

## As War-Mad Reagan Goes Down the Tubes...

# Gorbachev's Pipe Dream: Peace with Imperialism

### Defend the Soviet Union Through World Revolution!

The Tower Commission report officially told the American people what was always perfectly clear to everyone who had eyes to see, that Ronald Reagan is a moron and a liar. The victims of this vicious regime—workers who've had their unions gutted and broken, the black and Hispanic poor who've seen their children starved by the racist cutbacks—are now witnessing the sight of Reagan twisting slowly in the wind. But gloating over the downfall of the teflon president is not enough. Hard class struggle can turn this country around, galvanizing the sympathy of the ghetto poor and unemployed, farmers driven into bankruptcy, and all the intended victims of Ed Meese's thought and sex police. *Now is the time to strike back*, not only against the crippled Reagan government but the whole racist capitalist system.

Instead, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev holds out his hand to the rabid warmonger Reagan as a partner in securing "world peace." *Business Week* (16 March) breathed a sigh of relief: "Just as the Iran-*contra* scandal was laying waste to the Reagan Presidency, the leader of the 'evil empire' held out the promise of an arms-control breakthrough on medium-range weapons in Europe." Administration hardliner Kenneth Adelman crowed that the latest Soviet offer "shows that the Russians have not given up on President Reagan." Not only has Gorbachev not given up on Reagan, he has given in to him. The latest Soviet "arms control" proposal is the *very same* one Reagan made in 1981 when NATO was about to deploy the Pershing 2 missiles in West Germany, a first-strike weapon eight minutes flying time from Moscow.

Washington's so-called "zero option" was so one-sidedly advantageous to NATO forces, it was *designed to be rejected* by Moscow. And the Russians

did reject it, then. They pointed out the "zero option," while calling for the removal of almost 500 Soviet missiles in exchange for a promise not to deploy U.S. Pershing and cruise missiles, did not touch the British and French missiles targeted at their cities, nor did it affect U.S. submarine-launched missiles in European waters. At the Reykjavik summit the Soviets insisted that a "Euromissile" deal depended on limiting Reagan's "Star Wars" scheme; now they have dropped even that condition. One of the U.S. negotiators who first proposed the "zero option," Spurgeon Keeny, says the latest Soviet offer "is a far better deal than anyone would have prophesied" (*New York Times*, 4 March).

But all these negotiating moves, the endless offers and counteroffers at Geneva or Reykjavik, in no way reduce the threat of nuclear war hanging over mankind. "Arms control" is a hoax which in fact serves to stimulate the development of new weapons systems. The NATO powers will not give up or limit any weapons unless they can be replaced by comparable or more effective ones. The Soviet Union should build and acquire whatever weapons it considers necessary without being encumbered by "arms control" agreements with its implacable imperialist enemy.

Look at the 1972 SALT I treaty, which the Kremlin bureaucracy holds up as a model "arms control" agreement. Visiting the U.S. not long after this treaty was signed, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev declared: "The quarter-century period of the Cold War is now giving way to relations of peace, mutual respect and cooperation between the states of the East and West." Superficially, the SALT agreement froze the number of missiles on both sides. However, Nixon/Kissinger insisted on *exempting* the number of war-



As Pentagon's first-strike missiles target USSR, Reagan and Gorbachev meet at Reykjavik last October.

heads which could be placed on a missile. In the decade following the SALT I treaty, the Pentagon simply multiplied the number of warheads per missile, increasing its nuclear arsenal to the tune of three a day! So much for arms control and détente.

#### America's Main Export: Counterrevolution

Rabid warmonger Richard Pipes, formerly Soviet "expert" for Reagan's National Security Council, recently wrote: "Even a good [missile] deal would be a mistake, for the root of the problem is not nuclear weapons" (*New York Times*, 10 October 1986). No, the root of the matter is revolution and counterrevolution. Pipes makes no secret of his goal to overthrow the collectivized economy of the Soviet Union—the product of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution—and restore "free market" capitalism. However, the Soviet Union is too strong militarily and the loyalty of its people too deep for Western imperialism to risk a direct assault. Instead the

strategy is to attack on the periphery of Soviet power. In the 1950s John Foster Dulles called this "rollback." Today it's called the "Reagan doctrine" for exporting counterrevolution.

But the imperialist war drive against the Soviet Union is bipartisan, including the Democrats as well as the Republicans. "Arms control" honcho Adelman summed up the immediate aims of the "Reagan doctrine": force Moscow to end "the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the continuation of military support of regimes in Angola, Cambodia and Nicaragua" (*Washington Post*, 13 November 1986). In other words, the arms race is being used as a means of pressure on Russia to surrender Afghanistan to the CIA-armed Islamic fanatics, abandon the heroic Vietnamese people who inflicted upon American imperialism the greatest defeat in its history, let the racist butchers in South Africa take over Angola, and cut off support to Sandinista Nicaragua against Reagan's contras.

For the imperialists, a key test of Gorbachev's "desire for peace" is his willingness to abandon Afghanistan, on the southern border of the USSR, to "freedom fighters" who shoot school-teachers for teaching young girls to read. Gorbachev has called the war in Afghanistan a "bleeding wound" and repeatedly declared his intention to withdraw all Soviet troops in a relatively short time. Perhaps the Afghan army—trained by the Russians and bolstered by popular support for land to the tiller and other democratic measures—can mop up the *mujahedin* scum by itself. But there appears to be an increasing danger that the new Soviet leadership will sell

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# Partisan Defense Committee

## CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

### Labor Defense—Wherever the Class Struggle Rages

"The movement for non-partisan, unified working class defense is not only not confined to any one country, but is connected up in a strong ring of solidarity which embraces the entire world. Wherever the class struggle rages, and the capitalist class takes its victims from among the workers and farmers, the movement for labor defense grows up out of the struggle and into an arm for the masses" (*Labor Defender*, July 1927).

Last year South African workers at Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing downed tools in support of their brothers facing a shutdown of 3M's Freehold, New Jersey magnetic tape plant. Salvadoran phone workers struck in the face of death squad terror. The courageous struggles and solidarity of these brutally oppressed workers is an inspiration to their brothers and sisters throughout the world. In the belly of this largest imperialist beast, whose bloody hands terrorize workers and oppressed worldwide, U.S. workers have a special duty and capacity to assist our victimized brothers and sisters around the world. In recent months the

Partisan Defense Committee has supported a number of cases of workers and oppressed facing state repression across the seas.

Mordechai Vanunu is the Israeli technician who disclosed Israel's arsenal of 100-200 nuclear bombs. For this elemental defense of all peoples by disclosing this danger of a thermonuclear holocaust, Vanunu was kidnapped by the Israeli secret police, Mossad, and faces the death penalty as he stands trial for treason. The PDC issued an urgent appeal for an international campaign of protest demanding that charges be dropped and Vanunu freed. In a telegram protest to the Israeli Embassy, we charged, "Death penalty threat recalls anti-Semitic McCarthyite murder of Rosenbergs."

Following the well-publicized student upheavals last December, which backed by the threat of labor strike action forced the withdrawal of the anti-

working-class education "reform" bill, the Mitterrand/Chirac government was shaken when the workers hit the bricks for themselves. The Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF), French section of the international Spartacist tendency, was authorized by the strikers to raise funds to assist rail workers and their families who lost wages during the strike. The PDC contributed \$100 to express our solidarity with their struggle against years of anti-working-class austerity.

In South Asia, U.S. imperialism's anti-Soviet war drive fuels state terror and pogromist attacks against Sri Lanka's hideously oppressed Tamil minority. The capitalist powers such as Britain who arm and train the death squads of Jayewardene's reactionary regime close their borders to Tamil refugees. On February 18 the PDC cabled our protest of the Thatcher government's attempt to expel 58 Tamil refugees at London's Heathrow Airport and demanded full political asylum.

All Lankan workers face grinding exploitation to safeguard the profits of imperialist investors. In 1984 the PDC raised money for the mainly Sinhalese women textile workers striking at Magnum Garment. On 12 December 1986, a stop-work action was called against an attempt by Magnum bosses to take back bonuses, one of the gains of the 1984 strike. The bosses retaliated by sacking four founding members of the union who had led the stop-work, Leela Samarasinghe, Indrani Dayananda, Latha Gomes and Renuka. Once again we call on *WV* readers to dig deep for funds to aid our sisters in Lanka and their battle to win back their jobs.

Thirteen Puerto Rican independence fighters face FBI frame-up charges in Hartford, Connecticut. The use of

dragnet raids, massive wiretaps, RICO conspiracy laws and preventive detention is part of the government's efforts to crush the "independentistas" and try out Meese's arsenal for criminalizing political opposition on the mainland. The PDC has donated \$100 to their defense, which is crucial to all workers, oppressed and enemies of colonialism.

For 13 years Canadian abortion rights activist and concentration camp survivor Dr. Henry Morgentaler has been the target of vicious state prosecution and fanatical fundamentalist violence. The bible-thumping anti-Semites and abortion clinic bombers have in their sights not only women's rights but every working-class gain, from unions to the Russian Revolution. The PDC contributed \$100 to Dr. Morgentaler's defense, and encourage *WV* readers to render much needed support. As Dr. Morgentaler wrote, "I wish to thank you for your contribution to cover expenses related to my struggle for reproductive freedom for women in Canada. It is a long, arduous and protracted battle. I appreciate your support and view it as an encouragement to continue in spite of all the difficulties." Send contributions to: Pro-Choice Defense Fund, 238 Davenport Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 1S6.

We urge *WV* readers to continue to help build the PDC. Become a sustaining contributor. For your contribution of \$5 or more you will receive a subscription to *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*, newsletter of the PDC. For a single copy send \$.75. Earmarked contributions to any of these and other vital cases we support may be sent to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. ■



#### Workers Revolution to Disarm the Imperialists

*Besieged by imperialism and civil war, the young Soviet republic appealed for revolutionary action by the international proletariat. In March 1919 the Third International was founded, and two weeks later the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) adopted a program drafted by Lenin which stated:*



LENIN

The resistance of the exploiters, which grows simultaneously with the intensification of the onslaught of the proletariat, and is particularly intensified by the victory of the proletariat in individual countries, and the international solidarity and organization of the bourgeoisie inevitably cause the combination of civil war in individual countries and revolutionary wars between the proletarian countries and bourgeois countries fighting to retain the rule of capital. In view of the class character of such wars, the distinction drawn between defensive and offensive wars becomes utterly meaningless.

By and large, this development of international civil war, a process which has been taking place with exceptional rapidity before our very eyes since the end of 1918 is the legitimate product of the class struggle under capitalism and a legitimate step towards the victory of the international proletarian revolution.

