unions was formed last December, it threatened to burn the passes unless Botha repealed the law within six months. Like the repeal a year ago of the ban on interracial marriages, it is a small but real democratic gain that blacks have the right to move about in their own country. For one thing, this will make it easier to build a racially integrated communist vanguard party, centered on the working class, in order to destroy the racist hellhole that is South Africa and the capitalist class which rules that tortured land.

## The Pass Laws and Apartheid Capitalism

The repeal of the pass laws is not simply a cosmetic measure primarily designed to dampen the black revolt and soften international outrage against apartheid. With mass unemployment endemic among blacks, such controls are no longer needed to create and maintain a large pool of labor for superexploitation in the white-owned economy. The "liberal" wing of the South African bourgeoisie, represented by the Anglo American mining and manufacturing empire, has long argued that the pass laws had become an obstacle to developing a stable black skilled and semi-skilled labor force. Thus the repeal of these laws is an

attempt to modify the totalitarian control of black workers in the direction of a "free market" for labor.

The function of the original pass laws in South Africa, which go back to the Dutch colonial era in the 18th century, was to control the movement of blacks in the frontier areas—to ensure that those who were employed on white farms stayed put, and that those who were not stayed off white-owned land.

With the development of mining and later industry, pass law controls were vastly extended as part of a system designed to force subsistence-farming, tribal blacks to become migrant laborers. Black land ownership rights were increasingly restricted, cash taxes imposed and migrant laborers kept in compounds. Once it was set up, the migrant labor/pass law system guaranteed superexploitation. The migrant worker did not even need to be paid the bare minimum necessary to reproduce the labor force, since the worker's family could subsist on the land. The Randlords had what they needed, a limitless supply of unskilled cheap labor.

But South African capitalism could not grow fat by relentlessly sucking the lifeblood out of the bantustans forever. In the key mining sector almost half the migrant labor force comes from the belt of "independent" black states surrounding South Africa. The exhaustion of much of the bantustans has combined with low productivity, shortages of skilled labor and a weak domestic market to drag heavily on the industrial sector of the economy. The repeal of the pass laws aims to cut down on the enormous overhead cost of maintaining the bureaucracy that enforces apartheid and to promote some semblance of

stability for a layer of the black labor force.

At the same time, with massive and rising unemployment special measures are no longer needed to secure a cheap labor force. When the Afrikaner nationalist regime tightened up the pass laws in the 1950s, a major motivation was to guarantee virtual slave labor for the white-owned farms, which paid even less than the starvation wages of the

cities. However, in the 1980s hundreds of thousands of black labor tenants were evicted and dumped into the bantustans as the white farms became increasingly mechanized. Moreover, the apartheid state has gone to such lengths to separate blacks, coloureds (mixed race) and Indians from whites residentially and to keep the black townships as far from the cities as possible that the pass laws are no longer essential for this purpose.

## Smash Apartheid! For Workers Revolution!

The repeal of the pass laws will do nothing to stem the unrest which has swept the black townships for the past year and a half. Most of the residents of Soweto and Alexandra near Johannesburg, Mamelodi near Pretoria, etc. already have the legal right to "live" in these hellholes. For South Africa's black, coloured and Indian militants, such apartheid reforms are too little, too late.

This is the line taken by the principal black nationalist organization, the outlawed African National Congress, and its broad, legal front, the United Democratic Front (UDF). UDF publicity secretary Murphy Morobe stated:

continued on page 4



Eli Weinberg

Defiant protesters burn their passes, 1960.

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# Workers Revolution Will Avenge Haymarket and MOVE Martyrs!

In the discussion period at the May 2 Spartacist forum in New York, an NYC transit worker and Spartacist supporter stressed that American labor must remember the MOVE martyrs—the eleven black men, women and children burned to death one year ago, on 13 May 1985, by a Philadelphia police bomb launched on the orders of black Democratic mayor Goode and with the full approval and direct aid of the Reagan administration—just as the Chicago Haymarket labor martyrs are commemorated by the international workers movement:

This forum takes place on the occasion of an important anniversary, of the Haymarket events. A hundred years ago in Chicago there was an important industrial strike in which the police killed a striker. The rest of the strikers proceeded to call a mass labor demonstration in central Chicago. Some provocateur threw a bomb into this crowd and some policemen were killed. As a consequence seven labor leaders in Chicago were arrested and four were eventually hung. The movement to honor these martyrs of labor struggle, fusing with the eight-hour-day

movement, was the backbone of May Day which is celebrated internationally, but not in the United States. In South Africa where it is illegal for workers to go on strike for such an occasion, one and a half million black workers put their jobs and their very lives on the line to honor the cause of international labor and to honor these four labor martyrs.

Now because we don't have labor leaders who are, so to speak, willing to put their necks on the line, we don't have those kinds of gains today. Instead we have takebacks, givebacks: the only thing the bureaucrats are good for negotiating these days is whether it's going to be 20 percent or 15 percent. They're too busy to be down on the picket lines because they're spending all their time down on Wall Street consulting with their investment bankers on whether Leahn is preferable to Lorenzo. A judge waves a piece of paper and it's a magic stick. It's called an injunction and all of a sudden it might as well come from god or the high priesthood.

The point is unless we have, as this forum says, a revolutionary leadership for labor, labor cannot win permanent and lasting gains because it has to go up

against the capitalist class organized as a state power—the courts, the cops—and the bureaucrats in the pocket of the bosses. We have to realize two things: One, until the cause of MOVE—the most hideous racist massacre in this country, at least for generations—is protested, condemned and acted upon by the labor movement, and becomes a cause as dear to labor in America as the Haymarket Four are to labor internationally, this labor movement will go nowhere.

And secondly you must realize the importance of internationalism and an international revolutionary party. Consciousness is uneven. Those workers in South Africa, those workers in Chile, those workers in El Salvador who are willing to battle, who are willing to battle police state terror to honor the Haymarket Four today have more consciousness than the overwhelming majority of American workers. We need a revolutionary party and we need the rebirth of the Fourth International. ■

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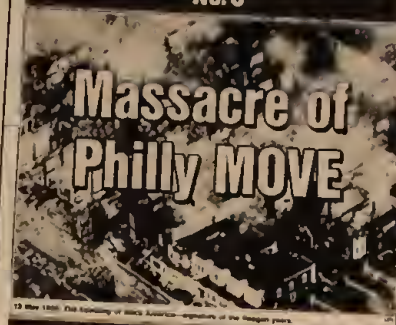
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## May Day in South Africa...

(continued from page 1)

surprising that he looks for support to the virulently racist and pro-imperialist American AFL-CIO bureaucracy.

The tribalist Buthelezi is an open and deadly enemy of South Africa's black workers movement, and every union militant recognizes him as such. A more insidious danger for the black proletariat is petty-bourgeois nationalism. The COSATU leadership has made no secret of its political sympathy for and support to the African National Congress (ANC). The subordination of the black union movement to the ANC nationalists can only derail class struggle against the apartheid bosses. This was treacherously demonstrated last fall when Cyril Ramaphosa, head of the powerful National Union of Mineworkers, sabotaged a nationwide strike in the strategic gold fields on the eve of a meeting between South African capitalists, headed up by the Anglo American mining empire's Gavin Relly, and the ANC.

Winnie Mandela, wife of imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela, told a May Day rally of 30,000 in the black township of Soweto to "close up ranks and prepare for the final onslaught." But ANC spokesmen have made it unambiguously clear that the "final onslaught" they are talking about is not a social revolution to smash apartheid capitalism, but a neocolonial solution as in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Thus ANC publicity director Thabo Mbeki stated in a recent interview: "... we are talking not of overthrowing the government but of turning so many people against it that it would be forced to do what Ian Smith had to do" (*Washington Post*, 10 March).

In 1980 Ian Smith's white colonial settler regime in Rhodesia, in a deal brokered by British imperialism, was replaced by black African nationalist Robert Mugabe. Since then the Mugabe regime in Rhodesia has ruthlessly exploited the black toilers on behalf of



Turnley/Detroit Free Press

Black workers at 3M plant in Johannesburg demonstrate in solidarity with 3M workers in Freehold, New Jersey who are fighting a plant closure.

Western capital, brutally suppressed the unions and all black opposition, and waged genocidal terror against the minority Ndebele people. However, the black working class in South Africa is far more powerful, better organized and politically conscious than in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, the black revolt in the apartheid state is now spreading from the segregated townships to the white-owned economy. "What we started to see at the end of 1985 was a spilling over of turbulence from the townships into the workplace," observed an official of the Anglo American corporation (quoted in *ANC News Briefing*, 23 March). In particular this turbulence has spilled into the mines which generate 10 percent of South Africa's gross national product and more than half of its foreign-exchange earnings. Here are concentrated half a million black miners—"migrants" recruited from the bantustans and black client states like Lesotho.

Strikes in the mines are increasingly more militant, combatting the threat of lockouts and deportations with sit-ins and mine occupations. They are increasingly over issues that cut to the heart of apartheid regimentation: the concentration of black miners in overcrowded single-sex hostels; the arming of white

foremen; physical abuse by both white and black foremen; the firing of militant black stewards and "cheeky" workers. Desperately necessary now is the construction of communist cells, in and oriented toward the workers movement, laying the basis for a racially integrated Leninist workers party. ■

## Apartheid Pass Laws...

(continued from page 3)

"Without addressing the crucial issue of political power and the popular demand of our people to take part in the decision-making process in this country, Botha's latest move will remain an act of political posturing" (*Washington Post*, 23 April).

However, the ANC/UDF nationalists seek to take part in "the decision-making process" in South Africa through a hoped-for "power-sharing" deal with the "progressive" wing of white capital. Thus last fall the ANC issued a joint statement with the Progressive Federal Party, the political arm of Anglo American, proclaiming "the urgent need to dismantle apartheid and establish a nonracial democratic

society" (*New York Times*, 14 October 1985). But the South African bourgeoisie cannot accept the democratic rule of the black majority and still preserve its economic dominance.

