

Soviet Workers Challenge Perestroika

The powerful strike by Soviet miners has not only shaken up the bureaucrats in Moscow. In an extraordinary front-page "news analysis," the *New York Times* (26 July) had some advice for the Kremlin leaders. "Worry for Gorbachev," it headlined: "Workers, Resentful of His Changes, Could Topple the Crippled Economy." Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev has been trying to portray the miners' burgeoning strike movement as support for his program of pro-market economic reforms that goes by the name of "perestroika" (restructuring). But, warned the *Times*, the workers' "notion of perestroika is not necessarily the one held by Mr. Gorbachev's economic brain trust."

The article noted the mood of the triumphant miners, who raised one "largely overlooked" demand which must have caused Gorbachev a "shiver of disquiet":

"Along with soap rations and winter shoes, night honuses and greater political power, many of the miners called for abolishing or sharply curtailing the freewheeling private entrepreneurs

who have amassed wealth and huge resentment under the new economic order that Mr. Gorbachev is trying to build."

Soviet workers have no love lost for price-gouging speculators and exploitation by nascent capitalists; they are hostile to Gorbachev's attacks on "wage-leveling." And, the *Times* article noted, "it is not hard to imagine the newly mobilized workers someday using their power to resist the dislocations that are expected to come with perestroika." For example:

"Mr. Gorbachev cannot count on blue-collar support for closing bankrupt industries, deregulating prices on consumer goods, laying off surplus workers—all measures that leading economists say are inevitable if the Soviet economy is to be revived."

We Trotskyists have insisted for several years now that the powerful Soviet proletariat is no fan of market-oriented reforms which would dismantle piecemeal the historic achievement of a planned economy. The prospect of inflation, speedup, layoffs

continued on page 4



Reuters/Bettmann

Prokopyevsk, July 15: Siberian miners strike for soap, meat and justice.

For Workers Political Revolution in China!



Reuters

Beijing, May 20: Workers flooded into the streets to defy state of siege.

Lessons of the Beijing Spring

We publish below an edited transcript of a speech by Ray Bishop of the Spartacist League Central Committee at a June 29 SL forum in New York.

While looking out over the carnage in Tiananmen Square on June 4, one young Beijing worker said, "This government is done with." You had troops patrolling up and down Beijing's boulevards; you also had students and workers in China's key cities rising up as one in protest. In Shanghai, China's largest city and its commercial and industrial powerhouse, you had an effective general strike until the end of that week. In the northeast, in Shenyang, 30,000 aircraft workers commandeered trucks and marched in unison to protest the massacre. In the center of China, in Xian, the ancient capital, tens of thousands of workers blocked roads. And in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, 30 workers were killed in the course of protests over control of the vast underground private market, which was called by one Chinese newspaper

"the main monument to capitalism" in that area.

It appeared also that the People's Liberation Army was splitting right down the middle over the massacre. The army unit that carried it out was the 27th Army, very close to Deng Xiaoping. But right after that happened, in Inner Mongolia, which is where the 27th Army is based, there was a troop rebellion, leading to 30 of the officers being shot.

So China was on the verge of civil war, and at that very time the government itself seemingly disappeared. For up to a week foreign diplomats and newspapermen couldn't find anybody to get the line on what was going on. The *People's Daily*, which is the Communist Party's main newspaper, could not be found on the streets of Beijing. But five days after the massacre, Deng re-emerged. And he re-emerged with a vengeance, unleashing a savage repression which to date, so far as we know, has meant 27 workers executed, thousands of arrests, including leaders of the

continued on page 6

Labor and Blacks Have the Power

Stop Racist Terror in Norfolk!

By Cliff Carter

The racism of the eighties has shaped the year of 1989 into a free-for-all for the racists in the Tidewater area. In the early 1980s, segregated schools suddenly became "neighborhood schools" and the racists saw a green light that hasn't changed.

On July 9, 1984, United States District Court judge John A. MacKenzie approved the Norfolk school board's plan to end cross-town busing and return to neighborhood (segregated) elementary schools. The labor unions could have defended busing, but since they didn't, the advocates of the neighborhood schools have been feeling welcome to continue to bring back the old Jim Crow discrimination laws and ways.

In the Tidewater cities several ugly incidents have taken place this year:

• Chesapeake, January 31

A cross was burned in the yard of a 32-year-old black lady and her four children.

• Portsmouth, March 18

At approximately 10:35 on a Saturday night, a cross was set afire on the lawn of an elderly retired black woman who recently moved into a predominantly white neighborhood.

• Portsmouth, May 30

At a playground, a 26-year-old white man fired seven shots with a pump shotgun at black children. Police arrived, questioned the shotgun man, but did not arrest him, saying he DID NOT pose a serious threat.

• Portsmouth, June 4

A 32-year-old black man found his 1986 Mazda RX7 messed up with spray paint. On the hood were words "NIGGER MOBILE" and a picture of male genitalia. On one door was a Ku Klux Klan insignia, and the other door had a picture of a pitchfork, the symbol of a satanic cult.

• Portsmouth, June 4

A 19-year-old white man was arrested for burning a cross on the front lawn of a 43-year-old black longshoreman who has lived at his present address for the last ten years.

• Virginia Beach, June 30

For the third time in a week, a Vietnamese man found his yard ripped apart and his house spray-painted with racial insults. The driveway was also painted with racial insults and had these words: "DIE HO CHEE" and "GO BACK TO CHINA SIGNORA."

• Virginia Beach, July 11

A cross was reported burning shortly before 6:40 a.m. The police traced the wood to a nearby resident's yard, where some gasoline also had been stored. These same police determined that the wood and gasoline had been stolen. The police sergeant's final assumption: "We don't think it is racially motivated because there are no black families living in the immediate area. But as a precaution, we did notify the FBI."

In the 1880s the Republicans withdrew the federal troops from the South and placed the control of law and order into the hands of the Ku Klux Klan. Today in the 1980s, while the control of black and poor people is a little more sophisticated, once again we see the nightriding of the Klan.

The Reagan administration continued with Bush (with the backing of the Democrats) and controls black and poor people with:

- 1) union-busting
- 2) gun control
- 3) the drug witchhunt
- 4) control of abortions and the death penalty
- 5) the green light to racist terror.

The union-busting got its strong start with the decertification of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) in 1981. Sure, the leaders of PATCO made some bad decisions, but the AFL-CIO should never have let Ronald Reagan destroy a

union. Labor had the power to shut down the airports and stop all traffic!

Gun control is a way to slowly take away the arms of all decent working people. Then black and poor people would be at the mercy of the local city police and the rest of the racists. Remember, lynching decreased when black people became owners of guns. Labor must destroy gun control. The police and National Guard troops are not geared to protect working people.

The drug testing of the workforce is just a way to control who works and who doesn't. If a shop or company wants to get rid of a militant worker, label this worker a drug user and he is gone. Want to have a family become homeless? Accuse just one member of the family of being a drug user and the landlord can request the door keys. Labor must stop the drug witchhunt.

The Supreme Court has shown its true face where abortions are concerned, by letting the decisions and welfare of women be made by men who care little or nothing about working women of today. Is it strange that every Congressman in Washington that is anti-abortion is for the death penalty?

The death penalty is the "legal" lynching of black and poor people. When the state wants to rid itself of an unwanted person, this person, guilty or not, can be placed on death row. Labor must defend the right for free abortions and fight to abolish the death penalty.

With the "go ahead" given to racists in the form of Congressmen, city councils, school board members, KKK and Nazi skinheads, and aided by Uncle Toms and other so-called black leaders, it is past time for labor to show its strength, unchained from the grip of the Democratic Party.

The labor movement of Tidewater must reorganize itself, not only to fight for jobs for the workers, but to fight racism in the communities throughout the area. To see racism and not organize against this wrong will only weaken you in every way and fashion.

Cliff Carter is a guest contributor to Workers Vanguard.



TROTSKY

Soviet Workers and Political Revolution

From East Europe to the USSR to China, the crisis of Stalinism has reached the point of explosion. The fundamental causes of that crisis were laid out more than 50 years ago by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936). The perspective of proletarian political revolution advanced by Trotsky was a keystone in his struggle to forge

the Fourth International and return the Soviet Union to the internationalist road of the October Revolution.

Will the bureaucrat devour the workers' state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat? Thus stands the question upon whose decision hangs the fate of the Soviet Union....

The revolution which the bureaucracy is preparing against itself will not be social, like the October revolution of 1917. It is not a question this time of changing the economic foundations of society, of replacing certain forms of property with other forms. History has known elsewhere not only social revolutions which substituted the bourgeois for the feudal regime, but also political revolutions which, without destroying the economic foundations of society, swept out an old ruling upper crust (1830 and 1848 in France, February 1917 in Russia, etc.). The overthrow of the Bonapartist caste will, of course, have deep social consequences, but in itself it will be confined within the limits of political revolution....

It is not a question of substituting one ruling clique for another, but of changing the very methods of administering the economy and guiding the culture of the country. Bureaucratic autocracy must give place to Soviet democracy....

If a bourgeoisie cannot peacefully grow into a socialist democracy, it is likewise true that a socialist state cannot peacefully merge with a world capitalist system. On the historic order of the day stands not the peaceful socialist development of "one country," but a long series of world disturbances: wars and revolutions. Disturbances are inevitable also in the domestic life of the Soviet Union. If the bureaucracy was compelled in its struggle for a planned economy to dekulakize the kulak, the working class will be compelled in its struggle for socialism to debureaucratize the bureaucracy. On the tomb of the latter will be inscribed the epitaph: "Here lies the theory of socialism in one country."

—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon

EDITOR: Jan Norden

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Jorge Ramirez

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Jon Lawrence

EDITORIAL BOARD: George Foster, Frank Hunter, Jane Kerrigan, Len Meyers, James Robertson, Reuben Samuels, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer, Marjorie Stenberg

The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

Workers Vanguard (USPS 098-770) published biweekly, except 2nd issue August and with 3-week interval December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to Box 1377 GPO New York, NY 10116. Domestic subscriptions: \$7.00/24 issues. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

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

No. 483

4 August 1989

JUST OUT!

Spartacist

English Edition

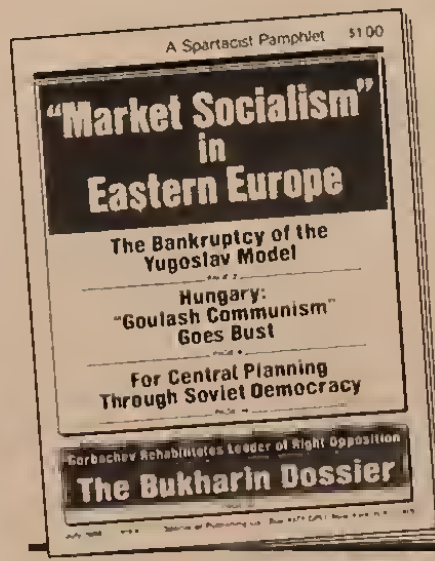
No. 43-44

Summer 1989

(56 pages)

\$1.50

(Spartacist is sent to all WV subscribers.)