For this reason, the R.C.P. emphatically rejects the hope of disarmament under capitalism as the reactionary philistine illusion of petty-bourgeois democrats, even though they call themselves socialists and Social-Democrats, and in opposition to this and all similar slogans which actually play into the hands of the bourgeoisie, it advances the slogan of arming the proletariat and disarming the bourgeoisie, the slogan of completely and ruthlessly suppressing the resistance of the exploiters, the slogan of fighting until victory over the bourgeoisie of the whole world is achieved both in civil wars at home and in international revolutionary wars.

—V.I. Lenin, "Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.)" (March 1919)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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20 March 1987

## Feds Continue Vendetta

### John Gotti Beats RICO Frame-Up

After a seven-month trial in Brooklyn, John Gotti was acquitted of federal charges under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) of engaging in a criminal conspiracy as a capo (and later head) of the Gambino Mafia "family." Before leaving the courthouse Gotti noted, "They'll be ready to frame us again in two weeks... just watch" (*New York Times*, 14 March). The very next day, the *Times* reported that Manhattan federal attorney Rudolph Giuliani has seized the case and is preparing a "new" case, based once again on RICO statutes, accusing Gotti and his six codefendants of running a "criminal enterprise"—the "Gambino crime family." So with Giuliani bucking for higher political office, the government vendetta continues. As liberal columnist Murray Kempton sarcastically observed before the verdict was in:

"It is an article of faith for civics classes that no man can be tried twice for the same crime. We can thank RICO for liberating us from that prejudice..."

"John Gotti could be convicted and sent away for 40 years or more if the jury found that he had conspired to commit a 1975 homicide for which he had already served a prison term.... RICO arithmetic is the science that takes one felony already adjudicated, adds one misdemeanor



John Gotti

Hemsey/Gamma-Liaison

and sums up the total as a multiplication of felonies.

"It has been said that, if such things can be done to the Mafia, they can be done to us all. We would better say that they ought not to be done to anyone."

—"If RICO Wins, We Lose," *Newsday*, 8 March

The government's momentary defeat in the Gotti case came after a string of courtroom victories culminating in the conviction of 17 reputed Mafia leaders in the "Pizza Connection" trial earlier this month. This time, the intended victim Gotti was lucky enough to have a jury which wouldn't buy the bought testimony

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Israeli soldiers terrorize Arab youth on occupied West Bank. AFP

# Unholy Alliance of Israel, Syria, Shi'ite Amal



Shi'ite Amal slaughters Palestinians in West Beirut. AFP

# Palestinians Under Siege

For decades the Palestinian resistance has been hailed by Arab nationalists and their left cheerleaders around the world as the vanguard of the "Arab Revolution" against Zionism and imperialism. In reality, all the Arab governments—feudal monarchies or "radical" military regimes, pro-Western or Soviet client states—have betrayed the dispossessed Palestinian people and sought to crush their armed militants: the 1970 Black September massacre by Jordan's King Hussein; the 1976 siege of Tel Zaatar by Lebanese Christian Maronites backed by Ba'athist Syria; the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, when the entire Arab world stood by while the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) faced alone the full might of the Zionist war machine. Today, once again, the bloody events in both Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza highlight the unholy alliance of Western imperialism, Zionism and the Arab rulers against the Palestinian people.

During the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, imperialist war criminal Henry Kissinger gloated:

"No Arab government has given more than verbal support to the embattled Palestinians, and even that lacked the traditional passion. Even Syria stood by passively until its own forces were directly attacked, and made a separate cease-fire while the PLO was being systematically destroyed."

—Washington Post, 16 June 1982

However, the Palestinian forces in Lebanon have since managed to regroup and grow, in part due to the Zionist state's savage repression in the West Bank and Gaza and continuing expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland. An estimated half of the 12,000 PLO commandos driven out of Lebanon in 1982 have since slipped back. However, the Shi'ite Amal, the main beneficiary to date of the Israeli



Palestinian camp of Shatila in West Beirut—scene of Zionist genocide in 1982—reduced to a few hundred square yards of rubble by Amal artillery. AP

invasion and subsequent pullback, is determined to prevent the restoration of Palestinian armed force in Lebanon. As a result there has been the grotesque spectacle of Shi'ites pounding the Palestinian camps with artillery fire and trying to starve them out, while Israel bombs them from the air and sea. And now Syria has sent its army into West Beirut to break the power of the PLO.

Amid the squalid communalist blood-letting in Lebanon, the struggle of the Palestinians for national justice is the one continuing social struggle which can legitimately claim the support of the world proletariat. Revolutionaries must support the Palestinian fighters defending the besieged camps. But backing the Palestinian cause does not mean political support for the PLO, whose petty-bourgeois nationalism has produced defeat after defeat for the Palestinian people. During the Israeli siege of Beirut in 1982, Arafat even called on the imperialist elite guard—the U.S. Marines, French legionnaires and Italian commandos—to disarm and escort out of Lebanon the PLO's own fighters, leaving the Palestinian masses defenseless before the Israeli butchers and their Christian Maronite jackals. The Sabra/Shatila massacre, reminiscent of the Nazi Holocaust, was the direct result of Arafat's betrayal. Today, it is the Shi'ite Amal which is carrying on the Zionists' dirty work.

## "War of the Camps" and "War of the Allies"

The "war of the camps" began last September when Amal renewed its siege of Rashadiyeh, a Palestinian camp near Tyre in southern Lebanon. The PLO fought back effectively, overrunning the Amal stronghold of Maghdusheh overlooking Sidon and carving out a six-square-mile "liberated zone" outside this strategic port of southern Lebanon, only 35 miles from the Israeli border.

managed to flee the nearby Baraj al Barajinah camp recounted in horror:

"Famine is ungodly and wicked. The children were constantly screaming for food. When there was shelling I prayed to God to take us so we would not feel our hunger anymore."

—Washington Post, 11 February

Then, in mid-February, fighting broke out in Muslim West Beirut between Amal and the Lebanese Communist Party. The initial turf battle was followed by a wave of assassinations of top CPers (at least nine killed) and the kidnapping and murder of scores of party members. Shi'ite clerics reportedly issued religious edicts calling for the killing of all Communists in southern Lebanon. Lining up with the CP in the Beirut battles were the Druze militias of Walid Jumblatt and the pro-Khomeini Shi'ite Hezbollah (Party of God), which has itself gone after the CP in the past. This "war of the allies" pitted against each other forces which had fought together against the Maronite Christian Phalange in 1983—becoming one more episode in the endless, shifting communalist civil war among the kaleidoscopic sectarian forces of Lebanon.

The entry of the Syrian army, 7,000 strong, into West Beirut late last month will bring no respite for the starving Palestinian camps. On the contrary, while the declared purpose of the Syrian intervention was to stop the fighting between Amal and Druze forces, Damascus strongman Assad's real target is the PLO. For all his hardline rhetoric against Israel, from his 1976 Lebanese intervention (initially on the side of the Christian Maronites) to today, Assad's overriding aim has been to break up a "Fatahland" in Lebanon under the influence of PLO leader Arafat. As the astute Near East correspondent David Hirst wrote: "A new link-up between the besieged [Palestinian] camps and West Beirut was something that President Assad had to prevent at all costs" (London Guardian, 23 February).

For good reason the PLO (now continued on page 11)



Syrian army intervention in West Beirut targets PLO. Kara/Sipa

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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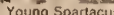
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# ***Drive CIA Recruiters Off Campus!***



WORKERS VANGUARD



# Racist Terror on U.S. Campuses

## Black Students Under Attack

Racist terror in America is not confined to the mean streets of Howard Beach and Forsyth County. From the mob rampage against black students at UMass Amherst following the Red Sox loss in the World Series, to the KKK-style cross-burning in a black cadet's room at The Citadel, there has been an ominous surge of racist violence on campuses across the country. These attacks have evoked outrage by minority and anti-racist students who've organized large rallies and "racial awareness symposiums." In several instances, the racist punks have been identified and been let off with a slap on the wrist.

If even one of these bigots were nabbed and displayed with a yellow stripe painted down their naked back, it would do more to improve the "climate of opinion" than a thousand "consciousness-raising" sessions. Racist terror will not be stopped by moral suasion—it must be smashed by the social power of the working class, united with the intended victims of race-terror and all anti-racist fighters.

• At the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, a former hotbed of radical student protest, racist flyers declaring the end of deer-hunting season and announcing "open season" on blacks were shoved under the door of a lounge where black women students were meeting. The scum responsible are feeling so emboldened that when several hundred students marched in protest of these threats, Klan outfits were hung



Black Student Union at Northern Illinois U. led large, integrated protest against racist threats on March 5 after Nazi swastikas appeared on campus.

The next day, over 100 students who came out to protest this assault became the target of another attack as racists in a pickup truck tried to mow down the marchers. Another punk in a white Cadillac smashed the camera of a *Boston Globe* photographer. Outrageously blaming the victim, university officials are denying that the attack on Kremer (who was sent to a local emergency room from the school infirmary that night) ever occurred, claiming that the snow where Kremer was beaten showed no trace of a scuffle!

• At UMass Boston, liberal professors have received hate mail on university stationery and swastikas have been plastered on their office doors. Professor Kevin Whitfield, the faculty adviser for InCAR (Progressive Labor Party's "International Committee Against Racism") received a threat stating that his "ease" has been assigned to the "werewolf" section of the SS in Urbana, Illinois."

• The elite University of Chicago is no safe haven from menacing bigots who take their cues from the KKK/Nazi fascists who've targeted that city for attack. Stickers reading "Stop AIDS: Castrate Gays" appeared in the black neighborhoods around Hyde Park and on the campus. Gay and leftist student leaders received letters which were also sent to their parents, roommates and employers threatening "strong measures" against their "deviant" behavior—the return address was stamped "The Great White Brotherhood of the Iron Fist, Botha Boulevard."

• At UCLA, an outfit named the "White Student Alliance" posted flyers for a racist rally on minority professors' doors and in Campbell Hall where the affirmative action center is located. Student groups organized a rally against racism, drawing some 400 predominantly black and Hispanic students out to combat this threat. This mobilization kept the racists from rearing their ugly heads that day.

Campus administrators are tripping over themselves hurrying to "fix" the damage by avowing their commitment to "diversity" and attribute the "troubles" to the fact that youth are young (l) and haven't lived through the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and '60s. Since the 1930s political activism on American campuses has been predominantly liberal rather than right-wing. But as a petty-bourgeois strata, isolated from the reality of working-class struggle, students can swing pretty far to the right. In Germany in the '30s, the campuses were breeding grounds for the ideological storm troops of Hitler's Third Reich.

To some degree, the increase in racist

violence on the campuses in this country today reflects the frenzy of the petty-bourgeoisie whose economic position has eroded with the rot of American industrial capacity. Yuppies grow up and become "dinks" ("double income, no kids"—'cause they can't afford them) and middle-class families finance college educations the way they'd buy a house, by going into massive debt.