In South Africa, as nowhere else, the struggle for the most elementary democratic rights is inextricably bound up with the struggle for workers revolution to overthrow capitalism. This fundamental truth is underscored by the repeal of the pass laws. This measure along with the proposed granting of "dual citizenship" to the residents of the hantustans ("tribal homelands") strips away the legal fiction that black South Africans are foreigners in their own land. But if blacks are regarded as citizens of South Africa, this poses the question of political rights and political power. (Significantly, the nationalist ANC does not call for citizenship for the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers, concentrated in the gold mines, who come from the "independent" black African states.)

The apartheid rulers can scrap the pass laws but they cannot grant democratic political rights—one man, one vote—to the dispossessed black masses. White control over the state and its armed forces is essential to enforce the superexploitation of the black toilers. And this is just as true for the "progressive" Anglo American bosses as it is for the most dihard ("verkrampte") Afrikaner nationalists. Indeed, the Anglo American mines are armed camps with secret gas vents installed in the mining compounds to deal with strikers.

Yet in its own way this massive apparatus of police-state terror displays the apartheid rulers' fear of the power of the black working class. That power was demonstrated dramatically on May Day when 1.5 million black African, coloured and Indian workers walked off their jobs, the biggest strike in South African history. Under the leadership of a racially integrated communist vanguard party, the black proletariat will be the gravedigger of apartheid. And on that grave will arise a black-centered workers government, the only road to the liberation of all black Africa from the chains of neocolonial exploitation and imperialist domination. ■

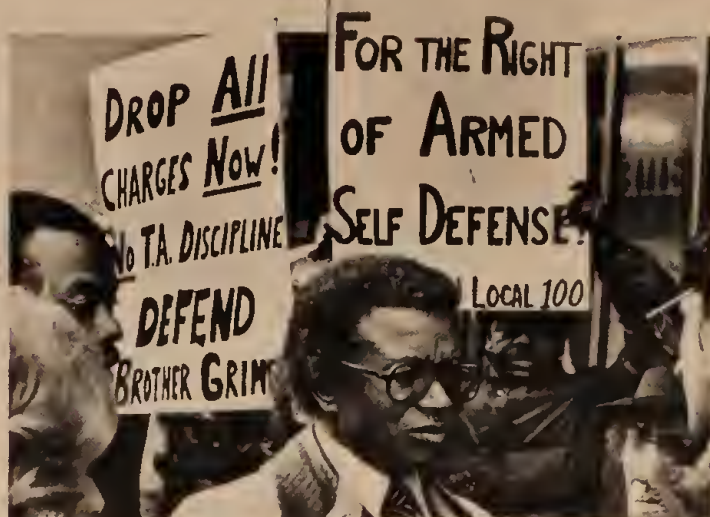


## Stop Koch/D.A. Victimization of Black Worker!

# Put Power of TWU Behind James Grimes!

MAY 6—Last January 6, black subway clerk James Grimes was jumped by three robbers while transporting \$1,500 in Transit Authority money from his token booth. When the thugs threatened to shoot him, this courageous worker successfully defended himself with a gun. When TA cops arrived, they arrested Grimes, and chained him to a bench in the precinct for nine hours. Brooklyn D.A. Elizabeth Holtzman, a liberal Democrat, threw the book at Grimes, convening a grand jury to consider felony charges. On May 2 the grand jury, while finding no grounds for manslaughter charges against Grimes, indicted him on a misdemeanor gun-possession charge. If convicted of the weapons rap, Grimes faces certain TA discipline as well, including possible firing. Grimes has already suffered two heart attacks, and had a pacemaker installed for his heart condition after the armed assault in January. Drop all D.A./TA charges against James Grimes!

On May 5 TWU Local 100 issued a call for a "mass demonstration" of union members "to win justice for R.R. clerk James Grimes and all transit workers," to be held tomorrow, May 7, outside the Brooklyn criminal court where Grimes is to be arraigned. For an all-out union mobilization behind



Militant transit workers outside Brooklyn courthouse January 23 support union brother James Grimes (center), persecuted for self-defense against armed assault by three robbers.

James Grimes—he is the hero, not the criminal! This call for union defense of Grimes is a welcome about-face from the Sonny Hall leadership, which had mainly stonewalled for four months while redbaiting Grimes's supporters in the union. On one occasion the bureauc-

racy sought to deflect the ranks' anger into a phony rally for...more transit cops! On April 11 outside a court hearing, the union tops actually distributed a fink statement, publicly criticizing Grimes's legal strategy and the fact that he took sick leave, and making

excuses for not calling a demonstration. But this backstabbing policy evidently did not go down among the members. The small core of Grimes's supporters who have militantly shown their support at previous hearings, mobilized by the Committee for a Fighting TWU, evidently spoke for a broad section of the union who want to wield the union's power in defense of James Grimes. That pressure, combined with the D.A.'s dropping the felony charges, evidently prompted the union leadership to move, finally.

At stake is not only the fate of this courageous fighter but the right of armed self-defense. In New York City "gun control" laws mean only criminals, kill-crazed cops and racist lynch mobs, like the one that bludgeoned TWUer Willie Turks to death in south Brooklyn, are armed. The idea that workers and particularly blacks have the right to carry a gun drives the bosses and their labor lieutenants crazy. James Grimes must not be allowed to become a victim of Koch's terror. The entire NYC labor movement must stand behind Grimes against the union-busting, racist Democratic Party and its kangaroo courts.

We reprint below a leaflet issued April 28 by the Committee for a Fighting TWU.

## Committee for a Fighting TWU Leaflet: Why Is Sonny Hall Finking on James Grimes?

The TWU tops put out a fink leaflet that abandons Grimes in the face of legal victimization by the bosses courts. This leaflet was distributed at a court hearing where Grimes faces charges by the District Attorney's office of Liz Holtzman. In opposition to this backstabbing attack all TWU workers must be mobilized to support this heroic union brother.

President Sonny Hall is claiming a "great victory" at the throne of the Impartial Arbitrator on the issue of escorts for Railroad Clerks. Is this a "great victory" or a great smokescreen? This "great victory" means having dangerous cops, like the one(s) that murdered Michael Stewart loitering around token booths. We all know that the Hall leadership like John Lawe has placed all its eggs in the arbitrator's basket, and his credibility in the eyes of the ranks is falling fast. The Arbitrator recently gutted job pick rights and working conditions and the Hall team badly needed a cheap win to take back to the members. The Arbitrator knew this, and so did the TA. So on March 14 the TA provided the busses to bring about 400 off-duty transit workers to blow off steam outside an arbitration hearing where inside the TA agreed to abide by its own regulation of providing escorts for clerks. Gunn decided to walk home a run for the losing Hall team.

At the March 31 Car Maintenance division meeting Hall was tooting his horn about this "great victory" and felt compelled to launch into a red-baiting attack on Transit Workers to Defend James Grimes. When challenged from the floor for not mobilizing thousands of transit workers to demand DA/TA Drop the Charges! at Brother Grimes'

court appearances, Hall started throwing "outsider" charges—not only at those who have fought for a solid union mobilization but also at Brother Grimes himself for going to an "outside" lawyer. Hall even blamed Brother Grimes for the leadership's passivity on this case by saying that no formal request for a union demonstration had been received from Grimes himself. This attitude is poison for the collective strength and solidarity of our union! A brother is in deep water with sharks closing in and Hall wants a formal request?!!

Hall red-baits Transit Workers to Defend James Grimes because he doesn't want mass transit worker demonstrations in front of the Brooklyn criminal courthouse. He believes in the "justice" of "liberal" Democrat DA Holtzman and the courts which gave the racist murderers of Brother Willie Turks a slap on the wrist or a walk while Grimes is getting the third degree. If Willie Turks had been packing he would be alive today, and if James Grimes hadn't been, he wouldn't be.

Sonny Hall busses members down to arbitration, up to Albany, and around to the back door of the Master's House. He tells us not to expect much in this current "anti-union climate." Of course, the union will present a "solid case" to these "reasonable men." When we get our asses handed to us we are told the next plan is to give to COPE, pay more dues, and vote for "pro-labor" Democrats. These types of union leaders are called labor-fakers and their policies of class collaboration have led directly to defeat after grinding defeat from PATCO to Hormel.

We have a different strategy. We fight for a massive mobilization of the un-

ion's ranks to defend James Grimes at the courthouse—not because we preach faith in this justice-for-the-rich system—but precisely because we know there will be no justice for James Grimes without mobilizing the power of labor to make an offer the corporate power structure and their hack politicians can't refuse: either drop all DA/TA charges against our Brother, or we strike the trains and busses. This is the method of working-class justice.

Labor cannot use its power as a united force capable of winning the mass support of all workers across race and sex lines as long as the right to union protection from Transit Authority victimization is limited to a few mostly white and male bus barns. If Sonny Hall can provide busses to get workers to stage a rally at an arbitration hearing then he should come up with at least two thousand token booth clerks and other

sections of this union to rally in support of Brother Grimes at his next court appearance where a demonstration of mass TWU support demanding the immediate dropping of all charges by the DA would do a lot of good!

Sonny Hall is in bed with Tammany Hall and he would rather see Grimes in jail than have a mass TWU demonstration that would further embarrass the scandal-ridden Koch administration. Hall and the other labor-fakers couple cozy class collaboration with red-baiting attacks on their own members who want to fight the racist, union-busting offensive. We stand with the union militants of the 1930's who rightly condemned red-baiting as a tool of company stooges. In the words of Mike Quill: "I'd rather be called a red by a rat than a rat by a red."