Also Available:

Spartacist Pamphlet

"Market Socialism" in Eastern Europe

(32 pages)

\$1.00

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

A Reporter's Notebook

Afghan Soldiers Vow: "If They Come, We're Ready"

KABUL—Every day cities like Kabul, Kandahar and Khost are being hit by rockets. Frustrated by their humiliating defeat at Jalalabad, the *mujahedin* are taking it out on the civilian population, who are growing ever more outraged with the cowardly murderers and their masters in Islamabad and Washington.

On Saturday, July 22, six rockets killed 41 and injured 161 in Kabul. Then on Monday afternoon, a bomb exploded in a normally crowded restaurant a few hundred yards from the Jumiati Hospital. On Wednesday, a bloodbath was narrowly averted at a vegetable market when shoppers noticed a box, which was found to contain five kilos of explosives. Two days later, 17 rockets hit the city, killing 10 and wounding 19.

We recently went to a huge kindergarten in the capital which had been hit by a rocket. Thankfully, there had been no casualties. When the teachers heard a rocket explode nearby, they quickly got all the kids—aged three months to six years—down to the basement. The windows were completely smashed—glass everywhere. It could have been a massacre.

The *mujahedin* are showing the signs of an army in disarray. Never united to begin with, they are now beginning to kill each other in a serious way. Earlier this month, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's gunmen ambushed a commando belonging to the Massoud faction, wiping out seven military commanders and another 23 men. This could signal a real blood feud. Let them kill each other!

In my third week in embattled Afghanistan, some other observations from this reporter's notebook:

* * *

July 19—The traditional hospitality of the Afghan people stands out even among the horrors of war, and it is doubled and tripled when they find out that this Western journalist is on their side against their counterrevolutionary enemies. Today, while I was walking by a guarded building in downtown Kabul, a soldier waved me over to drink tea with him, curious why a Westerner was not driving past in a car. Luckily, his comrades, standing guard with bayonets fixed, spoke Russian (one had studied in Stavropol, the other in Leningrad). They came over to translate when they learned I was opposed to the *mujahedin*.

One of the soldiers invited me inside their billet to share their lunch, a tasty mix of some cereals with roasted potatoes, milk and cucumbers.

They all had lots of questions—this is very typical here, I get interviewed more than I can interview others. A young officer wanted to know about the status of women in the West. From the little that we could say to each other it was nevertheless clear that the other side of women's oppression is how miserable life is for the young men of Afghanistan. People on the dance floor never

and embrace and exchange of "tasakor" (thank you).

* * *

July 24—A visit to Watan's nursery, the main nursery in Kabul. It is enclosed in a large walled compound west of the city center, with a steep hill to the back. It houses 1,000, mostly boys, who have been orphaned by the war or come from poor families. Another nursery for girls is located in the southern part of Kabul near the Soviet embassy. There are some 60 such homes all over the country.



Guardian (London)

Afghan militiaman with Soviet-supplied AK-47, ready to fight counter-revolutionary *mujahedin*.

touch, women enter the buses from the front and men from the back, swimming pools are for boys and men only. We talked about Jalalabad and what this victory represents for working people the world over, how our campaign got an audience especially among women from every part of the globe. I talked about how the civil war had erupted over issues like equal rights for men and women and how every step toward social progress is always met with reactionary resistance.

When I was about to leave, the young captain told me how much he liked our conversation and offered a handshake

which provide schooling and recreation and introduce the children to practical skills, like carpentry, mechanical work, carpet weaving and drawing. Occasionally the children are taken for excursions around Kabul.

The nursery is heavily guarded. This underlines the fact that in this country anything which represents culture and progress and the most elementary defense of human dignity—be it a nursery home, the national art gallery, a school—has to be protected against the counterrevolutionary cutthroats.

I also visited the Indira Gandhi Institute for Child Health. In the past year the Institute treated 3,525 war-wounded children. Most suffer from burns due to rockets or falling flares; 89 percent don't survive because their bodies are too weak to withstand the wounds they have received. "These are the pangs of a nation in the throes of war. The economy of a nation can be brought back on the rails, the infrastructure can be rebuilt, but what about the hundreds and thousands of innocent children who get wounded, their arms and limbs amputated?" said Dr. Abdul Salm Jalali, president of the Institute. "It will take decades to undo the destruction and damage being wrought on the society."

* * *

July 25—I was privileged to be present at a meeting of the Association of Families of Martyrs and Invalids, held at a hall of the Women's Council to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the country's independence. The asso-

ciation provides housing and other assistance for its 25,000 members. The president of the women's organization, a woman in her 60s, gave a very fighting speech. Other women spoke about how they came to lose their relatives. None of them wore the chador, although many had a scarf over their heads. One described how her family was attacked by *mujahedin* bandits on the road from Konar to Jalalabad. Her husband was killed and a little son died under a tank. Two of her daughters threw themselves into a river to die rather than be captured. She and the women with her waited for the enemy to return. Some of the women took small bombs and, knowing they would die at the same time, threw themselves at the murderers.

Not surprisingly, most of the women in the regular army battalions and in the new voluntary women's militia come from the association—they want revenge. Commander Shafiq, a Russian-trained woman who runs the training center, told me very proudly when I met her that this is the first time in the history of Afghanistan that women have been allowed to set up military units. They currently have a battalion of 600, one of whose detachments was in Jalalabad. The battalion is also responsible for guarding schools and institutions where women study or work.

* * *

July 27—Accompanied by the head of the provincial youth organization, our armed escort and a translator from the press center, I visited a youth battalion made up of People's Democratic Party (PDPA) and Democratic Youth Organization (DYOA) members stationed near Koresimir, some ten to twelve kilometers north along the Charikar Road, which is now closed off but used to be the main link with Salang. Army artillery units were active while we were there, and the youth unit was preparing to pursue *mujahedin* in a nearby village. This is part of the defensive ring around Kabul.

Earlier, I met with general secretary Mazdak, the 30-year-old leader of the DYOA. A member of the youth organization since 1976, he spent a year in jail under the Daoud regime. I outlined our support for the Soviet intervention in 1979, our offer to organize international brigades after the Soviet withdrawal and our criticisms of the policy of "national reconciliation." All personnel in the DYOA have undergone military training; there is even a military HQ in their Central Committee offices. The armed forces have six independent regiments made up of PDPA and DYOA members.

At the Koresimir outpost today they welcomed my visit and explained that one of their main tasks is to prevent rocket attacks against Kabul. Khamayon, the unit's political commissar, told me how everybody predicted they would fall after the withdrawal of Soviet troops, but "Afghans are defending themselves everywhere"; the *mujahedin* are "afraid to fight with us face to face, that's why they hurl rockets against defenseless people." "They come, we are ready," he added.

Hassan heads the special "Partisia" group and has been a partisan leader for eight years. The partisans, often disguised, infiltrate areas where the counterrevolutionaries are active, and then strike at them. Hassan and some of his comrades were featured prominently in a front-page article in the youth paper. Nurallah, a 22-year-old political activist, wanted to know the opinions of ordinary people in the West. It was a pleasure for me to be able to say, on the basis of our concrete experience around the campaign for Jalalabad, that there are tens of thousands of people that care about the fight of the Afghan people against the reactionaries. I concluded by assuring them that I and my comrades would do all we can to help them to win victory over the counterrevolutionaries who would like to bring back the Middle Ages. ■



Children in Kabul waiting for food. CIA-supplied terrorists target civilian population.

Soviet Workers...

(continued from page 1)

and vast income differences is social dynamite in the USSR with its deep collectivist heritage. When the workers enter the scene, we wrote, they will take aim at the parasitic bureaucracy which from Stalin on has usurped political power and whose policies ultimately threaten the very foundations of the Soviet workers state. Now imperialist spokesmen, blinded by the Solidarność experience into thinking that Soviet-bloc workers are a fertile field for anti-Communism, are beginning to wake up. But from an opposite class standpoint.

The *Times*' "analysis" suggested that Moscow think twice about the "price of buying peace in the coalfields" by concessions to workers interested in "instant gratification." This view from the most authoritative organ of the American bourgeoisie is of a piece with the line taken by the White House toward the recent crackdown in Beijing. While vote-conscious legislators called for sanctions, President Bush uttered a tut-tut while making sure the U.S.' trade ties, investments, military connections and intelligence listening posts along the Soviet border were secure. The imperialists' immediate concern is to pump billions in surplus value out of the deformed workers states; ultimately their aim is counterrevolution. Workers political revolution, toppling the Stalinist bureaucrats and returning the Soviet Union to the road of Lenin and Trotsky, is the mortal enemy of their plans.

Riding the Siberian Tiger

The miners strikes which spread like wildfire across the USSR last month marked the gravest crisis in the four years of Gorbachev's regime. From the Kuzbass coal fields in Siberia to the Donbass in the Ukraine to Vorkuta in the far north, *half a million* miners walked off the job. In an irony of history, Donetsk workers shut down the Stakhanov mine, named for the Stalinist superworker who jacked up piece-rate norms for all Soviet workers by overfulfilling his daily quota. Thousands of strikers in hard hats jammed the city squares from Prokopyevsk to Donetsk in round-the-clock protests. A worried Gorbachev went on nationwide television three times with personal appeals to the miners, saying they had "good reasons" for "taking matters into their own hands" but urgently asking them to return to work. As the London *Financial Times* (24 July) put it, Gorbachev is "trying to ride the Siberian tiger." Now a rail strike is threatened.

The miners finally heeded Gorbachev's appeal. In the deal worked out with strike committee delegates who traveled to the Kremlin, the government granted sweeping concessions including bonuses for hardship and night work, higher pensions, longer vacations and promises of an extensive list of goods, from meat to soap, detergent, milk, coffee, tea, cloth, shoes, cars, refrigerators, bathtubs and toilets. The desperate shortage of consumer goods, the worst in recent Soviet memory, is one of the bitter fruits of perestroika as neither plan nor market function. To satisfy the mine strike settlement, Moscow had to dispatch a government delegation on a shopping trip to the

West. Deputy prime minister Aleksandra Biryukova purchased \$58 million in pharmaceuticals and \$108 million in consumer goods, including 30 million pairs of pantyhose. The total price tag for the concessions is estimated at \$8 billion. But this is only the tip of the iceberg: what of the needs of millions of other Soviet workers?

Conservative columnist William Safire wrote that "It would be ironic if Mr. Gorbachev... should slip on a cake of soap" (*New York Times*, 20 July). But, as a member of the Supreme Soviet from the Donbass, Aleksei Boika, said, "The people have been driven to the streets not by a shortage of soap, but by a shortage of justice." He added, "The miners of Donetsk trust nobody and nothing. This is what we have come to... there is no protection, not from the

nationalist, company "union" of the CIA and the Vatican. But when the U.S.-financed "Democratic Union" tried to raise its head in the Kuzbass, its spokesman was hooted off the platform. The only place where the name Solidarity has been proposed is in the formerly Polish western Ukraine. When a strike committee member in Novokuznetsk (the former Stalinsk) said "we are the new Solidarity," the chairman begged to differ. "Workers in Gdansk had many political demands. We are putting forward only economic ones." In fact, the Soviet coal strikers have formulated political demands from the outset, but of a markedly different kind. The Kuzbass miners called for abolition of all special privileges for the bureaucracy and for a new Soviet constitution, to be prepared and publicly



Der Spiegel

Mammoth miners strike rally in Mezhdurechensk, July 13. The Soviet workers have awakened.

work councils, not from the unions, not from the party committees." Thus from the beginning, the miners movement threw up elected strike committees, recallable at any time, whose work was overseen by mass workers assemblies. These are the embryos of soviets. The strike committees will be maintained as workers commissions to monitor the fulfilling of the concessions, and as a reminder that the workers' muscle can be flexed again.

