

## Supreme Court, Bush, Democrats— Enemies of Women's Rights

# Free Abortion on Demand!



Sanceller/AP



WV Photo

Reactionary drive to gut abortion rights could provoke explosive opposition in the streets. Left: Philadelphia protest over Supreme Court ruling. Right: March 29 abortion rights rally in San Francisco.

Last week's high court ruling on abortion read like it was hatched in an underground parking garage halfway between the Supreme Court and the White House. By a five-to-four vote, the Court endorsed the core of an odiously restrictive Pennsylvania law requiring a mandatory waiting period for women seeking abortions and forcing teenagers to notify their parents. At the same time it claimed to reassert the "essence" of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion nationwide, while in fact undermining the "fundamental right" to abortion by allowing any restrictions which do not entail what they deem an "undue burden." The decision by the Reagan-Bush court was consciously crafted to split the difference with the aim of taking the explosive abortion question off the agenda and saving George Bush's ass in the November election. Instead, the ruling made abortion an even bigger election issue.

With the population strongly in favor of the right to abortion, and Bush sinking in the polls against "pro-choice" contenders Democrat Bill Clinton and the sinister Ross Perot, the Supreme Court ruling was meant to take "the edge off a recurring Republican nightmare," as the *New York Times* (30 June) commented. Yet the worries of the new "moderate conservative" center of the court, which the media has been playing up, went further. Reading from an opinion coauthored by Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy, Justice David

Souter motivated the decision on explicitly political grounds. He warned from the bench that overturning *Roe* "under fire" and "under the existing circumstances" would cause "profound and unnecessary damage to the Court's legitimacy, and to the nation's commitment to the rule of law." With the bourgeoisie split wide open over the question of legalized abortion, this elitist arbiter for the ruling class is clearly worried.

The "legitimacy" the black-robed judges seek to protect is their position as the judicial guardians of American imperialism's "New World Order." The same session asserted a U.S. license to kidnap abroad, and in the guise of striking down a misguided law against "hate speech," defended KKK cross-burnings as "freedom of expression." Appointing itself chief high executioner, the Court chillingly swept aside legal impediments to the death penalty, working through the night to insist that the state murder machine go into high gear. Already more people have been executed this year on disproportionately black and Hispanic Death Row U.S.A. than in all of 1991.

This ruling aimed at pleasing everybody in fact satisfied virtually no one. National Organization for Women (NOW) president Patricia Ireland declared, "Roe is dead, despite the flimsy stay of execution today from the Court." The rad-lih *New York Village Voice* (7 July) carried a huge front-page headline reading: "Court to Women: Drop Dead!" Even the *Wall Street Journal* (30 June) noted, "Frightened Teen-Agers, Poorer Women Likely to Suffer Most From Court Ruling." At the same time, the head of the National Right to Life Committee denounced the ruling as "a loss for unborn children and a victory for pro-abortion forces." Operation Rescue terrorist Randall Terry railed, "Three Reagan-Bush appointees stabbed the

pro-life movement in the back."

Both the anti-abortion bigots and the "pro-choice" liberals are pitching the coming election as one which will determine the next appointment to the Supreme Court and the fate of abortion. At the age of 83, Justice Blackmun, author of the *Roe* decision, says he "cannot remain on this Court forever." But it was not particularly the political composition of the 1973 court—whose chief justice, Warren Burger, was a Nixon appointee—which led to the legalization of abortion. This was a concession to an upsurge of mass social struggle. The women's liberation movement arose as hundreds of thousands of radicalized youth took to the streets in the struggle for black rights and in opposition to the dirty imperialist war in Vietnam.

Even the most minimal gains for working people, women and minorities have been achieved only as a result of social struggle, not through the ballot, and certainly not through lobbying the Congress or Supreme Court. But under capitalism, every reform remains eminently reversible, as the onslaught on abortion rights demonstrates. In its drive to rearm U.S. imperialism and restore its erstwhile hegemonic power in the world following its humiliating defeat in Indochina, the American bourgeoisie launched an all-sided reactionary onslaught aimed at reversing the gains of the civil rights movement, ending the "war on poverty" and crippling the labor

movement. The campaign to rip abortion rights away from American women is the spearhead for a general offensive, organized by the White House and its Supreme Court appointees, against women's rights and black rights.

Some 1.6 million abortions are performed every year in this country. Barely two people out of ten favor an outright ban on abortions, while even among Republican voters nearly two-thirds oppose such a ban. In recent years, particularly since the 1989 Webster ruling, hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets to demonstrate against the reactionary assault on this most personal of rights. But the "pro-choice" liberals offer only the most timid pressure politics.

According to National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) president Kate Michelman, the answer is to elect "a pro-choice President" and "a veto-proof Congress," in other words, a Democratic president with a Democratic Congress. In a picture that spoke two thousand words, Michelman was photographed on the steps of the Supreme Court as she rushed to report on its decision over a mobile phone to her supreme leader, Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton. NOW, NARAL and the other liberal abortion rights groups are firmly tied to the Democratic Party. Indeed, the challenge to the Pennsylvania law in the Supreme Court, initiated

*continued on page 8*



**Young  
Spartacus**

See  
Page 6

## The Rap Flap



# Free Robert Buck, Labor Prisoner!

Robert Buck, 27 years old, a popular member of Steelworkers Local 5668 at Ravenswood, West Virginia, has been in prison since last January, railroaded by the federal government for defending his union and his job from the scabs and thugs brought in by Marc Rich and Ravenswood Aluminum Corporation (RAC). Buck was slapped with a prison stretch of 33 months, sent far away from home and family to the hinterlands of Hinton, Oklahoma.

Buck was arrested in the fourth month of the class battle at RAC, convicted of two charges of possessing an explosive device, after the feds alleged that he and another USWA member, Gerald Church, threw a small homemade black powder

charge outside the home of a scab on 4 March 1991. The feds' "evidence" consisted of the testimony of the scab, Edward Piggett, and Church, who turned fink and got off with a year of house arrest for his "services."

Bob Buck's "crime" was to defend his union—not just on the picket line but by refusing to become a rat for the feds. Prosecutors and federal officers threatened to send him away unless he wore a wire and spied on his brothers at union headquarters. Buck told the Partisan Defense Committee, "The first time I ever saw these people, the first thing they said was 'You're going to prison for 40 years.' Reminded me of the bullies at school." Buck's mother told us, "I would

Jailed Steelworker Bob Buck refused to fink on union; shown here with his baby daughter.



have rather spent three years in prison myself than to see him wear a wire into a union hall."

Mrs. Buck described how the feds invaded their home and, brandishing a gun, kept her and her husband in Buck's bedroom as they rifled through his personal belongings, including pictures of his young daughter. For sheer spite they confiscated Buck's pickup truck, and 15 months later they still haven't returned it.

Buck told us how the state's response to the struggle at Ravenswood has firmed his resolve: "When they threw us out of that plant, I thought in a few days, we'll go to court, the state cops and everybody would come down here and straighten this out. They showed up all right, but to what? To escort the scabs. Maybe I never noticed these things before. I spent six years in the military and it was all 'USA all the way' and everything, but there's a lot of these things you just don't hear about. They may be our government, but they don't always look out for us

as much as they look out for where the big money and campaign contributions are."

"They want to come and bust a union hall. I think anybody that stands up to them scares them. They see an outfit like our group there, old men, old women, young women, young men and everything standing up to them, I think it scares them. Anybody that steps out of line or opens their mouth too much, they've got a place for them right here at Hinton."

By refusing to wear a wire, Buck did a great service for the entire labor movement. The fight for Bob Buck's freedom must be the fight of the entire labor movement. When the PATCO air controllers union leaders were marched off to prison in chains in 1981, and the labor tops did nothing, it ushered in an era of defeats. Strikebreaking injunctions, labor frame-ups, armed mercenaries from outfits like Vance security, and an arsenal of legal weapons recall the late 1800s, when the mines and plants were patrolled by private armies, and strikes



TROTSKY

### "An Injury to One Is an Injury to All"

The principle of non-sectarian labor defense in this country goes back to the revolutionary syndicalists of the Industrial Workers of the World. This cause was taken up by the International Labor Defense, established by the early Communist Party and headed by James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism. Looking not to the courts but to the power of labor, the ILD defended many "Wobblies" and others such as Sacco and

Vanzetti. Among the class war prisoners whose defense the ILD took up were San Francisco trade-unionists Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, framed up on bomb charges in July 1916. Today the Partisan Defense Committee continues this tradition of class-struggle defense.

The path to freedom leads through a prison. The door swings in and out and through that door passes a steady procession of "those fools too stubborn-willed to bend," who will not turn aside from the path because prisons obstruct it here and there.

The doors of San Quentin penitentiary swung outward the other day and three men stepped forth and drank in their first breath of freedom for several years. They were workers, members of the I.W.W., who had just finished a sentence under the criminal syndicalism law....

In the state penitentiary in Massachusetts, Sacco and Vanzetti wait for the final judgment to be passed upon them because they are rebels and foreigners....

The class-conscious worker accords to the class-war prisoners a place of singular honor and esteem. The class-war prisoners are stronger than all the jails and jailers and judges. They rise triumphant over all their enemies and oppressors. Confined in prison, covered with ignominy, branded as criminals, they are not defeated. They are destined to triumph. They are the representatives of an idea that will crack the walls of every prison and crumble them into dust.

There is a way of saying that the class-war prisoners are victorious, which smacks of superficial optimism and which offers little consolation to men who spend long, almost forgotten years behind the gray walls of the jail. We do not mean to speak in this sense, as though it were an automatic process. The victory of the class-war prisoners is possible only when they are inseparably united with the living labor movement and when that movement claims them for its own, takes up their battle cry and carries on their work.

—James P. Cannon, "The Cause That Passes Through a Prison," *Labor Defender* (September 1926)



LENIN

## Black Lawyer Barred—Racist "Dress Code" in D.C. Court

The following protest letter was sent by the Partisan Defense Committee on June 24:

District of Columbia Court of Appeals Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to protest the unprecedented action of Judge Robert Scott in dismissing attorney John T. Harvey from his courtroom for wearing a kente cloth. It was an outrageous expression of bigoted contempt for the jurors for Judge Scott to claim the kente cloth would prompt them to automatically sympathize with Mr. Harvey's client. It is also a racist recipe for excluding blacks from future juries.

In addition to the racist contempt of this judge, his action was blatantly unlawful—violating the right of Mr. Harvey's client to the attorney of his choice, and violative of the separation of church and state codified in the First Amendment. As legal commentators have pointed out there have been no like proscriptions against wearing a yarmulke or cross in court—not to mention the Brooks Brothers suit, Cardin tie, Lloyd & Haig shoes and Rolex watch which appear to be the U.S. legal system's version of the powdered wig.

What ruffles this judge's feathers is this gesture of solidarity expressed by Mr. Harvey with oppressed blacks across the country as well as in his courtroom. The acquittal of the officers who beat black motorist Rodney King was a reaffirmation of Supreme Court Justice Taney's decision in the Dred Scott case 135 years ago that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to



Berg/NY Times

D.C. attorney John T. Harvey wearing African kente cloth shawl.

respect." And as Judge Robert Scott demonstrated, that holds true as much for Mr. Harvey, an "officer of the court," as it does for the 85 percent of the black men in the nation's capital who, mired in a life of enforced ghettoization and poverty, sooner or later pass through the criminal "justice" system.

We demand that Mr. Harvey's dismissal be lifted.

Very truly yours,  
Paul Cooperstein  
for the PDC

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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# Ravenswood Strikers Beat Back Union-Busters

were branded as "criminal conspiracies."

They've added another deadly weapon to the legal arsenal—RICO conspiracy laws. Like the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890, which was first used not against trusts but against unions, the RICO laws enacted under the pretext of fighting "organized crime" have been a government dagger aimed at the heart of the organized labor movement. With the help of "reform" groups like the Teamsters for a Democratic Union, the feds have used RICO to place the powerful Teamsters union under government "trusteeship."

