

## Reaganomics, Anti-Soviet War Drive Fuel...

# U.S. Debt Bomb

Take a snapshot of the American economy. Fueled by the takeover mania financed by junk bonds, the stock market has reached historic highs. Last year over a hundred banks failed, by far the largest number since the Great Depression of the early 1930s. In January, the federally funded Farm Credit System sent out notices to 65,000 farmers foreclosing on their loans. The U.S. balance-of-trade deficit steadily widens as the dollar has plunged to a seven-year low against the Japanese yen. In just two years the United States has gone from being the world's largest creditor to the world's largest debtor nation.

Right now, Wall Street is celebrating the collapse of OPEC and the oil price slide as the beginning of a new era of inflation-free prosperity. But then they look at oil-exporting Mexico with its near \$100 billion in foreign bank loans and start to worry. "Mexico Can't Pay," headlines the conservative London *Economist* (8 February). Mexico's debt, however, is small potatoes compared to that accumulated by the Yankee colossus to its north. From the \$2 trillion federal government debt to the \$1.4 trillion in corporate IOUs to the \$530 billion in outstanding consumer credit, Reagan's America has become the buy-now, pay-later nation.

Some of the more sober heads on Wall Street fear that this tidal wave of debt is heading toward a great crash. Felix Rohatyn, the financier who has squeezed New York City for the banks since the mid-1970s, now exclaims: "I am frightened and utterly baffled. We are getting into totally uncharted waters." Albert Wojnilower, the respected chief economist for First Boston Corp., warns, "if something were to go wrong in the income flows supporting

all this debt, the collapse would be worse than the crash of 1929." And the well-known liberal economist Lester Thurow recently stated:

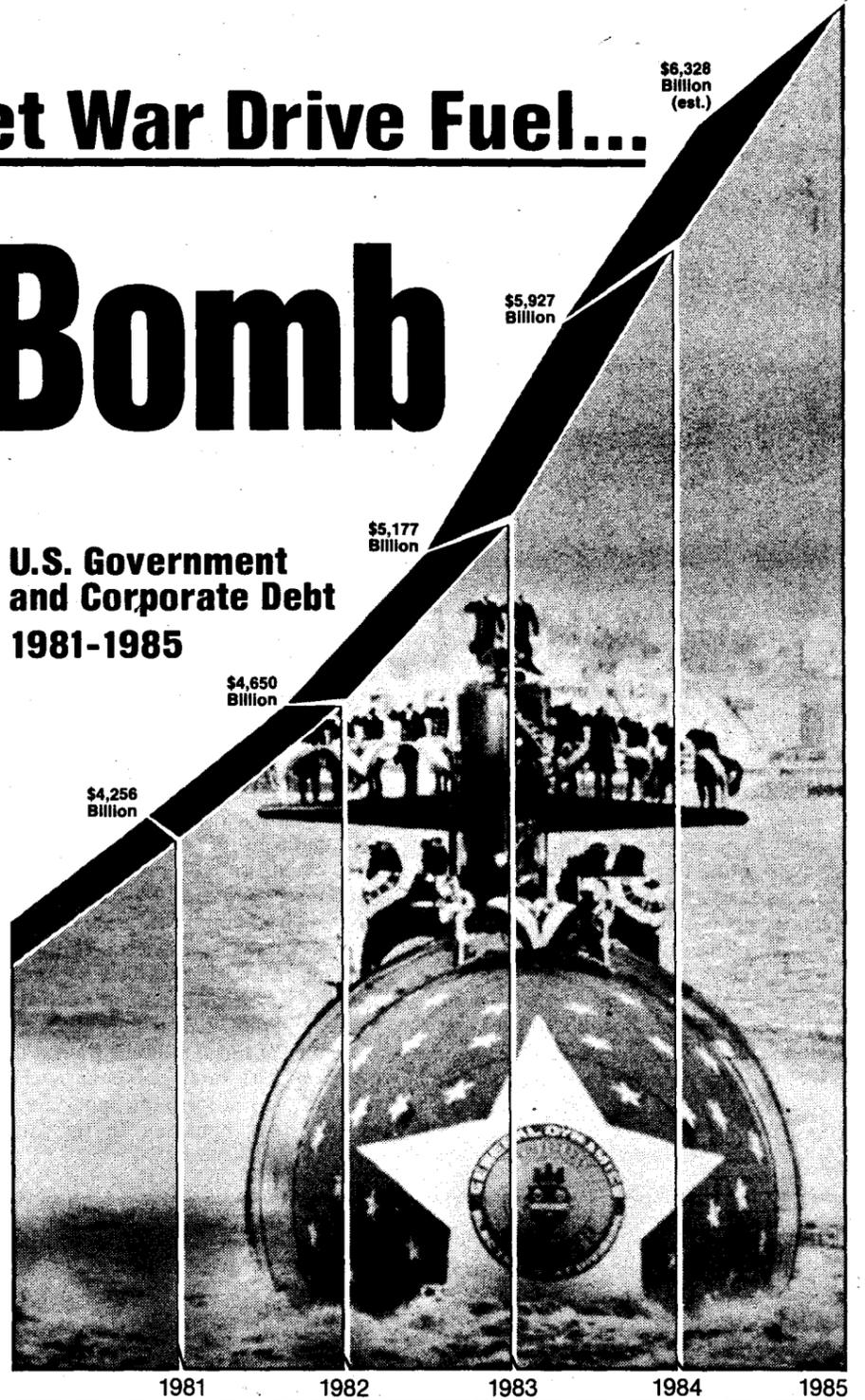
"I am often asked whether the financial panics of the 1920's and the Great Depression of the 1930's could happen again. For 20 years, I have answered that what happened then could not happen now. Today, I would not so answer."

—*New York Times*, 22 January

While serious financiers and economists are worried about another great crash, Reagan is mouthing off about the "great American comeback." "The United States," he proclaimed in his State of the Union message last month, "is the economic miracle, the model to which the world once again turns." Foreign capitalists and financiers are certainly turning to the U.S., to make money out of it as never before. Last year this country ran a balance-of-trade deficit of \$125 billion, the largest in its history, and became an international debtor for the first time since World War I. The present economic "recovery," like the stock market boom, is based on borrowed money and cannot mask the real deterioration of American capitalism.

That deterioration did not begin with Reaganomics, although this has greatly accelerated it. The long, losing, dirty colonial war in Vietnam was a watershed in the decline of American imperialism in the postwar era. The inflation generated by that war eventually toppled the world dollar standard with Nixon's "New Economic Policy" of August 1971. The dollar was devalued and foreign governments could no longer exchange U.S. currency for gold at a fixed price. August 1971 marked the end of American hegemony in the capitalist world. Since then the U.S.

### U.S. Government and Corporate Debt 1981-1985



Source: Economic Report of the President, February 1986

WV Graphic, Photo: UPI

### In Reagan's America Pentagon budget doubles, so does debt.

economy has continued to decline, one morbid symptom being the explosive growth of debt during the Reagan years.

### Star Wars Deficit

Historically, the outstanding debt and national output in the U.S. have

grown at roughly the same rate. However, beginning in 1981-82 the accumulation of debt has far outpaced real economic growth. What happened? Under Ronald Reagan the American ruling class has gone all out to build the military capacity to destroy the Soviet

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## Sandinistas Mop Up Contras

# Reagan Rabid Over Nicaragua

MARCH 11—As his kill-crazy "contras" are getting their asses handed to them by the Sandinista army, Ronald Reagan has pulled out all the stops to browbeat the U.S. Congress into shelling out \$100 million for the CIA's Nicaraguan mercenaries. With the polls showing three out of five Americans opposed to contra aid, Congress

has become reluctant to spend more money on this gang of cutthroats and losers. So last week Reagan upped the ante by accusing his opponents of being commie dupes, a standard McCarthyite ploy. Only this time it backfired, and now everyone from liberal Democrats to conservative Republicans and Catholic bishops

is screaming about administration redbaiting.

Last week's media blitz was vintage Reagan, warning of "the map of Central America covered in a sea of red, eventually lapping at our own borders," and declaring if Congress doesn't come through with the dough, the only alternative would be to send in "our own American boys." Conjuring up images of "Soviet military bases on America's doorstep" and a "vast migration northward" of Latin refugees, the president painted the picture of the "red menace" as only he can do:

"Defeat for the contras would mean a second Cuba on the mainland of North America.... And it would mean consolidation of a privileged sanctuary for terrorists and subversives just two days' driving time from Harlingen, Tex."

—*Washington Post*, 5 March

And Reagan put the Democrats on notice that "those who would invite this strategic disaster... will be held fully accountable by history." In other

words, the Republicans will accuse you of being "soft on Communism" in this fall's Congressional elections.

The Reaganites' ranting about "Sandinista Communism" and Nicaragua having become a "Soviet base" is far from the reality. To be sure, Russian military aid has been crucial to the defeat of the contra terrorist forces. However, the Sandinistas are petty-bourgeois radical nationalists still pursuing a "third road" between neocolonialism and social revolution. Sixty percent of the economy remains in the hands of the Nicaraguan capitalists, that is, the *internal* contras. In fact, the Superior Council of Private Enterprise blatantly refuses to oppose Reagan's support to the contras! A real danger is that the Sandinistas' conciliation of the bourgeoisie, further weakening a poor and backward economy already squeezed hard by U.S. imperialism,

*continued on page 12*

2 March 1986

Foreign Ministry  
Stockholm  
Sweden

International Spartacist tendency horrified by assassination of recognized leader of Swedish working people. Justice demands the achievement of all needs of world's working people as fitting memorial.

Heartfelt condolences regarding this crime which is so keenly felt by socialist workers in America and elsewhere in the world. Forward to a truly united socialist states of Europe.

Helene Brosius  
International Secretary  
international Spartacist  
tendency

James Robertson  
National Chairman  
Spartacist League/U.S.



Swedish premier Olof Palme infuriated U.S. imperialists by embracing North Vietnamese leader Pham Van Dong (right) in 1974.

## Outrage Over Olof Palme Assassination

Olof Palme, the 59-year-old prime minister of Sweden and leader of the Swedish Socialist Workers Party, was shot dead by a mysterious gunman in the streets of Stockholm in the late evening of February 28. Palme's wife Lisbeth was wounded in the assault, which took place as the couple was walking home from a movie theater. Characteristically Palme was without bodyguards, because of his expressed desire to "live like any other ordinary man." The next day, the site of the assassination turned into a spontaneous memorial as thousands of people filed by to drop red roses on the blood-soaked ground.

For the American ruling class, Olof Palme was the *enfant terrible* of the social-democratic Second International. In 1968 he marched in Stockholm side-by-side with the North Vietnamese ambassador to Moscow in protest against the U.S.' war on Vietnam.

Palme welcomed U.S. draft resisters and soldiers fleeing from that dirty imperialist war, and infuriated Richard Nixon by comparing the bombing of Hanoi with Nazi atrocities. While yesterday's liberal "doves" have long since joined the anti-Soviet "consensus," lately Palme renewed multi-million-dollar Swedish financing for a paper mill at Bai Bang in Vietnam. And in 1984, the Socialist prime minister visited beleaguered Sandinista Nicaragua, condemning aggression by the CIA's "contras." In the face of U.S. economic boycotts of both desperately impoverished countries, Palme's Sweden provided substantial aid to them.

Speaking internationally for capitalist Sweden, which remained neutral in two imperialist world wars and sold arms to both sides, at home Palme was reviled by the bourgeoisie as a class traitor. "I was born in the upper class," he said, "but I belong to the labor

movement." This "aristocrat turned Socialist," as the *New York Times* called him, was wedded to the "welfare state" and the illusion of a "middle way" between capitalism and socialism. He was returned to office last September in a particularly bitter election marked by accusations of being "soft" on the Soviet

Union. It is not clear at this point who was behind the assassination. But Olof Palme will be remembered by working people around the world for his frank condemnation of American imperialism's greatest crimes. We reprint above our telegram condemning this wanton crime. ■

## Soviet Mission: Good Neighbors

A hundred or more Russian diplomats are being thrown out of New York City. The U.S. government asserts they are some kind of KGB guys (and girls, presumably—remember Mata Hari). Soviet diplomatic personnel at the UN are a threat to America's national security, says the U.S. administration, in a frenzy worthy of J. Edgar Hoover.

Let's go to the real truth first: Reagan's government is against the UN, for their own reasons, which are quite different from ours. Our reasons closely approximate a 1983 observation by Nguyen Co Thach, foreign minister of the desperately poor Socialist Republic of Vietnam: "I personally am sorry that we are in the United Nations. We pay \$400,000 to the organization each year and it cannot solve any problems" (*New York Times*, 26 September 1983). The foreign minister was to address the general assembly to urge that the UN withdraw recognition from the former Cambodian government of Pol Pot, who massacred millions of Cambodians. Interviewed subsequently in Hanoi, Thach mildly observed of the UN that "twenty years of voting in favour of Chiang Kai-Shek failed to change the situation in China" (*Vietnam News Agency*, 10 November 1983).

As "international law" has no force, nothing compels the U.S. to pretend to play by the rules (which is obvious, as Reagan & Co. bluster about overthrowing governments they don't like around the world)—except considerations of world prestige. And U.S. pretensions to status as "world leader" are considerably diminished anyway these days. Notice that the U.S. didn't send up a space satellite to explore Halley's comet, in contrast to the impressive Soviet project. Evidencing at least a hypocritical responsibility as world citizens, the Russians opened their space institute to 100 top scientists from a dozen nations to participate in this exciting advance of scientific knowledge for mankind.

The Americans are perhaps playing a game injurious to themselves. Mrs. Thatcher threw 31 Russians out of London, announcing that of course she expected only minimal Russian retaliation. Exactly 31 persons of the English persuasion were then dumped out of Moscow. Now, experts in international

law are debating the apparent illegality of the present U.S. move. Richard Gardner, a former government official and now professor of law at Columbia University, observed: "How would the U.S. feel if the Swiss told us how large a staff we could have at the Geneva arms talks?" NYU professor Franck noted: "If the [UN] Secretary General does not stand up for the right of access on this one, he is asking for the organization to be moved out of the United States" (*New York Times*, 11 March). And of course the arrogant U.S. government is already violating its treaty obligations by refusing to pay its full assessed share of the UN budget.

The erosion of America's briefly hegemonic position in the capitalist world makes the Reagan administration more truculent than ever against the idea that other nations have any rights whatsoever. As imperialist thieves, they find it positively galling to vote in the general assembly alongside their victims. But for Reagan to come out simply against the UN isn't too diplomatic. So once again we get tales of poor tired old Russian spies endlessly trying to sneak into Rahway, New Jersey to steal the formula for yohimbine hydrochloride.

Well, insofar as we know, all those KGB spies don't go around shooting down diplomats in the streets, testing out chemical warfare in the subways, disrupting Midtown traffic with 60-car motorcades bristling with Uzis every time their boss drops in, or otherwise treating the Big Apple like enemy territory—unlike some other three-letter agencies who operate around here. In fact, we figure Russian spies probably make good neighbors. Colonel Rudolph Abel of the KGB, who enlisted in Soviet intelligence in 1927, was an upstanding citizen. He lived unassumingly in New York, on the Upper West Side and in Brooklyn Heights, from 1949 until his arrest in 1957. Personal letters testify to the hardship of the separation he, and his wife and daughter back in Russia, endured while he worked in a dark and lonely place for eight long years. In 1962 Colonel Abel was exchanged for captured American U-2 spy plane pilot Francis Gary Powers, a sniveling creep who, having promised to kill himself if captured, reneged on the deal. ■



TROTSKY

### Trade Unions and the Fight Against Capitalism

*Under Reagan the American ruling class has waged a one-sided war against the organized labor movement. Now a series of militant strikes are taking on the bosses and their state, and defying the wretched AFL-CIO bureaucracy. But, as Karl Marx stated over a century ago, trade-union struggle is not enough. The workers movement must fight to overthrow this rotting capitalist system.*



LENIN

At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the *conservative* motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword, "Abolition of the wages system!"

—Karl Marx, *Value, Price and Profit* (1865)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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14 March 1986

# Vendetta Against Berkeley Student Leftist

## All Out to Defend Guillermo Bermúdez!

University of California/Berkeley student and Spartacus Youth League member Guillermo Bermúdez has been suspended from school and is being dragged through the courts again for leading a militant protest against Marine recruiters in January 1985. On February 14, a hung jury in Berkeley-Albany Municipal Court thwarted the prosecution's attempt to convict and jail Guillermo on lying charges that he "assaulted" the campus cop who arrested and mauled him. Now Reagan and Meese's underlings in the Alameda County D.A.'s office have announced their intention to retry these frame-up charges of Bermúdez and have set a court date of May 8. In addition, the UC administration suspended Guillermo, ignoring the jury's vote and disregarding the recommendations of UC's own Student Conduct Committee.

