

# Women and Revolution



Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League

50¢

## Sex, Race and Class in the "American Century"

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### Free America's Class-War Prisoners!

See page 18



Workers Vanguard Photos



Oakland, California, 21 February 1987.

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## International Women's Day 1987

# Letter

## On Wilhelm Reich

New York, New York  
15 November 1986

Editor  
*Women and Revolution*

Dear Sirs:

I should like to comment on Jack Shapiro's recent and informative article which included a critique of Wilhelm Reich's work.

It is not to be denied that Reich's theories are incomplete. They do not really explain many aspects of history and everyday life although Reich insisted, erroneously, that they should and do. It is important to point out, however, the source of these theories. Reich was a real genius of science, an experimental biologist of amazing courage, skill and intelligence.

Reich, a physician, devised an entirely new way of observing human behavior in a clinical situation and thereby discovered a physically real phenomenon of the greatest possible importance. I refer to the principle which he labeled "armoring." There is nothing mysterious, unmeasurable or obscure about armoring.

Human armoring consists of two closely related aspects. One is the chronic restriction of breathing. The second is the existence of chronically tense, even rigid, muscles systematically disposed throughout the body. The restriction of breathing one can observe directly in everyday life. In the therapeutic situation one can easily feel the armored muscles. They are extremely painful even when lightly squeezed.

Reich's theoretical ideas emerged out of his attempts to dissolve the rigidity of the muscles and restore profound, natural breathing. He discovered that the average human is a masked figure beneath which lies trapped an organism in a straightjacket of desperately contained, impotent rage. Reich compassionately

### Defend Dr. Morgentaler!

*Dr. Henry Morgentaler has put his life on the line fighting for women's right to abortion against Canada's reactionary laws. A survivor of Hitler's concentration camps, today Morgentaler faces vicious state persecution in Canada. The Partisan Defense Committee has contributed to his defense, and received the following letter on February 21:*

I wish to thank you for your contribution to cover expenses related to my struggle for reproductive freedom for women in Canada. It is a long, arduous and protracted battle. I appreciate your support and view it as an encouragement to continue in spite of all the difficulties.

Yours sincerely,  
H. Morgentaler, M.D.

Send contributions to: Pro-Choice Defense Fund, 238 Davenport Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 1S6.

encouraged the release of that rage, in a harmless way and discovered, after it was spent, the natural, uncorrupt desire for love that was hidden beneath it.

No study of Reich's ideas should be undertaken without explicit reference to this principle of armoring. Leaving it out will always result in a distorted view of his work.

Very truly yours,  
Theodore Lasar

*W&R replies:* The article "The Trouble with Sexual Utopias" in our last issue, which also dealt with Charles Fourier and Sigmund Freud, contains a critical assessment of Wilhelm Reich's efforts to graft onto the program of the revolutionary workers movement a demand for universal sexual satisfaction. The article was not intended as a comprehensive survey of Reich's views, even in the period in which he considered himself a Marxist. For example, Reich's theory of the historical origins of sexual repression, expressed in his 1932 work *The Imposition of Sexual Morality*, was not dealt with. Nor did it take up his contributions to psychotherapeutic techniques. The article did acknowledge: "Some of his early writings on character analysis and 'body language' remain today standard texts for practicing analysts." Particular physical therapeutic techniques *do* help some suffering individuals in the immediate sense, undoubtedly. However, the broader point regarding Reich's political theories which the article made was that: "A socialist revolution—if it is to be made at all—has to be made by people as they are shaped by an oppressive class society with all its deforming effects. Rejecting the possibility of progressive social struggle by such people, and positing individual psychic health as the precondition for collective political struggle for liberation, Reich was profoundly fatalistic." ■

# Women and Revolution

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express the editorial viewpoint.*

# Sri Lanka

## Defend Fired Women Strike Leaders!

Back in 1984 we called on our readers to support the strike by Magnum garment workers in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The predominately female workers, who slave for a pittance in the textile factories of J.R. Jayewardene's Lanka, won their strike after a long struggle. The militant strike advanced the consciousness of these workers, most of whom are in their early 20s and came straight from small Sinhalese villages. Through our fundraising we were able to express our commitment to solidarity with our working-class brothers and sisters in Asia against capitalist exploitation.

On 12 December 1986, a stop-work was called in response to an attempt by the Magnum bosses to take back bonuses, one of the gains of the 1984 strike. The bosses retaliated by sacking four founding members of the union who had led the stop-work, Leela Samarasinghe, Indrani Dayananda, Latha Gomes and Renuka. In the management's notice of dismissal they charge:

"We have now come to know that you and three others not only led the workers to the Office, but also caused the workforce to congregate at the entrance so as to prevent the Production Manager and his staff from leaving the Office. We have also been informed that you and the three others with you, had come into the Office as spokesmen for the others, which in the circumstances can only be viewed as intimidatory."

In a letter to S. Siriwardene, General Secretary of their union, the All Ceylon Commercial and Industrial Workers Union, the women detailed some of the events which led to their firing:

"We need to remind you that when the Magnum authority grabbed our rights one by one we protected those rights from them through our class struggle. We wish to remind you that in all struggles we participated, we did our best to win them. On the struggle... made when comrade Ghana was suspended from work, one of our sisters named Renuka had to be in the police custody. In January '85 when the management of Magnum tried to suspend six of our employees in the Jacket section, we could defeat their effort having stopped the work due to our instant intervention against the management's decision... In such occasions our responsibility is to measure our strength under the circumstances and act accordingly. That is the real meaning of leadership."

The union leadership, supporters of the reformist Lanka Samasamaja Party, is criminally allowing the sacking to go unfought. The four women charged:

"Your inaction up to now for the request of 48 members of our union regarding reinstatement of the members who were dismissed and the letter which was sent by the Magnum management in which was stated that 'we are satisfied that the stoppage of work on the 26th November '86 was not the result of Union action', can be construed as the work of some unseen hands. If the office bearers are treated in this manner how will the general membership be treated by you."

These four militants face a long and difficult fight to win back their jobs. Their courageous struggle is taking place in a Lanka torn by communalist strife and reeling under deepening economic crisis and massive repres-

sion by the J.R. government. The murderous terror suffered by the Tamil minority for years at the hands of the vicious regime is increasingly accompanied by repression against anyone who engages in struggle, from the suppression of the nurses strike to the detention of Sinhalese leftists. The perspective of internationalist class struggle in defense of the Tamils and all the exploited and oppressed shows the way forward. Women workers, from the downtrodden Tamil women of the tea plantations (the so-called Indian Tamils, descendants of tea pickers imported by the British) to the mainly Sinhalese women in facto-



Spartacist League/Lanka

**Solidarity meeting of 100 militants from Magnum Garments, 10 February 1985, where spokesmen of the International Spartacist tendency presented 13,000 rupees (US \$520) collected by Australian trade unionists to the garment union.**

ries like Magnum in the export belt, will be at the forefront of victorious proletarian struggle. In their statement, the Magnum Four laid out their class-struggle perspective:

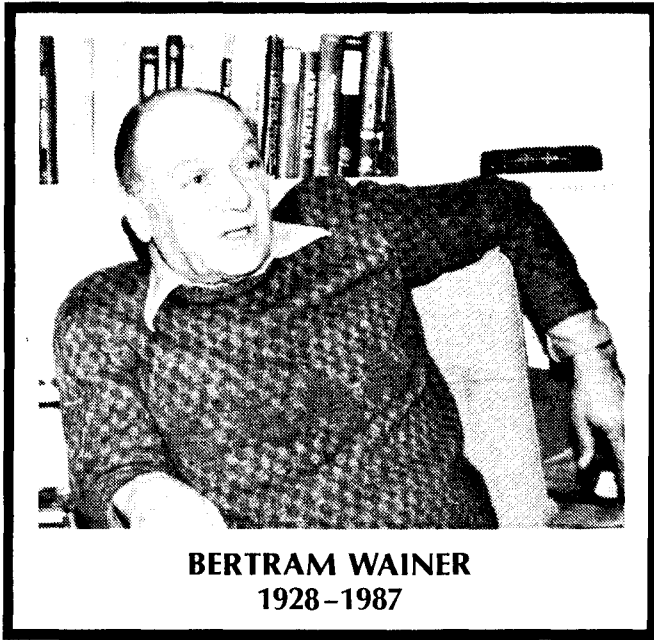
"We have always tried to appoint the correct leadership to all trade unions. Because of this view we are against the formation of other unions in the same place. We are no political pimps. We are fully conscious of a socialist system for the liberation of the masses. We strongly believe that the only way towards that goal is through class struggle."

We call on our readers to again dig deep for funds to aid our sisters in Lanka in their battle to win back their jobs. ■

—Reprinted from *Australasian Spartacist*  
No. 119, February-March 1987

Send checks earmarked "Defend the Magnum Four" to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

# Bertram Wainer, Champion of Women's Rights



**BERTRAM WAINER**  
1928-1987

*Australasian Spartacist*

Dr. Bertram Wainer, fighter for women's right to abortion in Australia, died on January 16, aged 58. Wainer, who was part Jewish, grew up in the working-class slum district of Gorbals, in Glasgow, Scotland. He was a kind of Sir William Wallace (the heroic leader of the Scots in the 13th century, who drove the invading armies of the English king from Scotland) in the struggle for women's rights. The availability of relatively cheap, safe abortions in most major Australian cities today, despite the continuing existence of legislation which makes abortion a crime, is in large part a tribute to his militant struggles.

In an interview with *Australasian Spartacist* (reprinted in *W&R* No. 30, Winter 1985-86), Dr. Wainer told our comrades he hadn't gone looking for the issue of abortion specifically, but that when it came up he saw that "there's something special about women being oppressed by laws which were designed to keep the poor down and to advantage the rich.... So the best that can be said of me is, yes, I cared about people and here was an issue where I could finally do something. I had always, wherever I could have, done things, because I am related to poor people."

Wainer, who served in the Australian military from 1960 to 1965 (when he resigned his commission in opposition to Australia's military intervention in Vietnam), told our comrades a story about how he got rid of some Australian anti-woman fanatics who had invaded his clinic:

"...we had crying women everywhere, the 'Right To Life' were chained to my operating theatre tables and refused to move.... I said, listen, you've got fucking three minutes to get out of this place or you'll all be

gassed, and I turned on the anaesthetic gas. And the copper said, you can't do that. And I said, look, we know just where you stand, you said you've no authority in here, now get gassed or get out. So he got out. And the 'Right To Life' at this stage started undoing their chains.... Then I turned the fire extinguishers on them and then I threw them down the back stairs and turned the hoses on them. I was beside myself with rage. I mean a real Glaswegian Gorbals rage, you see. And the TV arrived and filmed all this. There had been buckets of water flowing on them and they said, why are you doing that, doctor, and I said, I always wash the filth off my steps at this time of day."