Mine Workers, Longshoremens, Laborers and Hotel Workers are just some of the unions to feel the RICO sting. And under the threat of civil RICO suits, fines and seizure of union assets, the union tops have let militant fighters like Bob Buck swing in the wind rather than come to their defense. This is the "legality" honored by union officials who shun the weapons that huilt the unions—plant occupations, picket lines that mean you better not cross, and solidarity strikes.

The police-state RICO laws have been used against anyone or anything the government doesn't like—from black activists like Mutulu Shakur, to the New Leftist Ohio 7, to adult bookstores in the Midwest. Like the old IWW slogan said, "An injury to one is an injury to all." Labor must use the power it still has to beat back this new union-busting tool. For hard class struggle to defeat anti-labor repression—the only "illegal" strike is one that loses!

In a message for his union brothers and sisters, Buck told the PDC, "We got to stick together. You can't let one person take the fall by themselves. I could have possibly got out of this mess by putting someone else in it. But I wasn't willing to do that. We've got to stand together on all of this, and not let them scare us and bully us into taking whatever we're offered, or working unsafely or whatever, just to appease the company or the federal officials."

The USWA tops abandoned Buck as his union brothers return to work. Fourteen members of Local 5668 faced charges stemming from this labor battle, but under the contract negotiated by the union bureaucracy Buck will not get his job back.

At a May 16 rally of 2,000 locked-out RAC workers, a Partisan Defense Committee representative called for labor defense of imprisoned union brothers. The PDC has added Bob Buck to the list of class-war prisoners to whom we send stipends. It was people like Bob Buck who built the Steelworkers and every other union in this country. Free Bob Buck! (Send messages of solidarity to Robert Buck 03314-088, P.O. Box 200, Hinton, OK 73047.)

\* \* \*

We encourage WV readers to continue to support and build the PDC. Become a monthly sustaining contributor. Send a donation of \$5 or more and receive a subscription to *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*. For a single copy send \$1 to: Partisan Defense Committee, Box 99, Canal St. Sta., New York, NY 10013. ■

## Correction

Comrade Eibhlín writes us concerning an error in the article "Family Values are Killing Youth," WV No. 554 (26 June):

No. The (ex-) Bishop of Galway is Eamonn Casey, not Eamonn Murphy as the article states. Comrades in the Dublin Spartacist Youth Group reported that T-shirts appeared in Dublin during the Casey scandal, advertising condoms with the slogan, "Wear a condom, just in Casey!" As some wit on British television put it, the good Bishop will now go on to take up a missionary position in Latin America."

Two hours after the last of the scabs left the Ravenswood Aluminum Corporation (RAC) plant in West Virginia on June 29, the members of United Steelworkers (USWA) Local 5668 reclaimed their jobs. They had fought a brutal 20-month battle of attrition with RAC and metals tycoon Marc Rich. The wife of a Local 5668 member proudly told the *Parkersburg News*, "We've showed that company that people all across the country are willing to fight union-busting companies like Ravenswood Aluminum."

Workers had endured the long lockout and defended their union. They approved the final contract by a margin of 1,287 to 181, but they are also angry. Under the agreement hiring "preference" is given to the hated scabs who holed up in "Fort RAC." Over 100 have already been hired, while RAC uses physicals to screen out unionists. Militants are being provoked and disciplined. The final contract also gives RAC "flexibility" in job descriptions and work rules that will mean fewer, and more dangerous, jobs. The USWA bureaucracy and RAC rushed to settlement, as an NLRB law judge conveniently held back a ruling which could have cost the company \$70 million in back pay.

Criminally, the USWA tops also bargained away the job of jailed striker Bob Buck. Workers like Buck were the backbone of the strike. As one union supporter wrote in thanking the Partisan Defense Committee for a donation to a fund for Buck, "He had the courage not to wear a hug and try to trap his co-workers. It didn't take courage for the rat that squealed." Twelve other unionists who were fired for picket line activity will come back to work, but the settlement explicitly deals away Buck's job. Local 5668 members, and all labor, must not forget men like Bob Buck.

In announcing the contract vote, USWA International VP George Baker told the strikers, "you've had 19 months of putting up with a lot of crap that wasn't necessary and you won." But what was "unnecessary" was that it took 20 months to win this class battle. Sure, the International sent in strike support funds, and thousands of other unionists sent support. But from the time RAC locked the gates and implemented their plan to smash the union, the Steelworkers bureaucracy played by the bosses' rules.

Coal miners in West Virginia have shown the rest of labor plenty of times what to do with slave-labor laws like

Taft-Hartley. But the USWA tops just howled to the "secondary boycott" laws, and never called on bargemen to choke off the aluminum ore being shipped up the Ohio River. USWA can workers and Teamster brewery workers were never called on to refuse to handle RAC aluminum. Instead, the labor fakers pleaded with the brewing companies to drop RAC aluminum and relied on a campaign to scandalize Marc Rich in international banking circles. Tax evader Rich, who may be trying to cut a deal with the Justice Department to slither back into the country, finally gave in. But the bowing and scraping of the union tops to capitalist "law and order" cost the courageous Ravenswood workers 20 hard months—and cost Bob Buck his job.

True to form, the lesson that the labor lieutenants of capital draw from RAC is...more reliance on the bosses' state. The AFL-CIO traitors are so desperate in heaving for a "striker replacement" bill that Lane Kirkland supported an amendment that would have subjected all labor disputes to arbitration! The real lesson is the urgent need to forge a revolutionary party and class-struggle leadership that will stop begging and mobilize workers in a fight for power. ■

# Outrage Over NYPD Murders

## Dominican Community Explodes

JULY 7—New York's Dominican community has exploded in two nights of angry rioting over the police execution-killing of José García on July 3. García was shot at pointblank range in the lobby of an apartment building on 162nd Street in the Washington Heights neighborhood of upper Manhattan. Then as protesters were in the streets last night word spread of another NYPD killing of a Dominican man. The cops claimed they chased Dagoberto Pichardo to the roof of his building where he "jumped" to his death. But an eyewitness saw the cops push Dagoberto off the ledge.

Today, over 1,000 people, surrounded by a police army in riot gear, marched on the killer cops' lair at the 34th Precinct chanting "¡Policía asesino!" A Spartacist League contingent raised signs calling to "Mobilize the power of labor to stop racist attacks!" "For labor/black/Hispanic defense against racist cop terror!" "Full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers! Jobs for all!" and "¡José García presente!"

Two months after the L.A. riots, NYC rulers are in a "security" frenzy over the Democratic Convention which opens at Madison Square Garden on July 13. The city is seething with the anger of minority victims of police violence, and abortion rights activists warding off attacks by clinic besiegers. Meanwhile, cop helicopters are buzzing rooftops and police phalanxes patrolling upper Broadway. "Napalm the 'Hood'" headlined the *New York Post* (6 July), "reporting" a police radio message Saturday.

The killing of José García was a cold-blooded execution. Cop Michael O'Keefe grabbed García outside the apartment building, dragged him into the lobby, slammed him with a police radio, then shot him in the back and in the front. On Spanish-language TV, Mayor Dinkins revealed that the front wound "appeared to be a contact wound"—i.e.,



Protesters in Washington Heights rally outside building where José García was gunned down. WV Photo

the cop put the barrel of his pistol up to García's abdomen and pulled the trigger.

O'Keefe was a plainclothes narc squad cop who operated out of the notorious 34th Precinct, one of ten NYPD precincts now under federal investigation for corruption. He was part of the "Local Motion" team that roamed the neighborhood beating up and terrorizing residents. Deputy Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly praised O'Keefe as an "aggressive cop." Justifying shooting people like García first and asking questions later, Kelly said: "You don't want to chase them down the street, they usually run faster than you" (*New York Times*, 7 July).

City Council member Guillermo Linares told the press that just 20 minutes before García was shot, O'Keefe had been involved in a drug shakedown, where the cops beat up a drug dealer, confiscated \$2,000, three pounds of cocaine and two handguns, one of them a .38 caliber weapon. Conveniently, the police "found" a .38 handgun next to García's dead body.

There are now more than 500,000 immigrants in New York City from the Dominican Republic, where IMF-imposed "austerity" has brought the population to the point of starvation. The Dominican community in upper Manhattan is one of the fastest growing, most

politically active Hispanic neighborhoods in the city. And they are a particular target of the racist cops, from the narcs to beat cops to the INS immigration police, all of whom regularly shake down bodega owners.

Meanwhile, the cops have declared open season on Hispanics in New York. More than 30 Latin men have been gunned down by the police since early 1990. Their names are familiar to WV readers: David Cotto, José Luis Lebrón, Héctor Rivera, Federico Pereira, Tomás Vizueta, Juan Rodríguez, Andrew González. José Uviles and Gabino Figueroa are two recent victims gunned down by the NYPD in the last two months. And now José "Kiko" García and Dagoberto Pichardo must be added to this list.

Black "Democratic Socialist" mayor Dinkins sits atop the New York City powder keg, trying to balance between the minorities and the cops while presiding over massive budget cuts and police terror. What better proof that the Democratic Party "popular front" means the murder of Hispanics and blacks. The labor movement, with its heavy component of black and Hispanic unionists, must take the lead in defending the beleaguered ghettos and barrios. Break with the Democrats, build an internationalist workers party to fight for socialist revolution! ■



# German Spartakists Tear Down Nazi Flag



Our comrades ripped down swastika flag from wall near Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, unfurling red banner proclaiming, "The Red Army Smashed the Nazi Regime!" Spartakist photos

BERLIN—On June 23, supporters of the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD) and the Committee for Social Defense tore down a huge Nazi flag which had been mounted high on a wall near the Brandenburg Gate. With this act, our comrades put an end to a revolting provocation, to which thousands of Berliners and tourists who daily pass by the Brandenburg Gate were exposed. Displaying the fascist flag was a direct threat against survivors of the Nazi terror regime and an offense to all decent people.

Werner Brand, a spokesman for the Committee, said, "We won't tolerate this! The swastika stands for the gruesome murder of six million Jews, of Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), homosexuals and other minorities, of Communists and all anti-fascists. Recently it brought death to Mete Eksi, Nguyen Van Tu and Torsten Lamprecht," immigrant workers and a German youth who have been murdered by rampaging Nazi/skinhead killers.

The Nazi flag, with a giant swastika emblazoned dead center, had been hung from the fourth floor of the gallery on Pariser Platz, housing the former East German Academy of Art, on the famous promenade of Unter den Linden. This swastika flag was part of a so-called "historical exhibition" of all the flags of the German Reich since the time of the Kaiser. Since the exhibit was mounted in May, people passing near the Brandenburg Gate could be observed standing stock-still, necks craned as they gazed upward at this "exhibit" in horror and disbelief.

But after 4:30 p.m. on June 23, there was no swastika hanging near the Brandenburg Gate. Spartakist Toralf Endruweit and his comrades climbed out on the roof of a crumbling neighboring building, where Endruweit leaned over the edge wielding a long metal device to rip down the flag. The swastika flag fell to the applause of those gathered before the gallery. Shortly afterwards, a Spartakist banner was unfurled from the

roof with the words, "The Red Army Smashed the Nazi Regime!"

A representative of the gallery tried to "save" the Nazi flag as it fell to the ground, but anti-fascists seized this bloody symbol of genocide and hurned it on the spot. The functionary then rushed off to summon police, on traffic duty at the Brandenburg Gate, who dutifully came over and took four people into custody, holding them in a police

an energetic protest ensued. Passers-by from various countries, immigrants hawking items near the Brandenburg Gate who were angry over working in the shadow of the swastika flag, as well as supporters of the Kurdish Workers Party, chanted, "One, two, three—Let them go free!" Under their protests, the anti-fascists were released.