COMMITTEE FOR  
A FIGHTING TWU 28 April 1986

## Two Faces of Sonny Hall

11 April: Local 100's fink leaflet publicly smears James Grimes.

TO ALL TWU MEMBERS

MASS DEMONSTRATION

TO WIN JUSTICE  
FOR R.R. CLERK JAMES GRIMES  
AND ALL TRANSIT WORKERS

11 April: Local 100's fink leaflet publicly smears James Grimes.

5 May: TWU bureaucracy reverses itself, calls for union rally to back Grimes.



# Labor History: How They Split the Electrical Workers

## Red Purge Means Union-Busting

In the past few months, thousands of striking workers across the country have seen their own *International union leaders* act as strikebreakers. The clearest and most dramatic example was at Hormel, where both the International leadership of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union and Lane Kirkland, head of the AFL-CIO, openly scabbed on the strike. For the past several years, these same pro-capitalist bureaucrats have negotiated contracts giving back vital union gains won in decades of labor struggle since the 1930s. Thus the top leaders of American labor are *actively aiding* the destruction of the union movement. Many labor militants must be asking themselves, how is it that the union tops in this country have become not just sellout artists but *company cops*? The answer: that's how they got their jobs in the first place.

The present labor bureaucracy originated in the McCarthyite red purges of the late 1940s-early 1950s. With the active support of the FBI, the House Un-American Activities Committee and the reactionary Catholic church hierarchy, these Cold War bureaucrats were able to drive leftists out of the unions. Ever since, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy has been among the most rabid anti-Soviet warmongers in the country. George Meany, who boasted that he never walked a picket line in his life, was succeeded by Lane Kirkland, a protégé of the Rockefeller family. Kirkland was a member of the 1975 Rockefeller Commission which whitewashed the CIA following Watergate; the Committee on the Present Danger, which pushed for U.S. nuclear first-strike capacity against the Soviet Union; and the Kissinger Commission on Central America, which pushed for aid to the Nicaraguan contras.

One of the recent strikes knifed by the International leadership was a walkout of 9,000 electrical workers at the huge General Electric plant in Lynn, Massachusetts. This key plant produces jet engines for the Pentagon. The month-long strike in February-March was a militant stand against union-busting, coming after the company had beaten up and suspended union stewards. But then International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) president William Bywater stepped in and rammed through a settlement based on the same old arbitration schemes and "training courses" for stewards and foremen to promote class peace on the shopfloor. The background to this betrayal tells a lot about the history of American labor in the last four decades.

### The Communists and the Electrical Workers

Nowhere was the link between the red purges of the 1940s and '50s and the formation of the pro-company union bureaucracy clearer than among the electrical workers at GE and Westinghouse. And it was General Electric which put a grade B Hollywood movie actor on the road as an anti-Communist crusader. As part of his job hosting the "GE Theater" on TV, Ronald Reagan acted as a roving ambassador of big business for the company, visiting all 135 GE plants. "The most dramatic part of my pitch," he wrote in his autobiography, "was the account of the attempted takeover of the [film] industry by the communists." Presumably he encouraged GE workers to follow his own example as a fink, personally responsible for the blacklisting of members of the Screen Actors Guild.

The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE) was once the largest Communist-led union in the country. And the splitting and gutting of that union was an important victory for American capitalism on the home front in its anti-Soviet Cold War. It was no secret that the UE was built largely by

waving speedup artists and strike-breaking class collaborators. As a result, the CP lost a lot of authority among broad layers of union militants. Thus the Communist Party helped set itself up for the massive red purge after the second inter-imperialist world war gave way to the Cold War against

victims of Smith Act persecution of "subversives."

### How the Reds Were Purged

In 1945-46 millions of workers participated in a major strike wave to win catch-up raises and other gains. As the American rulers geared up for the Cold War—ultimately aiming to restore capitalism in the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state—they became convinced that the only way to break the domestic labor movement was to purge it of all "reds," which in the bosses' terms meant any kind of "troublemaker." The Cold War red purge was the signal for massive union-busting. Defense of the labor movement required the unconditional defense of all workers against the witchhunting onslaught. But such unity was undermined from within—by the anti-Communist labor bureaucrats and their hangers-on.

The kickoff for the witchhunt against labor was the passage of the Taft-Hartley bill in 1947. This bill not only outlawed the secondary or "sympathy" strike, a key class-struggle tactic, but more importantly went after the vanguard leaders of the working class through a totalitarian government certification scheme: union officials had to sign an affidavit swearing they were not members of the Communist Party or other groups advocating "unconstitutional" methods. Failure to sign resulted in federal prosecution and barred the union from the certification elections process administered by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Thus the class line was drawn: are you *for* or *against* "our" government, are you "loyal"—will you sign the affidavit and renounce class struggle, i.e., Communism?

Since the union bureaucracies had already endorsed the government's so-called "right" to certify and/or decertify unions as legal "bargaining agents," the state now had a powerful union-busting weapon to offer employers who wanted to bust allegedly "Communist" unions. The AFL and CIO bureaucracies were of course more than willing to demonstrate their loyalty to the bosses by carrying out the purge internally. The key turning point came at the November 1946 CIO convention, seven months before final passage of the Taft-Hartley Act, when CIO leader Philip Murray rammed through a policy statement which declared, "We resent and reject efforts of the Communist Party or other political parties and their adherents to interfere in the affairs of the CIO." Ironically, several Stalinist union leaders were on the 51-man CIO Executive Board that unanimously endorsed the declaration.

Trying to conciliate rather than fight the right-wingers, the CPers had only

*continued on page 11*



As Cold War against Russia heated up, in late 1940s CIO bureaucracy split Communist-led United Electrical Workers (UE) and set up rival IUE (top). UE leads 1951 strike at Pittsburgh Westinghouse to protest suspension of shop steward (bottom).

supporters of the Communist Party, both in the ranks and the leadership. The union's director of organization was James Matles, a Scottish immigrant who had been a leader in the Communist-led Trade Union Unity League in the early 1930s and once worked at GE Lynn. The UE secretary-treasurer was Julius Empsak, another CP'er who rose out of the ranks of GE machinists in Schenectady, New York.

It took two years of aggressive organizing, including a sit-down strike in a department of GE's mammoth Schenectady plant, before the company agreed to sign a national labor agreement with the UE in 1938. In alliance with Roosevelt liberals like James Carey, CP supporters built the UE into a union which embraced 200,000 workers at GE, Westinghouse and RCA on the eve of World War II.

The influence of the Communist Party in the UE was by no means unique. Many of the most militant workers who built the CIO industrial unions in the 1930s joined or supported the CP as "the reds" who appeared to fight against American capitalism. But the Communists were really Stalinists and opportunists, who believed in reforming American capitalism in alliance with the Roosevelt Democrats. This was especially clear during World War II, when Roosevelt sought to "make the world safe" for American profits. The Stalinist CP became flag-

Russia.

The CPers became the most zealous enforcers of the no-strike pledge in the name of the "war effort," denouncing coal miners as "Nazi saboteurs" and "fifth columnists" for daring to strike in 1943, and going so far as to organize scabbing to break "unpatriotic" strikes. As Humphrey-liberal red-hunter Max Kampelman noted in his book *The Communist Party vs. the CIO* (1957), UE secretary-treasurer Empsak "became a member of the President's Labor Victory Committee and led his union in support of the Communist position that 'for the duration' wage demands and other 'normal' trade union activities were to be suspended." The workers were rewarded with wage freezes and piecework.

While the Stalinists acted as loyal labor lackeys of American imperialism, the Trotskyists stood up to the social-patriotism of the AFL and CIO bureaucracies. In preparation for the U.S. entry into the war, Roosevelt saw to it that the Trotskyists who led the Minneapolis Teamsters were indicted and convicted in 1941 under the newly passed Smith Act on trumped-up charges of "subversion"—for advocating socialist revolution and opposing imperialist war. The Stalinists demanded the prosecution of the Trotskyists and applauded when they were sent to prison. Not too many years later, the CP leaders themselves would become

### Spartacist League/ Spartacus Youth League Public Offices

—MARXIST LITERATURE—

#### Bay Area

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

#### Chicago

Tues. 5:00-9:00 p.m. Sat. 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.  
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Chicago Illinois Phone (312) 663-0715

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Tues. 6:00-9:00 p.m. Sat. 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
41 Warren St. (one block below  
Chambers St. near Church St.)  
New York, N.Y. Phone (212) 267-1025



## Smash Union-Busting and Racist Terror!

# Labor Must Fight for Black Freedom!

On May 2, the New York Spartacist League held a forum on "Union-Busting and Government Terror in Reagan's America" at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. Leading off the meeting was a spirited talk by Connie Duquette, a member of the TWA flight attendants union on strike for two months against Wall Street raider Carl Icahn (see page 8). Gene Herson, a veteran class-struggle oppositionist in the National Maritime Union and Spartacist supporter, exposed the class treason of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy and traced its roots to the Cold War red purge of the late 1940s-early '50s. The third speaker was Ed Kartsen, Spartacist candidate for Manhattan Borough President last year and former member and candidate for president of the New York Transport Workers Union Local 100. We print below excerpts from comrade Kartsen's presentation and summary.

**Ed Kartsen:** The MOVE bombing in Philadelphia was a dry run for what Reagan had in store for Qaddafi and his family. All the hype about "terrorism" was a very thin cover for a hit on Qaddafi. Reagan managed to kill Qaddafi's adopted baby daughter and to kill and maim more than a hundred civilians in his attack against Libya. This was a dry run for World War III on a small scale. Reagan's first-strike war plans call for the decapitation of the Kremlin leadership in the first moments of World War III. Reagan is putting



March 5—Electrical workers shut down Lynn GE, major producer for Pentagon war machine.