This has provoked protest on the Berkeley campus. As the *Daily Californian* (6 March) stated in an editorial, "Not content to simply admit they were wrong, lick their wounds and crawl home, the university administration

maintains it acted properly and redoubled its efforts to make an example of someone—anyone—by suspending from school Guillermo Bermúdez.... If the university is really intent on enforcing university regulations regarding free speech let them punish the police videotapers and suspend themselves." The UC administration thinks that by nailing a young Marxist, they can intimidate and repress the hundreds of anti-imperialist students whose protests have rocked the Berkeley campus for more than a year. But united militant protest can spike the plans of the witchhunters and their brutal cops.

We reprint below a leaflet issued by our Bay Area comrades calling for the mass, united-front mobilization of students and labor that is urgently necessary now to defend Guillermo Bermúdez and the democratic rights of all who would protest the war moves of this government. A united-front protest against the vendetta against Guillermo Bermúdez has been called for Wednesday, March 12 on Sproul Plaza with significant student and faculty support.

of this government, its armed forces, its university henchmen. This sinister effort must not and will not succeed! The administration has made Guillermo Bermúdez a symbol of its determination to suppress student protest. Therefore there must be the broadest and most determined united action to defeat administration repression and to defend Guillermo and all victimized anti-imperialist protesters.

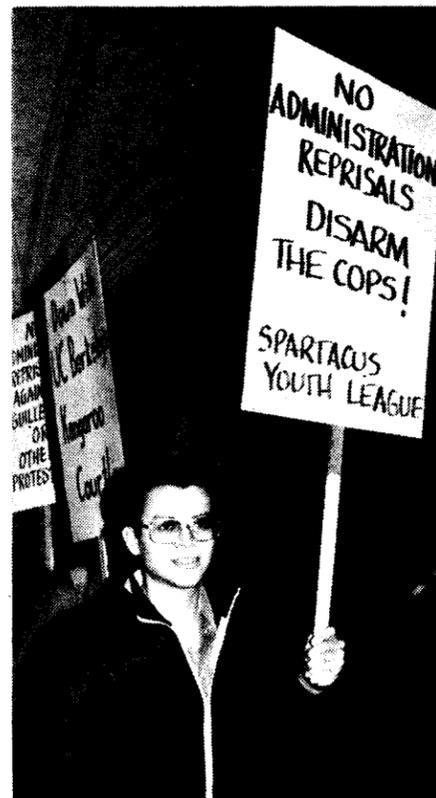
As we have emphasized since Guillermo's arrest 14 months ago, the administration's obsessive determination to "get" Guillermo was based on a cynical calculation: they thought no one would defend a revolutionary Marxist, member of the Spartacus Youth League. Now, with its campaign of prosecutions of campus activists in tatters, UC is more desperate than ever for a "win."

But this cynical strategy is backfiring, as broad sections of the campus demonstrate an ability to unite in action against repression, despite divergent political programs. Anti-apartheid activists testified on Guillermo's behalf at his trial, standing up to the prosecution's red-baiting harassment. Campus activists and faculty members are expressing their outrage at the suspension and discussing the need for united action against administration attacks. The *Daily Cal* (6 March) denounced the administration's "efforts to make an example of someone" by suspending Guillermo, as well as its "blatant attempt to intimidate... protesters" through frame-up trials and the videotaping of demonstrations. And on March 6 the ASUC [student government] voted to condemn the suspension and the administration's "cynical use of 'freedom of speech' as... justification of that action." In February, the protest of hundreds of students at the anti-ROTC 5 "disciplinary hearings" was instrumental in charges against them being dismissed. Now, the thousands of students who are being directly threatened by this victimization of Guillermo Bermúdez must turn out in mass demonstrations to force the administration to rescind the suspension and drop all charges against Guillermo.

The administration's cynicism and hypocrisy are so extreme that in its letter suspending Guillermo it suggests that he "undergo training in non-violent means of protests." This is Guillermo's answer:

"No, thank you, I have already experienced your 'non-violent methods.' Who teaches this training course? 'Choke Hold' Johnson, who could have killed me when he lifted me off the ground by the neck? The police who broke my arm? The police who ram patrol cars into demonstrators, hit them with clubs, pull guns on them and then charge their victims with 'assault'? The racist cops who beat up a visiting Chinese scholar? The spy you hired to infiltrate campus groups, who was eventually arrested for theft? Or the Marine Corps, ROTC-trained officers and CIA murderers who carry out massacres like My Lai, genocide like Hiroshima, and train the contras in Nicaragua and death squads and army in El Salvador, the country of my birth? No, you are the violent ones. The ruling class you serve rests on the most horrible violence. I call on all opponents of your violence to unite in action to defend the rights of us all!"

The smearing of protesters as "violent" is straight out of the arsenal of repression of Ronald Reagan and his sinister attorney general, Edwin Meese.



Young Spartacus

Guillermo Bermúdez

For former California governor Reagan and Meese, who used to work in the Alameda County district attorney's office, Berkeley has long been viewed as "enemy territory," a haven for "subversives" and a target for repression. During the 1960s Free Speech Movement and antiwar protests, massive police occupations of the whole UC Berkeley area occurred repeatedly. During the 1969 "People's Park" protest, students were shot at and one young man killed, and Reagan sent in the National Guard. Discussing this later, Meese openly declared that anyone attending a political demonstration deserved to be shot. If they can get away with it at Berkeley, the ruling class figures they can get away elsewhere with police-state techniques against even the tamest campus protests.

We can strike a blow against this repression. Student groups, faculty, unions, community organizations, all defenders of the right to protest must unite in action to demand: Rescind the suspension! No retrial! Drop the charges against Guillermo Bermúdez, José Carrasco, David Lucas, Michael Donnelly, and all anti-imperialist protesters! Administration hands off the Campaign Against Apartheid and other campus groups! Last year's anti-apartheid sit-in and mass rallies gave the administration and its Reaganite god-fathers a taste of the mass protest they are so desperate to prevent. Let's stand up for our rights and mobilize massive, united action against the choke-holders, the arm-breakers, the frame-up artists and witchhunters who want to throw Guillermo out of school and into jail in their drive to make the campuses boot camps for imperialist war, apartheid slavery, contra terror and racism at home!

Contributions for Guillermo's defense are urgently needed. Make checks payable to Guillermo Bermúdez Defense Fund. Mail to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 5555, San Francisco, CA 94101. Send telegrams/letters to the chancellor's office demanding that the suspension be rescinded (UC Chancellor Ira M. Heyman, Office of the Chancellor, 200 California Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720); and the district attorney's office demanding that the charges be dropped (John J. Meehan, Alameda County District Attorney, 1225 Fallon Street, Oakland, CA 94612); and copies to the Partisan Defense Committee.

For Mass, United Protest Action to Defeat Administration Repression! Defend Guillermo Bermúdez!

All Out! Demonstrate!  
Sproul Plaza, 12 Noon  
Wednesday, March 12th

9 March 1986

### Leaflet: "All Out for Guillermo Bermúdez!"

The UC administration and police were not content to choke-hold Guillermo Bermúdez and break his arm for leading a militant protest against Marine recruiters in January 1985. They were intent on sending him to jail. But they couldn't get him convicted in a court of law. They couldn't even get their own "Student Conduct Committee" to say he should be kicked out of school. So now, with a highhandedness worthy of a Marcos or Duvalier, they have appointed themselves judge, jury and executioner. Guillermo Bermúdez has been suspended from the University of California.

The charges? The same tissue of lies that fell to pieces in court. The "evidence"? Nothing but the false testimony of the only "witnesses" who spoke at the administration's star chamber: UC police who assaulted Guillermo, and

Marine recruiters. "Evidence" that became a laughingstock when it was repeated in Guillermo's trial in the municipal court.

At the beginning of February, UC chancellor "I Am the Law" Heyman denounced Berkeley judges who are too "short-sighted" to railroad protesters to jail, and vowed "to be tough as hell immediately." On February 14, a hung jury refused to buy the frame-up of Guillermo. On February 26, Vice Chancellor Park suspended Guillermo. And now the administration's cohorts in the D.A.'s office have announced their intention to subject Guillermo to another court trial on the same lying charges.

The plan is clear enough: throw Guillermo out of school and into jail; intimidate all those who would exercise their right and duty to protest the crimes



Jane Scherr

Berkeley, 29 January 1985—University of California cops ("Choke Hold" Johnson, center) assault Marxist student Guillermo Bermúdez for leading protest against Marine recruiters.

# Conspiracy Reached to the White House

## MOVE Massacre: Wilson Goode Is Guilty

### Free Ramona Africa and All MOVE Prisoners!

May 13, 1985: As black Philadelphia watched in horror, an army of cops carried out a fiery "search-and-destroy" mission in the heart of an American city, incinerating eleven members of the black MOVE commune while the rest of the Osage Avenue neighborhood burned to the ground. This Vietnam-style attack was intentional murder! *Workers Vanguard* headlined "Reagan Bombs Black Babies," pinning the horrendous crime right on the White House and Reagan's top cop Edwin Meese, as well as black Democratic Party mayor Wilson Goode who justified the cop terror-bombing because MOVE was "a very radical group." The Philly inferno was a message to blacks and anybody else who steps out of line in Reagan's America: *watch your ass, you could be next!*

March 6, 1986: In a televised news conference, Wilson Goode's hand-picked eleven-member MOVE commission released a 70-page report on the findings of its nine-month investigation. The commission concluded:

- "The mayor's failure to call a halt to the operation on May 12, when he knew that children were in the house, was grossly negligent and clearly risked the lives of those children."
- "The plan to bomb the MOVE house was reckless, ill-conceived and hastily approved. Dropping a bomb on an occupied rowhouse was unconscionable and should have been rejected out of hand by the mayor, the managing director, the police commissioner and the fire commissioner."
- The deaths of the five children "appear to be unjustified homicides which should be investigated by a grand jury." And the report stated what every black person knew from the beginning—racism was the inspiration behind the planning and the execution of the cop assault:

"...to allow the use of high explosives and, in a 90-minute period, the firing of at least 10,000 rounds of ammunition at the house, to sanction the dropping of a bomb on an occupied rowhouse, and to let a fire burn in a rowhouse occupied by children, would not likely have been made had the MOVE house and its occupants been situated in a comparable white neighborhood."

What Wilson Goode intended to be a whitewash commission has now threatened to put an abrupt end to his political career. But while condemning the deaths of five children, the commission, in calling MOVE "an authoritarian violence-threatening cult," implied the adults deserved to die! As Goode himself stated earlier, there was no basis for legal action; there were no search warrants. There was no chance to surrender; those who tried to escape were driven back with bullets, although the blazing fire was admittedly used as a "tactical weapon" to drive them out! It was cold-blooded murder and the state was the "violence cult!"

There was a racist conspiracy to murder MOVE, and Wilson Goode is guilty as hell. The sheer magnitude of this monstrous crime impelled the investigating commission to reveal some of the evidence. The hearings confirmed the massive firepower—one cop admitted firing 1,000 rounds from his M-16 semi-automatic from his station within 50 feet of the house. The Bomb Disper-



DiMarco/Time

Dead bodies carried from the rubble: black victims of firebombing ordered by Philadelphia Democrat mayor Wilson Goode.

sal Unit bombed the house three separate times, once using their own improvised powerful "flashbags" similar to fragmentation grenades. The bomb dropped by helicopter on the MOVE rooftop contained a combination of Tovex and the powerful plastique C-4. Yet "the mayor paused only 30 seconds before approving the dropping of explosives," the commission stated.

Ex-police chief Sambor and fire chief Richmond decided to let the house burn, while "police gunfire prevented some occupants of 6221 Osage Ave. from escaping from the burning house to the rear alley." The commission left out of its report that cops were shown on film laughing at the MOVE members trapped inside the inferno by the cops' guns. These bloodthirsty killers-in-blue wanted their revenge for the 600 cop siege of a MOVE house in 1978 in which one cop was killed. The report condemns the Medical Examiner's office for "unprofessional conduct," such as removing the bodies from the bombed-out rubble with a "crane with a bucket to dig up debris and bodies," resulting in "dismemberment, commingling of body parts, and the destruction of important physical and medical evidence." But it was the medical examiner's ghoulish job to obliterate the physical evidence of this Hitlerite atrocity.

There's plenty of blood on Goode and the cops' hands—but it doesn't stop there. Washington's role was apparently too hot for the commission to handle, so they just cover it up. The report goes to absurd lengths to avoid implicating federal authorities. While noting that "an agent of the FBI delivered nearly 38 pounds of C-4, a powerful military plastic explosive, to the Philadelphia Police bomb squad," it claims that "neither agency kept any records of the transaction," thus FBI officials "unwittingly furnished the commission with inaccurate and untruthful accounts of that agency's involvement."

*Reagan and Meese's FBI are in this up to their necks.* Soon after the bombing Sambor told the *New York Times* (19 May 1985) that on May 11 he went over the assault plans with the FBI who found them "sound." The report describes the incredible arsenal gathered for the assault ("M-16s, a Browning automatic rifle, a Thompson submachine gun, 30.06 and .22-250 sharpshooter rifles, two M-60 machine guns, Uzis, shotguns and a silenced .22-caliber rifle") as "military weapons and explosives not normally available to municipal police departments." But it disappears the key testimony that much of this materiel was acquired through an agent of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the same outfit whose agent helped organize the 1979 KKK/Nazi massacre of five leftists in



WV Photo

Greensboro, North Carolina.

Sensing Goode's imminent demise, liberal politicians are casting about for a new black front man to run this deeply racially polarized city. The *New York Times* (4 March) reports that one unnamed "powerful black officeholder" has sounded out Philadelphia Congressman William Gray, head of the House Budget Committee, in charge of selling Reagan's budget to black people. The *Amsterdam News* (8 March 1986) announced that NYC black attorney C. Vernon Mason, Judge Bruce Wright, Detroit Congressman John Conyers and others have formed a "Draw the Line" campaign and are calling for Goode's resignation. But what did these black liberals do right after the MOVE massacre? Not a damn thing. They know that a growing number of Philadelphia's black population despises Goode, and that nothing could get them to pull the lever for him on election day. So Goode has become a political liability for the black Democrats.

From the day the government dropped the bomb on West Philly, the Spartacist League has championed the cause of the surviving MOVE victims, exposed the role of Reagan, Meese and Wilson Goode, demanding revolutionary justice to avenge the MOVE's martyred dead. Relatives of the MOVE victims spoke of their outrage and their pain from our party platform. We stood out in stark relief against virtually the entire left, which churned out alibis for Goode to reinforce suicidal illusions in the "progressive" Democrats, even in some cases blaming the MOVE victims for the massacre (see "Reformists Unite

with Black Democrats to Cover Up Racist Murder—American Workers Revolution Will Avenge MOVE Martyrs!", *WV* No. 397, 14 February). At last month's misnamed "march against racism" in Philly, this gang came out to cover Mayor Goode's ass, even as scores of homeless were invading his conference on housing, demanding action.

A *Philadelphia Inquirer* (4 March) editorial praising the commission's findings nevertheless made a critical point: "Yet there is no feeling of catharsis in the report, no sense that the MOVE episode is behind Philadelphia. It stands instead as a benchmark and as a springboard for relentless challenge..." Despite the efforts of the "Mayor of Murder" (who has announced his refusal to step down) and his leftist apologists, *the MOVE massacre will not go away.* The frenzied mobs who terrorized black and interracial couples in Southwest Philly in December with chants of "Move! Move!" were part of a nationwide wave of racist violence touched off by the massacre.

From the smashing of the PATCO unionists in 1981 to the bombing of MOVE, the Reagan government has been using "anti-terrorism" as the justification for terrorizing blacks, labor and the left. An upcoming NBC television movie called *City Under Siege*—for which Sambor has been hired as an adviser!—will carry on this twisted propaganda ploy. "This is [about] terrorism and how a city dealt with terrorism," producer Jim Thebaut told the *Inquirer*. MOVE's "crimes" were that they were black, they didn't pay their electric bills, they didn't kill cockroaches and they defended their homes—so in Reagan's America they were labeled "terrorists" to be bombed to smithereens! But the real terrorists are in the White House and City Hall.

Ramona Africa faces up to 14 years in prison for surviving the government's genocidal terrorist attack. Her conviction on "criminal conspiracy" charges was a racist frame-up whose purpose was to "prove" the MOVE victims were guilty of the massacre. But as Ramona said in court, "It seems that every charge against me fits the police." After her trial, the commission has as much as admitted this. Today, every MOVE member is either behind bars or dead. Free Ramona Africa and all the MOVE prisoners! Reagan, Meese, Goode, Sambor—guilty as hell! Proletarian revolution will avenge the MOVE martyrs! ■

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## Black Subway Clerk on Trial for Self-Defense

# The Courts Are Killing James Grimes

James Grimes is facing a gun rap for defending himself from three robbers who jumped him while he was transporting \$1,490 in Transit Authority money from his token booth during the late-night hours of January 6. After risking his life protecting Transit Authority proceeds, the 55-year-old black New York City subway token clerk is now undergoing a "legal" mugging by the Brooklyn District Attorney's office of liberal Democrat Elizabeth Holtzman, the courts and TA management. Grimes has been treated as a criminal rather than the victim of a violent crime.