In 1945 the Soviet Army smashed the Hitler regime, liberating Europe



Red flag raised over the Reichstag, 30 April 1945, when Soviet troops vanquished Nazi Thlrd Reich. Yevgeni Khaldei

van. Those detained were: Werner Brand; Ronald Krüger (photographer for the newspaper *Spartakist*); Renate Dahlhaus and Toralf Endruweit (Spartakist spokesmen at the mammoth anti-fascist rally in Treptow in January 1990 and candidates for the SpAD in the last Bundestag elections)

As the four were held captive, a crowd gathered around the police van and

from fascist terror. Twenty-seven million Soviet citizens lost their lives in the struggle against the Nazis before the victorious Red Army could hoist the red flag on the Reichstag as a symbol of liberation. In the East German deformed workers state, the DDR, the swastika system was destroyed. Berlin is a workers' city with deep anti-fascist roots. When in January 1990 the Spartakists initiated a rally against Nazi desecration of the Soviet memorial in Treptow, and the SED (former Stalinist ruling party, now the PDS) took up this call, a quarter of a million working people came to express their outrage and their protest.

With the social-democratic SPD acting as the Trojan horse of counterrevolution and the SED-PDS selling out the DDR the Spartakists uniquely opposed capitalist reunification of Germany. Its aftermath has brought unemployment for millions, an assault on women's rights and a rise in rightist attacks. Now the bourgeoisie of Auschwitz is reaching out toward rule over Europe. As they do so, their minions in the SPD are leading the anti-Communist witchhunt. Meanwhile, the infamous Gustav Just, the murderer of Jews when he was in a Wehrmacht death squad, is a prominent member of the SPD!

The Fourth Reich wants to rehabilitate the Third. They won American imperialist backing in 1985 with Helmut Kohl and Ronald Reagan's obscene obeisance before SS graves in Bitburg. On 9 November 1991, the anniversary of the fascist Kristallnacht pogrom, the Nazis staged a parade in the East German industrial city of Halle. There, and again with the provocative appearance of former SS man Schönhuber, *Führer* of the fascist Republikaner, in Berlin's Alexanderplatz on May 21, the Nazis were protected by a massive police mobilization.

Seeking vengeance for the victory of the Red Army, German imperialism has put Erich Mielke, former head of DDR state security (the Stasi), on trial on charges stemming from the Nazi period. And in the SPD-governed city of Hamburg, the anti-fascist Gerhard Bögelein was condemned to life imprisonment for supposedly having brought to justice in a Soviet POW camp a notorious Nazi hanging judge. The Spartakists demand freedom for Mielke, immediate release of Bögelein, and hands off Erich Honecker, the former head of the DDR, who was jailed for ten years in the Third Reich and is now a "wanted man" in the Fourth Reich!

The Christian Democratic party of Helmut Kohl and the SPD prepare the soil for the fascists with their mass deportations of asylum seekers and immigrant workers. Meanwhile, the PDS makes the pages of *Neues Deutschland* available to SS Schönhuber to spew out his racist hate-mongering. The SpAD calls on the workers movement to defend the right to asylum and fight for full citizenship rights for immigrants. To drive the murderous bands of Nazis back into their holes, what is needed are mobilizations of workers/immigrants, who showed their will to fight in both West and East in the recent public workers strike.

The Spartakists' act of taking down the Nazi flag was welcomed by many Berliners, particularly among immigrant communities. In several cafes and local gathering spots, photos of the swastika being torn down are on display. As Toralf Endruweit stated, "We know what the swastika means and how we have to deal with it. Today we are also honoring in a modest way the heroic Jewish Communist Herbert Baum (who led a underground resistance group in Hitler Berlin). To eliminate the fascists once and for all we need a workers revolution that will avenge the victims of the Nazi Holocaust. This is what the Spartakist Workers Party fights for. And our comrades of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) are fighting against Yeltsin's counterrevolution, to win back political power for the Soviet workers and re-establish the country of the October Revolution as the vanguard of the world revolution." ■

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartakist League

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# Washington Lies on Vincennes Massacre

Four years after the fact, and four months before the U.S. presidential election, an influential section of the American media has decided to tell (part of) the story about the deliberate shootdown of an Iranian Airbus by the USS *Vincennes*. After an extensive joint investigation, ABC News *Nightline* (1 July) and *Newsweek* (13 July) blew apart the Washington cover-up. *Nightline* host Ted Koppel called the U.S. story of "self-defense" from Iranian attack "a tissue of lies, fabrications, half-truths and omissions." They term the 3 July 1988 downing of a civilian airliner which killed 290 innocent people, including 66 children, a "tragic blunder." But as they exhaustively and conclusively document, this was the result of a U.S. provocation and part of the Reagan/Bush policy of covert support for Baghdad against Teheran in the squalid, decade-long Iran/Iraq War.

Of course, you didn't have to wait until now to find this out. We said as much at the time. *Workers Vanguard* No. 457 (15 July 1988) headlined "Massacre

## Nightline/Newsweek Spill (Some of) the Beans, Finally

and was still gaining altitude at the time of the missile impact."

This is indisputable, as Koppel adds: "We know all these things now because the information was later retrieved through a detailed analysis of a tape made by the USS *Vincennes*' own Aegis radar tracking system."

The program quotes President Reagan saying that "the USS *Vincennes* and the USS *Elmer Montgomery* were operating in international waters." But Koppel produces Admiral Crowe, now retired, admitting under prodding that the *Vincennes* "was in Iran's territorial waters." Indeed, on screen we see actual footage of the action on the *Vincennes* during the shootdown, and hear the ship's navigator shout out, repeatedly, "we're about 9.3 miles from Qeshm Island," i.e., about three miles inside the 12-mile limit of Iranian waters. The Iranians were defending themselves against a U.S. naval provocation.

The Reagan/Bush "party line," as Koppel terms it, claimed that the *Vincennes* mistakenly shot down the Iranian Airbus because it had gone into attack mode answering "distress calls" from merchant ships under assault by Iranian gunboats. One was a Pakistani ship, but it wasn't attacked and didn't request aid. Another was called the *Stovall*, but as it turns out, this was a fictitious ship, a decoy—likely a radar blip created by patrol boats lined up to mimic an oil tanker profile. Former Marine Lieutenant Colonel Roger Charles, who advised ABC News' investigation, summed up:

"What we know, beyond any doubt, is that there was a provocation, that the United States forces enticed, in fact, entrapped the Iranian gunboats into a situation where we could then say that there's been a hostile action by them...and that then allowed, under this kind of specious rule of loosened hot pursuit, us to take military action.... We attacked the gunboats."

Charles noted that "full disclosure of what happened with the *Vincennes* would have brought about the disclosure of a secret war, the United States as an active military participant on the side of the Iraqis, fighting the Iranians." An honest probing reporter could have seen much of this at the time. So why the belated "revelations" now? This investigation by *Nightline/Newsweek* is undoubtedly related to the November elections and the Democrats' muckraking over Iran/Iraqgate. (Democratic Representative Henry Gonzalez is seeking the appointment of an independent counsel to "investigate the secret American buildup of Iraq before the Persian Gulf war.")

Still, what they dug up on Bush is stunning. After the USS *Stark* was hit by Iraqi missiles in 1987, killing 37 sailors, Reagan vented his anger on Iran instead, using the incident to step up secret aid to Iraq. Koppel relates: "U.S. military officers were stationed in Baghdad, initially to help keep Iraqi planes from hitting any more U.S. ships. But the end result was that the United States helped Iraq conduct long-range strikes against key Iranian targets, using U.S. ships as navigational aids...critical targeting information was carried to the Iraqi capital on a weekly basis by U.S. military personnel." A senior U.S. officer was quoted, "We became forward air controllers for the Iraqi air force."

### "First Casualty of War"

While the American media were toeing the "party line" and retailing the

Reagan/Bush lies about firing in self-defense, we wrote:

"By any standard of decency and morality, the captain and responsible officers of the *Vincennes* should be facing a court-martial. Instead, they're being treated as heroes. Because their orders were cut right at the top: shoot first and ask questions later. Reagan's cops of the world are subjecting the people of the Near East to a grotesquely magnified version of the murderous treatment cops mete out to racial minorities in American ghettos."

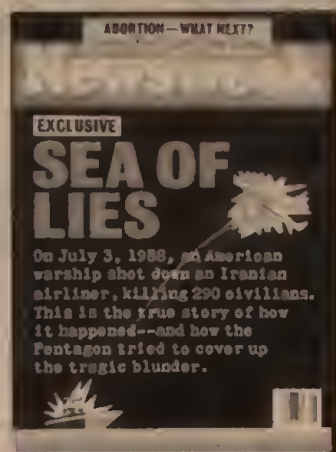
—WV No. 457

While the Congress rallied behind Reagan, and their "left" hangers-on remained silent, the Spartacist League joined a protest demonstration with signs including: "Reagan, Democrats: Blood Is on Your Hands!"

The media were willing handmaidens of the bipartisan anti-Soviet war drive, which served as the excuse for every kind of militarist provocation, from Libya to Grenada to the Persian Gulf. Only now that Washington is claiming victory in the Cold War are they willing to reveal some of their lies. Typically, the *New York Times* (2 July) buried its coverage of the spectacular *Nightline* revelations in the inside pages, with a doubting headline, "A Challenge to U.S. Version of Downing of Iran Airliner," over a small article which printed only a limited part of the hot stuff and back-lashed that.

And of course, they're all still wary of the most dangerous Reagan/Bush provocation—the 1983 KAL 007 affair, which could have triggered a nuclear World War III (see "KAL 007 Was on Deadly Spy Mission," WV No. 547, 20 March 1992). Reagan and the imperialist media screamed murder over the KAL downing, even though they knew the Soviets weren't aware it was a civilian plane. In the case of the Iranian Airbus, it really was murder.

The *Nightline/Newsweek* pieces show what serious in-depth reporting can do, when there's the will. Koppel notes that "after Vietnam and Watergate," it's impossible to ignore government lying. Over Vietnam and Watergate a myth



Four years later, liberal media blows Bush out of the water with exposé of Vincennes provocation, cover-up.

was created of crusading journalists ferreting out the truth. But in reality the critical reporting of journalists reflected splits in the ruling class. Democrats went dovish on Vietnam, and so you began seeing David Halberstam's dispatches contradicting the line put out by the U.S. command in Saigon. The capitalist powers that be decided that Nixon had to go, "for the good of the country" (i.e., the stability of their rule), and so the *Washington Post* publishers—who happen to own *Newsweek*—printed the stuff dug up by Woodward and Bernstein.

But only certain truths are "fit to print" for the ruling class. So when Bush launched his wanton aerial bombardment of Iraq last year, a campaign of deliberate mass murder worthy of Hitler, the media willingly went along, defaming CNN's Peter Arnett for reporting the truth about the U.S. bombing of a baby formula plant; claiming the bombed Amiriya bomb shelter was a military bunker; refusing to show photos of the carnage on the "mile of death" along the highway north of Kuwait. The White House has hands dripping with blood, as do the Democrats in Congress and their "Fourth Estate" partners in crime. The truth, as they recognize, is a powerful weapon in the hands of revolutionaries, which is why they suppress it, and we report it. From KAL 007 to the *Vincennes*, it's no accident that you read it here first. ■

### You Read It Here In 1988

**WORKERS VANGUARD**  
U.S. Warship Kills 290 Airline Passengers

#### Massacre in the Persian Gulf



We said it at the time: shoot-down of Iranian civilian Airbus was official U.S. murder.

in the Persian Gulf." In response to Republican and Democratic claims that the American warship had the right to defend itself, we asked: "So what the hell was the U.S. doing there in the first place? It is, after all, the *Persian Gulf*." Today Ted Koppel intones, "Governments lie; they do it all the time." But not just the government. As we wrote back then: "The capitalist media snapped to attention, retailing the government's lies, as the war criminals in Washington draped themselves in a blood-drenched Stars and Stripes for the Fourth of July." And so they did once again in 1991, regurgitating Pentagon war propaganda in U.S. imperialism's wanton "Desert Slaughter" against Iraq.

