

New York Governor Follows Clinton's Lead

Welfare-Bashers: Busting Unions, Starving the Poor



Reuters



Richards/Magnum



Yee/NY Times

A few days before Thanksgiving, the New York City government heralded the holiday season by dumping more than 6,000 people off the welfare rolls, leaving them with no money, food stamps or medical coverage. Around the same time, the federal government sent out letters notifying 260,000 children suffering from cerebral palsy, sickle cell anemia and other serious disabilities that their benefits were about to be taken away. But as already paltry benefits for poor and working people get the ax, the vultures on Wall Street are glowing with holiday cheer as stock prices go through the roof.

While the pre-Thanksgiving welfare massacre in NYC was blamed on "administrative error," it prefigured what's in store for nearly one and a half million welfare recipients throughout the state. Following the lead of Democratic president Clinton and the Republican-controlled Congress, New York Republican governor George Pataki last month announced plans to slash welfare benefits across the board. This vicious proposal aims not only to starve the poor, but to *punish* them as well. Families would have their benefits reduced if their children miss school, teen mothers would be forced to live with their parents, and all recipients would be subjected to fingerprinting and demeaning drug tests.

New York State's Home Relief program, which provides cash grants to about 230,000 adults without children, would be abolished. Nearly all welfare recipients, no matter how weak and disabled, no matter how many kids they have at home, would be forced into slave-labor "workfare" programs, as is already happening in New York City and other areas. Payments to families would be progressively cut for each year on welfare, declining by 45 percent after four years and going down to zero after five. The "poor laws" enacted in

Bipartisan war on the poor consigns millions to misery. Democratic president Clinton signing federal anti-welfare bill (left), Republican New York governor Pataki (right). Above: Desperate mother begs for handouts in NYC subway.

Jobs for All at Union Wages!

19th-century England at least provided for some minimal subsistence. The anti-poor laws being imposed across the U.S. today are a recipe for starvation. What Pataki's cruel and vindictive measure means is that there will be ever more homeless mothers standing on wintry street corners begging for handouts to feed their children.

When Clinton signed the federal anti-welfare law last summer, the story was that benefits were being handed back to the control of the states through "block grants." In fact, the real message to the states was to shred all social welfare programs. As an article on "Single Mothers and Welfare" in *Scientific American* (October 1996) noted, "an ensuing 'race to the bottom' will occur, in order to discourage potential recipients of welfare from moving between states." Now Clinton is cynically talking of "softening" the devastating effects of his new law, mainly by restoring food stamps to "legal" immigrants—but millions of immigrants and other poor people would still be left to starve.

The devastation of welfare will further decimate the overwhelmingly black and Hispanic inner cities, whose inhabitants the capitalist rulers increasingly deem to be a "surplus" population now that the big urban industrial plants they used to work in have been turned into rusting hulks. While the median family income for blacks is barely half that of whites, the percentage of blacks living below the official poverty line is more than *triple* what it is for whites. Meanwhile, 42 percent of all black children are on welfare, compared with 16 percent of white children.

The all-sided assault on the ghetto masses can be measured in the huge gap in life expectancy between whites and blacks: a recent study shows that a young black man in Harlem—where the death rate is over four times that for white men nationally—has only a 37 percent chance of making it to age 65. To enforce the growing disparity in income between rich and poor and the immiseration of the inner cities, the racist rulers unleash ever more virulent police terror

against the ghettos and barrios.

Seeking as always to foster and deepen racial antagonisms within the working class, the bourgeoisie seeks to sucker white workers and the middle class into believing that the assault on social welfare programs is directed at black people and immigrants, who supposedly live off of working people's hard-earned tax dollars. Aside

from the fact that the majority of welfare recipients are white, this grotesque racist lie aims to cover over the reality that the attacks on welfare are part and parcel of a broader assault on the living standards of *all working people*. Well over a century ago, Karl Marx described in *Capital* how the maintenance of a "reserve army" of unemployed was an integral part of capitalism, serving to degrade working conditions and to lower wages for all workers. As Marx explained:

"The over-work of the employed part of the working-class swells the ranks of the reserve, whilst conversely the greater pressure that the latter by its competition exerts on the former, forces these to submit to over-work and to subjugation under the dictates of capital. The condemnation of one part of the working-class to enforced idleness by the over-work of the other part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists."

This was written during the period of capitalist expansion. Today, under conditions of capitalist decline, this process is qualitatively exacerbated, resulting in the massive growth of a chronically unemployed population. And in this deeply racist country, minorities—particularly black people—make up a vastly disproportionate share of this growing army of permanently unemployed.

It is in the vital interest of the integrated labor movement to launch a class-struggle fight in defense of the poor, blacks and immigrants. Yet the existing pro-capitalist leadership of the trade unions doesn't even act to defend the interests of its own members against layoffs and wage cuts, much less mobilize on behalf of the ghetto and barrio poor. To smash the assault on social

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The Fight for a
Revolutionary Party

Cannon Writings
Published in Spanish

See Page 6



Village Voice Spits on Greensboro Anti-Klan Martyrs

Marching to the ever more right-wing beat emanating from Bill Clinton's Democratic Party, New York City's erstwhile rad-lib muckraking weekly, the *Village Voice*—now reduced to a free handout on Manhattan street corners—is hitting new lows. In its November 26 issue, the *Voice* ran a piece on "Who's Who on the Far Left?" with a layout dominated by a photo of the bleeding body of Cesar Cauce, a hospital worker who was murdered by the Ku Klux Klan in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1979. The *Voice*'s sneering caption—"Making the revolution can be dangerous to your health"—could have appeared in a KKK rag.

The November 1979 KKK/Nazi massacre of five leftists and trade-union organizers, supporters of the now-defunct Communist Workers Party, was one of the most horrendous fascist attacks in the U.S. in years (see "Greensboro: A

Requiem," *WV* No. 640, 1 March). It was carried out in broad daylight in front of dozens of onlookers and TV cameras, and with the direct knowledge, complicity and active participation of local and federal police agencies, from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the FBI to the Greensboro police. It seems that in these "death of communism" years of liberal cynicism, the *Voice* is now willing to spit on any leftist, even those murdered at the hands of the Klan.

The "Who's Who" article by Robert Fitch was a companion piece to "Commie Fiends of Brooklyn," a story on a group calling itself the "Provisional Communist Party," whose members were arrested en masse after an army of cops busted into their Brooklyn home on the night of November 11. The bust was accompanied by tabloid "red scare" hysteria and "informed" "exposés" by the

Village Voice "exposé" on "sectarian left" was accompanied by repulsive photo caption sneering at leftists murdered by KKK in 1979.



TROTSKY

The Fight for a Revolutionary Party

The following quote, taken from a selection of American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon's works newly translated by the International Communist League for Spanish-language Spartacist, is excerpted from a November 1953 speech titled "Factional Struggle and Party Leadership." This speech came at the conclusion of a factional struggle within the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party against Pabloite li-



LENIN

quidationism, which destroyed the Trotskyist Fourth International in the early 1950s. The "party question" was at the core of Cannon's fight, as it was in the recent struggle within the ICL against a liquidationist grouping led by former Workers Vanguard editor Jan Norden, whom we characterized as "Pabloites of the second mobilization." The dissemination of Cannon's writings in Spanish and other languages is part of our struggle to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

The only barrier between the working class of the world and socialism is the unsolved problem of leadership. That is what is meant by "the question of the party." That is what the *Transitional Program* means when it states that the crisis of the labor movement is the crisis of leadership. That means that until the working class solves the problem of creating the revolutionary party, the conscious expression of the historic process, which can lead the masses in struggle, the issue remains undecided. It is the most important of all questions—the question of the party.

And if our break with Pabloism—as we see it now clearly—if it boils down to one point and is concentrated in one point, that is it: the question of the party. That seems clear to us now, as we have seen the development of Pabloism in action. The essence of Pabloist revisionism is the overthrow of that part of Trotskyism which is today its most vital part—the conception of the crisis of mankind as the crisis of the leadership of the labor movement summed up in the question of the party.

Pabloism aims not only to overthrow Trotskyism; it aims to overthrow that part of Trotskyism which Trotsky learned from Lenin. Lenin's greatest contribution to his whole epoch was his idea and his determined struggle to build a vanguard party capable of leading the workers in revolution. And he did not confine his theory to the time of his own activity. He went all the way back to 1871, and said that the decisive factor in the defeat of the first proletarian revolution, the Paris Commune, was the absence of a party of the revolutionary Marxist vanguard, capable of giving the mass movement a conscious program and a resolute leadership. It was Trotsky's acceptance of this part of Lenin in 1917 that made Trotsky a Leninist.

—Fourth International (November-December 1953)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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CIRCULATION MANAGER: Shauna Blythe

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

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and with a 3 week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co. 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@iac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

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

The closing date for news in this issue is December 3.

No. 657

6 December 1996

New York Times. A number of the group have been charged with "obstruction of governmental administration" and "gun possession" after cops found a supposed "arsenal" of rusting weapons which had not been fired in years and were hidden away in dusty closets. Whatever the nature of this group, its members should be defended against any trumped-up weapons charges and sinister grand jury fishing expeditions.

Not only was this a sinister display of how the state uses its reactionary "gun control" laws, but it also illustrated the ominous role of the "child abuse" hysteria fomented by the capitalist rulers. The mass bust was initiated when a group of vigilantes from the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children"—a bunch of "wannabe cops," as a sidebar in the *Voice* rightly labeled them—reported hearing a child crying in the building. No evidence was found to back up the bogus "child abuse" charge, but it was enough to get the cops pouring into the group's house without a search warrant.

The *Voice* then added its rad-lib angle to the "red scare" sensationalism in the tabloids, with its rundown on the "top 10 far-left American sects" by Fitch. A cofounder of the Bay Area Revolutionary Union (now the Revolutionary Communist Party), Fitch summons some nostalgia for the 1930s and '40s, when Trotskyists and other socialists led mass strikes and the Communist Party served as a "political school" for various black Democratic Party pols of later years. But that was then. Today, Fitch remarks, oozing with urbane "death of communism" derision: "The sectarian left feeds principally on the imagined grass of a socialism that exists somewhere else. Now it can't even be imagined—Cuba and North Korea notwithstanding." In the face of "futility," he informs his readers, "the party becomes a sect, and sometimes from there, a mind-controlling cult"—a classic canard from the "god that failed" crowd.

Needless to say, the Spartacist League is included in Fitch's "top ten sects," described as "the edgiest members of the Trotskyist family, the most cerebral, and the most prone to factionalism.... Most recently, they expelled the editor of the paper, Jan Norden, and his *mishpocheh* [family, in Yiddish]. The burning issue? How to assess the practice of Trotskyist trade unionists in a province of Brazil." Readers who are concerned with issues

and areas somewhat more important than the *Voice*'s shrinking little corner of the world around Astor Place are encouraged to write us for documents on our recent internal struggle with the Norden group, materials which address the tasks of communists in Germany, Brazil and other areas.

Fitch does have a point, though, when he talks about those émigrés from the "sectarian left" who "enter the Democratic Party, the roach motel of American leftism: They go in but they don't come out." This comes from one who knows. The *Voice*'s biographical note on Fitch reports that "as an advisor to the Communications Workers of America Local 1180, he played a role in its endorsement of [Kathryn] Freed," a Democratic Party politician elected to the City Council in 1993. The *Voice* has always been essentially a house organ for Democratic Party liberals, an outlook that fits well not only with anti-communism but with scabbing. During last winter's SEIU Local 32B-32J building workers strike, numerous *Voice* staffers, including one from the self-styled "Bolshevik Tendency," regularly waltzed across the strikers' picket lines outside their building.