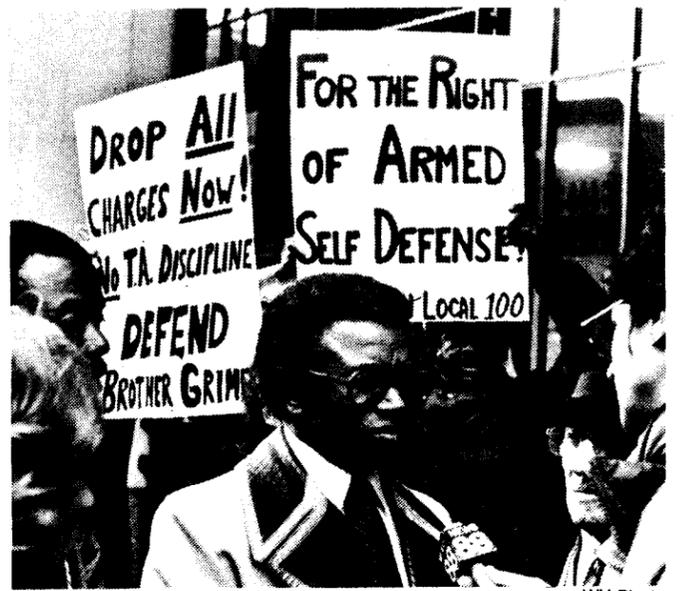
There has been a groundswell of support for Grimes from his fellow transit workers and every decent person in New York City. At his first and second court hearings, scores of Transport Workers Union Local 100 members turned out, including many token clerks, whose lives are daily put in jeopardy by the TA. Militant transit

workers have issued a call to mobilize the TWU to defend union brother Grimes at Brooklyn Criminal Court March 17, where he faces possible manslaughter charges.

The TA's notorious disregard for the safety of its workers and the riding public was tragically demonstrated February 18 when 50-year-old motorman Robert Dueffert, due to retire in June, was sent out to work in a Brooklyn railyard in 14 inches of water and was electrocuted by the 600-volt third rail. Local 100 officials, while paying lip service to defending Grimes and calling on Holtzman to investigate the electrocution of Dueffert, have done nothing to mobilize the 33,000-strong membership behind Grimes or combat the TA's brutal gutting of working conditions that killed Dueffert.

The Committee for a Fighting TWU has initiated an ad hoc defense group, which on March 4 issued a letter to TWU Local 100 (at right).

James Grimes with supporters outside Brooklyn Criminal Court, January 23.



WV Photo

### Open Letter to Sonny Hall, President, TWU Local 100 Re: The Need to Mobilize Local 100 to Defend Brother Grimes!!

Although you and the rest of the elected leadership of this union seem to have forgotten it, one of our union brothers is pitted against the combined forces of "law and order" and the TA brass. Do you know what a "legal lynching" is? That's what's happening to clerk James Grimes! Moreover, while the "Wheels of Justice" have barely started to turn they have already severely and irreparably damaged his health. Recently, he required emergency heart surgery to implant a pacemaker.

For anyone who has faith in the "benevolent, justice minded" courts, Grimes's second hearing should set you straight. On Feb. 10th Grimes's attorney, Harry Lipsig (who is defending him for free), again petitioned for dismissal of all charges on grounds of self-defense, and was again denied. But when the DA asked for more time to prepare a grand jury, to jack up the charge to a felony, he got it.

Shortly afterwards, Grimes's already weak heart nearly gave out. Lipsig went back to court on Feb. 28th to re-petition for dismissal, adding to the original grounds that the prosecution is killing his client. This was denied! Now HIP is refusing to cover the thousands of dollars in medical bills that have started to arrive.

The banks and politicians who run (rob!) this city are determined that only cops and criminals will have guns and decent working people will be at their tender mercy. To them it's OK that Willie Turks lies murdered while his racist killers still stalk the streets of

Gravesend. Their idea of "law and order" means TA cops beating and strangling Michael Stewart to death and chaining Grimes to a bench for 9 hours.

Despite the continuing inaction of the TWU leaders, scores of Local 100 members, mostly clerks whose working conditions are identical to Grimes's, showed up at Brooklyn Criminal Court to support him. Afterwards large groups of these workers marched to and picketed in front of TA headquarters demanding hands off brother Grimes. But it's supposed to be the job of elected union officials to mobilize the *entire* union in defense of Grimes. It's no coincidence that attacks on clerks have escalated recently. One clerk, Wanda Gregg, was nearly incinerated by vicious thugs.

We thank the sisters and brothers who came to court on Jan. 23rd and Feb. 10th. To you, Sonny Hall, we say: the union must cover all medical and legal expenses for brother Grimes and mobilize our 33,000 strong membership to be with brother Grimes when he returns to court this March 17th! Whether it's officially endorsed or not, all TWU members should BE THERE!

#### Money Now!

**TWU Mobilization March 17th!**  
9 a.m. Sharp! Monday, March 17th  
Brooklyn Criminal Court  
120 Schermerhorn St. (at Smith St.)

Transit Workers to Defend  
James Grimes  
4 March 1986

To ALL of my Co-workers, Friends,  
and Well-wishers,  
I say to ALL of you, "THANKS!"

...for all your SUPPORT  
...for pulling with me  
...for taking a stance,  
in my time of need.

It lifted my heart  
on January 23<sup>rd</sup>,  
When I walked up the block,  
and your chants I heard.

Speaking for myself, and my Family,

"Thank you, for not allowing  
me to have to stand alone,  
for the courage your SUPPORT  
has helped give me, and  
most of all, for your  
FAITH in me."

January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1986

Thank you  
letter from  
James Grimes.

## Judge's Decision Is a Racist Outrage!

# Free Geronimo Pratt, Now!

On Friday, March 7 former Black Panther Party leader Geronimo Pratt, the foremost class-war prisoner in America, was denied his appeal for a retrial on the frame-up charges that have kept him in jail for most of his adult life. This outrageous ruling was handed down by U.S. District Court magistrate John Kronenberg in Los Angeles. Targeted for "neutralization" by the FBI's murderous COINTELPRO conspiracy in the 1960s, Pratt was arrested after surviving a Gestapo-style raid on L.A. Panther headquarters by 400 cops. He has spent 16 years in prison, six of them in solitary, for a murder which *he did not and could not have committed*. Now the Justice Department headed by Edwin Meese, who under then-governor Reagan oversaw the war against the Panthers in California, wants to ensure that this valiant fighter for black freedom stays

behind bars. Every opponent of racist injustice must demand: Freedom Now for Geronimo Pratt!

Kronenberg's ruling simply dismisses the massive evidence of the FBI/Los Angeles Police Department frame-up, introduced by Pratt's attorneys on his behalf at the January 1985 hearing. As retired FBI agent Wesley Swearingen flatly stated, "Pratt was set up." At the hearing Swearingen testified that he had seen documents from FBI wiretaps that proved that Pratt was 500 miles away in Oakland at the time of the murder. These wiretap logs are now mysteriously "missing." Further, Pratt's attorneys showed that the key prosecution witness, one Julio Butler, was an FBI informant, a fact which he lied about at the original trial.

Pratt's appeal took *five years* to come to court, and then the judge delayed his decision nearly 14 months! Pratt's lead

counsel, Stuart Hanlon, stated, "It's a vicious way to handle it. It's just cruel. Why wait so long if you aren't going to do anything?" This same Judge Kronenberg last year attempted to block the extradition of Nazi war criminal Andrija Artukovic back to Yugoslavia to face trial for ordering the deaths of tens of thousands of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies during World War II. Kronenberg was then removed from the case.

On Monday, March 10, fifty militants demonstrated outside the Federal Building in San Francisco demanding freedom for Geronimo Pratt. Called on 24 hours notice by the Spartacist League and Labor Black League for Social Defense, the spirited demonstration chanted, "Smash the FBI/COINTELPRO Frame-Up!" "For Mass Labor/Black Action to Free Geronimo Pratt!" "Finish the Civil War—Forward to a Workers State!"



WV Photo

Spartacist and Labor Black League demonstrate for Pratt's freedom in San Francisco, March 10.

Earlier in the day Spartacist spokesman Donald Alexander met with Geronimo Pratt in San Quentin. Pratt wished to communicate to the demonstrators and all his supporters that he will continue to fight. "They called me a terrorist," he said, in an "attempt to criminalize the movement," in order to justify the campaign of *racist state terror* in Reagan's America. "They've kept me in jail this long because I organized the

*continued on page 12*

# From Forced Labor to "Guest Labor"

## Turkish Workers in the German Fourth Reich

In January, 15,000 people, among them 5,000 Turks, marched in Hamburg to protest racist terror against the *Gastarbeiter* ("guest workers"), West Germany's huge population of immigrant labor. The latest victim was a young Turkish worker, Ramazan Avci, who was brutally murdered by skinhead punks. These fascistic thugs stormed out of their hangout, the Landwehr pub, while one of them ran over Avci with a car. Lying helpless on the ground, he was beaten to death with baseball bats and axes. Avci was neither the first nor the last victim of skinhead terror. Indeed, outside the same Landwehr pub a black African from Ghana was beaten and kicked while his assailants chanted, "Niggers Out! White Power!"

The West German state—official successor to the Nazi Third Reich—has no intention of cracking down on the skinheads, who have close ties to fascist groups like Michael Kühnen's Aktionsfront Nationaler Aktivisten. What is involved is not just some lumpen skinhead punks going wild but racist violence inherent in the capitalist system. The line runs back from today's *Ausländerhetze* (hostility toward foreign workers) to the deadly exploitation of slave labor in Nazi Germany and Hitler's *Endlösung* (final solution) for the Jews. This is captured in a popular "joke" now current in West Germany: "What is the difference between Jews and Turks?" Answer: "The former have



Turkish leftists, West German trade unionists protest in Hamburg, 11 January 1985, against the racist murder of Ramazan Avci (inset) by "skinhead" scum.

pub to pieces and teach the scumbags a lesson they will never forget.

### Rock Bottom

One of the scheduled speakers at this demonstration was the journalist Günter Wallraff. Prevented by illness from being there, he had his speech read to the protesters:

"A chancellor [prime minister] tells the people on TV that the number of Turks in West Germany has to be reduced. Another CDU politician [member of the ruling bourgeois party] says: 'It is high time to act. The Turks don't just stand before Vienna anymore; by now they are already in Berlin, Stadt Allendorf or Hamburg.' And as we experienced some days ago the extreme racist right then acts..."

Wallraff has recently shaken up West German society. For two and a half years he disguised himself and lived as the Turkish *Gastarbeiter* "Ali Levant Sigirioglu." The change was easy enough: dark-colored contact lenses, a black wig and broken German fooled a racist society. Toward his Turkish coworkers he claimed to be a Greek. The cruel and degrading experiences he suffered—"slaves were treated better"—were documented in a book, *Ganz unten* (*Rock Bottom*), published last fall. Almost a million copies were sold in just five weeks; by now the figure has risen to six million. It's West Germany's biggest book sale success ever!

The horrible experiences Wallraff recounts should not have been a surprise to the West German public. A number of German-language books and articles written by *Turks* exposed similar conditions long before *Rock Bottom*. Thus, in one sense the popularity, or notoriety, of Wallraff's book underscores the pervasive racism of West German society. They had to hear about it from the mouth of a German.

In March 1983 Wallraff placed an advertisement in the paper: "Alien, physically strong, looking for work, any work, even hard and dirty, for any pay." The dirtiest, lowest paid and most dangerous jobs he got, indeed. He was kept "like an animal" by a woman farm owner in Lower Saxony. Working at McDonald's he was constantly harassed by his foreman and humiliated by well-dressed college kids. Working on a

construction site, he not only had to clean sewage away from overflowing toilets and balance on scaffolds while carrying concrete slabs up six floors. He was also confronted with viciously racist coworkers who loaded his cart so full of concrete he was unable to move it, who suspected him whenever anything was stolen and who made him the butt of anti-Turkish jokes.

### Slave Laborer for Thyssen

The largest section of *Rock Bottom* covers "Ali's" experiences working for the Thyssen steel empire. The Thyssen family, it will be recalled, were major early backers of Adolf Hitler. Wallraff/Ali came to work for Thyssen through a small subcontracting outfit owned by one Vogel, who, incidentally, was a member of the reformist Social Democratic Party, now in opposition. While Thyssen has laid off 17,000 workers since the 1974-75 economic slump, a large part of its labor supply is provided by subcontractor firms like Vogel's



Fascist skinheads attack foreign worker in West Germany. Smash racist terror!

whose workforce has no trade-union rights. These workers are often forced to work two regular shifts, and if they refuse are laid off immediately. One fellow worker Wallraff/Ali knew used to work 300 to 350 hours a month! Nobody can do this kind of work for more than a few years but there are always new unemployed and immigrant workers to take their place.

Wallraff/Ali and his fellow workers had to remove coke dust from the

steelmaking equipment, which was so thick that you had to "swallow and eat it." They didn't get masks so they could work faster. They didn't get helmets either. Wallraff/Ali bought one for himself. Twice the foreman gave Ali's helmet to a German worker who had forgotten his. One time a security engineer measured the amount of toxic gas in the air. When he received a signal that it was dangerously high, he said: "This is impossible. The instrument must be broken." A second instrument indicated the same level. "That fucking thing is not working either." No precautions were taken, no gas masks were distributed to the workers. Wallraff reports: "Since working there my bronchial tubes are practically chronically damaged and today—six months later—when I spit after a coughing attack my saliva is still black."

When he was laid off for a time, Wallraff/Ali tried to become a *Versuchsmensch*, a human guinea pig for medical experiments. Remember Dr. Mengele, the Angel of Death? The old Nazi doctors are not only still practicing, they still use human beings for their sadistic tests—only Jews have been replaced by Turks. The desperate foreigners get paid only if they stay through the whole test. If they choose to remain alive and healthy, they could even be sued for "breach of contract"! Ali decided not to go through this experience.

The final act in Wallraff's career as Ali came when friends of his made entrepreneur Vogel a fake offer to see just how far he would go. Six Turks were supposedly needed to repair equipment in a power plant poisoned by escaping radioactive fumes. To avoid a scandal only Turks who would soon be returning to Turkey could be chosen so they would not die in West Germany. Vogel had no qualms accepting this deal, demonstrating that West German capitalists would *kill* foreign workers in order to make a profit.

And their fascist thugs are out to kill foreign workers for the hell of it. On one occasion Wallraff/Ali had good reason to fear for his life. The occasion was the German-Turkish soccer match in West Berlin in the summer of 1983. The fascists used this event for a national mobilization against the Turks while the DGB trade-union tops and West German left staged a pitiful counterdemonstration outside the stadium and did nothing to protect the Turkish ghettos. Inside the stadium many Turks doubtless felt like Ali: "I am not a soccer fan. But in the Olympic Stadium I cheered for the German team. Out of fear."

Wallraff originally expected to be persecuted for his gruesome revelations. But the enormous publicity around his book and the video documentary he



*Rock Bottom*, best-selling exposé of Turkish workers' plight in West Germany.

their fate already behind them."

The reformist Social Democratic bureaucracy and petty-bourgeois radicals like the Greens offer no effective opposition to the superexploitation, harassment and violence against foreign workers. The Social Democratic-led DGB trade-union federation, one of the sponsors of the Hamburg demonstration, does *not* stand for full citizenship rights for foreign workers but only talks of "friendship with foreign workers." And the nationalistic West German left does anything to avoid revolutionary class struggle. Thus the Hamburg anti-skinhead protest was reduced to an exercise in liberal moralism, which bothers the fascists not at all. A revolutionary leadership would have organized the outraged German and Turkish workers to tear the Landwehr

secretly produced during his life as "Ali" has provided him with a protective screen. Still, he does receive death threats. While the trade-union bureaucracy is cold-shouldering him, crowded meetings of unionists have been held all over West Germany to hear Wallraff describe the terrible conditions of foreign workers. The outrage of West German workers over this question is certainly a good thing. But it will require

*continued on page 11*

## French Elections:

# Mitterrand Paves Way For Rightist Reaction

PARIS, March 5—The campaign for the upcoming March 16 legislative elections has focused almost exclusively on what happens *after* a right-wing victory at the polls. After five years of pro-capitalist austerity and "modernization" policies under "socialist" president François Mitterrand, the Socialist (SP) and Communist (CP) parties are expected to obtain a minority of the votes, possibly provoking a major political and constitutional crisis. Despite a consensus between the SP and bourgeois rightists in support of capitalist austerity, anti-immigrant repression, a neocolonialist and anti-Soviet foreign policy, and modernization of the military and the nuclear arsenal, it is not certain that Mitterrand will be able to coexist with a right-wing parliamentary majority.

