

Young Spartacus

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Reagan's Sanctions: Keeping South Africa Safe for Capitalism

Bury Apartheid Through Workers Revolution!



AFP

Campbell



Left, Cape Town march demanding freedom for Nelson Mandela broken up by cops, August 28. Right, defiant blacks at September funeral in Duncan Village for 18 victims of apartheid terror.

Shortly after his infamous suggestion that racial discrimination no longer exists in South Africa, Ronald Reagan announced a series of token economic sanctions against the Botha regime. Congress pushed for "bigger and better" sanctions. Now Secretary of State George Shultz has joined that section of white South African businessmen who want Botha & Co. to negotiate with the banned African National Congress (ANC) and release imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela. The continuing black revolt against apartheid rule puts U.S. imperialism in the following dilemma: how best to maintain capitalism in South Africa before their junior partners in Pretoria lose the whole ball of wax.

After the exposed bankruptcy of Reagan's "constructive engagement," the administration has concluded that even Botha's martial law-style "emergency" measures will not quench black revolt. And outrage at the brutal racist repression in South Africa threatens to spill over into opposition to the racist rulers at home. Margaret Thatcher's Britain is now the scene of massive "unrest" by angry black, Asian and white youth who are fighting back against racist police attacks. It would not take much for this scene to repeat itself on the streets of Harlem—where Koch's New York City cops think they can kill blacks with impunity. Already, student youth have protested apartheid in the largest campus demonstrations

South African Revolution Awaits Its Lenin

since the anti-Vietnam War movement; black Americans have been stirred by the anti-apartheid struggle in a way not seen since the civil rights movement in this country. And things are looking grim for Pretoria itself. Shultz put it bluntly:

"Apartheid is through.... It can't last.... It doesn't matter whether you think apartheid is a good idea or not, it's going to disappear.

"Now the question is how you manage the transition...one can readily imagine this blowing up into a really violent upheaval."

—New York Times, 4 October

U.S. imperialism stands to lose a lot if the scenario of revolution is played out: South Africa is a strategic ally in the anti-Soviet war drive, it provides—through the brutal superexploitation of black labor—vast mineral resources; it polices the entire southern region of the continent.

In South Africa itself, the anti-apartheid revolt "awaits its Lenin," as a recently banned issue of *Newsweek* put it. At funerals for martyred opponents of the regime the Russian flag has been displayed as a symbol of defiance

against the apartheid state. Botha and Reagan agree that apartheid's enemy is communism, so communism has become a popular idea among black township youth. In a sense, the imperialists are right: communist-led proletarian revolution is destined to bury apartheid. But tragically, the South African security forces are now battling unarmed schoolchildren—not a Bolshevik-led workers revolution.

From this distance, most people believe that there are simply two groups fighting it out in South Africa: the white oppressors and the black population.

But the ethnic/cultural/racial mixture is much more complicated. In the event that the white Afrikaans-speaking Boer population cracks, and in the absence of a revolutionary proletarian pole, there is the potential for an all-sided bloodbath—hexagonal genocide. South African society contains two distinct white populations—the Boers who have lived there as a "white tribe of Africa" for hundreds of years and the more recently-arrived English-speaking settlers; it has an Indian/Asian population of nearly a million people—recently victimized by pogromist assaults by Buthelezi's Zulus; the "coloured" or mixed-race population of two and a half million, actively struggling against the apartheid rulers in the Cape region; the black population is itself divided—there is a Xhosa-speaking majority, the Zulus are the next largest group. In the absence of a working-class-led

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Leninist Tactics and the Road to Workers Power

See page 4



Drop the Charges Against Guillermo Bermúdez!

Berkeley Militant Goes to Trial

BERKELEY—UC student and SYL member Guillermo Bermúdez goes to trial here on October 28. Hundreds of students ought to turn out at the trial to show their opposition to the witch-hunt of student protesters! Guillermo is among the hundreds of Berkeley students arrested over the last year for daring to protest U.S. imperialism and its agents—and one of the several singled out for draconian state victimization. Brutalized by UC cops in a potentially lethal choke hold, his arm broken in yet another “pain compliance” technique, Guillermo was arrested after leading a successful protest against Marine recruiters on campus last January. In a standard cop frame-up, he is facing lying charges of “assaulting a police officer”—charges which could put him behind bars for

nearly three years.

Regular readers of *Young Spartacus* will know that statements of solidarity with Guillermo against this nasty witchhunting have come from the Nicaraguan FSLN youth organization, area labor organizations and student groups. Prominent black civil rights attorney Howard Moore, who in the early 1970s defended Communist Party spokesman Angela Davis and more recently successfully concluded the “Perry County 3” voting rights case in Alabama, has taken up Guillermo’s legal defense. UC and its uniformed thugs have millions to pursue their vindictive case—Guillermo’s legal costs can only be met through generous contributions by all defenders of basic civil liberties.

This defense effort is particularly

crucial for student activists. The Berkeley campus has once again taken center stage in leftist political activity and the powers that be are gearing up their machinery to smash this in the egg. It was here several years ago that Reagan’s former UN ambassador and “Dragon Lady” Jeane Kirkpatrick was driven from the podium—prompting hysterical reaction from university administrations nationally. It was here that last spring’s anti-apartheid protests went beyond the Democrats’ hoped-for polite “pressure” tactics, spawning a radicalized, if politically primitive, student milieu. And it is here, in the supposed mecca of “free speech,” that students are routinely videotaped and spied on, clubbed, chokeholded, hauled off to maximum security cells, framed up on ludicrous charges. To add insult to injury, they are lectured about “appropriate” civil disobedience conduct by the same administration whose cops have annoyed even the liberal City Council

with their wanton brutality.

“It is right to rebel,” as SDS used to say. This sentiment has notably grown at Cal; we are struck, for instance, by the publication which issued out of last spring’s anti-apartheid protests—the *Biko Plaza News*. Marxist it’s not, but it is interested in seeking an alternative to mainstream rad-lib electoralist pressure politics. Some of these young radicals can be won to a lifetime of partisanship in the revolutionary movement—and that is something Berkeley and its cops aim to stop. If they can wave Guillermo’s communist scalp, they will have furthered their campaign to make this campus “safe” for Reaganite repression. **An Injury to One is an Injury to All! All Out October 28! Drop the Charges Against Guillermo and All Anti-Imperialist Protesters!** Contribute today—make checks payable to the Guillermo Bermúdez Defense Fund. Mail to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 5555, San Francisco, CA 94101.

Bury Apartheid...

(continued from page 1)

revolutionary struggle which can unite all the oppressed and disenfranchised—the Indians, the coloureds, the youth, the women on the bantustans, the land-starved rural toilers—and also neutralize a section of the white population (i.e., convince some whites *not* to fight for apartheid), communalist bloodletting is a horrible and real prospect. The likely outcome: something resembling Zimbabwe today which will make a mockery of Nelson Mandela’s picture on the currency.

Furthermore, the Boers are a determined people, armed to the teeth. The military reality is that South Africa’s white rulers very consciously designed the townships, the coloured enclaves, the migrant workers’ hostels *for repression*. Here we do not refer to the over 700 black martyrs killed over the last year, but to potential mass slaughter—the sealing off and napalming of entire townships. Again, in the absence of a revolutionary struggle along class lines, white supremacist victory through means of sheer state terror is another possible outcome.

