

1917

"To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives — these are the rules of the Fourth International."

JOURNAL OF THE BOLSHEVIK TENDENCY

No. 2



Summer 1986



1917

For International Labor Solidarity! **Smash Apartheid!**

The spirit of the 11-day 1984 San Francisco longshore boycott against South African cargo (in solidarity with the struggles of black workers and youth in Botha's racist hell-hole) was continued on Monday, March 10, when twenty-five longshoremen refused to cross a militant picket line set up at Pier 80 in San Francisco. The Campaign Against Apartheid (CAA), a Berkeley-based student group, called for this

blockade to prevent the unloading of the *Nedlloyd Kembla's* South African cargo. The CAA timed the action at Pier 80 to coincide with a week of international labor protest against apartheid called by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and endorsed by the trade-union

(continued on page 2)

Bull's-eye!



It is always gratifying to receive confirmation that a polemic has drawn blood. In this connection we were pleased with the response to a major article in our first issue ("The Robertson School of Party-Building") which pointed out the uncanny similarities between the methods of "party-building" attributed to Gerry Healy (recently deposed founder/leader of the British Workers Revolutionary Party) in the winter issue of *Spartacist* and those practices current in the Spartacist League (SL) itself.

Unable to rebut our attack, the SL opted to brazen it out. To this end they purchased several hundred copies of the first issue of *1917* and stamped "Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League No.4" across the top of them in bright red ink. Thus adorned, these copies of our journal were retailed (at a modest 100 percent mark-up) from SL campus literature tables across the country.

We're not complaining—indeed we are grateful to the SL for bringing our critique, the product of many years spent as cadres of the "international Spartacist tendency," to the attention of a few dozen people to whom we would not otherwise have had access. We hope SL caudillo Robertson decrees that our polemics continue to be distributed in the future.

We were also pleased by the prompt public repudiation which followed our critique of a particularly stupid leaflet issued by the unfortunate members of the Harvard Spartacus Youth League (see: "A Disavowal," *Workers Vanguard*, 14 February). They have learned that in the SL, as in the WRP, "dialectics" is whatever the founder/leader says it is. Likewise "Marxism." How else to explain the fact that the San Francisco "Red Avengers" who engaged in even more egregious departures from Marxism (including one who dressed up as a Nazi) were "hailed," while the (now ex-) SLers who took the rap in Boston are reduced to "express[ing] a desire to rejoin at a later time"? ●

1917

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Pier 80...

(continued from page 1)

movement in British Columbia.

The Bolshevik Tendency (BT) helped the CAA organize the San Francisco action from the beginning as a principled united front. Members of at least 14 different unions, along with members and supporters of half a dozen left groups and a variety of community organizations were among those who helped seal off the entrance to the pier. A BT leaflet explained:

"The united front at Pier 80, called by the Campaign Against Apartheid, is to stop the discharging of the *Nedlloyd Kembla* in solidarity with [the labor actions anticipated in British Columbia.]

"A court injunction issued during the 1984 longshore boycott is still in effect and is being used by the longshore union bureaucracy as an excuse not to reinstitute the boycott.

"We call on all longshoremen to refuse to unload this ship!"

The following is an interview with a BT supporter who was a participant.

Q. How many people were involved in the action on Monday?

A. All told there were about 150. We set up a militant picket line, blockaded the pier entrance and actually managed to fight off the cops. Two pickets were injured and two arrested. The bourgeois press reported two cops also got hurt.

Q. How did CAA anticipate the longshoremen would respond to the picket?

A. That depended on the forces that could be mobilized. The CAA agreed that a picket line would only be set up if the crowd was sufficiently large and militant. CAA members spent a good couple of weeks organizing phone trees, making picket signs (which they nailed to two-by-fours), and getting the bodies down to Pier 80 to stop the cargo.

They knew that a section in the waterfront workers' contract allows longshoremen to honor picket lines if they can claim possible danger to their "health and safety." And of course [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union—ILWU] Local 10 is still under the federal injunction [against boycotting South African cargo] which was used to break the 1984 cargo boycott—the longest political cargo stoppage in West Coast history.

So they [CAA] recognized that Local 10 longshoremen were under the kind of extreme injunctive penalties that made a resumption of the boycott unlikely. But by initiating the action at Pier 80, the CAA at least gave them a chance to express their frustration over handling South African cargo under the threat of jail and millions of dollars in fines. I think that CAA understood that no longshoremen would walk through a picket that effectively shut down the pier.

Q. But a couple of supervisors did try to get across?

A. Yes, at 7:00 a.m., just as the line was being consolidated, a company superintendent drove his pickup truck through. This made the pickets angry and they were determined not to allow any more through the line.

When a second CS&B [California Stevedore and Ballast Company] superintendent in a company truck tried to drive through the line, pickets blocked him, covered his windshield and rocked the truck from side to side. He sat nervously inside as the chant "Don't cross the line" and the

1917



1917

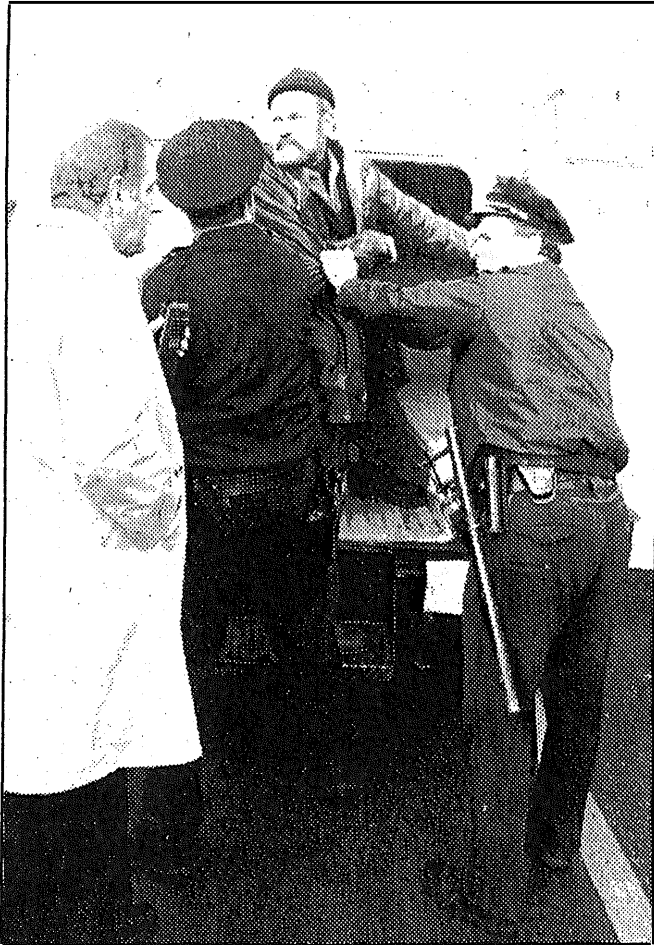


Cops unsuccessfully attempt to break up picket line, 10 March

pounding on the cab became louder, and then he got out of there.

By this time there was a double line of semis all the way up to Army and Third Streets [a quarter mile], preventing the pick-up or delivery of cargo for other shipping lines at

the pier. You could see the yellow-striped smokestack of the *Nedlloyd Kembla* from outside the gate, but the [ship's] cranes weren't moving. The big rigs were backed up and the longshoremen were just bunched on the sidewalk in front of the gate.



Cops arrest ILWU militant, Howard Keylor

1917

Q. And then the cops turned up?

A. Right. At about 8:30 a.m., the San Francisco cops began to arrive. They told us to get out of the way but when we refused, they called out the whole Potrero Division. When they tried to break up the line, they were surprised by what you might call "active physical resistance." Pickets surrounded, circled, blocked and outflanked the cops who beat fallen pickets, punched young girls in the face and arrested two pickets on misdemeanor charges of malicious mischief, assaulting a policeman, urging riot and resisting arrest. But they still weren't able to break the picket line, and so the top cop called out the Tac Squad [San Francisco's notorious anti-labor riot squad].

Q. At this point the company finally gave up on working that shift?

A. Yeah, officials of CS&B, who had called the contract arbitrator to order the longshoremen to go to work, conceded at this point that a "health and safety" condition did in fact exist and sent the longshoremen home. CS&B could tell that this was not just another pious demonstration of moral indignation. This was a serious call to dock workers for international labor protest against apartheid.

After four hours, and just as the Tac Squad was moving in tight formation to break up the picket line, a CAA member yelled to the cops, "We'll be back, motherfuckers!" and led the line out of Army Street.

The students had won the respect of longshoremen for their militant tactics—reminiscent of the early history of waterfront class struggles. And it showed the potential for a future student/labor alliance.

Q. And then there was the evening shift?

A. Yes. That evening when demonstrators returned to Pier 80 to stop CS&B from working the *Nedlloyd Kembla* on the night shift, all they saw was two cop cars and a locked gate. CS&B had cancelled the night shift! The demonstrators had a rally that lasted for about an hour.

On the way down the street to the pier a woman in CAA had been served with a Superior Court injunction which was supposed to begin on Wednesday [12 March] at 10:30 a.m. and which limited the number of pickets at Pier 80. They handled that about right—they ripped it up and tossed it on the ground. And then they all left, chanting, "We stopped the ship today, We'll do it again tomorrow!"

Q. So who turned up Tuesday morning?

A. There were about 200 in all. More elements of the left appeared [than on Monday]. Workers World, BAFSAM [Bay Area Free South Africa Movement—a liberal, pacifist, Communist Party-supported lash-up] hung their banners on the chain metal gate of Pier 80. It seemed they'd heard about the action on the [Monday] evening news. They joined a bunch of groups [Marxist-Leninist Party, Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade, Revolutionary Workers League, Workers Socialist League] who'd been there Monday morning. And most of the students and unionists who had been out Monday were back, too.

Q. But on Tuesday morning the police were ready?

A. Yeah, the riot cops were lined in ranks all along Army Street and back behind the CS&B building. This time they moved in quickly, before the start of the work shift at eight o'clock, to break up the picket line. Cops circled the pickets and announced that everyone in the area was under arrest. A group of demonstrators got away and continued to demonstrate a couple of hundred feet off, in front of the trucks waiting to enter. But they grabbed 57 pickets (about a third of whom were unionists, by the way), and drove them to the San Francisco Hall of Justice and cited them for "obstructing a sidewalk." By 8:30 a.m. the area was pretty much clear of demonstrators and the pier was open for business again.

Something that's also worth noting is that after the cops had broken the picket line and the longshoremen were ordered to go to work, there were four of them who refused to go in and work that cargo.

Q. That's four out of how many?

A. Oh, I'd say not more than 25.

Q. The CAA action was quite a bit different from the BAFSAM pickets at Pier 80 in the last couple of years, wasn't it?

A. It sure was. The BT worked with the students to initiate an action which, in the best case, could lead to re-institution of the 1984 longshore cargo boycott, with the ultimate goal of sparking significant labor strikes against the apartheid regime and its U.S. capitalist supporters. Over the last couple of years, BAFSAM has tried to exploit the 1984

(continued on page 10)

Reactionaries Fan Homophobic Hysteria

The Politics of AIDS

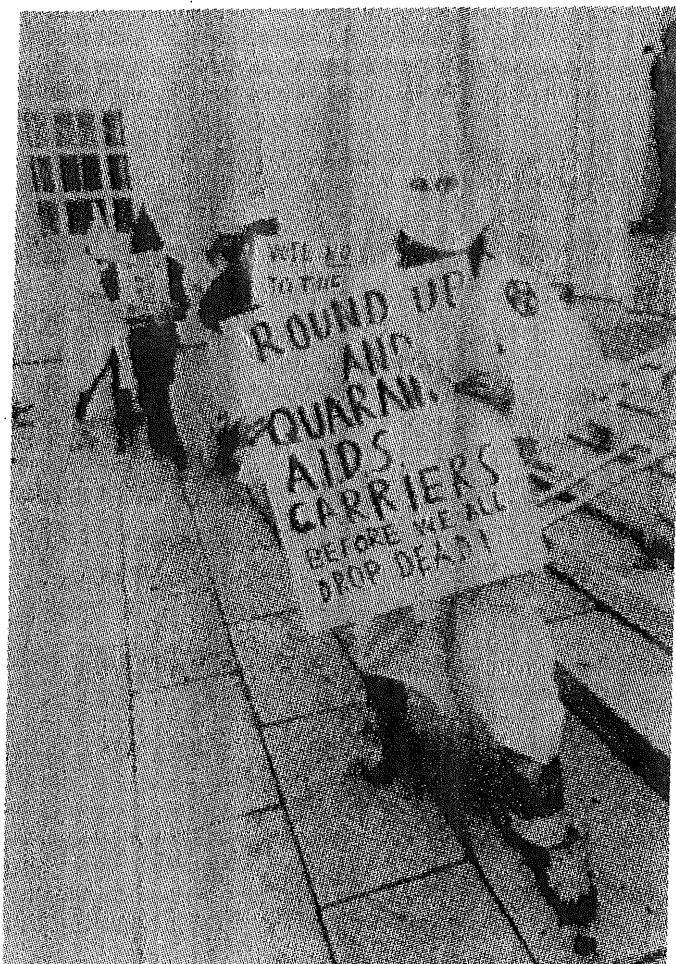
AIDS is the most terrifying public health calamity in the U.S. since the spread of paralytic polio in the early fifties. Gay people, already the victims of a medical nightmare, simultaneously find themselves the target of an intense and widespread campaign of homophobic frenzy. The sexual bigots and theocratic right seek to use the tragedy of AIDS as a battering ram to destroy the partial and fragile social gains won by gays over the last twenty years. White House communications director Patrick Buchanan summed up the Reagan gang's perspective with the comment that the "poor homosexuals have declared war on nature and now nature is exacting an awful retribution."