The intensified racial polarization on the campuses is also a direct result of government policy. The fascist seum got their green light under Democratic president Jimmy "ethnic purity" Carter with the 1979 slaughter of five leftists and union organizers in Greensboro, North Carolina. The Klan-endorsed Republican president Ronald Reagan has continued state-sponsored terrorism against black people as a policy. The bombing of the black Philadelphia MOVE household, legally sanctioned cop murder of black people in the streets of New York City, gutting busing for school desegregation, banning "secular humanist" textbooks—these are the emblems of a willfully vicious ruling class.

Government slashing of financial aid has hit black families the hardest. Universities get whiter while the armed forces are disproportionately black and Hispanic. Union-busting attacks by the bosses have given rise to a two-tier wage system in this country where young workers employed at a lower pay scale are wielded as a club against the unions themselves. *Newsweek On Campus* (February 1987) reports that at "many 'integrated' colleges blacks are fast becoming missing persons.... In the 1984-85 school year...the proportion of blacks in college decreased 20 percent. And this happened even as the number of black high-school graduates was rising."

At Dartmouth, where officials boast-

ed of the highest black enrollment in the Ivy League (a paltry 8 percent), minority admissions plunged 25 percent in one year after sledgehammer-wielding racists of the *Dartmouth Review* crowd leveled a shantytown, unable to tolerate even a symbolic gesture of solidarity with the black freedom struggle against apartheid. To eliminate the race and class privilege in higher education, the Spartacus Youth Clubs demand the nationalization of private universities. For open admissions and free tuition and a state-paid stipend for all!

What this country needs is some good old-fashioned class struggle—now, while the Reagan gang is widely despised as brutal, incompetent, war-crazed criminals. If labor flexed its muscles, the racist vermin crawling around the campuses would slink back to their holes, and frat rats now hoisting the Confederate flag of slavery wouldn't be whistling "Dixie." Impossible? Not at all. In 1982, the Spartacist League initiated a successful united front of labor, minorities and students which swept the Nazis off the streets of Ann Arbor.

On their own, students have no social power, but united with Detroit auto workers and other sections of the labor movement can beat back these racist



United front of labor and students, initiated by SL, drove Nazis out of Ann Arbor, March 1982.

from a dormitory along the march route. Racist graffiti is now commonplace in study carrels in the library; a book by Mark Twain was defaced with swastikas and pictures of lynched blacks hanging from trees. In early February the campus radio station was (temporarily) shut down and a "deejay" fired for broadcasting vile racist "jokes" complete with "laugh track."

• In Austin, Texas, two students, wearing Ronald Reagan masks and carrying a gun, cornered a prominent black student activist and tried to push him through a plate glass window.

• Just after midnight on February 18 at Tufts University near Boston, Ian Kremer, a student well known for his anti-racist views, was attacked by thugs who beat him to the ground screaming, "nigger lover," "pinko" and "Jew boy."



WV Photo

San Francisco, 1984: We tore down the Confederate flag of slavery!

attacks through militant action. What's lacking is a revolutionary leadership to get the unions off their knees and fighting in defense of their own class interest and that of all the oppressed. On the campuses and elsewhere, the Spartacus Youth Clubs seek to win anti-racist militants to the side of the working class, to fight for revolutionary integrationism. The racist oppression endemic to this society can only be eradicated by overthrowing the capitalist system which breeds it. We are dedicated to building the party to lead these struggles to finish the Civil War through socialist revolution. ■

### Spartacist Events

#### Spartacist Class Series

#### Black History and the Class Struggle

Saturday, April 4, 1:00 p.m.

Blackburn Center, Room 150  
Howard University

For more information: (202) 636-3537

WASHINGTON, D.C.

#### Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

#### Trotskyism: Revolutionary Marxism Today

(Exco Course)

Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.

Next classes: March 31, April 14, 28

Wilder Hall, Room 212

Oberlin College

For more information: (216) 775-5858

OBERLIN



# Detroit Auto Bosses Raped America

## A Review:

*The Reckoning*  
by David Halberstam  
William Morrow & Company,  
New York, 1986

### PART ONE OF TWO

In the early 1970s a business friend told Lee Iacocca, then president of Ford, that he'd been offered a big Toyota dealership in Houston. "Don't take it," Iacocca advised him. "Why not?" he asked. "Because," the blowhard Detroit auto man declared, "we're going to kick their asses back into the Pacific Ocean." In the next decade it was the Japanese who kicked the asses of Iacocca and his colleagues back into the Great Lakes. So now the Chrysler chairman is selling cars with "Born in America" flag-waving...and Japanese imports. (Incidentally, Iacocca's friend took his advice and later said it was the worst business decision he ever made—cost him \$10 million at least.)

Today the U.S. is running a whopping \$170 billion annual trade deficit, half of it to Japan. Democrats threaten trade war by pushing protectionist bills in Congress while Reagan's Treasury Department wages currency war, trying to make the yen expensive and the dollar cheap. As auto bosses push their Japan-bashing "Buy American" ads, United Auto Workers (UAW) officials are bashing Toyotas, whipping up deadly chauvinism in the ranks of labor. Already one Chinese American, Vincent Chin, was beaten to death by a Chrysler foreman screaming about stealing American jobs. And now, as Japanese investment in the U.S. increases, the media are handing out advice on "Working for Japan Inc." "Keep your union card in your wallet," suggests *Newsweek* (2 February).

With U.S. industry increasingly "uncompetitive," turning out shoddy products while the companies sink billions into takeovers instead of productive investment, anti-Japanese protectionism has tied American workers to the hosses and the Democratic Party. Last year, AFL-CIO tops scheduled a chauvinist demonstration on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, demanding the hiring of more union labor in building a Toyota plant in Kentucky. And Democrat Mondale appealed for union support to his '84 presidential bid ranting, "If you try to sell an American car in Japan, you better have the United States Army with you when they land on the docks!" We denounced this war talk, and pointed out:

"Japan was driven into [World War II] by protectionist barriers raised against its exports by the Western powers during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The attack on Pearl Harbor was a direct response to the American, British and Dutch embargo of oil shipments to Japan without which its economy could not survive. U.S. imperialism thus pro-



## JAPAN INC. VS. WALL STREET



Modern Japanese manufacturing plants dominate world markets, Wall Street speculators drive American industry into the ground.

voked Japan into war and then ended it with one of the most cold-blooded atrocities in modern times: dropping the first nuclear weapons on the defenseless civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"The answer to Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima is for the American and Japanese workers to unite and wage class war against their own exploiters on Wall Street and in Tokyo...."

—"Workers: Don't Buy  
Protectionist Poison!"  
WV No. 416,  
21 November 1986

### An Apology for Giveback Unionism

The "secret" to Tokyo's economic success is a hot topic from corporate boardrooms to the shopfloor. So explaining Japan's evident industrial superiority has become a cottage industry for American academics and journalists of late. There's Ezra Vogel's *Japan as Number One*, Herman Kahn's *The Japanese Challenge*, etc. The most recent contribution to this literature is journalist David Halberstam's *The Reckoning*, which sets out to tell "the parallel stories of the Japanese ascent and the American malaise." He uses the

device of parallel histories of Ford and Nissan, the number two auto makers in their respective countries. But this is not a narrow, dual corporate chronicle. *The Reckoning* ranges far and wide, from the politics of the postwar American occupation of Japan to the economics of OPEC.

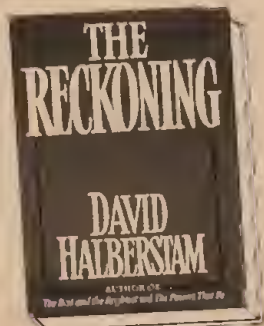
At its core *The Reckoning* is a slick, ideological apology for economic austerity and giveback unionism. Halberstam blames Detroit's economic collapse on geology and the American national character, or rather lack of character. The American people, he maintains, became soft and spoiled by the easy prosperity of the 1950s-'60s based on cheap oil, making the U.S. unfit to compete in the leaner and meaner world of the 1980s: "America, facing competition from hungrier, more disciplined Asian nations, seemed unable to discipline itself." Basically Halberstam agrees with Nissan head Takashi Ishihara, who told the UAW's Doug Fraser a few years ago: "Your problem in America is of your own making. It is your work force—it is your whole American system. Nobody wants to work."

Such views have become fashionable in American intellectual and also business circles. The doyen of liberal economists, John Kenneth Galbraith, hails *The Reckoning* as an "impressive achievement" and endorses Halberstam's analysis. Critics of the American auto industry now apportion the blame more or less equally between the greed and shortsightedness of the Big Three executives and the UAW. Maverick John DeLorean, once a GM vice president, declares that "monopoly led to lavish overhead, including lavish union contracts and lavish salaries for management" (*New York Times*, 7 December 1986). Consider how lavish the life of a typical Detroit auto worker is compared to DeLorean's. One Christmas he gave his wife three sable coats of different lengths, one for every occasion.

Halberstam does not especially condemn the UAW leadership, though he does argue that the union pushed up wages to a point that damaged the industry's competitiveness. Still, he is deeply respectful toward Walter Reuther and his successors in Solidarity House: "If there was a certain nobility of purpose—a vision of a better and more just society—that drove the union, then much of that came from Walter Reuther." No, it is the *rank-and-file auto workers* Halberstam condemns for getting too much money for doing too little.

It isn't that Halberstam is blind to the present suffering of the Midwest's blue collar workers and their families. He paints a powerful and moving picture of Detroit in the early 1980s—skilled craftsmen pawning their tool kits, some worth \$2,000 apiece; hundreds standing in the freezing cold all night to apply for a handful of jobs as department store clerks; the marked increase in broken homes and wife beatings as jobless men take their anger and frustration out on their families.

But for Halberstam, auto workers brought these terrible conditions down on themselves. Pointing to the breakdown of labor discipline in the early '70s—the rash of wildcat strikes, increased absenteeism—he retrospectively warns that "these alienated, complacent workers, whether they knew it or not, were under challenge from purposeful, disciplined workers around the world, and their jobs and their whole way of life were in the balance." Halberstam writes of Midwestern auto workers, a large number of them ghetto blacks, as if they were "me generation" yuppies into their BMWs, tennis lessons and aerobics classes. The fact that Detroit is a largely black town is barely mentioned in this 700-page study of the postwar American auto industry. While condemning auto worker militancy in the early 1970s, *The Reckoning* gives a glowing account of Nissan's new and non-union plant in Smyrna, Tennessee: "Morale was unusually high among the workers...it seemed as if fifty years of



Slick apology for givebacks, austerity.



Flag-waving blowhard Lee Iacocca pushes protectionism...and Japanese imports.



labor-management bitterness had been wiped away."