Of course, the *Village Voice* has been going downhill for decades. It canned its only first-rate political journalist, left-wing gadfly Alexander Cockburn, back in 1984, because Cockburn took money from an Arab foundation to write a book, thus offending the Zionist lobby. We defended him at the time, noting that he was an interesting opponent whose snotty wit hid a conciliatory core we ourselves enjoyed exposing. If Cockburn got in hot water, it was because once in a while he crossed the rad-lib line. To return to the Greensboro massacre, perhaps the best response to the *Voice*'s disgusting snickering is Cockburn's article in the 19 November 1979 *Voice*, "Silent as the Graves":

"Dignity would at least have required labor and its liberal allies to issue some proclamation of grief, some demand for justice if not revenge. Courage would demand issuance of a call for anti-fascist demonstrations in every major city—like the one sponsored by the Spartacists in Detroit. But our liberals are too busy with Teddy, and labor is getting ready to elevate Lane Kirkland as Meany's successor. Action against native fascism is left in the hands of the Trotskyists and other sectarians, who at least can understand the meaning of murder when they see it." ■

Come to a Fundraising Party!

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Why Internationalists Call for U.S. Bases Out of Japan

The following letter by our comrades of the Spartacist Group/Japan is in reply to a Japanese leftist named Fujimoto, who criticized in an Internet posting, quoted below, our call for "U.S. military out of Japan!" (see "ICL Protests Bombing of Iraq," WV No. 651, 13 September)

Tokyo, Japan
29 November 1996

Dear Fujimoto,

Our comrades at *Workers Vanguard* forwarded to us an undated E-mail letter you sent to them in late September. In this letter, and in the course of our numerous discussions, you have raised your disagreement with our slogan "U.S. military out of Japan!" which appears in our September 9 leaflet, "Japanese Imperialism Endorses the Killing of Arabs and Kurds—U.S. and All Imperialist Forces Out of the Persian Gulf!"

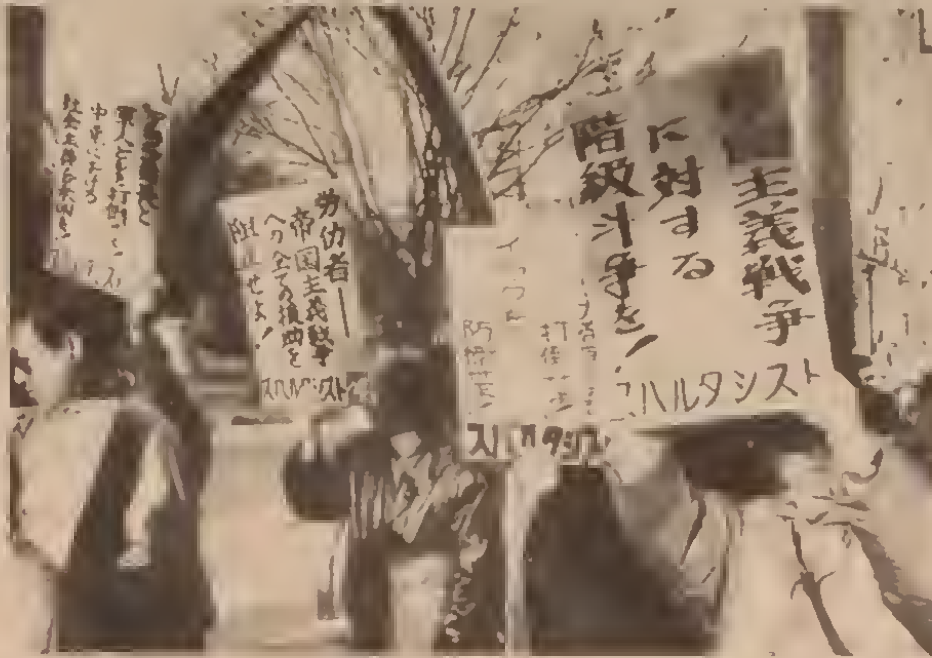
Our leaflet was issued as part of an International Communist League campaign of protest which stretched from New York to Berlin and from Tokyo to Milan in the spirit of true Leninist internationalism. *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., headlined, "U.S. Imperialist Butchers Hands Off Iraq!" and called for the defeat of U.S. imperialism. Far from simply condemning the U.S., our leaflet was directed against our "own" ruling class, which was complicit in the bloody bombing of Iraq. As we wrote, "Under the fig leaf of UN Resolution 688, the Hashimoto popular-front government is one of the few imperialist governments to come out in support of this attack against Iraqis and Kurds."

You write, "The SGJ raises a slogan 'U.S. military out of Japan!' It is wrong. It is anti-U.S. nationalist JCP's and various new left's slogan, nationalist and pacifist. Communists must call to 'Organize SDF and U.S. soldiers!'" This touches on an important question for communist internationalists. Indeed, any group in Japan whose primary slogan is "U.S. Troops Out," such as the Japanese Communist Party, is indeed social-chauvinist, alibiing their own bourgeoisie. Our opposition to U.S. troops is a subordinate and tactical question in the framework of our opposition to all imperialism, in which the first premise is "the main enemy is at home." If U.S. troops were forced out

of Japan, the Japanese proletariat could more clearly see their main enemy, the Japanese capitalists, with their own imposing military machine.

A genuine internationalist position is developed from actual, concrete circumstances. Today, in global terms, Japan is a second-rate military power while the huge American military machine is a dagger pointed at the deformed workers states in Asia. Hence, U.S. troops in Japan are the forward detachments for provocations against the Chinese, North

By way of historical analogy, we found it useful to review documents written during the time of the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky. The Fourth Congress of the Communist International took up the question of French imperialist troops occupying sections of Germany after World War I: "The Communist Parties, above all those of Germany and France, must start a joint struggle against the Versailles peace treaty.... The Czechoslovak and Polish Communist parties, as well as the Communist Parties of other



Spartacist Group/Japan at January 1991 protest against Persian Gulf War called for defense of Iraq and for labor to oppose Japanese bourgeoisie's aid to U.S.-led imperialist war.

Korean and Vietnamese deformed workers states. To fail to oppose this imperialist military presence would be to acquiesce to the continued military encirclement of three of the four remaining deformed workers states, and would suggest an attitude of disinterest toward the aspirations of the masses of Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, etc. who seek an end to military dictatorial rule backed by U.S. support, training, weaponry and the threat of possible direct U.S. intervention. In September, U.S. F-16 fighter bombers and aircraft carriers stationed from Misawa to Yokosuka were deployed and used in the murderous bombing of Iraq.

vassal countries subordinate to France, have a duty to combine the fight against their own bourgeoisies with the fight against French imperialism."

In a 13 September 1922 letter to the French CP, Trotsky, in the name of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, writes of the French troops: "The constant threats to occupy German territory constitute one of the highest obstacles in the way of the growth of the proletarian revolution in Germany." Indeed, when French troops occupied the German Ruhr valley in January 1923, this became a rallying cry for all German nationalists. If French troops had not been occupying parts of Germany, German workers could

have more clearly seen that "the main enemy is at home," and the Freikorps and Nazis would not have had this as a cause to rally around.

Troop occupations by the imperialist victors followed World War II, with U.S. troops occupying Japan. During the post-war strike wave, the U.S. occupying army was instrumental in propping up a weak capitalist Japanese government, and was key in crushing many post-war strikes. Following the Chinese Revolution of 1949, the U.S. saw it in its interest to have a prosperous and stable Japan as an anti-Communist bulwark in Asia. Thus, while the occupation ended in 1953, U.S. troops stayed as a forward base to fight against Communism. The U.S. bases in Japan were strategic to U.S. imperialism's killing and maiming millions of Chinese, Koreans and Vietnamese in the wars in Korea and Vietnam.

During the Cold War, the Japanese bourgeoisie was nearly united in support of American military troops being stationed in Japan. But the whole shape of global politics has undergone a fundamental sea change with the final undoing of the October Revolution. Today, a significant wing of the Japanese bourgeoisie is openly and vocally "anti-American." The vicious, inhuman gang-rape of a 12-year-old Okinawan girl by U.S. soldiers has served as a rallying cry for nationalism and cheap anti-Americanism, spanning from the rightists and fascists through sections of the bourgeoisie to the JCP and New Leftists. What we have here is an intensification of tensions between competing imperialist powers over spheres of influence and economic markets, and the left is lining up behind its own ruling class.

In our leaflet of September 9 we write: "What is needed are strikes by the Japanese proletariat working on the [U.S.] bases similar to those that occurred in Okinawa during the Vietnam War in 1971 which prevented U.S. ships and planes from leaving the base for 24 hours." As you can see, we call for *class-struggle* means of evicting U.S. troops; unlike the JCP, we don't preach illusions in a peaceful, democratic capitalist Japan brokering a deal with U.S. imperialism to get them out. We firmly reject the JCP's nationalist position that Japan is a neocolonial victim of U.S. imperialism. Thus, we go on to write in our leaflet, "The main enemy is at home, our own rapacious bourgeoisie and military. Japan is not a colony of the U.S. but the second largest imperialist power in the world with its own appetites—to once again enslave and exploit the workers and toilers of Asia." ■

Afghanistan and the Fight for Political Revolution in the USSR

New York, NY
22 October 1996

Dear Editor,

The article "Afghanistan: Hell for Women" (WV No. 654, 25 October) is very powerful on the woman question and also good on exposing the role of anti-Soviet "leftists" who opposed the USSR's military intervention in Afghanistan beginning in 1979-80.

Within that context, I think the article somewhat underplays the direct relationship between the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and the final collapse of Stalinism itself. The Soviet intervention in support of the modernizing nationalist PDPA regime and of the civil war against CIA-instigated counter-revolutionary terror was the last time the bureaucracy ruling the Soviet degener-

ated workers state undertook a progressive act. Although undertaken purely for defensive geopolitical reasons, it did, as the article emphasized, go across the grain of the Stalinists' abject pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

In the 1930s and heading into World War II, Trotsky analyzed the character of the Soviet degenerated workers state and put forward the program of political revolution, noting that if the working class did not throw out the bureaucracy, the bureaucracy would strangle the workers state. Though it took longer than Trotsky anticipated, the final dissolution of Stalinist rule under the military and especially economic pressure of imperialist encirclement of the Soviet Union conformed very precisely to his analysis.

The Afghanistan intervention testified to the persistence—attenuated as it was

after some six decades of Stalinist repression, lies and sellouts—of a contradiction between the collectivized foundations of the Soviet state and the parasitic bureaucracy. When Gorbachev & Co. abandoned Afghanistan with the futile aim of trying to appease imperialism, making a point of renouncing the supposed "Trotskyite heresy" of "export of revolution," this was the *direct* precursor to the Soviet bureaucracy abandoning "socialism" in East Germany and even in its own country.

The Partisan Defense Committee's 1989 offer to the Afghan government to organize international brigades to help fight the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats in the city of Jalalabad was aimed not only at bringing concrete assistance to the side which the international Spartacist tendency (now International Communist

League) militarily supported. The formation of an international brigade acting to defend the Soviet Union and unveiled women in Afghanistan could have also had explosive consequences in the USSR itself, especially among soldiers and officers who had believed in the internationalist implications of their involvement in Afghanistan. This calculation was among the things that led the ICL to say, retrospectively: better to have fought imperialism in Afghanistan than have to fight (or not fight) counterrevolution inside the Soviet Union. In other words, the brigade proposal was made in good part to further the struggle for political revolution in the Soviet Union.

In the absence of such an internationalist struggle, among the reported consequences of the Soviet pullout from Afghanistan was a growth of ultranationalist sentiment and sympathies for fascist outfits like Pamyar among embittered veterans of the Afghanistan war, after that effort had been repudiated by the Soviet government.

Comradely,
LG

South Carolina KKK "Store": Provocation for Racist Terror

Late on the night of October 27, two Ku Klux Klansmen stopped their pickup truck outside Club Illusions in rural Pelion, South Carolina, pulled out a semi-automatic rifle and began methodically firing into the crowd of black people gathered outside. Three teenagers were wounded by the terrorist nightriders and a dozen other young people were left in a state of shock. The would-be killers' truck was emblazoned with a Confederate flag, and the KKKers had come from a "Rebel Flag" rally earlier that day.

Barely three weeks after this potentially deadly racist attack, on November 20 the city council in Laurens, South Carolina, an hour's drive from Pelion, voted to grant a business license to the town's notorious KKK "Redneck Shop." Billing itself as the "World's Only Klan Museum," it sells Confederate flags and other racist paraphernalia and features a grotesque "display" of open coffins containing black mannequins with ropes around their necks! Hundreds of people



Thomas S. England

"Redneck Shop," nest of Klan nightriders. Right: 10-year-old Dwight Miller, victim of near-lynching in South Carolina.