Under the Fifth Republic constitution fashioned by and for General de Gaulle, the "strong" presidency is armed with semi-bonapartist powers to override parliamentary majorities. So instead of the continual cabinet reshuffling of the postwar Fourth Republic, the stage is set for a sharp clash of powers when president and parliament are opposed. At present, two of the three principal leaders of the right (the neo-Gaullist Chirac and former president Giscard d'Estaing) have declared their willingness to "cohabit" with the pro-NATO "socialist" in the Elysée Palace—but on their terms, not his. Mitterrand, in turn, has said he would rather resign as president than not exercise his power as head of state. But if he tries to exercise that power against a right-wing parliamentary majority, the bourgeoisie will likely move to bring Mitterrand down.

Economic crisis and anti-immigrant terror are ravaging France. The parliamentary fuse box may well short-circuit as a result of the tensions which have accumulated during Mitterrand's reign. There is a danger of a rightist mobilization in which the fascists would act as shock troops. The Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF), section of the international Spartacist tendency, says to class-conscious workers: No vote to the SP/CP parties of the popular front which has paved the way for rightist reaction on the march! The workers movement

must be prepared to smash the fascist threat in the factories and in the streets.

### "No to the NATO Popular Front!"

The regime which took power in 1981 was a class-collaborationist coalition between the reformist SP and CP and elements of the bourgeoisie. Mitterrand had already obtained the neutrality of Chirac's Gaullist party on the basis of virulent anti-Sovietism and a more nationalistic economic policy. Once in office, he tried to assuage his bourgeois bloc partners, appointing a cabinet of

Order." After the war, Communist and Socialist ministers in the Gaullist regime approved the breaking of strikes and drowning independence revolts in blood in Vietnam and Algeria.

In 1981, the Ligue Trotskyiste de France was unique in refusing to vote for this cold war "socialist." While Alain Krivine's fake-Trotskyist LCR called to "Vote Mitterrand to Chase Out Giscard" and Pierre Lambert's Stalinophobic OCI/PCI proclaimed "April 26: Vote Mitterrand," the LTF headlined: "No to the NATO Popular Front!" (*Le*



North African immigrant workers take the lead in resisting austerity under Mitterrand popular front. Above: 1983 strike by Talbot auto workers.

technocrats with a program of "modernizing" the French economy. And after the failure of its attempts to institute "Keynesianism in one country," this "left government" carried out an anti-working-class austerity policy (*rigueur*) even more ferocious than those of its rightist predecessors. Asked about the 500,000 jobs slashed, Prime Minister Fabius remarked, "it fell to us to do the 'dirty work'."

Mitterrand swore fealty to the officer corps, unleashing the army in a neocolonial war in Chad. He spent millions to "upgrade" the French *force de frappe* nuclear weapons while his gung-ho war minister gave the thugs of the DGSE the green light for state terror against the Greenpeace pacifists. And while politely differing with Ronald Reagan over distant subjects like Nicaragua, Mitterrand was point man for the anti-Soviet war drive in Europe. At home he bowed before Catholic reaction over the issue of private schools. And this "socialist" government unleashed the wave of chauvinism against immigrants, ordering the deportation of "illegal aliens" and trying to force unemployed North Africans to "return" to countries they hardly knew after decades doing the hardest jobs in France.

The time has come to draw the lessons of five years of this "dirty work," and the principal lesson is that it was the "left government" itself that has prepared the way for the rise of the right. One doesn't have to look to the Spanish Civil War or Allende's Unidad Popular in Chile in 1973 to see that the popular front has meant workers' blood. In France during the '30s, Léon Blum sent his cops to shoot down workers at Clichy, and the downfall of that People's Front led straight to Pétain's pro-Nazi "New

*Bolchévik* No. 26, June 1981). When CP ministers crawled into the cabinet, shamefully capitulating before Mitterrand's anti-Sovietism, the LTF published a special supplement, "We Trotskyists Defend the USSR!" Like his popular front predecessors, we said, Mitterrand's election was *no victory for the working class*, as it soon showed in office.

### Fight for a Workers Government!

In the last half-decade, dozens of militant strikes—from Talbot and Renault in auto to the steel industry and the shipyards—have been crushed by



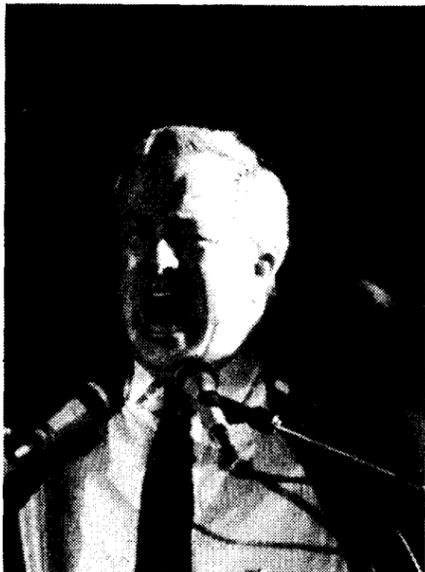
Mitterrand and Reagan united in anti-Soviet war drive.

Mitterrand's riot police or derailed by the trade-union bureaucracy, in particular the CP-controlled CGT federation, into the dead end of "pressuring" the government. We are now seeing racist terror on a scale unequaled since the Algerian war. The sole beneficiary is the sinister Le Pen, whose army of fascist thugs has swelled in proportion to the despair of all layers of the population, while Mitterrand has made racial exclusion and savage anti-Communism "respectable."

But although disoriented and weakened by five years of betrayal and the gutting of whole sections of industry, the proletariat, including its combative immigrant layers, is far from defeated. Throughout the country, in factory after factory, and sometimes shop by shop, defensive strikes have broken out—often brief wildcat walkouts, but frequently with 100 percent participation, transcending trade-union divisions. Recent strikes of power workers, railwaymen and Paris subway workers have shown that the working class is ready to use its power to stop production in order to beat back the bosses' offensive. But with more than three million unemployed and millions more youth trapped in "make-work" schemes, routine trade-union struggle and apolitical protests can go nowhere.

Militancy is not enough—to answer the political crisis, the workers' struggles must have a political perspective: the struggle for a workers government, the expropriation of the bourgeois class by the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist reconstruction of society, not under the French tricolor but under the red flag of a socialist united states of Europe. This requires the leadership of an authentically Bolshevik, Leninist-Trotskyist communist party which must be built on a program of intransigent opposition to popular frontism in all its forms, struggle against racist terror and racial segregation, for full citizenship rights for all foreign workers, for unconditional military defense of the USSR and the deformed workers states

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Sinister fascist Le Pen, organizer of racist terror.

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# Debt Bomb...

(continued from page 1)

Union in a nuclear first strike. "The home of the brave" would be covered by a space-based nuclear shield against the massive Soviet second strike. At the same time, the Reagan gang believed that a full-scale arms race would bankrupt the Soviet economy. Instead it is bankrupting the American economy.

White Middle America was told it wouldn't even have to pay for the Star Wars scheme, the MX missiles and the rest. The biggest peacetime arms buildup in U.S. history was to be financed through a *tax cut*, concentrated in the upper income brackets and in corporate profits. The predictable result of this "supply-side economics": the budget deficit *tripled*, from \$75 billion in 1981 to \$225 billion last year.

Listening to Reagan rave about Star Wars, you might think that the fastest growing item in his budget is Pentagon spending. Actually it isn't. That honor goes to interest payments on the national debt, which jumped from 11 to 15 percent of the budget during the Reagan years. Last year these interest payments amounted to \$130 billion, roughly equal to the total personal tax revenue collected from every taxpayer west of the Mississippi River! As Nobel laureate economist Kenneth Arrow put it: "We're like a Latin American country. We're getting into a situation where borrowing to pay the interest on the deficit is causing the deficit" (*New York Times*, 8 December 1985).

And last year half of this borrowing was in foreign money markets, especially Japan. One liberal Reagan critic quipped: "Now we know what supply-side economics means. Foreigners supply the capital. Foreigners supply the goods." Influential right-wing figures, for example, the head of the U.S. central bank (the Federal Reserve), Paul Volcker, and a former head of Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers, Martin Feldstein, have also argued that the massive budget deficits and resulting foreign borrowing could lead to a financial crash in the short run and will cripple industrial productivity in the longer run.

What is involved, however, is not just



Der Spiegel

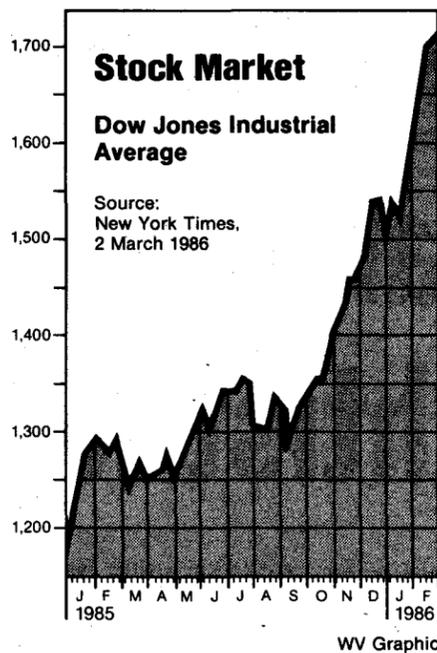
## Stock market boom based on takeover mania and junk-bond financing.

infinitely more complex task of constructing space-based weaponry (laser beams and the like) capable of destroying thousands of Soviet nuclear missiles? It's an anti-Communist wet dream.

The mad ambitions of the U.S. ruling class to dominate the world and "roll back Communism" are far beyond the deteriorating capacities of American capitalism. And runaway military spending is helping to *lose* the trade war with Japan, Inc. The billions squandered on the MX missiles and Star Wars is depriving American industry of the much-needed resources for technological renovation. There are, of course, limits to purely economic competition between rival imperialist powers. Wall Street and Washington are moving to retaliate against superior Japanese products by trade protectionism. And if the Japanese make too much trouble, say yahoos in Congress, well, remember Hiroshima! Thus U.S. capitalism moves toward new wars.

## White Middle America, the Reagan Cuts and Gramm-Rudman

While Reagan's America is losing the trade war with Japan and driving toward nuclear Armageddon with



campaign Reagan claimed: "We would use the increased revenues from the tax decrease to rebuild our defense capabilities" (*New York Times*, 18 May 1980)!

Reagan's former budget director, David Stockman, has since spilled the jellybeans. No one in the Reagan White House really believed this nonsense. They *deliberately* manufactured the massive budget deficit in order to pressure Congressional Democrats into dismantling half a century of social programs going back to the New Deal of the 1930s. And they succeeded, though only in part. The first round of Reagan cuts in 1981-82, which swept through Congress with *bipartisan* support, was targeted with almost surgical precision at the poor, concentrated in the black and Hispanic communities and among the elderly. The budget ax fell on welfare, food stamps, school lunches, Medicaid, CETA job training, Head Start programs for ghetto children, etc.

But the poor were just too poor to pay all of the Pentagon's new bills. Reagan could throw everyone off welfare and scarcely save enough money to build a couple of MX missiles. The rest of the money was borrowed from Japanese financiers. Stockman's self-criticism of Reaganomics is that they should have gone after everyone from the get-go:

"Our biggest failure was that we didn't create a much bigger and better package of spending cuts in the beginning. We should have gone after the big boulders—the social insurance programs.... We should have gone after Social Security COLAs [cost-of-living adjustments] in 1981. We should have gone after Medicare then too, and the farm program.... I have a large roster of cuts. Why mass transit subsidies for New York City? Why any farm-price support program at all? Why \$7 billion for higher education that sends middle-class kids to college?"

—*Fortune*, 6 February 1984

The Reagan gang is now trying to make up for what Stockman called "our biggest failure." This time around everyone, including large sections of the white middle class, is being hit hard. And so conservative Republicans from "Reagan country" are squealing, too. Especially in an election year, what Congressman from the rural Midwest and South, Republican or Democrat, is going to vote to do away with farm price supports and the Small Business Administration? What Congressman from the suburban Northeast is going to vote to eliminate Amtrak subsidies and college loans?

When Reagan announced his budget, Congressional leaders announced it was DOA (dead on arrival). Reagan retorted that a Democratic budget would be VOA (vetoed on arrival). This clash has produced the Gramm-Rudman "budget-balancing" act. If the president and Congress cannot agree on a budget by the beginning of the next fiscal year (October 1986), then large cuts will automatically take effect, about half in the military and half in social programs. Gramm-Rudman has produced a cer-

tain amount of hysteria in some bourgeois circles. It has been called a legislative monstrosity, unworkable and a breakdown of representative government.

In fact, as a more clear-eyed observer called it, Gramm-Rudman is a paper dragon. Basically, it is a stalling device for Congressmen. To begin with, the law may well be thrown out by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional. A lower federal court has already thrown a monkey wrench in the works. In any case, the big cuts would not really take effect until after the November elections. And then the lame-duck session of Congress could amend Gramm-Rudman or do away with it altogether. But whatever happens to the Reagan budget and Gramm-Rudman, one thing is certain. The vast majority of the American people will be paying dearly for the anti-Soviet war buildup.

## Reaganomics Bombs American Industry

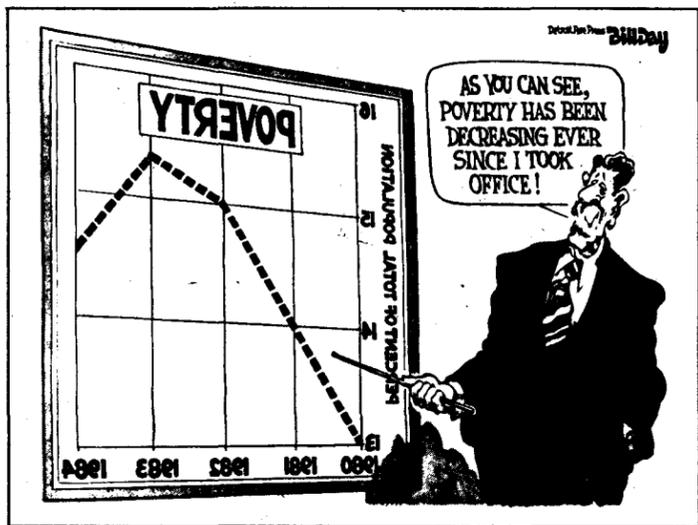
Reagan's unrestrained militarism has not caused the Soviet leaders to "cry uncle." Nor has it cowed the Soviet people, who stood up to and in the end destroyed Hitler's Wehrmacht. But Reaganomics has done a punishing job on American industry and the industrial working class. *Business Week* (3 March) recently issued a special report on "The Hollow Corporation," expressing alarm over the deindustrialization of America. The share of manufacturing in the U.S. economy has fallen from a peak of 30 percent in the early 1950s to 25 percent in the late '70s, to 21 percent last year. The co-founder and chairman of Sony, Akio Morita, described what is happening very well:

"American companies have either shifted output to low-wage countries or come to buy parts and assembled products from countries like Japan that can make quality products at low prices. The result is a hollowing of American industry. The U.S. is abandoning its status as an industrial power."

After three years of "recovery" from the 1981-82 depression, there are now *1.7 million fewer* manufacturing jobs in this country than in 1979. The labor market in the Reagan years is symbolized by high school dropouts slaving at McDonald's for subminimum wages at the lower end while Wall Street takeover artists are raking in millions at the upper end. Meanwhile, the basic industrial proletariat of this country is being ground between giveback contracts negotiated by their wretched union misleaders and a shrinking job market as the manufacturing sector is being milked by rapacious profiteers.

Normally, during the upswing of the capitalist cycle real wages rise. Demand for labor increases and with it the bargaining power of the trade unions. But not this time. The real hourly earnings of factory production workers are today *lower* than they were at the depth of the 1981-1982 slump and 6 percent *less* than in the mid-1970s (*Monthly Labor Review*, December 1985). Reagan's destruction of the PATCO air controllers union within months of taking office, and with no resistance from the AFL-CIO tops, set the stage for a major capitalist offensive against labor. *Three million* unionized workers—one out of every six—have been forced to take wage and benefit cuts by bloodsucking bosses and treacherous labor bureaucrats. Last year union-negotiated wage increases of 2.7 percent were the *lowest* since they started keeping records. And since inflation is running at almost 4 percent, the union tops are negotiating real *wage cuts*.

Union-busting, wage-gouging and givebacks are, however, no substitute for retooling and investment in new technology. And this is just what is *not* happening in American industry. In 1983-84 Japan, West Germany, Canada, Sweden and even Britain (!) all outstripped the U.S. in increasing



Reagan budget cuts hit hardest at black and Hispanic poor and the elderly.

the anti-Communist fanaticism, short-sightedness and sheer stupidity of one man, Ronald Reagan. U.S. imperialism cannot and will not coexist peacefully with that world power issuing out of the first workers revolution—the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917—albeit bureaucratically degenerated under Stalin. In fact, the drive to achieve nuclear first-strike capability against the Soviet Union began under the Democratic Carter administration. And now Jimmy Carter is bellyaching because Reagan is hogging the "credit" for the war drive!

