

## Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!



Washington, D.C., April 9.

WV Photo

# The Battle for Abortion Rights

## For Free, Safe Abortion on Demand!

Last July the Supreme Court issued a watershed decision threatening women's right to abortion nationwide. But widespread support for legal abortion among a broad range of the American people has begun to worry politicians, who are now dusting off their "pro-choice" credentials. A year ago, Democratic presidential candidate Dukakis only halfheartedly mouthed support for legal abortion while he was under attack from the "Operation Rescue" squads. Now anti-abortion politicians like Florida governor Bob Martinez find their careers threatened; in Virginia a black Democrat, L. Douglas Wilder, is poised to become governor—the first black governor since Reconstruction—by advocating a pro-abortion position; in New York City, Republican Rudy Giuliani changed his anti-abortion line in the mayoral race.

But in late October the Pennsylvania legislature passed a law with every conceivable restriction on abortion rights—from parental permission requirements to forced "waiting" periods to restrictions on doctors and clinics. This case

will provide the Supreme Court with its opportunity to overthrow *Roe v. Wade* completely.

When Congress voted to restore federal Medicaid funding for abortions for women pregnant due to rape or incest, Bush vetoed it. His reason? The taxpayers' money will be "abused" by women claiming rape in order to get the government to pay for their abortions! These categories account for only 1 percent of all abortions—and Congress couldn't even get the votes to override Bush's veto. The unstated position behind this funding measure is profoundly contemptuous of women: only the "victims" might deserve the right to abortion—those who might have en-


joyed having sex don't. Bush also vetoed the entire budget for the District of Columbia because it liberalized restrictions on the use of federal and local funds for abortions. As in the case of civil rights, his Supreme Court's "states' rights" policy is just a cover for reaction.

The National Organization for Women has called a November 12 march on Washington to lobby Congress. Counterposed to the NOW tactics of pressuring the very judges and legislatures that are threatening women's right to abortion, the Spartacist League fights for a revolutionary strategy to mobilize the working class, together with women and minorities, in defense of women's rights. Our socialist program was explained in

a series of *Women and Revolution* forums, "Women's Liberation: What Strategy to Win?" given by Amy Rath, associate editor of *Women and Revolution*, at Columbia University, Harvard University and the University of Chicago. We reprint here an edited and abridged version of this talk.

Seventy-two years ago there was a revolution in Russia. It started on International Women's Day in 1917, when women workers in Petrograd took to the streets to demand higher wages, bread for their starving families, and peace. It was the third year of the devastation and horror of imperialist World War I. This was the beginning of the most important victory for the emancipation of women, and of all humanity, in human history—the victory of proletarian revolution in Russia under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. It's this heritage that the Spartacist League, as a Trotskyist organization, defends and looks to in the struggle to achieve the emancipation of women.

*continued on page 11*



**Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!**

**Philly Rally:  
A Groundswell of Support  
Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!**

Special Supplement Pages 7-10

Also in This Issue:

**Mexico:  
Women's Rights  
Activists Face  
Torture, Jail**

See Page Six

# Defending the Bolshevik Revolution



Credits: New York Public Library, Hoover Institution, Penguin Books

En Route, published on Trotsky's train, a powerful weapon in the Civil War against counterrevolution. Cyrillic on photo reads, "Comrade Trotsky."

## From Trotsky's Train

On the occasion of the November 7 anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, we bring to our readers a rare facsimile (above left) of the newspaper *V Puti* (En Route) which, as its mast-

head declared, presented "News From the Train of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council Trotsky." Co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution, Leon Trotsky was the

founder and first commander of the Red Army. At least 135 issues of *En Route* were printed and published aboard the train in the course of the Civil War. The issue depicted here, No. 93 of 12 September 1919, published Trotsky's article, "Proletarians, To Horse!" urging the formation of the Red Cavalry which went on to win heroic victories.

parts of a front that stretched for eight thousand kilometres. Regiments and divisions were cut off from the rest of the world for months at a time... A wireless aerial had been arranged over a particular car in our train, so that we could receive radio messages from the Eiffel Tower, from Nauen, and from other stations, thirteen in all, with Moscow, of course, foremost. The train was always informed of what was going on in the rest of the world. The more important telegraphic reports were published in the train newspaper, and given passing comment in articles, leaflets and orders...



TROTSKY

**On the Anniversary of the Russian Revolution**  
*The Russian workers' seizure of power on 7 November 1917 gave living reality to Marx and Engels' program of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Five years after the Russian Revolution, the Communist International hailed the Soviet state's defense of the socialization of the means of production and the program of world revolution in the face of imperialist pressure. Today, playing out the consequences of Stalin/Bukharin's dogma of "socialism in one country," Gorbachev welcomes "market forces" and explicitly repudiates the international class struggle.*



LENIN

With the greatest satisfaction the Fourth World Congress declares that the first-ever workers' state created by proletarian revolution has, in the five years of its existence and despite exceptional difficulties and dangers, splendidly proved its viability. The Soviet state has emerged from the horrors of civil war hardened and strengthened. Thanks to the outstanding heroism of the Red Army, it has crushed the armed counterrevolution, equipped and supported by the world bourgeoisie, on every front. In the political sphere it has thwarted the capitalist powers in their attempts to use diplomatic manoeuvres and economic pressure to force a renunciation of the proletarian content and communist objectives of the revolution, i.e., to make the Soviet state recognize the right to private ownership of the social means of production and renounce the nationalization of industry. In the face of this pressure from the world bourgeoisie the Soviet state has staunchly defended the fundamental precondition for the emancipation of the proletariat: the socialization of the means of production...

The Fourth World Congress reminds proletarians everywhere that the proletarian revolution can never triumph within the limits of a single country; it can triumph only internationally, by developing into world revolution. Soviet Russia's struggle for existence, on behalf of the achievements of the revolution, is a struggle for the liberation of the oppressed and exploited proletarians of the entire world from the chains of slavery. The Russian proletarians have more than fulfilled their duty to the world proletariat as vanguard fighters for the revolution. Now it is the turn of the world proletariat to fulfil its duty.

—Fourth Congress of the Communist International, "On the Russian Revolution" (December 1922)

The train was first organized on 7 August 1918 to carry Trotsky and his staff to the crucial battle at Sviyazhsk, where it reversed an imminent defeat into a rousing victory over the imperialist-backed White counterrevolutionary forces. Over the following two years of civil war, Trotsky's train traveled from one front line to another, traversing more than 100,000 kilometers as it galvanized the young Red Army into a professional fighting force. It became, as French Communist Alfred Rosmer recalled in *Moscow Under Lenin* (1953), a "legendary phenomenon," whose "extraordinary exploits followed one another without end." But the Stalinist bureaucracy which usurped power sought to obliterate Trotsky's leading role in the October Revolution, and the legendary train was consigned to one of many "blank spaces" of Soviet history.

In fighting for workers political revolution to restore the banner of Bolshevik internationalism to the Kremlin, Soviet workers will restore the heroic experience of the Civil War to its rightful place in Soviet history. We reprint below excerpts from a chapter titled "The Train," from Trotsky's 1929 autobiography *My Life*.

What was the train of the Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Council seeking on the civil-war fronts? The general answer is obvious: it was seeking victory. But what did it give the fronts? What methods did it follow?... We were constructing an army all over again, and under fire at that. This was true not only at Sviyazhsk, where the train recorded its first month, but on all the fronts. Out of bands of irregulars, of refugees escaping from the Whites, of peasants mobilized in the neighbouring districts, of detachments of workers sent by the industrial centres, of groups of communists and trade-unionists—out of these we formed at the front companies, battalions, new regiments, and sometimes even entire divisions. Even after defeats and retreats the flabby, panicky mob would be transformed in two or three weeks into an efficient fighting force...

The train was not only a military-administrative and political institution, but a fighting institution as well. In many of its features it was more like an armoured train than a staff headquarters on wheels. In fact it was armoured, or at least its engines and machine-gun cars were. All the crew could handle arms. They all wore leather uniforms, which always make men look heavily imposing... When they were aware of the presence of the train just a few kilometres behind the firing-line, even the most nervous units, their commanding officers especially, would summon up all their strength...

When I was leaving to prepare an offensive against Wrangel, who had entrenched himself in the Crimea, I wrote in the train newspaper *En Route* on 27 October 1920:

"Our train is again bound for the front. The fighting men of our train were before the walls of Kazan in the grave weeks of 1918, when we were fighting for the control of the Volga. That fight ended long ago. Today the Soviet power is approaching the Pacific Ocean. The fighting men of our train fought gallantly before the walls of Petrograd. Petrograd has been saved and has since been visited by many representatives of the world proletariat. Our train visited the western front more than once. Today, a preliminary peace has been signed with Poland. The fighting men of our train were on the steppes of the Don when Krasnov and, later, Denikin advanced against Soviet Russia from the south. The days of Krasnov and Denikin are long since past. There now is left only the Crimea, which the French government has made its fortress. The White Guard garrison of this French fortress is under the command of a hired German-Russian general, Baron Wrangel. The friendly family of our train is starting on a new campaign. Let this campaign be the last."

The Crimean campaign was actually the last campaign of the civil war. A few months later the train was disbanded. From these pages I send fraternal greetings to all my former comrades-in-arms. ■

**WORKERS VANGUARD**  
 Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.  
 DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon  
 EDITOR: Jan Norden  
 PRODUCTION MANAGER: Jorge Ramirez  
 CIRCULATION MANAGER: Karen Valdez  
 EDITORIAL BOARD: George Foster, Frank Hunter, Jane Kerrigan, Len Meyers, James Robertson, Reuben Samuels, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer, Marjorie Stenberg  
 The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).  
 Workers Vanguard (USPS 098-770) published biweekly, except 2nd issue August and with 3-week interval December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. Domestic subscriptions: \$7.00/24 issues. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers Vanguard, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.  
 Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.  
 No. 489 10 November 1989

# Stop KKK Hitlerite David Duke!

## New York Picket

An angry protest by some 50 people outside the studios of ABC News in New York on November 2 chanted "David Duke, Klan in a suit—still a fascist killer!" and "Genocide is not debatable!" Duke, the "former" Klansman and Hitlerite recently elected to the Louisiana state legislature, was on the air in a cordial interview with Sam Donaldson on ABC-TV's *Prime Time Live* program.

The protest was initiated on short notice by the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC) and Spartacist League. Supporters of the Freedom Socialist Party also joined the picket. The PDC press release stated that Duke's presence was "an outrage to all the people of this multiracial city," declaring that he and his Nazi/skinhead cohorts "are a deadly threat to

blacks, Jews, gays, Hispanics, Catholics, unions—all of us."

ABC's Donaldson explicitly legitimized the KKK/Nazi nightriding terror, quoting some of Duke's "master race" filth and asserting "that's your view; it's fine if you want to express it." No, Duke's "Populist Party" denies there was a Holocaust because they want to prepare another one. They are racist *killers* who must be crushed before it's too late! Two years ago, Duke came to Howard Beach to celebrate the lynch mob murder of Michael Griffith; he comes now in the wake of the racist gang murder of Yusuf Hawkins in Bensonhurst.

The protesters' signs declared, "What Does Free Speech Mean for David Duke, Klaus Barbie, Charles Manson? Murder!" and "Democrats, Republicans Breed Race Hate—For a Workers Party!" Mass militant labor action must stop David Duke and his fascists. No Hitlers in New York!



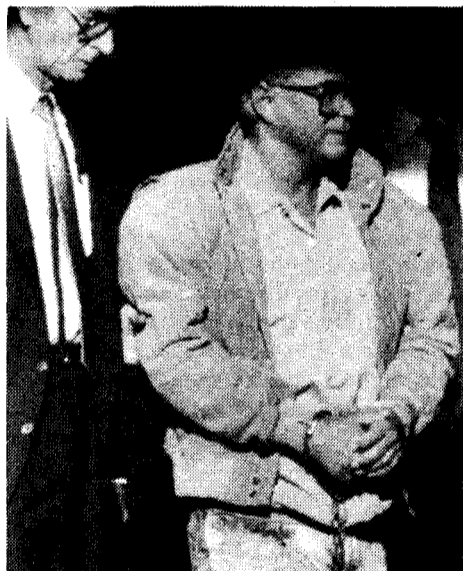
WV Photo

# Jim Bakker, Oliver North and Bourgeois Hypocrisy

Forty-five years in the slammer—for what? Overbooking hotel rooms. Gold-plated televangelist Jim Bakker is not one of our favorite people, but we think it's pretty gross he just got locked away for the rest of his life for what the travel industry does with impunity as a regular practice. Judge Robert (known as "Maximum Bob") Potter sentenced the PTL minister to 45 years in prison on October 24, after a jury convicted him of fraud for selling more vacation spots than there were rooms at his "Heritage USA" fundamentalist theme park. How many major hotel chains routinely overbook and then give poor suckers the "no room at the inn" runaround? And what about the auto rental agencies and airlines that regularly leave people stranded in airports during holidays?

Of course, the real issue here was Christian hypocrisy: two years ago "Bible belle" Jessica Hahn brought down the high-living preacher with her revelations of sexual hanky-panky and a quarter million bucks paid her in hush money. OK, so Al Capone was finally sent up for income tax fraud—but that was after years of bumping off people all over the place. In Jim Bakker's case, neither the ostensible crime (overbooking) nor the real issue (hypocrisy) are grounds for putting someone behind bars for years.

Contrast the treatment of Oliver North, the contra's colonel, guilty of just about anything you can imagine, plus he's a big-time drug-runner to boot: he walked. Now Congress is passing a spe-



Leverone/Charlotte Observer



McNamee/Newsweek

Televangelist Jim Bakker (left) gets 45 years for overbooking, while war criminal Oliver North walks.

cial law to give North his military pension—and he rakes in \$25,000 a shot on the lecture circuit.

Meanwhile, in Florida, local officials in the Miami suburb of Hialeah are going after believers in *santeria* (saint worship), a religious practice with Roman Catholic overtones which originated among African slaves and is observed by thousands of Caribbean, mainly Cuban, immigrants. Now the Hialeah city fathers want to ban it, screaming that its ritual sacrifice of chickens is cruelty to animals. Well, Frank Perdue—whose TV ads crow "It takes a tough man to make a tender bird"—kills a lot of chickens. Why aren't they going after him? What's

posed in these cases is fundamental: equal application of the law to all.

In France, the authorities recently expelled three girls from school because their Muslim fathers had them wear veils. Certainly one would hope these girls would come to reject the veil as they grow up, but now they're being punished for their families' religious beliefs. This isn't like the war against the CIA's "holy warriors" in Afghanistan, to free women from enslavement symbolized by forcible seclusion behind the chador. Nor is it Kemal Atatürk's campaign against the veil and the fez in the early 1920s, seeking to smash the power of entrenched reaction. What the French school authorities are doing

is anti-Islamic chauvinism, pure and simple—after all, what about kids who wear crosses around their necks or Jewish boys with yarmulkes?

The point is, in a secular state you're not supposed to mess with people's personal beliefs, including weird and medieval religious practices, except when they do violence to others or come into fundamental collision with the common good. As an example of such an exception, in Britain the desire of Sikh construction workers to wear turbans at work stands opposed to safety considerations necessitating the wearing of hard hats. Also, Jehovah's Witnesses have been prevented from denying blood transfusions to their children.

This article is predicated on the rise of bourgeois rationalism two centuries ago. But, in fact, states (bourgeois or otherwise) are committed above all to their victory in the class struggle, to which end they will set aside prior gains of the bourgeois revolution, at least temporarily. Now it's the communists, not the bourgeoisie, who defend the separation of church and state, a historic gain of the bourgeois revolution. In Britain, the brouhaha over admitting women to the Church of England priesthood is a public constitutional affair involving something called the Queen, Parliament and the voters, instead of being the C of E's own business, because it is an "established" church under English law. We oppose on principle unique status or special privileges for any religion.

The bourgeois state can't be looked to even when it comes to stopping those who would violently impose their religious views on everyone. For example, ultra-Orthodox Jewish zealots in Jerusalem who throw rocks at women in short skirts or cars driving past on a Saturday; the theocratic Zionist state doesn't lift a finger against them, but the Israeli army has no qualms about randomly gunning down young Palestinian kids in the *intifada* for throwing rocks at their occupiers. And in the U.S., young women seeking abortions are manhandled by "right to lifers" who are instigated and incited by the leading inmate of the White House.

