

Johnson/Time

Supreme Court of Injustice

"The state is an organization for the protection of the possessing class against the non-possessing class."

—Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884)

The U.S. Supreme Court is a hanging court, and the black-robed legal lynchers make no bones about it. In the past couple of months, the high court racists have ruled that you can be sent up on the basis of a "confession" beaten out of you by the cops or "evidence" seized without a search warrant; that having convicted you before a jury not of your peers, the prosecutor can parade the victim's weeping relatives to see to it that you fry; that you have at most one appeal to a federal court to overturn a flagrantly racist death sentence, and not even that if your overworked, often incompetent court-appointed lawyer deviated on even the slightest technicality from state appeals procedure. And the omnibus crime bill, overwhelmingly passed by the Democrat-dominated Senate, will not only codify this drive to death but, by placing under federal jurisdiction all homicides involving firearms, extend it to states which have resisted capital punishment.

In its lust to get the assembly line of death rolling in high gear, the Supreme



Berry/Boston Globe

Clarence Thomas with his patron, George Bush.

Court has blithely overturned its own recent precedents, largely shredded what reality there was to the Bill of Rights and even encroached on principles of the 800-year-old Magna Carta. The pace at which "Judge Death" Rehnquist and his

cohorts have stripped away what they see as "criminals' rights"—defendants' rights, particularly important for blacks and Hispanics, but protecting everyone who's up against the bourgeois state—has been hair-raising. In a matter of months, the Reagan/Bush Supreme Court has brought to a climax a sweeping judicial counterrevolution, overturning a whole series of decisions which provided some modicum of legal protection for the victims of wanton capitalist state terror and entrenched racial and sexual oppression. And the Reaganites are trying through judicial appointments to extend their reign of reaction well into the "next American century."

As if to underscore his disgust and frustration at the scale of this assault on civil liberties, 83-year-old Thurgood Marshall, the only black justice ever to serve on the Supreme Court, chose the last day of the term to announce his resignation for reasons of age and health. Bush quickly nominated black federal appeals judge Clarence Thomas to replace Marshall. Were it not for his skin color, Thomas' political record would qualify him for membership in the KKK.

And now Thomas has been fulsomely endorsed by Klansman David Duke! As the only black assistant attorney general in Missouri in the mid-'70s, Thomas displayed a Confederate-like flag on the wall behind his desk. In a *Village Voice* (16 July) article titled "Uncle Justice Thomas," Playthell Benjamin commented acerbically: "Like the passing of black leadership from Frederick Douglass to Booker T. Washington, the appointment of Thomas to Marshall's chair on the Supreme Court is a sign of the times."

It certainly is. Appointed in 1967, Marshall was seen as the last stalwart of the 1960s "Warren Court," long lambasted by the Reaganite reactionaries for carrying out a "liberal agenda." Marshall, this reputed flaming liberal, toed the line when it came to "national security," refusing to hear a 1974 case against Nixon's covert bombing of Cambodia (*Village Voice*, 16 July). But he made his mark as the attorney for the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* case which ruled that "separate but equal" segregated education was unconstitutional. In 1973, he was a signatory to the *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion, and he has consistently maintained that the death penalty is flatly unconstitutional. In contrast, Thomas denounces the *Brown* desegregation decision for leading to "a disastrous series of cases requiring busing and other policies"; hails black nationalist demagogue Louis Farrakhan as a champion of "black capitalism"; and sees the 1973 abortion ruling as an affront to "natural law," praising an anti-abortion tract which called for constitutional protection of the "inalienable right to life of the child-about-to-be-born."

And while he is being presented as a role model for black youth of pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps self-improvement, it turns out that Thomas was accepted into Yale Law School on an affirmative action program!

Even without Thomas' added vote, the Reagan/Bush gang already have a decisive majority on the Supreme Court. In case after case during the past three months Rehnquist & Co. revealed in the

continued on page 8



WV Photo

New York, July 6—Spartacists march in defense of abortion rights, under fire from Reagan/Bush Supreme Court.

Dominican Workers Strike Against IMF

Balaguer Deports Haitian Slave Laborers

The Dominican Republic was brought to a halt last week by a massive general strike which shut down all industrial and commercial activity. The strike, called by the United Confederation of Workers (CTU), the largest trade-union grouping, demanded a 100 percent pay raise for both government and private business employees and the rehiring of 3,000 workers fired by the state-owned Dominican Electric Company. The general strike also opposed signing of an agreement with the IMF that provides for brutal austerity and layoffs. Yet as President Joaquín Balaguer, the 84-year-old despot who has ruled the Caribbean island country for a quarter of a century, denounced the call for an "unlimited" general strike as a "declaration of war," social-democratic trade-union leaders called it off after two days.