The energetic bigots of biblical reaction have been out in force, advocating discrimination in health insurance, jobs, housing and education, and the use of an AIDS-antibodies test as the basis for blacklisting. These fanatics would ideally like to see all gays dead or at least in concentration camps. Their "minimum program" is to destroy the flimsy protection afforded AIDS sufferers by civil rights legislation. The retributive moralists of the right have a larger agenda however. They are trying to use the widespread fear of AIDS to promote a campaign of anti-science and anti-sex (particularly gay sex). These are the same people who want to ban *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, Darwin, rock videos and other examples of what they characterize as "secular humanism."

As Jonathan Lieberman observed in a recent issue of the *New York Review of Books*, (16 January): "ignorance has been making considerable progress" in present-day America. Militant ignorance must be opposed by militant enlightenment. In the spirit of the old union maxim that "an injury to one is an injury to all" the labor movement must take the initiative in counteracting the homophobic hysteria surrounding AIDS, and in campaigning for the allocation of sufficient social resources to find a cure. Such a campaign should be waged in the context of defense of the victims—actual and potential—of AIDS and of the virulent disease of retributive-moralistic social reaction.

Probably the most important fact about AIDS politically is that HTLV-3 (the "AIDS virus") is *not* transmitted in ordinary social contact. One of the most conclusive proofs of this was a year-long study of sixty boys in a French boarding school where more than half were hemophilia patients. Of these, half had been infected with HTLV-3—presumably by the use of contaminated blood products to treat their condition. According to French virologist Dr. Luc Montagnier, co-discoverer of the "AIDS virus," careful tests of the other boys "showed no indication that any were infected, and all the students lived together in 'very close, casual and continual contact'" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 October 1985).

In addition to demanding a massive publicly-funded research campaign to fight the disease, it is critical to defend the civil rights of those infected. No one should be denied health insurance because of exposure to the virus and all afflicted children must have the unqualified right to go to



Fascist KKK in Houston threaten quarantine

GAMMA

school if they wish. The labor movement must fight for free health care for the AIDS and AIDS-related complex (ARC) victims and must vigorously combat all attempts at job or housing discrimination against those affected and against gays in general. It is also vital that any antibody testing be voluntary and that anonymity be strictly protected.

HTLV-3, the "AIDS virus," attacks a particular type of white blood cell known as T-4 lymphocytes, which play a key role in co-ordinating the immune system. When the virus has infected the T-4 cells sufficiently, the body becomes susceptible to any of a number of secondary, ultimately fatal, diseases.

Now at epidemic levels in the U.S. and central and eastern Africa, HTLV-3 has so far appeared in over 70 countries reporting to the World Health Organization. Estimates of the number of infected persons in the U.S. range from 750,000 to two million. One of the reasons that the statistics are so indefinite (besides the appalling underfunding of AIDS-related research) is that scientists have not yet

been able to determine the length of the incubation period. Estimates vary from one to many years.

AIDS is one of the world's more difficult diseases to contract. The virus that causes it can only live outside the body under extraordinarily favorable conditions. It can be communicated by the transfusion of contaminated blood—thus intravenous drug users who share needles can also be very much at risk. HTLV-3 is most commonly spread when semen is mixed with the blood of a sex partner—often via bruised or torn rectal tissue. This is in effect a “transfusion” of infected lymphocytes. It seems probable that those whose immune systems are already weakened are most likely to develop the manifestations of AIDS or ARC.

The Origins of AIDS

There is considerable controversy in the medical press over whether or not AIDS was carried to the U.S. from central Africa and Haiti via the fleshpots of Nairobi and Port-au-Prince (or via imported blood plasma). Fearing a racist smear of African countries as the “source” of the epidemic, some nationalist regimes have simply denied that the disease exists within their borders. The government of Kenya reluctantly admitted recently to five cases in the country while a survey reported in the January issue of *New African* revealed that 54 percent of the prostitutes in Nairobi alone were infected with the virus. One doctor interviewed by *New African* said:

“Governments in Africa, and even the medical fraternity, are becoming obsessed with the political argument between Western and Third World nations as to where the AIDS virus originated. The origin of the virus is important to scientists, of course, and will be a vital factor in finding a cure. But at the moment this obsession, and the political mudslinging that goes with it, is detracting from the realities of the spread of the disease in this region and the precautionary advice to which every citizen and visitor is entitled.”

In any case, current testing methods for AIDS are notoriously unreliable. It is thought that five percent of those who test positive do not have the virus at all. A recent issue of *The Lancet*, a British medical journal, reported: “a study of 224 aboriginal Indians living in the Amazon rain forest which shows that four percent tested positive for the AIDS virus antibody in their bloodstreams. Of the nine people whose blood was shown to contain the antibody, five were women. All appeared healthy” (cited in *The Body Politic*, February 1986). It is probable that these “positives” resulted from the detection of another virus.

A Medical and Social Tragedy

In the U.S. AIDS has so far killed over 10,000 people. A majority of the victims have been homosexual males. Insurance company figures indicate that factoring in AIDS raises the mortality rate for 30-year-old white males from one to twenty per thousand. The federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta now estimates that AIDS may soon become one of the ten leading causes of premature death nationally.

In an attempt to offset the media scare campaign, some gay publications have made much of the fact that each year more Americans are killed by pneumonia (45,000) or traffic accidents (50,000) than by AIDS. Yet this dramatically underestimates the seriousness of the epidemic. The geo-

metric rate of increase in new cases has slowed somewhat (in early 1985 they were doubling every 12 months, now they are doubling at a rate of once every 20 months). This is hardly cause for relief, as the number of new cases discovered in 1986 is expected to approximately equal the total number of cases reported in the previous course of the epidemic.

AIDS poses not only a medical, but a social tragedy for gays, coming as it has just as they had won some small measure of sexual freedom. From Philadelphia to Houston to San Francisco, politicians are demanding the padlocking of gay bars, bathhouses and even bookstores. In New York, where a number of bathhouses and bars have been closed, the state health commissioner has threatened to break into hotel rooms to prevent consenting individuals from committing “unsafe” sex acts!

Behind such practises lies a concerted right-wing assault on sexual pleasure and freedom of choice. In Texas, a federal court recently upheld the constitutionality of a state sodomy law. In Houston an anti-gay “Straight Slate” ran in local elections and received 40 percent of the vote. This gang of super-patriotic, anti-union, bible-thumping bigots who worship at the altar of the unborn fetus, sees homosexuals as the human embodiment of the devil. One member of the slate, a Dr. Stephen Hotze, threatened, “When we take over, we’re going to clean the city up, and if they don’t get out of the way, we’ll drive right over them. We’re Texans and we’re fighters, and we’re not going to let a bunch of homosexuals take over our city.” Hotze went on to say, “When I think of San Francisco, I think of a cesspool of homosexuality... We’re not just talking about liberals, we’re talking about sodomites — that’s what God calls them” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 24 October 1985). Louie Welch, the slate’s candidate for mayor declared, over what he thought was a dead mike, that the solution to AIDS was to “shoot the queers.”

The Politics of “Afr-AIDS”

The rampant homophobia which has accompanied the spread of this horrible affliction has a grisly parallel in the Nazi occupation of Poland. “When the Warsaw Ghetto was stricken by epidemics of typhoid, the slogan ‘Jews-Lice-Typhoid’ was spread by the Germans among a not unreceptive Polish population” according to historian George Mosse in *Toward the Final Solution*. Writing in *The Body Politic*, a Canadian gay newspaper, Scott Tucker noted that, “A similar tactic is today used against gays, reducing us to rodents and insects who carry plague and deserve a purge from society.”

In the spirit of the reactionary “anti-syphilis” crusades of the 1890s, Lyndon LaRouche’s sinister right-wing cult (which recently made headlines by capturing two spots on the Illinois state Democratic ticket) is spearheading a national petition demanding a referendum to quarantine anyone infected with HTLV-3.

The depth of the homophobic tide which these nuts are attempting to ride was revealed in a December 1985 poll by the *L.A. Times*. Fifty-one percent of those interviewed said they would support a law to make it a crime for an

(continued on page 8)

Feminism & 'Moral Panics'

The AIDS hysteria cannot be seen in isolation from the more general right-wing ideological offensive. Preaching a gospel of unregulated greed in the marketplace, the Reaganite right simultaneously aims to reimpose Victorian standards of compulsory sex-morality on everyone. In an essay entitled "Thinking Sex," (included in *Pleasure and Danger; Exploring Female Sexuality*, 1984) anthropologist Gayle Rubin dates the present anti-sex campaign to the 1977 effort by singer Anita Bryant to overturn a gay-rights ordinance in Miami and compares it to earlier "moral panics" such as the "white slavery" hysteria of the 1880s, the anti-homosexual campaigns of the 1950s and the child pornography panic of the late 1970s. She writes:

"Because sexuality in Western societies is so mystified, the wars over it are often fought at oblique angles, aimed at phony targets, conducted with misplaced passions, and are highly, intensely symbolic. Sexual activities often function as signifiers for personal and social apprehensions to which they have no intrinsic connection. During a moral panic, such fears attach to some unfortunate sexual activity or population. The media become ablaze with indignation, the public behaves like a rabid mob, the police are activated, and the state enacts new laws and regulations. When the furor has passed, some innocent erotic group has been decimated and the state has extended its power into new areas of erotic behavior."

A feminist herself, Rubin attacks the alliance between the right-wing and such anti-sex feminists as "Women Against Pornography." She notes that the feminist movement has polarized into two currents: "One tendency has criticized the restrictions on women's sexual behavior and denounced the high costs imposed on women for being sexually active.... The second tendency has considered sexual liberalization to be inherently a mere extension of male privilege. This tradition resonates with conservative, anti-sexual discourse." At its extreme, this grouping espouses a grotesque parody of repressive, family-centered sexuality with its advocacy of monogamous lesbianism, while proscribing nearly all other sexual activity as being tainted with male dominance. "Even sexual fantasy during masturbation is denounced as a phallogocentric holdover."

Rubin goes on to say:

"anti-porn rhetoric is a massive exercise in scapegoating. It criticizes non-routine acts of love rather than routine acts of oppression, exploitation, or violence. This demonology directs legitimate anger at women's lack of personal safety against innocent individuals, practices, and communities. Anti-porn propaganda often implies that sexism originates within the commercial sex industry and subsequently infects the rest of society. This is sociologically nonsensical. The sex industry... reflects the sexism that exists in the society as a whole.... A good deal of current feminist literature attributes the oppression of women to graphic representations of sex, prostitution, sex education, sadomasochism, male homosexuality, and transsexualism. Whatever happened to the family, religion, education, child-rearing practices, the media, the state, psychiatry, job discrimination, and unequal pay?"

A good question. The answer is that such issues are submerged in a movement that situates the basic division in



ELSA DORRMAN

Andrea Dworkin, anti-sex feminist, co-author of Minneapolis and Indianapolis "anti-pornography" legislation

society between the sexes. As Marxists we unequivocally reject this feminist axiom and assert that the root of oppression lies in the division of society into antagonistic classes, i.e., in the requirements of the tiny handful of capitalists who have appropriated the productive capacity of society to maintain their rule. Those fake-leftists who try to bridge this gap with a hyphen (designating themselves "socialist-feminists") capitulate to the sectoralism of which feminism is but one possible variant. In so doing they soon find themselves "critically" supporting such fundamentally reactionary initiatives as calls on the state for more cops to make the streets safe (the political thrust of "Take Back the Night" mobilizations) or for the closing of porn shops.

Sexual oppression in capitalist society rests on the twin pillars of the family and the state. The fundamental role of the family is to produce and socialize the next generation of wage laborers for capital. The family naturally bulwarks the hierarchical social order of which it is the basic unit. The repression of homosexual and other forms of "deviant" sexuality serves to channel libidinous energy into the socially-approved heterosexual monogamous nuclear family. Nothing fundamental in this equation will change short of the wholesale re-ordering of society which smashes the material underpinnings of women's oppression and assumes social responsibility for childcare and housework. This can only be achieved through a social revolution led by the working class, uniting behind it all the oppressed and down-trodden of this society. ●

AIDS...