The Democratic Party accepts into its ranks people like Metzger, the "Grand Dragon" of the Ku Klux Klan. This party gave us "ethnic purity" Jimmy Carter, and Carter's anti-Soviet campaign opened the way for the warmongers in the White House right now. The Democratic Party is keeping in step with Reagan's anti-Soviet war drive. The labor leadership which supports this policy must be ousted by class-struggle leadership. A new labor leadership must be trained and educated in the fight to emancipate the working class.

### Blacks Are the Achilles' Heel of U.S. Imperialism

The Achilles' heel of Reagan's America happens to be the black population, the majority of which didn't vote for him and distrust him deeply. Black people aren't going along with the anti-Soviet war drive. The Civil War and the civil rights movement demonstrated that the path of advancement against reactionary forces in this country has been the fight for social equality for black people.

In Norfolk, Virginia the fight for equal education through racial integration of schools is recognized by a broad section of the black population as a critical struggle for their children's future. They know from their experience that separate is totally unequal, that separate will always be unequal. The powerful longshoremen, core of the working class in the Norfolk area, are strongly linked to that struggle. The outbreak of social struggle there could start a political movement against Reagan's war drive.

The fight for black rights and workers' rights must be linked. That is a strategic question for revolutionaries in this country. These two struggles can be linked but they can't so long as the labor movement remains tied to the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party is the graveyard of social struggle. The civil rights movement was led down the garden path to the cemetery by Kennedy and Johnson's manipulation and control of the civil rights leadership, centrally focused on Martin Luther King. The Communist Party and all the fake-left organizations that advocate pursuing the Democratic Party are being dragged to the right.

After tailing the right wing of the Democratic Party in refusing to support

busing in Norfolk, Jesse Jackson is beginning to feel the pressure or the pull. He can't move to the right as fast as the Democratic Party demands. He's jeopardizing his voting base. Black people aren't keeping in step with the anti-Soviet war drive. He's fast becoming a black face in a high place with a diminishing voting base.

Farrakhan's preachings, by the way, of race-hating and anti-Semitism can only politically disarm black social struggle. Farrakhan wanted Malcolm X dead and is on good terms with Metzger of the Klan. Neither the Democratic Party illusions nor support to the reactionary illusions of Farrakhan can succeed in advancing any effective social struggle by blacks.

The Democratic Party not only stands as an obstacle to the advancement of labor, it stands as an obstacle to the struggle for black freedom. And by that token, it stands as an obstacle to the advancement of a revolutionary program across the scale and the rights of all layers of the population.

### For Revolutionary Leadership of the Working Class!

The labor movement must forge a new leadership through education and class struggle. Labor needs class-struggle solidarity in action! The Machinists should be backing up the TWA flight attendants. "Wimpy" Winpisinger should be swept out of the way. The Machinists, pilots and Teamsters should be solidly behind this strike. That's the only way it's going to win. Labor must measure its success or failure on the ability to shut down the struck facility. Labor must determine who its allies and who its enemies are on the basis of who is helping or who is opposing the shutdown of the struck facility. Consumer boycotts, consumer campaigns are useless gimmicks. The power of labor is on the picket line, and picket lines mean don't cross.

In New York City, a heroic black transit worker, James Grimes, acted in self-defense against a deadly attack. The TA and the government have just indicted him on possession of a gun. The union leadership, meanwhile, has been stabbing this man in the back. These false leaders won't mobilize the strength of the transit union in his defense. The entire New York City labor movement should be standing behind Grimes, in

defense of the rights of working people against the union-busting, race-hating Koch government. Koch brings Reagan terrorism home to New York City. Hundreds of black and Hispanic people have been gunned down in the streets by New York's "finest." So class-struggle politics demands defense of the right of armed self-defense. It demands that the cops who murder blacks and Hispanics be put in jail.

It demands low-cost, quality public housing for working people. It demands the integration of the schools, it demands free higher education. It demands free medical care, 24-hour day care and free abortion on demand. It demands jobs for the jobless, homes for the homeless, food for the starving. It demands the end of the anti-Soviet war drive and defense of weak nations against imperialist attack. Only the struggle of the working class linked to the struggle for black liberation can open the road to a political movement that will bring the Reaganite reaction to a halt. And open the way to winning the rights for homosexuals, and making a cure for AIDS a social priority. This is the only way to form a social struggle that will halt the drive to World War III.

Labor's political program and action must be brought together in the concrete form of a workers party independent of both the Democrats and Republicans. The working class needs a party that will lead the struggle for the emancipation of labor from exploitation. A party that will unite labor in solidarity, unlike the British Labour Party which sabotaged the last British coal miners strike. A party that will not take over the instruments of capitalist state repression but will replace that machinery with organs of workers rule. A party that will fight to establish a planned economy, a plan that is based on social need instead of serving the minority of capitalists at the expense of social interests.

The Spartacist League is the nucleus of that party. Labor desperately needs revolutionary leadership. The Spartacist League is committed to providing that leadership. Labor Black Leagues can provide the basis for the building of a revolutionary party in this country. Our press, *Workers Vanguard*, is our main political organ and I urge anyone who doesn't have a subscription to get one. Further, I urge those who do have a subscription to commit themselves to political and educational struggle.

On November 27, 1982 the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth League initiated a demonstration in Washington, D.C. of 5,000 blacks and trade unionists and stopped the Klan in

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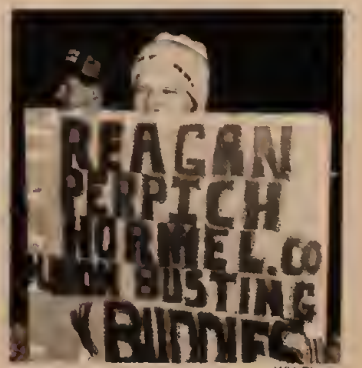


Spartacist spokesman Ed Kartsen.

internal and external policies in action to prepare for World War III.

War preparations continue at home with legal terrorism. I'm talking about the legal terrorism against the only surviving member of the MOVE massacre, Ramona Africa, who has become a political prisoner in this country. She is jailed because she is a member of MOVE just like Geronimo Pratt is jailed because he was a member of the Black Panther Party. And just like how they want to put Guillermo in jail for being a member of the Spartacus Youth League. Justice demands that Ramona Africa and all class-struggle prisoners be set free! And workers justice demands that the bloody MOVE atrocity be avenged!

War preparations at home include the destruction of workers' rights. The right to organize is under attack. The destruction of the air traffic controllers union made it clear. The labor movement, however, is being held back from carrying out class struggle. Instead of fighting for workers' rights, the bureaucrats are blocking with the bosses' government against the rights of labor. The labor bureaucracy is strongly linked with the Democratic Party machine.



Striking Hormel meatpackers lace bosses' government.





WV Photo

Unions take the lead in mobilizing to defend school busing in Norfolk, Virginia, May 1983.

## Labor Must Fight...

(continued from page 7)

Reagan's America from marching through that city. That demonstration shows the way forward for class struggle. I urge everyone here to fight for a revolutionary leadership. Fight for a workers' future! Fight for a revolutionary party that will establish a workers government!

### Discussion

During the floor discussion a black woman addressed the speakers:

"I am not a member of the Spartacist League. My question is that from what I can see you're talking about a poor black person or Puerto Rican. How do you really actually go about getting them to join your organization and follow your organization?... I mean what do you have to offer us that we should follow your organization?"

Ed Kartsen devoted his summary remarks to answering this question, explaining why the key to black liberation is the construction of a multiracial party for socialist revolution.

### Summary

**Kartsen:** We stand firmly for revolutionary integration. The American po-

litical situation was frozen with the betrayal of the gains of the Civil War. It was frozen with the alliance between the Northern capitalists and the Southern segregationists. We know that the only road to fight back is the road of the alliance of the revolutionary working class linked with the struggle for black freedom.

The political struggle for black freedom is not a question of moralism; it is not a question of appealing to the oppressed in terms of the oppressed being the most revolutionary by definition. The working class at large—black, white, men and women, Hispanic and all foreign workers—can only advance by linking workers' rights to the black question. That is what revolutionaries must stand and fight for, that's what the Spartacist League fights for and that is the basis from which we fight to recruit and have recruited black militants.

Students can play a role. Whites recruited to a revolutionary program can play a role. Hispanic people can play a role, and blacks can play a role. Revolutionary leadership is based on the principles of Marxism and class struggle. It is not a moral question. Moralism is more adapted to the position which the liberal left has taken and the position which the civil rights movement fell on.

Black people come to revolutionary consciousness understanding that racist segregation in America is based on

## Union Militants Must Fight for Workers Party

*At the Spartacist League forum in New York, guest speaker Gene Herson responded to a question on the role of opposition caucuses in the trade unions:*

I organized a caucus in the National Maritime Union called the Militant-Solidarity Caucus.

The basic problem in the union movement is the political consciousness of the workers. Number one, the American workers do not understand that there are two classes, the capitalist class and the working class, and that they have counterposed positions and that only one class can run society. That is the bottom line. The capitalists defend their profits based on nation-states. Workers have to understand their interests are international, counterposed to nationalism or patriotism. There has to be a sense of all workers being united. And the number one obstacle in this country is racism.

And reliance on the state—the illusion that you can find solutions within the state apparatus: the bureaucracy of the union relies on legislation and lobbying, so an "oppositionist" relies on going to the

courts and suing the union, suing his officials, seeking redress under the Landrum-Griffin Act which is a subpart of the Taft-Hartley Act, the cornerstone of anti-unionism.

And the third [obstacle] is the idea you can change the system through the Democratic Party.

A caucus is not the solution. It's a way of organizing workers around a class-struggle program to elevate their consciousness to see beyond that and the need to organize on a broader conception. Right now, you're not going to find all workers uniting to make a revolutionary struggle. What you're going to find is pockets of workers who are in struggle and they're looking for answers.