There is a third prospect in what might be called a “triangle of choice” for the anti-apartheid struggle: the revolutionary overthrow and smashing of the apartheid state and its replacement with a black-centered *dictatorship of the proletariat*, an integrated multiracial socialist state. The white population must have a place in an anti-racist society: the model is how Trotsky offered thousands of tsarist officers a job to do, placing their skills at the



Reuters

Brixton: British cops riot against minorities. Racist terror is endemic to decaying capitalism.

disposal of the new Bolshevik regime. The coloureds who comprise a strategic part of the Cape proletariat and the mainly commercial Indian population are no less a vital component. This is the only road for the liberation of the peoples of southern Africa, it is the road to which we in the Spartacus Youth League are committed.

What can we do here? The answer starts with the necessity for and genuine possibility of mobilizing the workers of the world against the South African regime and their “own” capitalist masters at home. It is counterposed to the strategy of appealing to the “morality” of American capitalism thus giving a “left” face to Reagan’s sanctions or impotent gestures (currently also good business practice) of “divestment.” Not only in the U.S. but throughout the imperialist world, labor and the op-

pressed feel a keen identification with the struggle against apartheid. Racist terror is integral to capitalism and capitalism is an international system. The only answer is an international working-class fight aimed at the *root* of apartheid slavery: private ownership and production for profit.

Take the example of Britain—a former colonial empire, now a decaying country with poverty and unemployment statistics more appropriate to the Third World. Thatcher’s idea of triumph is to “win” the Falkland/Malvinas Islands against Argentina. At home, the Tory bitch has unleashed her “bobbies” against minorities in a vicious wave of police terror; their nightsticks are to be augmented by “plastic bullets” and tear gas. The bloody Iron Lady of England is emboldened in savagely crushing the discontented youth today by having last year beaten back a class-struggle challenge to her vicious regime by the courageous British miners union. Only the treachery of the British Trades Union Council/Labour Party tops allowed Thatcher to defeat the miners strike. But the union was not broken and the solidarity forged in the strike between the miners and the most oppressed layers of British society is still a vivid memory. The miners found a solid base of support for their struggle among the Irish, the Asian and black minorities, the youth.

The mine strikers got help and support from the workers of the world. Material aid was forthcoming even from the black union of miners in South Africa. The miners organization in the Soviet Union contributed \$1 million. And in the United States, where the

labor bureaucracy was redbaiting and stabbing the heroic British miners, the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, anti-sectarian legal defense organization in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League—launched an urgent fund drive to aid the miners’ families which Thatcher had vowed to starve into submission. Now in Britain to defend minority communities and youth from the fury of Thatcher and her cop army of occupation, what is required are mobilizations of the power of labor. Militant unionists who recall how blacks and Asians generously supported striking miners and hid them when the cops raided should be mobilized to defend the minorities against cop terror—what is needed here too is the crucial element of revolutionary leadership.

Addressing students at Howard University on September 20, a Spartacist spokesman explained:

“There’s a reason for common action against apartheid between workers in South Africa and workers in this country. These Arizona copper miners were on strike for a long time last year, against Phelps Dodge. Well, Phelps Dodge is one of the major mining companies guess where? In South Africa. They face the same enemy. One of the things we hailed, and this was done in spite of all kinds of labor fakers and pseudoleftist waterboys for the bureaucrats, was the action of some Bay Area longshoremen who for ten days refused to unload South African blood cargo. It’s in the interests of working people—black and white—to get off their knees, to begin to play hardball—their unions are being destroyed, their living standards are being undermined. Labor action has the possibility to bring down Reagan—one of their bitter enemies. There should be no military goods leaving this country or any other for South Africa at this point. Labor struggle can turn not only this country around, but it can turn around South Africa.”

International labor action could galvanize the black proletariat of South Africa to strike at the apartheid butchers where it counts: in the mines and factories where black labor produces the wealth of the nation.

But such a working-class perspective is anathema to the reformist “left” of this country, busily organizing events on October 11 which center on the demand for “divestment” and that U.S. imperialism “Boycott South Africa, Not Nicaragua.” These are the same pro-Democratic Party hustlers who brought you *no* actions over the war moves against Nicaragua. They put down their picket signs and picked up their petitions for Walter “Quarantine Nicaragua” Mondale and/or his shill Jesse Jackson. What they have to show for

Spartacist Forums

South Africa: Razor’s Edge

- Reagan/Congress Sanctions Are a Cover-Up!
- Smash Apartheid! For Workers Revolution!

Speaker: Ed Clarkson
SL Central Committee

Wednesday, October 16, 7:30 p.m.
See “Today in the Union” for room
UW-Madison

For more information: (608) 257-8625

MADISON

South Africa: Razor’s Edge Smash Apartheid— For Workers Revolution!

Speaker: Don Alexander, SL CC
Guest Speaker: Stan Gow
ILWU Local 10 Executive Board

Saturday, October 12, 7:30 p.m.
Unitarian Church
1187 Franklin (at Geary)

For more information: (415) 863-6963

SAN FRANCISCO

LETTER

Why Bolsheviks Are On the Ballot

Knoxville, Tennessee

Dear Comrades,

Please note my new address on front and send all future *YS* issues there.

Although I differ with your position on many levels, I love your militancy. *But*, why a political office? (Stamberg & Kartsen). What is revolutionary about the American electoral system?

In spirit & action,
Brian M.

YSp replies: It's quite refreshing to receive an ultraleft criticism for a change. Much of our work necessarily entails struggle against illusions in the "liberal" imperialist Democratic Party and against the reformist left which shamelessly peddles these illusions. Now, we have an argument not about why we didn't support Jesse Jackson's cynical "Rainbow Coalition" scam to deliver the black vote to Cold Warrior Mondale, but about why we have anything to do with the American electoral system at all.

Brian's impulse here isn't half bad: there is certainly nothing "revolutionary" about the capitalist electoral system. And this is especially clear in New York—this heavily black, Hispanic, Asian and immigrant city is ruled by a Democratic mayor who's as close to a chemically pure fascist as one is likely to see within the framework of bourgeois "democracy": racist pig Ed Koch. Furthermore, even the bourgeoisie's mouthpiece, the *New York Times*, has

disparaged the incredibly corrupt and bureaucratic maze would-be candidates must suffer simply to get—and stay—on the ballot. Precisely because the bankruptcy of capitalist electoralism is so starkly obvious in New York, our communist campaign has struck a raw nerve of dissatisfaction among the working class and minority population.

It is an elemental truth for Leninists that the bourgeois state is the instrument of the dictatorship of the capitalist class. Its courts, cops, political institutions and parties have as their primary function the subjugation of the proletariat and oppressed. This truth is no abstraction in "Fear City" where the city administration—from black front man and police commissioner Benjamin Ward to the ghoulish city coroner Elliot Gross to Koch—incites and covers up racist police terror against black youth, black grandmothers, black radicals. New York is on the razor's edge and against the brutal police rampage, Spartacist candidates Stamberg and Kartsen call for mobilizing labor and minorities, for armed, integrated defense guards drawn from responsible union men and women to defend the population against the cops, i.e., against the state. Our campaign thus poses the question: who will rule? And we answer "New York City: For the Working People!"