Bipartisan majorities in Congress have gone along with and funded a truly crackpot scheme like Star Wars. But the people who run this country's military establishment cannot launch a space shuttle without it blowing up and killing the seven astronauts aboard. How can anyone expect them to achieve the

Russia, it has also been waging a one-sided war at home against the organized working class, the poor, especially blacks and Hispanics, and the elderly. And now the fallout is hitting white, middle-class America, too. If you remember, none of this was supposed to happen. Reagan ran for office in 1980 promising to achieve "military superiority" over Russia, cut everyone's taxes by a third and still balance the budget! He solemnly pledged not to touch Social Security entitlement programs and to provide a "safety net" for the poor.

This was to be the miracle of "supply-side economics." Cut taxes enough, according to this right-wing nostrum, and it would stimulate such a vast outpouring of work effort and investment that national income would increase enough to restore the old total tax revenue, even more. During the 1980

productivity in manufacturing. Last year labor productivity in the U.S. *did not increase at all*. A columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* (6 February) wrote recently:

"Throughout the current economic expansion, in fact, plant and equipment outlays have been comparatively sluggish. Too much of U.S. economic growth went into demand for imports, and now, with the expansion already in its fourth year, American industry is still operating at just over 80% of capacity."

What accounts for the stagnation of American industrial investment and therefore productivity? To begin with, the American middle and upper classes are notorious spendthrifts by international standards. In 1983, for example, the U.S. had by far the lowest personal savings rate—5 percent—in the advanced capitalist world. Canadians saved 13 percent of their personal income, the West Germans 14 percent and the Japanese 21 percent. Moreover, even America's relatively small pool of domestic savings is being drained by the Star Wars deficit. Thus last year the personal savings rate fell below 3 percent, the lowest level in three decades. At the same time, consumer installment credit soared to a record high of almost 20 cents for every dollar of after-tax income. "I find this one of the more alarming aspects of the economic scene," exclaimed Mellon Bank chief economist Norman Robertson. "You just don't have any future" as a country "unless you save."

There is another crucial way in which Reaganomics is foreclosing on the economic future of this country. In order to prevent the massive budget deficits from generating runaway inflation, Federal Reserve chief Volcker has kept the throttle on the supply of money and credit. As a result real interest rates (subtracting for inflation) have been pushed to historic highs. Throughout most of the postwar era real interest rates ran in the 2-3 percent range. In the Reagan years they've run 7 to 10 percent. Even more importantly, the real cost of borrowing capital for American businessmen is two to three times higher than in Japan. In fact, as Oklahoma Senator David Boren pointed out in the *Wall Street Journal* (10 February), on long-term research and development, "Given the current differential in our capital costs, the Japanese can afford to invest nearly five times as much as we can in the same 10-year project."

Research and development is the key to increasing labor productivity. It is also the most striking evidence of the deterioration of the U.S. economy in the Reagan years. Twenty years ago total R&D spending amounted to slightly over 2 percent of gross national product. In 1984 this amount was practically cut in half at 1.2 percent. Ten years ago half of all research was funded by the Pentagon, and half by civilian businesses and institutions. In 1984 the military ate up two-thirds of all R&D spending. In other words, investment to develop new civilian technologies is

proportionally less than half what it was a generation ago. Even in absolute terms it is a third less than 20 years ago. Is there any question why the U.S. can no longer compete with the Japanese?

### Giving Junk a Bad Name

If American capitalists are not investing in productive assets, what are they doing with all the money not being squandered by Pentagon contractors? Answer: they're raiding and milking one another's companies. There has been a seismic shift in the financial structure of American capitalism in the past few years. Nearly \$200 billion in equity (stocks) has disappeared from corporate treasuries and been replaced with IOUs that have to be paid. U.S. corporations are more top-heavy with debt than any time since the late 1920s. As we have seen, all this borrowing is part of the

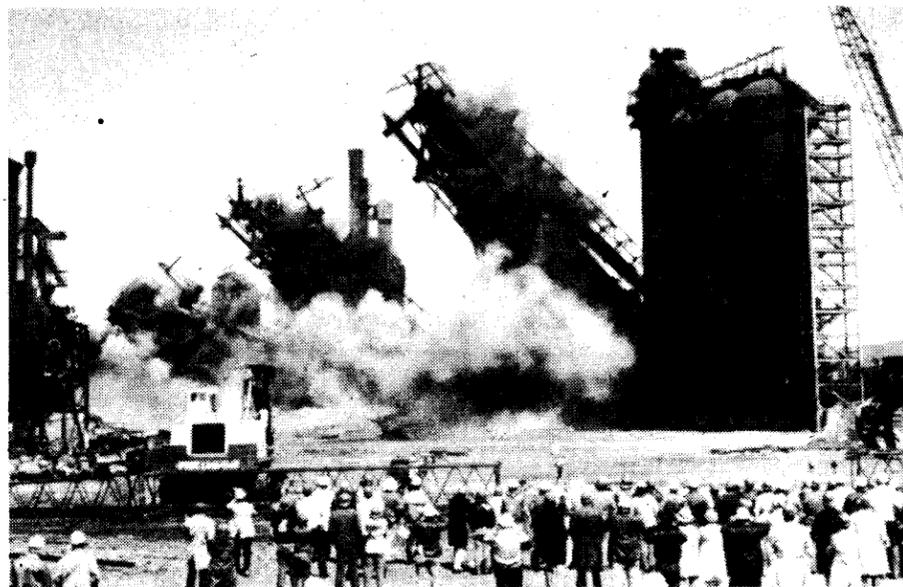
high-yield bonds called junk bonds. What is the collateral behind these junk bonds? It is the assets of the big company targeted for takeover! Why are many big banks willing to finance the raiders' shell game? Because at present interest rates there is little demand for productive investment, and junk bonds are still considered safer and more lucrative than lending more money to Mexico or Brazil. Having bled Latin America white, U.S. banks are now out to bleed American companies. The London *Economist* (14 December 1985) observed:

"There has been an especial reason in America why much of the new money has sloshed into stock markets. American banks have burned their fingers lending to Latin America and on rural real estate, so they are now burning them lending to small companies which want to swallow bigger companies up."

Typical of the current wave of hostile

Comparisons with the frenzied Wall Street bull market in the late 1920s are obvious. Then speculators borrowed as much as 90 cents on the dollar from their brokers to buy stock. They expected to repay these loans ("call money") by selling the stock at ever-higher prices. The brokers in turn borrowed like crazy from money markets across the U.S. and around the world. So when the stock market topped out in October 1929, it set off a chain reaction of defaults and an ever-widening circle of business contraction.

Just as speculators in the late '20s counted on higher stock prices to repay their loans, so today's raiders are counting on repaying theirs from the cash flow of the companies they take over. But what happens if there just isn't enough cash? "Sooner or later there'll be a problem—a failure of an overleveraged company," predicts Kenneth Mil-



The deindustrialization of America: Pentagon contractors and Wall Street raiders squander the country's productive wealth as manufacturing sector shrinks. Left: Steel plant demolished in Youngstown, Ohio.

takeover mania sweeping Wall Street. Between 1969 and 1980 there were only 12 mergers involving \$1 billion or more among American firms. Last year alone there were over 30 such billion-dollar deals.

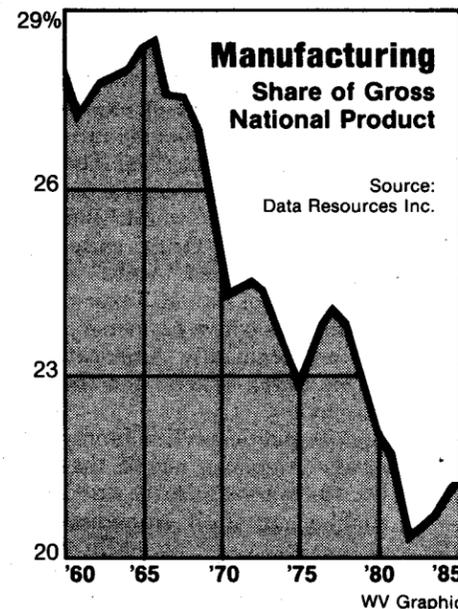
What we are now witnessing is not simply an acceleration of the historic tendency toward capitalist concentration. These mergers have little to do with the advantages of the economies of scale, an improved division of labor or even monopolizing the supply of a given commodity. What is involved here is looting companies of their assets. This is one of the most morbid symptoms of American capitalism's decay. The men who are taking over increasing chunks of corporate wealth have no interest at all in future economic growth. For them, the long run simply does not exist. Just as the political rulers of this country are ravaging America's productive capacity through the Star Wars deficit, so are the raiders and their bankers through the takeover bacchanalia.

Here's the way it works. A raider like T. Boone Pickens or Sir James Goldsmith sets up a shell corporation which has *no assets*. This company then issues

takeovers is that of Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corp. by Denver oil baron Marvin Davis in 1981. Since then Davis has taken more than *half a billion dollars* out of Fox to pay some of the debt he took on to buy it, and the company must raise an estimated \$400 million more to pay additional debt and still keep making movies. "Davis has just raped this company," is the judgment of an executive at a rival film producer.

To forestall such hostile takeovers, corporate managers have to rape their own companies, so to speak. They have to pay out high dividends and maximize short-term earnings at all costs. So they avoid long-term investments and risky ventures using new technologies. Peter Jones, a retired senior vice president with Levi Strauss, notes acidly: "While we in America devote a major part of our material and human resources to promoting and fighting mergers and hostile takeovers, we are becoming less and less competitive with Japan and all the new Japans."

Moreover, these long-term effects could be dwarfed by a financial panic if one of the big junk-bond issues defaults.



Proletarian link between Mexico and the U.S.: workers in Mexico City protest austerity ordered by Yankee bankers, Mexican government (left). Largely Chicano copper miners in Arizona strike against Phelps Dodge, 1984 (right).

### Mexican Debt Bomb on a Short Fuse

In late August 1982 the head of Mexico's central bank telexed bad news to U.S. Treasury officials. Because of falling oil revenues, his country could not meet the payments on the principal of its then \$80 billion in foreign debt. During this crisis Volcker harangued hesitant Treasury officials that they must funnel money to Mexico quickly so Wall Street banks would be paid on time. "If you don't do it," he reportedly shouted at them, "the whole thing is going to come crashing down." Today, once again, everyone is concerned that a Mexican default could bring the whole thing crashing down.

The Mexican and, more generally, Latin American debt crisis originated with the so-called OPEC "petrodollar recycling" of the 1970s. U.S. banks were then awash with money from the oil-rich sheiks of Araby and their partners in Houston and Dallas. With the U.S. and West Europe mired in recession in the mid-1970s, Wall Street financiers had to look elsewhere for lucrative loan prospects. They chose the more developed Third World countries. The tenfold increase in the price of oil spearheaded a general inflationary boom for primary products. Latin American *caudillos* and their Yankee bankers counted on the prices of Mexican and Venezuelan oil, Brazilian coffee and iron ore, Argentine

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# Debt Bomb...

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wheat and beef, Chilean and Peruvian copper to continue spiraling ever upward or, at any rate, to remain high. By 1980 almost 60 percent of the profits of American banks came from overseas operations, and 20 percent of Chase Manhattan's earnings came from Brazil alone.

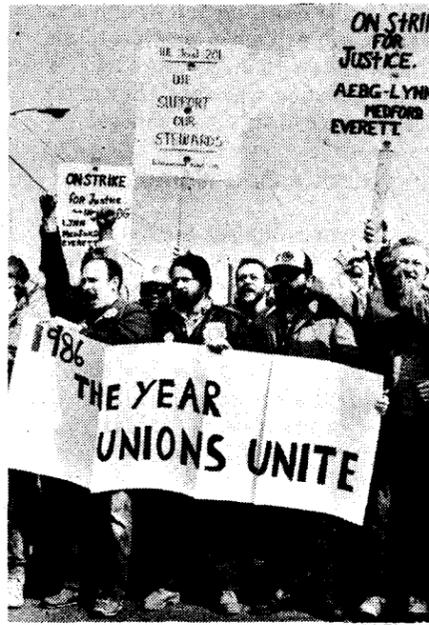
But then the 1981-82 world depression popped the commodity price boom like a balloon. Some 30 million people were unemployed in North America and West Europe, industrial production fell sharply and export markets dried up for Latin American products. "To some extent, U.S. inflation was broken on the backs of the Third World," admits even the *Wall Street Journal* (2 October 1985). The would-be cartels for copper, tin, coffee, sugar and rubber all collapsed as desperate Third World regimes cut prices to maintain market share. And now so has the strongest cartel of all, OPEC. Remember the anti-OPEC hysteria back in the '70s? The Arabs were blamed for sabotaging the economic health of the "free world." But key to the success of the OPEC cartel were those blond, blue-eyed "Arabs" in the executive offices of Exxon, Texaco, etc. OPEC was at its core a partnership between the predominantly American oil majors (the Seven Sisters) and the Saudi monarchy.

In the late '70s politicians like Jimmy Carter told the American people that the good life was over because the world was fast running out of oil. Nonsense! OPEC's price-gouging—at its height a

debt crisis in 1982. Today the situation facing Mexico is in every way far worse. Export earnings have fallen from \$20 billion in 1981 to \$15 billion last year. This year simply the interest payments due foreign moneylenders amount to \$10 billion! When Mexico's new president, Miguel de la Madrid, was inaugurated in December 1982, he proclaimed: "The austerity is obligatory." Prices were raised for all goods and services provided by the state, including electricity, telephones, road and rail transportation, and urban transit. Sales (value-added) taxes were doubled. Subsidies were slashed for a broad range of consumer goods, including such basic foodstuffs as beans and corn tortillas. Industrial production plummeted as unemployment soared, all in order to reduce imports.

In this way a net capital outflow of over \$7 billion was squeezed out of the Mexican people over the past three years for the banking houses of New York and Zürich. Mexico was supposed to be the "good boy," the model Latin American debtor nation that was willing to swallow the IMF's bitter medicine. But despite the Mexican government's "success" in tightening the belts of Mexican workers, the country is now in worse shape than ever. How much more will they take? A liberal Mexican academic, Jorge Castañeda, protests: "Mexico can no longer bleed its economy, its people and its future in order to meet interest payments."

Mexico has one of the largest and best-organized proletariats in Latin America. But for decades that proletariat has been shackled by a corporatist bureaucracy whose main stock in trade is anti-Yankee nationalist demagoguery.



WV Photo

Striking GE workers at Lynn, Massachusetts fight bosses' union-busting offensive, March 5.

coming together. The feverish lending to Latin America in the 1970s has produced in Mexico an explosive economic and political situation. The corporate takeover mania has created fears among investors of a major junk-bond default. And international financiers are now voting with their yen and deutschmarks against Reagan's Star Wars deficit. The dollar has fallen 25 percent in world money markets over the last year. Federal Reserve chief Volcker recently told Congress that the dollar's drop was nearing "the danger zone." If it falls much further, the run on the dollar may become a rout as foreign investors pull their money out of the U.S. before it loses even more value.

Ever since the Latin American debt crisis broke in late 1982, financiers and economists have been asking themselves: can another great crash like 1929 happen again? No one doubts the possibility that a stoppage of Mexican interest payments or a big junk-bond default, for example, could set off a chain reaction of bankruptcies. But the conventional bourgeois wisdom is that such a financial collapse will be prevented by the application of "socialism" to banks in trouble. Indeed, every capitalist in the world is an ardent advocate of nationalization... of his debts when he can't pay them. The men who run Wall Street and the Fortune 500 boardrooms know that the Reagan gang's "free market" rhetoric is so much bullshit.

Look what happened to Continental-Illinois. In 1983 the eighth largest bank in the country was about to go bust primarily due to unwise speculation in the Oklahoma oil patch. The federal government then pumped in \$7.5 billion, appointed its own overseers and totally reorganized the bank's operations. In effect Continental-Illinois was nationalized. Many bourgeois spokesmen maintain that bank bailouts like Continental can be carried out on any scale necessary to prevent another great crash. This argument was presented clearly a few years ago by the late Robert Weintraub, then senior economist for the Joint Economic Committee of Congress:

"Because the banking system collapsed in the early 1930s, some believe that it could happen again... However, what happened in the 1930s could have been prevented if the Federal Reserve had kept the money supply from contracting, as it should have done."

—"International Debt: Crisis and Challenge," *Cato Journal*, Spring/Summer 1984

In other words, another great crash can always be prevented if only the government runs the printing presses fast enough. But such a mammoth bank bailout, especially coming on top of the over \$200 billion a year Star Wars deficit, would produce an inflationary explosion the likes of which this country has never seen. Interest rates would shoot up to triple-digit levels disrupting production and commerce. People's savings would disappear. To dampen

inflationary pressures, the American ruling class would try to impose an austerity which would make the present Reagan cuts look like chicken feed. In short, America would begin to look more and more like Brazil.