The core of Halberstam's argument is taken over from Jimmy Carter's late '70s anti-OPEC hysteria: namely that the relative prosperity of the 1950s-'60s—the vaunted "American way of life"—was based on cheap oil, much of it by a happy accident of nature located under American soil:

"The oil culture, with its easy affluence, was like an addiction. Americans had been rich for some sixty years, and several generations had become accustomed to prosperity."

"The postwar years, the immense material strength and physical might, two generations of unrivaled prosperity—it had all lulled America into thinking it had attained an economic utopia, a kind of guaranteed national prosperity, like a concession won in some marathon bargaining session with God, a guaranteed annual increase in the standard of living. In those few postwar decades, America had taken a temporary historical accident and construed it as a permanent condition."

It is true that oil is a limited natural resource. But for now and the foreseeable future there is plenty available in the ground and it can be extracted for a very small fraction of the going price. It costs around 20 cents for ARAMCO (the American oil consortium) to pump a barrel of oil out of Saudi Arabia, which has by far the world's biggest known reserves (Alessandro Roncaglia, *The International Oil Market* [1985]). That barrel sells for \$19, almost 100 times the cost of production! A few years ago during the manipulated "oil crisis" the price was twice that. While Halberstam takes Detroit's Big Three to task for artificially propping up automobile prices, he ignores the far more powerful and dangerous Seven Sisters—the American/British/Dutch oil cartel. In fact, he blames the oil-price explosion of the 1970s entirely on the Arabs (he also thinks Iranians are Arabs).

But all this is totally irrelevant to Japan's competitive superiority over American industry, especially since the U.S. produces some oil and much coal while Japan imports all its oil and scrapped most of its coal mines in the late 1950s. True, the oil shocks of the '70s first turned American consumers away from Detroit's big gas-guzzlers and toward smaller, more fuel-efficient cars which the Japanese produced well and cheaply. But the flood of Toyotas and Nissans into the American market was by no means based solely on size and price. The Japanese simply make better cars. By the late 1970s Hertz Rent-A-Cars' maintenance reports indicated that Japanese cars were twice the quality of comparable American models.

And what does the price of oil have to do with Japan's superiority in steel making, machine tools, consumer electronics, office equipment...? Japan has now overtaken the U.S. in high-tech, microchip-based electronics. A recent report by the CIA concluded: "We believe the U.S. semiconductor industry is at a crucial turning point in its history. It fundamentally cannot compete in its present form" (*New York Times*, 5 January). In short, Japan has a clear edge over the U.S. in every branch of manufacturing not directly related to the military, like aircraft. If, in Halberstam's words, by the late '70s "the entire American industrial core was vulnerable to relentless challenge from a confident, disciplined Japan," this had absolutely nothing to do with OPEC.

## The Cold War and Japanese Company Unions

While Halberstam sees the American people spoiled during the era of cheap oil, he sees in the Japanese people models of every economic virtue. They are portrayed as combining the discipline and spirit of self-sacrifice of ancient Spartans with the intellectual rigor and intensity of nuclear physicists. The Japanese "were exceptionally well prepared for an industrial society." "Not



Steel mills demolished in Midwest rust belt. Wall Street is deindustrializing America.

only did these new workers have very good basic schooling, particularly in mathematics, on a level well above their counterparts in American industry, but they were much more driven by social ambition." Halberstam is impressed by the "cohesiveness" of Japanese society, the almost "familial" sense of national loyalty.

However, Halberstam's own narrative account of Nissan and early postwar Japan explodes these very myths which he otherwise perpetuates. This is the most valuable aspect of *The Reckoning*. In particular, it demonstrates the direct link between the creation of company unions in Japan and the Cold War alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet bloc.

That alliance came to defeated Japan a few years later than to defeated Germany. Almost as soon as Hitler's aides poured gasoline on his corpse, the U.S. set about rebuilding occupied western Germany as a bastion against Russia. "Denazification" was a joke. Apart from a handful of top figures like Göring and Goebbels, the masters of the Third Reich were co-opted en masse into the "free world." Reinhard Gehlen, chief of anti-Soviet intelligence for the Reichswehr, was recruited by the Americans with such dispatch that some of his agents never missed a payment.

The situation in the Far East after World War II (the "Pacific War" to the Japanese) was somewhat different. There, Chiang Kai-shek's China was America's main "free world" ally, and Washington viewed the resurgence of Japanese militarism as a potential threat to America's sphere of influence. Thus the American occupation under megalomaniac General Douglas MacArthur took certain measures to weaken the traditional Japanese elite, notably a land reform which created a class of middle peasant proprietors.

Steps were also taken to break up the *zaibatsu*, the big industrial monopolies like Mitsubishi and Mitsui. A goodly number of prewar Japanese politicians, military men and industrialists (including the founder of Nissan, Yoshisuke



U.S. occupation forces under General MacArthur (with Emperor Hirohito) helped break combative Japanese labor movement.

Ayukawa) were imprisoned for a time or otherwise barred from public life. The Japanese ruling class was demoralized by the foreign occupation of their country for the first time in history, blamed by the masses for the disastrous war and fearful of the intentions of the American victors.

At the same time, thousands of leftists and working-class militants were released from prison. The Japanese Communist Party (JCP) emerged from the underground with great moral authority among advanced workers and radical intellectuals as the only political force which had opposed the mili-



Federated Pictures

tarists' drive toward war. Under these conditions Japan experienced an explosion of pent-up class struggle unique in its history. Within a year and a half after the surrender of August 1945, five million workers were enrolled in trade unions, more than ten times the prewar peak. The most militant union federation, Sanbetsu, was strongly influenced by the pro-Moscow JCP.

The workers were clearly on the offensive. An American liberal, who visited Japan in this period, wrote:

"In the early days of the occupation most disputes were settled quickly, and usually with a victory for the union. Employers were stunned by the defeat, disorganized and uncertain, fearful of antagonizing the occupation forces, and in some cases, no doubt, apprehensive of revolutionary developments."

—Miriam S. Farley, *Aspects of Japan's Labor Problems* (1950)

In addition to strikes, Farley reported that militant unions employed an effective tactic called "production control" in which the workers "take over the plant and run it until management meets their demands or a compromise is reached."

The rising line of class struggle culminated on 1 February 1947 in a call for a general strike not only around economic demands but also for the ouster of the right-wing Yoshida government. On the eve of the planned strike MacArthur ordered it banned. The Stalinist JCP, like its counterparts in West Europe, was unwilling and unprepared to fight for power. Such a fight meant taking on the American occupation army, the effective bourgeois state power in

Japan. Instead the JCP obeyed MacArthur's orders and called off the general strike. By surrendering when they were strongest, leading the most militant elements of the Japanese workers movement, the Stalinists soon lost the position of strength that they had.

After the aborted February 1947 general strike, the American occupation switched to a "Reverse Course." In Halberstam's words, its earlier "New Deal liberalism" was scrapped. MacArthur organized a red purge of Japanese unions, enlisting for this purpose the fanatically anti-Communist bureaucrats of the American Federation of Labor. A top official of the AFL, James Killen, was sent to Japan to set up "democratization leagues" which acted as anti-Communist cells within the militant labor movement. Today, when the AFL-CIO tops shriek about "unfair Japanese competition" due to Japan's compliant corporatist unions, American workers should know that the "labor" agents of U.S. imperialism helped split the Japanese unions and break their power. In 1948 MacArthur outlawed all strikes by government workers. This affected wide sectors of the economy, for example the state-owned railroads.

While the U.S. occupation forces moved against the left and workers movement from early 1947 onward, Washington was not yet prepared to restore Japanese imperialism as a full-fledged Cold War ally. That development was precipitated by a momentous



Kyodo Photo Service

Striking workers surround Japan Broadcasting Co., 1946. Stalinist union leader Yashiro Ii (above) calls off planned general strike, 30 January 1947.

and unexpected event on the other side of the Sea of Japan: the victory of Mao's Red Army over Chiang Kai-shek in early 1949. This immediately produced a reversal of alliances. Japan became America's "best friend" in Asia, Red China its demonic enemy. Halberstam summarizes U.S. imperialism's changed policy toward Japan:

"The policy changed not so much because of events in Japan but because of events in the world. The Cold War had intensified in Europe, the Communists were about to win in China, and Washington, which was already in the process of strengthening and reindustrializing West Germany, suddenly began to see Japan differently: It should become a free-world bastion in Asia. It should be industrialized. Its traditional business structure should be strengthened, not undermined. Assaults upon the *zaibatsu* were to stop."

Significantly, the Korean War, beginning in mid-1950—"a gift from the gods," prime minister Yoshida called it—both consolidated the new Washington/Tokyo axis and pulled Japan out of its prolonged postwar economic depression. The *zaibatsu* became MacArthur's quartermasters, supplying arms to the U.S. forces in Korea. Nissan produced jeeps and trucks for the American army.

Initially, however, the U.S. Reverse Course toward Japan was associated economically with the "Dodge Line." In early 1949 Joseph Dodge, a right-wing Detroit hanker, designed an economic program for Japan similar to Milton Friedman's post-1973 "shock

continued on page 8



# Japan Inc...

(continued from page 7)

treatment" for Pinochet's Chile. His declared aims: "increase in unemployment will in turn lead to increased efficiency of labor and a greater production.... Get the country into hard condition for the struggle in the export market." Government expenditure was cut to the bone while taxes were raised. Central bank credit was frozen while loans were called in. A third of small Japanese businesses went bankrupt; by mid-1950 industrial production had fallen to less than a third the level of 1931, at the depth of the Great Depression!

Hundreds of thousands of workers, almost 200,000 in the government sector alone, were thrown onto the streets. The mass layoffs greatly facilitated purging leftists from the workplace and breaking the power of the radical unions. Halberstam pinpoints the origin of Japan's company unions and submissive labor movement in the Dodge Line and red purge:

"In 1949, with MacArthur's support, there was an all-out assault upon Communist leadership in the unions which became known as 'the Red Purge.' In union after union the Communists and some of their colleagues were simply arrested and removed from their jobs. As many as ten thousand workers were fired during these purges, and hundreds of thousands were pulled back from union membership."

"As one radical union after another fell, the Japanese industrialists replaced them with unions that to Americans seemed company-sponsored. What was emerging were management-union (or, some would say, management-management) relations that Americans could not match, an advantage that American industrialists did not themselves enjoy."

Halberstam notes the historical irony that a Detroit banker helped create in Japan an economic power that three decades later would reduce the U.S. auto capital to an industrial ghost town.