(continued from page 6)

AIDS patient to have sex with another person and favored quarantining all AIDS patients. Forty-five percent think job applicants should be tested for AIDS antibodies, 42 percent would support legislation to close gay bars and 15 percent want to *tattoo* anyone with AIDS!

It seems that anything goes when it comes to persecuting AIDS victims. In Flint, Michigan, an autoworker infected with the virus was arrested for drunken driving. He became enraged at the cops and spit at them. For that he was charged with assault with intent to commit murder. The chief prosecutor parried a defense argument that there is absolutely no reason to believe that AIDS can be spread by spitting by comparing the defendant to an assailant armed with a defective gun!

Even in the few areas of the country where their numbers have given gays some small social space and a little clout in local politics, the AIDS hysteria has led to a dramatic upsurge in ostracism and homophobic violence. In San Francisco, where the official crime rate declined by 10 percent in 1984, assaults on gay men increased by 16 percent, and half of these were explicitly AIDS-related. Meanwhile complaints of discrimination in housing and employment increased 41 percent in the same year. In New York, reported instances of discrimination against homosexuals rose from 20 in 1983 to 320 last year according to the Commission on Human Rights (*New York Times*, 17 February).

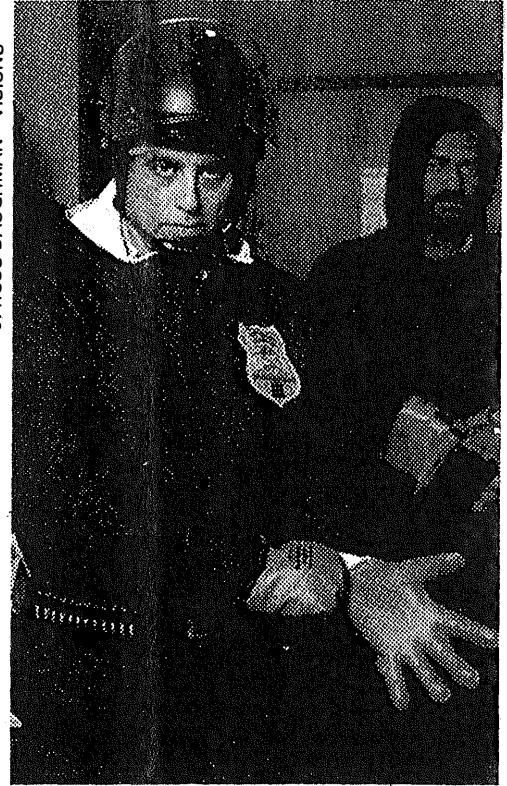
Sexual Bigotry and Medical Research

The AIDS crisis clearly exposes the nature of the capitalist health care system in the U.S. (the only industrialized country in the world besides South Africa without any kind of medicare). Most AIDS victims up to now have been young gay men with jobs and health insurance. They have been welcomed with open arms by profit-hungry hospitals and medical centers. This will soon change as the insurance racketeers demand the right to test prospective customers for HTLV-3 antibodies before issuing policies. Ultra-conservative ideologue William F. Buckley took this one step further when he proposed compulsory testing for the whole population (*New York Times*, 18 March). Such tests would provide lists of those with positive results and have frightening implications for homosexuals (and others) in a period when right-wing politicians are openly talking about quarantine. You don't need much imagination to foresee the camps originally designated by the McCarran Act to hold leftists in a "national emergency" being used to warehouse potential AIDS victims.

Sexual bigotry has heavily influenced the response to AIDS. After years of virtually ignoring an affliction that seemingly attacked only homosexuals, drug addicts, Haitians and a few hemophiliacs ("expendables" in Reagan's America), recent African studies which show that a large percentage of the heterosexual population in the so-called "AIDS belt" has been infected came as something of a shock to the medical establishment. There is no evidence that the virus is presently spreading widely as a result of heterosexual activity in North America, as it has in East Africa.

In the U.S. the demographic profile of AIDS victims is

J. ROSS BAUGHMAN—VISIONS



Prison guard dons "anti-AIDS" gear

shifting. Blacks comprise only 13 percent of the population but they now account for almost 25 percent of AIDS victims. New cases among drug users in New York have begun to outpace those among gay men for the first time. As more AIDS victims appear in the black ghettos, the current homophobic hysteria will inevitably begin to take an ugly and more explicitly racist character.

Last year's disclosure that movie star Rock Hudson was an AIDS victim did much to "legitimize" the affliction. The publicity and glitzy show-biz extravaganzas in Hudson's honor at least made it possible to *die* with a little dignity. It can hardly be an accident that Reagan's first pronouncement on AIDS came only a few weeks after Hudson made the front page of *Newsweek* and *People* magazines.

Six months later, in a public relations ploy, Reagan cynically announced, "One of our highest public health priorities is going to continue to be finding a cure for AIDS"; but the same news item which reported this, also noted that the administration was proposing to *reduce* the Congressional appropriation for AIDS research in 1986 by 22 percent, from a paltry \$244 million to \$193 million (*New York Times*, 6 February). A comparison with the \$295 billion earmarked for the anti-Soviet arms buildup (a ratio of something over 1500 to 1) gives a rough index of social priorities in the "free world."

Free Enterprise Medicine and AIDS

The medical industry has generally exhibited the same callous indifference to the AIDS tragedy as the White House. In a piece published in the 27 November 1985 *New York Times*, Robert E. Pollack, a professor of biological sciences at Columbia University, noted that:

"Samples of the virus have been isolated and their entire sets of genes decoded. The human populations for testing and eventual inoculation with a vaccine exist and are ready to volunteer. Yet the communities of physicians, and of public and corporate researchers, seem unable to organize the process. Why is the nation unwilling or unable to expend the effort and money to launch an applied-biology and bio-engineering effort to develop and test a vaccine?"

Why indeed? L. Patrick Gage, vice president for exploratory research at the giant Hoffman-LaRoche pharmaceutical company, provided the answer: "This will sound awful, but you have to understand that a million people isn't a market that's exciting. Sure, it's growing, but it's not an asthma or a rheumatoid arthritis" (quoted in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 November 1985).

Although it had been known since January 1983 that people were contracting AIDS from blood-bank transfusions, the vast majority of blood banks refused to carry out testing until they were faced with lawsuits and widespread boycotts of their services. Like every other field of human activity, medicine under capitalism is a business, where allocation of resources is determined by the projected rate of profit — not by social utility.

One of the critical lessons which the AIDS hysteria has brought home to many homosexuals is their relative isolation and vulnerability to persecution in this virulently homophobic society. Gay activists living in the midst of their own "communities" in big cities often have a dangerously exaggerated notion of the real social weight of the homosexual population. The programmatic expression of this misperception is captured in the formula: "the liberation of homosexuals can only be the work of homosexuals themselves."

For gays (as for women, blacks, and other specially oppressed layers in capitalist society), such sectoralism is a dead end. Those gay militants whose consciousness does not transcend their own particular community and experience are incapable of participating in a social movement which can eradicate the oppression of homosexuals at its base. There is only one social force — the working class — which possesses both the economic power *and* the objective interest to overturn the system of capitalist rule in which all forms of special oppression are rooted. It is the task of

revolutionary Marxists to imbue the working class with the recognition that it cannot itself be free without "destroying all the inhuman conditions of life in contemporary society," as Karl Marx put it in 1844.

For an All-Out Attack On AIDS!

The solution to the AIDS crisis is a massive government-funded assault against the virus on the scale of Reagan's "Star Wars" research program. Such an undertaking could provide basic research which would also be valuable in the production of vaccines for leukemias, lymphomas and other human tumors which are thought to be caused by viruses. Yet the rulers of this society refuse to devote the kind of resources necessary for such an effort. They are far more interested in the pursuit of world domination than in the eradication of human suffering.

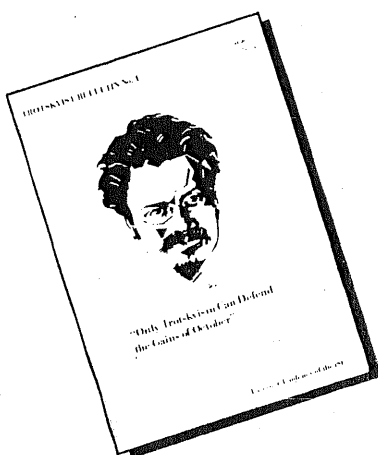
Only a workers state committed to guaranteeing health care as a birthright can provide decent medical care for everyone. One of the tasks of the future proletarian revolution will be to expropriate the entire medical industry, in all its component parts. The health care business in capitalist America — the hospitals, the medical research establishment and the pharmaceutical industry — constitutes one of the most cynical and profit-mad sectors of this sick capitalist society. Under the rule of the working class, medicine, like every other industry, will finally be run in the interest of the population as a whole, not according to the dictates of the market.

FOR A MASSIVELY FUNDED, ALL-OUT PROGRAM TO FIND A CURE FOR AIDS!

NO AIDS-TEST BLACKLISTING! DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF AIDS VICTIMS TO JOBS, EDUCATION AND HOUSING!

FOR ACCESSIBLE, FREE, QUALITY HEALTHCARE FOR ALL!

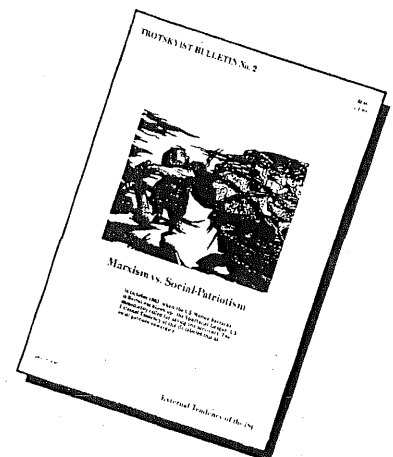
EXPROPRIATE THE MEDICAL INDUSTRY UNDER WORKERS CONTROL!



Trotskyist Bulletins

No.1 "Only Trotskyism Can Defend the Gains of October"
\$1.50

No.2 "Marxism vs. Social Patriotism"
\$2.00



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Oakland CA 94604, USA



1917

Pier 80...

(continued from page 4)

boycott by “greeting” Nedlloyd line ships with “informational” pickets and appealing to the individual consciences of dock workers.

At best BAFSAM has been inept: putting up pickets when no South African cargo was in port and confronting Nedlloyd line ships already docked with a single rowboat called the “peace navy.” At worst, BAFSAM has made a mockery of the picket line, the traditional labor weapon of class struggle.

Longshoremen coming to work at Pier 80 have often found token “picket lines” of a few BAFSAMers peacefully “witnessing” their opposition to apartheid by walking in a little circle in front of the gates. BAFSAM’s token pickets trained longshoremen to go through—which made it that much harder to organize a real labor/community alliance against apartheid.

Q. *What was BAFSAM’s role on March 10?*

A. There were only a few BAFSAM supporters who participated. None of them actively stopped trucks or fought the cops. Four were arrested Tuesday morning. But by the 1:30 p.m. press conference held by CAA on the City Hall steps, [retired longshoreman, BAFSAM spokesman and Communist Party supporter] Archie Brown was claiming credit for the whole action!

Q. *What criticisms of the action have been raised by other groups?*

A. The IWP [International Workers’ Party] and the SL [Spartacist League] criticized it on the grounds that it wasn’t a purely labor action, which of course it wasn’t. But what it was, was a labor-oriented attempt to revive, from the outside, the 1984 anti-apartheid strike on the docks when the longshoremen stopped the *Nedlloyd Kimberley* for 11 days and as such was completely supportable. The IWP, to give them their due, at least had the sense to recognize that the action was supportable.

Q. *What about the Spartacist League?*

A. The Spartacist League was nowhere to be seen. Even

A Letter to the SL

The following is a letter from a working-class militant who had been a supporter of the Spartacist League for over a dozen years.

[Spartacist League]
Att. Oakland Local

27 March 1986

To whom it may concern:

Enclosed are my pledges for Feb. & Mar. '86. This is also to tell you that I won't be sending you any more pledges, as I no longer am one of your supporters....

Two weeks ago a picket line of anti-apartheid fighters, including students, workers, blacks and leftists, militantly blockaded and picketed South African cargo at Pier 80. You were nowhere to be found. When confronting you on this, I was told you only work through the unions (or other working-class vehicles) in this kind of action. BULLSHIT! In recent years you have had occasion to substitute yourselves for union activity—examples, [your supporter's] one-man picket of a ship carrying Salvadoran cargo, and your Third Period substitutionalist picket *against* a radical-initiated boycott in '84, an action which you tried to wreck at the time, instead of at least critically support. (You later described it as supportable and commendable.)