The government conceded the miners' demand for the right of individual mines to sell excess coal abroad after their plan delivery quota is met. This is a dangerous demand, ultimately threatening the state monopoly of foreign trade, which Lenin established as a cornerstone of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Moreover, the workers may not like what they get. Soviet miners are relatively highly paid while Soviet mines are comparatively inefficient, so their coal may not be competitive on the world market. The logic of the market would dictate pay cuts. We warned in our last issue that the demand for enterprise autonomy could spell unemployment. Some miners are already realizing this. In the Kuzbass a Western reporter went down in the shafts, where a miner told him:

"No one's paying any attention to the fact that this mine is the worst around the Kemerovo region. It's exhausted. There are two villages to feed, and we're going to be out of coal in a few years. Some of the mines have no coal left in them at all. We've got to talk about redundant work."

Under the system of each mine on its own, miners may find themselves out of a job.

The Western press at first hoped that the outbreak of workers strikes in the Soviet Union presaged the formation of a new Solidarność, the anti-Communist, pro-imperialist, Polish-

discussed by 7 November 1990, the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.

In Vorkuta, strikers called for power to the elected soviets and for abrogating Article 6 of the Stalin-Bukharin constitution consecrating the political monopoly of the Communist Party. The Stalinist CP is not a workers party but the political vehicle of the bureaucracy. On the other hand, Gorbachev's refurbished "soviets" are hardly the revolutionary workers councils of 1905 and 1917 but pseudo-parliamentary talk shops. Indeed, the Kuzbass strikes grew out of frustration with the recent meeting of the new Soviet congress in June. One miner in the Kuzbass told the *Financial Times* that the workers had been waiting for results ever since 1985, when Gorbachev came to power.

"Then, the Congress of Deputies began. The workers expected something concrete to be decided. We were all waiting for something important. Every day people watched. They saw how people talked and talked, and took no decisions. The people had just had enough."

All "glasnost," no action. What's needed is a fight for real soviets! Not debating societies, but organs of workers' struggle, led by a genuine communist vanguard, to become the basis of a revolutionary regime of soviet democracy.

Baltic Nationalism and the Danger of Capitalist Restoration

Meanwhile, raging nationalist turmoil is threatening to tear the Soviet Union apart. In the Black Sea region of Abkhazia, 20 people including three policemen have been killed in the last month in ethnic clashes between Abkhazians and Georgians. Strikes in the regional capital of Sukhumi have stopped most rail traffic to the Caucasus. More than 1,500 weapons were reportedly seized in raids on police stations by Abkhazian nationalists who are demanding secession from Soviet Geor-

gia. In the Georgian capital of Tbilisi on July 24, there was a general strike and march through the capital of some 20,000 Georgian nationalists waving flags and shouting "Long live free Georgia, Down with the Russian Empire" and "Invaders go home." Interior ministry troops have been stationed in the area to prevent ethnic pogroms, as with the dispute between Armenians and Azerbaijanis to the south.

For decades, from the beginning of Stalin's rule, the Kremlin has pursued a nationalist course which reflects itself at home in Great Russian chauvinism toward the other peoples of the multinational Soviet state. The bankrupt policies of the Stalinist regime have generated powerful tendencies for the restoration of capitalism, which are going under the cover of national self-determination. While in the Caucasus and Central Asia ethnic pogroms have been set off as various nationalities squabble over their share of the pie in the framework of "market socialism," in the Baltic republics the nationalist movements are blatantly heading toward counterrevolution, with the support of local CP leaders. And last week the USSR Supreme Soviet gave preliminary approval, with the support of the Gorbachev leadership, to a law for the economic autonomy of Estonia and Lithuania that represents the first step on the road to independence.

Simultaneously there was a four-day general strike in Estonia, called by the "International Movement," against a new proposed law which would effectively bar Russian workers from local and republic elections. Estonian nationalists cooked up this chauvinist legislation, which would require voters to have two years residency, and candidates must have lived in the republic for 15 years! Already, a law making Estonian the sole "official language" was passed in January. This is a proposal to disenfranchise and deprive of their rights nearly *half* of the population of Estonia, which includes several hundred thousand Russian-speaking residents as well as 200,000 Soviet troops stationed in the area. Most industrial workers in the republic are Russian, and the walkout included thousands of workers at the Tallinn shipyards. Similar national-chauvinist proposals have been raised by the "People's Front" in Latvia and the Sajudis of Lithuania, including calls for a ban on immigration by Russians.

The "economic reform" plan for Estonia and Lithuania debated in the Supreme Soviet is a frontal attack on central planning. Under the law, which is supposed to be a pilot plan for perestroika, the Baltic republics would raise their own taxes, set prices, control financial markets and foreign trade, and eventually issue their own currency. Hoping to build a "market economy" based on agriculture and light industry, advocates of this plan seek to build a system "resembling Finland or Sweden more than the traditional Soviet model," the *New York Times* (28 July) reports. Yet their own tiny markets are far too narrow to support an industrial economy, and even the nationalists don't think they can produce quality goods up to international capitalist standards. Their main market is to be the Soviet Union and, says the *Times*, "success of the plan, Baltic economists admit, depends heavily on the ability to lure foreign investment to help modernize and develop new industries."

This means the Baltic republics would become neocolonies of Western imperialism, just like they were in the period between 1920 and 1940. Today reactionary "captive nations" nationalists and social democrats mourn the demise of these nasty statelets, dominated by German and British capital, where fascistic nationalists dominated the universities while Jews were restricted under the *numerus clausus*, and "independence" came under the protection of British naval guns while Communists were slaughtered. In World War II, Bal-

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips an issue in August.

Our next issue will be dated September 1.

Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!

Auto Workers Shafted at Smyrna

It was *the* vote on organizing auto in the South. The labor-haters at Nissan ran an all-out campaign to defeat the United Auto Workers whatever the cost. And the labor *traitors* at Solidarity House *let them get away with it*. Bieber's boys had nothing to offer—they couldn't even show the union made a difference. How could they, after giving away *billions* to Chrysler, Ford and GM in the last decade? The UAW tops lost this one big, by more than two to one. *All labor will pay for the defeat*. Nissan's Smyrna plant will soon be the largest assembly plant in the U.S. Like new plants being constructed by Honda, Toyota and GM, it was sited in the rural South to *exclude* militant and black and union-conscious workers. Nissan, like the others, hires a far smaller percentage of black workers than live in the surrounding area. The plant has been open for *six years*, the one millionth vehicle rolled off the line last month. But for six years *the UAW did nothing to fight Nissan's racism*.

Crippling back and carpal tunnel injuries at Nissan are the direct result of the grueling pace of the "team" system of production. But "teaming up" with the boss is exactly what Solidarity House is ramming down the throats of auto workers across the country. South of Nashville, just a few miles from Smyrna, GM's new Saturn plant will be the "model" of the UAW bureaucracy's sweetheart "teamwork" schemes, which rip up seniority rights and any union defense on the shop-floor. The UAW tops aren't union organizers, *they're union wreckers*.

Criminally, the union went ahead with the vote *knowing they were going to get routed*. The *Wall Street Journal* (28 July) spilled the beans: "Before the vote UAW officials conceded privately that they expected to lose." Just a month before the vote, UAW president Owen Bieber was cynically trumpeting the organizing drive at the UAW convention in California. Now workers who put everything on the line for the union face Nissan's retaliation, while the bureaucrats can safely retreat to "Sacrifice House."

Since former UAW chief Doug Fraser joined the Chrysler board of directors, the UAW tops have openly been company cops, enforcing giveback robbery and layoffs, whipsawing one union local against another. Over 500,000 auto union jobs gone, labor/black Detroit decimated. And it's all done under the labor traitors' rabid protectionist program: the lie that workers must unite with their exploiters to "protect American jobs." How are you going to organize workers slaving away for Nissan, Toyota or Honda with that racist crap? The only things the bureaucrats have "protected" are capitalist profits and their own privileges.

And the "New Directions" gang, the lash-up of reformists and out-bureaucrats on the make? They peddle the same protectionist poison against workers in Mexico, Korea and Japan. The racist, open-shop

South can be broken, but it will take the kind of class-struggle tactics that built the UAW—like "hot-cargoing," mass picket lines and sitdown strikes.

NYC Hospital Workers Call Three-Day Strike

In the second one-day strike by Local 1199 in two weeks, more than 15,000 NYC health care workers massed on July 24 outside St. Luke's Hospital in Harlem, then marched crosstown to Mt. Sinai. The fight by



1199 workers rally, July 24. NYC hospital workers need solid citywide strike to win big.

the low-paid, overwhelmingly black and Latin hospital workers is a fight for decent health care for all. 1199 president Dennis Rivera says that starting August 14, the union will strike for three days, kicking off with a mass march from City Hall to Battery Park.

The hospital union's members have been working without a contract at 53 hospitals and nursing homes since July 1. On the picket line at St. Luke's, before striking workers from other hospitals arrived, picket captains tried to lead chants of "No Contract, No Peace," pushing the 1199 leadership's program of civil disobedience stunts instead of strike action. But the strikers began to chant "No Contract, *No Work*" instead.

Rivera had vowed that the rally outside St. Luke's would be "the largest picket line that has ever circled a hospital in the world." But he caved in to a state court order obtained by the League of Voluntary Hospitals prohibiting pickets in front of hospital entrances, and scabs were able to enter unimpeded.

The 1199 leadership is pleading with the hospital

bosses to "Do the Right Thing" by settling for the same contract negotiated at the city's Catholic hospitals, a contract which *gives up* pension money in return for an 8.5 percent a year raise. And at a July 20 hospital workers rally at Riverside Church, Jesse Jackson told workers to "Do the Right Thing" by voting for Democratic mayoral candidate David Dinkins.

But empty slogans, pressure tactics and relying on Democratic Party politicians like Dinkins and Jackson, and Governor Cuomo, won't beat the bosses. They're hardlining it, and they have the capitalist courts and cops behind them. What's needed is a solid strike of *all* New York City health care workers, including AFSCME workers in the public hospitals. Mobilize NYC labor to swell the picket lines in what would be a hugely popular struggle. For a whopping wage increase and free, quality health care for all!

For a National Coal Strike!

After wildcats in defense of the striking Pittston miners spread across ten states for over a month, the United Mine Workers tops called a "memorial period" to squelch what had become a virtual national UMW strike. West Virginia miners, who had been the first to shut down the mines in June, were finally pushed back to work by union president Richard Trumka in mid-July, as the courts and labor board handed down massive injunctions.