It may seem a little unusual for a Marxist paper to be defending a high-flying Pentecostal minister like Bakker. In fact, it's not. Basically, it's the same principle as the Dreyfus case in the 1890s. When Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a bourgeois Jewish army officer attached to the French ministry of war, was framed up and shipped off to Devil's Island in a frenzy of vindictive anti-Semitism, it was obligatory for socialists to defend him. ■

## Geronimo Pratt Update

On October 20 Geronimo Pratt was transferred from San Quentin to Tehachapi State Prison, a maximum security prison located in the Tehachapi Mountains 50 miles southeast of Bakersfield, California. Pratt reports that for two weeks after his transfer to Tehachapi, he was denied his legal papers, and deprived of his personal effects and subject to daily harassment. This is calculated to set Geronimo up for write-ups and disciplinary

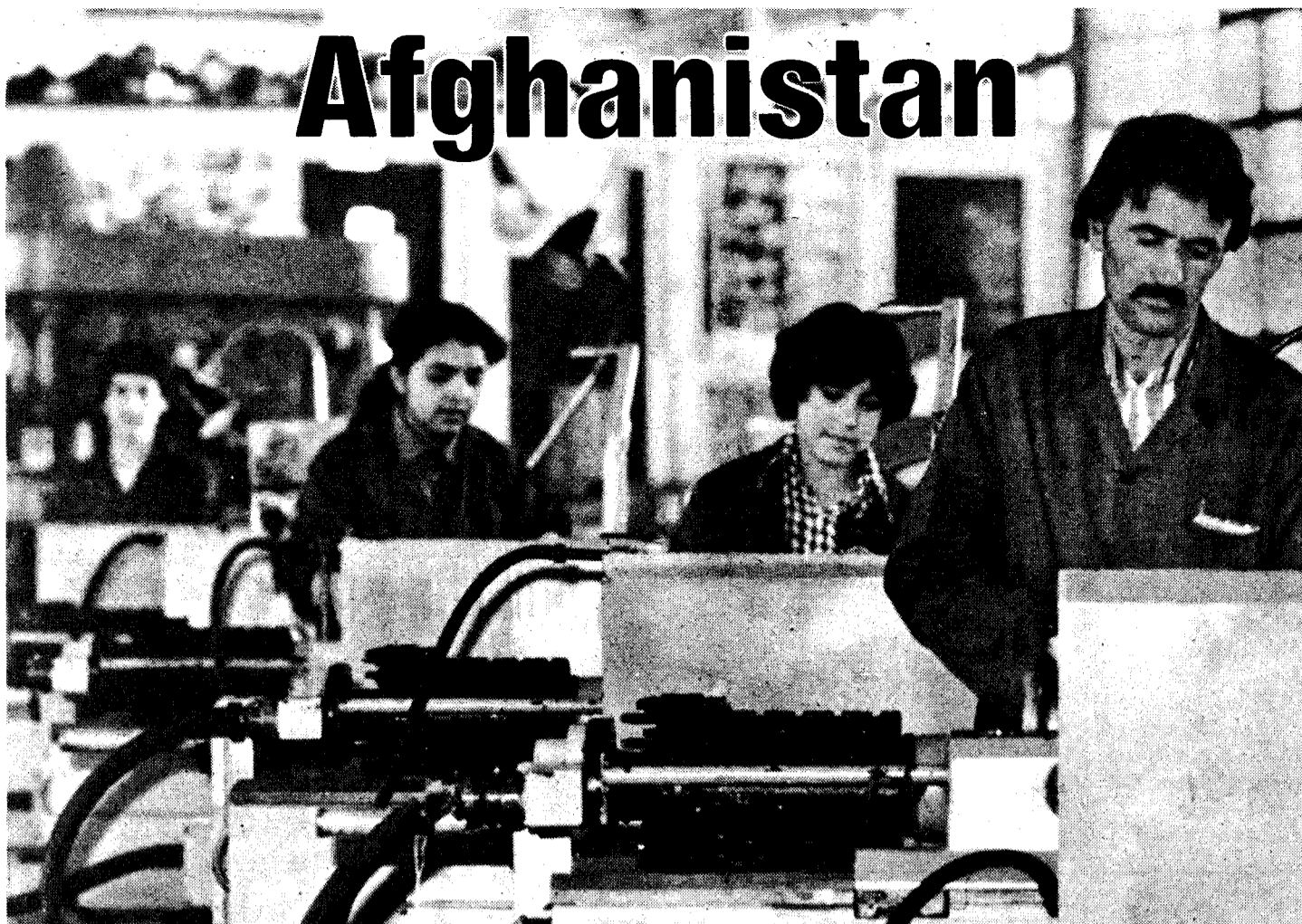
points allowing the state to transfer him to the isolated prison in Pelican Bay—virtually burying Pratt alive in a maximum security hellhole.

The transfer to Tehachapi was the result of the October 12 ruling by U.S. District Judge Stanley Weigel denying a motion filed by Pratt's attorneys to prohibit California prison authorities from carrying out what is potentially a life-threatening transfer. This decision came only two weeks after the

lawsuit's successful reversal of Pratt's sudden nighttime transfer to Folsom prison. Weigel refused to block this latest transfer while acknowledging that it may be retaliation against Pratt for suing the prison authorities.

The lawsuit was filed on Pratt's behalf by PDC counsel Valerie West and attorney Stuart Hanlon initially to challenge the dangerous transfer to Folsom. The suit charges that Pratt's life is in danger due to false charges in his prison files that Pratt is a "cop-killer" and "escape risk." It demands that these lies be removed and Pratt's parole and prison classification status be changed.

# Afghanistan



Planeta Publishers

Workers at car and truck repair facility in Kabul: development of class-conscious proletariat, key to social progress.

## Civil War and Social Progress

One way or another, the lengthy Afghanistan civil war is a decisive event in the history of the region. When opponents of the Soviet intervention bleated about the "trampled rights" of the Afghan nation ten years ago, we pointed out there is no Afghan nation. This is not our discovery. As historian Louis Dupree observed in *Afghanistan* (1980), "Afghanistan is an artificial country, created out of tribal kingdoms as a buffer state by the British and Russians in the nineteenth century," and composed of many different nationalities, tribal and ethnic groupings, and languages—Pushtuns, Tadjiks, Uzbeks, Turkomans, Baluchis, etc. More intelligent Western observers argued that a unitary Afghan nation might coalesce out of the struggle against the Soviet "occupiers." Under the impact of a decade of civil war, Afghanistan may in fact be compacting as a nation-state—not through the *mujahedin*, however, but against them.

This development, and its incomplete character, was observed by the correspondent of the International Communist League, reporting for *Workers Vanguard* and *Le Bolchévik*, during his monthlong visit to Afghanistan in July: "If you look at the faces of people in offices and workplaces, Kabul looks like a melting pot where people of different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds combine and mingle. But then you find

### PART TWO OF TWO

out that people gather in mosques according to their ethnic origins." Notably, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan is the first significant social or political formation in Afghan history to encompass representatives of all the country's various national and ethnic groupings. In contrast, the various *mujahedin* groups are organized—and divided—along strict ethnic/tribal affiliations.

A determination by the Soviet leadership to remain in Afghanistan until the civil war was won would have had a profound effect on Afghan society. Facilitated by the Soviet military shield and vast infusions of Soviet economic aid, Afghanistan could have built up an economic infrastructure of development, bringing with it the growth of a significant urban proletariat. Instead, with the Soviet military presence gone, the Kabul regime has followed the logic of its nationalist politics and turned to "national reconciliation," while still based upon the forces it commands and very heavy Soviet military supplies. Today Afghanistan teeters between pursuing the road of social transformation begun in the last decade or returning to the dark past.

In rolling back the U.S./Pakistan-dictated siege of Jalalabad, the PDPA government has clearly demonstrated its military capacity to ward off any immediate *mujahedin* takeover. But the

social and political obstacles to modernizing the country remain no less daunting. Even the limited gains which have been achieved since 1978 have inspired a generation determined to fight to the death to defend their reforms against the counterrevolution. On the other hand, the ICL correspondent reported "comments (by high-placed government officials) to the effect that maybe the April 1978 'revolution' had occurred too soon, by 'some 20 to 30 years'."

### Women's Progress the Key

During an interview on July 18 with Mme. Wardak, the president of the All-Afghanistan Women's Council, our comrade commented "that the civil war in Afghanistan was in large part unleashed as a result of the fact that in 1978 the government expanded the rights of

women." She replied that even in the last years of the monarchy, under the 1964 constitution decreed by King Zahir Shah, women had equal rights with men "including being eligible to be a candidate," noting that she herself was one of the four women senators or deputies at the time. She continued:

"So I wonder why there is so much made concerning the rights of women, that people say only the revolution granted rights to women. On the contrary, these existed, and were even laid down in the constitution in 1964. Of course it's true that without a doubt the number of women who are presently working has grown considerably, but ... they are all equal before the law."

But the question is not one of formal equality before the law in a constitution which was neither read nor enforced. In the early 1970s, one of the present *mujahedin* leaders, Gulbaddin Hekmatyar, led squads of fundamentalist thugs who threw acid in the faces of young Kabuli women who dared attend college or appear in public without the head-to-toe chador. And the *New York Times* (9 February 1980) reported immediately after the Soviet intervention:

"Land reform attempts undermined their village chiefs. Portraits of Lenin threatened their religious leaders. But it was the Kabul revolutionary Government's granting of new rights to women that pushed Orthodox Moslem men in the Pashtoon villages of eastern Afghanistan into picking up their guns."

Even in Kabul in 1980, half the women were still subjected to *purdah*, while the status of women in the countryside can be gleaned from reports about the *mujahedin*-controlled refugee camps in Pakistan, where the women are not allowed to see even female doctors, much less to educate themselves or have any sort of independent existence. Today there are 36 family planning clinics in Kabul and another 32 in the provinces. Women voted for the first time in the April 1988 elections.

The increase in the number of women working has been astronomical. *Afghanistan Today* (November-December 1987), an official government publication, points out that there were 5,000 women working in 1978. By 1987, this had increased fiftyfold: there were 245,000 women workers, of whom 11,000 were teachers. Meanwhile, 440,000 female students are enrolled in educational institutions and 80,000 more participate in literacy programs. As compared to 5,000 people who received literacy training in the decade before 1978, in the years since there have been more than one million.

### What is "National Reconciliation"?

Mme. Wardak's attempt to play down the significance of the last ten years of reforms is part and parcel of the regime's current policy of "national reconciliation" with the forces of Islamic



Progress Publishers

G.V. Plekhanov, pioneer Russian Marxist.

Workers Vanguard/Le Bolchévik Photo

PDPA/  
Democratic Youth  
Organization  
members guard  
Kabul against  
*mujahedin*  
terrorists.



WORKERS VANGUARD

reaction. Under the new constitution, approved in December 1987, Islam was declared the official state religion and the name of the country changed from "Democratic Republic" to "Republic of Afghanistan." The regime has built or repaired more than 270 mosques in recent years, as compared to 120 hospitals. The government has laid out two billion afghanis (\$40 million at the official exchange rate) for "promoting Islam," including the payment of state salaries to some 20,000 mullahs. The PDPA even despicably fell into line behind Khomeini's death threat against British writer Salman Rushdie, banning *The Satanic Verses*.

The ostensible aim of a grand coalition encompassing even the die-hard "Peshawar Seven" *mujahedin* groups is ludicrously unreal. However, the regime is having some success in getting regional *mujahedin* field commanders to agree to live and let live with the central government. Najibullah outlined this approach when he motivated a new decree at a May 2 press conference:

"On the basis of this decree in case these commanders refrain from war, they can retain peace without delivering their weapons to the state.

"The state is ready to grant them certain rights, privileges as well as certain socio-economical and political assistance. They can form local organs of state power and administration.... The generalization of this method can contribute to the restoration of peace as well as emergence of coalition administration all over the country."

The PDPA may think that as long as they can conciliate and neutralize the clerical-feudalist opposition while retaining control of the cities, they will be able to secure oases of relative social progress in a desert of rural backwardness (where women will continue to be enslaved). But sooner or later, the cities will fall victim to entrenched feudal reaction, and the continuation of ethnic and tribal divisions in the country at large will begin to wreak havoc on the multinational PDPA itself. In the long run, the generalization of the method outlined by Najibullah would simply end up reducing the PDPA to one among scores of competing ethnic, tribal and clerical forces, recreating the situation which has existed in Afghanistan for centuries.

### Plekhanov on Populism

In a July 19 interview with *WV/Le Bolchevik*, the president of the Democratic Youth Organization, Mazdak, put a somewhat different gloss on "national reconciliation":

"Our objective of reconciliation is not to reach an agreement with our enemies. The principal objective of national reconciliation is to get together with our allies, with our true allies. And we must not let these allies fall by the wayside in the revolution.

"The major part of our revolutionary forces are the peasants, that is to say, the peasants in the villages. Now at the time of the revolution, these peasants were weakened. This was due to our errors in the program toward the peasantry.... We didn't establish [our line] in this area in accordance with our experience but in accordance with what we had read in books. We said that the land belonged to he who worked it. However the peasants were not ready to take the land.



Afghanistan Today

**Away with the veil! Women visit one of Kabul's new beauty parlors.**

The peasants said that the land belonged to the feudalists, and that god gave it to the feudalists. So we used force to make him take it. However, he reacted with force. Instead of taking the land, he took up the gun."

The sort of difficulties encountered by the idealistic young PDPA cadre who went out to the countryside to "free" the peasants is given graphic treatment by Raja Anwar in *The Tragedy of Afghanistan*: "It is almost impossible even today to convince an Afghan peasant that what he has paid the tribal sardar [chief] by way of interest over the years is many times more than the original sum of money borrowed, for the simple reason that the Mullah has made him believe that unless he liquidates his debt to the chief, he will not be allowed to enter heaven after he dies, but hung upside down from the sky." Given such backwardness, it is no surprise that the PDPA's initial land reform efforts did not meet with success, especially since it often involved "enthusiastic but inexperienced city youth, who would alight on villages, gather the poor inhabitants together and regale them with speeches dripping with praise for the 'Great Leader,'" and hand out land title deeds.

However, the fundamental problem was not how the reforms were carried out but the absence of any significant social base within the population for effecting such reforms. The experience of the PDPA recalls that of the early Russian populists, the Narodniks, who likewise "went to the people" with the message of emancipation and likewise found themselves confronted with extremely backward and ignorant peasants under the sway of obscurantism. One of the "luckier" ones later recalled how "the peasants listened to his speeches as they did to the priest who preached to them about the Kingdom of Heaven, calmly resuming their existence after the sermon was over, as if nothing had happened. The unlucky ones were stoned out of the villages or turned over to the tsarist police by the indignant peasants" (Leopold H. Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism* [1955]).

Many of these young, idealistic intellectuals were murdered by the very peasants they sought to liberate. Among those who survived, some were driven to

re-evaluate their strategy of building socialism directly on the foundations of the village communes of a backward peasant economy, and were won to Marxism. The pioneer Russian Marxist G.V. Plekhanov, writing at a time when the Russian proletariat was also a relatively insignificant social force, argued against the romanticization of the peasantry and pointed to the necessity for the revolutionary intelligentsia to promote the emergence of the working class and a Marxist workers party. Though contemporary Afghanistan is by no means identical to tsarist Russia, which underwent a sharp period of industrialization around the turn of the century, Afghan radicals have much

tory lie ahead; all other roads can lead only to defeat and impotence."

—G.V. Plekhanov, "Our Differences" (1885)

In many ways, the PDPA is a hybrid 20th-century version of Russian Narodism—a petty-bourgeois nationalist party, but one which looks to and models itself on the experiences of Soviet Communism. This is not all that unusual in the epoch after the Russian Revolution, which continues to exercise a strong appeal to the colonial and semicolonial intelligentsia. In the early 1920s even the Chinese Kuomintang parroted the organizational forms of Bolshevism and paid lip service to the dictatorship of the proletariat. This did not prevent the Kuomintang—with the explosive growth of the Chinese workers movement—from leading the bourgeoisie in civil war against the Communist-led proletariat. Afghanistan, however, had neither a cohered bourgeoisie nor a proletariat to speak of.