Still, it is useful when the curtain of lies is lifted, even just a bit. In his hard-hitting broadcast, Koppel takes the audience step by step through the U.S. version as presented by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William Crowe. Correcting each lie as it was spoken by Crowe, Koppel notes:

- The plane was not "outside" its prescribed route but was "flying well within the commercial air corridor."
- The plane did not head "directly for *Vincennes*" but was "actually turning slowly away from" the ship.
- The plane did not emit "electronic indications" of an F-14 but rather "its correct transponder signal identifying it as a commercial aircraft."
- The plane was not "decreasing in altitude as it neared the ship" but rather "had been steadily climbing from liftoff

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# Young Spartacus

## The Rap Flap

- Cops Blame Ice-T for L.A. Riots
- Clinton Bids for Racist Vote

The fallout from the Los Angeles riots has continued to define the U.S. political landscape, including the recent presidential campaign proxy war over rap music and performers. After the racist acquittal of the L.A. cops who beat Rodney King, the nationwide escalation in police marauding has meant a surge of violence against blacks and Hispanics. This muscle-flexing is also reflected in the cops' campaign, now being championed by Bush and Quayle, against "gangsta" rapper Ice-T and his band Body Count for their hit song "Cop Killer."

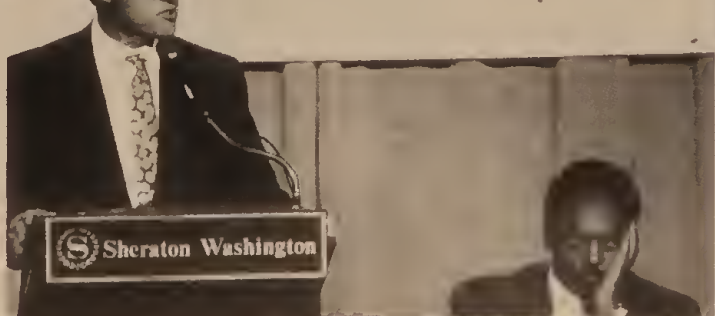
Then came Democratic Party front-runner Bill Clinton's widely publicized denunciation of nationalist demagogue "rapper" Sister Souljah at Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition conference, which made headlines nationwide. Picking up on Souljah's "get whitey" remarks made in a *Washington Post* interview, Clinton used the occasion to stage a calculated insult to Jackson on his home turf. Clinton's purpose was transparent: by turning Souljah into a new "Willie Horton," he was appealing for the white racist vote.

What's really behind all the claptrap about rap has little to do with the music, and a whole lot to do with the two capitalist parties' playing up to racist reaction in an election year. The cops, of course, want a license to kick ass in the ghetto.

The hysteria surrounding Ice-T has reached ridiculous levels. Dan Quayle gets a standing ovation at a National Sheriffs' Association gathering for calling the rapper "revolting." Cops try to strong-arm record stores to boycott the album, to pressure Time-Warner (which owns the record label) to drop the band, and even to get theaters to stop showing *Batman Returns* because Warner Bros., its production company, is owned by Time-Warner!

Most recently, 60 mostly Republican Congressmen signed a letter expressing "our deep sense of outrage" over Time-Warner's distribution of the album. The campaign is undoubtedly having a chill-

no Citizenship Ed



Death penalty Democrat Clinton dumps on Jesse Jackson, seizes on "get whitey" remarks by "Sister Souljah" to woo backlash vote, at Rainbow Coalition conference June 13.

ing effect: last week it was revealed that Time-Warner had caved in by vetoing an album cover depicting a black man ambushing George Bush in front of the Capitol.

This is not the first time the cops have gone on the warpath to try to intimidate black musicians they don't like. In 1988, when Compton rap crew NWA came out with the revenge fantasy "Fuck Tha Police," the FBI wrote threatening letters to NWA's record company, and cops around the country shut down the group's concerts—causing sales of the album to triple.

The racist hypocrisy of this latest campaign is so obvious even the *New York Times* (30 June) noted that while Bush intones, "I stand against those who use films or records or television or video games to glorify killing law enforcement officers," one of his biggest boosters is Arnold "Terminator" Schwarzenegger, whose character has killed and maimed dozens of policemen. In Hollywood, the trade term is "body count" movies. But Schwarzenegger is, after all, an Aryan; Ice-T and NWA are black.

What riles the cops is that rap songs like "Cop Killer" are immensely popular. Now why do you suppose that ghetto

youth would groove on a celebration of cops eating lead? This is just fantasy; the reality is *killer cops* emptying their service pistols (and "throwaway guns") into young blacks, killing several hundred a year.

And what really bugs these uniformed professional killers is the growing *multiracial* hatred of the cops, as evidenced by the L.A. riots. One of the reasons Ice-T's "Body Count" album may have been targeted is that it is a crossover attempt to reach a white audience: a black rap star singing (OK, screaming) with a white speed-metal band. Thanks in part to the reactionary campaign, it's selling like hotcakes.

Around the country, cops have been shutting down rap concerts in mid-song, beating and arresting black teenagers in the ensuing chaos, most recently last month in Boston and New Jersey. The reactionary campaign to force rap records to carry "Parental Advisory: Explicit Lyrics" warnings has picked up steam, with a law passed in Seattle threatening arrest of store owners who sell such albums to kids.

Sure, lots of folks (especially older people, black and white) don't like rap music. But "hard core" rap's angry social commentary speaks to the experience of young blacks. Moreover, many white kids like rap, which irks mainstream conservatives and liberals no end; a particularly stupid *Newsweek* (29 June) cover article sought to portray them as self-haters. Yet in many cases, a big reason is they go to schools that are still marginally *integrated*, where they have black friends. The bipartisan assault on school integration seeks to undo that.

As a way of commenting on events, accessible to even the poor and illiterate, there is a worldwide tradition of troubadours composing lyrics about current events. There are reportedly already several Mexican *corridos* (popular songs) dealing with the L.A. riots. When Ice-T says, "My life is violent, but violence is life/Peace is a dream, reality is a knife," a lot of black youth identify with it. In fact, it's one of the few things many black youth listen to. But rap is more than just passive reflection.

There certainly is an ugly side to the "messages" rap conveys, reflecting widespread backward attitudes in the ghettos, where anti-Semitism, sexism,



anti-homosexual prejudice, and anti-Korean racism are noxious by-products of oppression. Thus former NWA member Ice Cube's new album, *Death Certificate*, contains an anti-Korean threat called "Black Korea," addressed to Korean shop owners, in which he warns, "Pay respect to the black fist/ Or we'll burn your store right down to a crisp." This vile racism toward another oppressed group can only serve the oppressor.

In contrast, Ice-T recently criticized his earlier putdowns of homosexuals, saying that to be consistent in defending freedom of expression, he had to support it for gays as well. He backed this up by performing at an AIDS benefit. And on the L.A. upheaval he remarked, "I just hope black people realize it's more a poverty-versus-money thing than a black-and-white thing" (*Rolling Stone*, 25 June).

Sister Souljah says her remark quoted by the *Washington Post*—"if black people kill black people every day, why not have a week and kill white people"—was taken out of context, that she was trying to convey the view of gang members, or she was saying that whites don't care about blacks killing blacks but it would be different if whites got killed. Whatever—Sister Souljah's nationalist posturing makes all white people the enemy. Dead wrong. The racist capitalist system is the enemy.

Moreover, while fantasies about killing cops may have broad appeal, any attempt to carry this out would be stupidly suicidal. How many cops were killed in the L.A. riots? Zero. So what Sister Souljah's remarks feed into is going after the nearest available white person. It is this kind of false consciousness which led to the horrific beating of white trucker Reginald Denny during the L.A. riots, which is exactly what George Bush and Daryl Gates wanted.

In a more general way, no matter how offensive or misguided people may find particular songs, they are supposedly protected under First Amendment free speech provisions. But when Dan Quayle cynically cites the First Amendment, which he would dearly love to abolish, it's because he's more interested in promoting racist attacks by going after "PC" bans on "hate speech."

As we wrote two years ago during the



Roundup of black youth in Los Angeles in aftermath of riots that exploded in outrage at acquittal of cops who brutally beat Rodney King.



# LO Fête Bans AIDS Activists, Trotskyists

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 130, July-August 1992, newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

PARIS—We have noted over the years that the LO fête—the annual summer gathering of the French and European “far left” organised by Lutte Ouvrière in the village of Presles outside Paris—has increasingly carried the stamp of this workerist, nationally narrow and Stalinophobic outfit’s most unsavoury sides. In the attempt at a populist appeal to backward elements, their line and attitude on the race question, the poison of anti-Semitism and their unabashed homophobia are designed to compete for the types a Jean-Marie Le Pen would target. Last year LO thugs went after black youth. This year, LO outrageously refused a stand at its 6-8 June fête to ACT UP France, a militant gay rights group which has fought in particular on behalf of AIDS victims, exposing the Mitterrand government’s criminal policies.

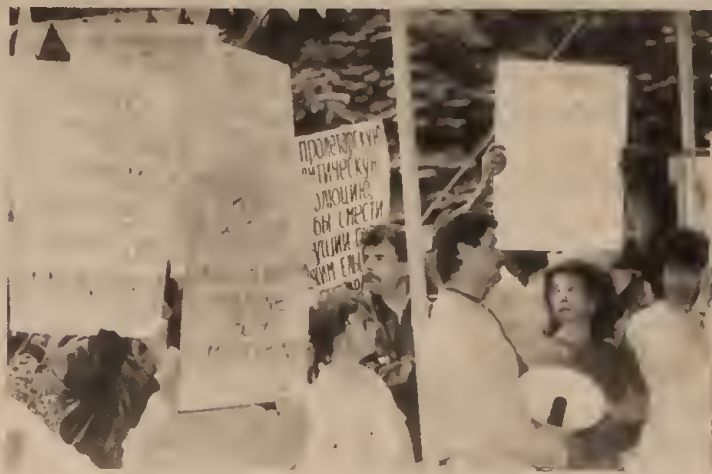
Upon learning of this exclusion, the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), wrote to ACT UP, offering that it share our literature stall at the fête. We noted in our letter that LO is a notoriously homophobic organisation, deliberately refusing to recruit gay militants to its ranks. With the policies of the French government on the question of AIDS sentencing whole sections of the population to death, LO’s exclusion should evoke utter disgust in every decent human being, let alone every leftist.

After discussing our proposal, the Paris chapter of ACT UP declined the offer of a shared stall. At the fête, ICL comrades went to the stands of the various organisations present to publicise the exclusion of ACT UP, distributing copies of our letter of protest, printed in the LTF newspaper, *Le Bolchévick*. Most of the LO cadres themselves only learned from the LTF of the decision to exclude ACT UP. The LO leadership became unhinged. They sent an LO veteran and chief of security to us to dramatically announce that since we had broken the rules of the game by “distributing a leaflet inside the fête” we too would be excluded from future LO fêtes.

We did not allow LO’s swinish antics to go unnoticed. Chanting “Down with the exclusion of homosexuals and Trot-

skyists!” some 25 protesters demonstrated at the end of the well-attended debate between LO and the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR, the French Mandeliste organisation). Called by the LTF, this protest was also joined by the British Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL). To its credit, the

ing impact, comparable, as one comrade noted, to what an organised demonstration in a Maoist “re-education” camp might have among the inmates. As the placards went up, LO leader Duburg was busily explaining that the question of voting rights for immigrants was of no interest to the working class. Summing



June 7—Protest against exclusion of homosexuals and Trotskyists at the “LO fête” outside Paris. Sign (left) says: “For LO ‘Death of Communism’ Means Communists Get Out!”

centrist RIL had called at its forum on every decent socialist militant to take part in the action.