Keith Gedamke

marched to protest the opening of this Klan terror nest earlier this year. On March 24, white 43-year-old carpet layer David Hunter courageously smashed his pickup truck into the KKK "shop" (see "Anti-Klan Fighter Rams Storefront," WV No. 643, 12 April).

Underlining that the Laurens "store" is a launching pad for race-terror provocations, Hunter told *Workers Vanguard* in a recent phone interview that news footage of the Pelion attack clearly showed a videotape from the "Redneck Shop" in the cab of the pickup truck. For his anti-racist action last March, David Hunter still faces two felony counts of malicious damage to property and up to 20 years in prison. We demand: *Drop the charges against David Hunter!*

What happened in Pelion is only the most recent of a series of racist attacks in South Carolina, including a rash of arson assaults on black churches. On November 22, white racists Benjamin Mims and his wife Betty were convicted by an integrated jury in Manning, South Carolina of aggravated assault and battery for their grisly beating and torture last January of a 10-year-old black child,

Dwight Miller. When Dwight went to their house to play with their 9-year-old son, he was subjected to a near-lynching. The Mims and other family members took Dwight into the woods, tied him to a tree, hit him with a crowbar, choked him with a belt and fired two shotgun blasts past his head.

These terrorist attacks and hearings are encouraged by the climate of racist reaction fostered by both the Democratic and Republican parties in Washington and, in the most direct sense, by the State House in Columbia, South Carolina. The Confederate battle flag has flown over the South Carolina State House since 1962, when it was put up in racist defiance of the civil rights movement. Finally, after years of protests against this obscene symbol of Jim Crow segregation and Klan terror and growing complaints by local business leaders, Republican governor David Beasley, echoed by die-hard racist Strom Thurmond, have proposed removing the flag from the Capitol building, only to plant it a few yards away at a Confederate "memorial" on the State House grounds.

What's motivating these racist politi-

cians is their perception that the prominent display of the Confederate flag has become "bad for business." With the influx of industry in recent years to this low-wage, open-shop region, North and South Carolina together today have more factory workers than any state except California. The multiracial working class has the social power and material interest to smash escalating racist terror and ensure that the Confederate flag of slavery is torn down and stays down wherever it appears. What is lacking is the resolute class-struggle leadership to wield labor's power to defend working people and all the oppressed. Indeed, any serious effort to unionize unorganized workers in the South will require a head-on confrontation with the KKK, which has historically been in the forefront of union-busting in the region.

We fight for the construction of a multiracial revolutionary workers party dedicated to putting the racist capitalist rulers and their fascist dogs of war out of business for good, from the White House to the backwoods of South Carolina. Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■



WV Photo

SL supporter Richard Bradley tears down Confederate flag of slavery in front of San Francisco's Civic Center, 1984. Finish the Civil War!

Indonesia: Free Imprisoned Leftists and Unionists!

As we have reported earlier, in the wake of massive anti-government protests by supporters of bourgeois opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri last summer, the Suharto military dictatorship in Indonesia arrested over 200 people, targeting trade-union activists and

supporters of the leftist People's Democratic Party (PRD) for particularly severe repression (see "Indonesia Powder Keg," WV No. 654, 24 October). On November 27, the regime announced the release of 124 supporters of Megawati, head of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), one

of two tame opposition parties permitted by the military dictatorship. But Muchtar Pakpahan, leader of the banned independent SBSI trade union, and at least nine PRD militants, including 27-year-old leader Budiman Sudjatmiko and activists Petrus Haryanto and Garda Sembiring, continue to languish in the dictatorship's dungeons on charges of "subversion"—which carries the death sentence. *Free Pakpahan and the PRD supporters now!*

Not content with holding Pakpahan in detention since July, the Indonesian Supreme Court has now vindictively reversed its earlier acquittal of Pakpahan on frame-up charges of "inciting rioting" during convulsive workers' protests which shook the city of Medan in 1994. In overturning Pakpahan's November 1994 conviction last year, the Supreme Court admitted that the charges were completely baseless, noting that "Pakpahan was on the island of Java and not in Medan at the time."

And even as it released Megawati's supporters in Jakarta, the military regime announced the arrests of an unnamed number of East Timorese, who face up to 20 years' imprisonment for "insulting the head of state" (UPI, 29 November). The arrests followed a protest by hundreds

of pro-independence activists in East Timor's capital city of Dili on November 25. The struggle of the East Timorese against Jakarta's genocidal annexation and forced "Indonesianization" of their island country is integrally linked with that of the workers and oppressed within Indonesia fighting against the yoke of the imperialist-backed dictatorship. *Indonesian troops out now—Independence for East Timor! Free all pro-independence prisoners!*

Suharto's release of Megawati's supporters while leftists and unionists remain imprisoned and under threat of torture and death underlines the suicidal character of the popular-frontist policy pursued by the PRD, which promotes the PDI as the democratic alternative to the current regime. It is not tame bourgeois critics like Megawati which the rulers of Indonesia's "New Order" fear, but the spectre of *socialist revolution* by the industrial proletariat standing at the head of the dispossessed peasantry, women, national minorities and all the oppressed. As an elementary act of class solidarity, the international workers movement must mobilize to demand: *Free all victims of Suharto's right-wing repression, from Jakarta to Dili, now!* ■

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Strikers' Blockades Shut Down Highways

French Truckers Face Down Government, Bosses

Continuing a wave of combative workers' struggles that has rocked France for the past year, truck drivers staged a 12-day strike in November which brought the country's road traffic to a virtual standstill. A number of auto assembly plants and other factories were forced to shut down for lack of parts or fuel. Would-be strike-breakers were given short shrift by the militant truckers: one owner-operator who tried to ram through a strike picket north of Lyon ended up in an intensive care ward. The strike was broadly popular among the working masses: in cities, towns and villages across France, well-wishers flocked to the truckers' barricades to offer food and support.

The impact of the strike was felt throughout West Europe, as drivers used their rigs to blockade major highways and border crossings into Spain, Germany and Belgium, as well as around ferry ports on the English Channel. Truck roadblocks also surrounded virtually all oil refineries and fuel depots, causing most of the country's gas stations to run dry and forcing the government to requisition "emergency" supplies and impose fuel rationing. Seeking to keep pace with the workers' combative spirit, a normally subservient trade-union bureaucrat declared: "There is a moment when the law stands aside against social reality."

Fearful of igniting a social explosion like last December's mass strike wave by rail and other public-sector workers, the conservative government of President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Alain Juppé rapidly intervened in an attempt to "mediate" between the truckers and their employers. By the time strike blockades started coming down on November 29, the drivers had succeeded in forcing the government and the trucking bosses to drop the retirement age from 60 to 55—one of the lowest in the private sector throughout West Europe. Other concessions secured by the strikers included a slightly higher wage settlement, payment for previously unpaid time spent waiting for trucks to be loaded and unloaded and an increase in the number of paid sick days. To settle the strike, Juppé proposed paying for the agreement out of the state budget.

However, no sooner had the roadblocks been lifted than pink slips began to rain down upon strike activists, as the employers seek to exact vengeance for the militant shutdown. *It is the responsibility of the entire workers movement to mobilize in defense of the fired truckers and to oppose all victimizations and reprisals.*

Nonetheless, the settlement is a significant blow to Chirac's policy of trying to force austerity down the workers' throats in order to satisfy the dictates of the German bankers and the Maastricht Treaty, which aims at establishing a single European currency by 1999. Coming barely one year after the mass strikes and street protests by public service workers, the latest strike will no doubt inspire further struggles against the government's campaign to slash workers' living standards and gut health care and other social serv-



Truckers strike blockade shuts down traffic on Normandy highway.

ices. Indeed, the truckers' walkout was punctuated by a series of shorter strikes which interrupted Air France's domestic flights, cut rail service in Rouen and Nantes, and crippled public transportation in Nice. In Rouen, bus drivers who are also demanding retirement at age 55 remain out on strike.

Yet the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucrats worked overtime to head off any extension of the truckers strike to other sectors. The Communist Party (PCF)-led CGT trade-union federation organized a day of protest demonstrations toward the end of the walkout but deliberately avoided mobilizing real solidarity strike action. And the social-democratic CFDT and FO tops openly opposed extending the strike. Moreover, barely 10 percent of drivers are in any union—and even this is a significantly higher proportion than in the rest of the private sector. Though, for a change, the various union federations joined in nominally supporting the strike, the backstabbing of the union tops underscores the need for a single industrial union encompassing all drivers.

Across the Channel, the British media and the Conservative government of Prime Minister John Major tried to provoke a chauvinist furor against the French truckers, railing about British drivers being "held hostage" by the blockades. In fact, a significant number of British, Spanish and other truckers enthusiastically manned pickets alongside their French comrades. Meanwhile, a four-day truckers strike in Denmark disrupted transportation throughout northern Europe and cut off most truck transport to Scandinavia. However, the British Transport and General Workers Union did little to encourage or organize class solidarity with the French truckers, moaning only (in a November 28 statement) about "the limited progress made in negotiations." Meanwhile the CGT, known for its call to "Produce French," has always sought to blame foreign workers for the crisis of French capitalism.

Workers on both sides of the Channel would do well to recall the powerful manifestations of international class solidarity during the 1984-85 British miners

strike. Itself facing Socialist Party (PS) president François Mitterrand's racist austerity attacks at the time, the French proletariat embraced the British miners' battle, as the CGT organized an extensive campaign of fund-raising and food shipments for the British miners, and French miners dumped truckloads of coal destined for Britain. But the British Trades Union Congress tops refused to bring out the other bastions of British labor in solidarity, in a class battle to win the miners strike and topple Margaret Thatcher's right-wing government.

When French truckers staged a previous strike four years ago, then-president Mitterrand unleashed the police to launch violent attacks on strikers and tanks were deployed to clear trucks off the road. This time, Juppé refrained from overt strikebreaking, fearing that a similar show of force would provoke an extension of the strike. To pay for the settlement, Juppé is now planning to dip into state pension funds and to offer the trucking bosses a tax cut on their profits. Yet a section of the French bourgeoisie was furious with Juppé for not making concessions sooner. Right-wing commentator Jean d'Ormesson declared in the conservative daily *Le Figaro*: "Reforms must be undertaken if we want to escape rampant, permanent revolution," adding, "the first reform is to avoid waiting for rebellion and strikes...to meet legitimate demands."

Conditions are ripe for an all-out mobilization of the working class against Chirac/Juppé's attacks on the working class and minorities of African and Maghrebian (North African) descent. Polls showed that three-quarters of the population supported the truckers strike. Yet the union bureaucrats excused their refusal to extend the strike to public transportation by claiming this would undermine the strike's "popularity." Similarly, during last winter's public service strikes, the union tops refused to reach out to the private sector with the argument that those workers were too "conservative." The latest strike dramatically puts the lie to that.

As we noted at the time, a key obstacle to the extension of last December's strike

wave was the union bureaucracy's chauvinist capitulation to the bourgeoisie's racist assault on "immigrants" (i.e., virtually anyone of African or North African descent). Though not the case in trucking, immigrant workers constitute an important component of the proletariat in the private sector, particularly in the strategic auto industry. But the union misleaders supported the government's racist "Vigipirate" campaign, in which the army is used to terrorize immigrant neighborhoods. The bureaucrats' support to the bourgeoisie's racist campaign also helped give a mantle of "respectability" to the fascist National Front, which has been making electoral gains and now controls several major municipalities.

The French government's concessions to striking truckers and repeated hesitations should not mask the fact that the French bourgeoisie is determined to inflict a more decisive blow against the unions. This would set the stage for a broader onslaught against the working class. Moreover, continuing economic militancy in itself, in the absence of a revolutionary resolution to the crisis of French capitalism, can act to push the middle classes toward the far right. The fact that the reformist bureaucracy ties the hands of the workers and prevents bold action against the capitalist system creates an opening for Le Pen's fascist marauders, who terrorize immigrants and bid to act as the bourgeoisie's final resort against a revolutionary challenge by the proletariat.