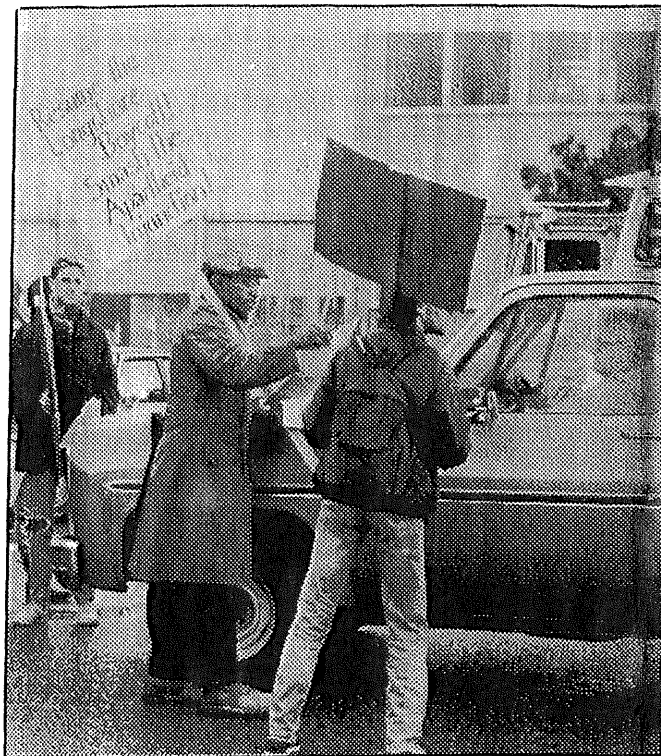
Not *all* actions to be supported, joined or attended by revolutionaries are *initiated* by the working class. Although Bolsheviks will try to intervene in a way to give the thrust of the action a more militant working-class axis, they *do* intervene.

While anti-apartheid fighters were being jostled, beaten and arrested (myself included) by cops, you weren't even present to dispense/sell literature arguing your own "correct" line. *A serious revolutionary party organizing militants to Bolshevism would have been there doing SOMETHING!!* I believe your absence was due to your increasing terror of having your ranks exposed to other leftists (particularly B.T. and other ex-members) who will tell them the truth about what kind of lying, slandering, cultist sham the SL is evolving into. Comrades, your emperor has no clothes and the world knows it!

Another half-baked line of shit you tried to hand me was that: "there are only certain periods that boycotts are implemented as a tactic." True—and this was definitely one of them. Gold miners were striking, a lot of blacks were being murdered and harassed by the state, and leading South African militants and labor leaders had put out a call for international solidarity actions of this kind!

Sincerely,
Bill S.

P.S. I now consider myself a supporter of the Bolshevik Tendency.



Pickers confront supervisor

13th. Gow argued that if the action had succeeded in spreading to other ports and other countries and eventually cut off all trade with South Africa, then black workers would lose their jobs and be sent to the Bantustans!

Q. That seems pretty far-fetched.

A. I'll say. In fact, just the day before at a U.C. [University of California at Berkeley] rally in support of Guillermo Bermudez [an SL supporter arrested on campus for protesting Marine recruitment], Stan Gow and SL supporters shared the platform with CAA members. When a CAAer referred proudly to this student/labor solidarity action, Gow and the SL lacked the political guts to contradict him and face the students' contempt for their abstention. Later, in *Young Spartacus* [the SL's youth newspaper], they came out with a public denunciation of it as "an objectively anti-working class stunt." What they *really* didn't like about it was that they couldn't claim the credit, and what was "worse," the BT and various other former SLers were among the participants. It was a classic sectarian reflex.

Q. What about the CAA? Firstly, what kind of a formation is the CAA?

A. Well, the CAA is more like the old New Left than anything else. It is pretty broad and non-exclusionist and plenty militant, especially on a tactical level. But like the New Left, it lacks a coherent overall worldview, and a comprehensive program. Of course that is just the flip side of non-exclusionism, but in the long run it's a real limitation.

The CAA contains within itself two ultimately counterposed political impulses: militant liberalism and class-struggle politics. So while they have a pretty good appreciation of the nature of the courts and the cops (especially after what happened on the pier and then what's being going on in Berkeley lately), they remain hooked on the demand

though in 1977 they had initiated two smaller, but politically identical, protest pickets against the *Nealloyd Kimberley* in support of a similar call by the ICFTU for a labor boycott of South Africa.

[SL supporter] Stan Gow "disassociated" himself from the action at the Local 10 Exec Board meeting on March

for "divestment," you know, that our campus board of regents or whatever shouldn't invest in South Africa because it's not "moral." And the ultimate logic of that is to start working for some "lesser evil" Democrat.

Q. What lessons do you think there are for the CAA in the March 10 action?

A: The March 10 action was pretty gutsy, and we were proud to have been a part of it along with the CAA. But it is important to recognize that it was only possible because of an unusual configuration of forces and as such is *not* generalizable as a mode for leading the working class in struggle against the capitalists.

This understanding wasn't reflected in a statement the CAA released after the action which only drew the lesson that, "the March 10 blockade... demonstrat[ed] that a small but committed group of people could temporarily halt trade with South Africa, but that such a victory could only be held by a showing of massive community support down at

the docks." Now it's true that a larger mobilization of support on the second day might well have prolonged the action. It might also have sparked an upsurge among longshoremen and other unionists which could have revived the 1984 boycott on a larger scale.

But the *critical* point here is that it's the determination of the ILWU members to defy the apartheid injunction, and the willingness of the rest of organized labor to back them up, which is key. And the struggle to mobilize the power of labor is primarily a political struggle that must go on *within* the union movement itself. In general it is not something that can be achieved by students and community members turning up outside the docks and the factories and calling for the workers to join in. It can only be done by groupings of class-conscious militants in the unions fighting to win support for a program which starts from the immediate felt needs of the workers and ties them, through a series of transitional demands, to the long-term objective necessity for socialist revolution. ●

Cops Off Campus! Defend Free Speech!



1917

Reprinted below are excerpts from a Bolshevik Tendency leaflet distributed on the Berkeley campus of the University of California on 7 April. In the preceding weeks the students had seen a reign of police terror unparalleled in 20 years. This vicious campaign was clearly intended to intimidate those who have participated in the ongoing campus protests against apartheid. Police raided apartments, movie theaters and grocery stores and grabbed dozens of activists on ridiculously trumped-up charges. Most of those arrested have been thrown in jail with bail set at extortionate amounts — \$29,000 in one case!

Blaming Thursday morning's police riot by club-swinging cops from at least *fourteen* different police departments on the students, Chancellor Heyman has issued orders banning anti-apartheid activists from the campus. Reminiscent of the bannings used by the Botha government in South Africa to control the black majority, Heyman's ban-

ning order carries a 10-day jail term for those who violate his diktat.

If this attempt to crush the campus anti-apartheid movement and isolate it from labor and off-campus protest movements is allowed to go unchallenged, it will set an extremely dangerous precedent for the exercise of free speech for everyone and sets the stage for massive repression of protesters should the Reaganauts send U.S. troops into Central America. Now is the time to go directly to labor unions asking for support to defeat the suppression of free speech.

We in the Bolshevik Tendency disagree with the strategy of divestment as an effective means of bringing down the South African government. The divestment strategy appeals to students and others who see themselves as having little direct power to effect social change because it appears to present a means of actually doing something against apartheid. We respect the subjective impulses of the thousands of students at Berkeley, Columbia and dozens of other campuses who are engaging in militant protests in an attempt to force their universities to divest South African holdings, and end their complicity with the bloody apartheid regime....

A successful student strike and *mass* demonstrations against the administration's repressive policies can result in a reaffirmation of the democratic rights won by students on this campus in the 1960s. Isolated and adventurous actions by a few courageous people can only end with more victimization and the loss of valuable militants to the fetid California prison system.

Ultimately it is only the working class that can smash the South African "master race" regime: the South African working class by means of a black-centered proletarian revolution that smashes apartheid and creates a non-racial workers state; and the North American working class aiding them with political strikes against the complicity of American imperialism.... ●

BAFSAM's Impotent Antics

Reprinted below is the text of Militant Longshoreman No. 15, which was distributed to participants in a impotent BAFSAM-initiated "picket" of Pier 80 last January.

BAFSAM (Bay Area Free South Africa Movement) has had a leaflet out calling on enemies of apartheid to "Stop Nedlloyd Ship at Pier 80—Saturday, January 25 at 5 p.m." People who respond to this call thinking that they are supporting a labor boycott of South African cargo may be surprised to find no ship with South African cargo docked at Pier 80. So what is BAFSAM doing? Is this just incompetence? Ever since the 11-day longshore boycott in 1984, BAFSAM has pulled a series of small, ineffective picket lines at Pier 80 in San Francisco, sometimes cynically picketing the entrance even when no Nedlloyd Line ship was docked there! Meanwhile BAFSAM has continued its lunch-time picket line in uptown Oakland at Pacific Maritime Association offices.

BAFSAM Strategy—A Total Failure

Last fall at U.C. Berkeley, BAFSAM spokespersons reported that their "Peace Navy" and picket lines had stopped South African cargo in the Bay Area. The truth is that in the Bay Area not one ship carrying South African cargo has been delayed in either docking, discharging or loading. Free South Africa Movement token picket lines in other West Coast ports resulted in at most a single 10-hour delay of one ship in Vancouver, WA. In every case arbitrators ordered longshoremen to work the cargo; orders promptly obeyed.

BAFSAM has refused to build a picket line big enough and militant enough to shut down Pier 80 when a Nedlloyd ship is in port; meanwhile they have ignored the ten US Lines and three Lykes Lines vessels carrying South African cargo calling at least weekly in the Bay Area. BAFSAM has been at Pier 80 in order to whore off the credit gained by S.F. longshoremen's history making 11-day political strike. These friends of Archie Brown's are the same people who later went on to organize BAFSAM. They are the same misleaders of the working class who helped the S.F. police to

break up a picket line at Pier 80 on Dec. 4, 1984—the picket line which had temporarily halted work on the *Nedlloyd Kimberley* the day after the Federal Court injunction against Local 10 longshoremen.

If BAFSAM had just held demonstrations off to the side of the pier entrance while issuing their appeals to the "individual consciousness of longshoremen," they would have been guilty of liberal ineffectiveness and political impotence. By putting up token picket lines they have prostituted this traditional trade-union weapon. Their actions are counterproductive; the only result is to train longshoremen to go through and work South African cargo behind picket lines. These cynical and irresponsible picket lines are only making it harder to organize a new longshore boycott. Clearly, the last thing BAFSAM wants is well organized and effective labor solidarity actions with the embattled black masses in South Africa.

BAFSAM's Real Strategy—Beg the Capitalists...

BAFSAM's presence at Pier 80 has nothing to do with working-class or trade-union action against apartheid. This was made very clear at a West Coast Labor Conference against apartheid called by BAFSAM in August last year. The underground South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU—supported by the ANC [African National Congress]) had just issued an appeal to trade unions, especially transport workers, in North America and Europe urging them to refuse to handle cargo, mail, communications to or from South Africa. One of the conference workshops introduced a motion to send delegates to the various labor union bodies in the Bay Area urging a union-organized two-week boycott of South African cargo during the forthcoming national period of protest against apartheid. Franklin Alexander and the other BAFSAM spokesmen demagogically attacked this motion for concrete action and were successful in getting it defeated.

Instead of labor action the conference passed a carload of liberal motions for letters to Congress, appeals to local government bodies, petitions to Port Commissions, and research into constitutional law. Their strategy is dead set against *real actions of labor solidarity*, and is centered on making liberal moral appeals to the consciousness of the capitalists and their political flunkies. During the Vietnam war these same people refused to even try to organize labor strikes against the war. They were conspicuous in the ineffectual pacifist peace crawls. It was the courageous struggle of the Vietnam workers and peasants against U.S. imperialism that led the U.S. to finally pull out of Vietnam. It's not liberal appeals to the non-existent "moral consciousness" of capitalists that is causing banks and corporations to pull out of South Africa; it is the revolt of the black masses which is making their investments in apartheid too risky to continue.