I would say the best direction as a worker in a union who has organized a caucus is that you start to look for a way to link up with the rest of workers who want to overthrow the system that exploits and oppresses us and look for a workers party. Obviously, I think the Spartacist League is the forerunner of the American workers party that will make a revolution that will overthrow capitalism and oppression.

capitalist rule. The working class and its organizations are oppressed on the basis of capitalist rule. This country is preparing for world war. It is destroying the unions. It is forcing labor to keep in step militarily with the right-wing mobilization for World War III, and black people are having none of it. It is on that objective foundation that the program of revolutionary integration, which links the struggles of labor to black people, can succeed. And it is on that objective basis that the majority of black people and working-class people will unite for the freedom of the entire human race. That's the foundation from which we as the Spartacist League, as a revolutionary core of a vanguard party, fight for a revolutionary program.

The needs and interests of black

people and the working class are one. They are united on the basis of a vanguard party that will fight to liberate the entire human race from capitalist oppression. That is the essential point. And November 27, when 5,000 black people and trade unionists united to stop the Ku Klux Klan in Washington, we were one! It is consistently carrying forward of that united force which is going to break Reagan reaction, which is going to open the way for the liberation of this society from Reagan reaction, from war, from poverty and from capitalism. It is on that foundation that we will unite black, white, Hispanic and the workers of this planet to overthrow imperialist oppression which keeps the entire human race on the verge of destruction. ■

## TWA Stewardess: Scabs Are Dangerous to Your Life

*The following are excerpts from remarks at the May 2 Spartacist forum in New York City by Connie Duquette, a member of the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants, on strike against TWA for the last two months.*

Today is Day 57 of our strike. I've been flying 13 years. When I started I had five and a half weeks of intensive safety training. We were taught CPR [cardio-pulmonary resuscitation], we're taught emergency procedures, how to deliver babies, to take care of drunks, psychopaths, all these different situations. When I was hired, you could be washed out for anything. If you could not evacuate a plane in 90 seconds, you were gone.

We've had two recent evacuations on TWA with our 18-day wonders [scab flight attendants]. They've been trained in 18 days. The first evacuation, in Boston, none of the slides were armed. Smoke was filling the cabin. One flight attendant was seen to be walking up and down with a fire extinguisher going, "everything's fine." The passengers were freaking out; they

had to open their own exits. They were jumping out of the wings. People could have died on that. Fortunately, there was no fire. In the second evacuation, in St. Louis, the flight attendant did not know how to open the door. A passenger opened it. People's lives are being risked. A man died of a heart attack recently on a flight because the crew had no conception of CPR, and they watched him die.

We are in a service industry and we are trained to be horrendously polite. I mean people abuse us verbally, physically. I've been tossed over seats. I've been smacked in the face. On one flight I had a kid wet on me, a kid do the other thing, I got thrown up on and a kid had a nosebleed all over me. I mean this is like a typical day. I don't want to work for that kind of money. I don't want to work under those kind of work rules. So we went on strike, all these nice people, and the first day that I actually got up my nerve to yell "Scab!" this other woman said, "I don't think you should yell like that. That's really rude." And I said, "This is not a tea party here."



Connie Duquette

WV Photo

I did not think our group was as strong as we are. Ten percent have crossed. The others are hanging very strong. We're picketing in the city. We're going to other union and labor meetings. We need all the support we can get. United Auto Workers have been supporting us and picketing with us. Other pilots have been picketing with us. The other pilots are trying to get our pilots thrown out of ALPA [Air Line Pilots Association]. Transport workers, a lot of these people have been out and we need the help. Those of us that are still there I do not believe will cross. If this goes on another year, I'll stay with it another year. Most of us will.

But we need the support of everybody in labor, we need the support of everybody. So please don't fly TWA,

and if you feel like coming out and joining us on the line, we would love having you there. Some of you already have and we really appreciate it. We are hanging in there and we are getting a lot stronger for it and a lot more unified, and when we do go back the scabs are going to have to be real careful. And if we can win this, well, maybe other unions have a chance too, because they're trying to kill us all.

When we got into this we didn't know anything about unions. I mean we're a member of a union, we paid our dues. If a passenger complained and we had to go in to our supervisor, we'd take our union rep and that was about it. That was our union involvement. But we're getting on-the-job training, which is a lot better than the scabs are doing. The new-hires, after 57 days, are still not allowed to turn on the oven and cook a hot meal for the passengers. They get cold snacks. If you fly from Tel Aviv, you get a cold ham and cheese sandwich and that's it.

The point is we're learning fast. A year ago, if you had taken a stack of *Workers Vanguard* papers and put them in a room this size filled with flight attendants, maybe five would have picked them up. Now, there are stacks of them in our strike headquarters and they are being read. I've seen them on the picket lines. I've seen them in the strike vans. They are being devoured. We are so hungry for any help, any information, anything we can get.



Bulletin's Hormel Lies

We told it straight. "Hormel Strike Knifed," declared our headline, adding "All Labor Will Pay for This Treacherous Defeat!" (WV No. 400, 28 March). For seven long months on the picket lines—against a union-busting company, backstabbing International union tops, a liberal Democratic governor and the National Guard—the Hormel meat-packers hung tough. But finally, in the face of this unholy alliance, the leaders of Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota decisively turned away from union action. Instead of a class-struggle program to clear the scabs out of the plant and win the strikers' jobs back, they called for a nationwide consumer boycott and announced they would sue the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in the capitalist courts. "And so after a hard, bitter fight the heroic Hormel strike has been smashed," we wrote.

We knew we would hear soon from the fake-left and others, whose program of tailing after the labor bureaucracy prevents them from saying what is. Sure enough, on April 1, the Bulletin, newspaper of David North's Workers League (WL), ran a full-page polemic titled, "'Workers Vanguard' Buries the Hormel Strike." The article, by Bulletin editor Martin McLaughlin, labels the Spartacist League "dyed-in-the-wool defeatists" and claims:

"For all the rhetorical denunciations of the betrayals of the UFCW International, the resolution and the entire analysis of Spartacist AGREE with the position of the UFCW that the strike is over and it is time for a post-mortem."

It's not surprising the Bulletin resorts to this lying amalgam, a smear tactic from Stalin's arsenal, equating the SL's call for class-struggle unionism with the UFCW International's scabherding. The entire resolution he refers to, by Spartacist supporter Stan Gow in the West Coast dock union (ILWU), is a bitter attack on "the labor traitors that currently make up the top leadership of the American labor movement" for having "deliberately isolated and stabbed in the back" the Hormel strike.

The professional con artists of the Workers League don't have to bow to the Stalinists when it comes to cynical lies: having signed up as press agents for local president Jim Guyette and his adviser Ray Rogers of Corporate Campaign, Inc., the WL simply declares that P-9's "decision to defy the International" was an "enormous advance" and a "great step forward for the entire labor movement." So—presto!—the workforce of more than 1,000 scabs who have been working in the Austin plant for more than two months now is simply disappeared!

What is this act of "defiance" North's WL praises so highly? They're not talking about a plant seizure, mind you, or militant mass picketing (as opposed to symbolic "civil disobedience") to drive out the Guard, stop the scabs, shut the plant down and keep it shut until the strike wins. Guyette and Rogers accept the government's claim that such class-struggle tactics would be "violent" and

For Marxists it is axiomatic that the state is not "neutral" but the armed fist of the ruling class. The behavior of the cops, courts and National Guard during the Hormel strike has dramatically proved this again. What P-9er expects to get justice in the courtroom of Judge Bruce Stoner, whose injunctions have made real picketing illegal? Experience from the United Mine Workers to the



therefore unacceptable. No, what they are referring to is taking the UFCW International union to court. The Bulletin article explicitly states that "the P-9 lawsuit is perfectly justifiable as a defensive measure..."

In 1979, when a WL agent, Alan Gelfand, was expelled from the Socialist Workers Party, North & Co. sued the SWP in federal court. Thus the Northies were calling on the class enemy to determine the membership of a self-proclaimed socialist organization! And as part of this provocation, the WL called on the court to pry into the SWP's minutes, finances—in short, every aspect of its functioning. Gerry Healy, North's British boss until recently (when Healy was blown out of the water in a scandal involving Libyan gold, fingering Iraqi Communists and allegations of sexual importunities with young women), would have leftist opponents beaten up by his goons, then sue them when they complained about it in print.

The Workers League has always had great faith in bourgeois justice. Remember their notorious support for the 1971 NYC police "strike," moreover at a time when the racist cops were flexing their bonapartist muscles for more leeway to go after the Black Panthers! Until recently virtually the entire British left shared with the Healyites the idea that cops were incipient "comrades." But the British miners strike, when the cops beat heads and tear-gassed strikers for 12 solid months, taught the British workers a lesson in the nature of the state and discredited the cop-loving Healyites in the eyes of militants.

NYC hospital union has shown over and over that when the government intervenes in the internal affairs of labor, the workers always end up paying. Rather than being a weapon for the Hormel strikers against the company and the treacherous UFCW bureaucrats, this suit will only help the bosses hamstring and control the union movement.

The Bulletin article promises to be the first of a series on "The Politics of the Spartacist League." An introduction describes the SL as "imbedded... deeply into the sewers of middle-class radicalism," and other uncomplimentary phrases. (This is a comedown, of sorts—last year the WL was labeling us "racist" and even "fascist.") To back up such charges, it claims that the SL last year "hailed" the NYC "subway vigilante," Bernhard Goetz, and "denounced" black revolt in South Africa, supposedly saying that armed struggle against apartheid was "hopeless." Anyone who has read Workers Vanguard or is familiar with the politics of the Spartacist League knows that these are patent lies. We have refuted them, exhaustively, in our article "Smash Fascist Smear of SL" (WV No. 379, 17 May 1985). But North, McLaughlin et al. have fed well at the Healyite trough, and figure that they can dish out any amount of hogwash and get away with it.