As it turned out, decent socialist militants in short supply among the anti-Soviet fake-Trotskyist attendees at the fête. The LCR made it perfectly clear (including in its newspaper *Rouge* following the fête) that it welcomed the exclusion of the ICL. True to their own policies at home, neither the Workers Power leadership (despite the initial impulse of a couple of their members) nor the Cliffite Socialist Workers Party lifted a finger against the LO’s bannings. The ban extended as well to the Courant Communiste Internationale, a harmless ultraleft grouplet which had the intelligent idea of distributing to meetings the issue of *Lutte Ouvrière* calling for a vote to the Cold Warrior, union-hating Mitterrand in 1981, exposing LO’s hollow claims to a consistent anti-Mitterrand posture.

The ICL/RIL protest and a short speech given by an LTF spokesman drew a lot of attention from those at the debate. The disciplined action had an electrify-

up their line on special oppression, he concluded with the statement that when women got the right to vote (in France, in 1945) this had not changed anything!

After the protest ended, in the midst of a growing crowd with whom the ICL comrades pursued the debate, we were confronted by a goon squad of some 40 males led by one Kaldy, a leading national spokesman for LO. This massive show of bullying threatened with each minute to get out of control—only quick action by an LTF comrade stopped the blow headed for a young comrade from the ex-DDR; a black sympathiser of the LTF was likewise specially targeted. We demanded to know who was in charge. Kaldy replied hysterically, “No one!”

Amidst vile sexist, anti-homosexual epithets and screams of “Get Out!” the LO goons tried to push the protesters back to the ICL stand. We stood our ground and LO was forced to back off; the protesters withdrew in good order. The following day, at least 40 “security squad” members “escorted” two of our comrades at the central rally where

Arlette Laguiller, well-known Lutte Ouvrière spokeswoman, gave her traditional “Sunday socialism” speech. Said speech began with a long paean to LO’s sterling record of...inviting other groups to the fête for “fraternal debates”!

In addition to the ACT UP militants and Trotskyists who were on the receiving end of LO’s method of “debate” this year, the black youth who last year were the victims of an ugly attack by LO marshals would treat this Orwellian twaddle with the contempt it deserves. Our protest against that vile action was documented in a letter from the Central Committee of the LTF to the organisations that participated in the LO fête, reprinted in *Workers Vanguard* No. 529 (21 June 1991). Despite a guilty acknowledgment that “mistakes” had taken place previously, LO’s policy continues to be one of “disciplined” violence and exclusion of minority youth.

Lutte Ouvrière has never been very good, let alone Leninist, on the questions of special oppression. But under the impact of Cold War II, the collapse of Stalinism and the bourgeois lie of the “death of communism,” all forms of social reaction, what Marx called “the old crap,” have flourished, with the fake left capitulating to this in a variety of ways. On the domestic terrain, LO’s particular brand of “colourblind” and homophobic workerism has intensified. Nominally defencist on the Soviet Union (but not anywhere else capitalism has been overturned), LO’s support to the forces of capitalist counterrevolution from Poland to East Germany places it in the camp of the anti-Soviet traitors. Its “neutrality” at the time of the August coup predictably gave rise to an internal state capitalist opposition, which in turn attracted the tender attentions of the British SWP.

At the same time, there are militants in and around LO who find our Trotskyist opposition to Yeltsinist counterrevolution attractive. Indeed, LO’s decision to exclude the ICL from future fêtes was motivated not simply by our exposure of its exclusion of ACT UP but also in reaction to our hammering the LO membership on the Russian question. Today the LO leadership is fostering and consolidating in its cadres a system of values totally counterposed to everything communism stands for. We said earlier that this organisation could head down dangerous paths. So it has, and the picture is not a pretty one. ■

controversy over Miami rappers 2 Live Crew: “state interference and infringement on the rights of young people to get their hands on whatever turns them on is part of the drive to roll back all democratic rights and reinforce every backward, sexist, racist, jingoistic prejudice to instill obedience to a racist, right-wing government” (“Rap, Rock and Race in the U.S.A.,” *WV* No. 505, 29 June 1990). Despite the self-appointed “guardians of morality” who want to silence rap, it still sells millions of records, tapes and CDs.

## Rappin’ with the Enemy

It’s not just the Republicans who find rap music and rap performers a convenient foil for advancing their reactionary agendas. When Clinton denounced Sister Souljah he was deliberately staging an incident to embarrass Jesse Jackson, “dissing” him on his own turf. But more than an affront, Clinton’s speech was part of a strategy to show that the Democratic Party is not “beholden” to “special interests,” like blacks or labor. Of course, the Democrats are beholden to the racist capitalists who run this country (and finance both parties). By bandying about “reverse racism,”

even grotesquely comparing Souljah to the fascist terrorist KKKer David Duke, Clinton is competing with Bush for the white racist vote by ostentatiously kicking blacks and labor in the teeth.

Meanwhile, Dan Quayle’s recent “family values” campaign, directed against the “cultural elite” supposedly infesting the entertainment industry, schools and the arts, is designed to appeal to a layer of the population that H.L. Mencken christened the “booboisie.” What is the “cultural elite”? It’s not the people with money; Quayle’s attacks are usually delivered to \$1000-a-plate dinners. And it’s not the people running the country; that’s Quayle and his boss(es). Taken together with Quayle and Bush’s repeated New York-bashing, this “cultural elite” crap is thinly veiled anti-Semitism, with a heavy component of the 1950s-style McCarthyite witchhunting.

As for the so-called angry “militant” Sister Souljah, what was she doing at Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition? She was on a panel discussion of voter registration as a road to “empower” black youth, by making them voting cattle for the Democrats. Souljah, aka Lisa Williamson, was a spokesman for the Brooklyn-

based December 12 Movement headed by Sonny Carson. Notorious since the 1960s for his anti-Semitism, since Jewish shopowners left the ghettos he is now going after Asians.

As Reagan and Bush were hyping the “war on drugs” as a way to increase the cop presence in the ghettos, Williamson was tight with Carson’s “Black Men’s Movement Against Crack,” which conducted its own drug raids. During the 1990 protests following the murder of Yusuf Hawkins by white racists in Bensonhurst, the December 12 Movement was organizing a racist boycott of the Korean-owned Red Apple deli. Carson’s bunch also played a despicable role in last year’s turmoil in Crown Heights, whipping up anti-Semitism against Hasidic Jews, and leading marches against synagogues by black youth chanting “Sieg Heil!”

In these elections every one of the capitalist candidates is a certifiable racist—and everyone knows it. Jackson’s pitiful bluster that he’ll now consider endorsing the sinister corporatist rightist Perot reflects the utter bankruptcy of black leadership in this country today. From Tom Bradley in Los Angeles, to Maynard

Jackson in Atlanta, to David Dinkins in New York, black Democratic Party mayors called in the racist cops to bust the heads of protesters against the King verdict.

For all the talk of “fight the power,” the most graphic rap songs of “dusting/icing/smoking cops” are cries of impotence. If the talentless Sister Souljah can get a hearing when she claims that “white people and the American Government want to destroy black African people wherever they are in the world,” it is because ghetto youth correctly sense that an oppressive force is out to destroy them. That force is spearheaded by the government, the executive committee of the capitalist class, which also oppresses and exploits tens of millions of white working and poor people as well as billions of people of every color around the globe.

To defeat that evil power and not just scream at it, you need to mobilize a superior power, the power of the working class. This requires the forging of a revolutionary, integrated vanguard party which can mobilize the proletariat, including the poor and oppressed of the ghettos and barrios, in a victorious fight for socialist revolution. ■



# Abortion...

(continued from page 1)

by Planned Parenthood and the ACLU, was a political maneuver calculated to bring about a reactionary decision, with which these liberals hoped to heat up the abortion issue and help elect a Democrat.

Even among the overwhelmingly white and middle-class crowd who turned out for the mammoth "pro-choice" rally in Washington on April 5, which featured Democratic and Republican speakers as well as repeated attempts by the NOW organizers to keep out leftist literature, many young protesters were far from enthusiastic about electoral politics. While NOW, NARAL et al. stick to the courts and the halls of Congress, these young women and men have time and again been prepared to put their bodies on the line, defending abortion clinics against reactionary bigots in Wichita, Buffalo and elsewhere. But rather than being mobilized in mass social struggle to defend abortion, their energy and commitment are being cynically exploited to obtain a Democratic election victory.

## Democrats Push Reactionary "Family Values"

The Democrats hope to capitalize on widespread support for abortion rights to catapult Clinton into the White House. Clinton immediately seized on Blackmun's warning, saying: "You have four judges plainly committed to repeal Roe vs. Wade, three others nibbling around the edges and a brave Justice Blackmun saying he doesn't know how much longer he can hang on. This is one of the things this presidential election is about." Meanwhile, the Congressional Democrats made it clear that they would push for a vote on the Freedom of Choice Act in the days before the Republican convention in August, knowing that Bush will veto it and hopefully shoot himself in the foot.

This is a pretty thin reed for defenders of women's rights to clutch at in order to salvage abortion. The 1976 Hyde Amendment denying access to safe abortion to poor women was passed with bipartisan support. And when the Supreme Court ruled a year later that states could also deny funding for abortion, born-again Democrat Jimmy Carter callously intoned, "There are many things in life that are not fair." Even the vaunted "Freedom of Choice Act," initially designed as a simple affirmation of *Roe* in the face of Supreme Court and state encroachments, has been watered down as the Democrats throw sops to their various reactionary constituencies. Thus the bill would impose parental notification for teens, allow states to deny funding and to restrict abortion after "viability," and it says nothing about federal funding for abortion. The bill permits doctors to refuse to perform abortions—a woman's right to medical care demands that they should be required to provide referrals.

And the Democrats seek to appeal to the same reactionary "family values" crap that potato(e) head Dan Quayle has been pushing. The Democratic draft plat-



NARAL president Kate Michelmen networks with Democratic candidate Bill Clinton via cellular phone after Supreme Court decision June 29. Who will they vote for on November 3—death penalty Clinton, sinister Perot? Some "choice"!



form demands restoring the values of "work, family and individual responsibility." In a barely veiled diatribe against "welfare mothers" and teen sex, it rails: "People who bring children into this world have a responsibility to care for them and give them values, motivation and discipline. Children should not have children." As a partner party of U.S. capitalism, the Democrats are committed to maintaining this sexist, racist system.

The right to abortion is no more than a simple democratic right to a medical procedure which is now one of the safest in the world. But the reactionary bigots see abortion as a threat to the institution of the family, a bulwark of social reaction, which along with organized religion props up the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. Thus any question relating to sex—and particularly sex and race—like interracial marriage, homosexuality and even sex education in the schools, is a conduit for the most blatant social reaction.

Women are supposed to be chained for life to husband and hearth. (One woman in an L.A. housing project told Quayle, "If the good Lord wanted everybody to have a husband, he would have gave them one.") Meanwhile, with the teen "squeal rule" and the outcry over distribution of contraceptives at schools, the sexuality of youth is punished with a putative death sentence, either through AIDS or back-alley butchers. And America's rulers continue to ban the RU-486 pill, which would enable women to have safe and convenient abortions at home, out of reach of the anti-abortion terrorists. Two days after the latest abortion ruling, customs cops at New York's Kennedy airport seized RU-486 from a pregnant woman who brought it for her personal use into the country in open defiance of the reactionary ban.