Wainer was a member of the British section of the Fourth International for a short period in the 1940s. He was responsible for the Beach and Kaye inquiries into police corruption in Australia. His involvement in tackling police corruption, which he first encountered in relation to "backyard" abortion practices, made him subject to massive cop and other harassment, up to and including death threats. He always maintained that it was the police corruption battles, and not his fight for abortion rights, that had ruined his health. A memoir about Wainer in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (20 January) noted that at a funeral service for him in Melbourne, "an opera singer will sing *A Scottish Soldier*, and the bagpipes, no doubt playing *The Flowers of the Forest*, will skirl a brave and great man to his resting place in Eltham cemetery." Comrades of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand attended the service, and also sent his family flowers and the following note, whose sentiments we share: "Our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Bertram Wainer. The death of such a courageous fighter for women's rights and civil liberties is a tragic loss and we mourn with you." ■

—Adapted from *Australasian Spartacist* No. 119, February-March 1987



*Australasian Spartacist*

**Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand at 1984 International Women's Day march in Sydney.**

# The Battles Against Syphilis and AIDS: Medicine vs. Anti-Sex Moralism

"I was led by the desire to direct my lifetime's work to an important and worthy objective.... I chose diseases that affect man and which it had hitherto been impossible to combat with other medicines."

—Paul Ehrlich, quoted in Ernst Baumler,  
*Paul Ehrlich, Scientist for Life*

## A Tribute to Paul Ehrlich

*Women and Revolution* has chosen this International Women's Day as an occasion to commemorate Paul Ehrlich, one of the great pioneers of medical science. Among his many discoveries in bacteriology, immunology and hematology, any one of which would earn him a place in history, was Salvarsan, the first effective treatment for syphilis, one of humanity's most terrible scourges. Although Salvarsan has been superseded by the far more effective penicillin, its discovery established the use of chemical agents in the treatment of disease (chemotherapeutics) as a new branch of medicine. And by targeting a venereal disease for treatment, Ehrlich took head-on the superstitious moralism which viewed such an illness as a "just punishment" for "sin." To the scientist Paul Ehrlich, this terrible disease was a medical condition, caused by a microbe, that could be cured and eliminated; his concern was to find that cure. Today, when anti-sex bigotry and hysteria against AIDS victims impede the already difficult task of conquering this new and deadly disease, the lessons of Paul Ehrlich's work are all the more important.

Ehrlich was born in 1854 of a German Jewish family. He entered medical school in 1872, at the dawn of a new age in medicine: the discovery that microorganisms are the cause of many diseases. With the aid of the microscope and the new theory, Louis Pasteur had saved the silk industry of southern France from the ravages of silkworm diseases. Over the next decade, the German bacteriologist Robert Koch identified the agents of anthrax, tuberculosis and Asiatic cholera.

Previously medicine had been dominated by the ancient theory of "humors." Syphilis patients, for example, were treated with mercury to cause profuse salivation and perspiration, which were believed to remove the bad "humors." Doses of mercury, a poison, probably neared lethal levels; whether patients suffered and died more from the illness or the "cure" is impossible to say.

It is hard to comprehend today the scale of devastation caused by this dreaded disease. The 1940s movie made of Ehrlich's life, *Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet* (starring Edward G. Robinson), paints a heart-rending picture of the suffering caused by syphilis: the desperate faces of the ill; a young man who commits

**Paul Ehrlich with  
Sahachiro Hata.  
In 1910 they  
discovered  
first effective  
treatment  
for syphilis.**



Holmes & Meier

suicide when informed that he has syphilis and cannot marry his sweetheart. The lives of millions of people were destroyed by syphilis, which often caused terrible complications such as heart ailments, blindness, insanity, sterility and paralysis. It has been estimated that 20 percent of the inmates of mental hospitals suffered from syphilis-induced dementia. In the latent phase of the disease, a woman could pass it on to her unborn child, without even being aware that she was infected. Congenital syphilis was a leading cause of stillbirths and infant mortality.

Bacterial research had been greatly aided by the discovery of dyes to stain tissue, which enhanced the microscopic details of cells. As a student Ehrlich became fascinated with staining and meticulously researched the affinities of various dyes with cellular structure. One of his first important discoveries was a stain which made a positive diagnosis of tuberculosis possible for the ordinary doctor.

In 1892 Ehrlich joined Robert Koch at the Institute for Infectious Diseases in Berlin, where they worked on tuberculosis immunology. Ehrlich was also part of the research team which realized the development of a diphtheria antitoxin and saved the lives of countless children. For this work Ehrlich won the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1908, along with Ilya Mechnikov, who introduced the theory of the role of the white blood cells in immunity.

Out of this work Ehrlich developed the concept of chemotherapy, highly controversial at the time. He expressed his insight in a vivid image: "Antibodies are to some extent magic bullets which seek out their own targets without damaging the organism" (Baumler, *Paul*

*Ehrlich, Scientist for Life*). Would it not be possible to use chemicals which would bind with specific microorganisms and render them harmless in the body? As the later development of antibiotics was to show, Ehrlich was on the right track, in a broad and technical way. But his discovery of Salvarsan was fortuitous: his work was highly experimental and conducted primarily through trial and error, without benefit of the decades of research into bacteriology and biochemistry which medical science now has. Advances in molecular biology have enabled scientists to better understand many cellular functions and so to design more effective drugs.

In 1907, with the Japanese bacteriologist Kiyoshi Shiga, Ehrlich discovered the dye known as trypan red, which destroyed trypanosomes in infected animals. Encouraged by this success, Ehrlich decided to target the spirochete causing syphilis, which had already been identified. In 1906 his colleague August von Wassermann had even developed a diagnostic test for the disease, but there was no effective treatment.

Ehrlich began his search for the "magic bullet" with arsenic compounds, which had long been known to be effective against disease. With his own research facility and staff in Frankfurt, Ehrlich proceeded to subtly alter

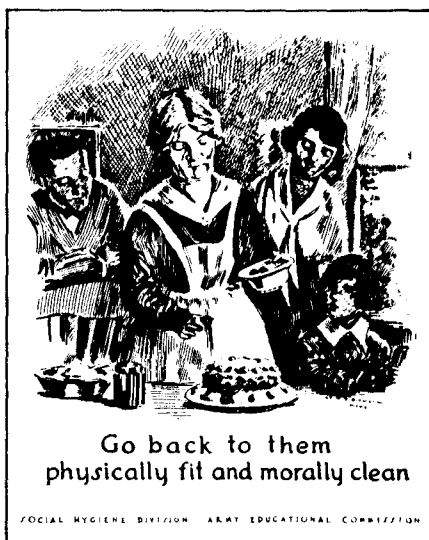
also found himself the target of scurrilous attacks by moralists and enemies of scientific progress: one Dr. Richard Dreuw, formerly in the police vice squad, accused him of endangering the public health. Scandal sheets distributed in Frankfurt charged that Salvarsan had been forced on prostitutes and was responsible for blindness and several deaths. Ehrlich characterized his opposition as anti-scientific, anti-progress and anti-Semitic "rabble." When the Nazis came to power they took up the cudgel for this rabble, the enemies of Paul Ehrlich, and tore down the street signs on Paul-Ehrlich-Strasse. Ehrlich's widow was forced into exile.

Ehrlich's magic bullet targeted more than the syphilis spirochete: the stigma of venereal disease had been as much of an obstacle for its victims as the disease itself. Henrik Ibsen's 1881 play *Ghosts* describes the ravages brought by secrecy, hypocrisy and syphilis on one family. An eminent critic of the time gave voice to typical destructive prudery: *Ghosts* was "an open drain, a loathsome sore unbandaged, a dirty act done publicly, a lazar [leper] house with all its doors and windows open" (quoted in *Six Plays by Ibsen*, Eva Le Gallienne). In 1916 Dr. Allan J. McLaughlin, a Massachusetts public health authority, denounced the moralists who claimed that "to advertise the marvelous effects of Salvarsan, and to place it within the reach of the poor is to place a premium upon vice and to absolve the syphilitic from the just punishment of his sins. As health officers let us be practical and consider syphilis as a public health problem..." (Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880*). In 1881 Massachusetts General Hospital had changed its policy from charging syphilitic patients double rates to refusing them admission altogether!

To this day, although both syphilis and gonorrhea are generally easily cured, they are widespread in the United States. In 1979 gonorrhea accounted for two-thirds of all reported communicable diseases in the U.S.; it is the most prevalent human bacterial infection on the planet. Just when the wide availability of penicillin after World War II could have dramatically lowered rates of venereal disease, government funding allocated for public education was slashed to the bone. While disingenuously de-emphasizing that syphilis and gonorrhea can be treated and cured, educational programs still often withhold the simple truth that condoms can be effective against venereal disease. The current controversy over public advertising for condoms is merely another episode in a long, dreary story.

### For Free, Quality Health Care for All!

The control of disease is as much a social question as a scientific one; in this sick capitalist society, the profits of the pharmaceutical giants and the insurance vultures come before public health. For decades the U.S. Public Health Service conducted an "experiment" only one step away from Nazi Germany: for 40 years, from 1932 to 1972, it "studied" 400 black sharecroppers with syphilis, who were never told they had it and never treated, so that "researchers" could watch the ravages of the untreated disease as it destroyed their bodies and



U.S. Army

**U.S. Army's  
World War I  
moralistic, anti-  
sex campaign  
among troops  
manipulated  
fear and guilt.**

Go back to them  
physically fit and morally clean

SOCIAL HYGIENE DIVISION ARMY EDUCATIONAL CORRECTION

one arsenic compound after another and inject it into syphilitic animals. The Japanese doctor Sahachiro Hata, sent by the Institute for Infectious Disease in Tokyo, gave invaluable assistance throughout the search. Thousands of rabbits were sacrificed to this cause—until finally preparation No. 606 proved effective against the disease without killing the animals.

Human studies proceeded with extreme caution. Doctors known personally to Ehrlich began treating patients with the new drug, named Salvarsan; by 1910 some 10,000 cases had been successfully treated. Only then was the drug released publicly, and soon it came into widespread use. An improved, safer version was released several years later.

Difficulties arose with large-scale manufacturing of the drug, and with adequate training of doctors in its application, which was by injection, a technique not commonly mastered by physicians at the time. Ehrlich



W&R Photo

**Spartacists at NYC Gay Pride Day march, June 1986.**

minds. Over one-quarter of the victims died of the effects of syphilis!

Today a new plague is upon us: AIDS, caused by a virus which destroys the immune system. Because the victims of AIDS in the United States have so far been predominantly gay men or users of intravenous drugs, bigotry and ignorant fear have come down on them full force. Ostracism and discrimination compound the physical suffering of an invariably fatal disease that is if anything even more horrible than syphilis.

So far AIDS has no effective cure and there is no preventive vaccine. Although much has been learned about the virus, the obstacles are indeed formidable. The only good news is that it is rather hard to transmit; nevertheless, hysteria has focused on bogus "dangers" of casual transmission as reactionaries seek to eject AIDS children from the classroom and fire AIDS victims from their jobs. The recent federal proposal for massive

testing of hospital patients and applicants for marriage licenses will do nothing to stop the spread of AIDS—but it will create a blacklist of victims of the anti-sex crusade.

Conservative columnist William F. Buckley thinks that people infected with the AIDS virus should be tattooed—perhaps he has in mind the pink triangle that marked gays in Hitler's Germany? In fact, the fascists have put themselves forward as the shock troops of anti-sex bigotry. J.B. Stoner, the man behind the racist Birmingham church murder bombings in 1964, rallied the Ku Klux Klan in Forsyth County, Georgia against black civil rights marchers with a pamphlet "Praise God for AIDS." *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz, frothing at the mouth as usual, railed against government expenditures on vaccination research: "Are they aware that in the name of compassion they are giving social sanction to what can only be described as brutish degradation?" (*ibid.*).