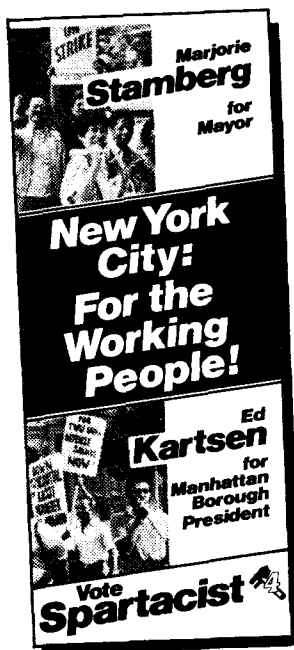
Will power transfer from the bosses to the proletariat through any election? No, it will not. Participation in elections under certain circumstances does, how-

these "pressure" tactics is a Democratic Party which has, if anything, tried to out-Reagan Reagan in its opposition to the Sandinistas and has appropriated vast sums of money for the *contra* scam on a world scale; we call it the "contra Congress." When Reagan announced his embargo—an act of war—against the Sandinistas, the fake-left responded with deafening silence. The Trotskyist SYL raised a modest sum for the urgent defense of Nicaragua. Simply put, we believe that it is our duty as American revolutionists to defend Nicaragua against our "own" rulers as best we can.

The reformist proponents of "divestment" are playing Reagan's game. We have always recognized divestment schemes as so much imperialist hypocrisy: neither Reagan nor the notorious

Harlem slumlord Columbia University, for instance, are in any position to preach to Botha about racial equality. The flight of domestic capital from South Africa—signaling white capitalist nervousness—has triggered a financial crisis leading to a significant flight of foreign capital. The "divestment" crowd is getting as much divestment now as they ever will: it is not only good business but a useful sop to keep the lid on at home. Sanctions are meant to give Botha the message that American imperialism believes time has run out and he should pretend to give a little.

The problem for Botha, Reagan, et al. is that Pretoria *cannot* make a few cosmetic reforms and maintain white supremacist rule. The black revolt continues; Botha's regime digs in. The strategic imperative for revolutionaries internationally is to build a Leninist vanguard party to lead South Africa's powerful black proletariat in a revolution to smash apartheid. A party like the one that toppled the tsar, emancipated women and national minorities, put the working class in power in Russia. Today's Soviet leadership, a far cry from the party of Lenin and Trotsky, clings to anti-revolutionary illusions in "détente" with imperialism. Lenin's Bolsheviks solved the problem now facing the South African masses: which class will rule? It will take a party that grasps the lessons of the 1917 Revolution to answer that question in South Africa—on the side of the black workers. The revolution awaits its Lenin. Here, against all wings of our "own" imperialist rulers—the bloodiest mass murderers of all—we fight to build an international party of socialist revolution to wipe the racist filth of decaying capitalism off the earth. As black unionists of South Africa say: *Amandla! Aweto! Power—it is ours!* ■



Workers Vanguard Photo
Spartacist campaign brochure reached thousands with call for labor/black defense against racist state terror. Above, candidate Ed Kartsen (right, with sign) at August 13 New York anti-apartheid protest.

ever, provide the revolutionary party with a platform from which to mobilize and a degree of legitimacy among those still chained to illusions in parliamentary reform. Indeed, the population is inundated from all sides with the myth of "reforming" capitalism through pressure on the ruling class at the ballot box. It is our task to bridge the gap between this existing false consciousness and the urgent objective need for workers revolution—one of many ways to accomplish this is to utilize the electoral arena. In the social hellhole of New York, with its thousands of homeless, rampant "gentrification," cop terror, official corruption and cover-up, continuing union-busting offensive and mean streets—the Spartacist election campaign allows us to reach thousands with a communist program. The spirit in which we launched the Stamberg/Kartsen campaign may be found in the thesis "The Communist Party and

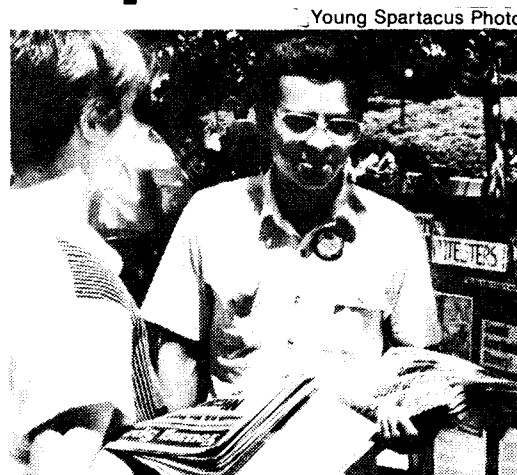
Parliament," adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920:

"The election campaign itself must be conducted not as a drive for the maximum number of parliamentary seats, but as a mobilization of the masses around slogans of proletarian revolution."

Through this campaign we are bringing our revolutionary politics before union local meetings, anti-apartheid demonstrations, college classes, community organizations. We are using the electoral arena to get a wider hearing for the idea that "the only solution is workers revolution." Thus a vote for Spartacist is not merely a "protest vote" to express dissatisfaction with the policies of the ruling-class parties but also a vote for the program of workers power. We also refer our readers to the excellent discussion on Leninist tactics contained in the centerfold article of this issue. ■

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Young Spartacus

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No. 130 October 1985

SYL Educational on "Left-Wing" Communism

Leninist Tactics and the Road to Workers Power

Part One of Two

Young Spartacus is pleased to print below an educational presentation by comrade Ed Clarkson of the Spartacist League Central Committee to a recent plenum of the SYL National Committee. This is the first of two parts of comrade Clarkson's talk on "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder. V.I. Lenin's polemical text on communist tactics. Part I puts the work in its historical context: the objective reasons for ultraleftism in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, the Communist International's struggle against the ultralefts in light of the experiences of the Russian Bolsheviks. The second part will deal with the application of these historical lessons to our own communist work among students and youth today.

In printing this presentation, YSp hopes to inspire our readership to study for themselves the basic texts of the only revolutionary party on the planet which successfully led a proletarian revolution—the party of Lenin. This discussion was motivated in part by the ignorance of basic Marxism within our own ranks and reflected an aggressive party campaign to rectify the legacy of semi-literacy that the declining American bourgeois educational system has bestowed upon us. Comrade Clarkson's talk complemented another historical/educational discussion which took place in the SL Central Committee plenum on the British socialist movement and its relationship to Lenin/Trotsky's Communist International.

Footnotes have been provided for some of the most important references; these cannot substitute for—but only augment—an independent reading of the books mentioned in the course of the presentation—Lenin's "Left-Wing" Communism, State and Revolution, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky and Trotsky's Terrorism and Communism. YSp readers are urged as well to attend SYL-sponsored classes on basic Marxism in your area (see ad, page 6). Today, as world imperialism is challenged from South Africa to Central America, as American students have begun to enter the political arena to express outrage against apartheid slavery, comrade Lenin's advice to the youth in 1920 is more correct than ever: "the tasks of the youth in general, and of the Young Communist League and all other organisations in particular, may be summed up in one word: learn."



Bolshevik troops—vanguard of the Russian workers. Their banners read "All Power to the Soviets, Long Live the Revolution!"

We're here to discuss this excellent guide to Marxist tactics. Some of you may know that Lenin wrote an article with essentially the same title, regarding the ultraleft position during the period just before Brest-Litovsk¹ and during Brest-Litovsk called "Left-Wing Childishness." The essence of the left-wing position at Brest-Litovsk was they wanted to fight a revolutionary war. Of course, there's nothing wrong with that except there wasn't an army. And I think actually in many regards that's a good description of ultraleftism generally. It's war without an army, which is something we seek to avoid.