Bourgeois feminists chant, "Not the church, not the state, women will decide our fate!" But under capitalism, the state—and the exploiting class it represents—does decide your fate. Coal miners don't "choose" to go down to work in the pits; they simply know they will starve if they don't. Control over the reproduction of labor power is a cornerstone of capitalism, and whether it is done through the Nazis' limitation of women to "Kinder, Küche, Kirche" (children, kitchen, church) or the social democrats' welfare state child subsidies to encourage working-class women to be incubators, the purpose is ultimately the same. Even the *Roe* ruling asserted the bourgeois state's "compelling interest" in an embryo which had reached "viability"—thus enshrining the government's "right" to mess with a woman's body.

It will take a socialist revolution to lay the basis for the full emancipation of women by abolishing the whole social order defined by exploitation, inequality and racism, and creating the social and

economic conditions for replacing the institution of the family.

## Poor, Young and Minority—An "Undue Burden"

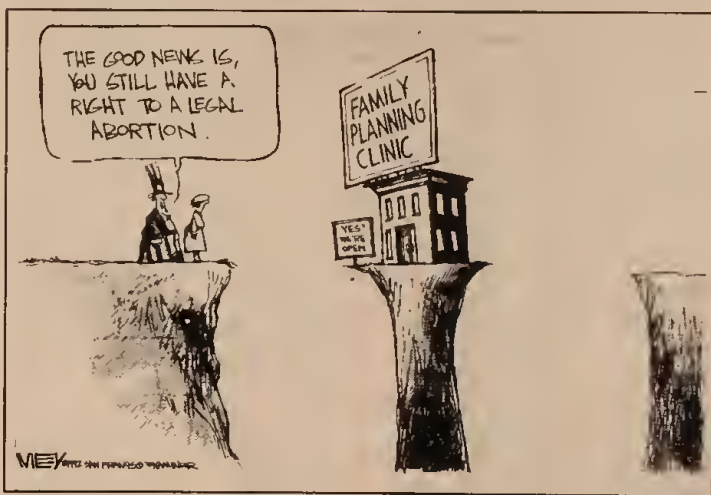
Perhaps the most succinct description of what the new ruling means came from liberal New York City Republican Congressman Bill Green: "The Supreme Court didn't kill *Roe v. Wade*. It gave the states permission to strangle it to death with red tape." This didn't start last week. Almost from the moment *Roe* was decreed in 1973, a section of the ruling class, whose most vociferous spearheads were the Catholic hierarchy and Moral Majority fundamentalists, has sought to limit and eviscerate the right to abortion. As soon as Reagan took office, he began packing the Supreme

her job or having an unwanted baby because she can't take a second day off from work to meet the waiting period requirement? How about 30-year-old Sheela Paine in East St. Louis, who with her unemployed husband and five children barely survives on welfare and who in her 19th week of pregnancy is still trying to scrape together the \$425 she needs for an abortion? And what about 17-year-old Becky Bell, who died from a back-alley abortion in 1989 because she couldn't tell her parents and wouldn't humiliate herself before a notoriously anti-abortion judge in her Indiana hometown? Instances like these, multiplied a millionfold, have made the right to abortion such an emotional and explosive issue for the vast majority of the American people.

## For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

But for NOW, NARAL and the other "liberal ladies auxiliaries of the Democratic Party," the millions of Sheela Paines in this country are ciphers. The bourgeois feminists are the self-conscious expression of a layer of educated, largely white, middle-class professionals who seek to forge their niche in bourgeois politics. Their primary concern is to preserve their right to abortion. Well-heeled women have long been able to buy safe abortions. But for poor, minority and working women, the racist Democratic Party offers nothing. Clinton glories in the fact that he returned home to Arkansas to personally supervise the execution of a brain-damaged black man. For that matter, "pro-choice" Clinton's home state has on the books one of the most invidious abortion laws in the country, banning virtually all abortions, as well as requiring parental notification and ruling out state funding.

To defend the right to abortion for all women means a struggle for free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all. To organize a social force



Wiley/SF Examiner

Court as part of a conservative strategy to make "permanent" the rollback of the gains of the 1960s social struggles.

Taking their cue from the White House, anti-abortion "god squads" took to the streets, besieging and bombing clinics, terrorizing both women patients and medical staff. Half of all urban counties and 93 percent of rural counties have no abortion facilities at all. From one year to the next, the number of available facilities continues to go down, as local and state authorities prevent the licensing of clinics, and doctors are either scared away by death threats or lured away by more lucrative work. Only one doctor provides abortions in all of South Dakota. In Pennsylvania alone, the number of abortion providers has plummeted from 147 in 1978 to 90 today, and they are all located in 8 of the state's 67 counties.

Now the black-robed bigots have invited the states to further erode the already tenuous access to abortion under their doctrine of "not undue burden." What about a 31-year-old single mother of two who has to choose between losing

capable of defeating the entrenched reactionaries—from the Catholic hierarchy to the American Medical Association—requires mobilizing the social power of the labor movement. Meanwhile, in order to be part of the Democratic Party "mainstream," liberal women's groups scarcely mention the "A word" these days. Bill Clinton declares, "Being pro-choice is not the same thing as being pro-abortion." In the same vein, New York WHAM, which sometimes mobilizes for clinic defense, proclaims on its press releases "WHAM! is not 'pro-abortion.' Nobody is 'pro-abortion.'" Even the more militant WAC chants: "WAC is watching, we'll remember—We'll be voting in November."

Buried inside WAC as its "best builders" are self-styled "radicals" like the International Socialist Organization. Likewise, inside WHAM's New York Clinic Defense Task Force is the Revolutionary Communist Party's "Refuse and Resist," whose slogan is "Abortion on Demand and Without Apology." Endless front groups and liberal slogans with a militant veneer—that is what these

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—MARXIST LITERATURE—

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# Mass Arrests by Orange County Cops, Deportations Threatened

## Stop Migra Strikebreaking in Southern California!

SANTA ANA, July 7—The hated immigration cops of *la migra* are waging a war against the union movement in California. Taking their green light from the repression of the ghettos and barrios following the racist acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King, the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) has gone after workers from the Bay Area to San Diego in a wave of union-busting deportations.

Now, in an outrageous assault on striking construction workers from Ventura County south to the Mexican border, Orange County sheriffs have jailed 149 drywall workers and offered them up to *la migra*, which is threatening to deport as many as 88 strikers. Their supposed "crime"? Defending their livelihood from the building contractors who have advertised for scabs from as far away as Tulsa and Cincinnati to break the drywallers' fight for a union. Los Angeles-area labor—longshoremens, hotel workers, SEIU janitors and the thousands of unemployed building trades unionists—must fight now to defend these brothers!

The workers have been in Orange County jail, framed up on bogus charges of "conspiracy to kidnap" some scabs. Early in the morning on July 2, strikers were able to militantly shut down a construction site in posh Mission Viejo. After a three and a half hour standoff, the sheriffs carried out the largest mass felony arrest in Orange County history. Court officials held the workers over the July 4 weekend, hitting them with \$50,000 bail each. In one case they demanded half a million dollars for this ransom. The D.A. justified this extortion by saying that if the workers were let go, they would go back to picketing.

As soon as word of the arrests spread, scores of family members and other workers protested outside the jail. Representatives of the Partisan Defense Committee and *Workers Vanguard* spoke with them in court and during protests for the last several days. Arrested strikers told of racist taunts in jail, cops calling them "wetbacks." Those who asked for a lawyer were told they would be in jail for days. When the drywallers were finally arraigned on Monday and Tuesday, they were held in a cage in groups of ten, out of sight of their families.

Prosecutors finally decided that they couldn't get away with charging 149 people with kidnapping, with no evi-



Combative Latino construction strikers in three-hour face-off with Orange County sheriffs, July 2.

dence to boot, so they tried to blackmail workers into pleading guilty to lesser charges. One striker who was released today told *WV* he and dozens of others were held overnight outdoors in an empty lot surrounded by a fence topped with barbed wire. They were given no blankets, and not permitted to lie down. He was incensed that the court tried to get them to agree to a criminal trespass charge. "But everyone refused to plead guilty," he said proudly.

Arrested strikers told *WV* that the arrests seemed pre-arranged. Waiting at the jail were INS agents, who interrogated each worker, targeting 88 strikers for deportation to Mexico. *Migra* thugs tried to intimidate the men by ripping up residency "green cards" in front of them. While several dozen have been released, more than 100 remain in jail, including those tagged for deportation. We call on the labor movement from L.A. to San Diego to provide legal defense and use its muscle to demand that all strikers be immediately released, that all charges be dropped, and that there be no deportations!

For many years, drywall workers in Southern California have been recruited from the village of El Maguey in the central Mexican state of Guanajuato. Paid as little as five cents a foot for the backbreaking work of putting up 100-pound slabs of sheetrock, the strikers are getting half what they were paid ten

years ago. Each wave of newly arrived workers is used by the contractors as a threat to undercut the wages of their own class brothers.

The Orange County sheriffs/INS attack on these strikers follows sharply increased use of *la migra* to terrorize the labor movement. Employers use the INS to sweep picket lines and rid themselves of militant union organizers. At a hearing a year ago, an IUE official reported that an organizing drive at one plant was chilled by an INS inspection of I-9 employment forms. The ILGWU reported that at two garment factories the employers broke a drive by promising labor certifications to some workers and firing the union organizing committee. Newly organized janitors in SEIU Local 399 were hit with workplace inspections for "illegals."

In an ominous development, it was announced last month in Washington that henceforth Labor Department employment standards inspectors will "share information" with the INS—instead of looking for unsafe working conditions, they will be used as finks to spot undocumented workers (*Long Beach Press Telegram*, 11 June). Meanwhile, INS sweeps of day-labor assembly sites have extended as far north as Marin and Sonoma counties. *La migra* is being used as the spearhead of a concerted government war on labor.

The AFL-CIO pushed for the 1986

"Immigration Reform and Control Act,"

which has driven immigrant workers to meet to be swept up in *migra* strikes last fall by the ILWU. In San Jose, near the Bay Area, the INS grabbed three unionists off the picket line and, in a dirty deal brokered by then-president of ILWU Local 6 Jim Ryder, deported the strikers to Mexico (*ILWU Dispatcher*, 22 October 1991). This obscene sacrifice of his own union members is part and parcel of the racist, flag-waving anti-immigrant policy of the American union bureaucracy.

There is a despicable history of the labor traitors using the racist immigration police of the capitalist state. Farmworkers president Cesar Chavez was notorious for "protecting" his documented members by calling on *la migra* to sweep the fields of undocumented workers. Instead of sparking broad labor struggle (which would have threatened his fellow bureaucrats), Chavez relied instead on consumer boycotts and looked to the Democratic Party, from top cop Bobby Kennedy to former California governor Jerry Brown, whose agricultural labor act subjects farm workers to a grower/bureaucrat-controlled state board and outlaws militant labor tactics like "hot-cargoing" scab produce.

Then, as now, the Spartacist League fought to bring out the power of labor on behalf of all workers. We say that anyone who has made it to this country has the right to stay and work—full citizenship rights for foreign-born workers! While AFL-CIO labor brokers push protectionist poison, we call on Mexican, U.S. and Canadian workers to defeat the bosses' "free trade pact" with joint class struggle. We fight for the political independence of labor from the capitalists—break with the Democrats, build a workers party!

The militant fight of the drywall workers is part of a surge of organizing by Latino workers, especially in Southern California. Coupled with hugely popular strikes such as those of L.A. teachers and teaching assistants in recent years, union drives by janitors, hotel workers and others can bring militant fighters into the labor movement.

The labor movement, especially powerful industrial unions like longshore and aerospace, must defeat INS union-busting and defend foreign-born workers. As the fastest-growing component of the union movement, these workers are linked in struggle to their black and white class allies, and are a bridge to combative Mexican workers on the other side of the border. From among them will be recruited class-conscious cadres who will play a crucial role in forging the revolutionary internationalist workers party that will bring down the racist capitalist system once and for all! ■

ostensible "socialists" and "revolutionaries" have to offer. All of these outfits will be outside the Democratic Party convention in New York City this month hugging this party of war, racism and exploitation to stand up for the rights of women.