As the history of syphilis and gonorrhea reveal only too well, such bigotry can be as much of an obstacle to fighting a disease as the microbe itself. Although the need for massive funding for AIDS research has been evident now for years, Reagan has consistently cut allocations for this work, while his director of communications, Patrick Buchanan, declared AIDS to be "nature's retribution" on homosexuals. What's necessary is *billions* for an internationally coordinated program of AIDS research.

Paul Ehrlich pointed the way forward when in the early years of this century he brought in the methods of science and threw out ideas of "retribution" as medieval rubbish. It will take a socialist revolution to put the tools that the heroes of medical science have given us fully to use in the service of all humanity. ■

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As a conductor on the Underground Railroad and a military strategist and spy during the Civil War, Harriet Tubman stood in the revolutionary insurrectionist wing of the abolitionist movement in the struggle against the Southern slavocracy. Her story is told in *W&R* No. 32, available for 50¢.

# Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!

## Extend Gains of Bolshevik Revolution to Afghan Peoples!

Proletarian revolution or slavery—there is no other choice for the women of the East. Seven years ago the Spartacist League said, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” We recognized that the Soviet Army intervention of 1979, though undertaken for defensive reasons, raised the possibility of revolutionary social transformation in this backward and poor country. We called at the time, and repeat that call today, to “Extend social gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!” The fight for women’s liberation from feudal enslavement enforced by the reactionary mullahs is key to the transformation of Afghanistan, just as it was for the Bolsheviks’ social revolution in Soviet Central Asia in the decades following the triumphant October Revolution of 1917.

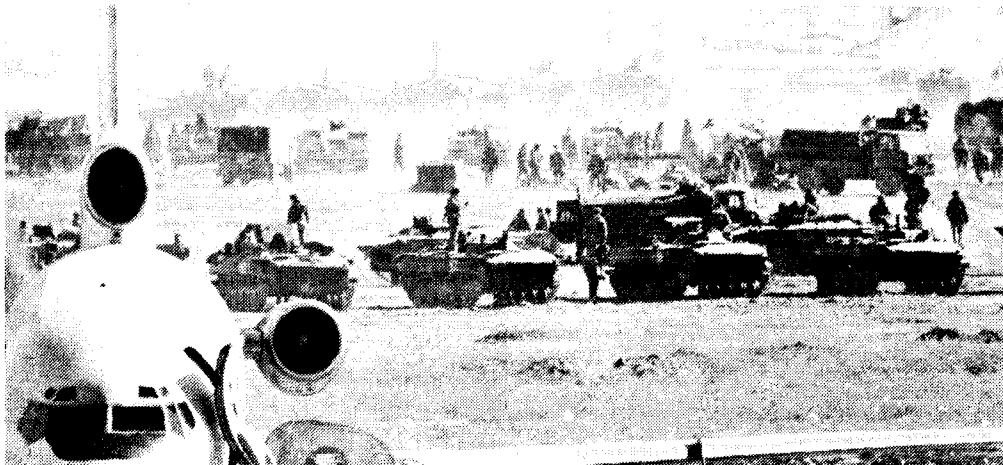
The CIA-backed Islamic *mujahedin* which Reagan and the Democrats hail are fighting the “godless Communist infidel” in order to preserve a society based on social parasitism, criminality and slavery. Pre-1979 Afghanistan was a squalid hellhole where emigration was virtually a national aspiration. Women were kept smothered under yards of heavy cloth covering them from head to toe. Illiterate and ignorant, they were sold like chattels under the bride-price system. The landlords and tribal khans literally held power of life and death over the mass of peasants, controlling 42 percent of the cultivable land and the irrigation systems. Half the children died by age five; even taking this into account, overall life expectancy was 40.

In 1978 the People’s Democratic Party came to power in essentially a left-wing military coup. A petty-bourgeois nationalist front, they had little support among the peasant masses and their limited democratic proposals, including some land reform, compulsory education for both sexes and separation of church and state, sparked violent reaction. It was especially their steps toward equality for women which fueled the

guerrilla war. Faced with certain defeat of its Kabul allies by an Islamic *jihād*, the USSR intervened militarily in late December 1979. Since then the protective wall of Soviet tanks and helicopters has made possible a real social transformation.

Today the number of doctors has been raised 50 percent, and in a country that was previously 90 percent illiterate, now more than 1.5 million people have passed the state-run literacy course. The USSR has poured in millions of rubles in consumer goods and industrial projects, developing mines, petroleum wells and hydroelectric plants. The most striking changes have been in the position of women. Liberated from the *chador*, 5,000 Afghan women have taken up arms as members of the Soviet-backed Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) militia.

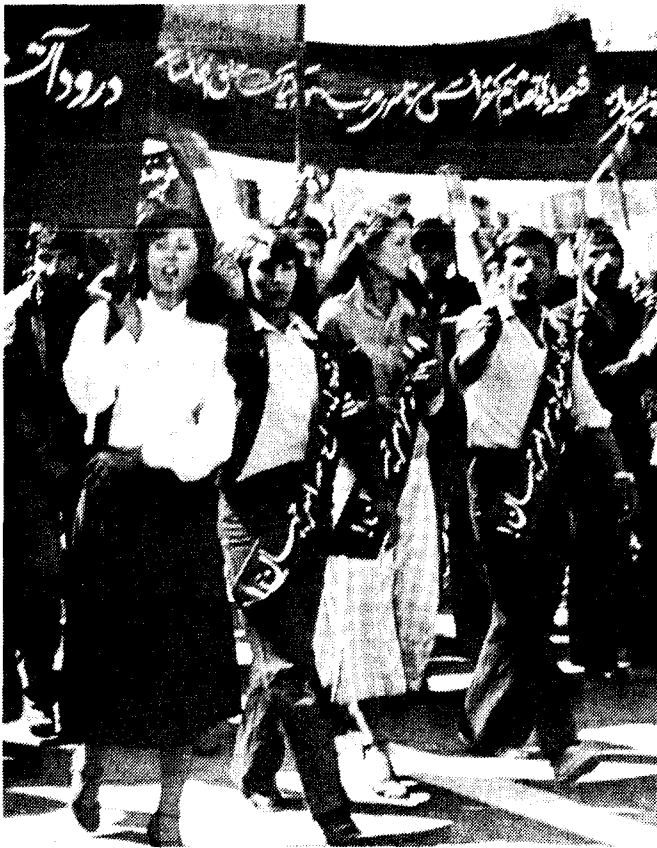
Now many women, formerly secluded, work in Afghan industry. Women workers at the Guzargah textile factory in Kabul, for example, are unionized and have access to free childcare and health care at the plant. Previously it was forbidden for a male doctor to touch a woman. When West German feminists tried to establish a health clinic in an Afghan refugee camp in Pakistan, they were all but lynched by the mullahs and tribal chieftains. The *mujahedin* have burned thousands of schools and murdered teachers for teaching young girls and women to read and write! Yet, shamefully, gutless “leftists” and even feminists throughout the West have joined the imperialists’ outcry over “fiercely independent Afghanistan,” because they know that to defend women in Afghanistan means to defend the Red Army. The Democrats in Congress have out-Reaganned Reagan in pushing an international program to fund the Afghan contra cutthroats—over *one billion dollars* a year in arms and aid. Cold War liberals have, predictably, joined the crusade. Writing in the *New York Review of Books*



Lochon/Gamma

**Soviet forces land at Kabul airport, December 1979. Spartacists hail Soviet intervention against the theocratic counterrevolutionaries.**





Planeta Publishers

**Women, liberated from the veil, marching together with men in 1984 Kabul rally. Red Army defends Afghan women against Muslim enslavement.**

(18 December 1986) Jeri Laber of the Helsinki Watch Committee rails that: "The Soviets are pursuing expansionist policies in Afghanistan, under the guise of bringing progress. But the progress they offer the Afghans—literacy, industrial development, a centralized economy, and the equality of the sexes—is not what most Afghans want [!]... Most Afghans are set in their tribal ways, and want only to be left alone." He speaks glowingly of Afghan contra kidnappings and "rehabilitation" of children to be spies and assassins for Reagan's drugrunning butchers.

Despite this hysterical capitalist propaganda, the Red Army and DRA forces are winning hands down. The *mujahedin*, lacking support in the cities, are increasingly relying on long-range firepower supplied by the U.S., launching indiscriminate rocket attacks on Kabul. They've managed to hit the U.S. embassy three times, and last December shot down a civilian plane with 30 people on board. In a hideous May 1984 bombing at Kabul airport, a "moderate" guerrilla group murdered a dozen children on their way to school in the USSR.

Recently there have been reports of a possible Soviet pullout from Afghanistan. Moscow foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze called for a "political settlement" and declared that "the time for a withdrawal of Soviet troops is not far off." And last December Afghan leader Najib (who just returned from a visit to Moscow) ordered a cease-fire, beginning January 15 and called for "national reconciliation" and a "peace initiative"

from Moscow and Kabul is misguided and dangerous. Like any military clash between two social systems, the civil war in Afghanistan is a political struggle. The modest social gains achieved by the Soviet-backed regime are directly threatened by any kind of deal with the CIA-backed rebels. In the civil war in Afghanistan, one side or the other must win. Offers of "compromise" will only embolden the imperialists. The sooner the feudalists are smashed, the sooner the bloodshed will end and the road to social progress will be secured.

Try as they will, Mikhail Gorbachev et al. aren't going to get a "neutral" Afghanistan on the Soviet Union's crucial southern flank. Backward Afghanistan could never sustain anything remotely resembling a stable bourgeois democracy: even the most minimal reforms provoked a violent feudal reaction. And the Kremlin Stalinists' dreams of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism are impossible, as the U.S. imperialists are united in their commitment to keeping Afghanistan unstable and "bleeding the Russians" as part of their war drive to "prevail" over the Soviet Union.

The only "political solution" is to complete and extend the social transformation begun with the Red Army intervention in 1979, through finishing the job of mopping up the reactionary cabal of landlords, tribal chieftains and mullahs. This would have a revolutionary impact throughout the region. General Zia's Pakistan is highly unstable: Baluchi and Pashtoon peoples separated by an imperialist border from their tribal brothers to the north already are attracted by overtures from Kabul, and there are reportedly thousands of Pakistani oppositionists in exile in the Afghan capital. Smashing the Afghan Islamic fanatics could revive revolutionary agitation among the working class in neighboring Iran, now suffering under the theocratic, clerical-feudalist regime of Khomeini's ayatollahs no less than it did under the hated Shah.

Within the framework of Afghanistan alone there is no solution to national and social oppression. These questions are linked, historically as well as socially, to the fate of the Russian Revolution. One need only look next door to Soviet Central Asia to see the gains won by the proletarian liberation of these pre-capitalist areas by courageous Bolshevik agitators and the Red Army. Compared to Afghanistan today, the social progress in these areas can be measured not in decades but in centuries, despite the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet workers state.

Afghanistan should become an independent workers republic with an open border with the USSR and a ruble-convertible currency. Look at Mongolia for a model. But it will take proletarian political revolution in the USSR to restore the Red Army and the Soviet state to their internationalist and revolutionary mission, through defending and extending the gains of the great October Revolution. Only the defeat of imperialism internationally, through workers revolutions under the leadership of a Trotskyist world party of socialist revolution, can lay the basis for the genuine social equality of all peoples. ■

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 420, 23 January 1987

# Down With U.S. Imperialism! Sex, Race and Class in the “American Century”

On 22 November 1986 the Spartacist League held a forum in San Francisco called “Fight Reagan Reaction with Class Struggle!” We print below an edited transcript of the speech given by comrade George Crawford, an SL Central Committee member.