## The 1953 Nissan Strike: A Historical Turning Point

While the Dodge Line and red purge greatly weakened the radical unions,



Kyodo Photo Service

Right-wing Detroit banker Joseph Dodge (far left) drew up program for mass layoffs, red purges in postwar Japan.

they were not decisively broken and replaced by company unions until after the Korean War. The 100-day Nissan strike in 1953 was a crucial event in postwar Japanese history. For at Nissan Japanese unionism was its most militant. Halberstam recounts that in the early postwar years, "There were strikes almost all the time. The union was stronger than the management, and management feared it." The company's president, Genshichi Asahara, literally hid from the union leaders rather than confront them!

The Nissan union was dominated by a radical intellectual, Tetsuo Masuda, a graduate of the elite Tokyo University (Todai). Masuda served as a medic in China during the Pacific War, where he contracted malaria. His mother and sister were killed in the American bombing raids. For this personal tragedy he blamed not the Americans but Japan's own rulers: "They ruined us, they ruined our lives. They left us with nothing." Masuda saw in the radicalized workers movement a weapon against the men who had ruined the lives of so many Japanese. Unusually for Japan in this period, Masuda was ideologically an anti-political syndicalist, rather hostile to the JCP as well as to the

social democrats.

Masuda met his nemesis in Katsuji Kawamata, a functionary of the Industrial Bank of Japan. In 1947 Kawamata was assigned to Nissan's management by the bank to bring the troubled company into line. He first successfully challenged the union during the Dodge Line by laying off 2,000 workers. However, a decisive showdown was postponed for the duration of the Korean War boom. The company was finally making money, and the last thing management wanted was a long strike. The workers needed all the overtime they could get to keep up with the war-generated inflation. During the Korean War years the union remained strong and militant on the shopfloor. Abusive foremen were ground down by the *surihachi* (mortar and pestle) treatment. They were surrounded by angry workers, who harangued them for hours, not even letting them go to the bathroom.

With the end of the American occupation in 1952 and the Korean War winding down, the Japanese ruling class was determined to reestablish itself as unchallenged master in its own house. There would be no deals and compromises with labor radicals like Masuda. At stake at Nissan was not simply the fate of one medium-sized company but the shape of the postwar bourgeois order in Japan. Knowing the entire bourgeoisie was behind him, Kawamata prepared carefully to destroy the union. He borrowed his own strike fund from the banks of \$1.5 million, an amount almost equal to the company's annual revenue. He extracted promises from Toyota and Isuzu, his major competitors, not to take Nissan's regular customers in case of a strike. He hired gangsters (*yakuza*) as strikebreakers. And, not least importantly, he conspired with Masuda's right-wing opponents in the union to split it and set up a pro-company union.

When it finally came in May 1953, the Nissan strike was, in Halberstam's words, "like a small war." Kawamata flat out refused to negotiate with Masuda. His demand was unconditional surrender, no compromises. As it became clear that Nissan was prepared to stay

shut indefinitely, many workers became demoralized and defeatist. After nine weeks Kawamata made his move, launching a second, pro-company union and locking out Masuda's people.

"It caught the union completely by surprise. The management put up barricades, and the union, perplexed, responded with force. Its people crashed through the barricades and, led by Masuda, poured onto the factory floor. There were fist fights everywhere between Masuda's people and the



AP  
Victory of Chinese Revolution in 1949 cemented Washington-Tokyo axis.

yakuza, and the police were called. The struggle went on day after day. The first barricade had been flimsy; the next barricade was stronger, and again Masuda's people charged it. Masuda was arrested."

In the end the union was defeated by a management, supported by the power of the state, that was determined to starve them into submission. By the end of September Masuda admitted he was beaten and advised his people to return



Department of Defense

During Korean War Japan became supply base for U.S. imperialist army.

to work to save their jobs.

Could the Nissan strike have been won? Yes, but only by extending it beyond the confines of Nissan. At the minimum Toyota and Isuzu also had to be struck, thus crippling Japanese auto and truck production, some of which was still going to the American forces in Korea. But such a strategic blow to the Japanese economy would have been a political challenge to the Yoshida government, posing the question: who will rule Japan? Thus Masuda's syndicalist anti-political prejudices contributed to his undoing. Halberstam insists that Masuda was not just a militant unionist but a genuine radical fighting for a new democratic and egalitarian Japan. Doubtless he was. But he conducted that fight within the framework of militant unionism, and that is why he lost. In the final analysis he who controls the state also controls the shopfloor.

Still, one might argue, the unions in North America and West Europe are far from revolutionary but neither are they Japanese-style company unions. They defend the workers' interest to some degree; they have some independence from management. Since the mid-1950s union leaders in Japan have sat on the board of directors of their companies. The UAW did not descend to this level of class collaboration until 1979, when

Fraser took a seat on the Chrysler board as part of the government bailout/give-back deal. Why was Japanese auto unionism totally broken by the companies in the early 1950s while a quarter of a century passed before the leaders of American auto unionism became open company cops?

First of all, the Japanese unions in the late 1940s were far more radical than anything seen in Detroit in the postwar era. Reuther's UAW negotiated work rules that in no way obstructed the effective exploitation of its membership by the auto bosses. From the time he became UAW president in 1946, Reuther advocated active class collaboration between the union, auto bosses and government. In the 1960s, for example, he proposed to the Johnson administration that it waive the anti-trust laws so that the Big Three could join forces to produce a small car to compete with the Germans and Japanese! So it's hardly surprising that the head of the Nissan company union, Ichiro Shioji, declared repeatedly that his role model was none other than Walter Reuther!

But more fundamentally, U.S. imperialism was top dog. In the early 1950s, Detroit dominated the world auto mar-

ket and so could easily tolerate a strong but decidedly unmilitant union like the UAW. The far poorer Japanese auto industry, struggling to break into foreign markets, could not afford any kind of unionism. The advantage in labor costs Toyota and Nissan had over GM and Ford (and that has disappeared) was achieved not by "worker-management cooperation" and calisthenics but by old-fashioned strike-breaking. With the help of the American occupation forces, the Japanese capitalists were able to impose a higher rate of exploitation on their labor force.

Halberstam wholeheartedly agrees, and argues that the UAW pushed wages up to a point that did much to destroy Detroit's competitiveness. But let's look at the record. Between 1955 and 1983 real wages in the American auto industry increased about 50 percent (U.S. Department of Labor, *Handbook of Labor Statistics*, 1985). Between 1955 (when Toyota and Nissan couldn't give away a car in the U.S.) and 1983, real wages in the Japanese auto industry increased over 300 percent (*Japan Statistical Yearbook*, 1985). As Toyota and Nissan have sped past the American Big Three, the wages of Japanese auto workers have risen sharply relative to UAW rates.

The key to this seeming paradox is that over the past three decades industrial productivity in Japan has increased relatively rapidly, in the U.S. at a snail's pace. Why? Because Japan invests almost twice as much of its national output in new plant and equipment as does the U.S. The masters of Wall Street have systematically looted this country's industrial wealth and deindustrialized America. Detroit dominated the world auto market in the late 1940s-'50s for the same basic reason that the United States demolished Japan in the Pacific War: it enjoyed overwhelming superiority in industrial productivity. How and why American capitalism lost that superiority is key to understanding the ascendancy of Japan Inc.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

WORKERS VANGUARD



# Watsonville...

(continued from page 12)

a company "offer" was rejected 800 to 1 at a tumultuous union meeting. When a government labor board "certification" vote was held after a year on strike, workers came back from as far away as Mexico to defeat scab votes and save the union.

Suffering hundreds of arrests and brutal attacks by the cops, Watsonville strikers tried repeatedly to stop the scabs brought in from surrounding towns. Amador Betancourt, a striker and husband of Strikers' Committee president Gloria Betancourt, was jailed for eight months for defending the picket lines. Even now the capitalist courts are threatening to imprison Amador again, for supposed "violations" of draconian probation terms. Scandalously, the Teamster bureaucrats did nothing to defend Betancourt, even cutting off his strike benefits while he was in jail!

Strikers' Committee member Chavelo Moreno, who along with Carlos Hernández faces trumped-up charges from a picket line arrest on February 17, spoke of the strikers' experience with capitalist "justice" in a solidarity message to the February 21 Oakland rally demanding freedom for imprisoned Black Panther Geronimo Pratt: "I know the injustices that the law and the police have against the workers, and how they work for the bosses." Drop the charges against Betancourt, Moreno, Hernández, and all victimized strikers now!

The election of the Strikers' Committee was a crucial factor in mobilizing pickets and defending the strike against the capitalist cops and courts, and their lackeys in the labor bureaucracy. But workers were unable to wrest control of the strike from the "official" leadership, although at the end of the strike Committee members were brought onto the union bargaining committee. The Watsonville strike showed the burning necessity of politically defeating and ousting the labor traitors—class battles can't be won with the bosses' agents at the head of the strike.

The reformist Teamsters for a Democratic Union, a prominent opposition during the strike, provided no alternative to the class collaboration of the Teamster tops. The TDU bases its strategy on appealing to the same bosses' courts that imprison strikers to "clean up" the union. Scandalously, in Watsonville the TDU *sued the union* under the notoriously anti-labor Landrum-Griffin Act. Labor must clean its own house! The precondition for union democracy and militant class struggle is complete independence of the workers movement from the bosses' state.

After months on strike the "peaceful, legal, play by the bosses' rules" line of the Teamster fat cats and the utter defeatism of the fake-left strike "supporters" took their toll. Instead of labor action to hot-cargo the scab produce, strikers were sent on far-flung pickets of Wells Fargo banks in Northern California, in an impotent attempt at a consumer boycott of the cannery's biggest creditor. The Wells Fargo campaign was the brain child of UFW head Cesar Chavez, who pushed it to cover his own strikebreaking refusal to stop harvesting the crops for the plant. The last days of the strike saw a desperate hunger strike and a Chavez-style "pilgrimage" of workers on their knees to a local church.

In the end, the plant was sold to a consortium of growers, Norcal Frozen Foods, in February. The new owners, who retained most of the old hated managers, were under pressure to settle. Instead of squeezing when it would hurt, the Teamster tops conspired with Norcal to present a "final" offer that would have deferred medical benefits for up to three years. Local 912 head Sergio López tried to pass off this sellout with the line that it's "much easier to fight from the inside than from the outside." Gloria Betancourt told *WV* the strikers' sentiment:

"Eighty-six percent of the workers in this cannery are women, the majority single women with four or six children in the family to support. So at \$5.85 an hour without medical benefits we won't be able to live."

The Teamsters even cut off the workers' \$55 weekly strike pay! López



November 1985 rally for Watsonville strikers. SL banner in Spanish: "Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!"

was aided in his betrayal by the fake-left League of Revolutionary Struggle (LRS) and their newspaper *Unity*. Even after the strikers refused to buy López' "final" offer, the LRS supporters at a March 9 strike rally told the crowd it would be a "victory" to "get it over" and go back to work *without medical benefits*. The pro-Peking and anti-Soviet LRS's "unity" has always been with the labor tops and the racist, capitalist Democratic Party politicians, like Jesse Jackson, who made two grandstanding appearances in Watsonville.