At a march in defense of abortion rights in Manhattan last month, cops clearing the way for Cardinal O'Connor set upon and arrested eleven protesters, including Spartacist demonstrators carrying signs proclaiming, "Down with Bush. Break with Democrats! Build a Workers Party!" From Warsaw to Berlin to Dublin to New York, abortion rights have become a key battleground in the struggle between social progress and social reaction. The march of counterrevolution across East Europe has meant increasing attacks on women and minorities. Yet the bourgeois feminists and their leftist hangers-on stood with U.S. imperialism in hailing the woman-hating *mujahedin* "freedom fighters" in Afghanistan and clerical-nationalist Solidarność in Poland. The

Spartacist League/U.S. and our sister sections of the International Communist League around the world have stood forthrightly in defense of abortion rights as part of our struggle against capitalist counterrevolution.

The Spartacist League has consistently fought to mobilize the working class to defend the rights of women and all the oppressed. We call on labor to defend abortion clinics, seeking to break away the ranks of the organized labor movement from the reactionary misleaders who wallow in all the social backwardness ordained by their bourgeois masters. The "pro-choice" Democrats offer the old shell game of "lesser evil" politics at the polls in November. We seek to build a revolutionary party which will serve as "tribune of the people" fighting all forms of social oppression as we organize to sweep away this disgusting system. **Free abortion on demand! Free quality health care for all! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!** ■

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### SPARTACIST

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#### ¡Derrotar la contrarrevolución de Yeltsin y Bush!



La URSS al filo de la navaja...  
Ruptura de la URSS significa baño de sangre nacionalista... 10  
Izquierda latinoamericana ante el golpe y contragolpe en México... 20

Marxismo Philipino 1989-1992

Temas de discusión y documentos sobre el Colapso del estalinismo  
2009 en Cuba: el debate  
El papel de la URSS en la crisis de la URSS  
El papel de la URSS en la crisis de la URSS

Purga estalinista en Cuba: La ejecución del general Ochoa... 55  
¡Defender a Cuba!... 64





Skid Row "Nickel" district in shadow of glitzy downtown hotels and office buildings.

Sarah Leen

## Los Angeles...

(continued from page 12)

the pernicious channeling of black anger not against the state but against Korean store owners. But what really shook the rulers of this country was that this was an integrated explosion of pent-up anger by the poor, minority and working people whom they have viciously ground down. The L.A. riots were widely seen as a "wake-up call to America." Various liberals and reformists saw this as an opportunity to cement a new "popular front." Thus Mike Davis wrote:

"Most of our political and business leaders have suddenly given lip service to portentous ideas like 'the war between the haves and the have-nots.' If they are serious, then surely they must recognize what Los Angeles most desperately needs is not a Pyrrhic 'victory' over rioters, but a truce between hostile ethnic and economic strata that can become a framework for negotiating a new social contract to replace the faded vision of the Bradley years."

—Los Angeles Times (15 May)

While Davis dreams of erecting some kind of "New Deal" on the smoldering ruins of South-Central Los Angeles, the only deal the hosses have to offer the working class, poor and minorities is an increasingly raw one.

Rather than the pipe dream of class peace, what L.A. showed was the potential for explosive class struggle. As we wrote in our article "L.A. Upheaval Shakes America" (WV No. 551, 15 May): "Conditions are overripe for a massive social explosion in this country extending from the ghettos and Hispanic barrios to white skilled workers, many of them one paycheck away from bankruptcy and eviction. The eruption of integrated protests following the acquittal of the racist cops in the Rodney King case signals the potential for just such a new wave of militant social struggle." To realize this potential, what is required is a multiracial revolutionary party that can bring to bear the consciousness and organization necessary to direct the anger and outrage that erupted in L.A., and reverberated across the country, into a revolutionary fight to sweep away this whole system of capitalist exploitation, racism and poverty.

### Fool's Paradise for the Rich, Nightmare for the Poor

The bourgeois reaction of the 1980s—brought home in massive union-busting, slashing social programs for blacks and Hispanics, starving the poor and aged, and a wholesale legal counterrevolution abrogating democratic rights—was a program that had been playing out in California over the last 25 years, ever since Reagan was elected governor in 1966. Riding to power on a white racist backlash following the 1965 Watts rebellion in L.A., he campaigned as the "law

and order" candidate who would root out "welfare cheats," hold the line against integrated "fair housing" legislation and otherwise use an iron heel to keep blacks, Hispanics and the burgeoning Vietnam antiwar movement in line.

The Reaganites' "supply side economics" of cutting taxes for the rich and upper income suburbanites, while stealing money from welfare mothers and inner city school kids, was presaged in the 1978 Proposition 13 "tax revolt" led by Howard Jarvis, head of the Apartment Owners' Association of L.A. A white middle-class revolt against government programs viewed as benefiting the ghettos and barrios, in L.A. the Prop 13 "movement" was linked with BUSSTOP, a racist mobilization that smashed even the limited moves that were ordered in 1978 for school integration (after a 15-year court battle). Blacks, Latinos and the poor were increasingly immiserated and rigidly segregated. Welfare was slashed, libraries and hospitals were devastated, the public school system was ravaged. The former "education state," California now ranks 48th among the 50 states in per capita expenditure on public education.

In the 1980s, big businesses reaped huge tax windfalls from Prop 13 (Standard Oil for example saved \$47 million a year). The California "defense" industry grew fat off the biggest peacetime military buildup in U.S. history. Real estate magnates secured tax breaks for development scams and speculation that earned them fortunes while looting rev-

enue for social programs. The "L.A. 2000" report boasted of the region's "robust" economy: "the largest aerospace center in the world; the greatest concentration of high-tech industries; and a healthy manufacturing sector. The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach presently handle the highest volume of shipping of any port in the nation. Moreover, the ports offer direct access to Pacific Rim countries, many of which are exhibiting spectacular economic growth." But the rulers were living in a fool's paradise on borrowed money and borrowed time.

The collapse of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and the counterrevolutionary ascendancy in the Soviet Union burst the bubble for war industry in the West. One-third of Southern California's aerospace workforce has been axed and hundreds of thousands more layoffs are coming down the pipes. Last week the L.A.-based Hughes Aircraft announced the dismissal of 9,000 workers. Meanwhile, East Asian flight capital has taken flight. Just as Reagan financed his "Star Wars" and other military boondoggles through massive borrowing from Japanese moneybags, German bankers and Arab oil sheiks, the "redevelopment" of downtown L.A. was financed by foreign capital. And while the L.A. ports were the busiest in the country, as Mike Davis points out, "more than half the containers which arrive in San Pedro filled with computers, cars and televisions return with nothing in them" (City of Quartz).

Of course, there isn't much to trade. The industrial heartland of Southeast



"Open shop" L.A.: Roosevelt sent in federal troops to break UAW strike at North American Aviation in June 1941. Bonapartist cops ride roughshod in town where labor has historically been weak.

Los Angeles has been transformed into a virtual "free trade zone" of low-wage sweatshop labor which, in the words of one economic analyst, was "competing head-to-head not with Germany and Japan, but with Bangladesh and the Philippines." More to the point, Mexican workers earning the minimum wage in L.A. are competing with Mexican workers making one-tenth as much just over the border in the maquiladora plants of Tijuana, which has grown from a honkytonk town into a huge industrial city producing for the American market. At the bottom, L.A.'s "growth economy" is a nightmare for a hard-pressed and increasingly marginalized black population, for hundreds of thousands of disenfranchised and brutally exploited Latino and East Asian immigrants, and for white unionized workers who have seen their jobs and unions decimated.

Over the past decade one of the biggest growth industries in L.A. has been private security firms whose armed cops patrol rich white neighborhoods. NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) yuppies have banded together in defense of the "environment" against new development. At a 1987 conference of "Not Yet New York," one group called for a statewide "Elbow Room" (or as the Nazis called it, *Lebensraum*) initiative to restrict immigration, seal the border with Mexico and impose obligatory "family planning." As Davis puts it: "hysterical homeowners' associations, supported by local businessmen, have begun to wage war against the very immigrant labor upon which their master-race lifestyles depend." Meanwhile real estate magnates and developers have demagogically presented themselves as the defenders of "cheap" high-rise housing for the working class and minorities against the "slow growth" NIMBYs.

L.A. has not built a unit of public housing since the early 1950s, when any further plans were defeated by a Los Angeles Times-led campaign denouncing them as "socialistic." Today whole families of immigrants are crammed into tiny apartments where they have to "hot bed" (it sleep in shifts) to get any rest. Others live in "reconverted" garages with no plumbing or electricity. To get to the office buildings and homes that they clean, they have to travel for hours by bus. (Until recently there has been no rapid transit in L.A., as it was also proclaimed to be "socialistic" by a cabal of West Side developers and General Motors.)

And while City Council members debate deporting the homeless to the Santa Monica mountains, they have implemented various "design innovations" to make life even more unlivable for the completely destitute. The last public toilet in L.A.'s Skid Row, "Nickel," directly abutting the Downtown citadel, was bulldozed. Round-top "bum-proof" benches, uncomfortable to sit on and impossible to sleep on, were installed at bus stops. An overhead sprinkler system in "Skid Row Park" is turned on randomly throughout the night to drive out the homeless. In the winter of 1987, when the temperature plummeted and a number of people froze to death on the street, the cardboard shanties erected by the homeless to protect themselves were torn down by the LAPD. The head of the Planning Commission explained that while it was not "illegal" to sleep on the streets, erecting "any sort of protective shelter" was against the law.

### "The Thin Blue Line"

L.A. has been a seething volcano just waiting to explode and the rulers sitting on top knew it. The overriding force "holding the line" against the majority of the city's population—on whose backs a thin layer at the top were enriching themselves—was the LAPD. As John Gregory Dunne described it in the *New York Review of Books* (24 October 1991), "the department functions more like a



panzer division than a normal police force, a high-tech army on wheels trained to respond to incidents in seven minutes or less." It's not just on wheels: LAPD helicopters, equipped with 30 million candlepower spotlights called "Night-sun," thunder over the ghettos and barrios 19 hours a day. To facilitate joint action with forces on the ground, rooftops have been painted with street numbers, in Davis' words, "transforming the aerial view of the city into a huge police grid."

In a bunker on the fourth and fifth sublevels of City Hall is housed the most powerful, state-of-the-art police communications system in the world—designed to speed up LAPD response time and coordinate information with database "hit lists" of "suspects." (This only underlines that the LAPD command deliberately refused to intervene when the riots erupted because the cops wanted a conflagration to promote interracial violence and to whip up a white racist frenzy that could be channeled into support for more murderous cop repression.) The "Emergency Command Control Communications System" was brought in at the time of the 1984 Olympics when the Reaganites' "anti-terrorism" scare was at a fever pitch. Now, Peter Ueberroth, who was the director of the '84 Olympics, is brought in to head the "healing process" to "rebuild" L.A.

The "war against drugs" supplanted the "war against terrorism" as the all-purpose ticket for terror sweeps of the ghettos and barrios. As increasing poverty, lumpenization and despair in the black ghettos and Hispanic barrios gave rise to gangs like the Crips and the Bloods, a frenzy was whipped up over "gang-related crime." In 1988, the LAPD launched "Operation HAMMER." Declaring "this is Vietnam here," the cops carried out "search and destroy" missions.

In August 1988, eighty-eight cops descended on two apartment buildings in a black neighborhood on Dalton Avenue. Armed with sledgehammers and battering rams, they completely demolished four apartments—smashing windows, walls and furniture, ripping out toilets and throwing washing machines into bathtubs, and spray-painting the walls with "LAPD Rules." Meanwhile those who were arrested were forced to whistle the theme song of *The Andy Griffith Show* as they were marched through a gauntlet of cops beating them with flashlights and fists. When it was all over, the LAPD had two arrests of non-residents on penny-ante charges of possessing small amounts of marijuana and cocaine. A year and a half later, an L.A. jury awarded the 55 residents \$3 million in damages.