Across the Appalachian coal fields, the war on the UMW continues unabated. Jails continue to fill up with Pittston miners, their families and supporters. Fines against the UMW have soared into millions of dollars. An army of armed thugs and state police (called "Pittston's blue lights" by the miners) have put coal towns in southwest Virginia under virtual martial law. But Trumka, who likes to brag that he goes "up to see the good people on the hill in Washington D.C. wearing my camouflage tie," continues to beg from the Democratic Party and labor boards.

The Pittston strike can and must be won. Reportedly, a "heated" meeting of the UMW executive board held in Virginia last week debated a call for a national coal strike. But Trumka, with his "selective strikes" and impotent civil disobedience, has hamstrung this fight from the beginning. This is class war, and miners need a leadership that is willing to fight. Delegations from every section and district of the UMW—miners, pensioners, the Daughters of Mother Jones auxiliary—should meet in Camp Solidarity, organize an all-out national strike and appeal for solidarity *action* from other unionists.

Steel workers in Pennsylvania shut their plant down when UMW pickets arrived. Hundreds of other unionists have come to Camp Solidarity to fight alongside the miners. The miners must tap this power. For a real national coal strike, with roving pickets dispatched to shut down steel mills and power plants across the East and Midwest! Hot-cargo scab coal! Victory to the Pittston strike! ■

tic nationalists welcomed the Nazi invaders, and retreated with the SS when they were driven out by the heroic resistance of the Red Army and the Soviet peoples. Now they are trying to attract Swedish, West German and American capital in the name of "democracy." In the heyday of Solidarność it was said that the Poles wanted to live like West Germans and work like Russians. Well, the Baltic nationalists want to live like Swedes and *exploit* the Russians!

For Proletarian Political Revolution!

In his annual July 26 speech, Fidel Castro raised a cry of alarm about crisis in the Soviet bloc. Developments in Poland and Hungary, he said, "lead one to think of a peaceful passage from socialism to capitalism." Cuba can no longer rely on "the supplies which have been arriving like clockwork from the socialist camp for 30 years," he said. The Bush administration has "shown a triumphalist attitude like no other U.S. government, not even Reagan's." And as for the Soviet Union, Castro remarked: "If one day we wake up to the news that the Soviet Union has disintegrated, something we hope will never

occur, Cuba and the Cuban Revolution will continue to fight and resist." As Trotskyists we don't view things from the same vantage point as Castro, who stands at the head of a bureaucracy that claims to be building socialism in one island and has dug in to weather some strong winds coming from the north. But neither are we worlds apart, and we share some common concerns.

And with his connections, maybe Castro knows something we don't. The very next day the Supreme Soviet in Moscow approved the Baltic economic "autonomy" law. And now an ultra-perestroika "Inter-Regional Group" has formed in the Supreme Soviet, led by Communist Party "maverick" Boris Yeltsin and pro-imperialist "dissident" Andrei Sakharov. Although the group is described as "left-radical" in the official Soviet media, its politics point instead to Western social democracy. Historian Yuri Afanasyev, one of the Inter-Regional Group spokesmen, called in a press conference for rethinking socialism, "from Jesus Christ, through Lenin's death agony, to contemporary social democracy" (*Financial Times*, 31 July). During the recent coal strikes, Yeltsin went on national TV appealing to the miners to go back to work. And as Moscow party chief, in

1987 the "populist" Yeltsin met with the sinister Russian nationalists of Pamyat, thus giving credence to this dangerous fascistic outfit.

The "triumphalism" of American imperialism is palpable. Bush just returned from a trip to Poland, where he spoke before a crowd at Gdansk in which members of "Fighting Solidarity" carried signs proclaiming "A Good Communist Is a Dead Communist," and to Hungary, where the American president chortled that Marx's *Capital* is no longer required reading at Karl Marx University. Gorbachev's response to this flaunting of American imperial arrogance was a belly-crawling letter to the Western economic summit in Paris, in which the Soviet leader called for the USSR's "full and entire participation in the world economy." With his plans for making the ruble convertible, and appeals to the imperialists that they "can only gain from the opening up of a market as big as the Soviet Union," Gorbachev is offering an open door to capitalist exploitation.

Unlike Castro, Trotskyists understand full well that counterrevolution would be anything but peaceful. And it's anything but inevitable. What's posed for the Soviet proletariat is fighting a civil war from Jalalabad to Riga to

defend and extend the gains of the October Revolution. While Gorbachev ignominiously withdrew Soviet forces from Afghanistan in order to appease imperialism, there are recent reports from Moscow that "Soviet veterans of the Afghanistan war have asked the Central Committee of the CP to be allowed to return there with a voluntary division" to fight the counterrevolutionaries (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 27 July). We Trotskyists wholeheartedly supported Soviet intervention in the face of imperialist reaction and were outspoken in denouncing the pullout as a betrayal of internationalism.

With the miners strikes of July 1989, the Soviet workers dramatically returned to the political scene with a display of proletarian power that shook the Kremlin bureaucrats of all factions and cliques as well as the imperialist bourgeoisie. Under revolutionary leadership, this is the decisive force which will determine the fate of the Soviet Union, together with the struggles of their class brothers and sisters throughout the world. Their urgent need is to reclaim the banner of Bolshevism, the program of world socialist revolution, which we Fourth Internationalists of the International Communist League also take as our own. ■

China...

(continued from page 1)

autonomous trade unions that have sprung up. Thousands of others are in hiding all throughout the country.

It's very significant that the regime has struck out first and foremost at the workers. The first executions, in Shanghai on June 21, claimed three young workers. The next day, seven Beijing demonstrators were shot. They were all workers as well. And in Jilin, 17 were killed. Deng's bloody terror is a monstrous crime, and partisans of the working class everywhere must demand a stop to the executions.

But you have to ask, why is it that all the executions to date are of workers—and most arrests as well—when it was the students who touched off this whole series of demonstrations? Some of the papers have suggested that students traditionally have this very privileged status in China, and in fact the leaders of the demonstrations largely came from the families of the governing bureaucrats themselves. However, the fundamental reason is that while the students were the spark, it was the workers' social power that immediately threatened the bureaucrats' grip on Chinese society.

As revolutionary Marxists, as internationalists, we must pose the way forward for the next wave of battles which will inevitably grow out of the current situation. We have to ask: what kind of

entire program revolves around a deal with the United States and with Japanese imperialism, opening up wide areas of China for their exploitation. And he's accusing the demonstrators of trying to bring back capitalism!

It's very true that the demonstrators had plenty of illusions. They had illusions in the United States, and in so-called Western democracy. Yes, they did listen to the Voice of America and to the BBC. There were certainly pro-capitalist elements that were active in the demonstrations, but whenever those forces appeared to try to take over those

formed workers state. Despite all the encroachments by capitalism, it's still a workers state in that its basic economic forms, the state-owned industry and state-owned land, are the basis of a planned economy, the necessary economic foundations for any workers' dictatorship. The creation of the People's Republic in 1949, which will celebrate its 40th anniversary on October 1, was a revolution against imperialist subjugation of China; it threw out the bloody Chiang Kai-shek regime, led to the expropriation of the capitalists, finally united the country, gave land to the

other cities, it made sure that the working class was kept down. The workers never played an independent political role in that revolution. So the regime that took over, led by Mao, was basically a bureaucratic military caste that knows only one way to rule society—through commandism. It was a state that was modeled on Stalin's Russia, where in 1923-24 a conservative bureaucracy seized control of the young workers state through a political counterrevolution.

The Stalinist Bureaucracy—A Fragile Caste

Deng's violent repression of the workers at the very first sign of their resistance shows not the strength of that regime, but its *extreme fragility*. Its power stems from monopolizing political control of a workers state, a state based on collectivized property. In fact, the Stalinist bureaucracy rules in place of the proletariat, and *in contradiction* to the very working-class basis of that society. What they do is they conduct a very delicate balancing act between the proletariat and imperialism, which seeks nothing less than the overthrow of socialized property, which seeks nothing less than capitalist re-enslavement of the masses. That's why Deng Xiaoping cannot stand any independent mobilization of the workers. That will ruin his balancing act. And the bureaucrats know it could only spread too quickly and just shatter their rule.

Now, there's a good example of how this can happen, which is Hungary 1956. It's in the news now, because there's been this drama over the reburial of the body of Imre Nagy, who was the liberal reform Stalinist who headed the country and was hanged in 1958 after the defeat of the Hungarian workers' uprising. Hungary was the peak of a working-class insurgency that swept through Eastern Europe. First you had the German workers in '53, then Poland in '56, and then Hungary the same year.

The Hungarian workers' uprising started as a show of support to Nagy against the old hardline Stalinist regime.



Tanks in Tiananmen Square (above) and victims of crackdown. Deng's provocative massacre sparked beginning of proletarian political revolution.



government must replace the hated, discredited regime of Deng Xiaoping?

Deng's Big Lie

When Deng finally resurfaced on June 9, his first act was to speak to the Military Commission, where he congratulated them on their "victory" in Tiananmen Square. And what did he say? Well, first of all, there's this Big Lie: the army didn't kill anyone, it was the people who fired at the army. Secondly, Deng says, the student demonstrations were intended to "overthrow the communist party and the socialist system, subvert the People's Republic of China and establish a bourgeois republic." When you read the bourgeois press, they say the very same thing: the demonstrations were a unanimous cry for Western-style democracy, for the free market, for capitalism. Not only the bourgeois press, but sections of the left in this country said this, like the Workers World Party of Sam Marcy, which historically has denounced all working-class uprisings against Stalinism as inevitably feeding into capitalist counterrevolution.

The Spartacist League said that it was a massive outpouring of defiance which signaled the beginning of a proletarian political revolution in China. We need to explain that, because that's a uniquely Trotskyist conception. The first thing to state, very clearly, is that this was not an attempt to restore capitalism. For Deng Xiaoping to call the students counterrevolutionary and pro-capitalist is at the very least the most incredible hypocrisy. This is a man whose favorite slogan is "To get rich is glorious," whose

protests, they were defeated. There's one anecdote that I think captures it very well, from the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (11 June): after the troops started firing on the demonstrators, there was shock, then, "Gradually, the chants of 'Tu Fei, Tu Fei'—the old nationalist cry of 'Communist handit'—grew louder and louder. Then they stopped and men in tears began singing the *Internationale*." And every time you turned on the news, that's what you heard, the *Internationale*, the international socialist anthem. When Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng, the premier, were denounced by the students, they were not denounced as communists—they were denounced as fascists and as reactionaries.

This is very unlike a real counter-revolutionary organization like Solidarność in Poland, which glorifies the prewar fascist regime of Pilsudski and carries his portrait in their demonstrations. You did not see posters of Chiang Kai-shek, you did not see the Kuomintang flag in Beijing. The students were not aiming to overturn socialism. They were angered at the corruption, and they wanted more democracy as they understood it, in political and social life. And that's why we say it was the start of a political revolution, a revolution whose only outcome, to be successful, would have to lead to ousting the Beijing bureaucracy and replacing it with the democratic rule of workers', soldiers' and poor peasants' councils defending the collectivized property.