In the absence of any footing in significant social classes, the PDPA's bonapartist character was manifested as well in the way competing PDPA leaders tended to resolve "political" disputes. As Fred Halliday noted in "War and Revolution in Afghanistan" (*New Left Review*, January-February 1980): "political differences within the Bolshevik party were settled by votes not, as in Kabul, bullets." The PDPA has changed somewhat in the last couple of years, as the Soviet withdrawal imposed on its leadership the realization that it would hang together or hang sepa-



Frey/Time

**Soviet troops departing Afghanistan, February 1989. Gorbachev's pullout is a betrayal of Afghan peoples and of defense of the Soviet Union.**

to learn from Plekhanov's polemics against the populists of his day:

"The disintegration of our village commune is an indisputable fact. But the speed and intensity of the process differ according to localities in Russia. To halt it completely in places where the commune is freshest and most stable, our Narodniks must use the forces now being freed by the breaking up of communes in gubernias where industry is more developed. These forces are nothing else than the forces of the rising proletariat. They, and they alone, can be the link between the peasantry and the socialist intelligentsia; they, and they alone, can bridge the historical abyss between the 'people' and the 'educated' section of the population. Through them and with their help socialist propaganda will at last penetrate into every corner of the Russian countryside. Moreover, if they are united and organized at the right time into a single workers' party, they can be the main bulwark of socialist agitation in favour of economic reforms which will protect the village, commune against general disintegration....

"It must be borne in mind, moreover, that this workers' party will also be for us a vehicle of influence from the West. The working man will not turn a deaf ear to the movement of the European proletariat, as could easily be the case with the peasant. And the united forces of the home and international movement will be more than enough to defeat the reactionary strivings of the small landowners.

"So once more: *The earliest possible formation of a workers' party is the only means of solving all the economic and political contradictions of present-day Russia.* On that road success and vic-

ately, and "The bickerings, sometimes resulting in shootings at Cabinet meetings, have dissolved into a united front" (*Frontline*, 15 April). But, in the final analysis, both a Marxist outlook and the practice of democratic political struggle depend on the existence of a proletariat, with a common class interest, within which to struggle for leadership.

The modernizing intellectuals like Taraki who founded the PDPA were in large measure inspired by the example of the Soviet Union across the border. However, what they took to be Communism was not the Bolshevik internationalism of Lenin but its Stalinist perversion under the rubric of "socialism in one country." Particularly in deeply backward Afghanistan, there can be no perspective of a nationally limited revolution.

Nor are the opportunities lacking for internationalist-minded elements in Kabul. First and foremost, of course, there are the profound links of battlefield solidarity with Soviet "afgantsi" and the working masses of Soviet Central Asia. For Soviet workers and intellectuals inspired by the internationalism of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan stands out in sharp relief against the drab nationalist background of the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." The "afgantsi," many of whom deeply believed that

continued on page 14



**Left: Parcham (Banner), 22 April 1970, organ of one wing of PDPA. Right: PDPA's first newspaper, Khalq (People), 11 April 1966. Petty-bourgeois nationalist party was rent by bloody feuding between Parcham and Khalq factions.**

# Mexico

## Women's Rights Activists Face Torture, Jail



Mexico City, March 8: Militant Seamstresses Union contingent in International Women's Day march.

WV Photo

Today in Mexico abortion is illegal and dangerous. In having a clandestine abortion, a woman faces the life-threatening risk of hemorrhage or massive infection, and on top of that the threat of torture or imprisonment by the armed thugs of the state. Last March, cops of the dreaded *Dirección de Inteligencia* (Intelligence Agency—the most notorious of Mexico's many secret police units) abducted eight women returning from an abortion clinic in Naucalpan, the huge million-plus shantytown city on the outskirts of Mexico City. Two of the women were activists of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT). The women were grabbed as they were riding home in a *colectivo* (VW minibus). The cops stripped, beat and verbally abused them, screaming "murderer," "bitch" and "whore."

The women were denied food, water, sleep and the anti-inflammatory medication and antibiotics which had been prescribed for them, although some were soon burning with fever. While being brutally subjected to crude vaginal exams, they could hear the horrifying screams of an elderly clinic doctor being tortured with electric shocks in a nearby room. They were forced to watch while the sadistic cops humiliated and beat the naked and terrified clinic nurses. Held incommunicado for almost 24 hours, the women were tortured for over half that time in a "secret" jail run by this infamous terror squad in Tlaxcoaque, while their increasingly panicked families and friends searched for them.

The missing women were finally located after they had been transferred to an official Investigation Agency of one of the districts of Mexico City. Rosario Ibarra, head of the "Eureka" committee for the disappeared and former presidential candidate of the PRT, accompanied by members of the PRT and several women's organizations, went to the police stations and agitated for the women's release. The women later recounted how the Tlax-

coaque police "said if we said anything, they would kill us." After "confessing" to seeking illegal abortions, they were finally released (*La Jornada*, 20 March).

In every aspect, the fight for women's rights in Mexico involves the broader struggle for social liberation. Currently there is agitation to amend the legal code of the Federal District (Mexico City) to partially decriminalize abortion. But the question of abortion goes far beyond legislative action: women's rights activists face the combined forces of reaction from vicious police repression to church-led mobs, *machista* (male-chauvinist) violence in the family, the weight of religious prejudice, the barrier of widespread ignorance, and the ravages of a medical system which provides grossly inferior care for working-class women and men, and none at all to the jobless poor. The fight for free, safe abortion on demand is a key part of the fight for socialist revolution.

### Capitalist Crisis Means Hunger and Death

The eight women tortured at Tlaxcoaque are among over a million women in Mexico who receive abortions each year. Estimates range up to two million, but who can tell, given the veil of terror-enforced clandestinity? The "fortunate" ones who can afford it get their abortions in clandestine medical clinics under the ever-present threat of police raids. Many urban poor and peasant women attempt to terminate pregnancy through the use of traditional herbal home brews (ineffective and often extremely dangerous), douching with cleaning fluid, self-inflicted trauma (such as throwing themselves down stairs), or the introduction of objects into the uterus. Yet whether abortion is legal or illegal, the women of the bourgeoisie are able to obtain safe abortions—in many cases flying out of the country to private clinics in Arizona or California.

In more advanced capitalist coun-

tries, the highest incidence of abortion is among young women who have not previously had a child. In Mexico the majority of abortions are sought by older women for whom having one more child gravely threatens their health and the well-being of the children they are already struggling to house, feed and clothe. In many rural areas it is still common for women to continue having children after they have become grandmothers. It is estimated that 80,000 Indian women are raped each year in the countryside where political bosses, *pistoleros* and the Judicial Police still regard women as part of the spoils of the land. In a recent survey of Mexican housewives, 61 percent reported physical abuse by their men, and this was across the economic scale, from domestic workers to professional women.

In a country where the crisis of Mexican capitalism has sent real wages plummeting to barely 40 percent of what they were a decade ago, the ability to afford and raise a child is no abstraction. Consumption of milk products has vastly declined, as the number of milk cows has fallen by more than half and in Mexico City alone there is a deficit of 10 million liters a day (*La Jornada*, 20

October). In affluent shopping areas of the capital, haggard Indian women from the countryside, exhausted from malnutrition, beg for their small children. If the kids are still alert, it is because their mothers are giving them most of the food. From 1982 to 1988, over one million children under the age of five died. Now President Salinas de Gortari, a Harvard-trained technocrat who is fulsomely backed by George Bush and the International Monetary Fund, plans to further reduce the standard of living of the working class.

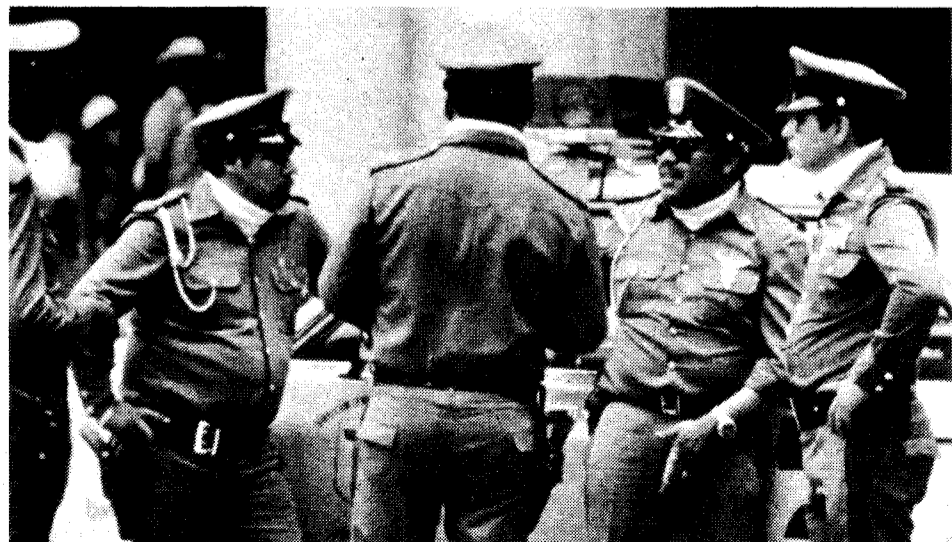
Women are often faced with the choice between dangerous abortions (frequently causing sterility) or giving birth to unwanted children, thousands of whom die of hunger or become mentally retarded or physically stunted as a result of malnutrition. It is particularly obscene to preach about "saving babies" in the context of forbidding abortions, in a country where the primary causes of infant mortality are malnutrition and gastroenteritis caused by the lack of food and by polluted water. Moreover, thousands of women lose their jobs each year when they are found to be pregnant. In U.S.-owned *maquiladora* (free trade zone) factories on the border, young women workers must show bloody sanitary napkins to the factory nurse or doctor every month to prove they are not pregnant (see "Class Struggle in the 'Global Sweatshop,'" *Women and Revolution* No. 34, Spring 1988).

In no state of Mexico do women have the right to abortion without stringent legal obstacles. Experts of the World Health Organization estimate that as many as 1,000 out of each 100,000 illegal abortions in Mexico result in the death of the woman (*Fem*, May 1988). These are deaths from a medical procedure which, properly performed under decent conditions, is one of the safest forms of surgical intervention! A 1983 medical study indicated that 60 percent of the beds in obstetrical/gynecological units of government hospitals were filled with the victims of unsafe abortions. And in 1986, according to a survey by the Mexican Social Security Institute, of women admitted to Mexico City hospitals because of complications from clandestine abortions, 62 percent died.

### Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

We assert that a woman's right to abortion is a basic democratic right. But the struggle for abortion rights is a struggle against the state, which in turn panders to the church hierarchy. The ruling PRI (Revolutionary Institutional Party) has long pushed birth control as part of population control programs which were the Kennedy-era "Alliance for Progress" pseudo-answer to Third World poverty. Under the previous PRI administration of Miguel de la Madrid, Mrs. de la Madrid's pet project was the DIF ("Integral Family Development") program, with numerous clinics and propaganda for "responsible parenthood." Contraceptive pills and IUD birth control devices are widely distributed. But abortion is

continued on page 14



Vicious police terror confronts Mexican women who dare fight for abortion rights.

Der Spiegel

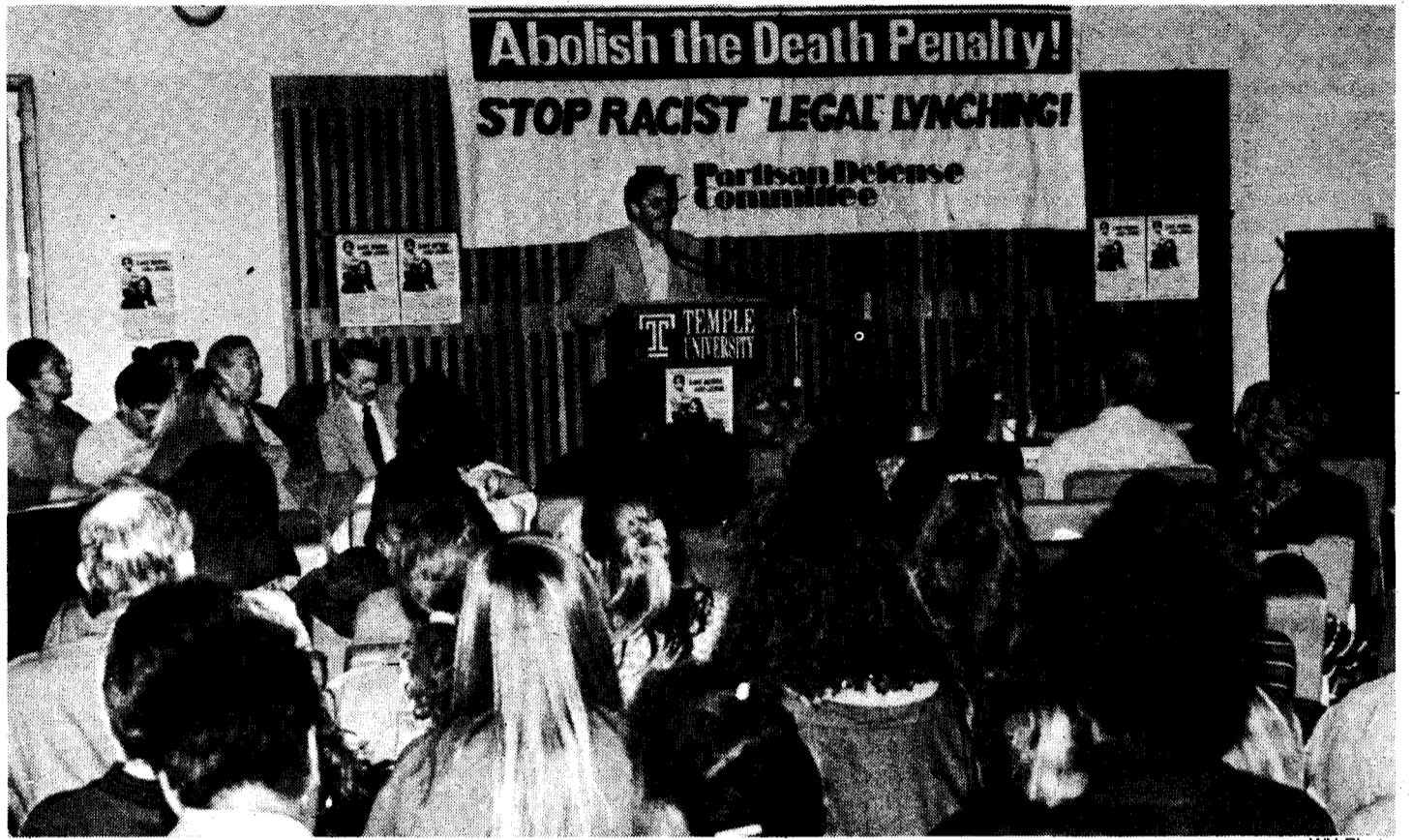
### Philly Rally: A Groundswell of Support

# Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

The state of Pennsylvania wants to kill one of Philadelphia's native sons, 33-year-old black journalist and death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, but a growing defense campaign is determined to save his life. On October 14, at a rally at Temple University, an overflow crowd of 200 people demanded "Abolish the Death Penalty! Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!" Co-sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee and Pennsylvania State Representative David Richardson, and held in facilities donated by the Temple Pan-African Studies Community Education Project, the rally brought out community activists, trade unionists, students and others who know that the death penalty in the U.S. is nothing less than "legal" lynching.

This was a meeting in Mumia's hometown, where people really know him. Family, friends, many who owe their political inspiration to Mumia, recalled his days as a young Black Panther. They remembered his powerful voice as a journalist defending the oppressed and the victims of the city's attacks on the MOVE organization, which culminated in the vicious 13 May 1985 police bombing of the MOVE commune on Osage Avenue where eleven people died, including five children. They know how Mumia stood up to Philadelphia's "mayors of murder," Rizzo and Goode, and their brutal cops. Philadelphia knows Mumia, and they know he was framed up on charges of killing a cop, victimized because of his political courage and the color of his skin.