The Bulletin lies about what we say on the Hormel strike; they lie about the SL's position on South Africa and the black question in the U.S. Aren't they afraid of getting caught out? The purpose of such obvious falsehoods is not to win over any independent worker

or radical who comes in contact with the Spartacists. (In fact, anyone who does admit having talked to the SL is immediately given an ultimatum—break off all contact with "the Sparts," or else.) Rather, these deliberate lies are a political straitjacket, to imprison their own members, morally and programmatically. Either you accept and defend them—all of them—or you're out of the Workers League. And once you've prostituted yourself peddling this crap, you've signed away your right to differ on anything: you are a proven liar.

There is one industry in the country where the WL is active and their work can be compared with that of Spartacist supporters: New York City transit. Recall that the Bulletin declared Bernhard Goetz a racist would-be killer on the sole grounds that he was a white man who shot some black youths; whether or not Goetz faced or feared a mugging was irrelevant to them, because in their legalist view only the "authorities" should have guns. The Goetz case was ambiguous, and we said so at the time. But recently a clear-cut case of self-defense has arisen, of black subway token clerk James Grimes, who shot robbers threatening his life in a hold-up attempt. Spartacist supporters together with token clerks and other transit workers have taken up Grimes's case, seeking to mobilize broad union support. But the WL has done nothing to defend Grimes against management discipline and attempts by the D.A. to railroad him to jail on gun possession charges or worse. The Bulletin has not mentioned this case once. This group which hailed the 1971 NYC cop "strike" won't defend a black man with a gun.

The WL's brand of "colorblind," legalistic unionism shares the fundamental values of the racist pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, which is why the Bulletin kept calling on every sworn enemy of P-9, from the AFL-CIO and UFCW tops on down, to aid the Hormel strike. The Spartacist League, in contrast, put forward a program to mobilize the ranks of labor in militant class struggle. It is not "defeatism" to recognize a defeat when it is staring you in the face. No doubt many Hormel workers will find this hard to take. But revolutionary politics is not a popularity contest: it's a matter of providing leadership. According to the Bulletin, things are getting better and better—all you have to do is believe. But Hormel workers aren't Peter Pans, and David North sure as hell isn't Tinkerbell. As Trotskyists we prefer to face the facts, in order to forge a party that can lead a winning fight. As Stan Gow's motion in the ILWU said of the Hormel strike, "All American workers are going to pay for this treacherous defeat. Next time there had better be a massive show of force by the labor movement to smash the union-busters." ■

Hormel...

(continued from page 12)

Vanguard supporter in Iowa pointed out that the rally will take place in the city park, which is nowhere near the Hormel plant:

"These workers plainly need a lot of things more than another day of Saturday speechifying and walking through the park. For example, a mass march which would end by placing them firmly inside the Hormel plant, along with a few thousand other unionists, and holding it until management rescinded the firings, granted them back pay, and agreed to no cutback on jobs at the plant."

Labor must mobilize to defend the fired Local 431 members!

Break with the Democrats—Build a Workers Party!

The day after the Austin rally, who should show up in town but would-be

"mediator" Jesse Jackson, who announced he had "lifted the spirits of the people on both the side of labor and the side of management" (Minneapolis Star and Tribune, 14 April). Jackson was in Austin to advertise his upcoming "Rainbow Coalition" meeting and hustle votes for the racist, union-busting Democratic Party, the party of Governor Perpich who called in the National Guard against the Hormel strikers, the party of Philadelphia mayor Goode, who massacred the black men, women and children of MOVE.

For P-9ers and all who were inspired by the fight they waged, a central lesson of the defeat at Hormel must be the need to fight for a class-struggle workers party. But various fake-socialists instead retail the lie that impotent civil disobedience and consumer boycotts will win. From the openly pro-Wynn Communist Party to the Socialist Workers Party, which covers for the bureaucracy's backstabbing of P-9, these reformists

are united in their desire to prevent labor struggles from breaking the limits of narrow trade unionism, and the chains which tie labor and blacks to the Democratic Party.

Hormel is not the first strike that has been defeated in this country. In 1894, a local manufacturing strike grew into the historic Pullman Railway Strike, organized by Eugene Debs's American Railway Union (ARU). The strike was crushed in a bitter battle that saw dozens of workers killed, and hundreds blacklisted from the railroads. In the strike's aftermath, Debs and other ARU members began to question their assumptions about American "democracy." In jail after the strike, Debs began to read some Marxist writings. In 1898 the remnants of the ARU founded the Social Democracy of America, a forerunner of the Socialist Party which was founded in 1901. Thus, many veterans of the strike, following Debs, made the leap from bread-and-butter unionists to

militant socialists.

From the beginning of the Hormel strike, P-9's allies were the working people and oppressed minorities across the country, who knew that the battle of this union local in the heartland of America was their fight. Under revolutionary leadership these powerful allies could have been organized in mass action to crush Hormel's union-busting drive. The Spartacist League is fighting for a class-struggle leadership of the workers movement, forged in political combat to drive out the labor fakers, from Kirkland and Wynn on down, who tie the unions to the capitalist enemy. For a workers party which fights for a workers government!

Contributions for strikers' defense can be sent to: P-9 Legal Defense Fund, 316 N.E. Fourth Avenue, Austin, Minn. 55912; Ottumwa Support Group, Box 1355, Ottumwa, Iowa 52501. ■



# Media Meltdown...

(continued from page 1)

from tours of the Soviet Union to check them for "contamination." (The amounts were so minute one technician quipped it would only be harmful if they ate off the soles of their shoes.)

It was, moreover, a *manipulated media panic*. At the imperialist summit in Tokyo, Reagan tried to deny the U.S. was engaged in "Soviet bashing" while one key official said, "the last thing we want to seem to be doing is any gloating." Gloating isn't the half of it. The Reaganites were having an anti-Soviet field day. Add to the usual "Russians eat babies for breakfast" Cold War rhetoric quite a dose of Ukrainian malice, as the media interviewed expatriates filled with hatred for the October Revolution, who all seem to have left in 1944 (i.e., with the retreating Wehrmacht). And a special contribution from that coterie of social democratic Cold Warriors around Jeane Kirkpatrick, notably Kenneth Adelman, the man who wouldn't call nuclear war "horrible" until it was clear his appointment by Congress as head of the "arms control" agency depended on it.

The "evil empire" propaganda was coming not only from Reagan but also liberals like the *Washington Post* (30 April), who claimed in an editorial ("The Russian Syndrome") that the Soviets don't put "the same value on

capitalist media has been a Big Lie.

Reagan's accusations of Soviet "disregard" for international welfare are not only lies but the height of hypocrisy, coming from the gang that wants to *nuke Russia* with a first strike. Far more dangerous than the Chernobyl incident was the deliberately provocative U.S. invasion of Soviet territorial waters in the Black Sea in March. That might have triggered a nuclear showdown. From Nicaragua to Angola to Afghanistan, the Pentagon is trying to escalate its "low intensity conflicts" with "Soviet surrogates" into confrontation with the Russian bear. And now CBS News (5 May) reports that the U.S. is planning yet another attack on Libya, this time with cruise missiles: "The administration is currently debating which targets

Government gave the information, which is true and reliable, that two died. But you didn't like that. So you talked about 2,000 deaths.... It's a lie" (*New York Times*, 3 May). But as the Reaganites learned from Joe McCarthy and Josef Goebbels, mud sticks if you throw enough of it.

Lie No. 2: "Mass Grave for 15,000 N-Victims." This wildly incredible claim also came from the Ukrainian "community" in the U.S. There are indeed mass graves in the Ukraine—they contain mostly Jews, such as the one at Babi Yar—but they were made by Nazis, not Russians, with the help of Ukrainian fascists in World War II.

Lie No. 3: "This time we apparently have the real thing, the core meltdown that Three Mile Island was not" (*Wash-*



Chernobyl power plant, site of serious nuclear accident in the Soviet Ukraine.

Americans' "interagency panel" on the nuclear emergency was backtracking, saying that "the latest Air Force reconnaissance photos made it 'plausible' that the Soviet Union had put out the fire, as Moscow contended" (*New York Times*, 2 May).

Lie No. 5: "Thousands Flee Nuke Nightmare—Help Us, USSR Pleads" (*Daily News*, 30 April). This is intended to make the Soviet government look like helpless idiots, supposedly pleading for allegedly superior American technical aid while a leaderless population panics. Wouldn't the Pentagon's first-strike war planners love that? But it's pure fantasy. The Soviets did carry out an organized evacuation of four settlements near the plant, reportedly 49,000 people—without upsetting May Day celebrations in Kiev. This was hardly panicky "fleeing." By way of comparison, when a test of evacuation plans for communities around Long Island's Shoreham nuclear plant was scheduled a while ago, it was called off because 1) local authorities considered evacuation impossible, and 2) they feared the chaos of a test evacuation could lead to deaths.

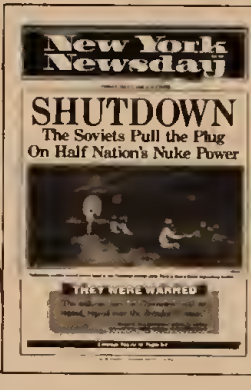
While White House spokesmen made a big publicity point of offering U.S. "help," they never did have any suggestions about how to put the fire out—the Russians did that all by themselves, apparently by dumping wet sand on it. The Soviets did take up the offer of help from the International Bone Marrow Transplant Registry at UCLA. The need for bone marrow transplants to treat severe radiation cases requires precise matches of tissue types, and hence a large pool to draw from.

Lie No. 6: "Experts: By Design, It Can't Happen Here" (*Newsday*, 30 April). After Three Mile Island? U.S. reactors, they say, use "containment" buildings to prevent release of radioactive material (they don't mention that the containment wouldn't help much in a total meltdown), and they don't use graphite-moderated reactors. This is not true for military/research reactors run by the Energy Department, which believes containment buildings "are not cost effective" (*New York Times*, 3 May). The Hanford facility in Washington state, which uses a graphite moderator like the Chernobyl reactor, is "designed to produce weapon-grade plutonium," unlike the Chernobyl plant which is a civilian utility.