Now, this text has the unfortunate history of being used as sort of the Marxist version of "Let's Make a Deal." This is the text more than any other that is trotted out to lend Lenin's authority to a whole spectrum of reformist and opportunist betrayals, including, for example, this amusing notion by this "global class war" clot up in New Haven that it justifies a vote for Henry Wallace in the 1948 election campaign. Well, the good news is that the Bolsheviks never called on the workers and peasants to vote for a bourgeois party. Never! Now, if you're interested in what they did in the Duma, which was a rather low-order tactic actually, you should perhaps read the article called "The Social Democrats

and Electoral Agreements" in volume XI of Lenin. I don't want to go into Duma voting, which was so incredibly complex and involved with so many different levels, that I doubt if I could explain it in full if given a full hour.

Now, the bad news is that the SWP on a couple of occasions voted for Democrats. They voted for them in the context, when they thought working-class guys, who were running on the Democratic Party ticket, were perhaps leaning in the direction of some sort of labor party, and they tried to use it as a model of critical support. I'm talking about in their revolutionary period, I'm not talking about the SWP that we now confront. Cannon,² looking back at that, thought that in both occasions they did the wrong thing. But he didn't eschew what he thought of as the principle, and that is, you might in certain situations try to intersect something going away from the Democratic Party in this vein. And I think there's even some discussion in Trotsky on the black question, hypothesizing about such things. Well, theoretically one can't dispense with anything out of hand. America is a fairly politically backward country. You know that after 1905 in Russia, the classes were all pretty well differentiated. The peasants voted for the peasants, the bourgeoisie voted for the bourgeoisie, the proletariat voted for the working-class parties. We don't have that here. But there's a lot of American working-class experience that suggests that this kind of development is not going to begin as some sort of left thrust within the Democratic Party. So basically there's nothing like the good old social-democratic position of the Second International of not voting for bourgeois parties. Which brings me to another point that Lenin made, you don't throw out the baby with the bath water: just because the Social Democrats betrayed, doesn't mean that they were stupid and everything they did was wrong.

Now, one of the reasons that this book has the misfortune to be used in the way it is today, is that the mass base

for ultraleftism in the working class no longer exists, as such. It did during World War I, with the betrayal of the Social Democracy and the utter devastation of Europe, an unimaginable devastation. The Bolshevik Revolution propelled hundreds of thousands of workers to the left and sometimes farther to the left. Now, these ultraleft elements were politically defeated by the Third International, not many of them survived the founding of the Third International, with the exception of course of the Spanish party, which met its Waterloo during the Spanish Civil War, when anarcho-syndicalism, being unable on principle to seize power, joined the counterrevolutionary popular front. This caused Trotsky to describe this brand of ultraleftism as being like a raincoat with holes—it was only good when it didn't rain.

With the degeneration of the October Revolution and the passing over, in the thirties, in Germany and in the Comintern generally, of the Third International to the camp of reformism, the rise of fascism—which itself was a product of the inability of the proletariat to seize power in revolutionary situations—the political spectrum shifted considerably to the right. We've mentioned this in the context of the comportment in the working-class movement, for example. It didn't used to be the case that it was considered *de rigueur* to slug somebody if they said something you didn't like. And it has pretty much remained there, so that the major betrayals today are pretty much always in the direction of class collaborationism.

Now, all this is to explain why we don't see the CP little old ladies waving copies of *State and Revolution* at us, and *The Renegade Kautsky*, but rather they do use "Left-Wing" Communism in that vein. And of course the other phenomena that exist now that didn't exist then, is we now have mass reformist organizations (I don't know if you want to call them parties, sometimes they're parties, sometimes not) for whom Lenin is an authority, and so of course they want to utilize that authori-



Brest-Litovsk, 1918—Leon Trotsky (center), revolutionary leader and commander of the Soviet Red Army, conducted negotiations with Germany during First World War.

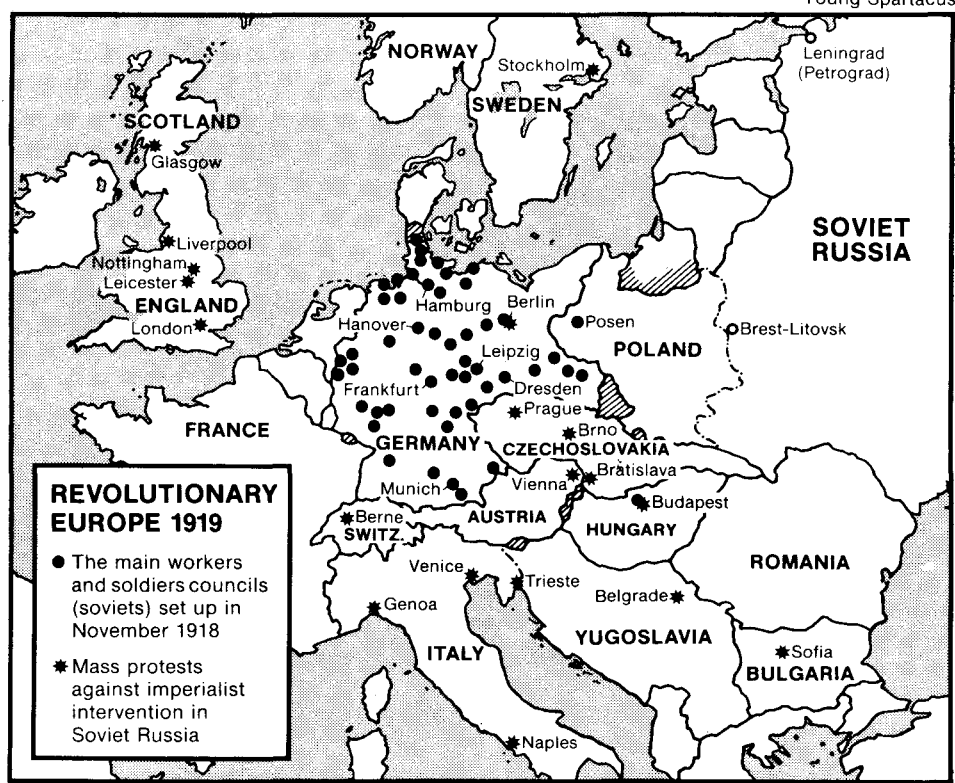
ty whenever they can. Now all these books that I've mentioned, all three, are really of a piece, you see, and that's the point I want to get to later on.

To be sure, there have been outcroppings of ultraleftism, mostly in the form of sectarianism, mostly based on reformist premises, for example the Third Period,³ which was based ultimately on the profoundly reformist premise of socialism in one country. The most perfect example in this country is PL [Progressive Labor Party], which is, of course, an exquisitely, perfectly sectarian organization, and also utterly reformist.

The Comintern's Struggle Against Ultraleftism

This was not the case in the World War I period and the post-World War I period. The Bolsheviks were faced with the genuine article: an ultraleftism that was based on an utter revulsion to the Social Democratic betrayals, and with a profound thrust toward proletarian or some sort of revolution. I want to give you some examples of this at the time, they were important examples and they tended to occur in the 1919 period, but as late as the 1921 March Action, when the German Communist Party decided to launch a revolution before people were ready to come to it.