Jackson, like the rest of the Democratic Party, pushes racist protectionism to "save American industry," by directing the hatred of U.S. workers at their class brothers and sisters abroad. The Teamster brass fought tooth and nail to stop Spanish translation at union meetings and "pledged that the union would work with Norcal to save the frozen food industry in California. Together we will stave off foreign competition" (*California AFL-CIO News*, 6 March). This despicable class collaboration is particularly dangerous for the Hispanic women at Watsonville, who face the terror of "La Migra"

and the bipartisan racist Simpson-Mazzoli immigration law. From Chavez' calls to deport undocumented non-union farm workers, to the UAW company cops and their "yellow peril" war cries against the Japanese, this protectionism is dangerous poison.

Racist terror has gone hand in hand with union-busting in Watsonville throughout this century; the 1930s saw a wave of anti-Filipino and anti-Mexican riots and deportations, mass trials of union organizers and red scares. It was the Communists who first organized the cannery and field workers long scorned by the imperialist-bribed labor lieutenants of capital. A vital part of a class-struggle program is the fight for *full citizenship rights for foreign-born workers* and their families. Many Watsonville workers migrate to Mexico during the off-season at the canneries, underlining the need and potential for militant, internationalist labor organizations on both sides of the border.

## Build a Workers Party to Lead the Oppressed to Victory!

Since Reagan smashed the PATCO air traffic controllers strike in 1981, bringing the anti-Soviet war drive home with stepped-up union-busting and racist terror, millions of workers have been looking for a victory, a chance to break the cycle of defeats and betrayals. Like the Morenci copper miners and Hormel meatpackers, an isolated cannery workers union in a small company town was left to fight alone. This testifies to the utter bankruptcy of the leadership of the powerful industrial unions—auto, steel, longshore, transport, mine workers.

Today the American government is in disarray as a political crisis racks their imperial presidency. To seize this opportunity, and strike back at the labor-hating racist criminals who rule America, requires a revolutionary leadership forged in the fight for a workers party to lead all the oppressed to victory. A workers government will expropriate the factories and fields, ending the criminal rule of the capitalists who coin their millions from the sweat and blood of the working people. ■

# RICO Frame-Up...

(continued from page 2)

of so-called witnesses—described by Gotti's lawyer Bruce Cutler as "paid Government informants who lie, who use drugs, who kill people"... and who got reduced sentences or even new identities in return for fingering the "dapper don." A master of understatement, Cutler told the jury, "I never said my client was a saint." But the federal prosecutors are hardly interested in wiping out crime. Otherwise they could go after a really big-time criminal conspiracy, Reagan's Iran/contras guns, drugs and murder operation.

What Reagan, his top cop Ed Meese and the feds are after is expanding their laws of repression, to be used against the working class, minorities and political opponents. As we wrote a year ago:

"But this crackdown doesn't have much to do with justice; they are actually trying to *frame the Mob*. The RICO... 'conspiracy' dragnet lets the G-men pick and choose who they feel like setting up and when; they don't need evidence of any actual crime. The Reaganites want to institutionalize the frame-up principle, and what easier target for a frame job than vicious parasites like gangsters?"

"Why are we Marxists commenting on these mobster trials? For one thing, we don't believe justice is only for the innocent."

—"Feds Frame Up Mob," *WV* No. 400, 28 March 1986

In the RICO racket the victim is snared not for committing a crime but for "patterns of racketeering activities" and

participation in a "criminal enterprise"—nebulous categories which have been applied against leftist and working-class organizations. Then they seize your assets as "proceeds of crime" before the trial has taken place, to ensure you can't defend yourself!

A recent article in the *Washington Times*' publication *Insight* (16 February) lauding the "new" (post-Watergate) FBI crowed that under William Webster the agency doubled its budget, doubled its wiretaps and doubled its undercover operations to become "once again a confident and vigorous national police force." The mouthpiece of the ultra-right Sun Myung Moon sect singled out



The Star Chamber, in Britain's Westminster Palace, where arbitrary royal "justice" was meted out. It was abolished by the Puritan Revolution in 1641.

RICO as "by far the most powerful weapon in the FBI's drive." This catchall "conspiracy" law is of a piece with the rest of the feds' "legal" paraphernalia, including entrapment operations (which netted one Senator and five Congressmen in the late '70s) and preventive detention (now before the Supreme Court in the case of Tony Salerno, reputed boss of the Genovese family). Add to this Meese's determination to get rid of the Miranda prisoners' rights ruling and decree a federal death penalty, and you get a blueprint for a police state.

Naturally, "organized crime" is equated with "organized labor." The Moonie profile declared, "This year, the FBI will take aim at labor racketeering." Already in 1986, the government used a civil provision of RICO to take direct control of Teamsters Local 560 in New Jersey. And although the Teamsters were one of the few unions to endorse Reagan, the feds are going after IBT president Jackie Presser, himself an FBI informant, even while admitting that Presser's alleged payroll padding was sanctioned by his FBI controller. Meanwhile, the U.S. Labor Department has embarked on a wholesale attempt to "discipline" the labor movement through criminal investigations, as a recent legal study noted (David Elbaor and Laurence Gold, "The Criminalization of Union Activity," 1985). One federal prosecutor drooled over the possibility of putting "the entire Teamsters union into receivership" (*Newsday*, 20 June 1986).

As always, leftists are also high on the government's hit list. Former FBI flunk Reagan (informal code number T-10)

wrote in the *New York Times Magazine* (12 January 1986) that his experience in running a red purge of the Screen Actors Guild taught him that "the tactics used by mobsters and totalitarian ideologues have a lot in common." Following the McCarthyite witchhunts of the 1950s, in the '60s FBI boss J. Edgar Hoover launched the COINTEL program which was responsible for the murder of Black Panther leaders. Reagan/Meese have gone a long way in openly reinstating such police-state tactics. One Frank Varella, an ex-FBI informer currently testifying before Congress about his infiltration of the CISPES solidarity group in Dallas, has stated that between breaking into offices, electronic surveillance, taping meetings and compiling hit lists, the government's repressive campaign now includes "everything Cointelpro covered before" (*Nation*, 7 March).

The feds' attempt to frame John Gotti failed—and that's a good thing, just like when in 1984 a Los Angeles jury found former auto magnate John DeLorean innocent of a federal drug "sting." Gotti returned to his home in Howard Beach, Queens, the same community where a black man, Michael Griffith, was lynched by a racist mob of white youth last December. But the feds aren't interested in pursuing that heinous crime. After all, in the 1985 bombing of the black MOVE commune in Philadelphia, all levels of the government, from the local police and black Democratic mayor right up to the FBI and Meese himself, were involved in a horrific racist mass murder. They did it simply because they *wanted* to. That is perhaps the most damning indictment of capitalist "justice" in Reagan's America. ■



# Gorbachev's Pipe Dream...

(continued from page 1)

out Afghanistan for the illusion of "peaceful coexistence" with Washington. After a meeting with Gorbachev last month, Henry Kissinger wrote:

"I had arrived in Moscow persuaded that the Soviet Union would never permit the overthrow of a regime established by Soviet power.... I am no longer so sure. Our Soviet hosts emphasized their desire for total withdrawal. They also affirmed the goal of a government of national reconciliation that would include representatives of the guerrilla groups."

—Newsweek, 2 March

We Trotskyists say: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan—Extend the gains of the Bolshevik Revolution to Afghan peoples!

## Gorbachev, Sakharov and the Glitterati

The Kremlin bureaucracy has preached and tried to practice "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism ever since Stalin, with his reactionary, nationalist theory of "socialism in one country." And the Gorbachev regime has played this theme over and over. Addressing the assembled celebrities at the "no



DPA



Haqiqat Enqelob Sawar

CIA-armed Islamic cutthroats in Afghanistan shoot schoolteachers for teaching young girls to read (left). At right: Soviet soldiers in Kabul. Hail Red Army in Afghanistan—Extend Social Gains of Bolshevik Revolution to Afghan Peoples!

While Gorbachev certainly hasn't given up on Reagan, he is also appealing to out-of-office Western politicians, capitalists and media stars (the "glitterati"). His effort to sponsor a global popular front for "peace" was launched in mid-February with a "Forum for a Nuclear-Free World and the Survival of Humanity." There were 250 businessmen, 215 clergymen, hundreds of scientists and a slew of retired NATO generals. Returning the compliment, retired high-ranking military officers in the USSR have formed a new group, Soviet Generals and Admirals for Peace

official in the Carter administration, wanted to get into a crowded session featuring Andrei Sakharov. When he pulled strings in order to hear in person the Soviet dissident, an aide to Gary Hart quipped his efforts had all the dignity of trying to get backstage at a Rolling Stones concert.

Aside from Gorbachev, the other superstar at this "peace" confab was Sakharov, a man who had urged the U.S. to deploy the MX missile (an acknowledged first-strike weapon) and to economically blackmail the Soviet Union into withdrawing from Afghanistan. Before releasing Sakharov from comfortable internal exile in Gorky last December, Gorbachev may have managed to turn him from his patrons in Washington. At the Moscow conference Sakharov spoke out against Reagan's "Star Wars" and applauded the new Soviet leader. However, he also spoke for Soviet collaboration with imperialism to maintain the global status quo:

"There must be a settlement of regional conflicts on the basis of compromise and restoration of stability wherever it has been disrupted. Support for destabilizing and extremist forces and all terrorist groups should be ended."

—Time, 16 March

"Terrorist groups" are what Reagan and his racist allies call national liberation movements around the world. The white supremacist rulers of South Africa label the African National Congress a "terrorist group"; the Zionists say the same of the Palestine Liberation Organization. To its credit, the Soviet Union has provided arms for the ANC and PLO. Sakharov's talk of "regional stability" means abandoning South African blacks and Palestinian Arabs in order to restore the stability of two of the most murderous, racist states on earth.

Sakharov's latest pronouncements wouldn't be all that important except they converge with Gorbachev's line. In his biography of the new Soviet leader, liberal Soviet dissident Zhores Medvedev notes that the Brezhnev regime played up its international successes, from the U.S. defeat in Vietnam to aiding nationalist regimes in Africa and revolutionary movements in Latin America. By contrast, Medvedev writes approvingly: "if Gorbachev's foreign policy intentions are to be judged by the new Party programme, there will be less ideological expansion of the USSR in future, compared to what was promised in previous programmes.... The programme promises solidarity and cooperation with the 'Newly-Free Countries,' but no new substantive help" (Gorbachev [1986]).