Lie No. 7: The reports of a Soviet electricity "Shutdown" (*Newsday*, 2 May) turned out to be a gross exaggeration. Only nuclear plants similar to the one at Chernobyl were shut down—a wise move under the circumstances—amounting to a temporary loss of less than 5 percent of total Soviet electric power production.

## Anti-Soviet Chain Reaction

The sequence of events as described by Soviet spokesmen appears utterly plausible. The accident reportedly hap-



Beyond disinformation: American media radiates anti-Soviet hysteria.

civilian lives...as does the democratic West." That's quite a mouthful coming from the only country to ever use nuclear weapons...against the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with a toll of more than 90,000 dead immediately and another 110,000 from the aftereffects! And don't forget those innocent civilians repeatedly irradiated over the years by fallout from U.S. nuclear tests in the Pacific. Recent evidence suggests that Marshall Islanders may have been deliberately exposed to the fallout so that they could be guinea pigs to study the effects of radiation on humans (London *Guardian*, 2 May).

So in the midst of this media meltdown, what did happen at the Chernobyl power plant? The Russians clearly want to minimize it, and they have their story. The Americans clearly want to maximize it, and they have lots of stories...which are all now collapsing on each other. All the satellite photos and other paraphernalia available to the U.S. "intelligence community" have not come up with anything to contradict the assertions in Soviet press statements. There was a serious nuclear accident, two people reportedly died immediately, about 20 are said to be in serious condition and around 200 were hospitalized. Several towns were evacuated. Certainly there will be many more deaths in the weeks and years to come among the Soviet citizens exposed to the Chernobyl accident. And there will be an increased incidence of cancer in that region. But most everything else in the

should be hit." The real nuclear danger is from the White House.

## Manipulated Media Panic

Here are only some of the Big Lies that have been strewn over the airwaves and published in millions of copies by the U.S. media in the last week. The purpose: to create anti-Soviet panic.

Lie No. 1: "2,000 dead." This came from a phone conversation with an "unidentified Kiev resident," according to UPI. It was later stated by the UPI night editor in Washington that this was "an unconfirmed report" which "came out of U.S. intelligence" (from column by Hunter Thompson in the 5 May *San Francisco Examiner*). When the Soviets issued their statement reporting only two dead, 197 hospitalized, with 18 in "serious condition," U.S. Arms Control Agency head Kenneth Adelman claimed this was "frankly preposterous" (he wanted more). But Dr. Richard Reba, director of nuclear medicine at George Washington University Medical Center, said the Moscow statement "makes sense," since anyone immediately killed by radiation would have had to be "in the reactor facility or very close to it."

Western media also noted with bewilderment that life was "normal" in nearby Kiev, where May Day celebrations went on as scheduled—impossible if a holocaust had just occurred in the suburbs. As the chief spokesman for the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Vladimir Lomeiko, rightfully complained at a New York conference on U.S.-Soviet press relations this week: "The Soviet

ington Post, 30 April). To begin with, Three Mile Island involved a partial meltdown, which came within an hour of being total. As for the Chernobyl accident, physicists are divided over whether there was any kind of a meltdown—an uncontrolled nuclear reaction. According to the *New York Times* (30 April), Yale physicist Allan Bromley, a government adviser on nuclear policy, pointed out that the Chernobyl accident "was almost certainly not a classic meltdown." Given the "design and physics of the Soviet reactor," he noted, "the fuel temperatures could not soar high enough for this to occur."

Apparently what happened was that graphite blocks, used in Soviet reactors to "moderate" the nuclear reaction, overheated and caught fire. At some point, a chemical explosion apparently blew open the reactor, releasing a cloud of radioactive particles into the atmosphere. "The reactor was turned off immediately after the accident," said Boris Yeltsin, Moscow Communist Party leader, in a West German TV interview. The 30 April TASS statement noted specifically that "no chain reaction fission of nuclear fuel is taking place." The big problem was putting out the graphite fire.

Lie No. 4: "It'll Burn for Weeks" (*Daily News*, 1 May). This widely publicized assertion was based on the offhand comment of Harold Denton, an official of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission—hardly a paragon of technical truth. The day after, the

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pened on the night of Friday/Saturday, April 25/26; the first public announcement came on Monday, April 28. Soviet foreign ministry spokesman Lomeiko told Western reporters:

"An event rose there [at Chernobyl], and its consequences were not known to us. It was a leak of radiation. But when it became known that it was not an event with just local repercussions, we informed you."

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency was informed of the partial destruction of a reactor and leakage of radioactivity. Contrary to scare stories about "death clouds" spreading across Europe, the radiation levels outside the Soviet Union were minuscule and quickly dissipated. Danish scientists measured radiation at 0.02 millirems per hour on May 1, or 1/500th of the amount of one chest x-ray. In Sweden, the peak was recorded at 2 millirems. "By comparison," the *New York Times* (2 May) noted, "a passenger flying from Los Angeles to New York receives a dose of 2.5 millirems from cosmic rays."

There was a series of successively more detailed Soviet news releases as information was verified—and so far they have proven to be true, unlike the hysterical Western reports. The *New York Times* (1 May), attempting to draw parallels about "Soviet Secrecy," noted that the Soviet news release process "recalled the defensive Soviet coverage of the South Korean [KAL 007] airliner incident, when Moscow took six days to concede that it had shot down the plane, and then gradually increased the doses of information while it built its case that the plane had been on an espionage mission." But in the sequel, all evidence points to the fact that the KAL jetliner was on a U.S. spy mission (see "KAL 007 Was U.S. Spy Plane," *WV* No. 379, 17 May 1985).

If this process seems slow by Western standards, it's not a Kremlin plot of secrecy but reflects the slowness of the ponderous Stalinist bureaucracy. If the Soviets can be faulted, it's that they did not inform *their own people* fast enough or with enough detail, leaving them susceptible to capitalist panic-mongering. And the decision-making levels of the apparatus may indeed not have known what happened. The cumbersome bureaucracy has built-in buffers against the impact of reality. Consider the illusions implied by the statement of Vitali Sklyarov, minister of power and electrification of the Ukraine, in an interview in the February 1986 issue of *Soviet Life* featuring the nuclear power plant at Chernobyl: "The odds of a meltdown are one in 10,000 years. The plants have safe and reliable controls that are protected from

any breakdown...."

There is no doubt that Soviet safety standards have been undermined by the bureaucratic degeneration of the Bolshevik Revolution. Prophetically, a March 27 article in the Soviet journal *Literaturna Ukraina*, by a woman described as a senior manager at the Chernobyl plant, complained of "deficiencies" in the building of the plant due to bureaucratic attempts to fulfill "unrealistic quotas" (*Newsday*, 2 May). A thoroughly plausible scenario printed in the same paper ascribes the accident to a sudden cutoff of electrical power to the coolant system. Naturally, the emergency backups also failed. Why shouldn't they? No time-serving bureaucrat would have checked it out—he figures he'll be gone in three years. It sounds all too true.

The *Washington Post* called Soviet society "accident-prone." Certainly workers democracy would clear up a lot of snafus in this degenerated workers state. But talk about throwing stones in glass houses: so far this year the U.S. has



Hiroshima was no accident! U.S. imperialism A-bombed defenseless Japanese civilians to intimidate Soviet Union.

managed to blow up a billion-dollar space shuttle with seven people on board; explode a \$500-million spy satellite atop a Titan rocket; spend \$70 million on an underground nuclear test which failed when the blast destroyed the test equipment; run two nuclear subs aground; and this week they blow up a weather satellite atop a Delta rocket at Cape Canaveral. So much for the "magic of the marketplace." When one Congressman tried to taunt Soviet embassy spokesman Vitaly Churkin at a House hearing by asking him to explain "in layman's terms" the Chernobyl accident, Churkin shot back: "Can you tell me in those same layman terms why the Challenger disaster happened?" (*New York Times*, 2 May). Behind this hoary old evasion stands a grim reality, the results of the market.

If you want to talk about genuinely sinister governmental cover-up and silence, what about the incident near Palomares, Spain in January 1966, where a U.S. B-52 crashed, losing four 20-megaton H-bombs. For 44 days the U.S. would not even acknowledge that it had lost anything, even while American troops scoured the Spanish countryside with Geiger counters. Eventually the U.S. admitted that two of the bombs had broken open, spraying the region with deadly radioactive plutonium and enriched uranium. The radiation was "basically harmless," the U.S. insisted, even as they secretly scooped up 1,500 tons of topsoil and shipped it back to the U.S. for burial. But there was no outcry about the "madmen" in Washington from the U.S. media or the "European community" of NATO—that rhetoric is reserved for the Soviet Union only.

### Chernobyl and the Anti-Soviet War Drive

What's going on in the U.S. and West Europe this week is a sinister amalgamation of hysterias, cleverly manipulated

many of them for the rest of their lives. But nobody seriously proposed abandoning the petrochemical industry.

A *New York Times* (5 May) news analysis noted:

"People carry in their minds images of the mushroom cloud of Hiroshima, and so atomic bombs and nuclear power plants become to them interchangeable in their potential for death and destruction."

The reformist left has tried to turn these fears into an anti-nuclear movement, by making a false equation between nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. "Shut 'em down!" demanded the radical *Guardian* (7 May) regarding nuclear power plants, echoing panicky bourgeois media stories about "millions" contaminated by dangerous radiation from the Chernobyl plant. Similarly, the *Militant* (9 May) chimed in with a call to "shut down all nuclear power plants immediately." So the eco-freaks have joined the anti-Soviet war drive. With their logic, you might as well shut down all industry, for good.