In Germany in 1919, the newly formed Communist Party, which included Luxemburg and Liebknecht, was formally on record against participating in bourgeois parliaments, and against participating in the reactionary trade unions. Moreover, there were National Assembly elections at the time which they did not participate in. Now that was unfortunate, although the Spartacist uprising would not have succeeded in any event. Lenin makes the point that they probably lost tens of thousands of workers to the USPD—he makes that point in "Left-Wing" Communism—because of their ultraleft positions. The primary reason that the Spartacists didn't grow a great deal is probably because they were insufficiently politically differentiated at that time. They were one month old at the time of the Spartacist uprising. But if you think about it, one thing participation in bourgeois parliamentary elections does, in addition to providing a platform for the revolutionary program, which is far and away its fundamental reason, is that it accords you a certain legitimacy. It's not as easy to repress people who have a representative in parliament. It's not impossible, it's just not as easy, in the same way that our lawsuit⁴ provides us with a certain protection against the bourgeois state, not an ultimate protection, a certain protection. Luxemburg and Liebknecht were opposed to these ultraleft positions, but nevertheless went along with the party norms, and so 15-20,000 workers died in the Spartacist uprising, including Luxemburg and Liebknecht. Some of those lives might have been saved, if there had been a more rational approach to these questions, the retreat might have been a little more successful. And then there's Hungary, where every mistake possible was made. What happened in the Hungarian Soviet uprising was that the bourgeoisie literally handed over the keys to the shop to whoever was willing to try to rule that country in the aftermath of World War I. The Hungarian Communists nationalized everything down to the pots and pans, neglected the peasantry and left them in their semi-feudal plight. One of the minor things they did was that 22 of 24 People's Commissars were Jewish, which tended to annoy some of the population, and then, of course, they ignored the Social Democrats, who joined the so-called Communist Party in Hungary, to subvert it from within. So just about every conceivable error was created by the Hungarian ultraleftists. Incidentally at the time of the Hungarian Revolution one-quarter of the Hungarian population was nobility, to give you some sort of sense of what kind of population you were



Post-WWI Europe: Allied imperialists carved up defeated rivals. Shaded areas show disputed German territories claimed by France and Poland.

dealing with at that time and some need for some tactical finesse.

And the third example involved the best of the lot, the Bulgarian Tesnyaki,⁵ who both in 1918 and 1923 also neglected their own peasantry in a particularly pernicious way, that is, they did not support rebellions. The first rebellion was a sort of soldiers rebellion, in 1918, toward which they adopted a hands-off policy, and they also adopted a hands-off policy to the overthrow of the Stambuliski regime in 1923, which was a peasant regime, it truly was, in favor of the peasantry, which was the vast majority of the population. It actually operated that way, and the Bulgarian Communist Party was indifferent to its overthrow.

So ultraleftism had to be fought in the Comintern, it was quite clear as of 1919. The ultraleftists were genuine, class-struggle militants at the time. But one thing that was quite obvious very early on in the struggles against ultraleftism in the Comintern was the peculiar, if not identity, very close parallel that existed between the positions of the ultraleftists and the positions of the reformists. To name just a few, historically, the left wing of the Bolshevik Party on the question of the revolutionary war was in a bloc with the right wing of the government, i.e., the Social Revolutionaries at the time. The Workers Opposition, Kollontai's⁶ group in '21, had the same positions that were being raised about concessions to the peasantry by the Mensheviks and the Kautskyites,⁷ the same complaints, of course, with a rather different thrust, but nevertheless essentially the same complaints. In the '30s in Germany we all know the German Communist Party was opposed to the united front. You may not know that the Social Democrats were also opposed to the united front, which would have made it particularly a powerful tactic in that situation. You get these groups that disdain democratic

demands, the Bordigists⁸ I think being the prime example. And as Trotsky points out that position is perfectly congruent and compatible with the position of the Stalinists themselves. So you get this kind of left-right parallel between the political positions.



Armed workers and soldiers of Spartacist uprising in Germany, January 1919.

Whereas the reformists are wedded to the bourgeoisie, and will not challenge their right to rule, or any of their institutional formats for doing so, the ultralefts on principle disdain all forms of struggle tainted by the bourgeoisie, and those of their labor lieutenants, and so the net effect is exactly the same. If these aren't identical tracks, they're at least closely parallel, so if you get tired of riding on one for awhile, you can simply step over to the other. The frequent flips between ultraleftism and reformism have been noted historically, primarily of course the history of the Third International, from the Third Period to the Popular Front.

The other important point where the reformists and ultralefts intersected in their political view was that of the Third International itself, and its formation. For both the ultralefts and the reformists complained about it being too Russian, too centralized, not enough local control. They all complained about the impossibility of trying to bloc with the reformists while simultaneously splitting from them, and you'll see complaints on both the left and the right about that, and they also talked about the incompatibility of the Bolsheviks achieving power with leading revolutions in other countries, that is, that the interests of the Soviet state would necessarily predominate in any such revolutionary movement, to the detriment of the revolutionary movement in other countries. And both left and right shared that. You can find it in Gorter, you can find it in Pannekoek,⁹ you can find it in Jack Tanner's¹⁰ comments, you can find it in Bordiga, and you can also find it in the apologists for the Second International, Kautsky—in almost every historian you read—Weinstein, Borkenau, Carr to a certain extent, in a much kinder way, and you'll find glimpses of it in Deutscher, who I just found out, incidentally, a couple of years back, not only thought it was premature to form the Fourth International, but also thought it was premature to form the Third International.

The interesting thing about this con-

Dietz



V.I. Lenin, addressing Second Congress of the Communist International, led fight against social-democratic traitors and ultraleft childishness.

gruency is that if you take the ultraleft complaints, you remove the centralization, you add a dash of local control, you remove the tactics for exposing the reformists, you delete the defense of the Soviet state as a primary task for the International, and *voilà!*, you have the Second International all over again. It's exactly the same, nothing's changed. Moreover, there's sort of a left version of Bernsteinism¹¹ in this argument, that is, since power requires concessions and compromises, it isn't worth having until compromises are unnecessary, i.e., the other way of saying it that Bernstein said more elegantly is "when the proletariat is mature enough," which of course Lenin points out will never happen in that sense, under a capitalist government.

Now the arguments against this are to be found in the history of the Bolshevik Party in the October Revolution, the successful formation of the revolutionary International, and the real history of the relationship of the Soviet state to this. For example, Brest-Litovsk is a paradigm of necessary compromise and revolutionary action not being incompatible. The Bolsheviks tended to be right I'd say about four or five times to one to their local experts. With respect to the American Communist Party, with respect to the French party, with respect to the Italian party, with respect to the German party: right, right, right, right, right.

The other interesting fact is that even in the first year of the degeneration of
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Leninist Tactics...

(continued from page 5)

the Bolshevik state, the impulse for revolution in Germany was far, far greater in the Bolshevik Party in Russia, than it was in Germany, where they simply wallowed in indecision. Now, the fundamental bankruptcy of ultraleftism in this period is not that they ignored the peasantry, or they wouldn't work in parliament, or they didn't want to support the traditional workers movement. All these things could have been tolerated, as Lenin pointed out, for a period of time in any event, worked out in the course of experience. The fundamental sectarianism of the ultralefts at this time is that they managed, in spite of rather ardent wooing by the Bolshevik Party and the Comintern, not to join the Third International. The SLP is a primary example of what happened to you politically in that period if you didn't take that road. You're dead politically, and in their case, they're just dead. What's interesting to read in this regard is Rosmer's *Moscow Under Lenin*. In one chapter he talks about the real relationships between the Comintern and the syndicalists, and what was really a quite intelligent attempt to regroup. For example, the Hungarians tended to be the "action faction" in the Comintern. That was unfortunate. So that there were many things that were wrong, that the Comintern didn't do with the greatest finesse, but their basic approach to this problem was essentially correct and resulted in millions of workers making the transition in a few short years from one International to another—hundreds of thousands of revolutionaries.