Tonight we’re going to be talking about domestic reaction within the United States now—Reagan’s war or, very importantly, the ruling class’s war, against what is known as the Vietnam syndrome, which came from the U.S. defeat on the battlefield at the hands of the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants. Now, this is also an international phenomenon, there’s America’s military attacks on Libya, on Grenada, many evidences of this. But inside the United States you have what you could call a moral rearmament, which is an enforced social reaction coming from the government in league with and using what is known as the Moral Majority forces, religious fundamentalists. It’s stepping up, becoming greater every day.

Everybody is constantly amazed that there’s no opposition to this incredible crusade against every kind of democratic right; that the Democratic Party basically tries to out-Moral Majority the Moral Majority. And the point that I want to make in the talk is that this is not simply the Republican Party or Reagan. This is a war against the population by an entire ruling class, because something is seriously wrong from their viewpoint with America. Very important for them that, one, workers work for what they’re paid and, two, most importantly, *volunteer to die en masse when necessary*. And if a

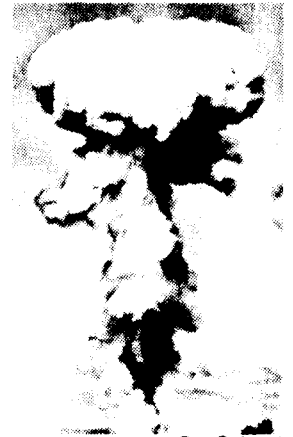


Carl Byori and Associates

**Idealized family life in the '50s. Political reaction pushed stultifying social conformity.**



U.S. Army



Der Spiegel

**Bloody inauguration of “American Century”: U.S. imperialism unleashed nuclear holocaust against Hiroshima and Nagasaki (left), 6 and 9 August 1945, as warning to Soviet Union.**

ruling class does not have that, it’s in trouble. And it doesn’t have that now, it’s a long shot from there.

## The 1950s: The Bomb and the Red Purges

I want to go back and describe a little bit about the '50s. The U.S. won World War II and it came out of World War II as the strongest and the overwhelming imperialist. The other imperialists economically were destroyed through the process of World War II. But the Soviet Union also won World War II, and not only that, within a very few years it had the atom bomb. And so the U.S., you might say at the very pinnacle of what it had declared its century, looked over its shoulder and there was the Soviet Union with the atom bomb. The atom bomb was very important to the U.S., by the way, and was used. It’s a matter of record that the atom bomb was used not for victory over Japan but to send a message to the Soviet Union for after the war. It was a calculated decision, to the point of even keeping Stalin totally in the dark; they did not want him to know what was going on in terms of the development and the dropping of the bomb.

So the U.S. lost its trump card within a very short time after World War II. Not only that, the U.S. had another problem. The original organizers of the AFL-CIO were in the main some kind of communists. They belonged to the Communist Party, they belonged to the Trotskyist party, they maybe were Musteites; but they were still there. And so in the late '40s, these people were neutralized. Either they were physically thrown

out of the unions, or they were isolated, or they were beaten up.

I remember when I went to work in '64, this was in a rubber plant in L.A., and it was about '69 when I started becoming political; and within about three years I met two guys, and I'd worked with the guys or around them for about eight years, and I had no idea that these people used to be political. Turned out that they were all, not members of the CP because there were no members of the CP left, they were supporters of the CP. One guy had three generations of union members which meant there were union members in his family before 1900. And the other one was a guy that, well, finally he told me that he had a full set of *Capital* locked away in his basement, which nobody else knew about. But then over a period of time he had convinced himself that communism's okay and all that, and Marx was right and all that, but the real question is the Catholics. And no one in the plant knew that these people were in the least bit leftist. They had not gone to a union meeting since the meeting in 1949 when they took the communist organizers out in the parking lot and beat them up.

Now, the '50s were pretty rough. One of the things in the '50s is that the population actually *believed* that this was the American Century, and that communism was, indeed, irrelevant—except as an external international phenomenon which was the enemy. But inside the U.S. there was a belief—and I'm not sure it was in all layers of the population, certainly less in terms of blacks—that U.S. imperialism is going to have things its way. And, after all, it had absolutely no competition from any other imperialist power in the '50s. U.S. Steel could produce at less than full capacity and simply dictate world steel prices, and pay incredible dividends (which paid off about 20 years later in plants that can't compete).

There was no pill, of course. You know, this "Just say no"? Boy, we grew up with this "Just say no." You know, it brings one to rage. And for the most part you unfortunately had to say no. Was it because you wanted to be a good citizen or a good Catholic? No, it was fear! Because 15 percent of your graduating class of women were pregnant in high school and they didn't graduate. And you had two choices: in L.A. either you sent your girlfriend or went with her to Tijuana, and since you couldn't speak Spanish you stood out in the avenue with a \$20 bill and you ended up with a woman dying or horribly mutilated with infection because the only person that stops is a cab driver. So that wasn't an option. Or you went to one of these incredible homes where the women put their babies up for adoption. And of course the third thing was marriage. So your life's over. At 18, forget it. That's it. The woman doesn't graduate from school, maybe you graduate from school. If you're lucky you've got an old man working in a unionized job and gets you a job, if you're not lucky it's gas station mechanic forever. There's a good film about this called *Fat City*, a John Huston film.

And so you did not get an enormous amount of questioning about options, what do I want to do in life, what will I do next year in life? It was there, you just did it—or it did it to you. And left politics, or politics per se was not even an alternative. And I'm sure where I grew



William P. Gottlieb

Adama Press

**Pitched battle at National Maritime Union meeting, November 1950. Right-wing bureaucrats like NMU president Curran used cops in drive to purge Communists. Sensationalist press pushed red scare.**

up was a bit worse, because it was one generation away from the South, a Southern working-class area, but there was no option, one could not conceive of thinking about becoming a revolutionary politician. I mean, the political debate that was going on was whether the Democrats sold out Eastern Europe and China, and if you were a Republican you said yes and if you were a Democrat you said no and that's as far as it went. And that's what the ruling class liked a lot. Because the workers did not create a hell of a lot of trouble. They were economically combative, that is true, but the politics one would say were at an all-time low.

**The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War**

What happened to change all this? First of all, you had the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement was very, very powerful because here is a fundamental democratic right that should exist by the very underpinnings—and *formal* underpinnings, and agreed by all, in the Constitution—of our society. Yet it was *impossible* and did not happen and the civil rights movement was a failure. Right now they try to pass off what a success it was. At the time we all knew it was a failure, and that what was happening was simply tokenism, and what was happening was that the real leaders of the civil rights movement were being butchered and murdered by the state.

And the second thing of course that happened was the Vietnam War. I want to tell one story about the Vietnam War. We were talking about the Vietnam syndrome and I think this story makes it actually clear. In 1969 I was just beginning to become involved in organized politics and just by chance dropped by Newsreel, a kind of New Leftist group, and they were involved in military organizing on the West Coast. Now, the main and only training camp for the Marines on the

West Coast is called Camp Pendleton, it's a critical camp. It's got some of the greatest real estate in the western United States. To get into Camp Pendleton you literally have to go to Oceanside. Well, that's Marine property, basically—it isn't, but it is.

And so there was a demonstration by an organization called the Movement for a Democratic Military. Now the organizer was a black sergeant, supporter of the Black Panther Party. There was a bus with Black Panther Party members going from L.A. to Oceanside for the rally. So I decided to go down with various people to this rally. And I got down there, and there's this little amphitheater right on the ocean, like in a hundred little seaside towns, and you've got an audience of about 500 Vietnam vets or about-to-be Vietnam vets because they're sitting there waiting for demobe orders home. Black and white, overwhelmingly from the South, Marines, sitting in there listening to all the antiwar speakers, including the Black Panthers! And the Black Panthers had a position that the Viet Cong should win the war—long live the revolution of the Viet Cong. And so around the edges of the amphitheater, of course, you've got the other Marines singing the Marine anthem and burning the Viet Cong flag. They had that Green Beret guy that was against the war and various other people, a woman and a doctor and all that, and they spoke for a while. After about an hour and a half, we were approached by military Movement guys who said, "You really ought to leave about now because something's going to happen soon." And so as we were leaving on the only road out of Oceanside, I looked back and fights were starting and the streets of Oceanside became one big melee that night.

Now, first of all, one does not want to say that this is revolutionary integrationism because there was no consciousness of class, there was no place for this to go because there was no mass party. We were too small. But in a little, not insignificant way, class war was beginning a little bit that night in Oceanside. And for the bourgeoisie and everybody who has an interest in capitalism, including the labor bureaucracy, this is the



Wide World

**Martin Luther King in Chicago, 1966. Mass civil rights movement shattered McCarthyite reaction. But liberal strategy, with no answer to capitalism's ghetto misery, won only token gains.**



The Bond

**Black and white GIs march against Vietnam War, in defense of Black Panthers, New York, 5 April 1969.**

height of their horrors. They can't stand this. This must be reversed no matter what.

And so actually as a postscript to what happened in Oceanside, the Movement for a Democratic Military tried to sustain their organization, and they had a little storefront in Oceanside, and every night or every other night, they got shotgun blasts into their storefront for about six months. And then the cops ran a massive provocateur operation on them, and then some months later there was a massive indictment of antiwar guys and the indictments were held in Arizona. They pulled them all out to Arizona and they resurrected some anti-IWW laws that hadn't been used since the early 20th century.

The other thing is that for the first time the soldiers in the war watched TV almost every night and so they got to hear the total crap that was being put forth on American TV news about how "we are winning the war," and they knew it was all lies, total lies. So in a sense what you had was a snapshot, like a very bright flash bulb, on the real nature of this class society, stripping away all the hypocrisy.

### "Ethnic Purity" Carter Paved Way for Reagan

After that the bourgeoisie knew they were in trouble. And so a wing of the bourgeoisie adopted a defeatist position on the war. Now when the SL said that at the time, everybody laughed at us because they were all in the popular front with this wing of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie wanted to get out of this war, they wanted to get out of an impossible situation before it got worse. (They actually did that, they were able to co-opt the antiwar movement in the U.S. Along the way they had to dump Nixon because he wasn't the guy that was going to reinstall faith in anything, it was quite clear.) But what you had was a generation of people that looked at life and figured, what do I really want to do with my life? Sex was one of the answers, there were a lot of answers. But the point of it is that since then the initial reaction to Washington and the government regardless of the power is "Bullshit! What are they trying to do to us now?" And that exists today.

Now, I remember after Watergate reading in the *New York Review of Books* about how liberals were very

upset about Watergate, and they were very pissed off at Nixon. And liberals said: the major problem with Watergate is that it damaged the imperial presidency, possibly beyond repair; and we as liberals know that all progress for the common man must come through the United States imperial presidency. And so this moral rearmament became urgent for them. So you get Jimmy Carter, the born-again, "ethnic purity" Democrat, and that was his purpose.