It is vital that French workers break out of the stranglehold of the reformist misleaders; otherwise, the bureaucracy, acting in collusion with the bourgeoisie, will either dissipate the workers' militancy or betray their strikes and set them up for defeat. The key question is the struggle to build an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the workers to power. As our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France noted in a leaflet—titled "For a New, Revolutionary Leadership!"—distributed widely to strikers last December (see WV No. 635, 15 December 1995):

"The bourgeoisie is on the attack against the working class. The reformists and class collaborators of the PCF and PS and their centrist tails offer only illusory reforms. They are all incapable of leading the working class in the current struggles and in the struggle to end the system of wage slavery once and for all. Only a party of the Bolshevik type based on a working-class revolutionary perspective can lead the workers forward. The forging in struggle of that party is the urgent task of the hour." ■

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Cannon Writings Published in Spanish

The International Communist League is pleased to announce the first-ever publication in Spanish of a selection of key writings by American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon. Centered on factional documents of Cannon's fight to build a revolutionary proletarian party, the compilation in the new Spanish-language *Spartacist* (No. 27, December 1996) includes a number of other selections, notably Cannon's 1959 article, "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement." The new *Spartacist* also reprints a memorial speech by Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee member James Robertson on the occasion of Cannon's death in 1974. The selection was prepared with the help of the Prometheus Research Library, research and archival facility of the SL/U.S. Central Committee. These writings are also to be published in forthcoming issues of the French- and German-language editions of *Spartacist*. Printed below are excerpts in English from the introduction to the Spanish-language *Spartacist*, "The Fight for a Revolutionary Party."

As an early adherent of the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky, James P. Cannon struggled for the greater part of his life to apply the lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution to building a revolutionary workers party in the U.S. Today, with the world's ruling classes braying over the "death of communism," most of those who consider themselves radical no longer claim allegiance to Leninism, even the perverted parody preached by the Stalinists. Thus there is a great disjuncture between the present level of consciousness of the proletariat, youth and self-proclaimed leftists around the world and the writings of Cannon, who was the most able practitioner of Leninism yet produced in the United States. Yet for those of us who fight for new October Revolutions—and for a new generation of young radicals and working-class militants who are seeking the road to human emancipation—Cannon's writings and speeches illuminate with crystalline clarity the struggle not only for a vanguard party to bring revolutionary consciousness to the world's working class but also to maintain the revolutionary program and purpose of the vanguard against the pressures of bourgeois ideology and violence.

The small forces of our revolutionary international have certainly not been immune to the pressures of imperialist triumphalism, and corresponding regression of proletarian class consciousness, coming in the wake of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the former Soviet Union. The struggle to orient our party in this period of post-Soviet reaction was brought out most recently in a sharp fight in our International and in our Mexican

The Fight for a Revolutionary Party



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section against those who, under the impact of the final undoing of the October Revolution, began to look to alien political programs and to vehicles other than a Leninist vanguard party to advance the cause of the liberation of humankind.

In this fight, and more generally, we have been hampered by the unavailability of Cannon's experiences and contributions on the party question in languages other than English. In our Mexican section, the translation of Cannon's writings on party struggle served directly to arm the comrades in their recent fight against

the centrist opportunism of Norden and Negrete [see "A Shamefaced Defection from Trotskyism," *WI* No. 648, 5 July]. One of the lasting contributions of this fight is the publication in Spanish of these particular works of Cannon, which are addressed to the struggle against an earlier manifestation of the liquidation of the need for a vanguard party.

The Fight for the Leninist Program and Party

As a delegate to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928, Cannon was won to Trotskyism after getting his hands on Trotsky's critique of the Comintern's draft program—later published as *The Third International After Lenin*, a searing indictment of the treacherous policies of Stalinism both in the Soviet Union and internationally.

Cannon brought some 100 supporters of the Cannon-Dunne faction of the Communist Party (CP) to the Trotskyist movement when he was expelled in 1928. This accretion of a formed factional grouping from the Communist Party accounts, in part, for the unique history of Trotskyism in the U.S. In China, the Trotskyists won even more substantial forces from the Communist Party, but this potentially powerful Trotskyist organization was destroyed early on by the combined repressive forces of the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang, the British and Japanese imperialists and the Stalinists. In Latin America, political differentiation among dissident Communist leaders was cut short by early death: Cuban Commu-

nist Party leader Antonio Mella was assassinated in early 1929, probably by a hitman from Stalin's GPU; Peruvian Communist José Carlos Mariátegui died in 1930 at the age of 34; Agustín Farabundo Martí, Alfonso Luna, Mario Zapata and other Salvadoran Communist leaders were murdered in the massacre with which the bourgeoisie crushed the 1932 uprising.

Although far smaller than the Stalinist CP, the Trotskyists of the Communist League of America (later the Socialist Workers Party [SWP]) possessed a cohesive and experienced leadership core, crucial continuity with the struggles of the early Communist movement, and significant links to the organized proletariat. As elucidated in Cannon's letter "Mass Work and Factional Struggle," the SWP sought to embody the Leninist understanding of democratic-centralist principles of organization; the fullest democratic internal political debate, conscious attention to the selection of a leadership representing in its majority the political views of the majority of the party membership, and the need for all party members in their external work to carry out the line and perspectives decided upon.

Cannon and other leaders worked closely with Trotsky particularly during Trotsky's exile in Mexico. Under Trotsky's tutelage, Cannon learned to put the struggle for political program and political clarity first in factional struggle, avoiding the bureaucratic practices and clique infighting that had marred the internal life of the early Communist Party in the U.S. This fruitful political collaboration between Cannon and Trotsky was brought to bear in the 1939-40 fight in the Trotskyist party in the U.S. against a petty-bourgeois opposition led by James Burnham and Max Shachtman.

Reflecting the pressures of imperialism, on the eve of the U.S. entry into World War II, this opposition repudiated the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union. Trotsky's seminal writings from this factional struggle, his last, were published as *In Defense of Marxism*. Cannon's documents were also later published in book form as *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*.

The Fight Against Pabloist Revisionism

Outside the United States, the Trotskyist organizations tended to be far weaker politically and organizationally. The problems were perhaps most persistently exemplified by the French section in the 1930s; largely petty-bourgeois in its composition, beset by cliques and persistent dead-end factionalism, perennially prone to sectarianism, with a penchant for dilettantish "leaders" seen as individual "stars" and a disdain for the full-time party workers. Both Trotsky himself and later Cannon struggled in vain to get the French comrades to grasp the need for a collective leadership, in which the individual weaknesses of comrades have the possibility to be overcome by the party's combined strengths.

The Trotskyist organizations, especially in Europe, suffered massive physical losses during the war. Trotsky's murder by a Stalinist agent in Mexico was compounded by the death of the most promising Trotskyist leaders. Weakened and disoriented, their human continuity to Trotsky's party hanging by a thread, the European sections were ill-equipped to handle the new pressures of the post-war world. The victory of the Soviet Army over Hitler's Nazi Third Reich, together with the creation of deformed workers states in East Europe, increased the power and prestige of the Stalinists. The response to this unanticipated strengthening of Stalinism was one of



Mural by Mexican artist Diego Rivera depicts Trotsky, Cannon, Engels and Marx behind banner of Fourth International.

impressionism, incarnated in the person of Michel Pablo, a young Greek Trotskyist leader who emerged as the principal spokesman for the Fourth International.

Pablo put forward a theory of a "new world reality" with liquidationist conclusions. Positing that under Cold War pressure the Stalinist parties would be forced into "roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation" ("Where Are We Going," 1951), Pablo insisted that the Trotskyists had to enter the CPs in order to pressure the Stalinists to the left (in some countries, notably Germany and Britain, the entry tactic was applied to the social democracy). This theory effectively deprived the Fourth International of any political reason for existence, transforming itself into cheerleaders for "left" Sta-



James P. Cannon speaking at 1940 convention of Socialist Workers Party.

linists and other reformist and "Third World" nationalist forces.

The majority of the materials on the party question which we are reprinting here are drawn from Cannon's speeches to the SWP and letters to comrades from 1953, during the factional battle with the SWP's Cochran-Clarke minority which allied itself with Pablo. Cannon's views as expressed in this fight are the culmination of his decades of experience as a Leninist politician.

At the same time, the SWP's fight against Pablo's revisionism and liquidationism was belated and, largely speaking, nationally limited to the U.S. Though the SWP did ally with ostensible anti-Pabloist Trotskyist parties in Britain and France in an "International Committee," the IC was never more than a paper organization; in practice many of its sections (e.g., Moreno in Argentina and Lora in Bolivia) proved just as opportunist as the Pabloists. The pressures of the Cold War and the McCarthyite witchhunt in the 1950s which set the context for the fear, pessimism and liquidationist conclusions of the Cochran side of the Cochran-Clarke minority also took their toll on the SWP's cadre as a whole. Coming out of

the barren and hostile climate of the '50s in the U.S., the now-aging cadres of the SWP were looking for something else to embrace as the vehicle for "revolution." The party abstained from intervening in the growing struggle for black rights in the American South, the civil rights movement, adopting an uncritical attitude toward its liberal pro-capitalist leadership and later black nationalist sequels. All the opportunist pressures came together in early 1960, when the SWP went whole hog for Castro, whom they heralded as an "unconscious Trotskyist." From here the SWP went into rapid flight to outright reformism, centrally expressed in its role as the "best builders" of the pro-Democratic Party right wing of the Vietnam antiwar movement in the U.S.

The revolutionary program of the SWP, which was the program of Lenin and Trotsky, was stronger than the party it created. The founding cadres of our International Communist League started as the SWP's Revolutionary Tendency, formed to oppose the SWP's uncritical adulation of the Cuban Castroites and its embrace of petty-bourgeois black nationalism. Standing proudly on the revolutionary foundations laid by Cannon and in continuity with his fight to construct the proletarian vanguard beginning in the early Communist movement and the Communist International, we claim this heritage as our own.

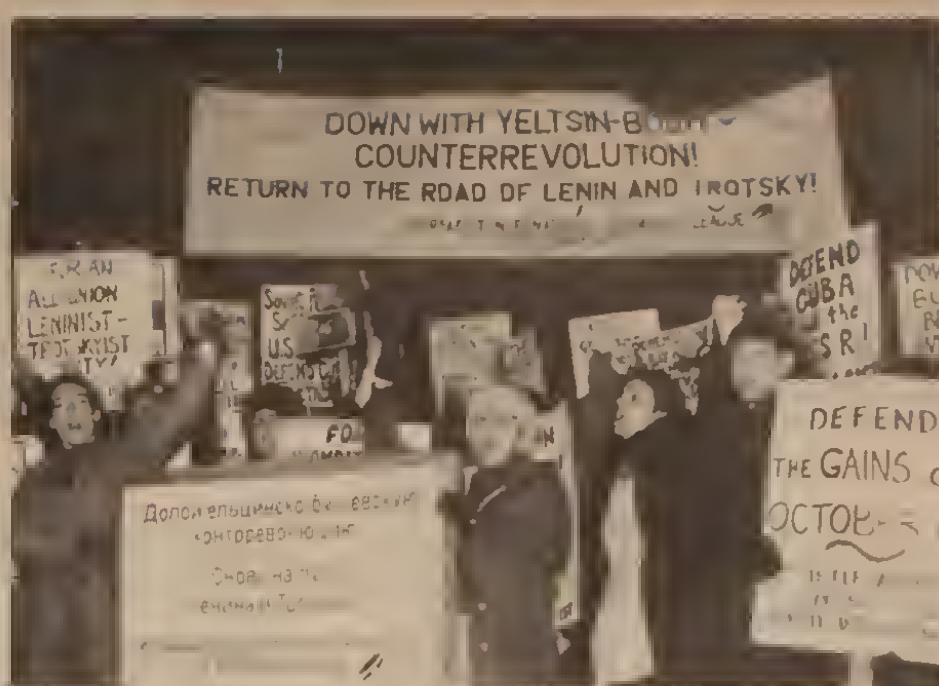
For Proletarian Internationalism!