Balaguer, who was again sworn in last August after blatantly rigged elections following the bloody suppression of protests in Santo Domingo, has already put

the country in hock to the international bankers to the tune of \$5 billion. While he builds expensive monuments, like the \$100 million lighthouse to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival, the Wall Street vultures are determined to squeeze repayments out of the Dominican masses, who already suffer food shortages, water and electricity cuts, and almost 30 percent unemployment. In neighboring Haiti, where radical priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide became president in February, the IMF bankers are intent on imposing a crushing austerity program, as they did last year in Jamaica as well as in Trinidad and Tobago.

Whether they are ruled by conservative *caudillos* like Balaguer or "leftists" like Aristide, the Caribbean masses are being pushed into ever deeper poverty by the imperialist financiers while a privileged handful live in splendor. The most dreadfully oppressed workers in the Dominican Republic are the Haitian slave laborers who toil in the cane fields.



Peter Essick

Haitian sugar cane workers (above) are kidnapped and press-ganged into slave labor in the Dominican Republic.

Their hellish conditions have long been exposed by civil rights organizations and have recently been the subject of exposés in the North American and European press—provoking the cynical indignation of Balaguer. In order to divert the growing popular anger against his austerity program, the Dominican chief launched a campaign of expulsion of Haitian workers.

In the last three weeks, 500 people have been expelled according to the government, but in reality the number is much higher and the expulsions continue daily. Balaguer sent the army into the *bateys* (living quarters in the cane fields) and urban Haitian neighborhoods dragging out blacks (including many born in the Dominican Republic) and throwing them out of the country. The mass expulsions have raised fears of a repeat of the gruesome 1937 massacre carried out by dictator Rafael Trujillo, Balaguer's former boss, who unleashed the mass killing which slaughtered as many as 40,000 Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic. Trujillo vituperated against "foreign negroes in our country"; Balaguer demagogically denounces a supposed "peaceful invasion" by Haitians.

In fact, the Haitians are brought to the cane fields by the state, in a system set up under the U.S. military occupation of 1916-25 when American trusts greatly extended sugar cane production by driving masses of peasants off the land. When Dominican peasants revolted in 1918 against the system of obligatory work for the landlords, U.S. Marines used aircraft and modern weapons to mow them down by the thousands. In the '50s, Trujillo began the practice of yearly contracts with the Haitian regime of Duvalier, who used his Tonton Macoute thugs to round up workers in return for millions of dollars. Begun by two U.S.-backed dictators, the slave labor system continued under the "democratic" military-based regime imposed by U.S. troops who crushed the 1965 Santo Domingo uprising.

Since the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship five years ago, the Dominican government has obtained Haitian slave labor through the use of *buscones* (recruiters) who are paid for each person they bring to the border—through false promises or outright kidnapping—and turn over to the Dominican military. On the plantations the helpless victims are locked in at night in windowless barracks without latrines, running water or electricity, and are prevented from escaping by armed guards and nearby army posts. They are forced to cut cane for 12 hours a day—otherwise they can be severely beaten. Those who escape are usually caught by the army patrols which regularly stop buses and trucks, and demand that all dark-skinned passengers

produce identification papers.

The existence of this system of bondage has been denounced in several books, including Maurice Lemoine's *Bitter Sugar: Slaves Today in the Caribbean* (1985) and Roger Plant's *Sugar and Modern Slavery* (1987). A 1989 study by Americas Watch and other human rights organizations was followed up by another in 1990 documenting that forced labor continues to be central to the Dominican sugar industry. The latest study, *Harvesting Oppression*, focused on newly arrived cane cutters, known in the days of colonial slavery as *kongos*, who are subjected to the severest abuse. A 19-year-old Haitian forced to work in the cane fields told interviewers:

"I have no money, and no change of clothes. No one in my family in Haiti knows where I am. They think I've run away, or that I have been murdered. They don't know that I was kidnapped. My poor mother. I want to go home."

A 17-year-old said:

"We are nothing more than slaves. They take all our things, they pay us nothing, we have no change of clothes. Look at this, I've been wearing this since I got here, they took away everything else.... If I tried to wear these clothes off the field...they'd know I was a cane cutter, and they'd send me right back."