The mad ambition of this country's rulers to destroy the Soviet Union is bleeding the productive wealth of America, posing a future of more depression, racism and permanent pauperization—and with the ever-increasing threat of nuclear Armageddon. Leon Trotsky's words in the Transitional Program, written in the depths of the last Great Depression, hold doubly true today:

"The economic prerequisite for the proletarian revolution has already in general achieved the highest point of fruition that can be reached under capitalism. Mankind's productive forces stagnate. Already new inventions and improvements fail to raise the level of material wealth. Conjunctural crises under the conditions of the social crisis of the whole capitalist system afflict ever heavier deprivations and sufferings upon the masses. Growing unemployment, in its turn, deepens the financial crisis of the state and undermines the unstable monetary systems. Democratic regimes, as well as fascist, stagger on from one bankruptcy to another.... "All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet 'ripened' for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened'; they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership."

—*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International* (1938)

In the U.S. today, the wretched AFL-CIO bureaucracy is not only sabotaging workers' struggles but openly scabbing. Look at Hormel! Hormel meatpackers, Wheeling-Pittsburgh steel workers, Phelps Dodge copper miners, Watsonville cannery workers, Greyhound bus drivers and TWA flight attendants have shown combativity and determination to resist the massive takebacks and wage-gouging by the modern-day Jack the Rippers of corporate America. But union misleaders, beginning with former United Auto Workers picard Doug Fraser in the 1979 Chrysler bailout, would sell their grandmother's gravestone for a seat on the company's board of directors.

Class collaboration has turned into an insidious brand of corporatism as these labor lieutenants of capital shackle their members and strangle the unions' potential power while the bosses move to restore 1920s sweatshop working conditions and destroy entire workforces. A new class-struggle leadership must be forged, fusing the militant traditions which built the industrial unions in the 1930s with the political understanding that labor must break with the Democrats and forge a revolutionary workers party. By "expropriating the expropriators," a workers government must rebuild America on an international socialist planned economy, where production is based on need, not ruinous greed. ■



Der Spiegel

October 1929: Wall Street panic as stock market boom goes bust.

barrel of oil was selling for 80 times the cost of production in the Persian Gulf—had nothing to do with any real shortage in supply. And as the Persian Gulf producers pushed up prices, it became highly profitable to develop fields elsewhere (e.g., the southern Gulf of Mexico, the North Sea). Once these new oilfields came on stream, in addition to substitution and conservation measures, the price of oil was bound to fall. The Saudis tried vainly to stem the slide by cutting back production. They succeeded only in cutting back their share of the world market. Now they are turning on the oil tap to recoup that market share. The price has fallen from \$25 to \$13 a barrel in just a few months. So it's *finis* OPEC.

By and large, capitalist spokesmen are hailing the oil price collapse as a great boon to the Western world. "Economic Forecasts Brighter as Result of Oil Price Slump," headlines the *New York Times*. There is, however, a rather large black cloud behind this silver lining. A substantial section of American finance capital bet very heavily on sky-high oil prices, lending heavily to wildcatters in Texas and Oklahoma as well as oil-exporting countries like Mexico.

It was the beginning of the oil price slide which first triggered the Mexican

Now, under the unrelenting pressure of debt peonage, the Mexican corporatist political order could crack. Even moderately perceptive imperialist spokesmen worry that a social explosion just south of the border would make its current troubles in Central America look like mere brushfires.

Mexico is not simply the U.S.' major oil supplier and a major Wall Street debtor. There is also a powerful proletarian link. There are between 20 and 30 million Mexican and Chicano workers in the United States, concentrated from Texas to California and extending as far north as Chicago. These Hispanic proletarians are among the most combative elements in the North American workers movement. Witness the heroic battles of Chicano copper workers against Phelps Dodge in Arizona and the die-hard fight of predominantly Mexican-born women against the cannery bosses in Watsonville, California. As Reagan's agribusiness and "Sun Belt" capitalist pals are well aware, a social upheaval in Mexico would have a powerful impact on its neighbor to the north.

## The Spectre of a Great Crash

All the streams flowing into the debt-laden American economy are now

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# Turkish Workers...

(continued from page 6)

a revolutionary party to turn this anger into class struggle against the Fourth Reich of Thyssen and Flick.

## Smash the Fourth Reich!

Last year U.S. president Reagan and West German chancellor Kohl confirmed their anti-Soviet alliance by saluting the Nazi SS graves at Bitburg. This ceremony unleashed a wave of "Deutschland über alles" chauvinism and anti-Semitism across West German society. The mood of resurgent nationalism expresses the increased self-assertion of the German imperialist ruling class. It also provides a fertile climate for the growth of fascist organizations.

The 4.5 million *Gastarbeiter*, of which 1.5 million are Turks, are treated as disturbers of "national unity" and as scapegoats for all social ills while many are still needed to keep West Germany's economy strong. Those that are not needed are brutally expelled. Many Turkish working-class youth are forced to go "back to Turkey" after school although they hardly speak Turkish or know that country. This is especially hard on young Turkish women, who have been raised in Western society and are now forced to live under repressive Islamic custom. And while the West German bourgeoisie opens the doors wide for anti-Communist refugees from East Germany and East Europe, it locks up left-wing political refugees in concentration camps.

Wallraff believes that a Social Democratic government will change things for the better for foreign workers. But it was under a government led by Social Democratic chancellor Helmut Schmidt that the crackdown against the *Gastarbeiter* began. And remember "Ali's"



Popperfoto

employer Vogel was an SPD member in good standing. There is nothing shocking or surprising in this. The Social Democratic bureaucracy are the loyal labor lieutenants of the Thyssens and Flicks.

The Federal Republic of Germany is the official successor state to the Nazi Third Reich. And the continuity is not simply a formal one. Old Nazis are to be found at every level of the West German government. Some of West Germany's biggest industrialists, like Flick, first grew rich as exploiters of *Zwangsarbeiter* (slave labor) for Hitler's war machine. In 1944 there were 7.5 million slave laborers in Nazi Germany. They worked 16 hours a day, getting only 800 calories of food. After six months most were so weak they couldn't work any longer and were thrown into the gas ovens.

Today, the West German ruling class would like to wash its hands of the Holocaust. But the working class will never forgive nor forget the concentration camps where eleven million people, six million of them Jews, were killed, nor the slave-labor camps and the destruction of the German workers movement.

The nightmare of Nazi rule in Europe was finally ended in 1945 when the

Jewish slave labor in Nazi Germany (left). Stuttgart: Turkish workers march with banner saying, "We Don't Want to Be the Jews of Tomorrow."



Der Spiegel

victorious Soviet Red Army entered Berlin and raised the red flag atop the Reichstag. However, only one part of Germany was ripped from the hands of the capitalists and transformed into a workers state, albeit bureaucratically deformed by Stalinism. In East Germany there are no old Nazis in high places and no skinhead fascists to terrorize foreigners and workers. But in West Germany the bourgeoisie remained in power and by and large the old fascists kept calling the shots. They see Bitburg as the opening shot in their "revenge." Their aim is to overthrow the East German workers state and ultimately the Soviet Union, continuing the old Nazi program of "Drang nach Osten" (Drive to the East).

West Germany, however, is not one reactionary mass. The powerful German bourgeoisie finds its counterpart in a powerful and well-organized proletariat, one that was historically betrayed by Social Democracy and Stalinism. Never again must German imperialism, now in alliance with the far more powerful and dangerous warmongers in Washington, be allowed to plunge the world into a new wave of barbarism! The German working class can provide the spark to ignite the workers of the whole of Europe in the struggle for the revolu-

tionary future of mankind. This requires a Trotskyist party based on an internationalist program of *revolutionary unification* of Germany through socialist revolution in the West and political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy in the East.

Turkish worker militants can and must be a crucial component of a German revolutionary party. For the most part foreign workers are deeply integrated into West Germany's industrial labor force. Many of them are militant trade-union fighters, all the more so since they are not bound to the Social Democracy like their native German coworkers. There have been quite a few fights where German, Turkish and other foreign workers stood side by side struggling against the same capitalist enemy, from the 1973 Ford strike in Cologne to the shipyard occupations in Hamburg and Bremen in 1984 to last year's strikes for the 35-hour week. What is needed to weld the German and immigrant workers into a mighty assault on capital is a party based on an internationalist program which fights for full citizenship rights for foreign workers and for the defense of East Germany and the Soviet Union against resurgent German imperialism. ■

# French Elections...

(continued from page 7)

against imperialism, immediate and unconditional independence for French colonies. This is the task that the LTF has set itself.

## Critical Support to Lutte Ouvrière

For class-conscious workers who have had enough of Mitterrand's now very unpopular front, there can be no question of voting for the candidates of the reformist parties who have organized this disaster—including the CP. Georges Marchais' party now seeks to cover its tracks with a campaign presenting itself as the defender of the working class against reaction and the government's policies, while in fact

preparing yet another class-collaborationist operation. Marchais continues to defend CP ministers' complicity in three years of Mitterrand's anti-working-class, anti-Soviet policies, and declares the CP "is ready at any moment to participate with other forces" (*L'Humanité*, 13 January). The Stalinists' goal on March 16 is to get a large enough vote to create conditions for eventual participation in another government with the SP and bourgeois "progressives," or even to support it from the outside—a popular front corridor coalition.

As for the "far left," the LCR is also trying to cover up its decade of pro-Mitterrand "unity"-mongering. Krivine's outfit has so immersed itself in anti-Soviet social democracy that it marched together with fascists in defense of Polish Solidarność, Ronald Reagan's favorite "union." And when General Jaruzelski visited Paris last December, the LCR denounced Mitterrand from the right for receiving the Polish leader. In the March elections, they are calling for a vote to the SP and CP in those departments where they are not presenting candidates or participating in a social-democratic anti-Soviet lash-up of ex-New Leftists, ecologists, etc. which calls for a "nonaligned" French imperialism. For its part, Lambert's PCI/MPTT, which has fused with the CIA-financed Force Ouvrière union bureaucracy, is running candidates in every district on a program defending "the popular mandate of 1981"—that is, Mitterrand's original program!

For the LTF, opposition to the popular front is a question of principle: we have always refused to vote for candidates of class-collaborationist coalitions, fighting instead for working-class independence from all sectors of the bourgeoisie. So following the breakup of the SP/CP/Left Radical "Union of the Left," when Marchais

announced in 1980 that "three times is enough"—referring to the popular fronts of 1936, 1944 and 1972—and the CP talked of running under its own colors, the LTF considered critical support to its candidates. However, this tactic was rendered impossible by the Stalinists' disgusting assault on immigrant workers at Vitry, designed to demonstrate the CP's chauvinist loyalty to "its" bourgeoisie as a preliminary to participation in the Mitterrand government.

In the March 16 legislative elections, the LTF is calling for a vote to candidates of Lutte Ouvrière. LO is running in opposition to the government, and unlike 1981 when it called for a vote for Mitterrand in the second round—"without illusions" but also "without

reservations" (!)—this time it is explicitly refusing to vote for the SP and CP. While now claiming to be sadder but wiser, LO presents an economist program, simply tailing behind the widespread working-class discontent with the Mitterrand regime. Nevertheless, by running independently of and against the mass reformist parties, the LO campaign allows revolutionary Trotskyists to politically combat the popular front by offering their sharply critical support.

The Ligue Trotskyste de France, the only communist organization that refused to capitulate before rose-colored illusions in Mitterrand five years ago, insists that working-class independence is the key to victory in the coming class battles. ■



Syigma

French Trotskyists say: This government is anti-worker! Break with Mitterrand!

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# Nicaragua...

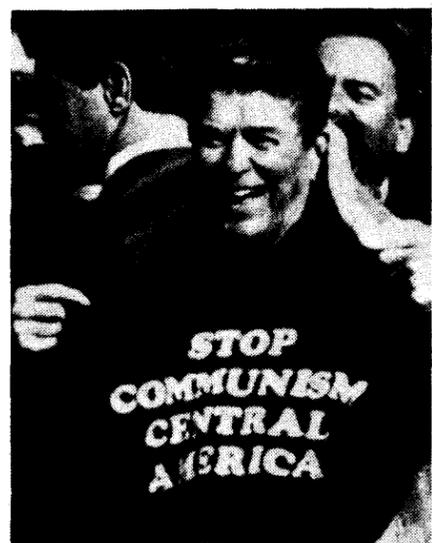
(continued from page 1)

will strengthen the internal basis for counterrevolution.

The Democrats are no less committed to counterrevolution in Nicaragua than is Reagan. They have another strategy, that's all. They know the open U.S. backing for the hated contras will strengthen the hardliners in the Sandinista regime and isolate Washington's friends in Managua. As a former senior editor of the *New York Times*, John Oakes, argued: "The more pressure from the outside, the less freedom on the inside." By "freedom" Oakes and his fellow liberals mean freedom for the Superior Council of Private Enterprise and reactionary Catholic hierarchy to try to organize the overthrow of the Sandinistas. Defense of the Nicaraguan Revolution demands the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, U.S. imperialism's fifth column.

## Reagan's Redbaiting Backfires

Having just gotten out of a jam in the Philippines by replacing the used-up dictator Marcos with the fresh face of Cory Aquino, the Reaganites figure



AFF

White House can't sell contra losers.

they're on a roll. Suddenly they talk of performing the "magic of Manila" in Managua. Reagan's favorite shuttle diplomat Philip Habib was appointed to line up Congressional committees and Central American puppet presidents behind the contra aid. And Washington pundits were called into the White House to get the word from the Heavy Hitters on deep background. As William Safire reported it, the Reagan/Shultz/Weinberger message went something like this:

"You say you like this topple-the-dictator business?... Tell you what we're gonna do: we're gonna finance the overthrow of the dictatorial regime of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua. And while we're at it, we're gonna help Jonas Savimbi topple the corrupt dictatorship in Angola. You like toppling, you'll get toppling."

—*New York Times*, 3 March

But it's one thing to topple an American flunkey in the Philippines and replace him with another even more

beholden to Washington, simply by shooting a phone call from the White House; it's another matter altogether to topple a regime growing out of a popular revolution that overthrew a hated tyrant in Nicaragua and which recently won free and fair elections hands down.

Realizing that the contras may be on the ropes and the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie remains divided over a U.S. invasion, the only way they can hope to topple the Sandinistas, the administration has decided they can at least make the Democrats squirm. Meanwhile, the "American boys" are already being deployed. Six U.S. air bases have been set up in "Fort Honduras," with a seventh on the way, and more than 25,000 troops have been rotated through on one or another "exercise" during the last three years. Currently a few thousand National Guardsmen are participating in the "Cabañas '86" maneuvers, with more scheduled to arrive in April to stage a mock battle a few miles from the Nicaraguan border.

After five years and over \$150 million the Somozaist-led contras are on the verge of collapse. The vast bulk of the force is now holed up in Honduras reeling from the pounding of the Sandinista army and militia. A senior contra official confessed to the *New York Times* (6 March) that the mercenaries were a "paralyzed army, maybe a defeated army," admitting that "This is going to take more than \$100 million because they are no match for the Sandinistas." Indeed, top contra commander Col. Enrique Bermúdez, a former National Guard officer with close ties to the CIA, blames the contras' disintegration on a lack of boots. But the truth is, the Somozaist officers are pathological killers, good for nothing but murder and rape of civilians, while their ranks are often peasants who were kidnapped and forced to join.

The Reaganauts launched their lobbying effort by charging the Sandinistas with a Church-based "disinformation campaign" aimed at Congress. That's rich. Here we have the masters of the Big Lie, who have described the contra gang of drug pushers, sadists and

rapists as "freedom fighters" while pumping in millions to overturn the popular Nicaraguan Revolution, attacking the Sandinistas for trying to manipulate public opinion! Perhaps the melodramatic highlight of the administration's campaign came during Secretary of State George Shultz's February 27 appearance before a skeptical Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Assuring the Senators that he knows "who the good guys and the bad guys are," Shultz pounded the table and fairly shouted that the contras could win, "if they had some shoes to wear and some uniforms to wear" (*New York Times*, 28 February).

White House communications director Patrick Buchanan, one of the main architects of the redbaiting tactic, drew a line dividing the "good" guys from the "bad" guys in this country, too: "With the vote on contra aid, the Democratic Party will reveal whether it stands with Ronald Reagan and the resistance—or Daniel Ortega and the Communists." Reagan's speechwriter didn't consider this an open question, stating that "the national Democratic Party has now become, with Moscow, co-guarantor of the Brezhnev doctrine in Central America" (*Washington Post*, 5 March). But many liberal Democrats worry that "complete overthrow of the Sandinistas" is not "likely to happen without massive intervention by us." They feel constrained from direct military intervention in Nicaragua by the memory of America's humiliating defeat in Vietnam.

Perhaps the biggest reason for the liberals' skepticism is the strategic

victory won by the Sandinistas over the contras last fall. The Sandinista army has developed battle-hardened counter-insurgency battalions which can be rapidly deployed and, when backed by Soviet-supplied MI-24 Hind helicopter gunships and mobile rocket batteries, constitute a devastating anti-guerrilla force. The contra defeat has been so complete that the economically vital coffee harvest, a prime target of contra sabotage in previous years, has been left virtually untouched, even though contra camps are just over the border from important coffee plantations. This is doubly significant as soaring coffee prices are likely to provide a major boost to the Nicaraguan economy.