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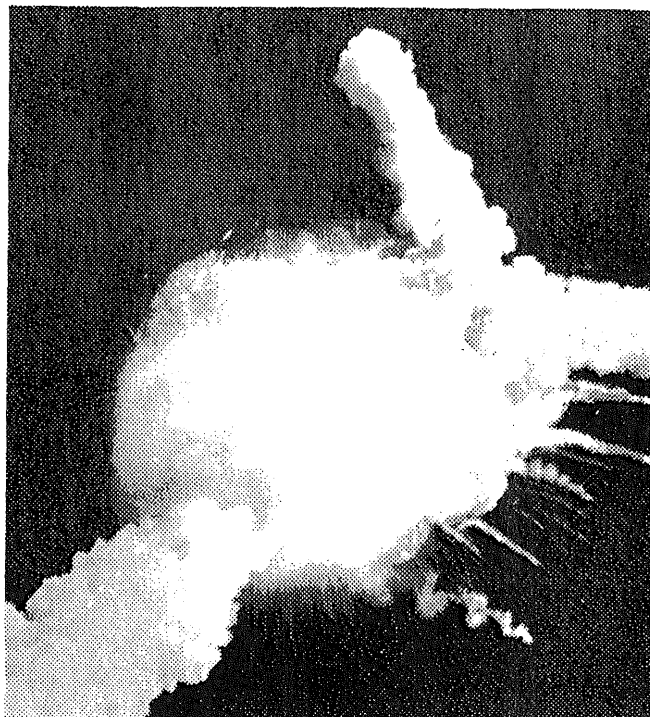
Challenger's 'Major Malfunction' No Disaster for the Working Class

The spontaneous abortion of space shuttle Challenger on January 28 was followed by an outpouring of government-prompted, electronically-orchestrated grief. From Pope to Queen, a variety of "world leaders" were quick to convey their speechwriters' expressions of sorrow. Even Kremlin chief Mikhail Gorbachev telegraphed Reagan, "We share your grief at the tragic death of the crew." None of these notables was so impolite as to point to Reagan's fingerprints on the wreckage. Yet White House pressure to get the 25th shuttle mission into orbit — regardless of hazardous weather conditions — in time for Reagan's State of the Union address that evening was plainly the cause of the "disaster." But instead of an upbeat message from on high, the January 28 evening news featured endless replays of Challenger's fiery demise.

The media made much of the "personal tragedies" of the astronauts' families. Meanwhile the good news about the failed mission has been largely ignored, even by the left press. And the good news is that, along with the \$1.5 billion flagship of the Defense Department/NASA shuttle fleet, the explosion destroyed the second unit in a projected four-part Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System (TDRSS).

The Air Force had initially attempted to give the TDRSS project a civilian cover but, as the 8 November 1982 issue of *Aviation Week & Space Technology (AW&ST)* reported, NASA soon decided "to shift the \$2.2-billion program to a total government system with no commercial communications services." It added that the "Defense Dept. could benefit by the switch. It has plans to use TDRSS spacecraft-to-spacecraft relay capability for military programs.... The relay capability of the TDRSS spacecraft eliminates the need for satellite ground stations, allowing near 100% continuous communications contact with orbiting vehicles." The first component of this system (TDRSS-A) was sent aloft aboard Challenger in April 1983. The second TDRSS unit, scheduled for launch in August of that year, has been delayed repeatedly since then.

In 1952 Eisenhower cabinet appointee Charles Wilson summed up the world view of that administration with his immortal observation, "what's good for G.M. is good for the country." The Reaganites have amended that to read: what's good for the war machine is good for the country. *Aviation Week* (3 March) reported that Air Force Under Secretary Edward Aldrich "said Challenger's destruction was tantamount to a national emergency." The February 10 issue reported, "Launch of a second tracking and data relay satellite to replace the one destroyed on Challenger and bring the TDRS system operational is a high priority in all of the manifest options." Indeed, according to the 17 March issue, the TDRSS is the *top* priority and is to be included on the next shuttle launch (currently set for February 1987).



Aldrich testified before a House Science and Technology subcommittee "that the military effect of the Jan. 28 explosion... would be 'relatively minor' if the three remaining shuttles could resume flights within six months" (*New York Times*, 27 February). But no one expects them to be ready to go in anything like that time frame. According to *AW&ST* (17 March) "Resumption of space shuttle launches prior to mid-1987 is unlikely, NASA managers and engineers believe... no managers believed the program will be operational as early as February, 1987."

There is plenty we don't know about imperialist Big Brother TDRSS (and the rest of the military's communications/intelligence satellite network), but it is reasonable to assume that the 28 January "disaster" represented a big setback for the U.S. military and its high-tech plans for war against the USSR. And that is a very good thing.

Spartacist League: Another Crisis, Another Flinch

For the formerly-Trotskyist Spartacist League (SL), flinching at moments of great "national crisis" (i.e., when it really counts) has virtually become a reflex, as their execrable press coverage of the 28 January explosion demonstrates. *Workers Vanguard's* first article ("Challenger Blows Up in Reagan's Face," 14 February) pays scant attention to the destruction of the TDRSS satellite aboard Challenger and ventures timidly, "there may be some small benefit from

the death of these seven people in that it makes a mockery out of Star Wars, where an enormously sophisticated system must work perfectly without testing." This ignores the fact that TDRSS can function independent of the completion of the rest of the Star Wars apparatus. TDRSS-A is working *now*. The long-awaited TDRSS-B would be working in tandem with it to "form a system capable of relaying communications from the shuttle or other spacecraft through 85% of each Earth orbit" (*AW&ST*, 20 January) had shuttle mission 51-L been successful. Surely the fact that it had to be salvaged from the bottom of the Atlantic, instead of circling the globe high over the central Pacific, must also qualify as a "small benefit" for the working class and its allies.

Taking its cue from the bourgeois media's "human interest" smokescreen, *Workers Vanguard* (*WV*) volunteers: "What we feel toward the astronauts is no more and no less than for any people who die in tragic circumstances, such as the nine poor Salvadorans who were killed by a fire in a Washington, D.C. basement apartment two days before." Yet from the press coverage we saw, there can be little doubt that those "nine poor Salvadorans" were refugees from the desperate poverty (and quite possibly the rightist death squads) of their homeland. *WV*'s assertion that it feels no more sympathy for such people than for the handful of Reaganauts who perished in an attempt to forge one more link in U.S. imperialism's bid to achieve first-strike capability against the Soviet Union, demonstrates that the ex-Trotskyist Spartacist League is no longer capable of distinguishing the class line.

Who Was Who Aboard Challenger?

Who were the "victims" aboard Challenger? Prominent among them was Air Force lifer Lt. Col. Ellison Onizuka, who was clearly a big shooter in the Star Wars program. Onizuka was a mission specialist on a top-secret January 1985 Defense Department launch. He was identified by *AW&ST* as the man "in charge of the TDRSS deployment" on the 28 January mission. *Time* magazine (10 February) identified Challenger's commanding officer, Francis Scobee, as an aerospace engineer and Air Force pilot who "found his true potential in the skies... [where he] flew on combat missions in Viet Nam."

Another war "hero" and Challenger "victim" was Michael Smith. According to *Time*, Smith won "appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis," and "became a pilot and won a chestful of medals during the Viet Nam War" in the course of flying 225 combat missions. Payload specialist Gregory Jarvis "enlisted in the Air Force in 1969, became a specialist in tactical communications satellites... and rose to the rank of captain."

Ronald McNair, the only black on the shuttle, "helped develop specialized lasers" at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. *Time* quotes former college classmate and black Democratic Party hustler Jesse Jackson as saying McNair saw participation in the space program as "the highest way he could contribute to the system that gave him so much." Judith Resnick was an electrical engineer who "operated the spacecraft's remote-control arm" on a previous shuttle flight in 1984. She must have been aware that she had locked onto the Star Wars program.

Christa McAuliffe, the New Hampshire schoolteacher

who won a national competition of 10,000 teachers to become the "first ordinary citizen in space," probably really thought that she was "reaching for the stars." She was indeed a victim. But the degenerate SL makes no distinction between Star Warrior Onizuka (whom the 28 February *WV* blandly describes as "a Japanese American Buddhist from Hawaii") and public relations hostage McAuliffe.

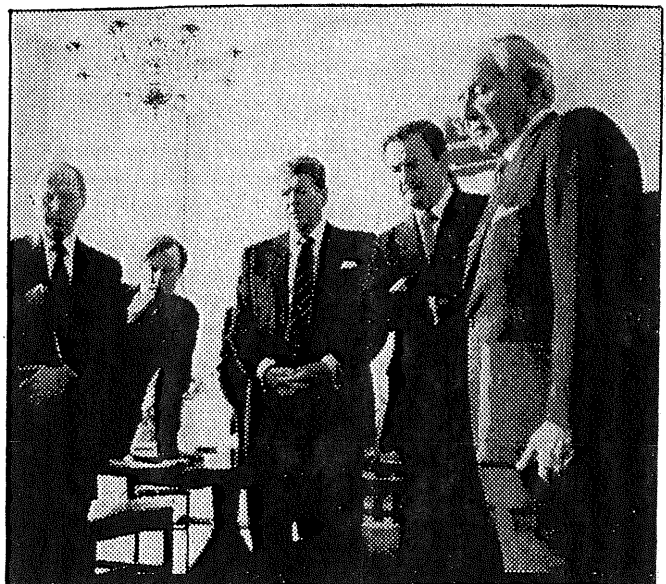
SL's Bogus Amalgam

To further confuse matters *WV* writes, "Those who died [aboard Challenger] were the victims of the U.S. imperialist anti-Soviet war drive, like the 200-plus dead Marines in Beirut or the passengers on the KAL 007 spy plane." What we have here is an attempt to amalgamate three very different situations by a bit of political sleight-of-hand.

The KAL-007 passengers *were* innocent victims. Unlike the "mission specialists" aboard the Challenger, they were sent to their deaths on a provocative and deliberate spy-flight intended to trigger the Soviet air defense network. Despite their posture as defenders of the USSR, in the crunch the Spartacist League flinched. *Workers Vanguard* (9 September 1983) declared that, had the Russians known that there were innocent passengers aboard, then "despite the potential military damage of such an apparent spying mission," shooting down KAL 007 would have been "worse than a barbaric atrocity." The SL defends the Soviet Union as long as there is no heat, but in the midst of an anti-Soviet media-blitz the position is subject to adjustment. So much for "unconditional" defensism!

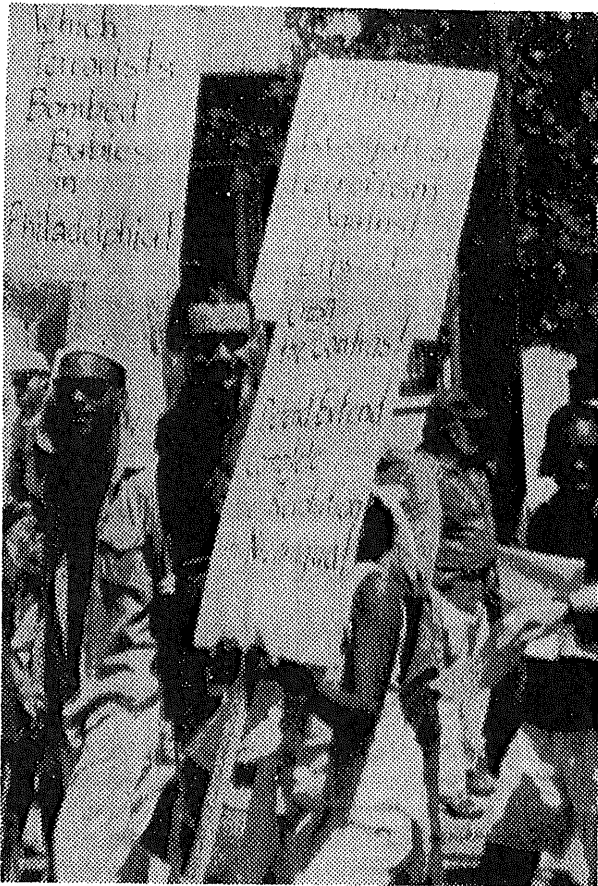
The flip side of ducking on the Russian question is social patriotism. The 200-plus U.S. Marines who perished in the 1983 barracks bombing in Beirut were imperialist hitmen establishing a beachhead for a U.S. military presence in the Middle East. Revolutionists unconditionally oppose imperialist intervention anywhere in the "third world," and call for the removal of such colonial gendarmes by any means necessary. Not so the Spartacist League, which, in the aftermath of the barracks bombing called for *saving* the survivors! As we pointed out at the time:

Reagan watches Challenger replay on White House TV



PETE SOUSA

Hands Off Libya!



BT contingent in April 19 San Francisco demo denounces American terror-bombing of Libya

"The demolition of the Marine headquarters was the biggest military blow to U.S. imperialism since Vietnam. And Reagan didn't like it. It might look "unpatriotic" to be seen applauding that action. So the SL leadership, despite all its huffing and puffing about hanging tough in the crunch, flinched and adjusted the program of the organization to make it more palatable to the bourgeoisie. A 'profile in cowardice.'"
—*Bulletin of the External Tendency of the iSt*, January 1984

The SL sought to alibi its refusal to defend the demolition of the Marine barracks in Lebanon on the grounds that there was no force in Beirut fighting for a "just cause." But the spectacular crash of January 28 demonstrated that even an outright *accident* can bring a welcome setback for imperialism. Those "revolutionaries" who cannot bring themselves to come out and tell the truth to the masses about such "national tragedies" demonstrate their ideological subservience to their own bourgeoisie.

As for *WV's* "millions of Americans" who saw the space shuttle's fatal malfunction as "a heart-rending human tragedy," we can only observe that the capitalist mass media is indeed a powerful ideological weapon. Perhaps exposure to the truth will one day teach some of them to greet future setbacks for the imperialist war machine with calls of "Encore"! ●

Philippines...