The Dalton Avenue assault was not a case of cops running amok but rather an example of standard operating procedure by the L.A. cops. A May 1991 *Daily News* study of 387 LAPD shootings (167 of them fatal) over the period from 1985 to 1990 showed that not one officer was criminally charged. A January 1992 American Civil Liberties Union report on the LAPD's canine unit showed more than 900 people bitten by police dogs in a three-year period ending early 1991; 70 percent of the dog-bite victims were Latino, 20 percent black and only 2 percent white. The kill-crazy sadism and thug mentality of this paramilitary force—whose helicopters, armored personnel carriers, tanks and SWAT teams have long been the stuff of TV shows and movies—was televised to millions of Americans who watched in horror at the videotape of an LAPD gang torturing a defenseless black man, Rodney King.

In the face of nationwide public fury, the L.A. city administration set up an "independent commission" to investigate the cops. The Christopher Commission report, opened with the statement: "The Rodney King beating stands as a landmark in the recent history of law enforcement, comparable to the Scotts-

boro case in 1931." The landmark here was that the cops were caught on camera employing the racist terror that is the daily fare dished out to oppressed minorities by police forces across the country. True, the L.A. cops may be one of the most blatant examples of police bonapartism, acting as a law unto themselves. Right up to his resignation last month, Daryl Gates flaunted the fact that the LAPD chief is not even formally responsible to the mayor or city council. Gates became something of an embarrassment to the powers that be. To rein in these dogs of war, the Christopher Commission report called for increased training, "cultural awareness" sessions and the creation of a "citizen Police Commission" to review complaints.

As communists with a Marxist understanding of the state, we oppose cop bonapartism and warn that the police-state terror of the LAPD is not going to be curbed through better training or "independent" investigation into its "excesses." The cops are the armed enforcers of capitalist "law and order."



LAPD war on minorities: paramilitary SWAT teams used battering rams mounted on tanks in "search and destroy" missions in ghettos and barrios.

The paramilitary forces of the LAPD reflect the fragility of the propertied, wealthy few whose rule can only be enforced and maintained through brutal subjugation of those whose exploitation and oppression feeds their profits. From the standpoint of minorities, poor and working people, the record of the more traditional, corrupt Los Angeles Sheriff's Department is hardly better. Some of the worst examples cited in the recent Amnesty International report on police brutality in L.A. were carried out by LASD deputies against black and Latino residents of Lynwood, a neighborhood near South-Central Los Angeles.

Small wonder that youth in the ghettos and barrios are receptive to the idea (peddled by groups like Progressive Labor and the Revolutionary Communist Party) that they are living under a fascist dictatorship. To preserve its decrepit rule, the bourgeoisie is increasingly turning this country into some kind of "democratic" police state using measures that found naked expression in Los Angeles. Behind the bonapartist cops stands an arsenal of legal repression like the 1988 "Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act" (STEP). Drawn up by the local D.A.'s office and passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in the California legislature, this law not only made membership in a gang a felony offense but allows for prosecution of parents of gang members. The net effect is to criminalize virtually every non-Anglo youth in the city and county, as well as white street kids.

L.A. now has the largest prison population in a country which has more people behind bars than any place else in the world. The cops harricade off whole neighborhoods in "Narcotics Enforcement Zones." Curfews are selectively applied to the ghettos and barrios as police sweep the streets for violators to add to their computer database of "sus-

pects." In a Rand Corporation study of 5,633 people arrested during the recent riots in L.A., more than 2,000 were hauled in for "curfew violation." Despite the media images of marauding mobs, barely 10 percent (570) were arrested on "violence" charges, and of those 143 were for weapons possession. This is an indication not of violent crime but of the fact that any sane person in Los Angeles is likely to have a gun. Only ten of those arrested, overwhelmingly Latinos and blacks, were charged with homicide. And of over 50 deaths listed as "riot-connected," not one was a cop.

## "Forty Year War" on L.A. Labor: Now a Century Old

That the LAPD rivals the military in some Third World military dictatorship is because they have never felt the mobilized power of an organized labor movement. Los Angeles is an anti-union, "open shop" city—a legacy which goes back to the robber barons who conspired to enrich themselves through the creation of this sprawling desert metropolis.

open-shop town in the United States."

Key was the jailing of the McNamara brothers in 1911. The McNamaras, organizers for the Iron Workers, were charged with dynamiting the Times Building. Their case galvanized labor in L.A. against the hated union-busting Otis regime. Demonstrations of 20,000 came out in support of the McNamaras, and Socialist Party candidate Job Harriman was poised to take the mayoral elections. But when defense lawyer Clarence Darrow had the McNamaras change their plea to "guilty," the tide was turned. The streets outside the courthouse, which had been filled with the McNamaras' defenders, were empty. The McNamara boys were thrown behind bars, one for life. Otis rode high in the saddle, trampling any opposition to the rule of his dynasty. This was the high point of what the *Times* termed the "Forty Year War" against labor, a defining event which has conditioned class relations in Los Angeles ever since.

Davis reports that "one AFL union after another had been broken in a succession of violent metal trades strikes and street transport lockouts. Only IWW seamen and longshoremen defied the Merchants and Manufacturers Association crusade to make the open shop complete" (*City of Quartz*). Through the 1920s, white mainstreeters from the Midwest flocked to L.A., making it one of the most right-wing naivist cities in the country. In the '30s, tens of thousands of "Okies" from the Oklahoma-Texas dust bowl joined the Depression migration to the Los Angeles basin. The first years of the stormy CIO organizing drives which established industrial unions in the Midwest auto, steel and rubber centers passed L.A. by. But as the U.S. geared up for World War II, industry in Los Angeles was booming. In March 1941, the UAW-CIO won an NLRB election at the North American Aviation plant in Inglewood.

On June 5, the 12,000 workers at North American struck. Roosevelt immediately ordered them back to work, and dispatched an army of 3,500 battle-ready troops to open the plant. As Art Preis reports in *Labor's Giant Step* (Pioneer, 1964), "Roosevelt acted with confidence because he felt he had the backing of high CIO and UAW officials.... Thus, the United States government waged its first military engagement of World War II on American soil against American workers resisting hunger wages." As troops drove workers back with blows from the rifle butts, cries broke out "Heil Roosevelt!" Soldiers armed with trench mortars, antitank guns, machine guns and two antiaircraft guns cleared the area. Local strike leaders yielded, advising workers to go back. In a final blow, the UAW International suspended local union officers, red-baiting them as communists.

When the UAW was finally established in the aircraft plants of Southeast L.A., and the Steelworkers at the Kaiser plant in Fontana out in San Bernardino County, it was strictly from the top down. During the war years, women workers were heavily employed in the aircraft plants, and many black workers from the South found jobs there. But the pervasive atmosphere of racist reaction (which exploded in the 1943 anti-Mexican "Zoot suit" riots) continued to dominate the area. (North American refused to hire any blacks.) Chester Himes' 1945 novel *If He Hollers Let Him Go* tells of the experiences of a skilled black shipyard worker confronted by Jim Crow segregation in and out of the plants. In his autobiography, Himes noted that he had lived in the South, survived seven and a half years in prison, five Depression years in Cleveland, "But under the mental corrosion of race prejudice in Los Angeles I had become bitter and saturated with hate."

[TO BE CONTINUED]



## L.A. Flashpoint U.S.A.



### Racist Cop Bonapartism vs. Minorities, Immigrants, Labor

WV Photo  
Labor battle at Century City: Striking janitors face LAPD attack in successful fight to win a union, June 1990.

Four years ago, in a report commissioned by L.A. mayor Tom Bradley, Los Angeles was hyped as a "vibrant mosaic," the "leading hub of world trade," a "crossroads city" that "welcomes and encourages diversity." The 1988 report entitled

#### PART ONE OF TWO

"L.A. 2000, A City for the Future" boasted, "Just as New York, London and Paris stood as symbols of past centuries, Los Angeles will be THE city of the 21st century." In a "New World Order" dominated by American imperialism, just as Miami would be the capital of Latin America, L.A. would serve as hub of the Pacific Rim. This calculation was the basis for an ambitious building boom of corporate centers financed by Asian capital. But the explosion of outrage that ripped through the impoverished ghettos and barrios, following the acquittal of the racist L.A. cops who savagely beat black motorist Rodney King, blew a gaping hole in the city boosters' script.

In "La-La Land," smug yuppies relied on desperate "illegals" from Central America to make their gardens bloom and care for their kids while they organized in "ecology-minded" movements to keep "them" out of the neighborhood. They would drive past teeming black and Latino South-Central as they cruised the freeways in their BMWs. At the top, city rulers pointed to their glitzy steel-and-glass developments in Century City and downtown. But at the base, there is an economy of raw exploitation where hundreds of thousands of desperate immigrants labor for the minimum wage in sweatshops that now occupy the sites of the former unionized manufacturing

plants. The destruction of industry decimated what income base there was in the already impoverished black ghetto. And on April 29, the smoldering rage at the bottom burst into flames that consumed the "city of angels."

By the end of the 1980s, Los Angeles had replaced San Francisco as the West Coast power center and become the second-largest financial center in the U.S. With the highest percentage of immigrants of any city in the country (over 40 percent of the total population), it was perhaps the most ethnically diverse metropolis in the world. The L.A. school district reports that over 80 languages are spoken by its students, while the London *Economist* describes Los Angeles as a place where one can buy a kosher burrito in a store run by

Koreans. But in this epoch of capitalist decay, the melting pot has become a pressure cooker. With this intense social change and strife on its doorstep, the film industry has produced a spate of recent films on the L.A. cauldron, from the white liberal *Grand Canyon* to the black nationalist *Boyz n the Hood*.

There has also been an avalanche of books on changing L.A., including David Rieff's vapid *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World* (Simon & Schuster, 1991), the diverse collection of essays edited by David Reid, *Sex, Death and God in L.A.* (Pantbeon, 1992), and leftist author Mike Davis' wide-ranging and knowledgeable *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (Verso, 1990). In *The Third Century: America's Resurgence in the Asian*

*Era*, Joel Kotkin argued that the massive immigration of Asians and Latinos to L.A. was emblematic of a new "Manifest Destiny" for the declining "American Empire," in which the U.S. would emerge as "a 'world nation' with links to virtually every inhabitable part of the globe." But far from representing a revitalized future for American imperialism, global exploitation and competition, Los Angeles' much-vaunted "growth economy" epitomized the decay and parasitism of U.S. capitalism.

The shameless looting of productive investment and destruction of industry was personified by Michael Milken, the '80s junk bond king who operated out of Beverly Hills. While Milken raked in a \$500 million "salary" in one year, tens of thousands of workers in L.A.'s auto, steel and rubber plants were thrown out of their jobs as the plants were closed down in the deindustrialization of America. Today over half of black youth in L.A. are unemployed, driven back and isolated on increasingly mean streets. Hovering above them, the "Blue Thunder" helicopters of L.A.'s paramilitary police force maintain a reign of terror over the ghettos and barrios, against the poor and homeless. And then with the blatant injustice of the racist Simi Valley verdict letting the LAPD killer cops walk, to paraphrase the city's motto, it "all came together in L.A."

What followed was a multiracial social upheaval. The media show endless reruns of the brutal beating of white truck driver Reginald Denny, trying to paint the conflagration as a vicious race riot (naturally, they play down the fact that Denny was rescued by blacks). There were ugly incidents, particularly

continued on page 10



WV Photo  
Spartacists join protest outside Parker Center after racist verdict in Rodney King case, April 29.