To know Mumia's case is to understand the racist character of the death penalty in America. Here we see not



October 14 Philadelphia rally brought organizers from black, labor, civil liberties and student groups in common fight to "Abolish the Death Penalty! Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!"

only the arbitrary cruelty of state terror, but the inherent racism of its application. Mumia's case is a symbol of the death penalty, and the fight to save his life is the fight against the state's institutionalized racist murder called capital punishment. Because the death penalty is part of racist class oppression in America, the fight to abolish it once and for all means mobilizing the forces

of working-class power, fighting for all the oppressed. The Partisan Defense Committee, the legal and social defense organization in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League, is dedicated to the fight to abolish the racist death penalty, and to free the many class-war prisoners in jail in the U.S. and internationally.

Effective legal and social defense

means relying on working-class and minority strength. This rally continued the spirit of 5 November 1988, when the PDC-initiated Labor/Black Mobilization prevented the KKK and skinheads from carrying out their racist terror in Philadelphia. Over 100 trade unions and officials supported that action, and many have continued to lend their

*continued on page 9*



Wadiya Jamal dramatically sets her husband's dreadlock aflame symbolizing what the state wants to do to this fighter for the oppressed.

## Wadiya Jamal:

# "They Want to Kill Mumia to Silence Him"

*In a moving speech to the October 14 rally, Wadiya Jamal appealed for freedom for her husband, Mumia Abu-Jamal:*

It's good to see so much support here for Mumia and his freedom and the other death row inmates and political prisoners, so thanks to you all from both of us. I wanted to be a mother and a wife of a rebel, a rebel man. One that would fight for what was right and against all that was wrong, a godly man. I got my children, and I got my rebel man—a man that just can't stop telling the truth about how rotten the system is.

How sick and murderous and corrupt the people

that are running this system have been and will continue to be until the people, us, we the people, are rebels for the same cause—the right cause. If not we'll be forced under.

What I'm about to display to you is pretty horrible for me to do, but it is an example. This is Mumia's dread and this is what they intend to do to Mumia—to burn him, to destroy him until he's no more. I can never forget this, the fact that they want to kill Mumia and burn him, and I never intend to let anybody else forget this either. I can't stand here and tell you all that I'm

*continued on page 9*

# Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

# Stop "Legal" Lynching!

We print below the excerpted remarks to the October 14 Philadelphia rally by Charles Brover, co-chairman of the Partisan Defense Committee.

As we meet here this afternoon, we can almost hear the anguished cry of desperate death row hunger strikers from the lower depths of Huntingdon prison. They have stopped eating. How else can they protest? The prison has shackled their bodies and tortured their spirits. How can they fight against the humiliating treatment, the assault on their human dignity? The death in life? What gesture can articulate their particular horror? Mumia is there, a death row prisoner now on hunger strike, but always a journalist of political passion. He listens, he reports, speaks, and of course, he writes: "An inmate said: 'I'm tired of being treated like a dead man. I live. I breathe. I feel. I'm still a man'."

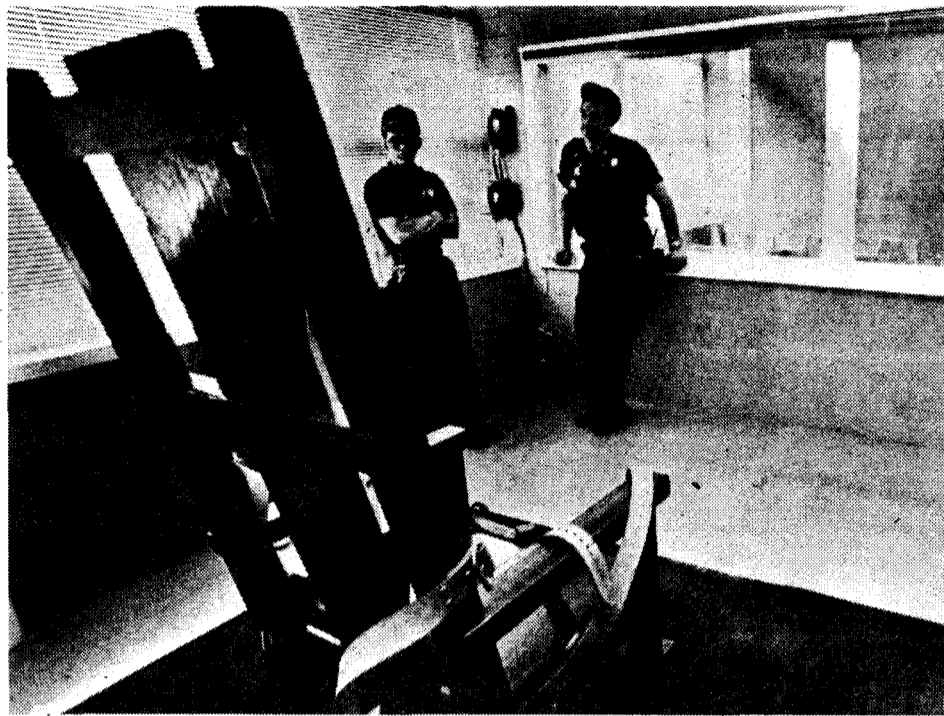
Like the prisoners massacred at Attica who began their famous demands with the preamble, "We are men—we are not beasts," the death row prisoners at Huntingdon assert their living human beings even if it means starving. And it is Mumia who finds the words, helps to shape the purpose of the cries of rage, the demands for human dignity and social justice. It is Mumia—death row political prisoner—the Mumia so many of you know—who is still, even on death row, the voice of the voiceless.

That these prisoners must say they are alive and human, that they must insist on it with their lives, gets us to the core of the death penalty in America. But to get to it now, we must go back to slavery, to the Middle Passage and before. For there is tradition in this country for marking a people as non-human. The slave master killed his black property

the state doing the murderous work of Jim Crow.

And the lynch rope always comes out faster for the fighter, the one with an attitude, the one whom Richard Wright called Bigger. The lynching is a social act meant to intimidate and brutalize a whole people. Look at Mumia—because Mumia is the death penalty in

The death penalty is the signal element in the drive for increased state repression, part of a wider social and political pattern. If the death penalty is the ultimate symbol of increased state repression, the so-called "war on drugs" is most publicized. It means more cops, more arrests, more prisons, more police terror, more death—officially in legal



Jackson/Times-Picayune

**Electric chair death mill: racist American capitalism is second only to South Africa in executions of blacks.**

America. Would he be on death row if he were not black? Not a Black Panther? Not a MOVE supporter? Not a powerful voice for the oppressed?

We of the Partisan Defense Committee oppose the barbaric death penalty on principle everywhere it exists. Not only is it irrevocable for the many innocents killed, but the death penalty harnesses the ancient tradition of arbitrary personal cruelty and torture to the ruthless machinery of the modern capitalist state.

So if the death penalty has symbolic value, this is its value: the state decides who lives and dies. The state decides which lives are expendable. And that means that mainly black lives are expendable. For decades, ghettos were the home of reserve labor forces, useful for depressing wages. But decaying capitalism has destroyed the basis for jobs; black youth are looking at 50 percent joblessness and up. The inner city has been declared, in the words of a recent *U.S. News & World Report* cover story, "Dead Zones." Hear that language and remember the prisoner on death row at Huntingdon crying out: "I am not dead. I live. I breathe. I feel." And we begin to understand what is at stake in the struggle against the death penalty in racist America. In the death penalty we have the impulse to genocide.

death chambers, and semi-officially on the streets. The "drug czar" wants the death penalty for drug-related murder. But the criminalization of drug use means that already half the prisoners are convicted of drug-related crimes.

And Judge Death, the head of the Supreme Court, Rehnquist, wants to get rid of *habeas corpus*, to get it going sooner. He's embarrassed even the federal judiciary. Halls of government and editorial pages are already ringing with calls for concentration camps, military takeovers of ghettos and an all-sided barrage against democratic rights, the rights of labor, a renewed appetite for censorship and regimentation, attacks on the right of privacy in everything from drug-testing to abortion.

The selling of the death penalty and increased repression as an answer to crime is a dangerous lie. The U.S. has close to a million prisoners, with the world's highest incarceration rate (next to South Africa). And the incarceration rate does not and cannot reduce the rate of crime, which continues to explode, particularly in the inner city.

The systematic oppression—the joblessness, the hopelessness—which is at the root of the crime and punishment cycle cannot be solved this side of a social revolution. And because they have no solution to the problems that particularly beset those people now called the "underclass," this state can only repress—and that they do with a vengeance. The only response of the state to the cycle of crime and violence bred of poverty comes out of the barrel of a gun. It is a little like the St. Croix disaster writ large. If people need food, send in the cops; if they need medical attention, send in the army; if they need homes, jobs, education, opportunities and hope, then drive them off welfare and open up the prisons; and if they protest, fire up the electric chair.

This campaign for death and repression depends upon convincing people that there is no other way out, that their options are closed within the capitalist system which produced the problems. So people have been led to believe that they must choose between the violent hoodlums who terrorize their housing projects and the cop squads which turn those same projects into minimum

security prisons. These no-win options are supported by both major capitalist parties.

That is why both Republicans and Democrats call for more cops and prisons, more military intervention against drug use. That is why all those Democratic mayors—black or white—cannot do otherwise than to be foot soldiers in capitalism's class war against the oppressed. And that is as true for a mad bomber like Wilson Goode as it is for others who might like to do better.

The way out—the way to victory—is the way of the class struggle. The powerful, integrated labor movement in action for its own interests and the interests of all working people and oppressed. It means a reinvigorated workers movement including a black and red leadership which can fight to win, all the way to a workers government.

The PDC is partisan on the side of the working class internationally, whether we're out collecting funds for the defenders of Jalalabad, striking miners in Britain or class-war prisoners at home. We defend those who have been victimized in capitalism's relentless class war: Geronimo Pratt, set up by COINTELPRO state terror; South African anti-apartheid fighters; Salvadoran trade unionists. The PDC sends a small monthly stipend to a number of class-war prisoners.

This meeting is another example of what is needed. You know that all of us on the platform are called death penalty abolitionists. I think we can all be proud of that name. "Abolitionist" is a name resonant with meaning. Some of the early abolitionists thought anti-slavery was a moral matter; others thought it was political; still others imagined it was merely military; some thought it was hopeless. I think that the former slave and great revolutionary Frederick Douglass saw further and deeper than the rest—for he saw it would take a social revolution to crush the slave system and he organized to make it happen.

But all of the abolitionists did important work. They had their political fights and differences, but they fought to get rid of slavery. I'm glad we have so many speakers here this afternoon. We need to carry out this campaign together. As we wrote in our April issue of *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*, devoted to Mumia's defense:

"Our campaign seeks to bring the force of labor, minorities, death penalty abolitionists, human rights organizations into the struggle to save his life. 'Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!' Let it ring out in union meetings. 'Free Mumia!' Let's hear it at international conferences, college campuses, churches. 'Mumia Must Not Die!'... Let his name resound in the working-class movement mobilized to fight for all class-war prisoners." ■



WV Photo

Charles Brover

with legal impunity. After the Civil War, the KKK and the state put the torch to Reconstruction and restored the lethal spirit of slavery with Jim Crow lynch law.

By 1977, when they brought back the death penalty, the Supreme Court was again ready to proclaim that black life was worthless. That those folks on death row, or those kids on dope alley, aren't really alive anyway. That's why we call the death penalty "legal lynching." It is

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 • (212) 732-7860

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$7/24 issues of <i>Workers Vanguard</i> (includes English-language <i>Spartacist</i> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$3/3 issues of <i>Women and Revolution</i>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2/10 introductory issues of <i>Workers Vanguard</i> (includes English-language <i>Spartacist</i> ) |
| International rates:<br>\$25/24 issues—Airmail \$7/24 issues—Seamail   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2/4 issues of <i>Spartacist</i> (edición en español)                                  |   |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

489

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116



WV Photo

**5 November 1988 Labor/Black Mobilization in Philadelphia stopped KKK/skinheads.**



# Philly Rally...

(continued from page 7)

support to Mumia's cause, and to the abolition of the death penalty.

The October 14 rally was an example of what it will take: bringing together people and organizations with differing views who stand together against the death penalty and for the life of Mumia. More than 11,000 people have already signed petitions to the governor of Pennsylvania. During the discussion period a student from nearby Cheyney State, a predominantly black college, brought in over 100 signatures he had collected; a postal worker described how she enlisted her friends and family to collect 109 signatures; and supporters of the Spartacist League presented 600 signatures on petitions collected during the preceding two weeks. It will take much more than a rally to get it done, but this rally raised the campaign to a new level of intensity, and showed how we can bring together the forces we need to win, in Philadelphia and internationally.

"Wave of Support Embraces Ex-Journalist on Death Row," headlined the *Philadelphia Tribune* (20 October) article on the rally. With mass working-class and black support, that wave can surge to an ocean of powerful action which can free Mumia and sink the racist death penalty. Mumia Abu-Jamal is uniquely *the* political prisoner on death row today. Like the Scottsboro Boys 50 years ago, the fight to save Mumia's life can become the focus for a powerful struggle against racist injustice in America.

We reprint below excerpts from some of the many speeches addressed to the rally.

## Gene Herson

Labor Coordinator of the Partisan Defense Committee

Today, 2,180 plus people are on death row. It is not an accident that 45 percent are minorities. One of the reasons many of us are here today is the case of former Black Panther and MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal. If there was ever a clear-cut case of the racist and political application of the death penalty, it is the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

As I look around the room today I see many familiar faces. From about a year ago, when the Partisan Defense Committee initiated and organized and built, with many of you in this room, the November 5th Labor/Black Mobilization, when we stopped the Ku Klux Klan from assembling here in Philadelphia. This rally today was initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee and State Representative David Richardson.

We have here many different views on how to stop the state's death machine. But we come together in an agreement to stop it. It is a tribute to all of the co-sponsors, and a tribute to all of you who are participating today, that we can make this effort.

## Muriel Feelings

Director, Pan-African Studies Community Education Service

Mumia's plight is a classic example of separate laws for blacks, a more exaggerated case we might see in South Africa, but which we're very familiar with right here in the United States. We can't forget about our community servants and people who are out there who have dedicated their lives, and are incarcerated because they cared.

## David P. Richardson, Jr.

President, National Black Caucus of State Legislators, Pennsylvania State Representative

Rep. Richardson was unable to attend the rally, as he responded to an urgent request for emergency relief from the hurricane-ravaged U.S. Virgin Islands. His statement was read by

State Representative Andrew Carn, from North Philadelphia.

The words to describe the death penalty are endless: barbaric, odious, uncivilized, injustice, unfair, legalized murder.

The African-American community should be especially concerned because its young men are dying at the hands of the state. And now, one of our finest is facing this terrible fate.

Here are the facts:

On the night of December 9th, 1981, Mumia Abu-Jamal was working as a cab driver in Philadelphia. Suddenly, he saw a policeman viciously beating an African-American who had been stopped for an alleged traffic violation. Mumia rushed to help and got a near-fatal bullet wound in the stomach. When the smoke cleared, Mumia was bleeding on the sidewalk, and the cop was dead.

Though witnesses all contradicted each other, the Philadelphia police arrested Mumia and charged him with killing the cop.

We shouldn't be surprised.

Since he was a teenager, Mumia Abu-Jamal was not afraid to speak out against racism. He was not afraid to point out that America's power had come from the barrel of a gun—a gun pointed at Native Americans, at blacks, at Hispanics, and at Asians—in other words, at anyone who threatened the established order of white male supremacy.

Mumia's trial was a farce. His past words, spoken in truth as a spokesman for the Philadelphia Black Panthers and as an outspoken journalist, were twisted and used to describe him as having a life-long mission to kill cops.

Character witnesses spoke of Mumia's dedication to wiping out injustice, but the testimony of untrustworthy so-called "eyewitnesses" had more weight. One witness claimed to have



Office of Rep. Richardson

David P. Richardson

seen a short, heavy man attack the policeman—Mumia is 6'1" and weighed 170 pounds at the time. Another witness said the shooter's hair was in an Afro style, when Mumia had been wearing dreadlocks for several years.

It was clear, to anyone whose eyes are open to racism, that Mumia had been framed for his political beliefs. The Philadelphia police had been after him for years, hoping to silence his support for the Black Panthers and, later, the MOVE group. Finally, when he became involved in an attempt to help his brother, they found a way to silence him once and for all.