Not all Soviet actions abroad in the name of "socialist solidarity" serve the cause of social progress and national justice. In particular, we strongly condemn the Kremlin's support to Ethiopia's Haile Miriam Mengistu, a left-talking Idi Amin who has crushed the nascent workers movement, exterminated an entire generation of radical intellectuals and committed genocidal terror against the Eritreans and other national minorities. But the NATO capitals are not much concerned about the Moscow-Addis Ababa connection. The imperialists are concerned about stop-

ping the limited Soviet support to revolutionary and national liberation struggles from Southeast Asia to Central America.

## The Spectre of Trotskyism

Gorbachev's "peace offensive" is not a cynical ploy to gain the favor of Western public opinion, nor is it motivated simply by a desire to free up economic resources now expended on the arms race. The Soviet bureaucracy is genuinely frightened of nuclear war, and rightly so. They also reflect the mass sentiment of the people of the Soviet Union in a deep-seated, desperate desire for peace. But there is also a sense among elements in the Soviet officialdom, intelligentsia and working people that appeasement, capitulating to the "Reagan doctrine," or allowing U.S. imperialism to isolate and starve heroic Vietnam and take over Afghanistan are *not* the road to peace. In a broadcast from Moscow last month, TV talk-show host Phil Donahue had a wide-ranging discussion with scores of Soviet youth on god, Communism, nuclear war—and couldn't get a single one to condemn Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as unjust.

Gorbachev sees Trotskyism behind any opposition to his headlong drive for "peaceful coexistence" with Reagan. At the Communist Party congress in February 1986, he denounced "revolutionary wars" as a "Trotskyite" heresy and went on: "Today, too, we are firmly convinced that pushing revolutions from outside, and doubly so by military means, is futile and inadmissible" (New Times, 10 March 1986). The wars now being fought by the Vietnamese in Kampuchea, the Soviet army in Afghanistan, the Cubans in Angola and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua are resistance to the export of *counterrevolution*. There probably are people in the Soviet hierarchy who are less willing than Gorbachev to sell out Vietnam or Afghanistan for the sake of better relations with Washington. However, the answer to Gorbachev's version of "peaceful coexistence" is not support to more hardline elements in the Kremlin, who will betray and weaken the defense of the Soviet Union in other ways.

The answer is the organization of the workers of the world by an international revolutionary party to overthrow the war-driven capitalist system. And here the spectre of Trotskyism really does haunt the Soviet bureaucracy. Witness a revealing article by one Nikolai Vasetski in the Moscow-based *América Latina* (No. 3, 1986) which polemicalizes against an article in *Workers Vanguard* ("Carter/Reagan Nuclear War Fever," *WV* No. 264, 19 September 1980):

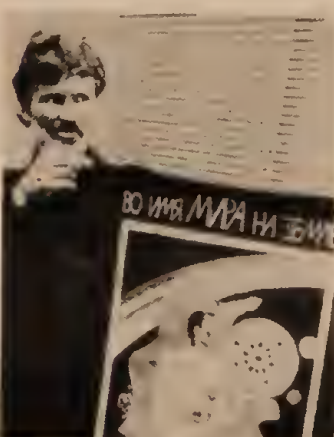
"On the cardinal question of the day—defense of the USSR against imperialist aggression—the Trotskyists of the United States consider that Trotskyism is distinguished both from petty-bourgeois pacifism as well as reformism and centrism, because it recognizes the fact that the 'Euromissiles' are aimed at the Soviet Union."

"But after recognizing this obvious fact, they draw the following conclusion: in order to defend the USSR it is necessary to carry out a permanent world revolution. The American Trotskyists are against all disarmament that isn't undertaken by the workers themselves. In their press organ they say that 'the



Oer Spiegel

Gorbachev (left) addresses glitterati at "no nuke" extravaganza in Moscow. Participants included actor Kris Kristofferson (right), star of demented anti-Soviet soap opera *Amerika*.



Economist

nuke" extravaganza in Moscow last month, the new Soviet leader declared:

"Before my people, before you and before the whole world, I state with full responsibility that our international policy is more than ever determined by domestic policy, by our interest in concentrating on constructive endeavors to improve our country."

—Moscow News, 1 March

For the last decade, U.S. imperialism has tried to browbeat, threaten or trick the Soviet Union into retreating from the international scene. No wonder this statement was greeted by Washington.

and Disarmament.

For a few days this winter Moscow was the "in" place to be for the jet set. Former Canadian prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, leading West German Social Democrat Egon Bahr, liberal American economist John Kenneth Galbraith rubbed elbows with Norman Mailer, Claudia Cardinale and Yoko Ono. Actor Kris Kristofferson, fresh from starring in the vile anti-Soviet soap opera *Amerika*, was there, too. The atmosphere was that of a political rock festival. David Aaron, a former high

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## TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA



possible destruction of the world by the missiles and other components of the imperialist war machine can only be averted by the worldwide victory of the working class....

"Disarmament" Trotskyist-style is a fig leaf to cover very different objectives for the Trotskyist leaders: to present Trotskyism as the far left pole of the antiwar movement (opposed to the supposedly reformist program of the Communists) in order to attract those workers whose class consciousness doesn't suffice to quickly understand the Trotskyist ideology."

It is perhaps no accident that a Stalinist polemic which admits that Trotskyism can attract revolutionary-minded workers appears in a publication directed at Latin America. For in this part of the world hatred for Yankee imperialism runs very deep and is near universal. "Peaceful coexistence" with Washington means Pinochet's torture chambers, Central American death squads and Citibank sucking the lifeblood of the workers and peasants. At the same time, a victory for U.S. imperialism in its "backyard" would spur on the war drive against the Soviet Union. Truly, as we have proclaimed, "Defense of Cuba/USSR Begins in Central America!" And a socialist revolution in Latin America would send massive shock waves to the imperialist colossus to the North, panicking Wall Street and electrifying the millions of Hispanic workers in America's factories and farms.

While Reagan is on the rocks, the thermonuclear-armed ruling class he represents is still in the saddle. The fate of the homeland of the October Revolution, the emancipation of the oppressed and toiling masses, and the very survival of humanity are inseparably bound to working-class revolution in the dominant imperialist countries, above all the United States. World revolution is no utopia but the only reality which can disarm the Pentagon. Lenin himself authored the plank of the 1919 program of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) which denounced "disarmament under capitalism" as a "reactionary philistine illusion of the petty-bourgeois democrats," calling instead for "arming the proletariat and disarming the bourgeoisie" and achieving victory over the capitalists "both in civil



WV Photo

**Spartacist protest ABC's Cold War mega-series Amerika in Washington, D.C., February 15.**

wars at home and in international revolutionary wars."

What Trotsky wrote in 1940, when Stalin was trying to appease Nazi Germany, retains its full force today as imperialism is preparing a nuclear Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union:

"The Fourth International can defend the USSR only by the methods of revolutionary class struggle.... We flatly reject the theory of socialism in one country, that brainchild of ignorant and reactionary Stalinism. Only the world revolution can save the USSR for socialism. But the world revolution carries with it the inescapable blotting out of the Kremlin oligarchy."

Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky!■

## Palestinians...

(continued from page 3)

headquartered in Baghdad, Iraq) denounced the Syrian move "since Syria is a basic party to the blockade of Palestinian refugee camps and the annihilation and starvation of thousands of our people there" (*New York Times*, 23 February). This was verified immediately when the first major move of the Syrian army in Beirut was to attack the Hezbollah, which for its own reasons had provided a certain buffer for the PLO camps. The only "peace" that the Syrian army will bring to Beirut is the peace of the dead. Only last December the Syrian army organized the massacre of the Sunni fundamentalist Tawhid sect (a PLO ally of the moment), in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli. Today, after 12 years of all-sided communalist slaughter, a full-scale Israeli blitzkrieg and direct imperialist military intervention, Lebanon's cities look like they've experienced a small-scale nuclear war.

### The Lebanese Cockpit

The slaughterhouse called Lebanon is a classic product of colonial divide-and-rule policies. France, which along with Britain carved up the Ottoman Empire in the Near East after World War I, created a separate Lebanon in order to maintain a base of support among the Maronite Christian community which feared incorporation into a predominantly Muslim Greater Syria. The 1943 National Covenant imposed upon Lebanon a government in which the spoils were allotted along religious/communal lines with Christian Maronites on top and Muslims, especially Shi'ites, on the bottom. Adding fuel to the Lebanese tinderbox were the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who fled the Zionist terror by which the state of Israel was consolidated in 1948. Tens of thousands more poured into Lebanon after the 1970 Black September massacre in Jordan.

In the mid-'70s all the pressures from below finally blew apart the fragile Lebanese system, a bankers' republic whose rulers gorged themselves on oil money while keeping the masses in grinding poverty. Growing out of a series of strikes, and initially fueled by legitimate grievances over Maronite domination, the brewing social explosion was transformed into a squalid communalist civil war by the traditional leaders of the Muslim camp, such as the hereditary chieftain of the Druze sect, Kamal Jumblatt. Had a revolutionary Marxist party stood at the head of the Lebanese Muslim and Palestinian toilers, it would have put forward a program capable of attracting the have-nots in the Christian community, splitting and weakening the base of the fascistic Phalange and other reactionary Maronite forces. But a genuine communist party does not exist in Lebanon.

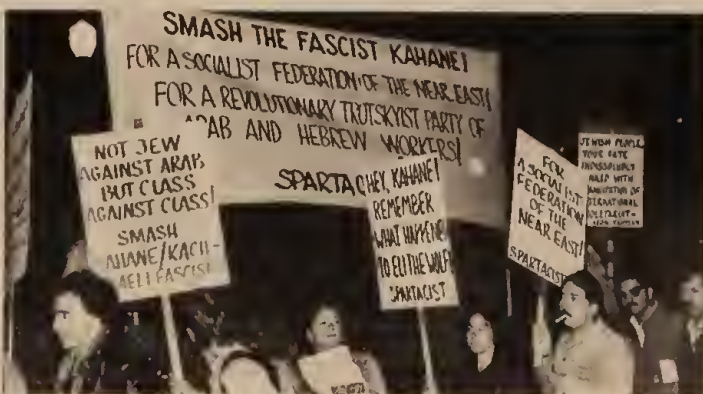
The Lebanese CP is one of the oldest and relatively largest Communist parties in the Arab world. With a heavily Christian leadership and Shi'ite base, the Lebanese CP is uniquely placed to cut across the sectarian/communalist divide. It is just about the only movement spanning the largely Shi'ite south Lebanon and the Christian/Sunni north, leading the trade-union movement and dominating several Christian towns before 1976. However, because of its Stalinist politics the Lebanese CP has tailed after the bourgeoisie for more than half a century, from abandoning the struggle for independence in the late 1930s and '40s to getting caught up in the maelstrom of communalism in the '70s and '80s. In the 1975-76 civil war it subordinated itself to Muslim confessionalists like Jumblatt (who masquerades as "Progressive Socialist Party") through the so-called Lebanese National Movement. And while it is the target of a Shi'ite murder campaign in Beirut and the south, in Tripoli the

CP participated in the recent Syrian-engineered massacre of the Sunni Tawhid sect (which itself massacred scores of CPers three years ago).