Lessons of October

What you generally hear from most historians on this question goes like this: "Well, the Bolsheviks in 1919, they thought they had it in the bag, Europe was up in flames, all they had to do was wave the red flag and it would be all over; 1920, they saw life wasn't exactly that simple, they tried a little splitting and wrecking, that didn't work; Third and Fourth Congress, what you had was a retreat into compromise, concilia-



Class war on the streets of Minneapolis as workers battle cops during victorious general strike in 1934. Trotskyist-led strike was a model for revolutionary action.

tion, opportunism, vis-à-vis the united front." Now, this is so much bullshit. To be sure, in 1919 the Bolsheviks hoped and even expected in that context, with central Europe simply up in arms on the side of the proletariat, to consummate some victories. It didn't happen. But even in 1919 you'll find articles by Lenin, polemicizing against ultraleftism in the German and Hungarian parties. In 1920, at the first substantive congress of the Communist International—the first one was kind of planting the flag on top of Mt. Suribachi, we're here, everyone join us, all the delegates from foreign countries had Russian last names—the Second Congress addressed itself to the main tasks on the agenda, which was building parties of a fundamentally different type than those of the Second International, not just parties that didn't betray and were pure, not just mass parties, but parties of a *fundamentally different type*. Let me read this quote talking about the Second International in "Left-Wing Communism:

"The principal reason for their bankruptcy [i.e., Kautsky & Co.], was that they were 'enchanted' by one definite form of growth of the working-class movement and Socialism, they forgot

all about the one-sidedness of this form, they were afraid of seeing the sharp break which objective conditions made inevitable, and continued to repeat simple, routine, and, at first glance, incontestable truths, such as: 'three is more than two.' But politics is more like algebra than arithmetic; and still more like higher mathematics than elementary mathematics. In reality, all the old forms of the socialist movement have acquired a new content, and, consequently, a new sign, the 'minus' sign, has appeared in front of all the figures; but our wisecracks stubbornly continued (and still continue) to persuade themselves and others that 'minus three' is more than 'minus two!'"

That new content is what we as Marxists describe as the epoch of proletarian revolution or the other way of saying the same thing, the epoch of imperialist decay. The preceding epoch being the epoch of reform, for which the parties of the Second International were, for the most part, quite adequate. Now this isn't like a Mel Brooks movie, right? *History of the Working Class, Part I*, (boom!) *Epoch of Reform*, (take it up...). One of the nice things about reading Schorske on German Social Democracy is that you get a nice sense of the accruing pressures of that transition, refracted in the political struggles and the organizational changes in Social Democracy that occurred during that period. You get a sense of how history, how material forces shape political parties. But World War I was a watershed. If you didn't cross that line, on the side of the proletariat, you were, as Luxemburg said, a dirty, stinking corpse, with respect to the workers movement.

Now if you think about that new content, about the epoch of imperialist decay and proletarian revolution, you'll realize that this dictates a whole different kind of party. So what do you have in the epoch of imperialist decay? Well, you have the division of the workers movement into its reformist and its revolutionary wings, based on the accumulation of profits by the imperialists, the labor aristocracy on the one side, the revolutionary party on the other side. You have the fact that imperialism no longer grows qualitatively. Well, that means something about the working class. It also no longer grows qualitatively. So you get an idea of the kind of party you need to address this situation. The conditions are rotten ripe. Proletarian revolution is on the agenda in a historic sense. So the revolutionary party becomes an advance detachment of the proletarian revolution, no longer mass parties of the Second International type. Maybe on the eve of revolution and thereafter, but not as the norm. And the strategic tasks flow from this: the penetration of all sectors of the working class and the population generally, the need to be a 'tribune of the people to lead—not the whole nation—but a good portion of the nation, in revolt. Revolutionary internationalism, of course, becomes of

increased importance, precisely because of the nature of the imperialist world. You have to intervene to advance the struggle. The purpose of intervention now becomes not reform, that doesn't mean we deny reform, but the purpose of each struggle is to advance the proletariat to the next stage, to prepare it for the task of seizing power—the Transitional Program. You may not know that Trotsky was commissioned to write a transitional program for the Third International. Stalin interrupted this, rudely, and Trotsky finally finished it in '38.

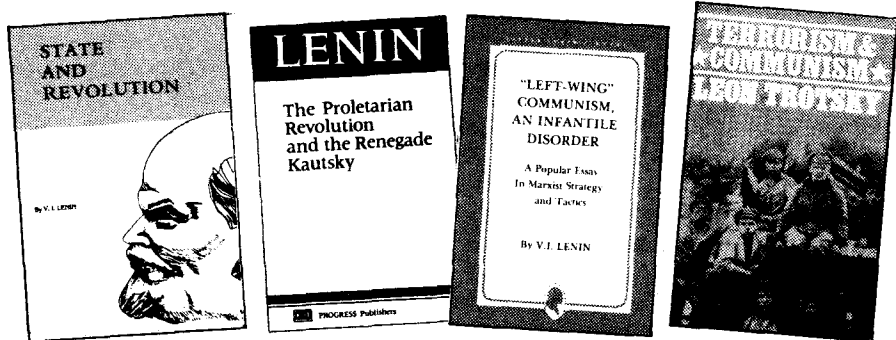
And of course you must discredit, expose and smash the reformists. The ABCs. Proletarian revolution, smash the enemy, seize power with the rest of the population. So all these tactics flow, and the very nature of the Bolshevik Party, and the organizational norms, and the need for ideological homogeneity and for unity in action, all this flows from the tasks of the period. Or let's put it another way. The ultralefts had it in Europe. You read Gorter, he says, well the only progressive class is the proletariat, everyone else plays a counterrevolutionary role. Well, look around you. If that's the case, we're dead. If you simply mobilize the proletariat, then you're going to lose, probably to a fascist reaction, because the petty bourgeoisie is quite capable of mobilizing on the other side.

Now Jon informed me that *Terrorism and Communism* was the other book distributed at the Second Congress to the delegates, along with "Left-Wing Communism, which I think speaks to what I'm trying to explain, that is, if you look at *Terrorism and Communism*, what is it? Well, it's a combination of *State and Revolution* and *The Renegade Kautsky* structurally. It tries to intersect both of those questions. Put them together with "Left-Wing Communism and you have a sense of what the Bolsheviks were trying to do and what we must do, to forge a revolutionary party. You take these books, the lessons of the first four congresses, you extend the historical bankruptcy of the bourgeoisie to the Third World, you take into account the degeneration of Stalinism and its impact on the working-class movement, and that's what revolutionary Trotskyism is in this period.

So the main point I wanted to make here is that these tactics are not merely smart—that's a strong argument I think, I don't want to impugn that, all things considered it's just as well to be smart as to be stupid—but they flow fundamentally from the task of the proletariat in this period.