If Mumia Abu-Jamal is put to death, it will not be for crimes against society. He will not be paying for another's life with his own. He will be put to death for his political beliefs.

We are all here because an innocent man, Mumia Abu-Jamal, has been sentenced to die.

How can we help? First, we can contact our legislators and governor, urging them to spare Mumia's life and to abolish the death penalty altogether.

Then we can go into the streets and shout about the injustice being done. We can make more and more people hear the story. We can make them realize that if it can happen to Mumia Abu-Jamal, it can happen to their own sons and daughters.

Right now, a man's life is at stake.

The death penalty must be abolished because even if we save this one man's

life, there will be others whose lives we can't save. There will be others who lived anonymous lives and who will die anonymous deaths. Unless we abolish the death penalty entirely, blood will continue to be shed for society's misguided sense of justice.

## Charles Valenta

President, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers Union Local 1034

I'm here to speak today to lend my voice, speaking my own personal convictions with the full knowledge that my opinion is shared by thousands of members of my own union, and I'm sure by hundreds of thousands if not millions of other trade-union members in America. I believe, we believe, that the death penalty is wrong and should be abolished in America.

If one person is put to death who is



WV Photo

Charles Valenta

later proved to be innocent of the crime to which they were found guilty, then the death penalty is wrong and must be abolished. If one person who is rich and affluent beats the death penalty while a dozen who are poor or of the working class are put to death, then the death penalty is wrong and should be abolished. If one white person does not get the death penalty while a black person or another minority group member is put to death, then the death penalty is wrong and should be abolished.

However, the labor movement is here and it is here to stay. We are fighting back—witness the struggle of Eastern Airlines being conducted by the workers there, pilots, flight attendants and machinists. In Virginia, against all odds—the governor, state police, etc.—the United Mine Workers carry on a valiant struggle against a giant union-busting attempt by the Pittston Corporation. We need your help in these struggles. And we lend our support to all who battle against the unfairness and the injustice in our criminal system. There is an army of workers out there who oppose the state and federal bureaucracy. And we are not willing to give them the right to say who lives and who dies.

# Wadiya Jamal...

(continued from page 7)

glad or pleased to be here. I'm not. I'd much rather be home with Mumia, with our family where we're supposed to be. But, as you know, this state has other plans for him.

Railroaded through a trial riddled with errors, beaten and shot in the streets, taken to the hospital, beaten some more and charged with the killing of a cop and cast into death row hundreds of miles from Philadelphia. The state has repeatedly shown its evil intent. Every action they've taken has been designed to stop Mumia, to silence and to kill him body and soul. But I'm here to tell you it ain't worked. Mumia is still here and full of life. Mumia is still here and full of love. And I give thanks from every drop of my being.

To keep it simple—the simple truth and the truth simple—Mumia's trial was



Lois Williamson

## Lois Williamson

Executive Director, Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants

I would like to focus on something that's very present, that's happening now. October 1, 1989, a hunger strike was begun at Huntingdon [prison], one of our most brutal institutions. On this hunger strike, there's eight death row inmates and two inmates who are in solitary confinement. I had some contact with Mumia—he said they were going to try to hold out for at least another week. Three inmates in Pittsburgh death row have also joined in the strike. While this is a very courageous action, it's desperate. It's the only action that they can possibly give.

## Pamela S. Tucker

President and Co-Founder, Western Pennsylvania Coalition Against the Death Penalty

I echo Wadiya's feelings, in that I'm not really happy to be here today. It's not good to hear all these speakers talking about a man I consider to be a friend, who is kept in a cell the size of most people's bathrooms, by keepers who plan to keep him there until they get the chance to take him to another cell, where he will wait a few weeks or months, and then be taken to another prison, where other keepers will lock him in another cell, until they are given the chance to strap him into the electric chair, and run electricity through his strong healthy body until all the life goes out of him. And there is only left the burnt body of a man with great

continued on page 10



WV Photo

Pamela S. Tucker

an act of injustice. From Day One we demand a new trial. Mumia's sentence to death rested upon a clear injustice, like when the D.A. went into his thing about Mumia being a Black Panther 12 years before. I mean, wouldn't you prefer to have had our young brothers today be Black Panthers fighting for the freedom of black people rather than them being junior black Mafia selling poison like they are today? Imagine the impact of the word "Black Panther" at a misunderstood white jury. And they talk about the jury of your peers! We demand an immediate reversal of the death sentence.

Last, but not least, let this gathering ring for Mumia's freedom. Let the power of the people be heard. Our kids grow older and taller, day by day. Still Mumia dreams of them as babies. This city's life that Mumia gave so much to is sinking deeper and deeper. You do need his voice. We need his freedom. With God's help and your deeds, the work we begin here, we shall have it. If we work together like today we can make it happen. ■

# Philly Rally...

(continued from page 9)

promise, great love to offer the world, and real insight into other human beings, even those that would exterminate him.

But I had to be here today. Not just because Mumia's my friend and they're trying to kill him, but because they're also trying to kill 115 other people in the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

## Harold Jamison

of the New York Amsterdam News

The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal didn't begin here on that cold December morning in 1981. It began when at the age of 14 Wesley Cook left Ben Franklin High School after leading a prolonged demonstration to have the school's name changed to El Haz Muli Gel Shabazz, or Malcolm X High School. It continued as he undertook the duties of Minister of Information for the Philadelphia branch of the Black Panther Party. It gained momentum as he developed into one of Philadelphia's premier broadcast and print media journalists, serving as the president of the Philadelphia chapter of Black Journalists, and an outspoken supporter of human rights.

Mumia's unwavering support for the MOVE organization added fuel to the fire that exploded in gunfire in 1981. The case against Mumia Abu-Jamal continued during his trial, when he was denied counsel of his choice. It continued when the jury was compromised, and then entreated to the paranoid rhetoric of the prosecutor quoting Mumia from a late 1960 *Philadelphia Inquirer* article stating, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."



WV Photo

I Abdul Jon

## I Abdul Jon

Mumia Abu-Jamal supporter, MOVE supporter

I'd like to say Mumia Abu-Jamal was put in the position he was because of his telling of the truth. The statement that Mumia Abu-Jamal was a MOVE supporter—I'd like to say that in fact that's not true. Mumia Abu-Jamal was a MOVE reporter. But in reporting on the MOVE organization you become isolated from the rest of society, the rest of the people in your field then isolate you.

But the government was not satisfied

# The Voice of the Voiceless

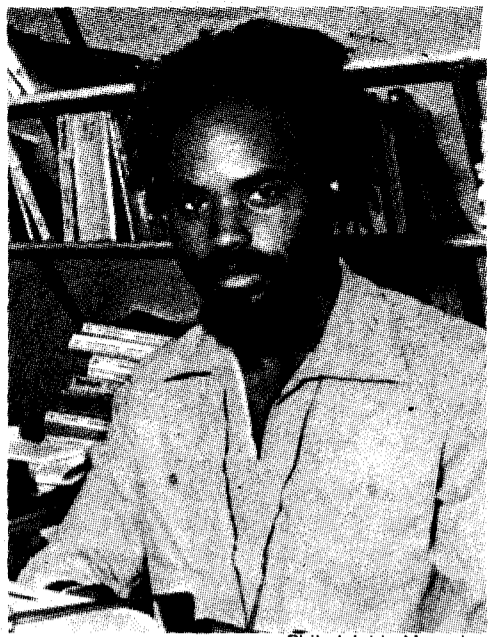
## "From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal"

Don't tell me about the "valley of the shadow of death." I live there. In Southcentral Pennsylvania's Huntingdon County a 100-year-old prison stands, its gothic towers projecting an air of foreboding, evoking a gloomy mood of the Dark Ages.

I, and some 45 other men, spend about 22 hours a day in a 6 x 10 ft. cell. The additional two hours may be spent outdoors, in a chainlink fenced box, rung by concertina razor wire, under the gaze of gun turrets.

Welcome to Pennsylvania's Death Row...

The "voice of the voiceless" is again being heard. Mumia Abu-Jamal's columns are now being published in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, *Atlanta Inquirer*, *Savannah Herald*, *New York's Big Red News*, *San Francisco Metro Reporter*, *Jackson Advocate*, *Black American* and other newspapers nationwide as well as in *Workers Vanguard*.



Philadelphia Magazine

with that. They intended to kill the MOVE organization. And one of the things that had to be done in order to kill the MOVE organization is the media had to be silenced. There was only one facet of media that would disregard the threats and innuendos and intimidation that this order puts on you. And that one person was Mumia Abu-Jamal.

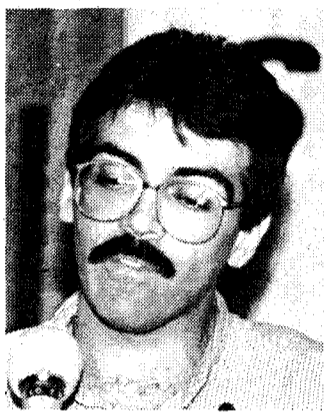
Dave Richardson was a part of an organization under the name of the Black United Front, that helped to draft some information called the Human Rights Agenda. One of the things in the Human Rights Agenda we stated is that MOVE was innocent of what transpired on August 8th of 1978. The entire community was supposed to have gone forward with this issue, and brought it up, but the entire community fell short, fell back, and was refusing and failing to do those things, so it became incumbent upon the MOVE organization themselves to go out and do it. The only help that they had in the media was Mumia Abu-Jamal. And that was the reason for the entrapment that was brought upon him.

I'd like to once again thank the Partisan Defense Committee. My sister Wadiya who had previously spoken, I want you to know that they have helped her in the fact that, you know, Philadelphia don't care, and it's not going to come from the inside out, it's going to come from the outside in. But I would hope that people would take a look at what's going on. I'm saying that all that's needed is that people return to him what Mumia has given them.

## Ray Martinez, Jr.

Vice President, Philadelphia Chapter, Pennsylvania Social Services Union, SEIU Local 668

Between 1930 and 1980, there were 3,862 executions in the United States. Out of these, 2,066 were black individuals. That's 54 percent, whereas during those years approximately 10 per-



WV Photo

Ray Martinez

cent of the population were black. Regarding Mumia's case: this, my fellow human beings, is a miscarriage of justice if I've ever heard one. If there must be a death penalty, perhaps it should be reserved for a very small group. A couple of names come to mind—how about Ollie North and Ronald Reagan?

## Ervia Gutierrez

Puerto Rican Justice Defense Coalition in Philadelphia

Going back to what has been said about Mr. Jamal, who was the "voice of the voiceless"—at this point in our com-



WV Photo

Ervia Gutierrez

munity in Philadelphia, Puerto Rican people have no voice, because the racist media in this city have continued to stereotype Puerto Rican people. More than ever the Puerto Rican community

needs the support of other sisters and brothers in this city, because the problem of racial violence is a problem for everyone. We know that justice-minded individuals in this city care, and they know that this city is torn apart by racism. We look at the Goode administration, and the silence at City Hall.

I urge sisters and brothers from the black community, from the white community, from the Asian community, from the gay community—and many of them are involved in this coalition—to speak out, to denounce the racist [District Attorney] Castille, to denounce the death penalty, because that translates into genocide for people of color. Our hearts go out to our sisters and brothers in the black community, because on May 13, 1985—we don't want to forget that eleven people in this city were murdered, in this so-called "City of Brotherly Love." Our message is that there can be no peace in Philadelphia until there is justice.

## Ed Kartsen

Spartacist League

Organized labor must take up the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the death penalty. But the strategic core of making labor a real force means breaking with the Democrats and building a class-struggle workers party. A party capable of leading struggles to end capitalist oppression. A party committed to fighting as the tribune of all the oppressed, to eliminate all forms of special oppression, particularly in regard to minorities and women. A party that can unite workers from Japan, Mexico and the U.S. in defending and extending the gains of the Russian Revolution. Workers need a party that can fight for a workers government, that will establish an egalitarian socialist society, that will eliminate poverty, exploitation and barbaric practices such as the death penalty, once and for all. ■

# Join the Fight to Save Mumia!

Join the campaign to save Jamal's life! Organize protest! Bring the force of labor, minorities, death penalty abolitionists, human rights organizations into the struggle to save his life. Pass motions in your unions, campus, church and community organizations. Publicize his case in your union or organization's newsletter.

The name of Mumia Abu-Jamal is today the rallying cry in the fight against the racist and barbaric death penalty.

- Contact the Partisan Defense Committee for

speakers, petitions, tapes of Jamal speaking.

- Send for posters (\$2 each, 20 for \$20) and bundles of the campaign issue of *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* (\$1 for single issue, 20 copies for \$10).

• Send letters of protest to Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

We need your help! Pass the hat! Send money to "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal" to the New York address below.

## Partisan Defense Committee Campaign to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal

### New York

P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Sta.  
New York, NY 10013  
(212) 406-4252

### Philadelphia

1530 Locust St., Suite 92  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
(215)-222-7880

### Chicago

Box 802867  
Chicago, IL 60680  
(312) 663-0719

### Bay Area

P.O. Box 5555  
San Francisco, CA 94101  
(415) 839-0852

Abolish the Death Penalty! Stop Racist "Legal" Lynchings!

## SAVE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!

Death Row Political Prisoner  
Black Journalist  
"Voice of the Voiceless"  
Former Black Panther  
MOVE Supporter

**MUMIA ABU-JAMAL MUST NOT DIE!**

Join the campaign to save Jamal's life! Organize protest! Bring the force of labor, minorities, death penalty abolitionists, human rights organizations into the struggle to save his life. Pass motions in your unions, campus, church and community organizations. Publicize his case in your union or organization's newsletter.

We need your help! Pass the hat! Your union or organization can send money to "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal" c/o PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

# Abortion...

(continued from page 1)

The Bolsheviks put into practice a number of crucial measures for the liberation of women. They made marriage and divorce simple matters of civil registration, entirely independent of the reactionary Russian Orthodox church, as part of an early decree giving women equal rights with men. Insofar as the poverty of the country allowed, they established communal kitchens, laundries and childcare centers to free up women from the overwhelming burdens of housework—measures which sought to lay the basis for replacing the family, the main institution for the oppression of women under capitalism, with socialized alternatives. They abolished all laws regarding consensual sexual relations (laws against sodomy, fornication, homosexuality) because they thought the state had no business interfering in private sexual matters.

In 1919 the Communist Party created the Department of Working Women and Peasant Women, *Zhenotdel*, for special work among women, which included organizing over 25,000 literacy schools. Before the revolution, family life lay in the grip of the Orthodox church and its priests; religious prejudices were deeply rooted in poverty and ignorance. And nowhere was the condition of women more downtrodden than in the primitive Muslim areas of Soviet Central Asia, where women, shrouded in the veil, lived in seclusion, subject to the centuries-old bride price. Dedicated and heroic members of *Zhenotdel* donned the veil to meet Muslim women and explain the laws and goals of the new Soviet republic.

What was the attitude of the young workers state to the issue of women's rights which rouses such controversy today in the U.S.—abortion? In 1920 the Soviet government legalized abortion and made it entirely free. At first they resisted this action, because they considered abortion to be a threat to women's health. In those days, before antibiotics to fight infection, it was much riskier than it is now.

The Bolsheviks also thought that poverty and backwardness drove many women unwillingly to abortion and that the real way to counteract this was to build housing, create jobs, education, childcare. They passed special measures to give extra help to single mothers. They believed that a woman shouldn't have to resort to abortion, when she might actually prefer to have the child, simply because she couldn't afford to feed, clothe and educate it. Their goal was to build a new, classless society in which the emancipation of women would be achieved as capitalist exploitation and oppression were abolished. And although that struggle was later derailed by the rise of Stalinism and the corrupt Kremlin bureaucracy, many of its gains still remain in the USSR.

## Abortion Rights Mirror Attitude to Women

But in the capitalist United States, it wasn't until 53 years later that the Supreme Court struck down state laws against abortion in *Roe v. Wade*, thus making abortion legal nationwide. Today, 16 years later, we are facing the possibility that same court will reverse its 1973 decision. George Bush is the number one crusader in this campaign against abortion. Like Reagan before him, he has urged the Court to overthrow legal abortion and applauded the "Right to Life" bigots.