As a communist leader in the U.S., Cannon did not have to confront the questions of national liberation, the emancipation of civil society from the church, and the destruction of feudal peonage in the countryside which continue to plague the countries of Latin America. The resolution of these questions lies through the application of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. Generalizing from the experience of the Russian Revolution, and in light of the experience of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, Trotsky understood that the bourgeoisies in backward countries were too weak, corrupt and dependent on imperialism to play other than a reactionary role. Consequently, the bourgeois-democratic tasks historically associated with bourgeois revolutions in Western Europe and the U.S. can only be realized through the proletarian conquest of power.

While communists in the U.S. must struggle against all the pressures and deformations of being up against one of the most powerful imperialist bourgeoisies on the face of the planet, in Latin America the fight to forge authentic Bolshevik parties requires a relentless political fight against nationalism and against a nationalist "left" which embraces the social values of its own rulers. The now-departed Nahuel Moreno, an Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist political bandit, was an archetypical example. This would-be *lider máximo* hailed every blood-drenched "Third World" strongman from General Juan Domingo Perón to the Iranian feudal ayatollah Khomeini. Such specious "anti-imperialism" has long been the rationale for supporting *popular-front* alliances in Latin America, tying the working class and oppressed masses to their "own" bourgeoisie from Bolivia in 1952 to Chile in 1970-73, to the latest enthusing over Lula's Popular Front in Brazil.

The struggle to forge an authentic Bolshevik party through the fusion of declassé intellectuals with a proletarian core requires a hard battle against the pernicious tradition of capitulation to the social values of the local ruling classes—in Latin America the inheritance of Spanish feudal colonialism overlaid with the last century of North American overlordship. In the fight to forge our international tendency, the ICL has struggled against such anti-Leninist proclivities, from Sri Lanka to Mexico to Brazil.

This in large part is what has impelled us to make the writings of Cannon available in Spanish and other languages. The



Proletarian internationalism: Spartacist League organized protest when Russian president Boris Yeltsin visited Wall Street, 1992.

fact that Cannon's works are unavailable in Latin America is itself a reflection of the anti-Yankee nationalism that passes for revolutionary politics in these countries. That Cannon is also unavailable throughout most of Europe is testimony to the legacy of Pabloist revisionism. Having themselves liquidated the necessity for a Leninist party, they sneer at Cannon's struggle for Leninism as vulgar American "pragmatism."

The writings of James P. Cannon may be circumscribed by his own experiences as a leader of communist trade unionists and as a Leninist party leader in the U.S. But at each step he fought to orient himself and his followers to find the internationalist revolutionary road for the world's working class. On this road, proletarian class struggle in North America and the liberation of Latin America from imperialist domination are inextricably linked. Trotsky argued this quite powerfully:

"It can be clearly deduced from what has been said that we far from recommend to the Latin American people that they passively await the revolution in the United States or that the North American workers fold their arms until the Latin American peoples' moment of victory arrives. He who waits passively gets nothing. It is necessary to continue the struggle without interruption, to extend and deepen it, in harmony with the actually existing historical conditions. But at the same time, one must comprehend the reciprocal relation between the two principal currents of the contemporary struggle against imperialism. By merging at a

certain stage, definite triumph can be assumed....

"The sooner the American proletarian vanguard in North, Central and South America understands the necessity for a closer revolutionary collaboration in the struggle against the common enemy, the more tangible and fruitful that alliance will be. To clarify, illustrate and organize that struggle—herein lies one of the most important tasks of the Fourth International."

—Trotsky, "Ignorance is Not a Revolutionary Instrument" (30 January 1939)

Comrade Jim Robertson, a leader of the Revolutionary Tendency in the SWP and a founder of the Spartacist League/U.S., noted Cannon's chief weakness in his 1974 memorial speech: Cannon's failure to take on the responsibility of international leadership. But it is for Cannon's strengths that the Spartacist tendency claims his heritage. As *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., noted in its obituary for Cannon (WA No. 52, 13 September 1974):

"James P. Cannon was the finest communist political leader this country has yet produced. In his prime he had the evident capacity to lead the proletarian revolution in America to victory."

Cannon is important not only in his own right but as a classic exemplar, at the highest level, of a working Leninist fighting to build and maintain a proletarian revolutionary vanguard party. ■

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Blair's "New Labour" Kicks Unions in the Teeth

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Lydia van der Meer

Labour leader Tony Blair seeks to break party's ties to unions, openly denounces strikes. Above: Demonstration by striking postal workers in London.

The following article is reprinted in abridged form from *Workers Hammer* No. 153 (November-December 1996), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

WORKERS HAMMER

At the Blackpool TUC [Trades Union Congress] conference this year, Tony Blair's New Labour launched a union-bashing offensive designed to convince City [of London financial district] bankers and big business that Labour in power can be just as anti-union as the Tories. Blair's attack on tube [London subway] strikers earlier this year was widely described as unprecedented for a Labour leader in opposition. Meanwhile, his employment spokesman David Blunkett told postal workers to end their strikes and conduct yet another ballot of their membership. This followed New Labour's pledge to retain the Tories' hated anti-union legislation and effectively to ban strikes in the public sector by imposing binding arbitration. To top it all off, Blair's shadow junior employment minister, Stephen Byers, took the opportunity to pronounce what everyone knows is key to the "Blair project": the breaking of Labour's historic link to the unions.

In the midst of this orgy of union bashing, Arthur Scargill stood out as a focal point of opposition to New Labour at the TUC conference. Earlier this year, Scargill split from Labour and launched the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) "in response to New Labour's betrayal of the commitment to common ownership, abandonment of socialism and open support for the 'free market' and capitalism" (*Socialist News*, September 1996).

Despite the very clear intentions of Tony Blair, the Labour Party remains a bourgeois workers party, i.e., based on the trade unions but saddled with a pro-capitalist leadership. For communists, breaking the stranglehold of the Labour Party over the working class is a key strategic task. Although the programme of Scargill's SLP is at bottom simply that of "old" Labour as against the New Labour Party of Tony Blair, this split from the Labour Party offers the possibility for a fundamental realignment of

the political configuration in this country out of which a revolutionary Marxist and internationalist workers party can be constituted.

A great deal of social tinder has accumulated during the long years of Tory rule, which have brought devastating attacks on the NHS [National Health Service] and welfare services. Despite the Tories' boast of "no-strike" Britain, this summer there was a series of one-day strikes in London Transport, the Post Office and the fire brigades. The public sector unions are made up of some of the most oppressed sections of the workforce—blacks, Asians, women—many of whom have worked for decades for extremely low pay. These strikes have been defensive battles against the ravages of privatisation, which attempts to destroy the unions, to atomise the working class and to impose scandalously low wages and working conditions reminiscent of the 19th century. But even such limited and episodic strikes were too much for New Labour, who are vying with the Tories for the reputation of being "tough on the unions."

New Labour's declared commitment to union-busting rankled even the most slavishly pro-Labour union bureaucrats. TUC general secretary John Monks complained that delegates in Blackpool "were shaken by the wild talk of Labour

severing all links with us." They may be shaken by Blair's deliberate kick in the teeth, but the TUC bureaucracy's "New Unionism" accepts New Labour's basic political premise: the trade unions must not pose a challenge to the "free market" of capitalist greed. These leaders cannot mount a fight against Blairism. Indeed, by the time of the Labour Party conference all the TUC heavyweights had knuckled under. TGWU leader Bill Morris spoke for all of them when he said "unions would now concentrate on helping Labour to win the general election." The message to striking workers is to go to hell—comply with the anti-union laws and elect a union-bashing Labour government.

Break with Labourism, "Old" and New

At the TUC conference, in the debate on the minimum wage, Arthur Scargill received rapturous applause when he asserted, "I'm fed up to the back teeth with people telling us not to rock the boat before a general election." After the conference, Scargill's SLP announced the recruitment of bakers union leader Jo Marino and Liverpool dockers leader Jimmy Nolan, as well as many other trade unionists.

Over half the RMT [Rail, Maritime and Transport] national executive, including

Assistant General Secretary Bob Crow, have joined the SLP. The strikes in London Underground, one of the few public services which have not been privatised, could have provided an opportunity to launch a counteroffensive against the impact of privatisation in rail and against the anti-union laws. Yet the tube strikes were conducted within a framework which accepted the hated anti-union laws. RMT leaders in the Underground instructed station staff (who had themselves voted to strike) to *go to work*, while RMT drivers were on strike. Pitting one section of the union against another weakens the power of the union and is poisonous to workers' consciousness.

At the TUC conference, Arthur Scargill argued for a one-day strike each week in support of the Liverpool dockers. When a Spartacist spokesman asked in an October 16 SLP London meeting if this was to be fought for by the SLP's supporters in the RMT, Scargill adamantly replied that this demand applied only to the TGWU, the dockers' union. The perspective which leaves each union to fight its "own" battles was the recipe which led to the defeat of the 1984-85 miners strike. It was used by so-called left TGWU leader Ron Todd to betray dockers strikes which occurred twice during the miners strike. Todd sent the dockers back to work on both occasions, leaving the miners isolated and paving the way for union-busting in the docks in 1989.

The miners were defeated by the Thatcher government, its cops and courts, with active assistance from Neil Kinnock's Labour Party and the TUC bureaucrats, including the "lefts" who preached solidarity with the miners but left them to fight alone. As we wrote in *Workers Hammer* (No. 67, March 1985):

"The NUM [National Union of Mineworkers] leadership under Arthur Scargill took this strike about as far it could go within a perspective of militant trade union reformism, and still it lost. Why? Because militancy alone is not enough. From day one it was clear that the NUM was up against the full power of the capitalist state. What was needed was a party of revolutionary activists rooted in the trade unions which fought tooth and nail to mobilise other unions in strike action alongside the NUM. But all Arthur Scargill had was the Labour Party, and it would rather see the NUM dead than organise to take on the bosses' state in struggle."

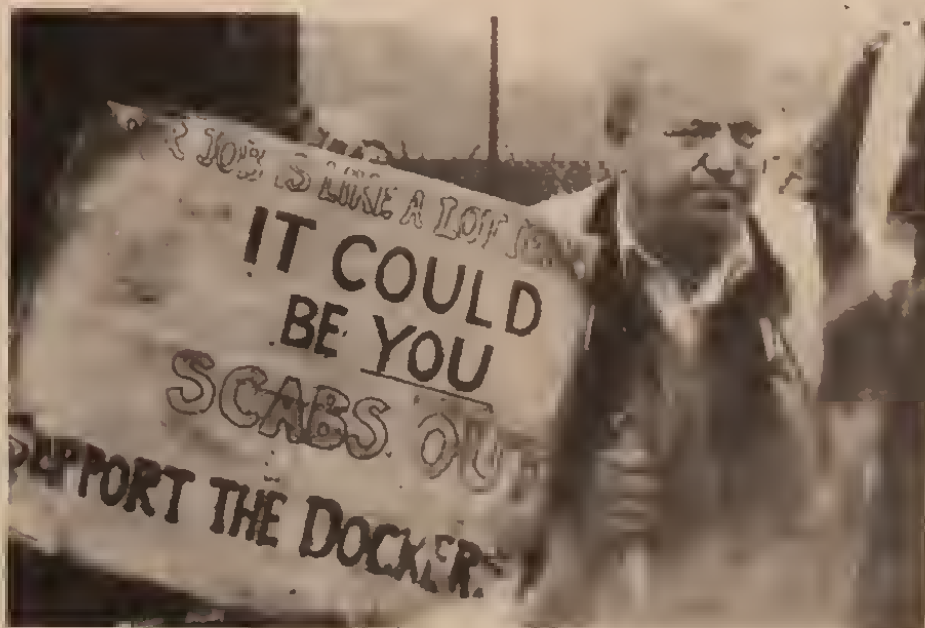
Today, to Scargill's credit, the SLP stands for the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords, but his version of "socialism" harks back to the early post-World War II period, when much of British industry was nationalised and free health care and other welfare benefits were introduced by a Labour government. The welfare reforms of the 1940s were introduced to forestall the "spread of Communism" and went hand-in-hand with the crushing of potential social revolutions in Western Europe.

The world has changed dramatically since then with the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, sold out by Stalinism. The problem with Scargill and the SLP is that they look not towards a revolutionary future, but to a social-democratic past. For revolutionary Marxists, the struggle for socialism, to put the working class in power, necessitates going forward to new October Revolutions, to place the working class in power, in Britain and throughout the world.