First of all, you should remember that Jimmy Carter wasn't just an ass. One time in his life he was a nuclear sub officer. So he had to have something going for him that was not obvious. Jimmy Carter, in his anti-Communist crusade, the "human rights" crusade, installed the boycott of the Olympics. It was under Carter that we got the establishment for the first time of religious fundamentalists in Washington; it was under Carter that leftists in Greensboro were slaughtered, an action that was organized by the FBI, like many if not most of these Klan executions in the South are. But he blew it pretty good—the killer rabbit and everything. Some nuclear sub officer!

So what we got was Reagan and Meese. The first thing they did is they got PATCO, the air controllers. Now, these people are so educated and are so white-collar that they were the tip of the top layer of the labor aristocracy. They come out of the service, they're at the top. And so these guys decided their work was impossible—which everybody knows it is—and they needed more money and they needed better working conditions. So they went on strike.

Now, the money demands were irrelevant. There are not that many of these guys. Any other administration would simply pay them off. But rather than pay them off, Reagan fired them all, got two union leaders, put leg irons on them and paraded them across the country, making sure there were lots of photographs. And if he can do this, and does want to do this, and is so proud of doing this to those guys, what the hell is he going to do to the rest of us? That was the message.

Then there was the MOVE bombing, just total fire-bombing, genocide of blacks, children, simply because MOVE didn't fit in, simply because they were different. They were no threat to anybody, everybody knows that. It was genocide, straightforward. State-enforced social reaction targeting everybody they suspect of not being in sympathy with a white, Christian fundamentalist, English-speaking America where deviants will not be tolerated.

Now, Rambo. This is Reagan's hero, this is the Reagan administration's movie. What is Rambo? First of all the guy's kind of short, second of all he was a draft dodger, third of all he's an ex-porn star. And this is the guy that kills 5,000 Vietnamese in 45 minutes? It's incredible, nobody believes it, it's just a simple lie. It has no power at all. And the viciousness of this enforced reaction with Reagan is because nobody believes. So the only way forward for Reagan is terror against the American population.

**Reagan's Soldiers:  
Religion in the Service of Reaction**

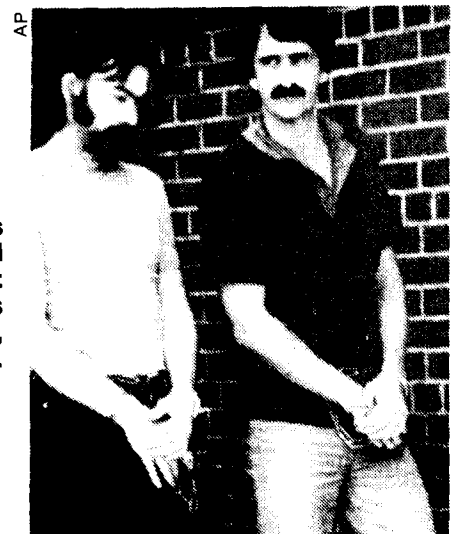
Now, I want to talk for a few minutes about the nature of Reagan's soldiers, the cutting edge of Reaganism in

terms of the active domestic policy, and that's the religious right, the Moral Majority, whatever you want to call them. These people have always been around. First of all, these people are not the Jehovah's Witnesses, who are very sincere in their religious beliefs and suffer for it. These people are not the Amish in Pennsylvania. These people are not particularly religious. I'm not saying that they're enlightened or advanced. What they are are demagogues, and they use religion.

These people are also always used, historically. And who are they always historically used by? They're used by the Southern upper class. There was a movie some time ago called *Advise and Consent*. And always you have the Senator who gets down there and it's the Sam Ervin type and he's got this drawl and he's just the country boy and all, except he's got a Phi Beta Kappa key from Harvard, he's got the Oxford scholarship, his family goes back three hundred years in the South, one of the old slave-owning families. And he's the master. He's the master not simply in that sense for blacks but also for the Southern poor whites, who he calls "Southern white trash," which is the layer you're talking about in terms of these revivalists and such in the South.

These fundamentalist leaders have always served their master. And what these guys are all about is money. Now there was a line from *Prizzi's Honor*. Some woman has ripped off the Mafia for money, you know, it's not too smart. Jack Nicholson is going with that woman and so he's got trouble now. And he looks at her and he says: You know, Italians like money more than they like their sons, and they like their sons an awful lot. Well, these guys like money more than the racism, and they like the racism an awful lot.

The people that take these guys really seriously are sort of like the types you would see going out on Saturday night to a professional wrestling match and taking it really seriously. I'm sure they must have more people but what I'm trying to say is they are not on their own a significant percentage of our society in terms of power or anything else. Maybe in Alabama, yes, but only if a Huey Long was in office, you see. That's their relationship, always. So they are powerful because of



**Reagan's  
message to all  
working people:  
PATCO leaders  
in chains,  
August 1981.**

the Reagan government but most of all they are powerful because they serve a need that the entire bourgeoisie has right now, which is this terror on the American people to restore in the population unquestioning loyalty in preparation for the anti-Soviet war drive. That's what purpose they serve.

You could say, well, this doesn't make any sense at all, why is it critical to go after sex videos for this question? Isn't this creating problems? You're going after people, they're not leftists, they just want to be left alone. Why isn't there something like a *Brave New World* where you've got those pleasure pills and all that sort of stuff, and then you've got total totalitarian society? Because class society doesn't work like that, because it's class; because reaction takes particular historical forms. In Germany, there was Hitler; in this country it takes the form of the Ku Klux Klan.

And so what these people's ideology represents is classical—the ideology of the Ku Klux Klan in this country. If you're talking about fascism and how the bourgeoisie needs fascism at a certain point and turns around and uses these dogs, that's what's going on now. Not in the sense that these people have taken power, no. Not in the sense that the Reagan government is fascist, no. But in the sense of using these people and using this ideology, that is certainly going on.

I want to talk a little bit about their ideology. (I want to use Gore Vidal because Gore Vidal really hates Christianity. As he says, his secret hero is Herod, Herod and the Apostate Julian, the last pagan.) Of course, they pick and choose from the Bible what they want, even though they'll tell you that every word in the Bible is god. Except they fight over which Bible. For example, as

the Jews will tell you, the Bible bars shellfish, the Bible bars pork, etc. Well, somehow those things are not effected. They're not effected because Paul sold out on those issues in order to get a hearing from the Romans.

But to them what the Bible is, very important, is a justification for their racism. The whole thing about the descendants of Ham is used by these people. In secular terms, when you hear the cry of "law and order" or "cut welfare" or "the death penalty" those are simply code words for "get blacks." And as for Jews, "these are the people that killed Christ, these are the Christ-killers." And it will never change.

And sex, well, the main teacher for them is Paul, that's the main guy that they swear by. As a comrade said last night, the Catholics call him Saint Paul and for those who have met him personally they call him Paul. The twice-born, the third-born, the people who talk in tongues, who have visions nightly; no priests, they do it—personally.

So, anyway, Paul had a position on sex: forget it. His position was that sex under any circumstances regardless was a sin. It was a departure from purity. You should go out in the desert and wait for God to come to this earth. And God was going to come in six months. God didn't come in six months. Well, God was going to come in nine months. God didn't come in nine months. And he's having trouble with his people, right? Certain things are happening and they're getting upset. And he finally said: it's better to marry than burn. And he wasn't talking about the fires of hell when he's talking about burn. So he will let you marry, but that's as far as it goes.

Now, the position on women for the entire Judaic-Christian tradition is one of the most backward positions there is. It's that women exist simply as a repository of the sacred sperm, that a woman is commanded to serve and obey her husband as he is in turn commanded to serve and obey his temporal, Bible-quoting master. And Constantine, when he was having trouble with the Roman Empire, figured out that Christianity was the best thing that he had. So he made it the state religion. It wasn't actually that big, it certainly was no threat. But it was used, it was the greatest thing for state reinforcement of ideology. Been that way ever since.

Gore Vidal talks about homosexuality in the Bible. And it turns out there's quite a bit of homosexuality in the Bible. Vidal talks about the stuff with David and Jonathan, and it's quite clear. David's always talking about his love for Jonathan. And Vidal talks about Ruth and Naomi. He says, it's quite clear about their emotions toward one another, that this would be the basis for joint ownership of a pottery shop in Laguna Beach.

But then you get to Leviticus. And Leviticus on homosexuality is something like, if one man lie with another man, thereby he be put to death. Real hardcore stuff, from then on. And Paul of course was dealing with Leviticus. Why does Paul hate sex so much? Aside from maybe he was a little peculiar and he had his problems, why does he hate sex so much? What is the political reason? Well, what Paul was competing against was the Roman gods, the pagan religions. And the greatest god of the pagan religions was the Goddess of

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Dean Paul/NFI Photos

**Spartacist-initiated "June 27 Committee Against the Nazis" in Chicago's Lincoln Park, Gay Pride Day 1982, mobilized blacks and labor against fascist filth who cited Bible's call for death to homosexuals.**

Fertility. And, of course, when they went to a Sunday ceremony, they got it on. And they really got it on. The hardest teachings of the Bible against homosexuality and against sex in general come right after what is known as the Babylonian captivity, where the Jews were forced to live in the city of Babylon for a period of time. And it turns out that Babylon was the Paris of the B.C. world. It's sort of like in the First World War, once the farm boys see gay Paree, that's it, boy, ain't never goin' back to the farm. Well, once the Jews got to Babylon they really didn't want to go back to that desert. Not only did they have as much sex in ways that they could never conceive of (human sex, not goats) but indoor plumbing, everything, it was a very advanced city. And the Jewish ruling class had a problem, they somehow had to get the Jews back into the desert. And so you get all these moral strictures on sex. In other words, what was going on in sixth century Palestine was very similar to what they're trying to pull off today. Sex is bad; go out and get killed or live in the damned desert. So, the Bible is a historical document.

### **"Moral Rearmament" Is Enforced Social Conformity**

What are the issues that are coming up today? First of all, women. For what the bourgeoisie is talking about socially, it's essential that women get out of the factory, certainly that women get out of the trade unions. They don't want women to have class consciousness, that's a no-no. They want to get them out of the productive process, back into the home. They want to eliminate their rights. They want to eliminate day care. They want to eliminate abortion. And they're simply doing that by abortion-clinic bombing and terror. What they'd like to do is eliminate the pill, but only the Pope thinks he can pull that off. Their key slogan for women is: Defeat ERA and Save the Family.

There is a study that's just come out that said: For 20 years, the federal government before the Reagan administration had systematically destroyed the family; we have and are going to reverse every one of those policies. What were those policies? The biggest one was welfare. So we're going to save the family by cutting off welfare. Now, figure 20 years back from where Reagan got in office. What do you get? The beginning of the civil rights movement. It's not an accident.

Sex. The Supreme Court has made sodomy illegal, i.e., you will go to jail for sodomy. The point is the way the ruling is formulated: it's illegal because it is against historical Christian-Judaical principle. Well, where does that stop? They can say blacks are unequal because of historical Christian-Judaical principle. (And the head of the Supreme Court turns out to be a racist vigilante.) There's no limit to this. It's a total elimination of separation of church and state. Our position on sex is: government out of the bedrooms, let people figure it out themselves.

AIDS. The first thing you've got to understand is that these people think that AIDS is the greatest thing that's ever happened. As long as it doesn't get in a massive way into the heterosexual population, it's like god speaking. The more homosexuals die, the better it is. So, of course, they do not fund AIDS projects. And, of course, Dianne Feinstein is not going to release needles to drug addicts so AIDS would not be spread many, many times over by using dirty needles. This should be an enormous scandal.