Our program is based on our understanding of what the Chinese People's Republic is. It is a bureaucratically de-

peasantry—a revolution that took years of bloody civil war to accomplish. Certainly the working people of China know far too well what Chiang Kai-shek stands for, and they don't want his tyranny back.

But the revolution and the state it created was deformed from the beginning. The Communist Party in China, in fact, really is communist only in name. It rode to power not on the basis of a proletarian insurrection, but through guerrilla warfare based on the peasantry. It was the peasant-based Red Army that seized power in 1949. And when it finally marched into Shanghai and

Putilov factory workers voting for delegates to Petrograd Soviet, 1920. Banner reads, "Long live the holiday of the international army of labor." Chinese workers need soviet democracy, Bolshevik internationalism.



There was a series of demonstrations, leading to one where Stalin's bust ended up just lying on the ground in the center of Budapest. What happened when the workers overturned that statue and threw it to the ground is that the secret police started machine-gunning them down. And that touched off uprisings all throughout the country. The workers armed themselves and they formed workers' councils throughout the country.

The Communist Party apparatus shattered—80 percent went over to the side of the workers' councils—which really points up its contradictory nature, as opposed to a capitalist ruling class. You would never see even a tiny fraction of the capitalists go over to the workers against capitalism. Like the Chinese workers and students, the Hungarian workers also had plenty of illusions in the West. They were influenced by bourgeois nationalism. But every time fascist or openly counterrevolutionary elements appeared, they were defeated by the workers. The workers' councils eventually declared for international socialism. Some of them even called for the councils to take power. The only way the Stalinists could suppress the uprising was to use the Soviet army; twice, because the first time there was too much fraternization between the troops and the Hungarian workers. And, by the way, the first government to applaud the crushing of the Hungarian workers was Mao's government. He sent Chou En-lai to Moscow to make that clear.

Now around the events in Tiananmen



Financial Times

Deng says "To get rich is glorious." Consumer goods are available, but not for Chinese workers.

Jiang Zemin. In fact it's faced with a situation of extreme instability. There is an underlying economic crisis behind the crisis of the political regime, a product of Deng's so-called "open door" policy. First of all, in the countryside right now land is still technically owned by the state, but they long ago broke up the people's communes, and they lease land to individual peasant families. That's created a very sharp class differentiation in the countryside, so that on the very same street, or the very same neighborhood, you'll have rich peasants who have benefited from these pro-capitalist measures, living side by side with poor peasants who have lost out. Huge re-

show a lot of output, they can fire workers, lay off workers. Unemployment is an extremely explosive issue right now. They're also letting factories go bankrupt if they can't turn a so-called profit, except the government has not closed a single factory under that new law, precisely because they fear the workers' resistance to such a measure. One writer, Orville Schell, called it the "Chapter 11 revolution." When he visited China in 1986, he saw a newspaper that said, "Bankruptcy Improves Businesses."

So you're getting to see what Deng's "building socialism with capitalist methods" really means. It's brought back some of the most hateful institutions of prerevolutionary China—child labor, prostitution. Then you have the return of what used to be called foreign concessions, basically a whole network of wealthy playgrounds for rich foreigners. Schell describes one of them in his book *Discos and Democracy*, the Zhongshan Hot Springs Golf Club (designed by Arnold Palmer, no less) where, he says, "while shooting down a fairway, one could pause to admire picturesque Chinese peasants plowing their rice fields with water buffalo." This is literally a picture you could have taken from the China of 60 years ago.

There's another important factor of instability. It's a certain political awakening. In 1978 when Deng Xiaoping first got back in the saddle, students went out in demonstrations and said, "Hello, Xiaoping." That was their chant, calling him familiarly by his given name, which they've never done to a Chinese leader in the past. Now he's the most hated man in China, next to Li Peng probably. When the current wave of demonstrations first broke out, students were not really opposed to the government. What they were doing was appealing to those in the regime they saw as their friends. But how about Zhao Ziyang, who they were looking up to as a fighter against corruption and bureaucratism? Zhao was one of the main architects of the economic reforms like the bankruptcy law in 1987. And

corruption? Zhao's two sons are two of the wealthiest men in China now.

The demonstrators' illusion that they would find a solution by pressuring for change at the top was utterly shattered on June 4, under the hodies at Tiananmen Square. The next uprising will be fundamentally different.

For Workers Democracy— For Lenin's Communism!

I also want to talk about the illusions that the students showed in Western-style democracy. Democracy is a very vague term, and many people mean many things by it. As Marxists, we understand there is no such thing as a classless, pure, abstract democracy. Democracy here and in West Europe was a product of revolutionary struggles against feudalism, and in this country against slavery, and it provided a political framework for the development of capitalist class society. Today the capitalist state tolerates democratic institutions just so long as their rule is not in jeopardy. When their rule is in jeopardy, you get something like Chile 1973. There you had a self-described Marxist elected president who didn't even talk about building socialism but was seen as enough of a threat by the United States for it to help sponsor the bloody coup by Pinochet that unleashed the last 16 years of terror.

For the Chinese people, there is an alternative. It's the workers democracy of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, when the workers seized power and built their state on the basis of workers' and peasants' soviets, the revolution that inspired the founders of Chinese communism. That's why we say in China today, workers' and soldiers' soviets must rule.

We have another slogan: "For Lenin's Communism." In fact, what the Chinese people know of communism is the Stalinist perversion of the communist program. You know, a whole wave of radicals in the '60s and the early '70s looked to Maoism as a revolutionary alternative to the conservative policies of Brezhnev and the Kremlin. Today, aside from bizarre sects like the Avakianite Revolutionary Communist Party, Maoism is utterly discredited. Its image, its following, was basically ruined when Mao embraced Kissinger and Nixon in Beijing while American bombers rained death and destruction on Vietnam. But Maoism never amounted to more than Stalinism as applied to a peasant country.

Mao's peasant-based Stalinism arose out of the greatest defeat the workers of China ever suffered, which was in the failed revolution of 1925-27 and the Shanghai massacre of 1927. The CP was founded in 1921 with one or two dozen intellectuals who had their origins in the radical bourgeois-nationalist May 4 [1919] Movement. Under the impact of the Russian Revolution, a section of these radical intellectuals was won over to Bolshevism, to a program of world

continued on page 8



Stalin statue toppled in Budapest, 1956. Bureaucratic apparatus was shattered by Hungarian political revolution.

Square, we called for the formation of workers' and soldiers' councils. And that's not some pie-in-the-sky notion. You had tens of thousands of workers, whole work units from the factories marching en masse, as a unit, to those demonstrations. The workers' councils, what were called soviets in Russia, are quite appropriate to such generalized uprisings. When they did arise in Russia it was to coordinate strike actions in the 1905 Revolution. Workers' soviets are based on the power that workers have at the point of production. They pose the question of who should rule that society. In Russia in 1917 that question was answered through the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution and the creation of the first workers state, based on the workers' and peasants' councils.

Now why didn't the Hungarian workers succeed in taking power on the basis of their soviets? The critical element they lacked was the revolutionary leadership that the Russian workers in 1917 had, a tested Bolshevik party that could show the way forward, that could pose how to seize power. And that is in fact the central lesson of the events in China: the Chinese working masses also need that kind of Bolshevik party, if they are to be successful.

China in Crisis

Right now the Deng regime would have you think that it's back in the saddle. You know, it has just reshuffled the government; it has appointed a new party leader, the former Shanghai boss

sentiment is building up.

Furthermore, the peasants now depend mostly on sales of their produce in the private markets, where they get a better deal. When the state tries to buy agricultural goods, it's pretty hard because they're chronically short of cash, and recently they resorted to issuing worthless IOU's to the peasantry. That's building up to a tremendous crisis in agriculture. In fact it was reported on June 14 that the martial law authorities dispatched troops to the countryside to harvest wheat and to move the food into the cities, because they rightly feared that food shortages were on the way, which would mean price hikes, and that would simply inflame the situation again.

Then there's inflation, a very sore spot among the workers, who have a fixed income. Last year was the first time that China saw double-digit inflation in almost 40 years. This year it's estimated to be 30 percent. And all these unemployed workers who flocked to the demonstrations—where did they come from? Article 42 of the Chinese Constitution proclaims guaranteed lifetime employment for China's workers; it's what is called the "iron rice bowl." But the dislocation that went on in the countryside shook loose a lot of poor peasants and they're flocking to the urban areas.

Furthermore, the way that Deng Xiaoping has largely dismantled centralized economic planning means that if individual factory managers don't



Shanghai worker condemned to death for protesting massacre.

China...

(continued from page 7)

workers revolution to liberate their country. By 1924, they had grown to be the mass party of the Chinese proletariat. But Stalin and Bukharin ordered the Communist Party to liquidate into the Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek, and even made Chiang an honorary member of the Comintern. The result was that in 1927 Chiang's Nationalist Army turned on a disarmed CP, unleashing a horrific bloodbath. Tens of thousands of Communist workers were killed. It was a blow that beheaded the Chinese proletariat literally and politically, a blow from which, in a sense, they've never fully recovered.

Many Chinese Communist militants discovered that in the USSR Trotsky had fought that policy of disaster all along. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Peng Shu-tse and others fought for Chinese Trotskyism under the most horrible conditions, ending up first in Chiang's jails, then in Mao's. The rest of the party fled the cities for the countryside and concentrated on organizing the peasantry. In the process they transformed the party from a Communist workers party into a peasant guerrilla army with a peasant nationalist program. It was in this period that Mao took control of the party. With the Japanese invasion of China, it was Mao's Red Army that fought them. All this time, Mao was calling for a coalition government with Chiang Kai-shek, but despite these appeals the Chinese bourgeoisie decided to flee to Hong Kong and Taiwan after the war. The Kuomintang regime basically disintegrated, ravaged by its own corruption. In 1949 Mao's Red Army seized power and, to counter the pressure of American imperialism, finally expropriated the Chinese capitalists.

If it was absurd for Stalin to talk about building "socialism in one country" in the USSR, it's doubly absurd for the Chinese Stalinists to believe they can build it in their extremely backward and poor country. What it takes in fact is workers revolution throughout the world, an international division of labor based on a common economic plan, to take advantage of the advanced economies, like Japan especially, which is the powerhouse of Asia. But the Stalinists wanted to make China modern, rich and powerful on their own. And that is basically what explains the zigzags that have taken place since 1949, from the Great Leap Forward in the mid-1950s, where Mao tried to forge a modern power by increasing the load of labor on the peasants' shoulders. And all that did was lead to a massive economic collapse where you had widespread starvation in the countryside. It also meant that Mao lost tremendous prestige in the Party. Liu Shao-chi and Deng Xiaoping were then in the ascendancy, and they proceeded to dismantle the people's communes and reverse a lot of the measures that Mao had taken.