Scargill rejects this internationalist programme. While the SLP opposes the European Union (EU) as a bosses' club and makes statements against "narrow nationalism," they in fact push little-England protectionism. Such nationalism is counterposed to the fight against the government's racist, anti-immigrant onslaught. It is reflected in the SLP's constitution, which restricts membership to people who have "resided in Wales, Scotland, England or Ireland for more than one year."

Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The hallmark of the ostensible socialist left in Britain has historically been



Craig Easton

Liverpool dockers' hard-fought struggle has won international support. Spartacist League/Britain calls for solidarity action to shut down the docks.

British Left Debates Scargill's SLP

Workers Power: Drummer Boys for Tony Blair

LONDON—As Tony Blair's "New Labour" moves ever more aggressively to refashion itself in the image of Bill Clinton's openly capitalist Democratic Party in the U.S., the numerous "far left" groups which worship at the altar of Labour's "broad church" have been thrown into a tizzy. The centrist and reformist left in Britain have always held as their eleventh commandment, "Vote Labour to keep the Tories out," viewing as cardinal sin any attempt to split the Labour Party. So when miners leader Arthur Scargill did just that earlier this year, breaking with Blair to found the Socialist Labour Party (SLP), it rocked the Labour-loyal left.

The growing frenzy of groups like the right-centrist Workers Power (WP) in the face of a deepening split in Labour's camp was evident at an October 30 public debate in London with Labour Left Briefing and the pro-SLP Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). For a change, unable to get the agreement of its debate partners, WP did not exclude supporters of the Spartacist League/Britain, as it has done at its "public" meetings for years. The motives for WP's policy of cowardly exclusionism were manifest at this debate. Rarely of late have we seen a display of belly-crawling before Blair by ostensible "revolutionaries" equal to WP's that night. With Blair attacking the trade unions even before getting into the prime minister's residence at Downing Street, with "New Labour" having thrown out even the party's fig-leaf commitment to nationalisation of industry ("Clause IV"), one WP member after another nonetheless got up to insist on the supposedly massive illusions workers entertain in a future Labour government.

For Marxists, the task is precisely to dispel any such illusions with the aim of splitting Labour's working-class base from its pro-capitalist misleaders. Workers Power, in contrast, has dedicated itself to reinforcing and bolstering sup-

port for Labour. While carefully peppering his presentation with references to the need for a revolutionary party, WP speaker Paul Morris made clear his organisation's real programme. Enthusiasm that the mass of the working class will vote Labour, Morris hailed this as a "class offensive against the Tories." And to allay any hint of a doubt where WP stands, Morris raved that it "will be a great victory despite anything else when the class puts Blair in power."

Even the speaker for the opportunist CPGB had an easy job of exposing the

soft-pedaling any criticism of Scargill's programme of "old" Labour reformism. they remain part of the Militant-led Socialist Alliance, which is committed to electing a Blair government.

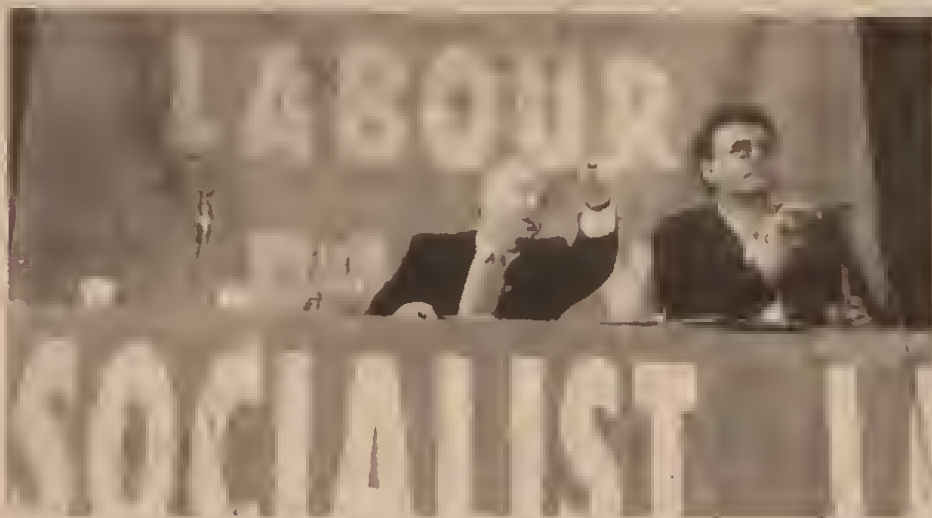
The debate itself was the epitome of the "chummy British left" in full-colour action, with the different groups politely calling each other "revolutionaries" while restricting themselves to interminable discussions over "tactics." As WP nattered on about "intersecting" illusions in Blair, the CPGB urged WP to join it as bloc partners in the "left" wing of

[Labour Party leader] Kinnoch, had the same position for a scab ballot in the early weeks of that strike." WP also embraced counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność, even as Thatcher and the Cold War Labourites seized on Scargill's correct denunciation of Solidarność as "anti-socialist" to witchhunt the NUM leader on the eve of the miners strike.

Even today, after the Soviet Union has been destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution, WP continues to be driven by Stalinophobia. With Scargill now "guilty" not only of refusing to enlist in the imperialists' anti-Soviet crusade but also of breaking from the Labour monolith, WP is getting downright unhinged. In his speech, Morris worked himself into an almost literal fit of Stalinophobia, foaming that the left social-democratic union leader's politics are "a complete Stalinist disaster for the working class." Then Morris launched into a Dr. Strangelove tirade against an SLP public event attended by former Communist Party members and other leftists several weeks earlier, fulminating that the meeting had been "teeming with the most murderous Stalinists!"

WP and the CPGB also stand to the right of Scargill on the question of the Maastricht Treaty, with its (utopian) aim of setting up a unified German-dominated capitalist European superstate. In practice, Maastricht means vicious austerity measures against the working class and "Fortress Europe" anti-immigrant racism. As a second SL/B floor speaker noted: "Scargill has a nationalist position, a very reactionary protectionist position, which is coupled with a correct understanding...that Maastricht actually represents a massive anti-working-class attack. These are organisations—the Communist Party of Great Britain and Workers Power—who abstained on the referendums over Maastricht, in the case of Workers Power telling us that maybe the workers would be under better conditions to fight after the implementation of Maastricht."

Given their capitulation to anti-Sovietism during the Cold War, it is no wonder that the centrists of Workers Power today find themselves increasingly disoriented in the face of intensifying interimperialist rivalries ushered in by the destruction of the Soviet Union. In their eyes, Maastricht—with its drive for increased capitalist exploitation and anti-immigrant repression—represents an opening for class struggle, and a racist, union-bashing Blair government would be a "great victory." For our part, we will continue to fight for real victories for workers and the oppressed, seeking to win Labour's base to a revolutionary workers party with a programme to sweep away decrepit British imperialism. ■



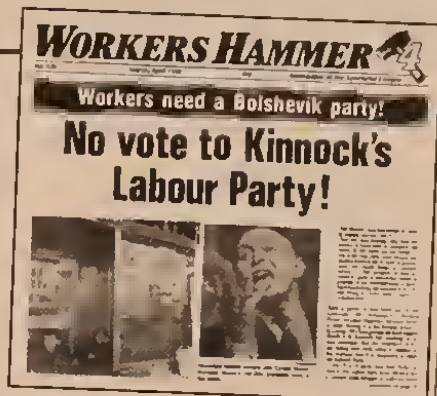
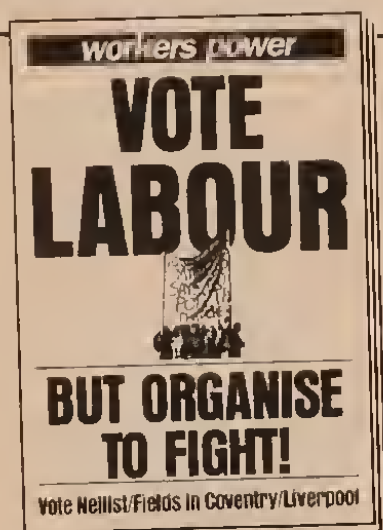
Guardian (London)

Split from Blair by British miners' leader Arthur Scargill (left) and his Socialist Labour Party has thrown Labour-loyal fake-left into turmoil.

tortured twists and turns of Workers Power's line on the SLP: at first they welcomed it and called for "a revolutionary SLP," then they dismissed it as an undemocratic "Stalinist" sect, and recently, noticing that trade-union militants are joining, they have pledged their aid to a "revolutionary platform" within the SLP. All the while, WP has continued to stump for Labour, including supporting Blair's candidate against the SLP in a parliamentary by-election last February in Hemsworth. As for the CPGB, while

Scargill's party. For these outfits, "tactics" are a be-all and end-all aimed at covering over their refusal to break from social democracy. Contrasting *Weekly Worker's* uncritical stance toward the SLP's Brenda Nixon in Hemsworth in February with the SL/B's line of critical support, a Spartacist floor speaker at the debate explained: "Basically we thought many of the things she stood on were supportable and we welcomed the fact that she said 'no vote to Labour.' But we pointed out that the SLP's demands cannot be achieved under capitalism." "The key question," our comrade asserted, "is how to build a working-class, revolutionary party capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie."

The SL/B speaker pointed out that both WP and the CPGB have a history of capitulating to bourgeois pressure, taking positions to the right of Scargill, particularly noting their support to the capitalist rulers' demand during the 1984-85 National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) strike for a strikebreaking "vote" after the miners had already voted with their feet by walking off the job. As our speaker said: "Politics is not decided in the arena of bourgeois Parliament, it's decided in the course of class struggle. And in the 1984 miners strike both of these organisations tailed Thatcher, tailed



Centrism vs. Trotskyism during 1992 British elections. Workers Power always stands by Labour traitors, SL/B fights to split Labour and forge a revolutionary workers party.

bject loyalty to Labour. A prime example is Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party, who persist with the tedious sing-song: "Vote Labour to get the Tories out." Since their inception as a split from the Cliffites, Workers Power (WP) has preached *strategic unity* with the Labour Party, and view with horror any split in Labour's ranks. As the SLP widens the split within Labour, WP's attitude to Scargill's party gets more tortured. WP's attitude to the SLP is coloured by their abiding hatred for "the Stalinist" Arthur Scargill. What bothers WP is not Scargill's reformist, "old" Labour framework, but the fact that he is splitting the Labour camp by standing candidates against New Labour [see "Workers Power: Drummer Boys for Tony Blair," above].

The International "Bolshevik" Tendency (IBT), having decided that "partic-

ipation in the SLP was more important than maintaining a propaganda circle" (1917 No. 18, 1996), then herates the Spartacist League as "abstentionist"—because we haven't liquidated our party! Their own organisational dissolution into the SLP reflects their political adaptation to it. The 1917 article, for example, praises the SLP's call for British troops out of Northern Ireland but fails to point out that the SLP supports the imperialist "peace" process which is premised on the British Army remaining in place. Where we have pointed out that the SLP's "residency clause" would prohibit immigrants and asylum-seekers from joining, 1917 replies dismissively that it "could well be dropped at the next party congress."

Today the IBT is adapting to SLP reformism, but they could easily swing back towards mainstream Labourism for

trifling advantage, most likely when the SLP comes under heavy fire from the right. Arthur Scargill upholds the principle of not crossing a picket line. Not so the IBT. Last winter they frothed at the mouth when we nailed them for crossing picket lines in the New York City building workers strike. Inside the SLP, former IBTers joined Stalinophobic anti-communists—supporters of Solidarność counterrevolution and advocates of imperialist intervention for "poor little Bosnia"—in a common election slate at the founding conference.

We Spartacists have always had a sharp, aggressive programmatic counterposition to Labourism. As we wrote in a 1981 document, "Revolutionaries and the Labour Party":

"We seek to exacerbate the contradictions between the aspirations and objec-

tive interests of the working class base, centrally organised in the trade unions, and the policies and actions of the social-patriotic leadership. We wish to win the base to our programme and to the building of a Marxist party in *counterposition* to the Labour Party, in the course of mobilising for class struggle and through the exposure of Labour treachery by the communist vanguard."