Reagan claims that "What we're seeing is the end of the post-Vietnam syndrome, the return of realism about the Communist danger.... And now we're ready for one of the final acts" (*New York Times*, 11 March). Not so fast, Ronbo. Not only is the American public opposed to U.S. involvement in Central America and Congress leery of pouring more money down the contra rat hole, sections of the labor movement are beginning to mobilize against the domestic effects of the war drive. Strikes against givebacks today could broaden into political action tomorrow if Reagan decides to "send in the Marines." The Spartacist League has called for labor strikes against a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua, and those who recall the last months of the American army's presence in Vietnam know that this could well happen.

Even the *Wall Street Journal* (5 March) notes that "Reagan's Risky Tack Ties Defeat of Contra Aid to Soviet Takeover or U.S. Invasion of Nicaragua." This could lead to a "big political defeat" if he can't pull it off, worries the mouthpiece of American finance capital. But it will be no thanks to the radlibs and reformist left, who are just as terrified as the Democrats of being labeled "soft on the Soviets." Ever since Daniel Ortega went to Moscow last May looking for Russian aid to counter the imminent U.S. trade embargo, the "solidarity" milieu has taken a dive. Today, the main opposition to Reagan's contra aid has been from nuns and bishops lobbying Congress! But while the fake-lefts try to hide from the Russian question, declaring that talk of communism is just a red herring, the Trotskyists of the SL forthrightly answer Reagan: Defense of Cuba/USSR Begins in Central America! Defend, Complete, Extend the Nicaraguan Revolution! ■



Reagan's Contra Band.

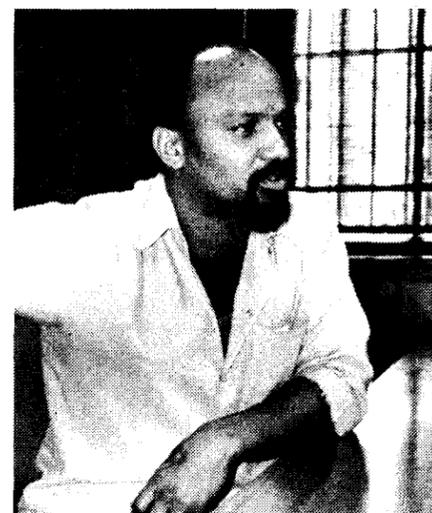
## Geronimo Pratt...

(continued from page 5)

Panthers to defend themselves against the police attacks." He added, "I made up my mind a long time ago that I would be prepared to die for my positions. The thing that really hurts is when my young boy visits me and says, daddy, come home, play basketball with me."

Geronimo Pratt is a courageous representative of a generation of black militants who sought to engage in revolutionary struggle against racist American capitalism. Pratt is among those class-war prisoners to whom the Partisan Defense Committee, in the tradition of the International Labor Defense, sends monthly stipends to help alleviate the horrors of confinement in some degree. The SL's principled revolutionary defense stands in sharp contrast to the bulk of the left who have abandoned Geronimo Pratt because he continues to symbolize revolutionary opposition to black oppression, unlike the black front men for Reagan's America such as Jesse Jackson or Wilson Goode.

There is no justice for black people in



WV Photo

Geronimo Pratt, foremost class-war prisoner in America.

racist America. As Don Alexander told demonstrators outside the SF Federal Building, "We can win against the cross-burners, the lynchers, the race-terrorists with the program of mobilizing labor and blacks, all the oppressed, independently of the capitalist parties. We must forge a multiracial revolutionary working-class party and finish the Civil War, the unfinished business for the coming American workers revolution." ■

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# For a National Strike: Rip Up Giveback Contract!

## Lynn GE Workers Strike Back

LYNN, Massachusetts—Over a thousand workers at General Electric's Turbine Division here walked off the job March 5, bringing GE's giant Riverworks complex to a total standstill. At a noon rally at union headquarters, hundreds of Aircraft Engine Division workers, on strike since February 21, chanted "1, 2, 3, 4—Bring Turbine out the door!" They then marched to the gate where they greeted the Turbine workers streaming out of the plant with applause, cheers and union chants. Later that afternoon, more than 80 percent of the workers voted for a plant-wide strike. Two days earlier, 1,800 GE employees in the nearby Everett and Medford aircraft parts plants also struck. With all 9,000 workers out, it was a solid show of force by International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) Local 201.

The issue behind this strike is GE's arrogant attempt to destroy the union. Local 201's strike bulletins point to a backlog of grievances and harassment by foremen, including physical attacks against shop stewards. Last August a steward was so badly beaten that he was spitting up blood and required hospital attention. The last straw was in February when union steward Richard O'Day, a 46-year-old mechanic who worked at GE for 24 years, was given a week's suspension without pay because he told a boss he didn't "give a damn." Aircraft Division workers walked out in response to this highhanded discipline. Local 201 members are determined that their union will not be another PATCO; as one striker told the *Boston Globe* (4 March), "What we're striking over is, is there going to be a union tomorrow or not?"

GE workers have aggressively struck back against the company's refusal to recognize the union on the shopfloor. Since picket lines went up, management has persisted in its tactics of violence: at least one striker was run down by a company car and required hospitalization; another was jumped by company thugs while doing solo picket duty. The way to answer the union-busters is with a massive show of force, as during the 1969 strike when thousands of picketers surrounded the Lynn plant and scores of vehicles blocked the entrances. GE's anti-union violence is not a "local issue." Local 201 should lead a nationwide walkout against this strikebreaking company which first gave Ronald Reagan a national TV platform on "General Electric Theater," and sponsored Reagan on a tour of all 135 GE plants to spew out his redbaiting attacks on labor.

Lynn GE workers are in an excellent position to play hardball and help spark a real labor offensive in this country. Historically a center of union militancy, Local 201 voted down the national GE contract last summer by a two-to-one

GE workers in Lynn, Massachusetts in solid strike against union-busting.



margin, objecting to the givebacks in wages and benefits. It was shoved down their throats, but not for long. As one striker put it succinctly: "Concessions are bullshit." The union has GE by the balls: the Lynn plants produce vital equipment for the U.S. military, including engines for F-18 jet fighters and Blackhawk helicopters. Even the bosses' press noted that the strike has left "work on the production of some \$1 billion in military aircraft engines...at a standstill" (*Boston Herald*, 5 March). With a successful strike here, GE workers can unilaterally rewrite the contract and set the pace for labor nationally.

Lynn GE is critical to Reagan's war drive against the Soviet Union. For that very reason, strikers can expect the full arsenal of company/government repression to be brought to bear. Neither General Electric nor the Pentagon is going to take this lying down. The last major strike against GE took place during the Vietnam War. That hard-fought 101-day 1969 strike was the first in a wave of labor struggles: auto, post office and Teamsters. "Strikebreaker, war maker—Smash GE!" was a popular chant picked up by union militants making the link between the struggle of American workers and the struggle against Washington's war on the peasants and workers of Vietnam. Should this strike last for any length of time, you can bet the bosses and their state will cloak their union-busting in propaganda about "national defense."

Already, GE has asked the NLRB to enjoin Local 201 against picketing on the basis of an injunction handed down during the 1969 strike. As for GE's "patriotism," color it green. Last year, the company was exposed as part of a massive war industry swindle.

### Don't Fall for Flag-Waving Union-Busting Claptrap!

Key to winning this strike is the fight for a class-struggle leadership that refuses to play by the bosses' rules or knuckle under to the predictable "patriotic" attacks from the company and their "labor lieutenants" in the top echelons of the union internationals. As strikers from Phelps Dodge copper miners to Hormel meatpackers have found out, the AFL-CIO misleaders are avowed enemies of any serious workers' struggles. And this is nothing new. A *Boston Globe* (4 March) article on the

Lynn strike recounted the post-World War II witchhunts in the CIO, which broke the powerful Communist-led UE:

"...the company helped foster [the IUE] some 35 years ago. Taking advantage of the red-baiting acceptable during the McCarthy era, GE helped drive out a powerful union and invited in several others in an attempt to divide workers. GE won then. But the militancy it hoped to rid itself of in the 1940s and '50s is still alive at Local 201 in Lynn."

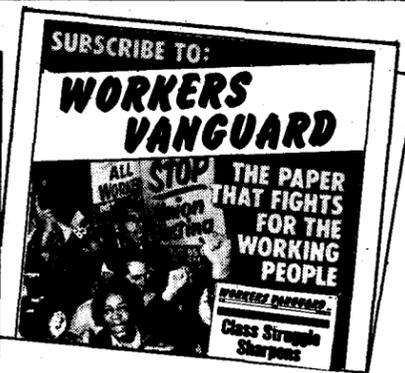
The present union bureaucracy was forged in the anti-Soviet Cold War. And it's a straight line from purging the union leaderships of militants and "reds" in the '40s to givebacks and physical violence against union stewards in the '80s.

The Lynn strike is not an isolated action: it's part of a national reaction to the sellout givebacks negotiated by the labor fakers. The entire Boston-area

labor movement must be mobilized behind Local 201, and GE workers must link their fight to others around the country. The seven-month-old strike by Hormel meatpackers in Austin, Minnesota has already inspired Lynn workers with their militant determination. At an IUE solidarity meeting with Hormel P-9 strikers in Lynn, March 5, a P-9 spokesman laid it out:

"We gave 'em all kinds of concessions—we sold the farm in '78. In 1984, because of the wage reopener in our contract, Hormel said, 'Hey, you guys, want to sign this?' We said, 'Naw, stick it man, we've done enough for you'."

Enough of this union-busting garbage! GE workers are on the front line of labor's fight. A victory here can turn the tide for unionists from striking TWA flight attendants to Hormel packing-house workers. Victory to the Lynn GE strike! ■



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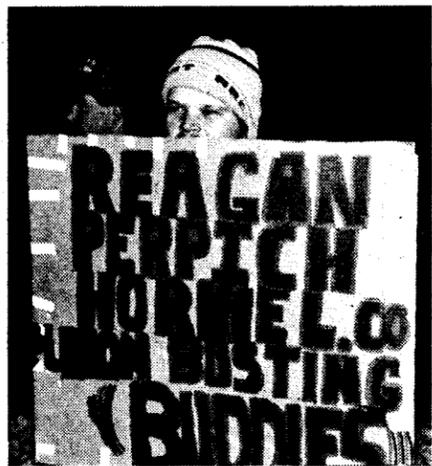
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# Hormel Strike...

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"cram your Spam," but a powerful workers' boycott—where Teamsters, railroad workers, longshoremen "hot-cargo" (refuse to handle) Hormel products. The company, cops and courts, the capitalist parties and their agents in the labor movement, will all scream "that's illegal"—but P-9 didn't get this far playing by the bosses' rules. Labor must play hardball to win! Mass pickets to shut down the plant! Don't touch scab goods—too hot to handle! Victory to P-9!

After years of having concessions and mass layoffs rammed down their throats, American workers are fed up. The giveback artists in the labor bureaucracy have become open company cops as they trade billions in concessions and hundreds of thousands



WV Photo

Workers need their own party.

of union jobs for their seats on company boards. Winning the P-9 strike means breaking the stranglehold of the AFL-CIO misleaders. But various union "dissidents" like the National Rank and File Against Concessions (NRFAC) and their pseudo-socialist cheerleaders will not and cannot build a class-struggle opposition to capitalism's "labor lieutenants." Their role is to

cover the ass of saboteurs like UFCW's president "Loser" Wynn and AFL-CIO head "Lame" Kirkland.

The CIO unions were built by "reds" in the stormy labor battles of the 1930s. The road to industrial unionism was prepared by the militant, socialist-led mass strikes of 1934: the Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamsters, Toledo Auto-Lite workers and San Francisco longshoremen. The sit-down strike, key to organizing auto, was pioneered at Hormel's Austin plant in 1933 by the former "Wobblies" of the Independent Union of All Workers. These are the traditions of labor struggle that must be restored to win the fight at Hormel's. Today again it will take sharp class battles to bring Reagan down, and labor must forge its own party, a revolutionary workers party, to lead the fight.

## P-9's Picket Lines Have Drawn the Class Line

Throughout the labor movement, the line has been drawn over Hormel: are you with P-9 or with the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, who has enrolled in the official AFL-CIO campaign to smash the strike. In the San Francisco Bay Area, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) militants fighting to defend P-9 have been opposed every step of the way by the ILWU officialdom, who fear what a victory at Hormel would mean to the class struggle up and down the West Coast.

In Oakland-based ILWU Local 6 (warehouse), Militant Caucus member Pete Farruggio put forward a motion at the February union meeting to donate money to the Hormel strikers. Local president Al Lannon, the "progressive" darling of Bay Area liberals and radicals, went into a tirade denouncing the P-9 strikers, and succeeded in tabling the motion. At the February 26 General Executive Board, Lannon came back with a despicable "policy statement" attacking P-9 and calling for an end to the strike. He went on to say Local 6 "will not take sides in that inner-union struggle." There are no neutrals in Austin: Lannon has picked his side—he's with the scabherders and union-



UPI

Scabherding National Guardsmen were ordered by Democratic governor Perpich to break Hormel strike.

busters. Denouncing "falsely militant calls for 'all-out support' a thousand miles away," he calls for a "top-level Labor Commission" (like who, Kirkland and Wynn?) to "intervene" in the strike—in plain English, to sink it.

Farruggio counterposed a Militant Caucus motion to back the Hormel workers' fight and win now, calling for financial support to the strike and hot-cargoing Hormel's scab products. But with reformist Communist Party supporters sitting on their hands, Lannon's motion to scuttle support for the P-9 strike passed.

Meanwhile, in Local 10 (longshore) across the Bay in San Francisco, the ILWU bureaucracy tried to gut class-struggle solidarity with the Hormel strikers, just as they have spent the last 20 years presiding over the steady erosion of jobs, the hiring hall and working conditions on the waterfront. At the February 27 Local 10 Executive Board a P-9 striker addressed the meeting, after which Militant Caucus spokesman Stan Gow, who was recently re-elected to his 13th term on the board, introduced the following motion:

"Whereas: The courageous Hormel workers' strike is the critical battle for the American labor movement and whose victory could spark a long overdue labor offensive, and  
 "Whereas: It is imperative that the American labor movement do everything in its power to assure a victory by Hormel strikers, and  
 "Whereas: Instead, the strikers are being stabbed in the back by their own International leadership, backed up by the AFL-CIO executive committee, who are doing everything in their power, in collaboration with the bosses, the Democratic Party governor and the National Guard, to break the strike.  
 "Therefore, Be It Resolved: ILWU Local 10 conveys its complete solidarity with Local P-9 and all the Hormel workers and urges Local P-9, joined by all labor organizations in the Austin area and throughout the Midwest, to mobilize their members to build mass pickets at the Austin Hormel plant to shut it down tight, drive out the National Guard and win the strike, and  
 "Therefore, Be It Finally Resolved: That ILWU Local 10 will make an initial contribution of \$250 to the Hormel Strike Fund, will search out and hot cargo any Hormel products for the strike's duration and will do everything in our power to assist roving P-9 pickets."

While lifting a cap on local donations and raising the amount to \$500, Local 10 president Joe Lucas bureaucratically deleted the motion's clear stand with P-9 against Wynn, Kirkland & Co. and the Democratic Party strikebreakers. But the motion, including the key call to refuse to handle Hormel products, was then passed. Political strike action can lend decisive aid in defense of workers and the oppressed in key battles, such as against the 1973 coup in Chile or the bloody repression launched by the apartheid regime in South Africa in 1984. For more than a decade, the Militant Caucus has fought to establish the class-struggle tactic of hot-cargoing in Local 10, a majority-black local with its origins in the 1934 San Francisco general strike.

Gow moved that the board carry out the motion in defense of P-9 immediately by executive action, but none of the so-called "militants" on the board had the guts to buck the Local 10 hacks and

second Gow, thereby giving the bureaucracy several weeks to sabotage the motion until the March 20 union meeting. Among those who kept silent was one Howard Keylor, a fake-opponent and supporter of the ex-"External Tendency," an increasingly dubious clot who fled from the revolutionary struggle of the Spartacist League in the Reagan years. Keylor ran point for the ILWU tops during the 1984 boycott of South African cargo, declaring that hot-cargoing was not a union action, but only an act of "individual conscience." This enabled ILWU president Jimmy Herman to sink the boycott when the capitalist courts handed out their paper injunctions.

## Oust the Labor Traitors! Victory to P-9!

Back in Minnesota, the P-9 leadership, following the program of union adviser Ray Rogers' "Corporate Campaign" and the NRFAC lash-up of local union officials, is looking to a national consumer boycott to save the strike. This is counterposed to the hard class struggle which shut Hormel down in Austin and spread the strike to Ottumwa, Iowa in January. According to Ed Allen, a partner in Corporate Campaign, Inc., "The key isn't shutting the plant down tight but building solidarity with a wider public. We're counting on trade unionists around the country saying, 'We're not going to have another PATCO'" (In These Times, 29 January). But empty "solidarity" didn't save PATCO, and it won't stop the hog kill at Hormel. Back in January, Allen ordered militant Teamsters to stop when they successfully turned around scabs' cars at the Hormel gates. Rogers and Allen offer the courageous P-9ers the prospect of another long, losing "boycott strike," like the Morenci, Arizona copper strikers whose local unions were formally decertified February 19.