That laid the basis for what was called



A. Mondadori



no credit

Armed workers militia in Shanghai, 1927 (left). Stalin's class-collaborationist policy of subordinating Chinese CP to Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang led to mass slaughter of Communist workers.

the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," which was nothing more than Mao's attempt to get back as head of the Communist Party. It was a giant faction fight, where Mao mobilized basically the students, the Red Guards, with the support of the People's Liberation Army led by Lin Biao, against the bureaucracy of Liu Shao-chi, based mostly on the trade unions, as well as the party bureaucracy. When the Red Guards moved to "revolutionize" the PLA, Mao sent them off to the countryside—he was saying, don't touch my army.

When Mao died in 1976, Deng took over, purging Mao's wife and the "Gang of Four." Deng came in preaching his gospel of "Four Modernizations," his gospel of reaching the level of the West by the year 2000. He appealed to the self-interest of the middle-class elements especially. He coined a slogan, "To get rich is glorious." After Deng initiated his market reform policies, there was in fact a boom that lasted quite a few years, but now we're seeing the price the workers are paying for that boom. It's coming home to roost.

Down with China's Alliance with U.S. Imperialism!

The lesson here is that whatever wrenching faction fights took place between different wings of the Chinese bureaucracy, they were really agreed on fundamentals. And one thing that really proves it is China's utterly reactionary, counterrevolutionary alliance with the United States, which arose out of the nationalist rivalry between the Chinese and Soviet Stalinist bureaucracies. As I said, back in 1969 Maoism was all the rage on the left. The Spartacist League, though, said, "we must warn against the growing objective possibility—given the tremendous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union—of a U.S. deal with China." That's exactly what happened, and that alliance was forged by Mao.

It was an alliance that was sealed in acts of war, from Angola in 1975, where China armed insurgents backed by the CIA and South Africa against the pro-

Soviet MPLA, to Afghanistan today, where the Chinese regime is arming the CIA's cutthroats who are fighting to re-enslave women and to stamp out any attempt to modernize that backward society. China today is home to some of the CIA's most valued intelligence listening posts along the Soviet border, which makes that border a possible trip wire for World War III. This, of course, is what explains the "moderate" response by the American government to Tiananmen Square. For them, Deng Xiaoping is just too valuable an asset to upset too much. Probably the most serious weakness of the recent demon-

genocidal maniac Pol Pot trying to fight to get back power in Cambodia, a workers and peasants government in China would immediately provide massive aid to Vietnam. Such a government would seek to forge communist unity with the Soviet workers state, because if George Bush and his NATO allies succeed in their plan to overturn the gains of the October Revolution of 1917, you can count the future of the People's Republic of China in days. This unity is not only urgently required for military defense against imperialism, but in fact would make possible what's really a natural economic partnership between



WV Photo

Spartacists protest China's invasion of Vietnam, 1979. Beijing bureaucracy sealed alliance with U.S. imperialism in blood of Vietnamese workers.

strations is that they failed to raise the issue of China's alliance with American imperialism.

One possibility now is that China could disintegrate into what people are calling economic or military warlordism. The PLA could break up into different regional entities. You have the economically better-off regions like in the south and east, where the imperialists exploit Chinese labor in the so-called special economic zones—sort of free trade areas. They recall the foreign concessions they used to have in China earlier in the century. That's why we call for the unity of China under workers' leadership. But for this unity, the workers must have an internationalist program. One of the first tasks of a revolutionary Chinese regime would be to combat Han chauvinism, the chauvinism of the predominant people of China, granting autonomy and respecting the autonomy of Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and the Turkic peoples in Sinkiang province. In fact, one of the reasons why the workers must restore centralized economic planning—under democratic soviet control—would be to enhance the development of those more backward areas with the rest of China.

The workers of China must have a perspective for international socialist revolution, most importantly in Japan. There must be an immediate rupture of the shameful alliance with the United States. While Deng Xiaoping continues to harass Vietnam by supporting the

China, the Soviet Union and a workers' Japan.

I want to close with a certain theme. A couple of weeks ago, you had *U.S. News & World Report* claiming "Collapse of Communism"; you had *Business Week* saying "Communism in Turmoil." Here's what we said in announcing the launching of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist):

"The bourgeoisie is celebrating in anticipation of the 'end of Communism.' The Stalinist bureaucracies have indeed reached the point of terminal crisis. But their crisis is because they are opposed to everything communism stands for. The national antagonisms in the Soviet Union, the revolt in China, arise in response to 'market socialist' policies that are counterposed to centralized socialist planning. The bureaucratic stranglehold over political and cultural life, the appeasement that has emboldened imperialism—these are not communism but its antithesis."

Today it is the Trotskyists who uphold the banner of Lenin's communism.

And you know that Chinese worker that I talked about at the beginning? He was right, there is no future for Deng's regime in China. The task we have is the building of a Bolshevik party in China as part of a reborn Fourth International, under whose banner the working people of China will find the road to ousting their bureaucratic oppressors, to securing the socialist future, and in so doing avenge the massacre at Tiananmen. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

☐ \$7/24 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)

☐ New ☐ Renewal

International rates:

\$25/24 issues—Airmail \$7/24 issues—Seamail

☐ \$2/4 issues of *Spartacist* (edición en español)

☐ \$3/3 issues of *Women and Revolution*

☐ \$2/10 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____ Phone (____) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

483

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

The Hungarian Workers Uprising of 1956

On July 6, Imre Nagy and four others sentenced to death for their role in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 were officially "rehabilitated" in Budapest. Three weeks earlier, the bodies of Nagy, Pal Maleter, Miklos Gimcs, Jozsef Szilagyi and Geza Losonczy were removed from the unmarked graves in which they had been buried in disgrace and reinterred in a ceremony attended by over 100,000 people. While the ruling party was not officially represented, party leaders in the government attended and a ceremonial guard was provided by the People's Army. Having for three decades vilified the events of October-November 1956 as a "fascist counterrevolution," the Stalinists now seek to "rehabilitate" it, as Soviet historian Leonid Yagodovsky puts it in the Soviet newsweekly *New Times* (4 July), as "the harbingers of the current changes in Hungary and in the socialist world as a whole."

Thus does one Stalinist lie replace another. While the neo-Bukharinite "reform" Stalinist Nagy could in some ways be considered the progenitor of the current regime's policies, even he might well have balked at the grotesque extremes to which his epigones have gone. More or less with Khrushchev's blessings, Nagy sought to carry out a program of economic and political liberalization prefiguring Gorbachev's perestroika. And later, after Nagy was removed and arrested by Soviet troops, the Kremlin installed not the old hard-liner Rakosi—a tyrannical butcher—or one of his underlings but Janos Kadar, who was part of Nagy's circle and who went on to implement at least the economic aspect of Nagy's program in what came to be known as "goulash communism."

In foreign policy, Nagy sought to follow in Tito's footsteps, declaring Hungary's "neutrality," then breaking with the Warsaw Pact as a way of dislodging the Soviet troop presence. But it wasn't Nagy's policies, internal or external, which made the Soviets decide to intervene. Khrushchev sponsored Nagy and was at that moment engaged in a reconciliation with Tito. Indeed, Khrushchev visited Tito on the eve of the military intervention and Tito condoned it.

What drove the Stalinists into a frenzy was the fact that *the armed power in Hungary was in the hands of the insurgent workers*. The essence of the Hungarian Revolution was not to be found in Nagy's liberal Stalinism, but in the armed revolutionary committees and workers' councils which sprang up throughout the country in October-November 1956. The Nagy regime lasted less than two weeks, devoting its efforts primarily to trying to rein in the insurgency on the streets and in the factories; in contrast, the workers' councils had sufficient influence and organization to carry off solid protest strikes even a month

after the Soviet suppression.

While there was plenty of political confusion among the revolutionary workers, their representative organs stood clearly opposed to a return to capitalism and were in practice counterposed not only to the old hardline Stalinist butchers like Rakosi and his coterie but to the Nagy reform regime as well. The Budapest Parliament of Workers Councils, representing two dozen of the city's largest factories, pro-



Wide World

claimed as its first principle when it convened on October 31: "The factory belongs to the workers" (reproduced in Bill Lomax, *Hungary 1956* [1976]). A district workers' council in the capital demanded "free elections in which only those parties may participate that recognize and have always recognized the Socialist order, based on the principle that means of production belong to society" (see "'Pure Democracy' or Political Revolution in East Europe," *Spartacist* No. 30, Autumn 1980).

It was the proletariat asserting itself as an independent political force which caused the bureaucratic apparatus to shatter. This is vividly described in an autobiographical account, *In the Name of the Working Class* (1986), by Sandor Kopacsi, who was Budapest chief of police at the time and later a co-defendant with Nagy, Maleter et al. when they were tried. Among the illusions within the insurgent proletariat, nationalist sentiments were widespread, in part a reaction to the police role of the Soviet army and in good measure a reflection of the influence of the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." But these confused views were by and large *not* an expression of anti-Sovietism or anti-Communism. Kopacsi recounts a scene in which three Soviet tanks came "nose to nose" with a crowd of demonstrators on October 25:

"A boy, undoubtedly a student—the scene took place just below us—pushed his way through the crowd to the first tank and passed something through the loophole.

"It wasn't a grenade but a sheet of paper. It was followed by others....

"Then the top of the turret of the lead tank opened a little, and the commander, with his leather cap and gold epaulettes, emerged slowly into the view of the apparently unarmed crowd. Then he flung the turret open and perched himself upon the top of his tank....

"The crowd erupted in a frantic ovation. In this jubilant atmosphere, the commander's cap was thrown into the middle of the crowd. In exchange, someone plunked a Hungarian Army kepi on his head. The crowd sang 'Kossuth's Song' and then the Hungarian national anthem. And, at the top of

their voices, they cried: 'Long live the Soviet Army!'"

Moments later, Kopacsi recalls, he received a report from one of his police officers at the demonstration: "The AVO [Hungarian secret police] is firing from every roof. Now the Soviet tanks are firing on the AVO! They're defending the crowd...." The extent of fraternization between the insurgents and the Soviet troops sent to suppress them was so widespread that the Kremlin was

parties—including openly pro-capitalist ones—to contest the coming parliamentary elections. Foreign capitalist investors can now own up to 100 percent of Hungarian firms, and will be able to repatriate profits; the government aims at putting fully one-third of the economy in private hands over the next few years. Even the "market socialist" Kadar was too orthodox by the standards of Hungary's present leaders: Kadar was stripped of the presidency



Der Spiegel

Budapest insurgents atop Soviet tank (left). General Pal Maleter (above) vowed: "There will never be capitalists and landowners in Hungary again."

forced to pull back and unleash a second intervention days later, on November 4.

Nagy's defense minister, Pal Maleter, was a decorated anti-fascist partisan in World War II, a dedicated Communist and a colonel (promoted to general when he was appointed defense minister) in the Hungarian People's Army. Far more than Nagy, he was seen by the workers as the popular leader of the insurgency. When Maleter called a meeting of the various insurgent groups with the aim of organizing a new National Guard, he told them:

"The purpose of this meeting is to lay the foundations for a new armed force in our country. This force is born of the insurrection, but we must ensure that reactionary elements, wanting to re-establish the old prewar regime, don't worm their way into it. That regime, fortunately, is dead, and there will never be capitalists and landowners in Hungary again. Am I understood?"