I saw this liberal program on AIDS the other night. I was listening for one of these liberal doctors to get up and say, "We need money. We need massive funding." And they wanted to say it, it's quite clear, but for some reason they didn't say it. But they said everything else. They got the hottest researcher around (he's from Scotland, actually) and he said: AIDS as a virus is very difficult medically, what needs to be done now is massive experimenting; we can sit around, we could talk about it forever, but what needs to be done is trial and error in an international sense. And in the next scene they talk about the technical problems, and the man who narrated says: the problem that scores of researchers are running into across the country.... "Scores" of researchers are working on the vaccine for AIDS across the country, that's it! And we're talking about a screaming national health emergency. But the government is coming from a totally different direction on this AIDS question. They want to politically exploit it, it's good for them.

Death penalty. The death penalty simply means: kill blacks. The death penalty was temporarily ruled unconstitutional in '72, largely as a result of the U.S. bourgeoisie trying to clean up its act in terms of how it was seen internationally. By the way, this country is one of the few countries that actually has the death penalty;

most of the European countries don't. The interesting thing about the death penalty is that it's a forbidden topic for debate now. We just had a major election in California over [State Supreme Court chief justice] Rose Bird, over the death penalty. Her right-wing attacker's every other word is: she doesn't believe in the death penalty. I saw a number of her commercials; she didn't have the guts to get up and say: I oppose the death penalty. I think it's barbaric, inhuman. And the majority of the world, and the state, and the ruling class of the world agree with me. No, politics has gone so far to the right that she didn't even say that. She said: well, um, I oppose the judiciary being political. You try to figure out what that means.

In fact, the entire election was absurd. All these justices say they're friends of labor. Not one of those guys mentioned unions throughout the entire campaign. Reagan's Central America policy is very unpopular with the population. Why didn't [Democratic Senator] Cranston run his campaign on opposition to Central America? It's because he's got Reagan's position on Central America. He didn't want to make Central America an issue. That's what we're talking about, bipartisan support to the war drive. Also, bipartisan support to this social crusade against you.

The drug witchhunt. The ruling class has declared a war on drugs. Total hypocrisy. The ruling class has pushed and made money from drugs I don't know since when. The British used drugs as one of their ways to conquer China; Hong Kong was founded on the profits of the opium trade. And who ran drugs all through the Vietnam War and before that out of the Golden Triangle? It was the CIA. Who provided the planes? It was CIA airplanes. When they talk about landing in those paddy fields, what do you think they were loading? It wasn't all orphans.

And in the cities. As just one example, you have the movie *The French Connection*, the biggest bust in heroin that's ever happened in New York City. They

had the trial years later, not one speck of that heroin was left. They couldn't find it, it was all gone. It'd all been sold. It's obvious and has been documented—it's the cops. The cops either hold the pushers up for their cut and then the pushers charge that much more; or they just take the entire thing and sell it themselves. So what you get between the pushers and the cops is combat for profit. And that's the vice squad.

So this war on drugs is simply a tool to build the police department, to eliminate democratic rights so the police can go anywhere to terrorize black kids. And not only that. The conditions of capitalism in the ghettos are so severe with generational unemployment, with no possibility of getting out for these kids, no possibility of jobs, so why not take drugs? A black mother in the ghetto knows that there's a struggle every day, second by second, to save her child from that damned pusher. So what you get is the black hustlers like Jesse Jackson that come up and say to this black woman, "Yeah, you've got to support your cops, that's the answer." It's a rotten shell game.

Now, we're opposed to laws against what they call "crimes without victims." Basically it's a matter of personal rights. We feel that if somebody wants to take drugs, that's his own right. What kind of sex people want, that's their own right. We're against the state intervening in any of these questions. Now, it doesn't mean that we don't give a damn about a generation of ghetto kids that become addicts. But how do you fight that? How you fight that is by struggling against the ruling class and the conditions they impose by which the kids become addicts.

Now, in the black movement, there's always been two wings. One, the Jesse Jacksons and George Washington Carvers, the Uncle Toms, who say what you've got to do is, don't ask for anything from the white man, improve yourself in the eyes of the white man, and if you're good and good long enough, then you'll get something. And basically what it does, it

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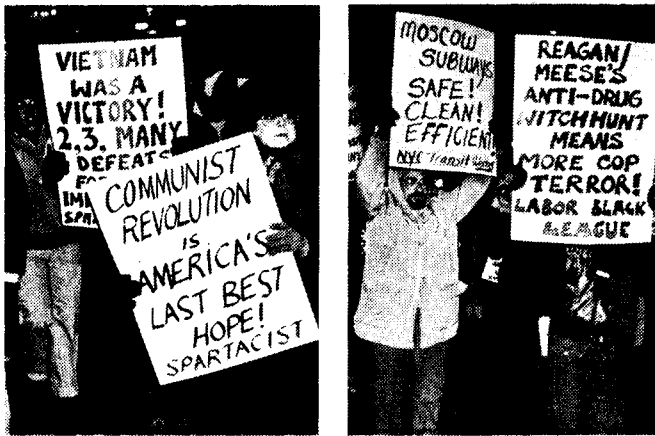
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Workers Vanguard Photos

**Spartacists protest anti-Soviet, anti-communist, anti-American TV series *Amerika*, February 15. For a revolutionary workers party to lead the fight for a socialist America!**

accepts the terms of the racism of the oppressor. Jesse Jackson's recent statement is that drugs kill more than Klan ropes—does he want a united front with the KKK against drugs? Or what about a united front with the local racist politician against drugs? And then you've got Farrakhan who pushes the same stuff, except in his case, even worse—anti-Semitism, hustling black shampoo.

And then you have the wing of Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois which fights against the conditions, and fights against the racists, and fights for equality. Our position is for revolutionary integrationism, black liberation through socialist revolution.

In California there was an "English-only" proposition on the ballot. Now, this is simply vengeance. Everybody who's had any contact with immigrants knows that the first thing they want to do and have to do is learn English. And by and large they always do learn English. It's critical for them obviously in terms of making money. What this stuff is of going after English-only and destroying bilingual education is to eliminate the possibility of immigrants learning English, to eliminate the possibility of them living a decent life in the United States so they don't come here.

Now, of course, one must understand that there are two classes of immigrants. There's the people who come from right-wing reaction, the states which are overwhelmingly supported by the U.S. government, like the Haitians. They don't get in. And then there are the exploiters, the people like [South Vietnam's Marshal] Ky, the protégés of the U.S., the U.S. stooges. Not only do they get in, but they get everything.

### Dictatorship of the Property Party

Everybody talks about the two-party system in the United States. There's not a two-party system, there's a one-party system. And that party is the property party. The people that belong to that party are less than one percent of the population of the United States, and they own the United States. And they own the government; they run the Republican and the Democratic parties.

The only difference between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party is how they do things, not

what they do, and not where they're going. Basically when you become a politician in the Republican or Democratic parties, you get a job. And you don't go to your constituents and get a job. No, you go to the businessman, at whatever level, and get hired, get his endorsement. You're a hireling of the bourgeoisie. Capitalist politicians are generally not the top people around. These are the people who are not good enough to make a great career in the professions, law or things like that. So, you know, you've got a big mouth and you're not particularly successful, not real smart and you don't mind being a prostitute and saying whatever somebody tells you, you become a politician. The property party is what really makes the difference, that's what calls the shots in this country. The class nature of this country is that the people who own this country are the people who run this country. It is their dictatorship.

There is a major economic crisis, it's a crisis that capitalism's had since its inception. What you've got in this country is a question of overproduction in every major field. Protectionism is coming up over the question of U.S. cars, or whatever, and this is reactionary and we're opposed to it.

And you've got overproduction internationally, in steel, in cars, in computer chips. What happens when you get overproduction that exceeds the market's ability to buy? These things are not sold. You get bankruptcies. Economies go under. Now, what happens if you're the U.S. bourgeoisie, you can't sell your stuff, and you've become a weak country economically, but because of a quirk of history you have the strongest military forces, aside from the Soviet Union, in the world? Do you just sit there and say, well, we're not going to sell anything this year, so I think this country is simply going to go down the drain and I'm going to lose everything I got? No, you use your cards. You use your ace, and your ace is your military card. It's the only card the U.S. has right now. So you go into various countries or various areas of the world and you seize those markets. What that is is war. And capitalism has never resolved an overproduction crisis yet through any other agency except war.

Why do we always talk about the anti-Soviet war drive? Why can't there be coexistence, why can't they just disarm? Why can't they recruit some Democrats, maybe they'll get along? They can't get along for two reasons. One, the very fact of the existence of the Soviet Union as a workers state, however degenerated, threatens capitalism. But, two, you've got to sell your goods. And one-sixth of the world's humanity, if you can open it up for private property, that's an enormous market. That would give capitalism a new lease.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx says that the history of man is the question of class struggle, and that where one class cannot triumph over another in a clear way, sooner or later it leads to the ruination of both classes. So what we are facing is barbarism. The only alternative to that is the international proletariat taking power, and the critical aspect is not the lack of a working class or the lack of militancy or anything like that. We've seen plenty of that, we've seen strikes historically and even in the recent period. The question is *leadership*. And that's the Spartacist League. ■

# Free America's Class-War Prisoners!

"For Labor/Black Defense to Stop Racist Attacks!" was the theme of a Spartacist League forum in New York City January 23 which presented the socialist program to mobilize against the growing wave of racist atrocities in this country. We print below a slightly edited transcript of the presentation by Partisan Defense Committee spokesman Richard Dundy.

SL spokesman Marjorie Stamberg talked about the lynch mob attack on three black men in New York's Howard Beach in December 1986, which led to the death of Michael Griffith, a 23-year-old construction worker. She showed how these murderous attacks are encouraged by the climate fostered by the Reagan gang in their drive to regiment the population for war against the Soviet Union. SL spokesman Ed Kartsen said labor must mobilize to lead the fight against the rulers' attempts to set black, white, Hispanic and Asian workers against each other. He concluded: "What we need is a workers party to do that, and replace that strutting cowboy in the White House and the Democrats with a workers government. Our fight is to finish the Civil War with a third American revolution, a workers revolution."

The work of the Partisan Defense Committee, undertaken in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League, is urgently needed as a vital part of mobilizing and uniting the exploited and oppressed in their own defense. We're happy to report that on January 25 all charges were dropped against Spartacist youth activist Guillermo Bermúdez in connection with

the witchhunt of him by the San Francisco State University administration. And on February 21, a demonstration in Oakland, California on behalf of former Black Panther Geronimo Pratt, organized by the PDC and the Labor Black League for Social Defense, drew 200 protesters.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is nearly the fifth anniversary of the death of our comrade Toni Randell. She died at the age of 38 of cancer. She was a founding member of the Partisan Defense Committee. Toni did the research on the early defense work of the International Labor Defense, the organization, led by James P. Cannon from 1925 to 1928, on which our work is modeled. It was her dedication, her scrupulousness, her attention to detail, but primarily her tireless efforts to launch a fighting organization in defense of victims of capitalist injustice, which are the base from which we have been able to carry out our work. Toni was a hard communist, and she would have been proud to hear Ed and Marjorie speak tonight to a revolutionary program to end this truly grotesque form of racist capitalism.