The well over half a million Haitians in the Dominican Republic represent a key question for Dominican workers. Pedro Juan Persia, editor of *Hablan los Comunistas*, newspaper of the Dominican CP, told *Workers Vanguard* in a phone interview that Balaguer was using the issue to divert popular protest, and that the "Left Axis" coalition had issued a statement demanding a halt to the repression against Haitians. He added that immigration is a matter that "the governments must discuss." Yet it is the duty of the Dominican *workers movement* to defend their Haitian class brothers and sisters, demanding full citizenship rights and organizing them into the unions. That kind of united struggle would send shock waves throughout the islands, shaking the bloodsucking IMF and toppling its local puppets.

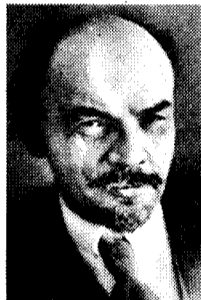
The Spartacist League declares that it is also an obligation of revolutionaries in the U.S. to take up the cause of Dominican and Haitian workers. More than one million Dominicans and Haitians live in New York City alone. Liberation of the impoverished masses of the Caribbean will not be accomplished by nationalist populists, no matter how radical their rhetoric, within the confines of each individual island, but only through a proletarian *internationalist* struggle, including *unconditional military defense of Cuba* against U.S. imperialism. A fight for socialist revolution would blow through the Antilles with hurricane force, sweeping away all the oppressors, and extend to the imperialist heartland. ■



TROTSKY

Proletarian Justice and Bourgeois Injustice

With the Reagan/Bush legal counterrevolution in full swing, liberals today yearn for the "progressive" era of the 1960s Warren Supreme Court. But the bourgeois courts are and always have been agencies for class oppression, and the so-called separation of powers serves only to further insulate the bourgeois judicial system from any semblance of democratic control. In contrast, as laid out below in the Bolshevik Party's 1919 program,



LENIN

the Russian workers revolution of 1917 set up a judicial system whose aim was to serve the will of the working masses.

The Soviet government, securing for the working masses an incomparably greater opportunity to vote and to recall their delegates in an easier and more accessible manner than they possessed under bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism, at the same time abolishes all the negative features of parliamentarism, especially the separation of legislative and executive powers, the isolation of the representative institutions from the masses, etc....

Proletarian democracy, taking power into its own hands and finally abolishing the organs of supremacy of the bourgeoisie—the former courts of justice—has replaced the formula of bourgeois democracy: "judges elected by the people" by the class slogan: "judges elected from the workers and only by the workers" and has applied the latter in the organization of law courts, having extended equal rights to both sexes, both in the election of judges and in the exercise of the functions of judges....

The Soviet power, abolishing all the laws of the overthrown governments, ordered the judges elected by the soviets to carry out the will of the proletariat in compliance with its decrees, and in cases of absence or incompleteness of such decrees, to be guided by socialist conscience.

Constructed on such a basis, the courts of justice have already led to a fundamental alteration of the character of punishment, introducing suspended sentences on a wide scale, applying public censure as a form of punishment by obligatory labour with the retention of freedom, turning prisons into institutions for training, and applying the principle of comradesly tribunals.

—"Programme of the Russian Communist Party (B)" (March 1919)

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Is Big Sister Watching You?

NOW & the FBI

Strolling through the aisles of the exhibition hall at NOW's 25th national convention at the New York Hilton on July 5-7, delegates and guests did a double-take as they came upon a booth with a giant shield and the sinister question on the backdrop: "Is your future with the FBI?"

Leftists, black militants, antiwar activists, labor movement organizers, victims of the McCarthyite witchhunts which targeted Communists, homosexuals, in fact anybody considered even slightly to the left of Attila the Hun by J. Edgar Hoover's American Gestapo, all have nothing but loathing for the FBI. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's COINTELPRO ("Counterintelligence Program") set up and murdered black militants, including Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark gunned down in their beds. Scandalously, however, the bourgeois feminist National Organization for Women welcomed the FBI to its national conference.

It wasn't just the booth. In the glossy NOW conference brochure (titled "Empowering Women") there was a full-page ad for the FBI, giving their pitch a special feminine appeal featuring a "wardrobe" with handcuffs and 10mm Smith & Wesson (we can just picture it: "Special Agent Harris wowed 'em in a drop-dead sheath with deep décolletage and major accessories..."). The G-men were also listed among the "Supporters and Advertisers" in the brochure.