The *New York Times* (1 May) airily dismissed the Soviet government's complaints about panic-mongering coverage in the Western press, and recalled Gromyko's statement when he nominated Mikhail Gorbachev head of the CPSU a year ago, that "We live in a world in which, figuratively speaking, various telescopes are aimed at the Soviet Union." They're "just waiting for some sort of crack to appear," he opined. This is not "paranoia" but entirely accurate, as the Chernobyl incident graphically demonstrated. The monstrous inefficiencies and loss of life caused by the Stalinist bureaucracy's stifling of workers democracy are all too real. They only pale in comparison to the deliberate mass murder carried out by the imperialists. Militarily defending the Soviet Union against imperialist attack, the Soviet workers must take back political power and restore the banner of the Bolshevik October Revolution.

The real threat to the world comes from those nuclear nuts in Washington. You can bet that the nuke planners in the Pentagon were carefully tracking that radioactive cloud this week—not out of humanitarian concern, but to calculate the effects of their planned nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union. For them, the Chernobyl accident was merely an out-of-town tryout for nuking Russia. From the MX to the Pershing 2s to the Trident submarines to Reagan's "Star Wars" madness, the U.S. government—Republicans and Democrats alike—are driving us headlong toward a nuclear World War III, and only a proletarian revolution can stop them. ■

## Red Purge...

(continued from page 6)

emboldened the witchhunters. UE officials refused to sign until 1949, when they acquiesced, but the FBI and other witchhunters continued to hound them anyway. In 1950 the CIO expelled ten "Communist" unions, including the UE. Across the country, careerist union bureaucrats saw their chance to get rich quick—at the expense of labor's strength and independence—and they offered their services to the bosses for the dirty work. Thus emerged the virulently anti-Communist and docile labor bureaucracy which runs the AFL-CIO today. In the National Maritime Union it was Joe Curran, in the Transport Workers Union it was Mike Quill, and in the UE it was James Carey.

In 1947 Carey launched a dissident group to regain control of the UE, allying himself with the most reactionary elements of the Catholic church in the so-called Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU), with a one-plank program to kick out the "reds." In one typical and critical local election

contest at Local 601, Westinghouse, in 1948, Carey was aided by the timely arrival of the House Un-American Activities Committee, which subpoenaed the local's left-wing leaders at the critical moment. In such contests ACTU would often sermonize that the vote "represented a choice between Washington and Moscow, and ultimately between Christ and Stalin," as one Massachusetts priest told his flock (quoted in Bert Cochran, *Labor and Communism* [1977]).

Carey and his group were expelled from the union at the 1949 UE convention, but by 1950 Carey's creation, the International Union of Electrical Workers, had gained control of 56 GE units with 53,000 workers, including Lynn and Everett, while the UE had 46 units with 36,000 members including the Schenectady local. Because the UE membership had mushroomed from 200,000 to 550,000 during the war, when the Roosevelt government encouraged unionization under pro-war bureaucrats, the Matles/Emspac CP leadership had relatively few hardened cadre tested in tough organizing battles. This made it easier for Carey and his

redbaiters to do a wrecking job on the union. Democratic president Truman made clear where he stood by sending personal greetings to Carey's IUE in 1949. There was, in short, massive collusion between the bosses' government, the employers and the "labor lieutenants of capital" to break the UE and other "red" unions:

"Among Congressional committees, a favorite pretext for intervention against UE was the imminence of an NLRB election in which the union was challenging, or being challenged by, an anti-Communist rival. The company, GE or Westinghouse, would petition for an NLRB election under the Taft-Hartley Act, then permit IUE free run of the plant for its campaign, and, when a Congressional committee appeared over the horizon, fire those UE militants who took the Fifth [Amendment].... 'HCUA [House Committee on Un-American Activities] repeatedly subpoenaed national and local UE leaders and scheduled hearings to coincide with NLRB elections, as well as negotiations and strikes.'"

—David Caute, *The Great Fear* (1978)

Joe McCarthy himself lent a hand for Carey. On 17 November 1953, for instance, a screaming headline appeared in the local *Lynn Item*: "NLRB Orders

GE Union Poll; McCarthy Due to Quiz Lynn Workers on Red Ties." "Two days later," writes Caute, "McCarthy staged televised hearings in Boston, hot on the heels of the announcement of the NLRB election between UE and IUE at Lynn and Everett." An FBI fink turned over names of alleged "Communists," two of whom were immediately suspended by GE—they were, of course, UE supporters. Needless to say, Carey won the subsequent NLRB "election" (though only by the narrow margin of 5,546 to 4,806). The bosses' red purge succeeded.

Following that reactionary triumph of the anti-Communist labor bureaucracy, the AFL-CIO apparatus became the most servile instrument for subduing the working class. It is proof in the negative of Trotsky's warning, written over 45 years ago: "The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat" (*Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*). ■



## S.F. Longshore Union Condemns U.S. Terror Against Libya



Longshore Militant Stan Gow.

On April 24, the Executive Board of International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) Local 10 in San Francisco unanimously passed a resolution condemning the murderous U.S. bombing raid against Libya. This courageous stand places the predominantly black SF longshore local once again in the vanguard of American labor.

Local 10 was forged through the mighty 1934 general strike that smashed open shop conditions in San Francisco. In 1953, at the height of McCarthyite Cold War hysteria, thousands of Local 10 longshoremen drove the HUAC witchhunters out of town. Today, as ILWU members up and down the coast face a concerted employer attack on union conditions, defense of labor at home requires opposition to the anti-Soviet war drive.

We warmly applaud this action by

Local 10 in the face of flag-waving, union-busting Reagan reaction. The resolution, presented by Stan Gow, a member of the Executive Board and supporter of the Spartacist League, is printed here:

"ILWU Local 10 supports the cause

of Libyan independence and territorial integrity against assaults by U.S. imperialism. We condemn U.S. imperialism's policy of anti-Soviet provocation and its acts of aggression, criminal assassination and mass terror against Libya."

ILWU  
forged  
in 1934 San  
Francisco  
general  
strike.



## Defend Hormel Strikers!

The government and its loyal cops in the AFL-CIO bureaucracy who knifed the Hormel strike are continuing their all-out assault on the meatpackers' Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota. On Friday, April 11, civil disobedience protests at Hormel's corporate headquarters and the nearby plant gates were assaulted by riot police brought in from throughout the state. The cops waded into a demonstration of hundreds of P-9ers and supporters, using tear gas and clubbing protesters. With over 1,000 scabs working in the plant, which has been operating for three months, P-9ers have little to lose; they defended themselves against the police assault, and several cops had to be treated at St. Olaf's Hospital. To date some 150 P-9 strikers and their supporters are facing criminal charges, some carrying up to ten years in prison.

Meanwhile, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) International under William Wynn, not satisfied with killing the Hormel strike after sabotaging every effort to bring out the rest of the chain, has moved to place a trusteeship over P-9, holding a kangaroo court "investigation" of the local. In response, local president Jim Guyette announced May 6 that P-9 is suing the International for \$13 million. This appeal to the capitalist state, which has persecuted the strikers at every step, will only aid the bosses' attempts to undermine labor. Instead union militants should be fighting to oust the labor traitors like Wynn. Labor must defend P-9! Drop all charges against the Hormel strikers! Down with the UFCW kangaroo court! Cops and courts hands off the unions!

For months, the Hormel strike in-

Cops riot  
against Hormel  
meatpackers in  
Austin, Minne-  
sota, April 11.  
Heroic strike  
was knifed by  
reactionary  
labor tops.



AP



Schluter/Minneapolis Star and Tribune

ed unionists across the country as P-9ers militantly defied the givebacks offered on meatpackers by Wynn & Co., galvanizing support from hundreds of UFCW members through the use of roving pickets. But the courageous P-9ers were defeated, as the scab Wynn, backed by Lane Kirkland's AFL-CIO, withdrew strike sanction and cut off strike benefits. The P-9 leadership lacked the class-struggle program necessary to defeat the unholy alliance of the company, the state and the labor fakers. Harry DeBoer, a veteran of the powerful Trotskyist-led 1934 Minneapolis Teamster strike, says he told P-9 leaders months ago what it would take:

"There's no way they'll win a strike with a factory working.... They're going to have to take over the plant. It will be violent, no doubt, but that's the way they're going to have to protect their union."

—quoted in *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, 4 April

This road was not taken. Instead, under the tutelage of Corporate Campaign, Inc. "consultant" Ray Rogers, P-9 leaders retreated into a dead-end campaign of consumer boycott, civil disobedience and dragging the UFCW into the bosses' courts.

Now, the strike leadership and their supporters on the reformist left claim the "strike" is in better shape than ever! On April 12, the National Rank and File Against Concessions (NRFAC) organized a 4,000-strong march and rally in Austin, ostensibly to "shut down Hormel." But as Guyette admitted, the purpose of the rally and the week of civil disobedience which preceded it was "to further intensify our nationwide boycott" against Hormel (UPI, 10 April). Militant unionists have learned from bitter experience, when you go on the boycott list, it's a tombstone over your dead strike. NRFAC is cynically misleading workers to cover up the fact that

it opposed shutting down the plant and strike action to drive out the National Guard.

Hormel workers who honored P-9's roving pickets in Ottumwa, Iowa and Fremont, Nebraska are fighting to get their jobs back. In Ottumwa, where over 500 Local 431 members were fired, P-9 supporters won a small victory when the state awarded them unemployment compensation. But the UFCW tops are letting them twist in the wind while their cases drag through the grievance procedure; the arbitrator won't even begin considering the issues until the hearings are concluded at the end of June, and Hormel has begun hiring scabs at the plant.

On Saturday, May 10, NRFAC will co-sponsor a march and rally in Ottumwa for the Local 431 members who stood behind the principle that picket lines mean don't cross. A *Workers* continued on page 9