Just as the Soviet workers state mirrored its commitment to the emancipation of women in a struggle to make abortion safe and free to all, so in the United States today the right-wing attacks against abortion rights mirror the reactionaries' program for women.



Credits: RSFSR Artist, G. Pishnek  
**Soviet poster (1920) hails emancipation of working and peasant women in October Revolution. Heroic Bolshevik women (right) risked their lives to spread the revolution to Muslim women in Soviet Central Asia.**

The right to abortion is a simple democratic right to a medical procedure, now one of the safest in the world. A part of birth control, it provides women with a small measure of freedom to be something other than eternally pregnant or entirely celibate. But for the bigots, abortion is a threat to the institution of the family, a bulwark of social reaction, which along with organized religion and the armed might of the state

like France and Germany.

The infant mortality rate for minorities is on a par with a Third World country. In Chicago, which has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the U.S.—over 16 deaths per 1,000—the average rate is half again as high for black women—nearly 23 deaths for each 1,000 babies born. And in the predominantly black city of Washington, D.C., it was an astronomical 32.3 deaths



Richards/Magnum

**Genocide, USA: Bipartisan war on the poor means soaring infant mortality rates in Washington's black ghetto. Free quality health care for all!**

form a trinity propping up the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression.

The attack on abortion rights has become a spearhead for social and political reaction because at the heart of the abortion war lies the question of legal and social equality for women. This country can't even pass a token reform like the Equal Rights Amendment, a simple statement that rights before the law won't be abridged on account of sex. Women are still systematically paid about two-thirds the wage of men in an equivalent job. Even middle-class families can't make it on one income anymore—but there's practically no decent and affordable childcare in this country for women who have to work.

While women are oppressed on account of their sex throughout this society, the burden falls triply hard on working and minority women. As American industry falls apart, concomitant soaring rates of unemployment push women out of jobs. Widespread slashing of budgets for social services over the past ten years has destroyed necessary programs for health, food, education. Funding for prenatal care, care for infants, child vaccination programs—all but gone. Young women can't get access to decent birth control, while the utterly lousy school system leaves incredible levels of ignorance about sex and reproduction among the young. The result: a soaring rate of teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood unheard of in European countries

per 1,000 for the first half of 1989! It's not just that the babies are born prematurely and sick because their mothers have been unable to obtain decent obstetrical care. One-third die within a year after leaving the hospital because the mothers can't afford to buy enough food, to keep the heat up, to take the baby to the doctor.

A year ago Democrats and Republicans in Congress gleefully united to pass a bill for "welfare reform," otherwise known as "workfare," which was cruel-

ly called the "Family Security Act." We called it by its real name, *genocide*, because it amounts to death by starvation for millions if it's put into practice. Women with children are supposed to enroll in "job training" programs—yet the government has cut these by 68 percent over the past six or seven years. And if the women turn down a job, they're simply cut off the welfare rolls.

So when last July the Supreme Court issued its watershed decision upholding a reactionary Missouri law and threatening women's right to abortion, the surprise was that there was anything left of abortion rights at all. In fact the Supreme Court has issued a blanket invitation to state legislatures to hand them the perfect case with the perfect legal argument to overthrow Roe.

What was this Missouri case about? Its core is a ban against all abortions performed in facilities receiving any kind of state aid, and banning the participation of anyone working for the state of Missouri in any abortion-related activity, including counseling. *Ninety-seven percent* of abortions in Missouri were in such facilities. Now any doctor trained in a public hospital there won't be able to learn how to do an abortion. Two weeks after the decision a woman carrying a severely deformed fetus was *denied* an abortion in Missouri and had to go to Kansas for the procedure.

For the moment, women who can afford to travel, who can afford the medical care, do have options. Before Roe, of course, rich women used to go to New York City or to European countries like Sweden, where abortions were legal. But poor women—disproportionately black, Hispanic and immigrant women—have the so-called "choice" of having an unwanted child they can't care for, going to a back-alley abortionist who's more likely than not a dishonest quack, or trying some self-induced abortion technique. Hospital

*continued on page 12*

## Women and Revolution

Spring 1989, No. 36  
\$1.00 (32 pages)

- Labor Must Defend Abortion Rights!
- Interview with Bill Baird
- West Germany: Anti-Abortion Witchhunt
- Soviet Women Combat Pilots Fought Nazi Germany
- Battle for Afghanistan
- Black Freedom, Women's Rights and the Civil War

3-issue subscription \$3.00  
Make checks payable/mail to:  
Spartacist Publishing Co.  
Box 1377 GPO  
New York, NY 10116

## Women and Revolution

Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League

International Women's Day 1989

### Labor Must Defend Abortion Rights!

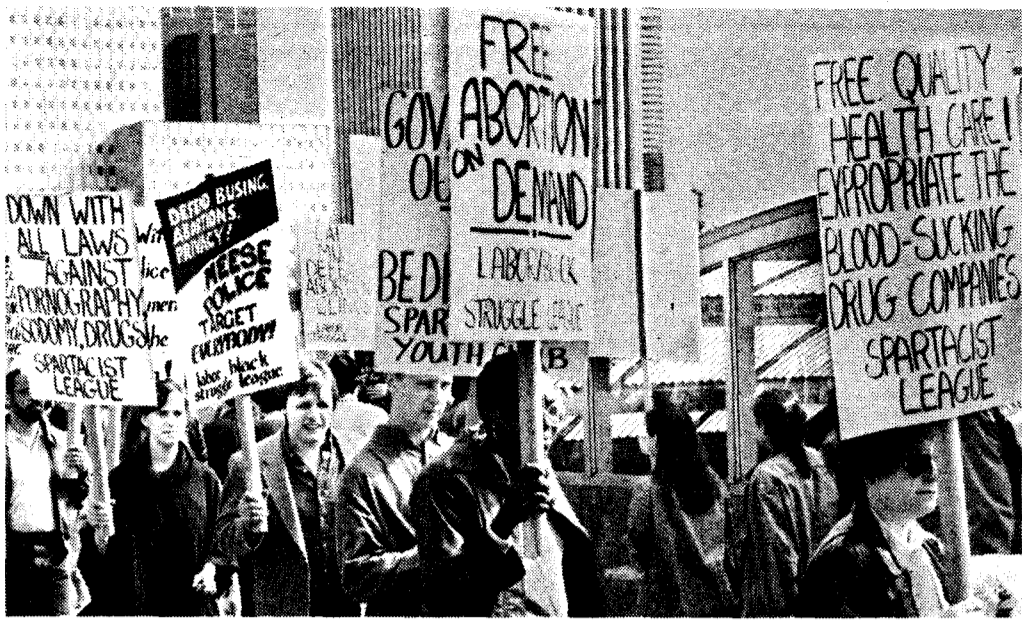


### Interview with Bill Baird

Fighter for Women's Right to Abortion...9

West Germany: Hundreds Pilloried in Anti-Abortion Witchhunt..... 14  
Night Witches: Soviet Women Combat Pilots Fought Nazi Germany..... 26  
Smash Islamic Reaction! No to the Veil! Battle for Afghanistan..... 32

Black Freedom, Women's Rights and the Civil War...18



Spartacist League, Labor/Black Struggle League in defense of Chicago abortion clinic (left), May 1988. "Right to life" bigots (right) terrorize women seeking abortions.



## Abortion...

(continued from page 11)

wards will be full of butchered women, maimed, mutilated, often made sterile or dying of infections or bleeding to death. Around the world today—primarily in Third World countries—200,000 women die each year from the effects of illegal abortion.

### Anti-Woman Bigots from the White House to "Operation Rescue"

And if a woman does get to a clinic for her abortion, what will she find there? Last July the bigoted bullies who call themselves Operation Rescue threatened to step up their campaign of harassment and intimidation. According to the National Abortion Federation, between 1977 and 1987 terrorist actions against abortion rights have included 70 bombings and acts of arson, 213 bomb threats, 216 clinic invasions, 41 acts of assault and battery, 2 kidnappings, 191 instances of vandalism, 61 death threats and 624 pickets and blockades against clinics or facilities. And that's not even including the last two years.

The U.S. government made it clear from the beginning what side it was on. While the feds are using "RICO" racketeering laws to frame up everyone from "pornographers" to unions, the FBI refused to consider the bands of thugs roving around from state to state and city to city to be a "national conspiracy" and washed their hands of any responsibility to investigate or stop them on a national level. The local courts and police departments usually treat the blockaders with uncharacteristic gentleness, carefully removing them one by one so no hair on their heads is hurt.

For years Reagan and now Bush have given the anti-woman forces their blessing. But the *first and so far major restriction on abortion rights came from the U.S. Congress*. That was the 1976 Hyde Amendment, supported by both Republicans and Democrats, which prohibited the use of federal Medicaid funds to pay for abortions for poor women, *even when they are medically necessary*. By the next year federally funded abortions had dropped from 295,000 to 3,000 per year. Thirty-seven states also have state-level bans on abortion funding. When there was an outcry about this, the Democratic president, born-again Christian Jimmy Carter, sneered and said: "There are many things in life which are not fair."

The Missouri law also contains a clause which states that "human life begins at conception." Now, the First Amendment guarantees the separation of church and state—the most important gain of the American Revolution aside from independence from Britain. This is supposed to mean that what you believe about the origin of life, and whether a fertilized egg is a human being, is your own business. But the

Supreme Court let this outrage stand. As historical materialists, we of course have deep philosophical differences with fundamentalism—just as with any other religious worldview. But what we are dealing with here is religion mobilized as a *political program*. Organized religion has for centuries in conjunction with the state witchhunted other beliefs. It has always been the position of Marxists to oppose such attempts to use state power for religious persecution.

The fundamentalist view that fetuses should be extended full rights as human beings has led to some unintended hilarious results. There is a young woman who's in jail in Missouri for forging checks. Well, she's pregnant. So she's suing the state for the unlawful imprisonment of her fetus! But unfortunately this is *no joke*. In California the courts have already charged one woman with child neglect because her baby was born with severe brain damage and later died.

The "Right to Life" movement also wants to ban various kinds of birth control—including the pill—because they sometimes work by preventing a fertilized egg from implanting in the wall of the uterus. Anti-abortion forces have successfully threatened the drug companies into refusing to sponsor the new drug, RU 486, which induces abortion chemically. If it were available, it would mean that to get an abortion a woman would simply have to get a prescription from her doctor. It would make abortion an entirely private act, meaning no abortion clinics to bomb and blockade. This drug could dramatically improve conditions in the impoverished areas of the Third World, where lack of decent medical facilities can make surgical abortion more dangerous.

Now you may be thinking, how could the government outlaw birth control? It was not so long ago that birth control was illegal in this country. Up to 1965 in Connecticut it was illegal for *married* people to use birth control. Up to 1972 it was illegal for single people to use birth control in Massachusetts and many other states as well. Bill Baird, a heroic fighter for women's right to abortion, spent three months in *jail* in Massachusetts for giving a package of contraceptive foam and a condom to a Boston

University student as a challenge to the law. According to an article in the July *Science*, in the past decade scientific research into new contraceptive methods has virtually screeched to a halt in this country. The Reagan administration several years ago slashed funding for family planning internationally, including for abortion and birth control, leaving many Third World women with not much to turn to.

The government is threatening to dictate to women on one of the most intimate questions of their lives. And this threat to remove an essential control over their decision if and when to bear children—what you're talking about is slavery for women! I mean, look at the imperialist draft for men. It's being forcibly kidnapped, dragged off to labor ceaselessly in some hellhole and subjected to daily threats of a hideous death in imperialist war. Now women face kidnapping of their bodies, shackling them to unwanted motherhood for the rest of their lives, if they aren't killed or mutilated by back-alley butchers.

### All-Sided Capitalist Reaction

For the last 10 or 12 years we've seen, along with escalating anti-abortion attacks, the effective destruction of busing for school integration and Reagan's 1980 firing of the air traffic controllers union for the "crime" of daring to go on strike, opening a period of vicious union-busting. We've seen the criminal neglect of the AIDS epidemic, whose victims—because they were at first almost overwhelmingly gay men—were simply left to die by the inhuman bigots who run the country. The death penalty has been restored. Cops rampage through the cities beating and shooting, while the Ku Klux Klan spreads its killer race-hate.

Endemic to this reactionary onslaught is a broad-based attack on the right to privacy. The White House welcomed fundamentalist preachers who campaigned to get prayer in the schools and to teach the biblical myth of Genesis in place of Darwin's theory of evolution. Now it's focused on the so-called "war on drugs" which is a blueprint for uncontrolled police terror throughout the country, in particular in

the ghettos and barrios. It's also part of a 1980s "neo-Prohibitionism" which extends from alcohol to drugs to tobacco. This summer censors canceled a show at Washington's Corcoran Gallery of the work of Robert Mapplethorpe (who died of AIDS last March) because it contained evocative photographs on homosexual themes.

This was all rather appropriately capped off by the Supreme Court's last session. The Court ruled that white men claiming reverse discrimination can sue at any time against affirmative action programs—but black women fighting discriminatory demotions were too late because they had to sue *before* they were demoted. The Court upheld confiscation of suspects' assets, thus preventing them from hiring "high-priced lawyers." They even ruled that it's OK for states to put to death *children* and the mentally retarded! And they ruled that massive statistical evidence of discrimination in hiring was irrelevant, because the workers involved had to show that it wasn't just "good business" to discriminate.

This deep-seated domestic reaction arises out of a crisis of U.S. imperialism driven by the devaluation of the dollar in 1971 and the defeat of its imperialist army in Vietnam in 1975. Jimmy Carter kicked off Cold War II with a phony campaign for "human rights" in 1979 when the Soviets entered Afghanistan at the request of the besieged Kabul government. Minimal reforms enacted by the left-nationalist regime—restriction of the bride price, elimination of the head-to-toe veil, teaching young girls as well as boys to read—drove the Islamic mullahs and tribal chiefs into military opposition. Over the past ten years the U.S. has funded and supplied the tribal reactionaries in Afghanistan who are fighting to maintain the near *slavery* of women in that country.

Carter's support to the tribal reactionaries in Afghanistan was part of a U.S. imperialist campaign to re-establish its strength and authority internationally. And it had a domestic corollary. The government wanted to get Americans behind them, supporting their treacherous, bloody imperialist adventures, be they in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, the Middle East. They needed to bleed the working class dry to fund this. So there was a campaign to smash the unions, to dismantle even the token gains of the 1960s civil rights movement and to re-install "family values," respect for the good old American way, religion, social and sexual conformity. Carter started it, and the Reagan and Bush administrations just grabbed the ball and went on.

### The Family

There are lots of lies about what communists really think about the family. I remember being told in junior high school that communists think people should live in army barracks because they're against families. The bourgeoisie presents the monogamous, one-man-on-one-woman-for-life, family as an "eternal" formation based in nature and blessed by god. But Marxists recognize

KKK terrorist brandishing coat hanger outside Dallas abortion clinic. Racist bigots would have women die in back-alley abortions.



that it is fundamentally a social institution which has evolved through history into what it is today.

Monogamous marriage arose with the development of private property—that is, with the development of agriculture and the first breakup of society into classes. Then men found that they needed to know which children were really their own, because they had property to pass on. Thus the patriarchal, monogamous family unit came about, which Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* calls the “world-historic defeat of the female sex.” Because what it really meant was monogamy for women—the by now so familiar double standard.

Today, the right of inheritance of private property remains central to the bourgeoisie’s maintenance of its class dictatorship. A workers government would indeed abolish the right of inheritance—it’s one of Marx’s central demands in the *Communist Manifesto*. It was a very important measure indeed to the Bolshevik Revolution: property—the land and the factories—went to the workers state to be used for the needs of all, not profit for a few.

But raising the next generation—that’s a function of the family which cannot simply be abolished, but must be replaced. It will still take years to raise a human being. We say that housework and childcare should be socialized through communal kitchens, free, 24-hour childcare, communal laundries—a new way of rearing children and attending to personal care that will enable women to become full participants in social and political life and that will destroy the material basis of anti-woman bigotry. And then personal relationships could be based solely on love and friendship. Economic necessity and stifling moralism would no longer be factors in compelling people to get together or stay together.