—Spartacist No. 33, Spring 1982

The purpose of the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League, is to pursue this perspective, in order to bring about the overthrow of bloody British imperialism, its monarch, House of Lords and Parliament, and to replace it with a federation of workers republics. For workers governments based on workers councils (soviets), part of a Socialist United States of Europe! ■

Chicago...

(continued from page 12)

prevent and limit any anti-Klan protest. When the City's efforts were foiled by the anti-Klan demonstration, the City and police retaliated with these prosecutions.

Police Attack Anti-Klan Protesters

Anti-Klan protesters from a variety of backgrounds and political viewpoints joined at the Daley Center. These protesters came out to protest because they believed that the Klan is a racist terrorist organization which poses a deadly threat to blacks, immigrants, Jews, unionists, gays and leftists in Chicago. From the hooded nightriders who fought Reconstruction after the Civil War, through the KKK terror of the 1920s when the Klan gained strength in Northern cities like Chicago, serving as shock troops against blacks and immigrant workers (especially Catholics), to the 1963 Klan bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, to the Klan's 1979 Greensboro Massacre—the Ku Klux Klan are organized lynchers, bombers and murderers. Even this year, the Klan has been active in the rash of black church burnings in the South.

The anti-Klan demonstration began at about 2:00 p.m., well before the Klan appeared. About 50 anti-Klan demonstrators, representing a number of groups, rallied peacefully on the sidewalk adjoining the Daley Center, chanting and carrying signs and banners. Defendant Herson, who is labor coordinator for the Partisan Defense Committee, was conspicuous as a central organizer of this anti-Klan demonstration.

After about two hours, police erected two lines of metal barricades on the Plaza to divide the anti-Klan demonstrators (east) from the Klansmen (west). Despite the barricaded division of the Plaza, about 15 uniformed Klansmen deliberately marched onto the Daley Center on the east, anti-Klan side of the barricades. The Klansmen, now wearing Klan insignia, marched in tight military formation in three lines, armed with bolt-studded shields and long, heavy "flagpole" lances which they used as weapons. When anti-Klan protesters approached to voice their opposition to the Klansmen, the Klansmen provocatively taunted black protesters, saying, "Come and get it, boy," and then attacked the anti-Klan protesters with their lances. A number of anti-Klan demonstrators were injured in the head or hands by the Klansmen's attacks. The anti-Klan demonstrators successfully defended themselves and their demonstration against this Klan attack.

When the altercation had already stopped, Commander McNulty approached Defendant Herson from behind, and then sprayed Herson directly in the face with pepper spray. Herson had his mouth open when McNulty sprayed him, creating a potentially lethal situation because pepper spray can cause



Chicago cops attacked anti-Klan protesters, protected KKK race-terrorists on June 29.

throat inflammation and resulting suffocation. To further punish Herson and the other arrested anti-Klan protesters, police placed them in a patrol wagon directly in the hot sun, leaving them there for two hours, with the engine running and the windows closed, despite the fact that the temperature that day was in the high 90s, creating a near-suffocating heat.

Over the next hour and a half, the anti-Klan demonstration grew in size to over 100 demonstrators. At the point that the Klan left the Plaza, police brandishing their clubs massed in formation and created a human wall at the south end of the anti-Klan demonstration. Without any action or provocation by the anti-Klan demonstrators, police attacked the anti-Klan demonstrators, pushing the anti-Klan demonstration backward, and striking demonstrators with police clubs. This police attack created a dangerous situation, causing demonstrators to fall backward, with the police continuing to swing their clubs at fallen demonstrators.

At the beginning of this attack, police (including Commander McNulty) singled out Defendant Dennis Glass for arrest. Glass was singled out for arrest solely because he was a black youth and was one of the most enthusiastic anti-Klan demonstrators. Police subjected Glass to a choke hold and struck Glass after his arrest.

Among the youth whom McNulty personally injured were members of a group of about a dozen or more interns from the AFL-CIO Union Summer program. McNulty struck a young black woman Union Summer intern in the chest with a club, and went out of his way to step on the foot of another black woman Union Summer intern. Another police officer struck an Asian Union Summer woman in the neck with a club. At about 6:45 p.m., the anti-Klan demonstration dispersed. The group of Union Summer youth began to walk back to the hostel where they were staying. Some of the Union Summer youth noticed Commander McNulty as the officer who had been particularly hostile and had injured

demonstrators. One of these youth, Malcolm Goff, took McNulty's photograph while McNulty was sitting in a police car. McNulty immediately got out of the police car and pursued Goff, shouting that Goff would be arrested and that he had "threatened" McNulty.

Defendant Lyons, a supporter of the Refuse and Resist organization and a known anti-racist and anti-police-brutality activist in Chicago, saw this vindictive arrest and verbally protested it. In response, several police officers immediately seized Lyons, threw him to the ground, and then arrested him, pushing him down spread-eagled on the front of a police car, injuring him in the process. McNulty then pressed a false charge against Lyons for "obstructing" the arrest of Goff.

Suppressing Political Protest

The June 29 anti-Klan demonstration took place at a time when the City was attempting to build up its security, limit and control dissident political activity, and limit unfavorable publicity in preparation for the Democratic National Convention. Over 2,800 Chicago police officers were receiving special two-day training sessions in crowd control just around June 29 in anticipation of the Convention, including training on tactics used against the June 29 protesters (such as use of plastic handcuffs). Earlier that month, police imposed a virtual state of martial law in westside ghetto neighbor-

hoods in anticipation of the Chicago Bulls NBA championship celebration.

In April and May 1996, the City of Chicago received requests from two separate Klan groups for use of the Daley Center Plaza on June 29 and September 21. Following discussions between the Public Building Commission and the Mayor's Office, the City adopted a policy to limit or restrict public knowledge of this information. The news that the Klan might rally at the Daley Center on June 29 was thus made public only as an aside in a June 28 *Tribune* report on traffic congestion in the Loop during Taste of Chicago [an annual street festival].

Police approached the June 29 demonstration as a "test run" of their tactical methods of suppressing and controlling political expression in the context of the Democratic Convention. On information and belief, Chicago police are using the June 29 arrests and arrests of protesters during the Democratic Convention as a basis to argue that the "Red Squad" should be officially reestablished in Chicago.

There can be no question that the First Amendment secures the right of these Defendants and other anti-Klan protesters to gather and express their opposition to the race-terror of the Ku Klux Klan. The only basis for these charges is to retaliate against the Defendants and other anti-Klan protesters for exercising their right to protest the Klan, and to "cover" the police officers' own acts of misconduct.

* * *

The anti-Klan defendants are being persecuted for acting in defense of blacks, Hispanics, Jews, trade unionists and gays. Join the effort to defend the Anti-Klan Three—bring this cause to your unions, student groups and community organizations. Send protest statements demanding that the charges be dropped to Richard Devine, State's Attorney of Cook County, Richard J. Daley Center, 55 W. Randolph Street, Chicago, IL 60602. Funds for the defense are urgently needed! Send donations (earmarked "Anti-Klan Protesters") and copies of protest statements to the Partisan Defense Committee. Contact the PDC in Chicago at P.O. Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60602-2867, phone (312) 454-4931; or in New York at P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013-0099, phone (212) 406-4252. ■

Geronimo...

(continued from page 12)

in Orange County after Judge Michael Cowell disqualified himself and the entire L.A. Superior Court bench on the grounds that Kalustian, now an L.A. Superior Court judge, presented a "conflict of interest."

Geronimo has been denied parole 14 times. Five previous attempts to demonstrate his innocence in the courts and expose the government frame-up which put him behind bars have been turned down. As the Partisan Defense Committee wrote in a statement last May following the refusal of the L.A. Superior Court to hear Geronimo's case to overturn his conviction:

"Many supporters of Geronimo thought that the unambiguous evidence of his innocence, announced by attorneys Johnnie Cochran and Stuart Hanlon at a press conference which included significant participation by important witnesses and community activists, would lead in short order to Geronimo's release. We in the Partisan Defense Committee, who have worked for Geronimo's freedom for over a decade, would have surely welcomed such a turn of events. But our understanding of the nature of the state, race and class in America has led us to see that there is no justice in the capitalist courts."

— "Mobilize Labor/Black Power to Free Geronimo!"
(WV No. 645, 10 May)

The fight to free this courageous man must actively bring to bear the social power of the organized multiracial work-

ing class, not just union resolutions and letters of support in Geronimo's defense but the mobilization of union members in action to combat this racist frame-up. From the destruction of welfare to intensifying state repression, America's rulers wield racist reaction against the black population and desperate immigrants to further the brutal exploitation of the working class as a whole. The more the government, its courts and cops get away with framing up and keeping those like Geronimo imprisoned, the more the state will act with similar impunity against the entire workers movement. An injury to one is an injury to all! Freedom now for Geronimo ji Jaga!

Geronimo will be at the hearing on December 16. Mobilize in solidarity with his cause—come to the court for the hearing! Monday, December 16, 9 a.m., Superior Court, Department 35, 700 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana. Funds for legal defense should be sent to Prisoner Litigation Trust Fund, c/o Stuart Hanlon, 214 Duboce Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. ■

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Welfare-Bashers...

(continued from page 1)

programs—and to fight for free, quality medical care, for housing, education and jobs for all at union wages, and then some—requires a leadership that is imbued with the understanding that it is necessary to break the power of the bourgeoisie, whose rule is based on the exploitation of the working class. It will take a thoroughgoing socialist revolution to rip industry out of the hands of the greedy few and turn the tremendous wealth of this country over to those who labor to produce it, to create a workers state which reorganizes society on the basis of a planned, collectivized economy.

Axing Welfare, Driving Down Wages

The direct link between the slashing of social welfare measures and the destruction of hard-won union gains is revealed in one pair of statistics. Since 1972, welfare benefits have plummeted by half; during the same time, real wages have fallen almost 20 percent. According to the Economic Policy Institute, nearly one in three workers today makes less than \$7.28 an hour, as compared to fewer than one in four in 1973. This, too, is an endemic feature of capitalism, characterized by Marx as the tendency toward immiseration of the working class.

More and more people are working harder and harder for minimum or sub-minimum wages, and the expansion of "workfare" and forcing millions off welfare altogether will serve to drive down wages even more. As an article in the *New York Times* (17 November) observed: "When welfare recipients start looking for jobs to replace their shrinking welfare benefits, they will be competing with the working poor, who are barely surviving on what they make now."

In most cases, there are in fact no jobs to be found. And even where minimum-wage jobs are available: for most welfare recipients this would mean a precipitous decline in their already dismal standard of living. A case in point is 24-year-old Karen Goff in Kentucky. While managing to feed, clothe and house herself and her five children on a monthly welfare check of \$432 plus food stamps, she continued her schooling, earning a high school diploma and a two-year college degree. Now her hopes of finishing her college education and preparing for a decent job have been dashed, as the state demands she accept any job at minimum wage. After paying for day care for her kids, that would leave her with \$40 a week!

Meanwhile, in forcing poor people to scramble for any job, no matter how low-paying or demeaning, the capitalist rulers consciously seek to pit one section of the oppressed against another. At a non-union Marriott hotel in Iowa City, Bosnian refugees were imported to replace recently deported Mexican workers. And in Virginia, the state government is proposing to place "workfare" recipients into jobs left open after Immigration and Naturalization Service raids lead to the deportation of low-paid immigrant workers. The labor movement must be mobilized to defend immigrant workers not only as a necessary defense of democratic rights, but as part of the fight to prevent the worsening of wage levels and working conditions for all workers. *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

The capitalists' intent is to pit unionized workers against impoverished, predominantly black and Hispanic welfare recipients, inflaming racist reaction and increasing the rate of exploitation of all workers. The union-busting character of the current welfare "reforms" can be seen most clearly in the "workfare" programs which are being instituted across

the country. In New York City, more than 20,000 unionized municipal jobs have been slashed in the past few years, with the work now being done by welfare recipients slaving for next to nothing. Now this scheme has been formally institutionalized in the New York transit system, as the leadership of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, potentially the most powerful union in the city, has pushed through a contract mandating that unionized subway jobs will be replaced by "workfare" crews working without wages and union protection.

Fight for Revolutionary Leadership!