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian defense organization in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. We take as our heritage the working-class defense policies of the ILD. The PDC was initiated by the Spartacist League in 1974, and we stand on the record of principled defense work conducted by the SL. We are partisan. We stand unconditionally on the side of the working people and their allies in struggle against their exploiters and oppressors. We place all our faith in the power of the masses, no faith whatever in the "justice" of the courts, the cops, the prisons. While favoring all possible legal proceedings for the cases we support, we recognize that the courts, and the prisons, and the police exist to maintain, through organized violence and terror, the rule of one class over others.

In our partisanship we are also non-sectarian. We champion causes and we defend cases whose victorious outcome is in the interest of the whole of the working people, irrespective of their particular political beliefs.

Toni fought until her death for a socialist future. And she understood the importance of a defense organization; one that could wield the powerful fist of a united workers movement, which could defend ourselves as well as those hard-won, bloodstained victories of our class. She taught us the critical importance of a political fight in defense of those who, because they struggle, are victimized by the rulers of this country.



**Toni Randell,  
April 1976.**



Workers Vanguard Photos

**Former Panther leader Geronimo Pratt in San Quentin. February 21 rally for his freedom won wide endorsements from labor and civil libertarians.**

Toni researched, she learned and she passed on to us some of the lessons that have been lost since the ILLD became nothing more than a pawn of the Stalinist Communist Party.

We understand that there are certain cases which shape and condition entire periods of history, not necessarily because they are unique or because of the enormity of the crimes involved, but in particular because they are understood by broad layers of the masses. These cases focus the fight against state repression and serve as lightning rods through which the consciousness of a generation can be changed. Sacco and Vanzetti—they were kept from the electric chair for six years because of a truly international movement of protest. The Scottsboro Boys case—black youth in the South framed up because they were found on a cattle train with young white women. Massive protest saved their lives and served to expose the conditions of the South in that period.

Certain events shape political periods. Sometimes they're victories—often they're not. Howard Beach is one. The destruction of the Black Panther Party was another. The Philly MOVE massacre may be the most horrible in recent memory. Because she survived the 13 May 1985 bombing of the MOVE house in Philadelphia, Ramona Africa is in prison in Muncy, Pennsylvania with her sisters Janet and Consuewella Africa, and MOVE members are scattered all over the state of Pennsylvania in prisons.

The Howard Beach lynching is blowback from the MOVE firebombing—the incineration of eleven people, including five infants and children. They were blacks who were organized, who dared to be different, who had managed to understand something very

fundamental about racist America.

That the rulers couldn't tolerate. They were incinerated by Reaganite terror in collaboration with the black Democrat Wilson Goode. It fueled racist reaction. The MOVE massacre was meant to cow and intimidate an entire population. I spoke this week with Ramona Africa and let me tell you that this woman is not cowed, and she is not intimidated. She is fiercely resolute. She is articulate. And she is fighting against that system that illegalized her entire organization and jailed those it could not murder.

We pledge to avenge the MOVE martyrs. We work for the freedom of their imprisoned survivors. Ramona was just denied parole on the basis of her refusal to accept the condition that she not associate, if released, with any member of MOVE or any household of MOVE. This she refuses to do. Only when the workers and the oppressed rise in protest against this apartheid-like denial of her right of association can Ramona expect justice.

Earlier last year when a section of Chicago labor protested her quarantine—her isolation from the general population—the jailers relented. A protest centered on the labor movement must again speak out: Freedom for Ramona, for Janet and Consuewella and all MOVE prisoners! That is the only way.

Today, in a court in San Francisco, Spartacist activist Guillermo Bermúdez is on trial for handing out Marxist literature to raise money in the defense of Nicaragua at San Francisco State campus, from which he was banned.

In 1985 at the Berkeley campus, Guillermo was arrested; he had his arm broken and he was subjected to the infamous choke hold, because he led a successful militant protest against Marine recruiters. A class-struggle defense policy, all the legal talent that we could muster alongside a national campaign centered

**LABOR DEFENDER**

**Free Sacco and Vanzetti!**

By James P. Cannon.



Labor Defender

**James P. Cannon led 1920s International Labor Defense, which waged international fight to save framed-up anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti from the electric chair.**



**Reaganite terror murdered eleven people in MOVE commune, incinerated entire neighborhood. Free Ramona Africa and all MOVE prisoners!**

UPI

AP

on Bay Area students, faculty and unionists, resulted in the dismissal of those charges. Today he faces time again because the campus administrators and the government want to pacify students. They are haunted by the protest of the '60s and they are fearful and angry because of the inability of their war criminals—their Kirkpatrick, their Shultzes, their Bothas—to walk on to college campuses without protest. That means they can't launch their full-scale invasion and occupation of Nicaragua—not yet. And Guillermo Bermúdez stands out front for all the students who hate apartheid and aren't interested in being cannon fodder for another dirty war in Nicaragua. Guillermo's fight and a victory here will mean that the government's campaign of fear and intimidation can be spiked. The madman generals at the Pentagon fear an invasion and an occupation of Nicaragua of which the population back at home doesn't approve. Freedom for Guillermo Bermúdez!

The FBI/COINTELPRO destruction of the Black Panther Party was, for that generation, the starkest example of state terrorism—the vicious, naked fist of the rulers. The Panthers represented the very best of a generation of fighters—in opposition to Martin Luther King pacifism and for the right of armed self-defense against Klan and government terror. They were targeted for extermination.

Elmer Geronimo Pratt was a leader of the Black Panther Party. And after he escaped assassination in a murderous cop/FBI assault on the L.A. Panther headquarters he had to be framed up for the murder of a woman in Los Angeles—a murder that he could not and did not commit because he was in Oakland 400 miles away. Nevertheless, 16 years later Geronimo is in jail having spent nearly half that time in solitary because his will is not broken. You can read some of his materials in our newsletter *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* on the table in the back. Geronimo Pratt today is America's

foremost class-war prisoner. He is in jail because he stood up to racist capitalist oppression. His freedom is of great importance to all who fight against that oppression, not merely for the justice of his case, but for the memory of all his fallen comrades. We won't forget.

Geronimo has an appeal for a new trial before the 9th Circuit Court in California coming up very soon. His case is very strong. An ex-FBI agent has admitted that Geronimo was set up. Additionally, there were wire-taps, now mysteriously missing, that confirm his presence 400 miles from the scene of the murder. The Partisan Defense Committee and the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense, in conjunction with dozens of unionists and the Spartacist League and others, have called for a mass demonstration at noon on the 21st of February in Oakland, as an expression of our determination to see this heroic man get justice.

You see, democratic rights are not divisible. The fight for Geronimo's freedom, for Ramona's freedom, for the dismissal of charges against Guillermo, these are the fights against race-terror today. These are fights against the madman war drive against the Soviet Union. These are concrete actions in defense of the whole of the working people. Michael Griffith is dead, many others are dead. Class-struggle defense, the policy of mobilization and protest, not whimpering before august authorities of the state, their judges, their cops, their lawyers—these are our policies. The fight for these cases and for others is the fight against the all-sided assault on our rights and on our lives.

A year ago the PDC revived an honorable tradition of the ILD. We began sending monthly stipends to class-war prisoners—\$25 every month to those behind bars whose freedom is linked to ours, as an expression of our solidarity. We also asked our friends and supporters to contribute regularly—\$5, \$10, \$100—so that we can do this work, and others can be active participants in the struggle to free these class-war prisoners. I'd like to ask you tonight to help us, to join us in this fight. It was our way of honoring Toni Randell and it's the best way we know of continuing her work. ■

## Support the Partisan Defense Committee!

We urge *W&R* readers to help build the PDC. The PDC now has 50 regular sustaining contributors who together pledge about \$1,600 a month, making it possible for the PDC to provide regular monthly stipends to 13 imprisoned victims of capitalist injustice, in addition to its other work. Become a sustaining contributor! For a donation of \$5 you will receive a subscription to the PDC's *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*, which details its ongoing work. A single copy of issue No. 3 is available for 75¢. Write to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

# French Workers...

(continued from page 24)

the working class, the accumulated experience of class struggle historically. Its power lies precisely in its capacity to anticipate programmatically the broad social imperatives posed in the struggles in order to arm the workers politically and lead them against the class enemy.

During the strike, we of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the international Spartacist tendency, fought for the perspective of creating a national strike committee democratically elected on the basis of program, and for a general strike against the Mitterrand/Chirac government's anti-worker, anti-immigrant and anti-youth attacks. Above all, as we wrote in *Le Bolchévik* (No. 69, January 1987): "The task of a Trotskyist vanguard is to fight this treacherous policy [of class-collaboration] of the Stalinist and social-democratic leaderships, to break the workers from their domination and build the revolutionary party capable of leading the working class to victory. Then the proletariat can be done once and for all with the double disaster of inflation and unemployment by expropriating the capitalist class, bringing down the bourgeois state and installing a workers government—the dictatorship of the proletariat."

\* \* \* \* \*

W&R reprints below a short report on women's strike support work in Marseille, along with two other excerpts from *Le Bolchévik*, written before the strikes. Such revolutionary propaganda helps to arm the workers politically so that the next time they will be prepared to understand that from the beginning no strike can limit itself to bread and butter issues but must confront the government on the political terrain if it is to emerge victorious.

\* \* \* \* \*

## WOMEN ON THE PICKET LINES IN MARSEILLE

Miramas, near Marseille, early January. A hot spot in the trainmen's strike. The life of this small town revolves completely around the SNCF train yards. For several days now the cops have surrounded the tiny depot in order to clear out the picket line which had prevented the TGV [the superfast "bullet train"] from leaving. A couple of days ago, the riot cops dispersed the pickets with tear gas and billy clubs, and they didn't hesitate to knock around the wives and children of the trainmen who had come to reinforce the lines.

It is a Sunday. Braving a glacial wind, 60 strikers are on the spot to block the track along with a dozen of their very determined wives. In response to our questions, the women explained to us with justified pride that every day since December 31 they have done their turn on picket duty. The night before, the cops chased the women pickets around the tracks until one in the morning, and finally ended up asking them if they weren't tired and if they didn't have children to look



Sygma

Paris, 27 November 1986: Massive student protests against elitist Devaquet education "reform" sparked labor strikes, forcing government retreat.

after. The stinging reply was: "It's none of your business to begin with; the committee is taking care of the kids."

In fact, a solidarity committee of trainmen's wives was created at the beginning of the strike on the initiative of three of the women. At the first meeting there were 80, ready to join forces with their husbands immediately. Since then they have organized a fairly successful financial campaign involving local city councilors, shopkeepers in the city and workers from the factories in Fos [a nearby center of the petrochemical industry] and marched in the demonstrations under their own banner. In particular, they are organizing the babysitting, so that they can do their picket duty, where, as the local press underlined, they often show more determination than the strikers: "The wives of the trainmen of Miramas were present [at the CGT demo on the 6th of January]... More firm perhaps than their spouses, they refused to lift the blockade of Miramas, in which they have actively participated since December 31" (*Le Provençal*, 7 January).

This militancy, which has not diminished one iota since the beginning of the strike, is testimony once again to the enormous revolutionary potential and the extraordinary political power of working-class women, whose isolation as housewives is broken down in the heat of social struggle.

—Translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 70, February 1987

## DOWN WITH SOCIAL REACTION!

The "Séguin amendment" on working hours, coming in the wake of government measures against the social welfare system and jobs, is in fact a systematic attack on social gains. The bosses understand that they are being offered a new legal tool based on the imperatives of profit-making to use against "their" workers. The workweek, presently set at 39 hours, will be an average calculated on the basis of a year. Employees may be obliged to work up to 44 hours a week—without overtime rates and without compen-

satory days off—while they will then experience, according to the needs of the bosses, periods with a reduced workweek, that is, unemployment.

In his proposal, Séguin also expands the possibilities for applying a dispensation on the ban on night work for women. There can be no doubt that when Séguin argues “the right to employment and professional equality” for women, it is a pretext: it is a measure which aims at reinforcing exploitation and adapting the workforce to the needs of capital. But the first reaction of Krivine’s LCR [French section of Ernest Mandel’s fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat] was to call for the “extension of this ban [on night work for women] to men also” (*Rouge* No. 1233, 20-26 November 1986). Principled opposition to night work is retrograde, comparable, for example, to the resistance of the first workers to mechanization. Besides transport or public service industries (health services in particular), industries like steel or the oil refineries in a modern country must run around the clock. Faced with the specific difficulties created by night work, we call for financial compensation and compensatory days off, increased security measures, creation of material infrastructures to take care of children, etc.

Also fundamentally reactionary is the same opposition to this part of the Séguin amendment coming from the MPPT-PCI [formerly the OCI, the ultra-reformist ex-Trotskyist group headed by Lambert]. In a leaflet calling for their demonstration on 29



Le Bolchévik

Ligue Trotskyiste de France in demonstration, January 1984, demanded: No confidence in the bourgeois state to crush the fascists! This government is anti-worker! Break with Mitterrand!

November, these social democrats write: “Everyone understands the significance of the reestablishment of night work for the mother, the consequences for the children, for the family.” But one does not defend women by defending the nuclear family, which is precisely the instrument for the oppression of women. This is exactly why Marxist revolutionaries fight for a society in which the family can be replaced. Very early on in the history of the workers movement and particularly in the French trade-union movement, the Marxists had to fight against opposition to women entering production. Under the pretext that the boss used the female workforce as a reserve army of labor, lowering salaries and weakening union struggle, this opposition de facto kept women locked up in the home—slave of a slave. Marxists on the contrary are always in favor of integration of women in the workforce, particularly in industries with a skilled workforce, through a class-struggle fight against their special oppression: Against all sexual discrimination! Equal pay for equal work! Free abortion on demand for all women, including minors and immigrants! For 24-hour day-care centers, restaurants, laundries and other facilities to be run by society—an entire material infrastructure which is the basis for the liberation of women from domestic slavery, a liberation which will be realized through socialist revolution.

—Translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 69, January 1987

### CHIRAC SAYS: TIGHTEN YOUR CHASTITY BELTS

“Work, Family, Fatherland”: this was the sinister motto of the Vichy regime which now inspires the Chirac government. In the name of the bourgeois moral order, Chalandon, “Minister of Injustice,” has decreed that people who take drugs are “delinquents” and has reinforced the repressive arsenal in order to give them the Bastille treatment in hospital-prisons. This campaign has very little to do with drugs. Chalandon wanted obligatory drug testing in the

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schools and to turn high school teachers into auxiliaries of the police because he wants a "healthy" and docile youth, capable of serving as cannon fodder in the imperialist war being prepared against the Soviet Union.

Once again, the "left" government showed the way to the reactionaries with its Gestapo-type raids in immigrant neighborhoods in the name of the "battle against drugs." But today, the reactionary government is "at war"...against the entire population. Thus a villainous circular was distributed by the Academic Inspection of Val-de-Marne [a Parisian suburb] demanding that residency permits of the children of "foreign nationals" be checked: "We must make sure that we don't let a young terrorist militant slip in under the cover of being an eighth-grader" (*Liberation*, 1 October 1986). The FEN [teachers union] and the other unions must crush these odious attempts to turn teachers into informers in the service of the cops. Decriminalize drug use!

As always, bourgeois "anti-drug" repression is associated with sexual puritanism, in defense of the bourgeois family and the general moral order—and underlying it all is the "opium of the people": religion. The position of Marxists on questions like religion and sexuality was briefly summarized by Marx himself in 1875 in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*:

"Everyone should be able to attend to his religious as well as his bodily needs without the police sticking their

noses in. But the workers' party ought at any rate in this connection to have expressed its awareness of the fact that bourgeois 'freedom of conscience' is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of *religious freedom of conscience*, and that for its part it endeavours rather to liberate the conscience from the witchery of religion."

Mitterrand's popular front maintained the Veil law on abortion, which condemned 100,000 women a year to clandestine abortions because of its restrictive clauses: the "conscience" clause for doctors (used as an excuse to refuse abortions in hospitals), obligatory parental consent for minors, refusal of the right to abortion for foreign women, limitation to ten weeks, obligatory interview, etc. It is necessary to sweep away this whole hypocritical system of restrictions: For free contraception and abortion on demand, including for minors and immigrants!

The capitalist system is in total decay. In the country of the Great French Revolution, the Lyon police round up the mentally ill to protect His Holiness the Pope against... a prophecy of Nostradamus! Exploitation and oppression, the internal reaction which accompanies the frenzied anti-Soviet militarization—this is all that this rotten system can offer to the masses. It is the triumphant socialist revolution which will put an end to this nightmare!

—Translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 67, October 1986

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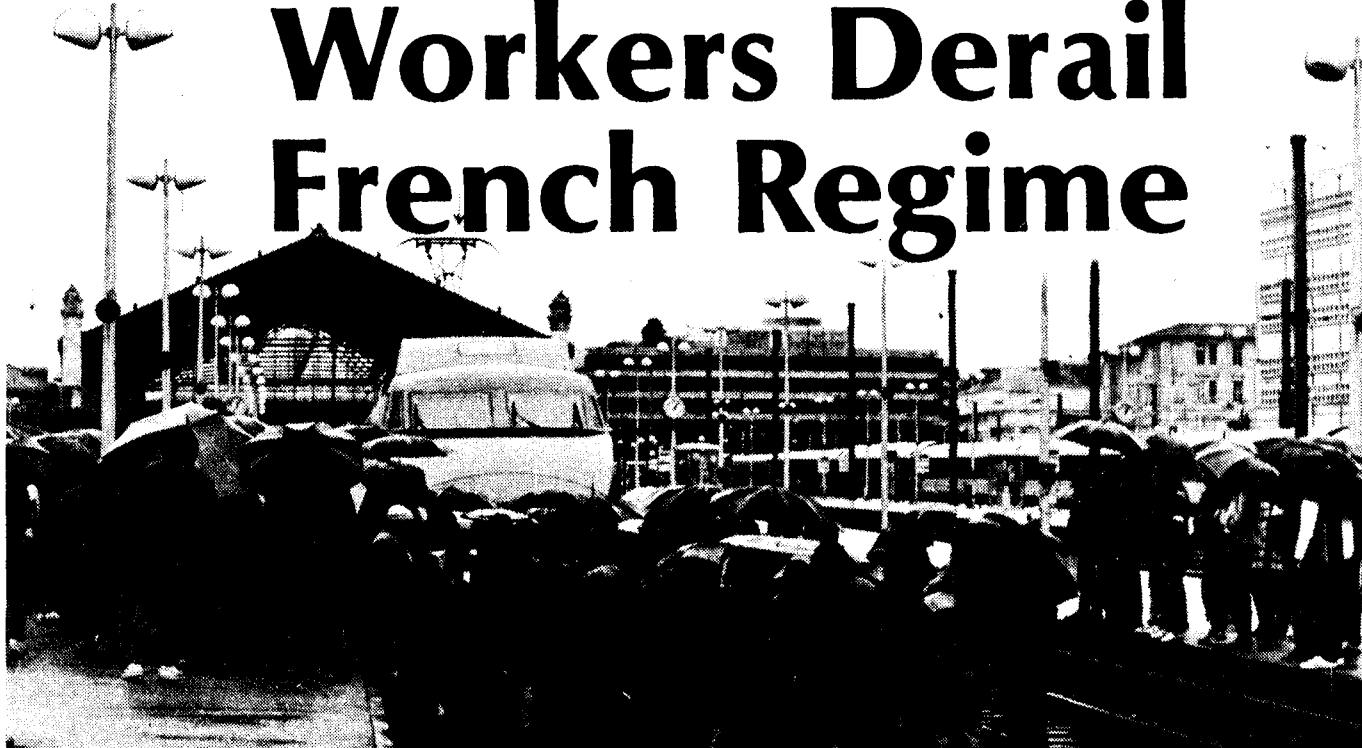
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Build a Bolshevik Party in France!

# Workers Derail French Regime



Le Bolchévik

**Striking trainmen brought Marseille to a halt. Pickets, including solidarity committee of trainmen's wives, stop trains at Gare St. Charles, 10 January.**

PARIS—During the first two weeks of January, the eyes of class-conscious workers and leftists around the world were turned toward France. Until the last SNCF [French national railroad system] train yard went back to work on the 15th, France was in the throes of the most important social struggle since the pre-revolutionary situation of May '68. Five years of anti-working-class attacks under the popular-front Mitterrand regime had demoralized but not defeated the proletariat. And after nine months of the Mitterrand/Chirac "cohabitation" regime, the working class again took the offensive.

This powerful struggle finished in a draw. The striking trainmen and those in other public sector industries retreated in good order, aware that they did not have the necessary means—strategy, program, leadership—to pick up the gauntlet of the *political* counteroffensive launched by the bourgeoisie. But the massive student mobilizations of last November-December, which exploded into broader social protest after the racist cops beat to death a student of Algerian descent, and the subsequent massive strike wave have plunged the government into a state of profound paralysis, worrying both the French bourgeoisie and its imperialist partners.

This working-class counterattack struck a direct blow against the vast program of social austerity that the bourgeoisie had sworn to apply against the working class and the oppressed after Chirac took power last March. Today the regime is retreating down the line: the Devaquet and Monory laws, which sought to make the educational system more elitist; the Séguin

"amendment" on the "flexibility" of working hours; the "nationality" code, which would have increased segregation by making it more difficult for second generation North Africans to obtain citizenship—all are in the wastebasket. This "cohabitation" government is based on a consensus around an anti-Soviet foreign policy (witness France's military intervention in Chad). But it may simply be incapable of actually carrying out its task of breaking and regimenting the population, the indispensable condition for the imperialists' anti-Soviet war preparations. *France is the weak link among the anti-Soviet, NATO governments.*

Another round against capitalist austerity will soon come in France. One lesson is dramatically clear: class struggle is the key to breaking the reactionary momentum. During such struggles as those in France in the last months, the workers are led to see for themselves the nature of the obstacles that they must overcome, and in so doing, they appropriate parts of the revolutionary program as their own. For example, the striking trainmen who started the movement in Paris began with a craft union perspective. But many came to understand that they were up against the entire policy of the capitalist state, and that therefore they should have worked to extend the strike to other sectors from the beginning.

The other crucial lesson of the strike wave is that to take the struggle all the way, it is necessary to construct a revolutionary party which links together, on the basis of its program, all sectors of society targeted by capitalist reaction. The party represents the memory of

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