Now, I've tried to look at sectarianism in a variety of different ways to suggest its bankruptcy, and ultraleftism. George incidentally wanted me to get up here to defend the amicus brief¹² in this context, of blocking with some of the scummiest elements in society on a certain question. Let's take the standpoint of what works. Let's be a little pragmatic for a while, it's an American disease in any event; let's wallow in it. I can't think of one struggle—now god knows there've been damn few victories—since the Bolshevik Revolution, but I can't think of one even partial victory which would have been achieved, including our own, including Washington and Detroit and Chicago, including all our PDC [Partisan Defense Committee] work, without utilizing these tactics. Take the Minneapolis Teamsters strike, which is one of the best models I can think of, short of the October Revolution, for revolutionary action. Now you would think on the face of it, well it's a Teamsters strike, it's a purely industrial action, all that you have to do is go out there and you beat the shit out of the bosses, nobody crosses the picket line and that's it! Wrong! What the Trotskyists had to do to expand that struggle in a revolutionary direction was they had to utilize, from a revolutionary viewpoint, the bourgeois state, which they did with the governing Farmer-Labor Party in the

Readings recommended in "Leninist Tactics and the Road to Workers Power"



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Vote Spartacist...

(continued from page 8)

against Gross. But the day before the hearing was to begin, a compliant judge ruled that the state had no jurisdiction to investigate the city's "angel of death," arguing in true doublespeak that even though a chief medical examiner must legally be a licensed medical doctor, his "required" knowledge of medicine is "incidental" to performing autopsies. As Marjorie Stamberg, Spartacist Party candidate for mayor told the protesters, "New York City today is cover-up city. This is just one more proof that what we have here is a whole system of racist police terror. Koch's cops kill. D.A. Morgenthau comes in to stop indictments, and Gross's job is to hide the evidence."

There is nothing too gross for Gross, from switching cadavers to gouging out the eyes of Michael Stewart in order to destroy evidence that he was beaten and strangled by the cops. While the charges against Gross were being squashed, Gross himself took time off from his paid leave of absence to testify at the farcical trial of the cops who killed Stewart. Two years ago, Gross said Stewart died from cardiac arrest, then changed his story and said it was due to a spinal injury. Now he says Stewart's injuries were "consistent with" the testimony of witnesses who saw the cops viciously beat the young black artist.

While Koch's coroner covers up for

the trigger-happy cossack cops, Koch himself rules over the working people of New York like a Zionist army commander in an Arab city. He positively glories in union-busting. He gets a kick out of riding in his stretch limo with a police entourage while down below the working people are packed into the rotting subways. But what he really grooves on is giving the finger to black people. His answer to black and Hispanic residents of the burned-out, rat-infested South Bronx was to paste decals of flower boxes over the holes where the windows are supposed to be. Some residents quipped at the time, "How about a decal job, a decal Mercedes and a decal steak to feed my kids?" As Ed Kartsen, Spartacist Party candidate for Manhattan borough president, stated at the anti-Gross rally, "Koch is Reagan's man in New York City. Reagan prepares for war against

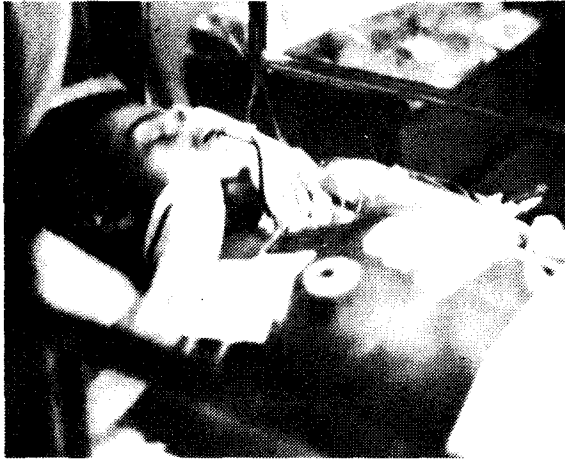
Amsterdam News



the workers and peasants of Nicaragua and prepares for Star Wars to destroy the gains of the Russian Revolution. In order to carry out this war on labor and blacks at home, Koch needs racist terror."

Indeed, at the very time of our protest, hypocrite Koch was organizing a "speak out" against Louis Farrakhan, trying to whip up race war between New York's huge black and Jewish populations. No one should be fooled by Farrakhan—the man who, two months before Malcolm X was gunned down, said that "Such a man as Malcolm is worthy of death." Today Farrakhan appeals to the black community with calls of "self-reliance" and woos the race-hate terrorists of the Ku Klux Klan (see *Workers Vanguard* No. 388, 4 October). Both Koch and Farrakhan are dangerous racists, but there is a difference. Farrakhan only has his

Michael Warren



The working class will not forget. Vengeance for Michael Stewart!

context of the Teamsters strike. They even had to turn to the social-patriotic scum-sucking pig Dan Tobin and the Teamsters International and utilize him—Trotsky's proposal to run him for president seems to me one of the more off things Trotsky ever said about anything, not unprincipled but—they had to maneuver even with elements of the Catholic church. They had to maneuver with the petty bourgeoisie, with the small businessmen, with the farmers, it was an important element of surviving during the strike, absolutely vital.

So, revolution occurs in the real world. It doesn't occur inside your head, or it may, but nobody would care. Look at the United States, for example, which I think arguably is the most developed capitalist country on the planet of any significance. One could argue Sweden, I suppose, but it really doesn't count in the scheme of things, certainly not Japan, which still has a large peasantry created by the American occupation, and underconsumption being the norm in that society on a certain level, which is part of the reason for their success. If you look at the U.S., and take the past couple of years, I would imagine the working class in terms of its relative weight has declined a percent or two, in terms of this population. So what we have here is a large unemployed, we have blacks and browns, we have semi-, quasi- and all sorts of proletarianized forces, which from a Marxist standpoint, would not be construed as the heart and soul of the industrial working

class. You have a rather hefty, diverse middle class society here. So what you get is the necessity for American communists to construe, to think about what Jim tried to think about when he talked about the "workers and x" government. Somebody else is going to get something out of this revolution. Now, of course, the SWP has this silly notion it's farmers. The entire farm population could be put into Brooklyn and there'd still be room for a million and a half more people there, that's literally true. But, it's obvious that our task has to be to intersect, to neutralize and to draw to the program of proletarian revolution as many of these diverse elements as we can. Just as that was the case in post-World War I Europe, perhaps even more so, because America is more politically backward, and we're going to have to use our heads a little, and we're probably going to have to do it fast, 'cause it's not going to be like 1905, "Oh, nice lesson, let's assimilate it for 12 years," probably not that way, probably a lot quicker.

The moral is, you better know, if you know nothing else, the lessons of October, of which this book is a critical component. It's not like a technical afterthought. A critical component.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

¹ The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed 3 March 1918, concluded peace between imperialist Germany and the newly formed Soviet state during World War I. Bolsheviks saw the treaty as a necessary compromise while continuing to encourage the German workers to rise against their "own" rulers.

² James P. Cannon (1890-1974) founded the American Trotskyist movement in 1928 after his expulsion from the CP, of which he was a founding leader. He was National Secretary of the SWP, founded in 1938, until 1953 and a spokesman for the SWP until his death.

³ The "Third Period" (1928-1933) was the term used by the Stalinist Comintern to characterize what they viewed as an impending wave of revolutionary struggle to justify extreme adventurism and sectarianism. The Stalinists eschewed common action with other workers organizations, dubbing the latter "social fascist." In Germany, the Third Period policy against united fronts with the Social Democrats against the Nazis paved Hitler's road to power in 1933.

⁴ Our court suit refers to the SL/SYL's successful legal challenge to the FBI and the 1983 Attorney General's Guidelines for Security/Terrorism Investiga-

tions. We concluded an agreement wherein the FBI dropped its lying definition equating Marxists with violent terrorists and instead defined the SL as what we are—a Marxist political organization.