Maleter's going over to the side of the insurgency is illustrative of the shattering of the Stalinist bureaucratic caste. He was at the head of a tank unit sent to suppress a nest of "counterrevolutionaries." When he spoke to them under a white flag and discovered that they were pro-socialist workers, he turned his tanks around. Like Maleter, Kopacsi was also a former partisan, a third-generation working-class socialist from the steel mills of Diosgyor. Had the insurrection continued and the workers' councils become the new state power, doubtless there would have been a further polarization among pro-Nagy "national Communists" like Kopacsi. The essential element that was missing in the Hungarian uprising was a conscious proletarian vanguard party, committed to the revolutionary internationalism of Lenin's and Trotsky's Bolsheviks.

Today there *are* capitalists in Hungary again. A 13 July *New York Times* piece observed how "Budapest barely seemed Communist at all, with gambling riverboats on the Danube and swank millionaires." In February, the regime decreed the right of all political

and expelled from the Central Committee in May. Imre Pozsgay, a leading government spokesman and member of the new four-man presidency, declares that it is "impossible to reform communist practice as it currently exists in the Soviet Union and East Europe.... This system must be liquidated" (*Le Monde*, 30 May).

It will require more than state decrees and parliamentary elections to liquidate the historic gains achieved for the Hungarian workers by the overturn of capitalist property relations. As the nascent capitalist class—supported by sections of the bureaucracy—moves ever more to assert itself, it will be confronted with a *civil war*, as the workers seek to defend the jobs, rights and living standards associated with the collectivized economy. With inflation and unemployment soaring, the current regime is so discredited among the workers that when Kadar died, ironically the same day that the former comrades he betrayed in 1956 were rehabilitated, tens of thousands turned out for his funeral. One woman explained, "We trusted him more. He was stable, prices were stable."

The Hungarian workers uprising, even in defeat, vindicated in life the Trotskyist perspective of proletarian political revolution. The key to a future victory lies in the urgent crystallization of a Trotskyist vanguard. Trotsky's observations about Stalin's Russia in "The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (October 1933) apply with full force to Hungary 1956 and today:

"When the proletariat springs into action, the Stalinist apparatus will remain suspended in midair. Should it still attempt to resist, it will then be necessary to apply against it not the measures of civil war but rather the measures of a police character....

"A real civil war could develop not between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the resurgent proletariat but between the proletariat and the active forces of the counterrevolution.... The victory of the revolutionary camp, in any case, is conceivable only under the leadership of a proletarian party, which would naturally be raised to power by victory over the counterrevolution." ■

Spartacist League Public Offices

—MARXIST LITERATURE—

Bay Area

Thurs. 5:30-8:00 p.m., Sat.: 1:00-5:00 p.m.
1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor (near 17th Street)
Oakland, California Phone: (415) 839-0851

Chicago

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

New York City

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

Young Spartacus

"Do The Right Thing"—A Review

Continued from page 12

the degradation, disease, crime and poverty that are endemic in the ghetto. Spike Lee has created a stylized neighborhood for his movie, which is of course his right. Still, Lee purports to tell "the truth, Ruth"—and *this portrait is unreal*. Before he could even build the sets for this movie, Lee hired 20 bow-tied heavies from Louis Farrakhan's Fruit of Islam as his private security force! They boarded up two crack houses, swept up M-16 cartridges, ran the junkies around the corner, cracked down on crime and patrolled the set round-the-clock through the entire shoot.

In this film, nobody but Mookie has a job (except for his sister, who Lee described as "in a grey area, not black or white, when it comes to politics"). Working for the white man makes Mookie the middleman between Sal's business and the black community. Mookie's unemployed friends keep reminding him to "stay black" and demand that Sal add pictures of black people to his pizzeria's "Wall of Fame." The main omission from Lee's slice of life is the black working class, a force that could lead the ghetto masses in struggle.

There is a purpose to this deceptive portrait: to construct a framework for the simultaneously liberal and reactionary politics of cultural nationalism. Certainly blacks and Hispanics caught in America's ghettos know what they've got stinks and they want out. They don't want Ed Koch's decals of flower boxes pasted over burned-out tenements, they want real housing, real jobs, real schools. So why prettify the conditions and omit the power that black people have in the working class? It's convenient if your perspective is petty-bourgeois black nationalism.

The name of Spike Lee's production company, "Forty Acres and a Mule," identifies with the aspirations of black people after the Civil War and is a refer-

ence to their freedom betrayed. It is past defeats of integrationist struggles that fuel the defiant posture and rhetoric of nationalists who have in fact given up the fight. Pork barrel politicians and black capitalist hustlers worship the accomplished fact of segregation in order to push their own ambitions: to politically control and economically

immigrant bigotry that nationalist hustlers (like Sonny Carson, or FBI fink Al Sharpton who led a march against Arab grocers) are pushing in New York City. In one scene, the three sidewalk sages argue over why they are black and unemployed while a Korean has a successful new business in the neighborhood. One hastens to remind "Coconut

some point in his life, he'd called somebody a nigger, and I went crazy because he was someone I liked. Danny was upset with himself, I was really upset with myself, and Spike was gleaming, because he'd gotten the scene."

—Rolling Stone, 15 June

Esposito's real-life mother is black and his father is Italian. Off camera, he and Danny Aiello chatted in Italian. On camera, they were hurling epithets at each other. Lee's art didn't imitate life, it became life.

The Fake Unity of Malcolm and Martin

To the incessant beat of Public Enemy's rap tune "Fight the Power" blasted from Radio Raheem's boom box, the recurring image in this film is a photo of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King standing together. The incoherent, stuttering "Smiley" peddles this photo up and down the block. When Sal's pizzeria is burned to the ground, "Fight the Power" still pounds away from the ashes and Smiley pins his photo on Sal's previously all-white, all-Italian "Wall of Fame."

What's the point? The photo evokes a period of militant struggle against Jim Crow segregation and racist inequality in this country. That struggle was defeated—by black misleaders who sold their souls to the Democratic Party, by brutal state repression that mowed down the most militant black fighters, and by a passive labor movement that failed to flex its muscle in a class-struggle fight for black freedom. But that photo (snapped in the one brief moment that these two opposing political leaders ever stood together) has been preserved and peddled to promote a liberal lie.

Malcolm X, who stood for militant self-defense against racist attacks and opposition to the bosses' Democratic Party, is made more "acceptable" by association with King. King, who preached "love thy oppressor," is packaged to make him acceptable for today's alienated and oppressed black youth. That photo hangs in virtually every Black Studies department in every university. Malcolm X is now marketed for the illusion that you can "fight the power" while just buying into it. And that message is the conclusion of the film. There is no social struggle to combat cop terror against black America, just one word from "Mister Señor Love Daddy," the neighborhood's DJ and social conscience: "VOTE!"

Fight For Power

In his epilogue to *Do The Right Thing*, Spike Lee (who thinks his character, Mookie, is "from the Malcolm X school of thought") writes: "In the end, justice will prevail one way or another. There are two paths to that. The way of King, or the way of Malcolm.... I know who I'm down with." The film ends with two quotes. Martin Luther King espouses nonviolence. Malcolm X objects to self-defense being mislabeled as "violence"; he rightly calls it "intelligence."

It's a terrible abuse of a terrific quote from Malcolm X. Malcolm told the truth about the need for black self-defense and warned against any illusions in the bosses' police or the bosses' political parties to defend black rights.



1980 New York City transit workers strike: integrated labor movement has the power. Unleash it in revolutionary struggle to bring down racist capitalist system!

exploit "their" people, "their" market. Although this nationalist mindset permeates Spike Lee's diary, production notes and interviews, his talent as a filmmaker transcends his politics. His camera records all players in the New York scene with compassion and complexity and gives us a richer picture.

New York City Raw

Do The Right Thing captures the ambivalence of the black community toward a Korean greengrocer and turns it into an argument against the anti-

Sid," a Caribbean black, that he's not so long off the boat himself and ought to drop this Korean-hating nonsense; another rejects talk of a boycott with the announcement that "it's Miller time" and heads over to buy a beer. When the police murder Radio Raheem, the Korean grocer is among those chasing the cop car out of the ghetto. The crowd turns on him as another "outsider" charging "much money" in the black neighborhood. He frantically swings a broom to defend his store and pleads that he is not white either, that he too is black. Fury turns to amusement and finally compassion; the crowd disperses.

Lee exposes the contradictions of race-hatred with humor, and at times with a startling blast of raw loathing. Sal's son Pino, a racist Italian punk who can't stand serving Pop's pizzas to black people, ties himself in knots trying to justify his bigotry while conceding that all his entertainment idols are black: "...but not really black. They're more than black. It's—it's different." A rapid-fire montage of racial slurs slung between blacks and Italians, cops and Puerto Ricans, and the Korean to the Jewish mayor, stings the audience while they laugh. These words mean blood in NYC and everybody knows it. Lee hammers home the point of how absurd it is for everybody to hate everybody... while the cops get away with murder.

Sal (Danny Aiello) is a compelling figure in the film because he seems like such a decent guy, but when menaced, the same racist filth surges out. Moreover, that scene was a genuine, unscripted eruption. Giancarlo Esposito, who plays "Buggin' Out," the mover of the boycott of Sal's in the film, says "I got the ball rolling when I called Sal a guinea bastard":

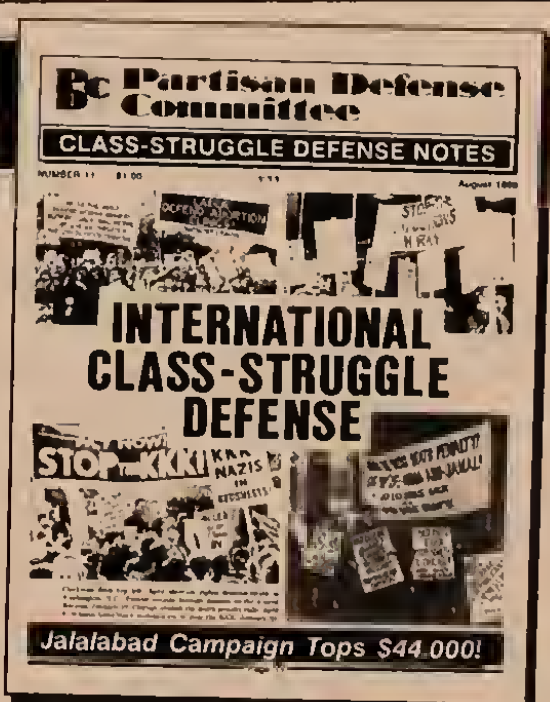
"When Danny said 'Nigger,' I freaked. It finally came up for him. I knew that at

Get Your Copy of CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES!

No. 11
August 1989

Latest Issue of CSDN contains:

- An international campaign of class solidarity and humanitarian assistance for besieged Jajalabad victims of CIA's mujahedin.
- Solidarity greetings from fraternal defense organizations initiated in France, Australia, Japan and four other countries.



With your contribution of \$5 or more receive a subscription to *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*.