(continued from page 24)

Marcos' election gambit turned into a genuine political event. Opposition candidate Corazon Aquino's rallies drew crowds of hundreds of thousands who enthusiastically applauded her promise to bring down the curtain on the despised dictator. Marcos countered with his usual tactics—bribery, fraud, intimidation and assassination—but as the campaign went on it became apparent that events had begun to slip beyond his control.

The vote settled nothing. Marcos proclaimed himself the winner but his opponents were in no mood to go home and wait for the next election. Aquino called for strikes, boycotts and civil disobedience as Marcos plotted a preemptive military strike against the opposition. Reagan's special envoy, Philip Habib, was on the scene in Manila, talking to both of the principals in an attempt to avoid a civil war. Habib also met with long-time Marcos backers Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Deputy Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos. A few hours later Enrile and Ramos declared for Aquino and called on the military to join them against their former boss.

Their call brought little initial response from the armed forces, but tens of thousands of unarmed civilians responded to the exhortations of the Catholic hierarchy to form a human wall around the rebel headquarters at Camp Crame. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, the Pentagon pressured every Philippine army commander they could get hold of to keep their troops off the streets. The turning point came when "loyalist" tanks sent to snuff out the revolt refused to open fire on the crowd around the Constabulary Headquarters. At that point, according to a senior American official, Marcos' chief concern became "to make sure he did not leave with a bullet." Too bad he didn't.

The U.S. was a key player in the fall of the tyrant, but it did not write the script. The issue of who would end up in the presidential palace and who would be airlifted to Hawaii courtesy of the USAF was not decided in Washington but in the streets of Manila by the tens of thousands of ordinary citizens who risked their lives to be rid of Marcos.

Aquino's "People Power"

Aquino's "People Power" was intended by its clerical organizers to ensure that the massive hostility to Marcos did not spill over into a wholesale attack on privilege and property; but instead remained within the framework of a struggle to change the administrative personnel of the state. "People Power" was an instrument of those sections of the Philippine elite that resented Marcos and his clique of "cronies" treating the state as their own personal property.

The coalition which stood atop the "People Power" pyramid embraced the clerical hierarchy (a potent force in this 85 percent Catholic country), the commercial bourgeoisie of the Makati district, sections of the landholding hierarchy (represented by Aquino herself), and enjoyed the support of a sizeable portion of the middle and lower ranks of the officer corps.

The bourgeois class character of the new administration is apparent in Aquino's cabinet choices. Her Vice President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister (and rival), Doy Lau-

rel, was one of the few bourgeois oppositionists who did not suffer financially under the dictatorship. Jaime Ongpin, the new Finance Minister, is president of one of the largest mining multinationals in the Philippines. The two leading military rebels, Ramos (Marcos' top cop throughout the martial law period) and Enrile (who was among the richest and most corrupt of the cronies) kept their jobs as armed forces chief of staff and defense minister respectively. They embody the continuity of the state, in particular the military, from Marcos to Aquino.

The new government is pledged to taking back a few of the holdings awarded to the cronies; reappropriating as much of Marcos' loot as it can locate; and returning the army and the rest of the state apparatus to the service of the entire ruling elite. But Aquino's "People Power" will do nothing to better the abysmal conditions of life for the 70 percent of the population who live in poverty. There are already indications that the illusions of last February are beginning to evaporate. In a speech delivered in mid-April, Vice President Laurel made reference to "deep grumblings sweeping across our land" (*New York Times*, 21 April).

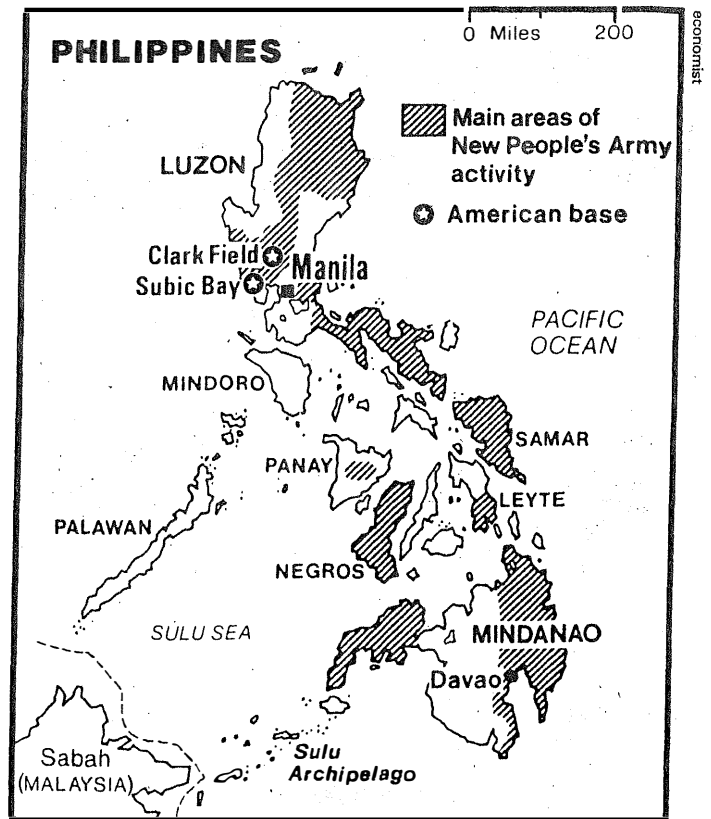
But Washington has no complaints. The multinational investments remain secure as do the naval and air bases at Subic Bay and Clark Field. Aquino's victory has also kept the Filipino officer corps intact for its war on the NPA and has, at least temporarily, administered a major political setback to one of the world's largest leftist insurgencies. A State Department aide summed up the view from Washington: "We feel we're on a roll. Now we want to use that momentum and apply it to the contras."

American Imperialism's First Conquest

The U.S. role in the events of last February is only the latest chapter in almost ninety years of America's bloody colonial domination. At the turn of the century the Filipinos had the unfortunate distinction of being the first overseas victims of American capitalism in its imperialist "maturity." On 16 March 1898, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations reported that "the creative energy of the American people can no longer be confined within the borders of the Union. Production has so outrun consumption in both agriculture and manufactured products that foreign markets must be secured or stagnation will ensue." Five weeks later the U.S. declared war on Spain—Cuba and the Philippines being the real estate up for grabs.

At that time the Filipinos were in the midst of a protracted war of national liberation against the Spanish. Initially the insurgent Filipinos welcomed the intervention of the U.S. military, but they soon discovered they had acquired a new and even more rapacious colonial master. The overwhelming military superiority of the U.S. and the savage policy of mass extermination of the indigenous population—a strategy which the U.S. Army had perfected during the genocidal wars of conquest against the Native American peoples—eventually drowned the rebellion in the blood of a quarter of a million Filipinos. Mark Twain commented sardonically that: "as for a flag for the Philippine Province, it is easily managed. We can have a special one—our states do it; we can have our usual flag, with the white stripes painted black and the stars replaced by a skull and crossbones."

The national elite (the *ilustrados*) abandoned the fight



early to sign on as junior partners in the new colonial arrangement. The result was a paradigm of the deforming effects produced by the forcible integration of semi-feudal societies into the imperialist world economy. As Trotsky noted in his 1940 article "Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution":

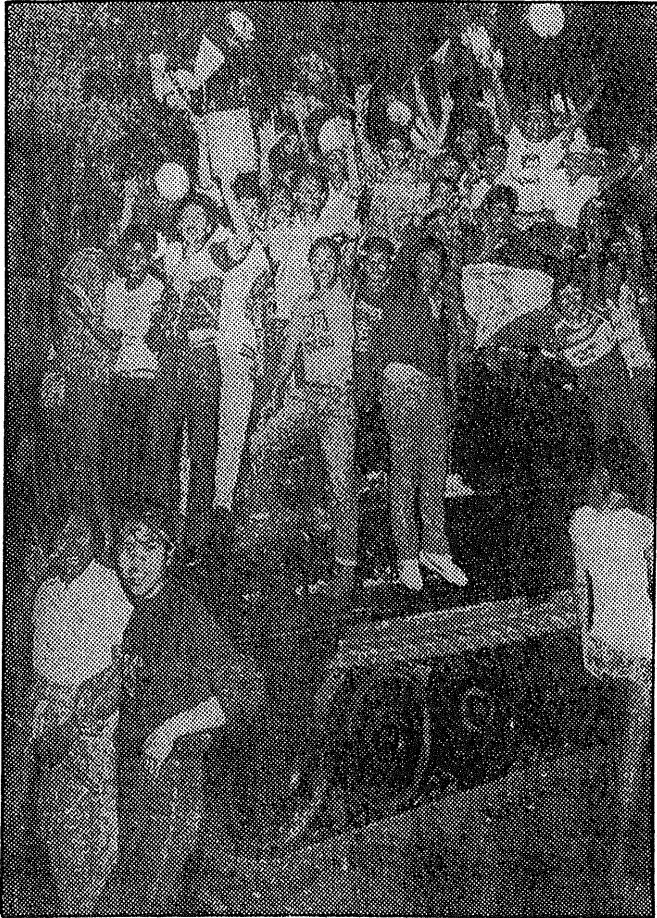
"historical backwardness does not mean a mere retracing of the course of the advanced countries a hundred or two hundred years late. Rather, it gives rise to an utterly different 'combined' social formation, in which the most highly developed achievements of capitalist technique and structure are integrated into the social relations of feudal and pre-feudal barbarism, transforming and dominating them, fashioning a unique relationship of classes."

A 1909 "free trade" agreement imposed by Washington transformed the Philippines into a producer of agricultural products for the U.S. and a tariff-free market for American manufactured goods. This effectively foreclosed the development of an indigenous manufacturing bourgeoisie and ensured a pattern of neo-colonial dependency which has continued to this day.

In the countryside farmland was increasingly concentrated in the hands of huge owners known as *hacenderos*, and many previously independent peasants were turned into sharecroppers. American agribusiness came to monopolize rubber, pineapple and banana output as well as big chunks of other specialized agricultural production.

Japanese Occupation and the War Against the Huks

American rule was briefly interrupted by Japanese occupation from 1942-44. The Philippine elite easily adjusted to a new imperialist master. The puppet government set up by the Japanese was headed by Doy Laurel's father; Cory



KIM KOMENICH

Filipino youth celebrate fall of Marcos dictatorship

Aquino's father-in-law served as a cabinet minister. In the countryside the People's Anti-Japanese Army, or Hukbala-hap, mobilized tens of thousands under Communist Party (PKP) leadership in a rebellion aimed at securing national independence and distributing the land to those who worked it. While the Aquinos and Laurels were serving the Japanese, the Huks inflicted 20,000 casualties on the occupation forces and their native collaborators.

In 1944 the U.S. Army, led by Douglas MacArthur, began the reconquest of the Philippines. Two years later, on July 4, U.S. President Harry Truman signed a proclamation of neo-colonial "independence" for the Philippines. "National freedom" was backed up by legislation providing for American training of the Philippine armed forces, free entry of U.S. imports for a period of eight years and a constitutional guarantee of equal property rights for U.S. citizens. In 1947, with the Cold War heating up, the United States extorted 99-year leases on fifteen military bases from its vassal. Eisenhower's secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, with unintended irony, proclaimed the Philippines "a symbol of how the West can create independence in Asia."

The continuing efforts of the displaced landlords—backed by the U.S.—to reverse the agrarian reforms instituted by the Huks during the war, and the exclusion of duly elected PKP supporters from the National Assembly, touched off a renewed period of armed struggle which raged from 1948 to 1955. A CIA-organized counterinsurgency

campaign, combining military pressure with "psychological warfare" (centered on empty promises of significant land reform), broke the back of the revolt. In 1956 Cory's husband Benigno (who 25 years later bragged, "I've worked with the CIA on many operations," quoted in *Intercontinental Press*, 27 January) negotiated the surrender of Huk leader Luis Taruc. The promised land reform never materialized.

The "American Century" in the Philippines

The Philippines' economy experienced significant expansion in the 1950s. Tariffs were set up to shelter local industry and as a result the import-substituting manufacturing sector doubled between 1948 and 1958 (accounting for 20 percent of net national product). Despite this quantitative expansion, the industrial development of the Philippines remained extremely one-sided. Concentrated in and around Manila, indigenous manufacturing consisted of assembling parts made elsewhere and the production of processed foods and light consumer goods. Shoes were virtually the national product, perhaps explaining why 3,000 pairs of them were found in Imelda Marcos' dressing room after her flight from the Malacanang Palace. Heavy industry was non-existent.

In the early 1960s the limited measures undertaken to promote industrial development were reversed. At the behest of the IMF and World Bank, the government instituted a radical currency devaluation and slashed tariffs. The resulting increase in the cost of imported raw materials and equipment halved the rate of growth in manufacturing. Working-class living standards plummeted as real wages fell by ten percent in two years. But the devaluation provided what the IMF wanted: a bonanza for agribusiness and easier conditions for foreign capital penetration. In the course of the 1960s imports of machinery and vehicles outpaced traditional exports, as the trade deficit soared to \$257 million in 1969. The national debt approached \$2 billion. The next decade would see it spiral out of control (see *Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines*; Walden Bello et al, 1982).