If the labor movement, crippled by decades of unchallenged attacks, is to be revitalized, it must take up a struggle on behalf of all the oppressed. Yet the pro-capitalist labor tops increasingly act not only as the bourgeoisie's political police within the trade unions, but as overseers of slave-labor programs for the racist rulers. At bottom, the union misleaders share the outlook of their capitalist masters, seeking to bolster the profitability of corporate America in its competition on the world market and striving to enforce the bourgeoisie's economic dictates on the working class. The bureaucracy's political allegiance to the capitalist system is manifested particularly in its craven support to Clinton's Democratic Party.



Welfare recipients in Washington, D.C. forced to do municipal workers' jobs. Slave-labor "workfare" means union-busting.

Despite the pretense of offering a "socialist" alternative to the capitalist Democrats, various reformist groups simply attempt to give a leftist veneer to the same policy of supporting the Democrats as a "lesser evil." A prime example is the Workers World Party (WWP) of Sam Marcy. Over the years, the Marcyites have built one front-group "coalition" after another designed to act as a "left" tail on the Democratic Party donkey. During the run-up to the presidential elections, Workers World candidates made a splash by crashing Democratic Party fundraisers to "expose" Clinton for not vetoing the welfare law.

Recently, the WWP has helped launch "workfairness," a group calling for "equal pay" and "labor rights" within the "workfare" system. To fight insidious, union-busting "workfare" requires a political struggle against the labor tops who have signed on as straw bosses for the capitalist rulers in this scheme. Yet the Marcyites look to just these labor traitors to lead a "fight" to defend "workfare" recipients.

When the TWU "workfare" deal was announced, *Workers World* (3 October) crowed that "a number of unions may be preparing to open a struggle to block the spread of workfare and demand union rights for workfare workers." In particular, the WWP hailed as an "initial step" in this "struggle" an appeal by AFSCME city workers chief Stanley Hill to NYC Republican mayor Giuliani to declare a



Hospital workers rally against layoffs, killer cuts in New York City, June 12.

"moratorium on workfare right now." In fact, Hill's weak-kneed "moratorium" call was meant to cover up his own role in collaborating with Giuliani for the past two years in implementing "workfare" at formerly unionized municipal jobs. When the TWU tops accepted their new contract sellout, Giuliani and Hill both screamed bloody murder because the deal threatened to expose their own ongoing back-room sweetheart agreement.

To organize the unorganized and defend the rights of the poor requires mobi-

lizing the *social power* of the working class. A historical example of this can be found in the turbulent class battles which took place during the Great Depression of the 1930s. When Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935, seeking to use the unemployed to drive down wages by paying rates even below those of local relief, the Trotskyists fought for the right of union organization on WPA projects, calling for such demands as immediate relief and unemployment insurance paid by the employers and the state and for a six-hour day and five-day week at no loss in pay.

Importantly, the struggle to organize the unemployed was directly linked to the tremendous battles to organize the industrial unions of the CIO, which were established through sit-down strikes, mass pickets and other militant tactics. Writing in 1933 against the reformists of his day, then-Trotskyist leader Arne Swabeck emphasized that the objectives in organizing the unemployed "must be general working class objectives, its struggle part of the general working class struggles for the revolution" (see "Organizing the Unemployed in the Great Depression," *WW* Nos. 73 and 74, 18 July and 1 August 1975).

The Trotskyists advanced a series of transitional demands—such as a sliding scale of wages and hours to combat inflation and unemployment, and the call for workers defense guards to defeat

strikebreakers and fascists and to serve as the nuclei of a proletarian army—which addressed the felt needs of workers and the oppressed and pointed to the need to seize state power from the bourgeoisie and create a socialist planned economy. This was codified in the 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of Trotsky's Fourth International.

Today, the biggest obstacle to mobilizing the unions to launch such battles is the craven trade-union bureaucracy—the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class—who would sooner die than allow any struggle which challenges the "sacred" property rights of the capitalists. In the absence of any organized resistance, every social program grudgingly conceded by FDR in the tremendous working-class battles of the 1930s is on the chopping block, as the racist rulers—with Democrat Clinton as their chief executive—prepare to eliminate the last shreds of any social "safety net" for the poor. Welfare, unemployment insurance and other social measures were set up during the Depression to piece off the working class, as the bourgeoisie feared the spectre of "red revolution."

In the aftermath of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state and imperialist triumphalism over the "death of communism," the men who run Wall Street and the Fortune 500 corporations now believe they can do *anything* to the workers, the poor, the elderly, the black and Hispanic masses without the slightest danger of serious social turmoil. But these policies are creating enormous pressure at the base of society: people don't like the idea that there is no future for themselves and their kids. The need for socialist revolution to break the power of the corrupt, racist ruling class is posed ever more sharply today. What is needed is a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed, a party which fights to sweep away this system of racism, repression and poverty, replacing it with an egalitarian socialist society. ■

CORRECTION

The article, "For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!" (*WW* No. 651, 13 September), stated that "There is also a sizable Kurdish working class with a history of militant struggle in the oil fields of Kirkuk and other strategic centers." While there had been a large concentration of Kurdish workers, many of them militant supporters of the Iraqi Communist Party, in Kirkuk through the late 1950s, they were by and large driven out by the nationalist Ba'ath regime, today headed by Saddam Hussein, as part of its policy of "Arabization" of the oil fields (see "Kurdish Workers in the Iraqi Revolution of 1958-59," *WW* No. 370, 11 January 1985).

WORKERS VANGUARD

New Legal Papers Document Cop Vendetta

Defend Chicago Anti-Klan Three— Drop the Charges!

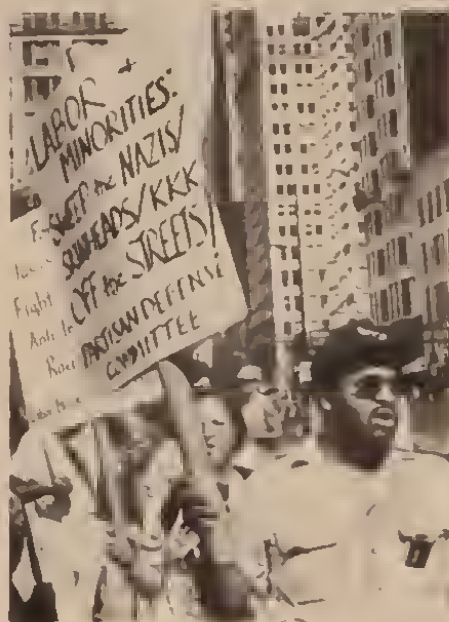
DECEMBER 2—In Cook County Circuit Court today, defense attorneys for three participants in the June 29 protest in Chicago's Daley Plaza against the race-terrorist Ku Klux Klan moved to dismiss trumped-up charges of assaulting police. In response, the court granted a defense request for an evidentiary hearing on the motion, to be held on January 23.

While charges against six other anti-Klan protesters were dropped at a previous court session, Jeffrey Lyons and Gene Herson continue to face up to a year in prison and Dennis Glass faces up to two years in prison for having taken part in the June 29 protest, in which a violent KKK provocation was decisively routed. The anti-Klan protest was initiated on less than 24 hours' notice by the Partisan Defense Committee and the Chicago Labor Black Struggle League. Before today's proceedings got under way, some 35 demonstrators rallied outside the court to demand: Drop the charges against the Anti-Klan Three!

We reprint below extracts from the defense motion submitted in today's session. The legal papers demonstrate that the prosecution of these anti-racist activists is not only a blatantly malicious and vindictive act but one in a series of attempts by the city gov-

ernment and police to stifle and suppress any social protest in the months leading up to the Democratic National Convention in August.

These three consolidated cases arise out of a demonstration against the Ku Klux Klan on the Daley Center Plaza in



WV Photo
PDC-initiated protest, June 29, routed violent KKK provocation in Chicago.



WV Photo
Chicago Anti-Klan Three: Jeffrey Lyons, Dennis Glass, Gene Herson.

downtown Chicago on June 29, 1996. Defendants face completely false charges of assaulting, battering and obstructing police officers. In reality, as Defendants will show at an evidentiary hearing on this motion, these charges are brought solely (1) in retaliation for the Defendants' exercise of First Amendment rights by participating in the anti-Klan demonstration, and (2) to conceal and justify police physical attacks on the anti-Klan demonstrators, targeted particularly at minority youth and known anti-racist activists.

These cases arise from a series of police attacks on the anti-Klan demonstrators. The first came immediately after the anti-Klan demonstrators defended themselves against a violent Klan provocation. At that point, First District Commander Patrick McNulty pepper-sprayed Defendant Eugene Herson, an organizer of the anti-Klan demonstration, and later caused Herson's arrest on false charges of battering the Commander. The sole reason for Herson's arrest was to retaliate against an organizer of the anti-Klan demonstration.

About 90 minutes later, after the anti-Klan demonstration had swelled in size

and the Klan had left the Daley Plaza, police attacked the anti-Klan demonstration, assaulting several anti-Klan demonstrators, particularly young minority men and women, and arresting Defendant Dennis Glass on false charges of aggravated assault and battery, for no reason except that he was a vocal and enthusiastic anti-Klan protester who carried a sign protesting police brutality. Then, after the demonstration had dispersed, police attacked a group of AFL-CIO Union Summer interns because one of the group, a black youth, had photographed the same Commander who had earlier assaulted several demonstrators. Defendant Jeffrey Lyons was arrested solely because he verbally protested the vindictive and unlawful arrest of the photographer.

The police retaliation against the anti-Klan protesters stemmed from a City policy to limit and control political protest in preparation for the Democratic National Convention in Chicago because of the fear of adverse publicity and unfavorable comparison to the Democratic Convention in 1968. To avoid unfavorable publicity the City limited public knowledge of the Klan's planned rally, hoping to

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Former Black Panther Wins Hearing in Bid for New Trial Freedom Now for Geronimo!

Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), a former leader of the Black Panther Party who has been behind bars for 26 years for a crime the government knows he did not commit, has won a hearing on his request for a new trial. On December 16, California Superior Court judge Everett W. Dickey will begin taking testimony on Geronimo's petition in a Santa Ana courtroom.

Framed up by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the FBI's "Counter-Intelligence Program" (COINTELPRO), which was aimed at destroying the Panthers, Geronimo was convicted in 1972 of the 1968 murder of a Santa Monica schoolteacher. The petition for a new trial details the unambiguous evidence of the innocence of this unbroken fighter for black liberation whose only "crime" was to have challenged the racist status quo in America. The petition documents three sets of FBI wiretaps on Panther offices showing that Geronimo was 400 miles away at the time of the

murder; the victim's husband's identification of another man as the killer one year before he ever saw a photo of Geronimo; and the fact that the man who testified that Geronimo had confessed to the crime, one Julius Butler, was an informant for the LAPD since 1966 and an informant for the FBI since at least May 1969. *All of this was known at the time by the FBI and the LAPD and was hidden from the defense.*

On November 22, Judge Dickey announced that the court hearing will focus on the spectacular recent disclosure that *Butler was also an informant for the L.A. district attorney's office even as the D.A. was prosecuting the case against Geronimo.* Butler, a one-time L.A. County Sheriff's Deputy who joined the Panthers in Los Angeles, was the centerpiece of the prosecution's case against Geronimo. On the witness stand in the original trial, he denied being an informant. Geronimo's court papers also document the investiga-

tion by lay minister Jim McCloskey which identified the likely real killers of the Santa Monica schoolteacher as associates of Butler.

The chief prosecutor of Geronimo in 1972, then-assistant L.A. district attorney Richard Kalustian, as well as former D.A. Ronald Carroll and investigators from the D.A.'s office have also been ordered to testify at the upcoming hearing. Judge Dickey was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* (23 November) as saying: "There has to be some clarification on what efforts were made by Kalustian on Butler's behalf." Referring to one investigator who had knowledge of Butler's association as an informant for the D.A.'s office, Dickey added, "I think we have to hear from Bowles."

Kalustian claims he was ignorant of Butler's relationship with the FBI. Yet in September this year, Geronimo's case was moved from L.A. to Santa Ana

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Jonathan Eubanks
Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), imprisoned for 26 years for a crime government knows he did not commit.