⁵ The Tesnyaki or "Narrow" Socialists were Bulgarian revolutionaries who were among the earliest opponents of World War I and participated in the founding of the Communist International in 1919.

⁶ Alexandra Kollontai (1872-1952) was a veteran Russian socialist and a Bolshevik Central Committee (CC) member at the time of the October Revolution. Active in the fight for women's liberation, she was on the editorial boards of the Bolshevik journals *Rabotnitsa* and *Kommunistka*. After an ultraleftist phase in the Workers Opposition, Kollontai became a Stalinist diplomat and Soviet ambassador to Norway, Sweden and Mexico, the sole survivor of Stalin's bloody purge of the original Bolshevik CC.

⁷ Karl Kautsky (1854-1938) was the undisputed leading spokesman for international Marxism prior to World War I. During the war he adopted a pacifist, centrist stance and apologized for the social chauvinist traitors who supported the war aims of their "own" bourgeoisies. He was a bitter opponent of the Bolshevik Revolution and Communist International.

⁸ Amadeo Bordiga (1889-1970) was a leading anarcho-syndicalist in the Italian Socialist Party and a founding member of the

mouth; Koch has 30,000 gun-toting cops who think they have a license to kill and use it daily. To make the streets safe for decent New Yorkers, the Spartacist Party calls for labor/black defense against the racist terrorists in white sheets and blue uniforms.

While the condo kings, banker barons and fat cat capitalists try to turn New York into a glittering playpen for the super rich, the working people and minorities have been pushed against the wall and are looking for answers. Mary Bumpurs told a recent Spartacist forum in Harlem: "My two brothers were in the service for this United States here. Once they heard what had happened to my mother, they immediately had no reason to serve the USA again, because why are you fighting over there when you can't get justice here?"

The Main Enemy Is at Home! From this election platform, the SL/SYL is campaigning to build a workers party that will fight for a workers government. A vote for the Spartacist Party is a vote for the program of workers revolution. Vote Red—Vote Marjorie and Ed! ■

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Italian CP. He was an early opponent of participation in bourgeois parliaments and fought against the united front tactic in the Comintern.

⁹ Jack Tanner (1889-?) was a leader of the Shop Stewards Movement in Britain formed in opposition to World War I and later a leader of the British CP.

¹⁰ Hermann Gorter (1864-1927) and Anton Pannekoek (1873-1960) were among the more prominent ultraleftists against whom Lenin's "Left-Wing" Communism was chiefly directed. They were spokesmen for the "Tribune" or ultraleft wing of the Dutch CP as well as the ultraleft German Communist Workers Party (KAPD).

¹¹ Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932) was Frederick Engels' literary executor and later the leading spokesman within the German Social Democracy for revisionism, counterposing gradual, "evolutionary" advancement toward socialism against the class-struggle road to workers revolution.

¹² Amicus brief—In 1983 the SL submitted an *amicus curiae* ("friend of the court") brief urging the Supreme Court to overturn the tax fraud conviction of Sun Myung Moon. The brief contends Moon's prosecution threatens First Amendment rights. Others who filed amicus briefs include the Presbyterians, Mormons, Baptists, SCLC, Eugene McCarthy, Clare Boothe Luce, the National Conference of Black Mayors, the ACLU and three states.

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Young Spartacus

From Harlem to Soweto: Smash Racist Terror!

New York City: Vote Spartacist

"Gross the Ghoul Has Got to Go!" was the rallying cry of the demonstration called October 3 by the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth League to protest the continuing cover-up of racist cop terror by New York City's chief coroner, Elliot Gross. Carrying pictures of black victims of New York's killer cops, protesters chanted, "Eleanor Bumpurs, Michael Stewart, Edmund Perry—Vengeance!" and "From Harlem to Soweto—Smash Racist Terror!" Endorsers of the demonstration included Mary Bumpurs, whose 67-year-old mother was shotgunned by the cops for being behind in her rent, civil rights attorney Conrad Lynn, the Welfare Action Coalition of the Bronx, and Benny Foster, chairman of the Track and Power Division of Transport Workers Union Local 100. Among the protesters were a representative of the Perry family and Olive Armstrong of the Mobilization Committee Against Police Brutality, who was jailed for refusing to collaborate with the attempted frame-up of the radical black nationalist New York 8+.

The demonstration was set to coincide with hearings around the New York State Department of Health's charges of gross incompetence and negligence

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"Gross the Ghoul Has Got to Go!" Spartacist Party candidates Stamberg and Kartsen (center) at New York City protest against Koch's "Dr. Mengele," Elliot Gross.

Spartacist: Our Internationalist Tradition

The following are Spartacist mayoral candidate Marjorie Stamberg's concluding remarks at an SL forum titled "From Soweto to Harlem: Smash Racist Terror!" held in Harlem on September 24.

Now as we are running in this election, frequently the first question I am asked is "What is Spartacist?" We take our name first from the original Spartacus slave revolt against the Roman Empire. And from there to the revolutionary socialists in Germany in World War I, the Spartacists. After the October Revolution, they used to talk about the "three Ls"—Lenin the Russian Bolshevik, and the German Spartacists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who waged a brave struggle against their imperialist rulers in war time, and moreover had to fight every step of the way in opposition to the degenerate patriotic social democrats of their time. Liebknecht and Luxemburg fought for international working-class solidarity against imperialist slaughter, were jailed for their revolutionary opposition to the imperialist war, and then both were killed.

In World War II, the American Trotskyists, James Cannon and the others, were jailed for their courageous refusal to line up behind that imperialist war, at a time when all the liberals and reformists were trying to pretend it was a war for democracy. This was at the time when, in the interests of the war drive, the Communist Party dropped its opposition to Jim Crow, while it stabbed the March on Washington in the back, it labeled the West Virginia miners striking against the coal barons as a "fifth column" and threw Japanese members out of the party, it abandoned the call for the independence of Puerto Rico.

It was the Trotskyists who helped organize defense squads to defend black working people in Detroit against racist attack, against the Silver Shirts. It was the Trotskyists who called on the working people to defend Japanese Americans and protest their incarceration in concentration camps in this country. It was the Trotskyists who demanded the U.S. open its doors to Jewish refugees from Hitler's terror, when Roosevelt and the liberal Zionists were jointly opposed to permitting

the Jewish people to enter.

And today we are proud to stand in that tradition of internationalism, of opposition to the U.S. anti-Soviet war drive, for international labor solidarity with our South African brothers and sisters, for labor political strikes in the face of Marine invasion of Nicaragua, for the fight for no deportations, full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers, for defense of the USSR against imperialist attack.

So here we are in Reagan's America, in Koch's New York, where anybody who opposes the government is labeled a terrorist, so the climate is set to shoot them down. And now that we are in a period of the most profound social and sexual counterrevolution, it is more urgent than ever to defend the gains won in previous struggles, to fight Reagan reaction with the methods of the class struggle. So if you like what you heard tonight, we'd like you to get involved, sign up with the election campaign, get involved with one of the party organizations, come to study classes, help us to form a Labor/Black League in New York. We are struggling to build a party like that of Lenin



Marjorie Stamberg with Spartacus, published by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht during WWI.

and Trotsky, like the Bolsheviks. As you can see from the talks tonight, that party was anything but parliamentarist, anything but electoralist. But don't forget to go to the polls November 5, because a vote for Spartacist is a vote for the program of workers power, from South Africa to the U.S.