A further 60 percent devaluation of the peso ordered by the IMF in 1970 kicked off a debilitating round of inflation. To suppress a rising tide of strikes and social struggle against rapidly falling living standards, Marcos, who had occupied the presidency since 1966, imposed martial law in September 1972. Wages were curtailed, strikes banned, militant unionists blacklisted and political opponents driven underground. All of this was applauded by the IMF and other imperialist financial agencies as the road to prosperity for the Philippines.

Marcos took advantage of martial law to set up several free trade zones. These were supposed to attract foreign investment, create jobs and introduce modern production techniques into the Philippine economy. But, predictably, the companies attracted by the low-wage tariff-free zones tended to be low-tech, labor-intensive sweat shops (garments and electronics). Moreover they imported most of their components and raw materials, rather than creating local spin-off industries as had been projected. In the first ten years of its operation, Marcos' showpiece, the Bataan Export Processing Zone, generated a paltry \$82 million in foreign exchange earnings to offset the \$192 million it cost to construct it in the first place.



Young NPA fighters

JAMES NACHTWEY

Marcos' authoritarian "solutions" for the chronic economic problems of the neo-colony which he ruled proved a spectacular failure. But for a tiny stratum they were extremely lucrative. Friends and relatives of Ferdinand and Imelda cornered markets and exploited the government's connections with the IMF and World Bank to build private empires. By monopolizing agribusiness, controlling government-initiated construction projects, using state decrees that awarded entire industries to individuals, and scoring spectacular "commission" coups through their ability to secure American multinationals' favored contracts, the "cronies" amassed immense fortunes.

Few regimes flaunted so brazenly Proudhon's maxim that "property is theft." (During Ferdinand's tenure in office he managed to accumulate a personal fortune of \$10 billion which, on a salary officially pegged at \$4,700 a year, was quite a feat.) Nor did many so openly translate state power into a license to kill. The assassination of Benigno Aquino in 1983 declared to the world that no one was safe from Marcos' obsessive quest to silence critics. In 1985 alone there were over 2,200 known cases of political executions, torture and "disappearances."

The recipe for "export-led" growth enforced by the IMF and the World Bank, as well as the pillaging and incompetence of Marcos and his cronies, have made the Philippines into an international "basket case." The economy was also hit hard by the rapid rise in interest rates in the early 1980s and the simultaneous fall in the price of its chief exports. (Sugar, the leading export, fell from 65 to 3 cents a pound between 1975 and 1985.) Foreign investment fell off dramatically and lines of credit (which had provided Marcos with an "alternative" to economic growth throughout the 1970s) were cut.

Today the national debt stands at \$27.5 billion and the interest payments alone consume a third of the country's annual export earnings. In the past two years gross national product has contracted by ten percent. Per capita consumption has fallen to 1972 levels. Half of the workforce is unem-

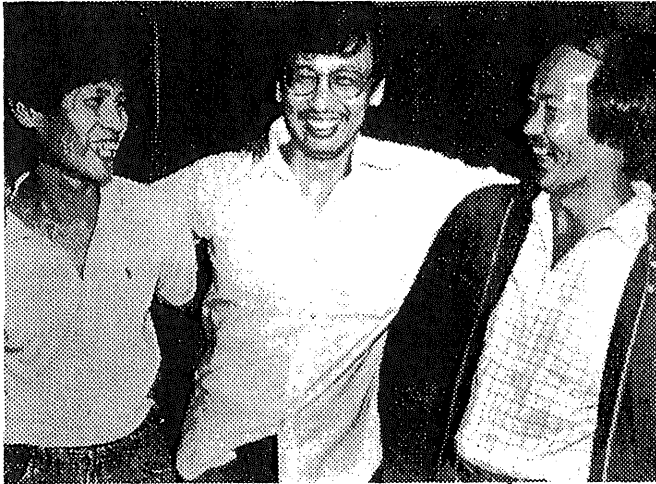
ployed at least part of the year.

The dismal economic situation in these potentially rich islands is only partially attributable to the greed and mismanagement of Marcos and his cronies. It is more fundamentally a product of the mechanism of imperialist exploitation. The 30 January issue of *Far East Economic Review* pointed to some of the ways in which this works, "some multinationals have indeed shortchanged host countries by underpricing exports and overpricing imports to shift profits, and therefore tax liability, outside the host country." In the case of the Philippines in 1984 "of the total net profits of P7.2 billion [pesos], foreign companies garnered 67%." Most of this is repatriated by the foreign corporations in addition to the \$1.7 billion taken out of the economy annually in interest payments to international creditors. That is why, whether under Marcos or Aquino, a capitalist Philippines is doomed to *remain* a "basket case." Only by expropriating the capitalist parasites—domestic and foreign—and repudiating the debt to the international financial bloodsuckers, can the Filipino people escape the endless cycle of exploitation and poverty which membership in the imperialist "free world" condemns them to.

Preconditions for Revolution

Financed by debt, driven by greed and sustained by brutal repression, Marcos and his cronies had brought the Philippines to the brink of a massive social explosion. Writing in 1915, Lenin specified "three major symptoms" of a revolutionary situation:

"(1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes', a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for 'the lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that 'the upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and



CPP leader Jose Maria Sison (center), NPA commander Bernabe Buscayno (left) after release from prison

want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in 'peace time', but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the 'upper classes' themselves into independent historical action."
— "The Collapse of the Second International"

This describes the situation in the Philippines last winter. The ruling class was deeply fractured. The millions of Filipinos who lived in squalor amid obscene displays of tasteless ostentation from the tiny layer of ersatz Disneyland aristocrats and hangers-on clustered around the Malacanang Palace increasingly looked to the Maoist insurgents in the countryside for deliverance from Marcos.

The malaise extended into the military which, like the rest of the bloated and corrupt state apparatus, was slowly decomposing. Splits in the armed forces had been evident since at least 1977, and the military was becoming decreasingly effective against the NPA insurgency. "Crony-ism" in the armed forces translated into a log-jam at the top as Marcos favorites stayed on long past retirement age, thereby freezing the promotional ladder and creating disaffection among the more junior officers.

Yet even the most favorable objective preconditions are insufficient to ensure the triumph of the proletarian revolution. That requires above all a leadership which possesses the programmatic capacity to turn the objective possibility into an actuality. The Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP—founded in 1968 after splitting from the Moscow-line PKP) has succeeded in organizing a nationally-coordinated peasant-based guerrilla movement, the NPA. But it has proved utterly incapable of providing even a deformed approximation of revolutionary leadership for the Filipino working class.

The CPP advocates an explicitly non-proletarian "countryside surrounds the cities" strategy of rural guerrilla warfare as the road to socialism. Despite their position of influence in the May First Movement (KMU), the largest and most militant trade-union federation, the armed agrarian reformers of the CPP/NPA view events in the urban metropolitan areas, particularly the struggles of the working class, as secondary to the conflict in the countryside.

Even when peasant-based petty-bourgeois movements

succeed in overthrowing neo-colonialist regimes, and go on to expropriate the means of production (as occurred in China, Vietnam and Cuba), the regimes which result are necessarily cast in the mold of the degenerated Soviet Union. The absence of a class-conscious proletariat as an active contender for state power permits the leadership of the peasant insurrectionary armed forces to establish a political monopoly and consolidate its position as a parasitic stratum sitting atop the collectivized property forms.

CPP/NPA: Aquino's Would-Be Partners

The rapid success of Aquino's "People Power" revolt came as a big surprise to the CPP/NPA, which had projected a protracted intra-bourgeois conflict during which they could consolidate their island base areas while picking up disillusioned Aquino supporters radicalized by Marcos repression. The CPP sought to become the left wing of a broad anti-Marcos popular-front government ("New Democracy" in Maoist parlance). This strategy has been overtaken by events as Aquino managed to defeat Marcos without the participation of the CPP. Indeed a key part of her program was that she was better able to contain the leftist insurrection.

The flight of Marcos and the triumph of the yellow banner of "People Power" was profoundly disorienting for much of the CPP/NPA rank and file, who had been recruited to a program of anti-Marcos reformism. Aquino moved to exploit the crisis of confidence within the CPP ranks by rapidly making good on her promise to release all CPP/NPA prisoners, despite the opposition of the military. One recently-released political prisoner commented that the 15,000 NPA guerrillas "are getting very tired of living in the hills on sweet potatoes" (*Toronto Globe and Mail*, 6 March), implying that they would not long continue fighting against a popular "People Power" government.

Aquino has been careful to reassure those who considered her olive branch to the NPA as "naive": "I am offering amnesty to all those who have joined the NPA but who are not out-and-out Communists and who will lay down their arms, renounce all forms of violence and pledge allegiance to the new government. I am confident there are many who belong in this category and, in fact, the hard-core constitute a very small minority.... I am not really so naive" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 February). For the "hard core" Aquino promises extermination.

The CPP/NPA leadership responded to Aquino's victory with contradictory signals. The international office of the National Democratic Front (a CPP front group) initially hailed it as "a people's victory over the US-backed Marcos regime." Its 26 February assertion that, "In toppling the Marcos regime, the people have cracked the imperialist hold of the US over the Philippines" (cited in *International Viewpoint*, 24 March) shows the profound disorientation of the CPP. In fact Aquino's victory, by removing the despised Marcos regime, accomplished just the opposite: the beginnings of the *re-consolidation* of the imperialists' hold—at the NPA's expense. Yet despite the conciliatory approach taken to Aquino to date, the NPA has not called off its struggle against the army.

The intensity of fighting varies widely—in some districts an informal cease-fire is in effect, while in others the war is waged as fiercely as ever. The *New York Times* (21 April)

reported that according to Antonion Zumel, a CPP political bureau member and spokesman for the National Democratic Front, the NPA would continue to attack "military units that it says are abusive, provincial warlords once protected by the Marcos regime and certain paramilitary units said to have a long record of human rights violations."

CPP's Inability to Capitalize on the Crisis of the Regime

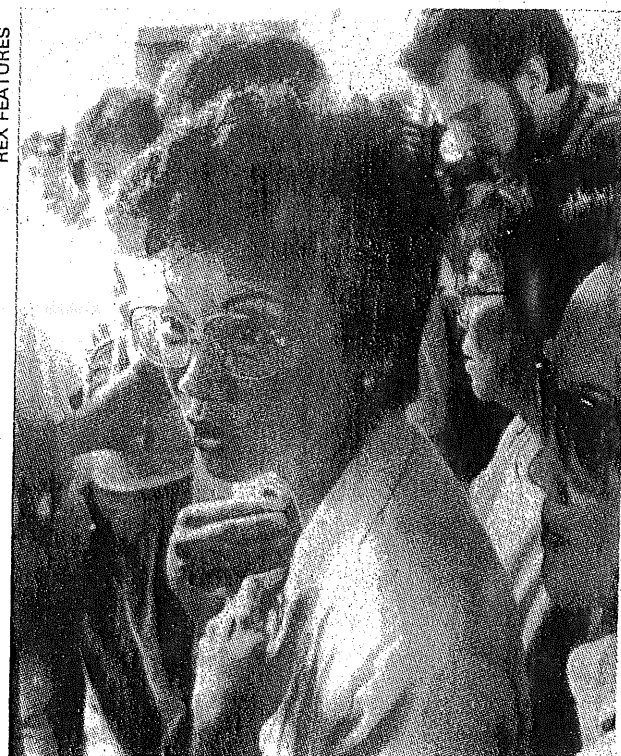
The CPP's abstention from the February 7 presidential election was presented as a principled refusal to participate in "a meaningless but noisy electoral contest between local reactionaries." It is certainly true that nothing fundamental would change as a result of the electoral process. Nonetheless the abstention of the CPP allowed Aquino's bourgeois coalition to present itself as the sole opposition to Marcos.

Leninists could not, as a matter of principle, have offered any political support to Aquino and the bourgeois opposition. But this does not mean that the alternative was passive abstentionism. A genuine revolutionary party with the kind of mass base which the CPP possesses would have run directly, or through a legal front group, on a socialist program which put forward the independent class interests of the workers and the oppressed. The purpose of such a campaign would not be to get elected but to raise issues that would demonstrate to the working masses how *both* wings of the bourgeoisie were united on all the fundamental questions.

The reason the CPP did not do so is because it viewed Aquino as the embodiment of the "anti-Marcos" wing of the capitalist class that it has long sought alliance with. Despite its occasional denunciations of both sides in the contest, *Ang Bayan* (the CPP's paper) leaned heavily toward Aquino, claiming that "Corazon Aquino has been carrying on a vigorous antifascist campaign, thus making valuable contributions to the people's overall antifascist struggles." The CPP's imprisoned former head, Jose Maria Sison, suggested that the party's "minimum boycott" would "allow the opposition candidates to seek votes from [the CPP's] mass base, which is sizeable and can be decisive." Sison also ventured the opinion that, "To me personally, the opposition tandem of Aquino and Laurel is far, far better and more acceptable" (quoted in *Intercontinental Press*, 10 March). Some "boycott"!