The politics of the pro-Moscow Lebanese CP reflect the orientation of the rulers of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. Repudiating and fearing proletarian revolution in the Near East (as elsewhere), the Kremlin backs Arab nationalist regimes and movements who invariably end up at one another's throats. In fact, all of the combatants in the recent fighting in Beirut are armed with Soviet weapons! And while Moscow proclaims undying support to the Palestinian cause, it has publicly endorsed the entry of the Syrian army into West Beirut, designed to break the PLO.

### For Proletarian Revolution in the Near East!

While Amal militiamen try to starve out Palestinian camps in Lebanon, the Zionist state is escalating its reign of terror both in the Occupied Territories, seized by Israel in the 1967 war, and within Israel itself. In the West Bank last December Israeli soldiers opened fire on 200 students conducting a nonviolent protest. Two students were killed and at



WV Photo

**San Francisco—SL contingent in protest against Zionist fascist Meir Kahane, October 1985.**

least eleven wounded. The following day the occupation troops struck again, murdering a 14-year-old boy, allegedly for throwing stones. A few days later a 12-year-old boy was found murdered, either by soldiers or clerical-fascist Israeli "settlers" who are issued automatic weapons by the army. The shootings were so viciously cold-blooded and obviously state-sponsored that even the UN Security Council condemned them 14-0 with the U.S. abstaining.

West Bank protests soon spread to the occupied Gaza Strip where 550,000 Palestinians, half under the age of 15, live in an area 27 miles wide and five miles long. Here also Israeli soldiers and their "settler" auxiliaries fired at unarmed Palestinian youths, wounding many, but this did nothing to quell the spirited protests. The Palestinians in Gaza and the 700,000 on the West Bank are disenfranchised in their own land, like blacks under South African apartheid except that they have even fewer "rights." As the Zionist rulers have sought to transform Israel into a garrison state where the main industry is armaments, the "dirty" (i.e., productive) work of construction, agriculture and transport is increasingly allocated to Palestinians, especially superexploited labor from the Occupied Territories.

Tens of thousands of workers are trucked in daily from these Zionist bantustans since they are not allowed to stay overnight in the "Jewish state." They pay income tax and social security, but receive no benefits—their payments go toward the costs of the military occupation! At least another 50,000, often mere children, are paid a pittance and are kept in locked huts overnight. Israeli civil rights fighter Israel Shahak, a survivor of the Bergen-Belsen death camp, noted that these Palestinian laborers are given cooked marrow to eat—the same food given to Jews in the

Nazi concentration camps in the last year of the Third Reich! In an act of courageous working-class defiance of Israel's draconian martial law, in late February Gaza Palestinian carpenters (supported by Israeli unionists and civil rights fighters) formed a 400-strong union.

As Iran/Contragate investigations show, Israel has placed itself in the forefront of U.S. imperialism's anti-Soviet war drive, doing its dirty work in the Third World. In return Israel gets \$3 billion a year from Uncle Sam, two-thirds of it in direct military grants. The revelation by Mordechai Vanunu that Israel has 100-200 nuclear warheads means that the Zionist rulers want the capacity to nuke not only every Arab capital but also Moscow and Leningrad. To justify itself and "unify" the nation, a garrison state like Israel must ever be on the brink of war. And the most likely Zionist target is Soviet-backed Syria. Meanwhile, Reagan has the U.S. Sixth Fleet sitting off the coast of Lebanon and would very much like a military diversion. A war between Israel and Syria could rapidly escalate into nuclear world war, especially given Israel's sizable nuclear arsenal, urgently posing defense of the Soviet Union and the

social gains of the October Revolution.

The Zionist state, carved out of the living body of the Palestinian Arab people, offers Jews not a haven but a deathtrap. Many Israelis do not want to live in a permanent armed camp ever on the brink of war...and not all of them can emigrate to drive taxicabs in New York City. Recently, a number of joint Palestinian Arab and Hebrew demonstrations have taken place despite increased repression on the part of the Israeli rulers. Defense of the democratic rights of all the peoples of the Near East requires a revolutionary struggle, with the working class and its vanguard party at the head of the exploited and oppressed, that would smash the Zionist state, bring down the rotten medieval structure in Lebanon and sweep away the Hashemite kingdom in Jordan and bloody Ba'athist bonapartes in Syria. The right to self-determination for both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples, if it is to lead to genuine national emancipation and social progress, can only be realized in the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East. ■

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Defiant Cannery Workers Go Back Watsonville: Hard 18-Month Strike

WATSONVILLE—After 18 months of bitter class struggle, the Watsonville cannery strike ended March 11. The strike of 1,000 mainly Mexican women frozen-food workers against the arrogant agribusiness bosses of this company town became a symbol of resistance to the union-busting and give-backs of the Reagan years. It was the strikers' hard-bitten tenacity on the picket lines that beat back the bosses' attempt to crush the strike outright and destroy the union. In a dramatic eleventh-hour effort, the strikers stunned the company, Teamster brass and media by defeating a "final offer" that would have robbed the workers of medical benefits for up to three years.

The Watsonville strikers were attacked by the cops, betrayed by the bureaucracy of their union, Teamsters Local 912, and isolated by California labor officialdom that preached "solidarity" and practiced betrayal. Yet the workers hung tough, finally driving out the labor-hating boss and forcing the new owner to restore benefits. The strike ended with a concession contract which slashes wages to \$5.85 per hour—from the already miserable pre-strike wage of \$6.66—and cuts the workforce by a third. But unlike the Hormel strike in Austin, Minnesota, where the meat-packers' local was ripped up and the membership fired, the Watsonville strikers' militancy and determination



Militant cannery workers, predominantly Mexican women, march through Watsonville, California, November 1985.

saved their union.

The Watsonville strike could have been won. Strike rallies and marches drew hundreds of members of powerful unions in the San Francisco Bay Area, two hours drive from Watsonville. The presence of Farmworkers (UFW) unionists who pick the vegetables frozen in Watsonville was significant, given the history of vicious raiding by the Team-

sters against the UFW. Early in the strike, we put forward a program of militant labor action to bring cannery owner and Reagan buddy Mort Console to his knees:

"All the canneries must be brought out on strike—6,000 Local 912 members are still working without a contract at five other canneries. What is needed is daily mass pickets of area unionists to stop the scabs and turn the strikebreak-

ing injunctions into worthless scraps of paper. And unionists must go after the employers' weak spot: their product is seasonal and highly perishable. This means a strategy of labor boycott, not impotent consumer boycotts. ... Teamster drivers, railway workers, warehousemen and retail clerks must *harcargo* (refuse to handle) the scab produce."

—"Victory to the Watsonville Cannery Strike!" *WV* No. 389, 18 October 1985

At the beginning of the strike, a group of women workers put forward a motion for a "general strike of all the canneries," and in January 1986 strikers passed a motion demanding the Teamster tops stop the vegetables pouring into the struck plant. But Local 912 leaders declared the strikers' motion a dead letter, howling before the slave-labor Taft-Hartley law "illegalizing" secondary boycotts. The Teamster tops' sabotage was so blatant that they kept the plant's own "waterhouse" freezer operators on the job—"because they're under a separate contract"—while Teamster drivers and warehousemen continued to ship and store frozen food produced by the scabs in the plant!

Fed up with this backstabbing, an assembly of 500 workers elected a Strikers' Committee. They demonstrated their determination time and again: in 18 months not one striker crossed the picket lines. Two months into the strike

*continued on page 9*

## British Ferry Tragedy Free Enterprise Sinks Free Enterprise

In the worst marine disaster in British peacetime history since the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912, some 134 crew members and passengers went down with the car ferry *Herald of Free Enterprise* when it capsized on March 6 just outside Belgium's Zeebrugge harbor.

A catastrophe—but no accident. Rather it was the horrible outcome of utilizing a notoriously unsafe ship design and then disregarding one of the most elementary procedures of maritime safety: ship openings and ports must be secured watertight before leaving dockside. Early on the shipowner, Townsend Thoresen, tried to claim that "somehow" the bow-loading "doors burst open." But as survivors have testified and a preliminary inquiry affirmed, the ferry accelerated across the outer harbor before the crew on the lower vehicle deck could close the apparently jammed doors. The ship became a giant scoop and rapidly destabilized as water poured in and surged to the port

side. Within a minute the vessel capsized, making it impossible to launch life rafts. After the fact, port officials have acknowledged that leaving the docks without securing loading doors is *standard operating procedure* for companies out to make a faster buck by cutting turnaround times.

According to one report the Zeebrugge docks are among the lowest in the Channel; water is pumped into the forward ballast tanks to facilitate loading cars and trucks. The inquiry confirmed that the ferry left "slightly trimmed down by the bow, which would accentuate the scooping effect of the bow." That more people weren't killed is testimony to the heroic rescue efforts of the crew. Half of the 84 crew members perished, many because of overexposure. As one seaman interviewed at the headquarters of the National Union of Seamen in Dover noted: "It was the cold water that killed them.... They died because they stayed behind to help others" (*London Guardian*, 11 March).



Ferry *Herald of Free Enterprise* capsizes, March 6, plunging hundreds into icy waters off Belgian port. Passengers and crew members were killed by decrepit British capitalism.

Within a day of the disaster marine engineers confirmed what is widely known: the ferry design, utilized for faster loading—i.e., to cut costs—is notoriously unsafe. Incredibly, as one British paper observed, they have the same fatal design flaw as the *Titanic*:

"It is right that we should recall the worst and most famous mercantile disaster of them all now, because it was that which imposed a fundamental principle on steel-ship construction: that watertight bulkheads (steel walls) should extend crosswise at intervals from the bottom of the hull to the upper deck. The 'unsinkable' *Titanic* had such bulkheads, but they did not rise high enough. Roll-on, roll-off (ro-ro) ships are the first major commercial type to ignore this axiom. If water ever penetrates these box-like compartments in any quantity, it can cause a fatal list and the ro-ro rolls over in a few moments."

—*London Guardian*, 9 March

A 1980 report by the UN's International Maritime Council noted that these ro-ro vessels suffer twice the number of losses as other ships; over the last twenty years, 35 of them have capsized.

So why are ships launched with construction decidedly worse than that which was proven deadly dangerous and unseaworthy almost 75 years ago? The answer is encapsulated in the names of Townsend Thoresen's major ferries: the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, *Spirit of Free Enterprise* and *Pride of Free Enterprise*. And now the British government has come up with a new and macabre use for the ro-ro's: to refit them as prison ships to pen black and Asian immigrants refused entry into the country. Such is the private profit motive and the decaying system of capitalism.