Today the bourgeois family serves as a bedrock of social conservatism to ensure the habit of obedience to authority and bourgeois morality, which condemns as “wrong” and “unnatural” anything that deviates—from premarital sex to homosexuality. The whole question of sex and the family is manipulated to make women, and men, fearful, docile, guilt-ridden and conflicted. After all, in the absence of alternatives, the family is all people have to fall back on. And this vulnerability and traditional morality is extremely useful to beat back any struggle for women’s rights—indeed, any struggle at all.

The power of the family for social reaction is enormously explosive. In this country you’re supposed to identify first with your family. Then it’s religion, ethnicity, race—all the categories that the capitalist class uses for the poison of hate, to pit workers against each other: white against black, Christian against Jew, man against woman, *everybody*, it seems, against Asians and non-English-speaking immigrants. This murderous hate reaches its most virulent and explosive tensions when it intersects with sex—as we saw most horribly last August with the vicious killing of Yusuf Hawkins in Bensonhurst in New York City. A young woman, Gina Feliciano, living in a deeply conservative Italian Catholic neighborhood, reportedly had a dark-skinned Caribbean boyfriend and black and Hispanic friends. And because she’d crossed the accepted line about sex and race—because she violated the biggest sexual taboo in America, interracial sex—the local thugs killed Yusuf Hawkins, who just happened to be the first black guy who walked by.

### What Strategy to Win?

The Spartacist League has consistently fought for abortion as a basic democratic right. We also recognized that legal abortion was a simple reform which can do little to change the material conditions of life for the vast majority of women and which could be easily granted and easily taken away.

Therefore, we called for “free abortion on demand” and linked it to the fight for free, quality health care and free 24-hour childcare—measures which address the profound oppression of working-class and minority women.

When you want to fight for even a straightforward reform like abortion rights, you can’t isolate it from its social context. But the politics of bourgeois feminism, like the National Organization for Women, which many women look to for leadership in this fight, can-

glove with the CIA to support the bloody *mujahedin* in Afghanistan! A fine leaflet put out by the Spartacus Youth Club to protest Bhutto’s appearance at Harvard University commencement last June described what this first female leader of an Islamic state has done for the women of Pakistan:

“She betrayed the hopes of thousands of women who expected her to do away with the hated Haddood Ordinance against ‘moral offenses,’ under which women are condemned to death by public stoning for ‘adultery’ and even



Friends of Afghanistan Society



WV Photo

**Afghan women militia volunteers (above) take up arms to defend gains. At April 9 Washington, D.C. demo, PDC kicked off international campaign to aid civilian victims of CIA-backed mujahedin siege of Jalalabad.**

not address these questions. NOW’s strategy was very much in evidence last April 9 at the women’s march in Washington. They paraded a string of Congressmen across the podium and tried to fire the crowd with enthusiasm for endless “lobby your Congressmen” campaigns.

The question of legal abortion is one which has produced some differences within the American ruling class and its two parties. It is not insignificant that the *New York Times* has been campaigning for abortion rights, while the “Right to Life” movement has never been able to get the “human life” amendment through Congress.

But bourgeois politicians waffling back and forth on this question is nothing new—many of the most virulent anti-abortion fanatics weren’t always that way, either. George Bush used to support limited abortion rights; he changed his line to get on the Republican ticket with Reagan in 1980. And even Reagan, as governor of California, signed into law a bill allowing some restricted access to abortion in that state, which was one of the most liberal in the nation at the time. These capitalist politicians know their own daughters, wives and mistresses will always get abortions, legal or not.

At the April 9 march, Jesse Jackson said something which fired the NOW leaders with enthusiasm but which to me symbolized all the dead-end, do-nothing treachery of feminism. He said, “If Margaret Thatcher can be prime minister of Britain, if Indira Gandhi can run India, if Benazir Bhutto can be prime minister of Pakistan, then a woman can be president of the United States!” That’s what NOW wants: a woman to run the U.S.—just like Margaret Thatcher, who can smash strikes, destroy workers’ living standards, and unleash race-hate as good as any man!

As for Benazir Bhutto, as prime minister of Pakistan she works hand in

prohibited from testifying at their own ‘trials.’ Over 3,000 women still languish in Pakistan’s prisons and more are dragged in each day. Bhutto issued a *directive* that all Pakistani women should...submit to arranged marriages, wear head scarves, and not soil a man’s hand with a female handshake in public.”

On April 9 the Spartacist League marched under the banner of the Partisan Defense Committee—which read “No to the Veil! Defend Afghan Women! Support Jalalabad Victims of CIA Cutthroats!”—as the kickoff of an international campaign organized by the PDC to raise money for the aid of the victims of the reactionary *mujahedin*. Last February Gorbachev, to appease the U.S. imperialists, withdrew the Red Army from Afghanistan. The *mujahedin*, backed by the U.S. and its ally Pakistan, began a drive on the strategic city of Jalalabad, whose fall would open the road to Kabul.

The fall of Afghanistan to the reactionary *mujahedin* would mean not only re-enslavement and mass slaughter for the people of Afghanistan, but a strengthening of counterrevolution across the world. The U.S. would have a dagger pointed at the heart of the Soviet Union, which borders Afghanistan. Thus the battle of Afghanistan raises the crucial question of defense of the Soviet Union against U.S. imperialism. A victory for U.S. imperialism would also greatly strengthen the forces of domestic reaction here. It would certainly make it all the harder to do what’s needed to even begin to defend abortion rights in this country.

We also marched under the banner: “Labor: Defend Abortion Clinics!” Because decisive action can really only be taken by the one force in this country that can make the capitalists sit up and listen: the working class. The workers have enormous social power because by withholding their labor power they deprive capitalism of its reason for exist-

ence: profits. They can and must be mobilized in defense of abortion rights, not for any lobbying but for a class-struggle fight for rights for *all*. The Spartacist League calls for a massive mobilization of labor, together with women and minorities, to keep the clinics open—it’s this kind of show of strength that could bring out many others in support of women’s rights.

Such struggles must be part of the building of a new party, a multiracial workers party opposed to the Democrats and Republicans, the parties of capitalism. A class-struggle strategy to fight for women’s rights, against racist terror, against *all* capitalist attacks, can win. Last fall we saw it in action, at the November 5 Mobilization to Stop the Klan in Philadelphia. Massive support for the Partisan Defense Committee’s call for mobilizing labor/black power kept the killer Klansmen off the streets of Philadelphia.

At root, all the exploited and oppressed have a *common interest* to fight against capitalist reaction. This is no abstract point, but hits us all in our daily lives. It’s purely artificial to divorce abortion from the question of access to health care, as NOW does. Over the past ten years all of us have faced astronomical increases in the cost of medical care. The American system of medicine for profit has spawned a deep-going crisis in health care. Hospitals close, they groan with debt, people pay hundreds, thousands more out of pocket or simply go without needed care, as insurance plans vanish or cover less and less.

And it is no coincidence that the strikes going on in this country—the miners in Pittston, the telephone workers—are largely against attempts to further cut or eliminate health care benefits. If you tap the power of the labor movement for “free quality health care for all” you have a link between the most oppressed and the social might of the working class. So there is an alternative to this passive do-nothing strategy of relying on the cops and courts.

There is another women’s movement: the women who have joined in the front ranks of every revolutionary struggle on this planet, the women workers who sparked the Russian Revolution when they marched on International Women’s Day in 1917. When the October Revolution smashed the old tsarist society in Russia, militant women were among the first recruits to communism in dozens of countries where women were oppressed by semi-feudal conditions and “customs.” They recognized a road forward to uprooting social reaction and building a society freed from sexual, racial and class inequality.

We need an international revolutionary party—a reborn Trotskyist Fourth International, a tribune of the people, which will fight for all the oppressed and exploited, and against all reaction. We must carry the struggles of the other women’s movement forward to international socialist revolution. Then the trinity of reaction—the family, organized religion and the state—will let go its grip on us as we build a new social order free from exploitation and oppression. ■

## Spartacist League Public Offices

—MARXIST LITERATURE—

### Bay Area

Thurs.: 5:30-8:00 p.m., Sat.: 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor (near 17th Street)  
Oakland, California Phone: (415) 839-0851

### Chicago

Tues.: 5:00-9:00 p.m., Sat.: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.  
161 W. Harrison St., 10th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois Phone: (312) 663-0715

### New York City

Tues.: 6:30-9:00 p.m., Sat.: 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
41 Warren St. (one block below  
Chambers St. near Church St.)  
New York, N.Y. Phone: (212) 267-1025

# Mexico...

(continued from page 6)

another matter, because here is where the battle line has been drawn by the Catholic church, the principal force for anti-woman backwardness in Mexico.

The anti-abortion reactionaries of the clerical-led Pro Vida ("Pro-Life") movement seized on the Tlaxcoaque raid in March to step up their agitation against abortion, pressuring government officials to raid more clinics. They offered to provide the addresses of 12 more clinics in the area to the government, which declared itself "open to the proposals of the Pro Vida committee" to eradicate abortion (*La Jornada*, 26 March). In 1988, clerical reactionaries of the National Synarchist Union led a demonstration of 100,000 in the capital threatening to lynch artist Roland de la Rosa and burn the Museum of Modern Art for displaying de la Rosa's montage which superimposed the face and bare breasts of Marilyn Monroe over the Virgin of Guadalupe. The church has built a cult around the "brown virgin," the "little mother" of Mexico, to foster humility, patience and passive endurance of suffering—held up by reactionary forces as the model for Mexican womanhood.

In the last year, there has been a good deal of agitation for abortion rights in Mexico. On April 9, as hundreds of thousands of women marched in Washington, pro-abortion activists picketed the U.S. embassy in Mexico City. Recent magazine and newspaper ads calling for legalization without qualifications have appeared, signed by leftists and feminists, and well-known artists and writers. In 1983 an amendment to the Penal Code of the Federal District (Mexico City) was defeated which would have granted the right of abortion within three months of conception, under various circumstances including rape, severe physical or mental deformation of the fetus, or "grave and proven" economic hardship. But in the



Cambio 16

current proposal to amend the Penal Code with a qualified decriminalization of abortion, in open capitulation to the church hierarchy the clause on grave economic hardship has been omitted.

In 1979 the deputies of the ostensibly Trotskyist PRT, along with various feminist deputies and members of the former Communist Party, put forward a bill in Congress for "voluntary maternity" which called for complete legalization of abortion. Reactionary forces organized demonstrations against this bill, even attacking its known supporters in the streets. But reflecting nationalist opposition to birth control as an imperialist plot, a view widespread in the *machista* Latin American left, the PRT repeatedly emphasizes that abortion "is not, therefore, a method of birth control nor a contraceptive method, which governments have used in accordance with the interests of the bourgeoisie in certain historic periods," but rather it can only be "the last recourse in the face of an unwanted pregnancy" (*Bandera Socialista* pamphlet, July 1989).

The punk/surrealist popular-frontists of *La Guillotina* (June 1989) go even further along these lines, saying "if contraceptives were 100 percent sure,

free, and there was effective education and true sexual freedom perhaps we could all be anti-abortionists." In fact, the bourgeois-nationalist Revolutionary Democratic Party of ex-PRI leader Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas has a more forthright defense of "decriminalizing voluntary abortion to be regulated as a free and technically qualified health service" (Draft Program of the PRD). We Trotskyists are for free and safe abortion on demand, and full access to all available birth control procedures. Notably, the RU 486 "French abortion pill" has the potential of making abortion an essentially private matter for the woman concerned.

But to win such a demand will mean a full-scale battle with the forces of reaction, beginning with the church, which neither the reformist left nor the Cardenista popular front will undertake. In fact, as part of their bloc with the rightist and Catholic-dominated PAN (National Action Party), the former Stalinists who are now the organizational apparatus for Cárdenas' PRD sought to overturn the 1917 Constitution's prohibition on clerical participation in politics. The ostensibly revolutionary left, meanwhile, has traditionally ignored the struggle



Mexico Journal

Struggle for survival in impoverished shantytowns ringing Mexico City (left). Catholic church is the principal force for anti-woman reaction.

against women's oppression or, in recent years, relegated this to the status of a special "woman's issue." Yet the struggle for the liberation of women is integral to the class struggle for socialist revolution. Significantly, the only country in Latin America where abortion is legal, aside from the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico, is Cuba.

Women played an important role in the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17, symbolized in the figure of the *soldadera* peasant fighter. Today, women are in the forefront of many struggles, from the community groups and September 19 Seamstresses Union which arose after the 1985 earthquake, to the insurgent teachers who led marches of hundreds of thousands of opposition unionists in Mexico City this last spring. The revolutionary vanguard party, as the most consistent fighter for the emancipation of women and champion of all the oppressed, will win the most conscious women militants to its program of socialist revolution. The emancipation of women will be won through the victory of all the working class. Free, safe abortion on demand! End forced sterilization! Free quality health care for all! For women's liberation through socialist revolution! ■

# Afghanistan...

(continued from page 5)

they were carrying out their internationalist duty as they understood it, are among the most politically active elements among Soviet youth today.

Moreover, Kabul itself has been a haven for leftist exiles from the Khomeini theocracy in Iran and from military repression in Pakistan. The imperialist-imposed borders in the region cut through the living bodies of entire peoples, notably the Baluchis and

the Pushtuns, and Pakistan is openly intent on gobbling up a huge chunk of Afghanistan. Both Pakistan and Iran are prison houses of peoples and both have substantial proletarian concentrations. Left-leaning Baluchi nationalists in Pakistan looked to the PDPA in power to lend support to their struggle for self-determination; had that support come, it could have torn apart Zia's Pakistan. The degree to which the imperialists and their regional gendarmes feared the spread of revolutionary ferment throughout the region as a result of the 1978 PDPA takeover was described by Fred Halliday at the time:

"Afghanistan has long played a major role in Pakistani politics, by claiming to champion the cause of the six million Pushtuns or Pathans who live in north-west Pakistan and to a lesser extent the three million Baluchis in the west of the country. A militant government in Afghanistan is seen as posing a threat to Islamabad's control of these territories, and hence to the survival of the Pakistani junta itself, still struggling to restabilize the country after the overthrow of Bhutto. In Iran, where twenty-five years of political oppression have now been answered by a massive popular upsurge, the dramatic appearance on the country's eastern flank of the PDPA government has provoked great concern."

—"Revolution in Afghanistan," *New Left Review* (November-December 1978)

If anything, the situation in Iran and Pakistan is even riper for revolutionary agitation today than ten years ago. The Pakistani regime of Benazir Bhutto is divided and the masses are increasingly fed up with the exactions imposed upon them by Pakistan's support to the *mujahedin*. At the same time as the *WV/Le Bolchévik* correspondent was in Kabul, there was a visiting delegation of sympathetic Pakistani journalists. Meanwhile, after more than ten years of an Islamic theocracy and the bloodlet-

ting of the fratricidal war with Iraq, there is evidence of an upswing in strike activity among the historically combative Iranian proletariat and the Teheran regime appears increasingly fragile. But rather than seek to encourage popular upheavals or resistance against the reactionary rulers of neighboring countries, the Kabul regime goes out of its way to conciliate them, actively pursuing an understanding with Teheran, pressuring Bhutto for an accord, vowing it "firmly believes in strengthening Islamic solidarity" (Bakhtar press release, 19 March 1989).

Even more strategically powerful than the proletariat of Iran and Pakistan is that of India. Indian leftists have generally expressed sympathy for the Afghan PDPA against the American/Pakistani-backed *mujahedin*. And the Gandhi regime in New Delhi has maintained cordial diplomatic relations with Kabul on the cynical nationalist principle that "the enemy of my enemy (i.e., Pakistan) is my friend." But the true friend of social liberation for the Afghan peoples is not the wretched Indian national bourgeoisie but the Indian working class. Proletarian revolution in India would not only sweep away the reactionary institutions of that benighted country (the caste system, untouchability, "bride-burning," etc.) but also help bring social progress to the entire region.

What we said before the Soviet intervention applies with equal force to Afghanistan today:

"Destroying the power of the mullahs, the landlords and the usurers of the Muslim East cannot be achieved by modernizing army officers, but only by a class-conscious, revolutionary proletariat. Pulling Afghanistan out of the muck and gore of feudal barbarism will be achieved through proletarian social revolutions in Iran, Pakistan and India linked to proletarian political revolu-

tion against the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR."