P-9 can win, in Austin, by mobilizing the forces to shut the plant down. Solidarity rallies, which are being held in cities across the country, can publicize the Hormel workers' fight and raise much-needed donations, but they are no substitute for mass pickets at the plant. At a March 8 rally in Atlanta, P-9 president Jim Guyette spelled out the strike leadership's retreat from the fight:

"We in Austin, in Ottumwa, are a little bit fatigued by this struggle. However, when one gets tired, you run a little bit, and soon you get over being tired. And that's exactly what we are doing. We're

# Hormel Butchers Workers

Responding to a baiting question from an anti-labor reporter who compared the horrifying industrial injury rate at Hormel to falling down on the ice (!), Local P-9 president Jim Guyette said, "People do not go to work to deliberately hack off pieces of their body in order to take advantage of any workers' compensation system."

Talk to any P-9 striker about his or her working conditions, and you will quickly sense the anger that has fueled this strike. Hormel treats its machinery far better than its workforce. Meatpacking is a dangerous industry, in which one third of the workers suffer some kind of injury every year. At Hormel's flagship Austin plant, there are an incredible 202 injuries per 100 workers per year—more than six times the average in the industry! Major lost-time injuries have more than doubled since 1981. At Hormel's, workers are treated like meat.

A P-9 member told WV about some typical accidents in the hog kill department. Workers standing elbow-to-elbow on cement platforms perform quick cutting operations on the hogs, using razor-sharp knives. One worker slipped off his blood-drenched platform, slashing his neighbor's leg as he fell. The injured worker almost bled to death. Another worker in "the cut" stabbed himself in the stomach; he had been

boning hams, cutting toward himself as they all must do in order to get the work done as fast as the company wants.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a very common ailment here. We were talking to some P-9ers over coffee in the union hall basement when they called over a fellow striker. When he put his forearms together, palms up, we saw the massive scars. Asked if his injuries were in the photo on one of P-9's leaflets, the strikers all chimed in, "No, there are plenty of wrists around that look the same."

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a collection of deposits in the wrists that is caused by the repeated grabbing motions required in many meatpacking jobs, from cutting to pulling nets off steamed hams. The deposits pinch the nerves and tendons, causing pain and in some cases rendering the hands useless. Some Hormel workers, after working on the grueling line, can't even hold onto a steering wheel!

Hormel is demanding that injured workers on rehab jobs lose their regular jobs if they don't reclaim them within 60 days. The company also wants a green light for unlimited speedup by eliminating "past practices" and outlawing the right to strike, the bottom line for safety on the job. At Hormel, defending yourself on the shopfloor is a matter of life and limb.

Spartacist Forum

## Eyewitness Report: Class Battle at Hormel Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win

Guest Speaker: Kevin Quirk, Member Amalgamated Transit Union Local 241

Saturday, March 22, 7:30 p.m. Blackstone Hotel 636 South Michigan Avenue

For more information: (312) 663-0715

CHICAGO

# Bay Area Labor: Don't Move Scab Produce!

## Defend Watsonville Strike!

WATSONVILLE, California—For six months the largely Mexican women cannery workers here have been on the front lines of class struggle in Reagan's America. They have stood up to bloodsucking bosses, brutal police attacks and their own sellout leaders in the Teamster bureaucracy. And their combativity and determination remains unbroken. The very day after cops in riot gear assaulted a union support rally February 17, about 100 strikers and supporters defied an anti-picketing injunction and prevented the Watsonville Canning and Frozen Food Co. from running a second shift.

A few days later, on February 22, a union support rally of 1,200 gave a standing ovation to Harold Miller, a representative of the striking Hormel meatpackers, who told them: "We need to work together against our enemy." Watsonville strikers were keenly interested in the Hormel union's flying pickets that have shut down other plants, and inspired their determination to keep fighting in the face of National Guard strikebreaking. The bosses' press worries that the interest in the "violent" Austin, Minnesota strike is to "prove that confrontation can be a more effective tactic" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 February). But the union tops are dead-set against the militant tactics urgently needed to win, both in Watsonville and at Hormel: *mass picket lines to*



Contingent of striking Watsonville cannery workers, predominantly Mexican women, at M.L. King memorial march in San Francisco, January 20.

*stop the scabs and shut down the plants, and hot-cargoing of the struck products.*

Like their class brothers at Hormel, the Watsonville cannery workers have experienced the hard way that the armed forces of the state are the armed forces of the capitalist bosses. At the rally striker Gloria Betancourt told *WV* that a week before "the police fired tear gas into the union hall. There were children inside and we had to take some of the kids to the hospital." And after the rally, when about 100 people marched to the Watsonville Canning plant, the cops went to work once again.

They arrested two for picket-line violations, forced the strikers and supporters to move back a few blocks and then began random arrests. Later that day, when people gathered at the prison to demand the release of those arrested, the cops again assaulted the crowd. Workers need mass pickets and their own *union defense guards* to defend the strike lines.

The strikers called the February 22 rally to "tell the company we won't accept a settlement like the one at Shaw." The Teamster Local 912 bureaucracy stabbed the strikers in the

back with a sellout contract at the smaller of the two struck plants, Richard Shaw, Inc., claiming "the company was in dire need of relief." This sweetheart deal imposes virtually all of the takeaways demanded by the company, slashing line workers' wages from \$7.06 to \$5.85 an hour. Moreover, this contract contains clauses reducing wages even further to any lower level the union negotiates with other local cannery plants! The Teamster tops' sellout leaves 1,000 strikers to face Watsonville Canning, the industry leader, alone.

This strike *can be won* through real labor solidarity: unions must refuse to handle ("hot cargo") the scab goods. At a January union meeting, the strikers passed a motion to stop the produce coming in from the fields, where United Farm Workers president Cesar Chavez keeps the broccoli flowing into the struck plant. This is the crucial spring harvesting season for the canneries and for multibillion-dollar California agribusiness in general. But the Local 912 leaders declared that the motion would remain a dead letter on the usual grounds that secondary labor boycotts are illegal under Taft-Hartley. Screw Taft-Hartley!

Bureaucrats of other unions come to Watsonville for ritual weekend rallies, to get their pictures taken eating a taco for "solidarity," while they refuse to lift a finger to mobilize the powerful Bay Area labor movement to stop the scabs and scab goods. This strike is crucial for the labor movement in California, especially for the oppressed Mexican and Chicano workers. Winning it requires *mobilizing the power of labor now* before it is too late. ■

running to Atlanta to confront the company, to New York, to San Francisco, to Philadelphia.... We want to hit the company where they will feel it the most, in their pocketbook."

What Hormel would feel the most is shutting down production. But Guyette put forward a different perspective:

"We have also gone to some politicians... but when you talk to politicians you have to talk their language, which is votes. A lot of politicians don't hear through their ears, they hear through their rears—you have to kick them out of office."

The way to deal with the phony "friend of labor" Democratic politicians is by organizing a class-struggle workers party.

The "rank-and-file" union officials pushing consumer boycotts have not broken with the sellout program of the AFL-CIO tops. NRFAC, which organized the Atlanta rally, invited Democratic Party honchos Julian Bond and Mayor Andrew Young. Young tours the world offering capitalists the advantages of the low-wage, non-union "New

South," and Bond obscenely supported Philadelphia mayor Wilson Goode's massacre of eleven MOVE men, women and children last May: "In my view Mayor Goode did the only possible thing he could do" (*Atlanta Voice*, 15-21 June 1985). Despite NRFAC's invitation, Bond and Young didn't show. The UFCW bureaucracy waged a campaign to sabotage the rally, redbaiting P-9 and the Ottumwa local, but a dozen workers from the Tucker, Georgia Hormel plant came out to demonstrate their support for P-9.

Among the organizers and endorsers of NRFAC are local union officials representing thousands of members of industrial unions in the Midwest, including key unions in Chicago and Minnesota which could shut the Austin plant down tight with mass pickets. But these junior bureaucrats offer nothing except the same old class collaboration dressed up in militant rhetoric.

For weeks, the P-9 leadership has been paralyzed and incapable of waging the hard political fight *against the labor traitors* that is necessary to win. By and large, the P-9 leaders have not been where it counts—in Austin. So it is left to Rogers, who says "shut it down," but diverts the strikers' combativity into "civil disobedience," where handfuls of P-9ers are told to lie down on the ice in front of the cops and scabs. UFCW president Wynn attacks P-9's heroic fight as "mass suicide," and Rogers sounds like that's what he wants P-9ers to do when he tells strikers to lie down on the road and take it! To hell with that—the scabs should be sent crawling out of Austin, by union action to seize the plant!

Kirkland, Wynn & Co. have staked a lot on defeating P-9. They know that a victory now for the Hormel strikers will spell trouble for their strategy of "concessions" to bolster capitalist profits. Having come to power through the Cold War McCarthyite anti-Communist purges, today they swear allegiance to the anti-Soviet war drive. The American trade-union bureaucracy fears nothing more than an eruption of class struggle which would expose them

as the parasites they are. The Spartacist League is fighting to build the class-struggle leadership that can oust the misleaders of labor, those in power and those waiting in the wings, who are roadblocks to the socialist revolution that will sweep away the union-busters, race-terrorists and warmongers once and for all. ■

## TWA...

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mayhem. That and "deregulation" inspired Texas Air ("Treetop Airlines") tycoon and notorious union-buster Frank Lorenzo to make a heavily indebted buyout of Continental Airlines in 1983, demanding huge wage and job concessions from its 12,000 workers. When the flight attendants and pilots balked, Lorenzo filed for bankruptcy even though the company was solvent. He fired the entire workforce, then rehired one-third of the workers at half the pay and double the workload. The "bankruptcy" tactic brings the state, through the courts, directly and openly into the class struggle as undisguised union-buster—and it worked at Continental.

Lorenzo's latest buyout is Eastern. Here tens of millions in union concessions had won for Machinists district head Charles Bryan a seat on the board of directors. Now he's supposed to be a labor hero because he refused to go along with *another* 20 percent pay/benefits cut like the leaders of the flight attendants and pilots did. As a result, Eastern chairman and former astronaut Frank Borman, pressured by the banks, sold the company to Lorenzo. Bryan told his 12,000 members not to be "traditional union people, disruptive or slow-down and strike-minded" (*Newsweek*, 10 March), as he pleaded for an audience with the Texas airline czar. Ninety percent of the capital of Lorenzo's airline empire, now the largest in the country, rests on long-term debt, and clearly he intends to take the interest payments out of the hides of his

workforce.

Lorenzo also had his eye on TWA. The leaders of the pilots union and the Machinists agreed to givebacks of 20 and 15 percent respectively so that the board of directors would back Wall Street raider Carl Icahn against Lorenzo. The unions played a "crucial role," according to IFFA, in bringing Icahn in so that the company would not be grabbed by Lorenzo. Now if he gets his way, TWA stewardesses will start at the incredibly low wage of \$12,000 a year, on schedules which require them to be away from home 320 hours a month (*New York Daily News*, 10 March). At People Express, the pioneer in such wage-slashing fly-by-night operations, flight attendants receive a salary of only \$9,000!

As a high-flying Wall Street raider, Icahn has ripped down and ripped apart corporate empires. He is a terror in the Fortune 500 boardrooms. So Icahn naturally thought he could easily ride roughshod over TWA's labor force. "These girls aren't breadwinners, they will give me what I want," Icahn declared. Here is a certified male chauvinist pig as well as a bloodsucking corporate raider! But the gutsy ranks of the TWA flight attendants are not intimidated, and their strike could well spark a massive fight against the whole giveback offensive in airlines. When a *WV* reporter pointed this out to union spokesman Karen Eitelberg, she responded proudly, "Yeah, by a bunch of girls."

Whether it's Icahn or Lorenzo or Borman, there is no such thing as a "good" capitalist in the scramble for maximum profits. The bosses and their government have joined together in an onslaught against working conditions and safety in air travel. The labor bureaucracy's program of administering capitalism together with the bosses has only intensified the exploitation of labor, yet the AFL-CIO tops continue to crawl. To lead a real fight against the union-busting "giveback" offensive what's needed is a class-struggle leadership of labor. Shut down TWA! Victory to the flight attendants! ■



Scott Marshall

High school students in Austin, Minnesota rally for striking Hormel meatpackers.

## Hormel Strike: A Battle Labor Must Win!

MARCH 10—The seven-month-old Hormel meatpackers strike is a key test for American labor. The defiant stand by Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in Austin, Minnesota, in the face of the hard-nosed Geo. A. Hormel Co., a liberal Democratic governor and the National Guard, has won the admiration of millions of workers. P-9's roving pickets have sparked struggles in the meatpacking industry. Their combative example has inspired cannery workers in Watsonville, California, General Electric aircraft workers in Lynn, Massachusetts and airline workers at TWA, where 6,000 flight attendants struck March 7. Now the *open strikebreaking* of the UFCW and AFL-CIO labor traitors, their obscene declarations that P-9 is committing "mass suicide" and their plans to smash the striking local have cut like a knife through the labor movement. The issue is sharply posed: Will the unions continue to give back, or fight to win? Which side are you on?

At this moment in Austin, the strike is at a critical juncture. For weeks, Hormel has been gearing up production, with over 1,000 scabs in the plant. Hog kill operations began a month ago. And

despite delays in training which have kept production down, *Hormel has the plant, not P-9.* Meanwhile, UFCW president Wynn has been meeting with scabs, including former officers of P-9, on plans to put the local into receivership and replace it with one more to Hormel's liking. On Monday, March 10, the union staged a sit-in outside the corporate headquarters, resulting in 115 arrests. The rank and file's will to fight was clear, but it has been channeled into dead-end symbolic gestures. Instead of padlocking the gates of the company offices from the outside (and sending the key to the governor!), they should lock the gates of the Austin plant *from the inside*, and throw away the key!

"P-9, Loud and Proud" has been a beacon for the entire workers movement. This strike must be won—and it can be won. We had better not let the Hormel strikers go down the tube. Instead of knuckling under to the bosses' court injunctions or getting arrested for nothing ("civil disobedience"), Midwest unions must mobilize for mass picketing in Austin to *occupy the plant* and send the scabs packing. Not the empty moral gesture of consumer boycott, calling on housewives to

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Austin, Minnesota—Thousands of trade unionists from across the country march in solidarity with striking Hormel meatpackers, February 15. WV Photo

## Machinists, Pilots: Honor the Picket Lines!

# Shut Down TWA!

MARCH 10—Six thousand members of the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA), 85 percent of them women, struck Trans World Airlines (TWA) March 7, forcing the company to cancel half its flights on the first day. The bosses thought they sensed weakness when the IFFA leadership offered to surrender 15 percent of their wages and benefits, so the company brazenly demanded *three times* that amount, triggering the strike. But this time the unexpected happened: across the country, thousands of Machinists union members, who comprise the critical ground crews and mechanics, spontaneously refused to cross the picket lines, crippling TWA. Such class solidarity is a clear example of how to turn the tide of takeaways in one of the most heavily unionized U.S. industries.

Everyone is watching this one. If the International Association of Machinists (IAM) continues to respect IFFA picket lines, then not only will TWA's take-back plan be smashed but the road will be opened to a labor counteroffensive across the country. Until now these



At Kennedy Airport, NYC labor militants join picket line of striking TWA flight attendants. WV Photo

airline strikes have been repeatedly lost precisely because the unions scabbed on each other. The air traffic controllers union PATCO was smashed by Reagan in 1981 with the help of IAM leader

William Winpisinger's treacherous refusal to honor the picket lines, opening the door to the past several years of takebacks. Better known as "Wimpy," Winpisinger is a self-described "seat-of-

the-pants socialist" who reserves his "socialism" for Sunday speechifying while the rest of the week he sits on his ass selling out labor struggles, backslapping Democratic Party politicians and backstabbing the workers.

Unlike the PATCO air controllers, stewardesses have no economic power. But there are the pilots, Machinists and Teamsters, any two of which can shut down the airlines tight as a drum. So far, the pilots union is openly scabbing, and the IAM International has issued only hot air "support" for the TWA strikers, telling the membership to go to it alone according to "conscience." But local IAM leaders have been pressured by the rank and file to respect the lines. The 3,200 Machinists in Kansas City are staying out in solidarity, as are Machinists at the airline's major hub in St. Louis. In New York, the 2,300-member IAM local agreed at a meeting March 8 to stay out. Union secretary Joe Adinolfi told *WV*, "There's a legitimate picket line up, and the policy of Local 1056 is we honor that picket line."

This strike can be won—if the conservative IAM bureaucrats don't capitulate when TWA obtains court orders this week. Everybody out on the picket lines! To hell with the bosses' courts! Picket lines mean don't cross! Shut down TWA with mass picketing!

### Break from Class Collaboration!

Reagan's "first strike" against American labor was busting PATCO, thereby turning air travel into murderous

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