In the aftermath of the election, when it was clear that Marcos was preparing to cling to power by naked force and Aquino was talking about massive civil disobedience, there was a fleeting opportunity for the CPP, with its substantial trade-union base, to take advantage of the bourgeoisie's crisis by aggressively uniting the plebeian masses in a struggle to overthrow the tottering regime. The masses were drawn into political activity as a consequence of the elections and the military was divided. In this situation a wave of factory and land seizures culminating in a national general strike against the hated regime could have opened the road to the conquest of power by the proletariat. A key part of organizing such a general strike movement would have been the initiation of a network of workers councils, with their own armed defense guards, which could have formed the nucleus of proletarian rule.

REX FEATURES



Corazon Aquino

Instead, Leandro Alejandro, the 25-year-old secretary general of Bayan (a legal reformist coalition which the CPP is active within), went to Camp Crame to negotiate with military chieftain Enrile. Unable to cut a deal, Alejandro announced that the confrontation in the streets was just a "war of the ruling class." By sitting out the struggle against Marcos, the CPP and its allies handed over the initiative to Aquino and the Catholic hierarchy, and allowed them to claim the fruits of the victory.

Despite the passivity and abstention of the left, the situation remains highly volatile. There are obviously important rifts in the new government over how to manage the transition back to "normalcy" after 14 years of despotism. Enrile and Ramos (the military "conservatives") want to use the authority of the new government to terminate the leftist insurgency through naked repression; whereas Aquino and the "reformist" wing favor a combination of the carrot and the stick with an initial emphasis on winning "hearts and minds" in NPA base areas with new promises of land reform and an amnesty for those who turn themselves in.

Program for Power

In periods of mass social turmoil in which tens and hundreds of thousands of people are drawn into politics for the first time, a small revolutionary formation can become a decisive factor. But this is only possible if it has a correct program, and the capacity to apply it intelligently. Such a party must also have the political courage to "swim against the stream" and not capitulate to the existing illusions of the masses.

What is required today in the Philippines is a party firmly based on the Transitional Program, the core of which Leon Trotsky explained in 1938 as "a system of *transitional*



Leftist students denounce elections, demand closing of U.S. bases

demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

One of the key demands which a revolutionary party would put forward at this juncture would be a call for immediate elections to a constituent assembly. This simple challenge to Aquino's right to rule by decree could drive a wedge between Cory and her misled plebeian supporters.

The kind of "democracy" Aquino is committed to was demonstrated by her announcement that she would be appointing a commission to draft a new constitution, in the meantime arrogating all executive and legislative power to herself. Asked why those charged with elaborating a new constitution should be appointed instead of elected, Justice Minister Neptali Gonzalez replied "that popular election 'may not necessarily result in the election of the most qualified person' able to draft 'the best constitution possible'" (*New York Times*, 26 March). So much for "People Power"!

Another key question in the Philippines today is the *national* question. This has two aspects. Firstly, a revolutionary organization must absolutely and unconditionally recognize the right of the oppressed Muslim Moro minority in the southern islands to self-determination. The Moros have periodically fought ferocious armed rebellions for independence from the predominantly Christian Filipino majority. The latest of these wars of national liberation in the 1970s was brutally suppressed by Marcos at the cost of 60,000 lives.

Secondly, there is the question of U.S. imperialist domination of the Philippines itself. As one source notes:

"After Reagan was elected, it had become widely respectable in nearly all circles in the Philippines, for the first time since the turn-of-the-century Philippine-American war, to be anti-American in matters of policy... By now most opposition leaders, whether in jail, in exile, underground or enjoying limited freedom of movement, had called for the removal of the American bases."

— *Revolution in the Philippines*, F. Poole and M. Vanzi, 1984

Yet Aquino and her government are pledged to maintain the imperialist garrisons at least until 1991. Laurel's first official utterance as foreign minister was to announce Subic Bay and Clark Field were safe because "the Philippines was not anti-American."

This has created problems for Aquino as the massive U.S. military presence is extremely unpopular with ordinary Filipinos. As Jose Diokno, chairman of Aquino's own Human Rights Committee put it, "The Philippines is an independent country that is not sovereign." Diokno reflected the bitterness of many of his countrymen when he denounced the March 21 stabbing of a Filipino by an off-duty U.S. serviceman as "one in a long string of abuses committed by American servicemen against Filipinos... in all cases, the servicemen involved never faced Philippine courts" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 24 April). The demand for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all imperialist military forces is a powerful lever to break the allegiance of Aquino's mass base.

The land question is also pivotal to any revolutionary strategy in this country where two-thirds of the population is rural. The NPA's peasant-based revolt has been fueled by the failure of Marcos and his predecessors to effect any substantial land reform, despite repeated promises to do so. By the end of 1980 a mere 1,700 tenants had benefited from the much-heralded "emancipation patents." Behind this kulakization at a snail's pace lies the intractable opposition of the large landowners, as well as the huge agribusiness monopolies, to any significant redistribution. As the World Bank loan officer for the Philippines commented, "Land reform is not amenable to halfway measures." And yet halfway measures were all that Marcos, his cronies, the World Bank and foreign capital could countenance. Aquino, who comes from one of the largest landowning families in the Philippines, will do no better.

"the 2,300 workers employed by the 'People's President,' who has pledged to address the urgent need for land reform in the still largely feudal and impoverished Philippine countryside, do not own one inch of land.... Ardl, a 25-year-old

labourer, heaved his machete after cutting cane, and leant against a rickety hut of palm and bamboo. His family had worked on the hacienda for 60 years, he told me, and 'we want land'."

—[London] *Observer*, 2 March

He won't get any from Cory's powerful Cojuangco clan. A revolutionary party must rally the peasantry behind the working class by calling for the expropriation of the landlords and nationalization of large-scale agribusiness.

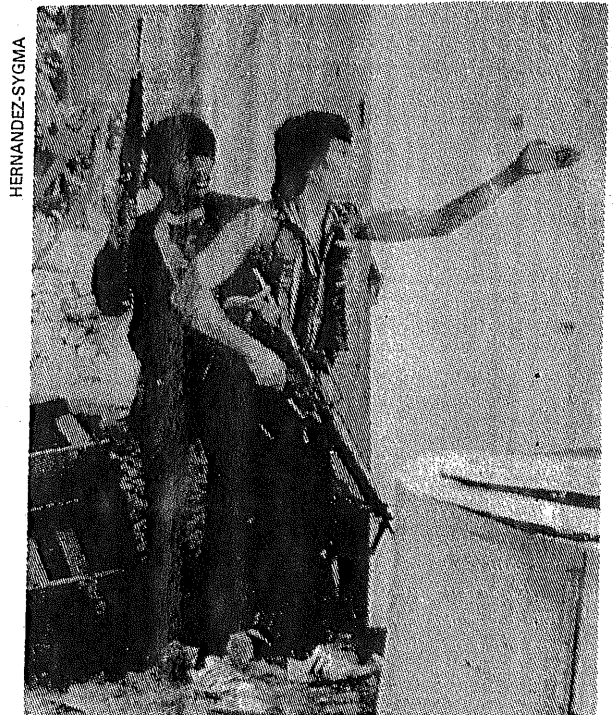
Revolutionists would also raise the demand for the right of the trade unions to "open the books" of the big capitalists and to proceed with the expropriation without compensation under workers control of all the holdings of Marcos and those (like Enrile) who profited from the wholesale looting of the economy over the past 15 years. Furthermore it is necessary to mobilize the masses to root out the torturers and criminals (like Ramos) among the cops, the officer corps and the government bureaucracy, and subject them to trial by democratically-elected people's courts. But Aquino is administering Marcos' state apparatus on behalf of the entire bourgeoisie, including the "cronies." She has no intention of carrying out such measures; like other purely democratic demands, they can only be carried out by mobilizing the power of the proletariat *against* the new government.

In response to capitalist "austerity" schemes to meet the demands of the international loan sharks, revolutionists should demand a tripling of the minimum wage and a sliding scale of wages and hours to combat unemployment. The workers must respond to capitalist pleas of inability to pay by the expropriation of industry along with the banks and the agribusiness monopolies. In order to defend the unions against attacks by rightist thugs, scabs and the armed forces, it is necessary to begin to organize armed self-defense squads in every workplace to form the basis of a workers militia. Such a program of democratic and transitional demands leads logically to a call for a workers government—based on democratically-elected workers councils—to expropriate the entire capitalist class and destroy the bourgeois state.

The Crisis of Leadership in the Filipino Proletariat

The Filipino working class is one of the most viciously exploited proletariats in the world. Effective labor costs are less than half of those of Singapore and Taiwan and only a third of Hong Kong. Despite the Marcos regime's heavy repression, workers have managed to organize powerful unions and have waged strikes with desperate courage. Between 1982 and 1984 the Bataan Export Processing Zone, "a zone which the government boasted would never have a strike had been hit by three general strikes in three years, each involving up to 20,000 workers" (*International Labour Reports*, July/August 1985). The victory of "People Power" unleashed a wave of strikes, including a 10-day shutdown of the two giant U.S. military bases. "At least for now," commented *Business Week* (24 February), "the increasing radicalization of the work force is a more pressing concern than the communist insurgency."

Over and over the Filipino working class has proven its combativity. What is missing is a leadership committed to a resolute struggle for working-class power. The CPP's program of a "New Democratic" first stage in which the workers and peasants unite with the "progressive" and "anti-



NPA guerrillas attack military in northern Luzon

imperialist" sectors of the capitalist class is a fetter on the heroic and combative Filipino proletariat. In the neo-colonial "third world," as in the industrialized imperialist "first world," *all* sectors of the bourgeoisie are united by their common class interests against the workers and peasants. Alliances with one or another section of the capitalist class can only demoralize and politically disarm the workers and thus lead to the victory of the counterrevolution.

The evident appetite of a large section of the CPP leadership to seek accommodation with Aquino paves the way for a bloody massacre on the model of the liquidation of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965, in which some 200,000 workers and peasants perished. While militarily defending the CPP/NPA cadres against Aquino/Enrile's "reformed" military, it is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to wage a ruthless political struggle against the fatal class-collaborationist illusions being promoted by Sison & Co.

The history of the Philippines in this century amply demonstrates that the fundamental tasks of the national-democratic revolution can *only* be accomplished under the rule of the working class. The Menshevik/Stalinist program of "two-stage" revolution is designed to weld the workers and peasants to the ruling elite, pending the "completion" of the classical tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Yet the interpenetration of urban and rural ruling classes in Filipino society, as well as the subordination of the domestic bourgeoisie to the American colossus, makes the national bourgeoisie incapable of playing any historically progressive "anti-imperialist" role. Only the Leninist-Trotskyist program of permanent revolution—the expropriation of the capitalists and landed oligarchs, and the establishment of a workers and peasants government—can break the chains of imperialist debt slavery and capitalist exploitation which shackle the dispossessed millions of the Philippines today. ●



KIM KOMENICH—S.F. EXAMINER

Filipino Elite Still in the Saddle

Not 'People Power' But Workers Power!

"We love you, sir," gushed George Bush after Ferdinand Marcos "won" the rigged Philippines presidential election of 1981 with a modest 88 percent of the vote. "We love your adherence to democratic principles and democratic processes." But five years later, the Reaganites reluctantly concluded that time had run out for their model "democrat." With an expanding leftist guerrilla insurrection and the Philippine economy in a tailspin, Marcos had become a liability U.S. imperialism could no longer afford.

In May 1985 CIA chief William Casey visited Marcos in Manila and bluntly demanded that the presidential election scheduled for 1987 be held immediately. A few months later, U.S. officials were publicly criticizing "the unwillingness of President Marcos to clean up the political system, professionalize the military and break up business monopolies." In the State and Defense Departments there was acute worry over Marcos' policies, which many predicted would "lead to a collapse in the Philippines and deal a blow to western interests" (*New York Times*, 31 October 1985).

Among these cherished interests were \$3 billion of private American investment and two military bases of vital strategic significance in U.S. imperialism's preparations for war against the Soviet Union.

Fearful that the guerrillas of the New People's Army (NPA) would ultimately replace the butcher of Manila if the conflict between Marcos and his moderate bourgeois opponents had to be settled in the streets, Washington sought an "orderly" transition to a government more broadly representative of the Filipino elite. But the diseased despot of the Malacanang Palace refused to cooperate in dismantling his nepotistic regime. Instead, he called a snap election, hoping to capitalize on divisions in the opposition and his control of the media and army, to steal another vote and present Washington with a *fait accompli*.

It was a gamble that backfired. Intended only as a public relations hoax to get his imperial patron off his back,

(continued on page 16)