—*WV* No. 239,  
14 September 1979

An internationalist perspective can have a powerful impact on the deeply oppressed peoples of the region. The PDC's Jalalabad aid campaign elicited support from people from all ethnic and national backgrounds: anti-Zionist Jews and North African Arabs, East Indian women and Sikh men. Several young Turkish women in West Berlin who donated said, "We know what Islamic terror means." At the same time, the Spartacus Youth Club organized a demonstration against Benazir Bhutto at Harvard University, denouncing her as a "linchpin of the CIA's bloody Afghan war" and protesting the plight of women in Pakistan who are jailed and stoned to death under the hated "Haddood Ordinance." The protest struck a chord as far away as the South Asian community in Britain, where it received prominent coverage in both the English-language *Asian Times* and in London's *Sher-E-Punjab* weekly.

Under the best of circumstances, a nationalist Afghanistan can aspire to nothing more than an impoverished, pastoral existence. But Afghanistan stands at the crossroads of Central Asia. With a revolutionary-internationalist perspective, the Afghan struggle against imperialist-backed reaction can be a catalyst for socialist revolution throughout the region. As we wrote in "Front Line Afghanistan" (*WV* No. 482, 21 July): "Jalalabad besieged was the focal point of imperialism's *jihad* (holy war) against social progress and the Soviet Union. Jalalabad victorious can inspire revolutionary struggle throughout the region, from India to Turkey. That requires above all the program of Leninist internationalism, the banner of the International Communist League." ■



Le Bolchévik

Paris, May 1989: International Communist League campaigns for aid to embattled Jalalabad.

# E. Germany

(continued from page 16)

shortages, one of the most widespread chants in the oppositional demos was "We're staying here!"

A yardstick for the expanding protests were the mushrooming Monday night marches in Leipzig: an estimated 70,000 on October 9, 100,000 a week later, 300,000 on the 23rd and over 500,000 on the 30th. The demonstrations were concentrated in the red belt of industrial cities south of Berlin (Dresden, Karl-Marx-Stadt, Halle). The bureaucracy tried to contain them by mobilizing factory militias. But demonstrators fraternized with the militia members, one of whom in Leipzig said he and his colleagues shared the protesters' concerns. Strikes were threatened, and there was a four-hour work stoppage at the giant Buna chemical works. However, an attempt by social-democrats to form a Solidarność-style anti-Communist "free union" in East Berlin fizzled. And at a demonstration of some 40,000 in the northern town of Schwerin, a large banner proclaimed: "Socialism Yes, Capitalism No."

The escalating unrest led to a palace revolt in the upper spheres of the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED). A narrow majority in the Political Bureau opposed a bloody police suppression of the October 9 Leipzig demo. Ten days later Honecker was ousted as head of state and party, replaced by his former protégé Egon Krenz. As security minister, Krenz has had a hard time passing himself off as a reformer, having been responsible for grossly falsifying the results of May local elections and praising the June 4 Beijing massacre. Along with Honecker, economics minister Mittag and ideology chief Herrmann were dumped. Two weeks later, five more Politburo members (all over 70 years old) were ousted, and education minister Margot Honecker resigned. But a purge of the doddering "politbureaucracy" was not enough to head off the protests.

So on Saturday, November 4 a mammoth flood of people jammed into East Berlin's Alexanderplatz after marching past the East German parliament building. Estimates of the size of the crowd range up to one million people—a sizable percentage of the DDR's total population of 17 million. The first-ever authorized opposition protest was

called by an association of theater employees, but the tone was set by the Neues Forum (New Forum), a two-month-old dissident group. For the first time there were numerous banners, mostly homemade. Many called for free elections, freedom to travel, freedom of the press. There were many humorous touches, such as a caricature of the ever-smiling Krenz as the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood with the comment, "Grandmother, what big teeth you have!"

From the podium, writer Stefan Heym was enthusiastically received when he declared, "Socialism, not Stalinist but the real thing, which we want to finally build, for our benefit and that of all Germany, is unthinkable without democracy." Another prominent author, Christa Wolf, called for "a revolution from below," adding poetically, "So let's dream, with our minds wide awake. Imagine that there is socialism, and nobody leaves." Berlin SED leader Günther Schabowski, a quintessential fat-jowled Prussian bureaucrat used to barking commands in between sausage sandwiches, was drowned out by jeers, whistles and shouts of "shut up!" and "resign!" The former head of the security police, the historically sinister Markus Wolf, was also booed, but having gone over to the other side stood his ground and closed with the only explicit praise for Gorbachev and his policies of glasnost ("openness") and perestroika market reforms.

There was a lot of hatred of the secret police (Stasi), with slogans referring to them as "130,000 useless eaters" and proposing "Without work, no pay, put the Stasi to work" and "For a life without Stasi terror." Both Manfred Gerlach of the Liberal-Democratic Party, who is now offering himself as an alternative to his longtime SED allies, and a newly founded Social Democratic Party (SDP) called for a market economy. But while the prevailing tone in the demonstration tended to the right, toward social democracy, there were quite a few leftist and explicitly pro-communist slogans. Thus one banner declared, "For Communist Ideals! No Privileges!" Another bore the message: "For a German soviet republic! Build soviets!" One placard said: "Hungary '56, China '89" and listed other countries and dates when the Stalinists had smashed mass uprisings; another sign referring to the Beijing massacre ended with a call "For a new communist

party." That is indeed the key—a genuine Bolshevik leadership.

## For Revolutionary Reunification of Germany in a Socialist United States of Europe!

Noteworthy about the mass demonstrations in East Germany is that the discourse is in "socialist" terms. There is real pride, extending far beyond the ruling party, in the achievements of the DDR, which in a resource-poor area has risen from the rubble of World War II to become the tenth-ranked industrial country in the world. Many rightly see the full employment, low-cost housing, free education and health care as basic rights that have been won. Compared to elsewhere in East Europe, there is relatively little support for a "market economy." Many protesters say that perestroika reforms are unnecessary due to the relatively good performance of the DDR's planned economy. Likewise with calls for "socialism with democracy." For some of the leaders of dissident groups like Bärbel Bohley's New Forum, Democracy Now, Democratic Upheaval—all in the orbit of the Lutheran church—this may be a cautious hint at Western-style social democracy. But many East Germans want to live in a socialist society, a real one.

The London *Guardian* (6 November) reports, "There is nowhere you can go in the German Democratic Republic today where the words 'hope' and 'socialism' do not form a constant counterpoint." It adds that this is "no more than a generalised ideal" of social justice and equality. But even so, that offers quite a different perspective than in much of East Europe where the Stalinists have so discredited "socialism" that pro-capitalist forces dominate the political landscape. And there is also a good deal of political ferment in the SED itself, which with 2.3 million members is not just the bureaucratic apparatus that most ruling Stalinist parties are. There was reportedly much discontent in the party over the support by Honecker and Krenz to the bloody Beijing crackdown, and hundreds of FDJ youth members attended public readings this fall by Gorbachevite Markus Wolf from his recently published memoirs.

But in the East German bureaucratically deformed workers state, which was created out of the smashing of the Nazi dictatorship by the Soviet Red Army, the alternative to a counter-revolution clothed in social-democratic

garb is not an impossible "self-reform" of the ruling apparatus. The Trotskyist call for a proletarian political revolution is hardly an abstraction in the DDR. East German workers were the first to rise up against bureaucratic rule, in the uprising of 17 June 1953. In fact, the 1953 revolt was still a taboo subject in Saturday's demonstration. This reflects the fundamental fact that the East German proletariat remains atomized; there have still been no political strikes, and there is no revolutionary leadership. Urgently needed today is the formation of workers councils (soviets), which may issue out of the sort of factory committees or strike committees which sprung up in '53.

Nor was there any mention of German reunification on November 4. For many this expresses a desire to preserve social gains in the DDR rather than see the country gobbled up by West German revanchists, as George Bush would like to see. For East Germany, capitalism is not abstract, it means absorption into West Germany, the legal successor state to Hitler's Third Reich. But there can be no genuine socialism in half a country, in an isolated DDR facing an economically far more powerful imperialist neighbor. We Trotskyists, who unconditionally defend East Germany against imperialism, call for a *revolutionary reunification of Germany* through social revolution in the capitalist West and political revolution in the East to oust the bureaucracy and establish genuine soviet democracy. Because of the strategic weight of Germany in Europe, which is also at the origin of its division, reunification, if it is not to recreate an imperialist behemoth, a Fourth Reich, can only be as part of a *Socialist United States of Europe*.

On that June 17th in 1953, the East German workers appealed to their class brothers and sisters in the West to rise up against their capitalist masters. At the train station in Halle, workers greeted a train from the West with a banner proclaiming, "We're cleaning house in Pankow [East Berlin], now you sweep out the crap in Bonn." What was lacking in 1953, and remains so today, is an internationalist proletarian vanguard fighting for power. The Trotskyistische Liga Deutschlands, German section of the International Communist League, seeks to build that leadership, inscribing on its banner the communism of the "three L's," Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht. ■

# El Salvador...

(continued from page 16)

been active in union organizing for the last ten years, organizing women textile workers at Levi Jeans and later going on to lead the textile union. In 1986 Febe was kidnapped and held for five days by the Treasury Police; a strike by her fellow workers, a march by FENASTRAS and a campaign of international labor solidarity finally secured her freedom (see "Workers Free Salvadoran Unionist," *WV* No. 409, 1 August 1986).

The militant Salvadoran labor movement has been a prime target of the military and death squads, frustrated over their inability to suppress the FMLN insurgents. On September 5, the FENASTRAS union hall was hit by an anti-tank rocket. In particular, the military hardliners have taken aim at talks between Cristiani and the guerrillas. A couple days after the FMLN met with Salvadoran government representatives in Mexico City in September, 61 union members were arrested, beaten and tortured; several of the women were raped, and 15 are still in prison.

The November 1 FENASTRAS and COMADRES bombings occurred a day after FMLN urban commandos attacked the Defense Ministry and the headquarters of the army's General Staff. The guerrillas' Radio Venceremos announced the attack was the start of a

new military campaign, "All Against ARENA and the Tandonas." The *tandonas* is the class of officers who graduated from the Salvadoran military academy in 1966 and currently are in command of the armed forces. Immediately after the attack, Defense Minister Col. Ponce gave a press conference saying the military would retaliate.

After the bombing, UNTS leader Humberto Centeno declared, "We hold the fascist government of Alfredo Cristiani, where the real power is D'Aubuisson, and the military high command responsible for these actions of terror.... We must get rid of them. We will take whatever measures necessary" (quoted in the *Washington Post*, 1 November). What is necessary is a revolutionary struggle for power, for a workers revolution to sweep away all the factions of the blood-drenched Salvadoran ruling class and their military guard dogs.

Speaking at a protest in Boston against the bombings, Gregorio Osorio, a leader of the FEASIES union federation, reported that from June (when ARENA front man Cristiani took office as El Salvador's president) to September there were 453 assassinations, 75 "disappearances" and 603 arrests. Yet during this same period, the FMLN concentrated on seeking negotiations with the new government, offering to give up armed struggle in return for a mythical "self-purge" of the armed forces. The October 31 bombings were

the military's answer.

At a November 2 protest march in Washington, D.C., Spartacist League supporters carried signs declaring: "Febe Elizabeth Velásquez—Salvadoran Workers Leader Murdered by Bush's Puppet Army!" "Negotiations

with D'Aubuisson/Bush Mean Workers Blood" and "Death Squad Democrats, Republicans Bankroll War on Salvadoran Workers, Peasants and Students." As one of the SL placards proclaimed, "Workers Revolution Will Avenge Our Martyrs!" ■

## SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. LOCAL DIRECTORY

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 • (212) 732-7860

### Atlanta

Box 4012  
Atlanta, GA 30302

### Detroit

Box 441794  
Detroit, MI 48244

### Norfolk

Box 1972, Main PO  
Norfolk, VA 23501

### Boston

Box 840, Central Sta.  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
(617) 492-3928

### Los Angeles

Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta.  
Los Angeles, CA 90029  
(213) 380-8239

### Oakland

Box 32552  
Oakland, CA 94604  
(415) 839-0851

### Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO  
Chicago, IL 60680  
(312) 663-0715

### Madison

Box 2074  
Madison, WI 53701

### San Francisco

Box 5712  
San Francisco, CA 94101  
(415) 863-6963

### Cleveland

Box 91037  
Cleveland, OH 44101  
(216) 781-7500

### New York

Box 444, Canal St. Sta.  
New York, NY 10013  
(212) 267-1025

### Washington, D.C.

Box 75073  
Washington, D.C. 20013  
(202) 636-3537

## TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA

### Toronto

Box 7198, Station A  
Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X8  
(416) 593-4138

### Vancouver

Box 2717, Main Post Office  
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3X2  
(604) 255-0636

# WORKERS VANGUARD

**For the Communism of Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht!**

## East Germany in Upheaval



East Berlin, November 4: Well over 500,000 protest against hidebound Stalinist bureaucracy in largest demonstration in East German history.

Spartakist

NOVEMBER 7—So rapidly has the crisis of bureaucratic rule in East Europe developed that in the space of little over one month East Germany has gone from being one of the last bunkers of fossilized Stalinism to a land where mass upheaval is mounting day by day. After several weeks of anti-government protests, on October 18 Erich Honecker resigned as head of state and party of the German Democratic Republic (DDR). But this did not stop the unrest, and on November 4 considerably more than

### Workers Soviets Must Rule!

half a million people demonstrated in East Berlin, the largest protest in the history of the DDR. This was followed yesterday by a march of 500,000 braving driving rain in Leipzig. And today, on the anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, all 44 ministers of the East German government resigned.

On October 7/8, Honecker returned from his sickbed to preside over the official celebrations of 40 years of the DDR. While a hundred thousand members of the Free German Youth (FDJ) marched in a torchlight parade, a few thousand opposition youth chanting slogans like "Happy birthday police

state" were beaten and arrested by the cops. Interestingly, both supporters of the regime and dissidents chanted "Gorby, Gorby," looking to visiting Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev as their savior. In Leipzig, when officials of the *Volkspolizei* (People's Police) ordered the crowd to disperse, demonstrators shouted back: "We are the people!" And while more than 100,000 people have left East Germany since mid-August, leading to acute labor

*continued on page 15*

## Army Bombs Union Hall—10 Dead Murder in San Salvador

At half past noon on October 31, a powerful bomb exploded in the first floor entrance to the offices of the National Trade Union Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS) in the heart of downtown San Salvador, killing ten people and injuring 35 more. The building is located only two blocks from the National Police headquarters, infamous for its torture chambers in which countless leftists have perished.

Among the dead is Febe Elizabeth Velásquez, secretary of international relations of the federation and a member of the executive committee of the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), the largest grouping of leftist unions in the country. Also killed were FENASTRAS press secretary Juliana Tatiana Mendoza, finance secretary José Meléndez, bank workers leader Luis Gerardo Vásquez and water work-

ers leader Vicente Melgar.

Earlier that same day, at 2:30 a.m., another bomb exploded at the office of the Committee of Mothers and Family Members of Political Prisoners, Disappeared and Assassinated of El Salvador (COMADRES), injuring four people, including an American woman.

These two attacks are nothing less than cold-blooded mass assassination. The FENASTRAS bombing was specifically directed at Febe Elizabeth Velásquez, who was widely known for her courageous opposition to the military butchers who have slaughtered more than 70,000 Salvadorans over the last decade of civil war. Behind the façade of Christian Democrat Duarte and now under Alfredo Cristiani of the fascistic ARENA (National Republican Alliance), the U.S. has poured in over \$3 billion to prop up this "death squad democracy."

A few days before the October 31 attack, a "Civic Patriotic Committee," the voice of a hardline sector of the army, sponsored a TV propaganda spot directed at FENASTRAS and Velásquez. According to the Mexico City daily *La Jornada* (2 November), a video montage showed Febe Elizabeth walking in front of burning buses, while depicting the federation as a front for the leftist guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN):

"The image freezes for some seconds on the trade-unionist's face and two red 'x's' appear on the screen, underlining the message of the spot."

FENASTRAS denounced this as a "death sentence." Today Febe is dead.

Febe Elizabeth Velásquez was 30 years old. She had three children, the youngest barely six months old. She had

*continued on page 15*



FENASTRAS union offices devastated by army terror-bombing.