For a single copy of issue Number 11, send \$1.00 to:
Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013

Army Storms Salvador University

About 60 people demonstrated outside the Salvadoran consulate in New York City July 26 to protest the latest wave of repression against students in El Salvador, carried out by the Salvadoran death squad government backed by the United States. Organized by the Hunter College Central America Solidarity Committee and CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador), demonstrators demanded freedom for René Antonio Cruz, president of the General Association of University Students (AGEUS). Cruz was captured and beaten by government soldiers at a bus stop just outside the University of El Salvador on July 16. At this writing he is still being held by the notoriously sadistic Treasury Police.

Between July 1 and July 16 at least 14 students and teachers were captured by government security forces. A social science student, a sociology professor and a high school student abducted by government forces are missing and feared dead. On July 17, army soldiers and Treasury Police fired on a demonstration of some 500 students demanding the release of Antonio Cruz, Robert Drennon, a Hunter College exchange student studying Spanish at the Univer-

San Salvador, July 17: troops occupy campus, round up students.



sity of El Salvador, was one of nine people injured at the July 17 demonstration. Drennon told *Young Spartacus* that when they heard gunshots and bazooka fire, "Everyone just scattered and ran into the University away from the guns. It was a lot of confusion, and right after that I broke my leg."

Under the constitution, the University of El Salvador is supposed to be an "autonomous" institution, the one place in the country where soldiers aren't allowed to come. But since last Decem-

ber the government has held the campus in a virtual state of siege, establishing military checkpoints at all gates. After the July 17 protest the government of Alfredo Cristiani sent in troops to occupy the campus indefinitely. Preceding the abduction of Cruz, government helicopters flew overhead and planes dropped leaflets. One of the leaflets "said the UNTS [the main Salvador labor federation] equals urban terrorists and it had the picture of a skull," Drennon told us.

The intensified repression against Salvadoran students follows on the heels of a stepped-up terror campaign targeting the labor movement and peasant and community groups. Hundreds have been arrested and kidnapped since the victory of the fascistic ARENA party in U.S.-brokered elections held March 16. But contrary to Pentagon propaganda claims ("Salvador's Army Gains on Rebels") in the *New York Times* (30 July), the leftist insurgents of the FMLN control a good third of the country and are hitting government forces in the heart of the capital, while the unions mobilize tens of thousands in defiance of state terror. So ARENA has introduced "anti-terrorist" legislation which would officially outlaw virtually any activity of trade-union, student and peasant organizations.

At the July 26 protest in New York, one protester, Mark Hoyt, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, and "assaulting" cops who knocked him to the ground, punched him in the face and wrenched his arms behind his back. The presence of numerous "undercover" agents at the demonstration was particularly menacing in view of the U.S. government's concerted campaign of harassment against Central America solidarity activists. We demand the dropping of all charges against Mark Hoyt. Stop the repression against workers, peasants and students in El Salvador! ■

But burning down a pizzeria has nothing to do with self-defense, and the real powers that keep blacks locked at the bottom of a capitalist social system lie far from "Sal's Famous" pizzeria in Bed-Stuy. Herein lies the danger of the purposely ambiguous message of *Do The Right Thing*.

In a recent *Penthouse* (August 1989) interview Spike Lee said the way out is that "blacks have to build our own economic base, own our businesses, be self-sufficient." And, he added in a talk show on Black Educational Television, when blacks are not just consumers hut owners, then they can put up the pictures they want in their shops. So in the end, what triumphs is accommodation with the racist Pino's views: blacks should stay in their own neighborhoods and Italians in theirs. What crap! In a racist society, *separate means unequal*. The myth of black capitalism is a hoax, and furthermore a naked one, which anyone can see by just looking at the racial composition of the ruling class in this country: not one black CEO in the top 1,000 corporations. Yet "black capitalism" schemes such as pushed by Jesse Jackson tell black people the lie that they should look to Coca-Cola for liberation, rather than to united class struggle together with white, Hispanic and Asian working people against their common enemy.

Lee provides the wrong answer to the question of why there are no black-owned businesses in a discussion about the Korean grocer in the film. His sidewalk sage concludes: "Either dem Koreans are geniuses or we Blacks are dumb." Black people are not simply another ethnic group in this society or



Malcolm X addressing Harlem rally. He opposed both racist parties of American capitalism.

just the most oppressed among many. Since the victory of Northern capitalism in the Civil War and the defeat of Reconstruction, the black population has been compacted as a *race-color caste*: last-hired, first-fired and segregated at the bottom of society. A caste system means social mobility only for some—Koreans, even light-skinned Hispanics can move up, but keeping black people down is a pillar of this capitalist system.

But society is not fundamentally divided between owners and consumers. There are *producers* of the wealth who have been systematically denied the fruits of their labor. It is the integrated

working class that has the social weight and power to break the bosses' rule. To see that, Spike Lee would have to cast his camera off the microcosm of one

ghetto block. But not too far. Even a glimpse of the local subway at rush hour would do. Tens of thousands of black men and women, many of them unionized hospital workers and public employees, teachers, utility employees and service workers, are a key component in what makes New York run. And getting them to work every morning are the transportation workers, who showed their power in 1980 in a big strike that left the Brooklyn Heights yuppies limping over the bridge to Wall Street.

Genuine emancipation of black people from their oppression in this racist capitalist society, making racial equality a reality rather than a dream, will begin with socialist revolution. There is no other road to black freedom. To lead that fight, we need a party—an integrated, class-struggle workers party that will mobilize labor and minorities in defense of the beleaguered ghettos. The bosses' Democratic Party is the main political means used to tie the oppressed to their exploiters. We need a workers party to lead all the oppressed in a fight for a workers government. To this we in the Spartacist League are dedicated. ■



Martin Luther King Jr., Robert Kennedy, Roy Wilkins, Lyndon Johnson in 1963. King tried to channel ghetto anger into racist Democratic Party.

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. LOCAL DIRECTORY

National Office:

Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116
(212) 732-7860

New York

Box 444, Canal St. Sta.
New York, NY 10013
(212) 267-1025

Atlanta

Box 4012
Atlanta, GA 30302

Detroit

Box 441794
Detroit, MI 48244

Boston

Box 840, Central Sta.
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 492-3928

Ithaca

Box 6767
Ithaca, NY 14850

Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO
Chicago, IL 60680
(312) 663-0715

Los Angeles

Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta.
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 380-8239

Cleveland

Box 91037
Cleveland, OH 44101
(216) 781-7500

Madison

Box 2074
Madison, WI 53701

Norfolk

Box 1972, Main PO
Norfolk, VA 23501

Oakland

Box 32552
Oakland, CA 94604
(415) 839-0851

San Francisco

Box 5712
San Francisco, CA 94101
(415) 863-6963

Washington, D.C.

Box 75073
Washington, D.C. 20013
(202) 636-3537

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA

Toronto

Box 7198, Station A
Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X8
(416) 593-4138

WORKERS VANGUARD



Universal City Studios Photos

Scenes from the movie: Residents outraged by police murder trash pizzeria; above, Mookie (Spike Lee) and Sal (Danny Aiello).

"Do The Right Thing"— A Review

New York City. From the Bronx to Brooklyn, people are lining up in the summertime heat to see *Do The Right Thing*, Spike Lee's new film about racism in New York. It is a riveting picture of abrasive race relations as seen in the life of one block of the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn. Here people are locked in, compressed, brimming with pent-up frustration. Nothing comes from outside this block

Young Spartacus Film Review

by A. Stevens

except the heat—the killer cops and a merciless sun. As the temperature rises, we see not the fabled American "melting pot" but a pressure cooker that serves up an American meltdown. A racial confrontation and then police terror spark an explosion. People who don't even see themselves as racists get caught up in it: there is *no way out*.

There is a genuine New York flavor to this movie—both in the stinging rawness of race-hatred and the cultural mix in this city with its ethnically diverse population of minorities and foreign-born. This vibrant and often very funny film is something of a cultural breakthrough: a restoration of humanity and compassion to black people that Hollywood has all too often typecast in racist stereotypes. Lee's idea for *Do The Right Thing* arose out of the racist murder of a black man by a gang of white racists in Howard Beach, Queens. Lee says: "It was 1986 and a black man was still being hunted down like a dog. Never mind *Mississippi Burning*: Nothing has changed in America, and you don't have to go down south to have a run-in with racist rednecks. They're here in Nueva York." Although Lee has brought a charged political issue to the big screen,

Do The Right Thing is deliberately ambiguous in its message.

Do The Right Thing is dedicated to six black men and women, a roll call of victims of lynch-mob and racist cop terror: Michael Griffith, Eleanor Bumpurs, Michael Stewart, Edmund Perry, Yvonne Smallwood, Arthur Miller. As their names rise on the screen we remember each chilling murder and also think of the new names that must now be added and also not forgotten—Richard Luke, seized in his housing project and murdered in police custody; Trevor Francis, hurled to his death from a Harlem roof. How many more have been martyred for the "crime" of being black in a racist society? Deliberately timed for release in the midst of New York City's mayoral race, this is pretty hot stuff—too hot for some blowhards of

the bourgeois press.

One reviewer hysterically accused Spike Lee of having lost the election for black Democratic hopeful David Dinkins. Others sound the alarm that this film could spark race riots at a theater near you. But did the press worry when they screamed "WILDING" all over their front pages? Did any of them fear unrest when George Bush rode to office over the image of Willie Horton? Whipping up white fear and hatred is news fit to print for those who mold "public opinion" in order to keep things as they are. But black rage? Misdirected vengeance? It's a racist double standard. As Lee said, "Any riot this summer will be because another cop killed a black kid who's innocent."

The Euro-chic judges at the Cannes Film Festival snubbed this film, declar-

ing a movie about American racism "irrelevant." (We suspect that North African workers in France and Asian immigrant workers in Thatcher's Britain won't think so.) The critics found "Mookie," the movie's central black character, "unheroic." It is precisely the absence of heroes and angels and feel-good-Movieland endings that give this film its complexity and its viewers something to think about. Shouting "Howard Beach!" Mookie turns his wrath at the police murder of Radio Raheem (the block's baddest, most alienated and menacing youth) on Sal, the white pizzeria owner. It's not heroic. It is a very tame screenplay of the repression and rebellion that's swept America's inner cities when black youth have been driven beyond reason by trigger-happy cops.

Cultural Nationalism: Liberal Lies

A self-proclaimed "black nationalist with a camera," Lee paints a very idealized portrait of ghetto life. This block of Bed-Stuy looks good: poor but rich in spirit, laughter and innocence. Even the cops are too good to be true. The chokehold murder of Radio Raheem is horrifying and intentionally evocative of the real-life police murder of Michael Stewart, yet here it's portrayed as an accident by two overzealous pigs, one of whom pleads, "Hey, that's enough, stop it." By contrast, the murder of Michael Stewart, like so many others, was no accident. It was 14 against one and nobody yelled "stop!" except the anguished family and angry New Yorkers in protest of this heinous crime.

It is not this "artistic license," however that has many critics howling. All they want to know is "where's the dope?" One can appreciate Lee's hissing at racists who believe all black people are shiftless, lazy junkies who must be held personally responsible for

continued on page 10



February 1987 protest outside Bronx courthouse against police murder of black grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs.

Wilford Harewood