At least when Gloria Steinem took CIA money, there was some attempt to cover up, *de facto* acknowledgment that it was a shameful thing to do. But Patricia Ireland, NOW vice president and heir apparent to Molly Yard, *openly* let the spies in; she told one outraged protester, they figured since the FBI would be there anyhow, why not take their money for the booth? Only in the last hours of the conference on Sunday, after growing protests by furious delegates, many with firsthand experience of FBI terror, was she forced to make a reluctant public statement admitting it was a "serious political error."

By the second day of the confab, at NOW's march and rally against the Supreme Court abortion "gag rule," New York Radical Women had a leaflet out calling to "Protest the FBI Participation in the 1991 National N.O.W. Conference." The leaflet noted, "Allowing the FBI to promote a friendly public image as an 'equal opportunity employer' gives cover to its spies and police agents to penetrate more deeply into the women's movement." Women from Gainesville, Florida had initiated an anti-FBI resolution, which was bureaucratically squashed in an "issues" committee.

A little after 3 p.m. Saturday, a speak-out protest against the FBI took place in front of the (by then empty) booth. Alex Leader of the University of Florida Campus NOW said one of the reasons she opposed the FBI was because she had known Judith Brown, one of the founders of the 1960s radical women's liberation movement, for whom a memorial service had been held only a few weeks earlier. She told how Brown had received over 400 pages of (heavily censored) FBI files on herself. "Why do we want to be in an institution that stands for oppression?" was a heartfelt sentiment.

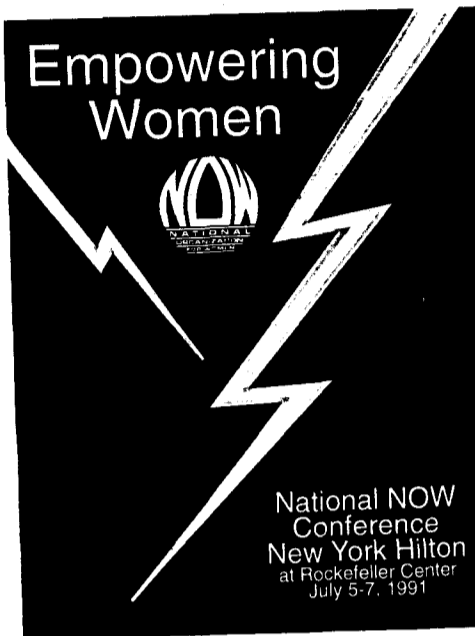
The 30 to 40 activists there quickly sized up the situation and did the right

thing. As they were taking down the exhibit, two NOW conference goons, Dixie L. Johnson (who was credited with the conference brochure) and Diane Welsh (New York NOW's "Consciousness Raising Committee" chair), raced

that "consistent feminism leads to socialism." Well, here it leads to the FBI.

Sisterhood of Spies?

The NOW leadership knew perfectly well what they were doing when they



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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Full-page ad for FBI in NOW brochure (above). Protesters at FBI recruiting booth at conference (below). FBI has long targeted blacks, women, gays, leftists; COINTELPRO operation set up Black Panthers and other black militants for murder.



over to defend the FBI table. One of them said, "women in the FBI are working on things that are very important for us, like drugs." Conference manager Johnson went for sex-baiting, grabbing the arm of a young man in an ACT UP cap and hissing, "He's a man!" He was firmly defended by the protesters.

Ms. Dixie finally personally dragged the FBI's stuff away under the curtains at the back of the booth, presumably for safekeeping. Participants in the action used NOW's own rhetoric to shout down the NOW goons, chanting "Civil disobedience!" and "This offends women!" Getting that obscene booth out of there was undoubtedly a great relief to many of the conference participants, though no credit goes to those so-called "leftists" who apparently sat there in their booths like little lambs for a day and a half cheek by jowl with the FBI. The feds' booth was across from the Women's Commission/FIT; SWP and Socialist Action were a few booths down the aisle. Perhaps they felt constrained not to "make trouble." For years they've been the "best builders" of NOW, claiming

gave approval for the FBI booth, but it took insistent pressure to get them to own up. By Saturday evening the Gainesville women had gotten over 200 signatures for their anti-FBI resolution, thereby getting it included as number 48 in a list of over 50 resolutions to be supposedly discussed and voted on Sunday (naturally the conference never got to most of them). When a longtime activist from Atlanta finally managed despite bureaucratic obstacles and calls of "He's out of order!" to raise the question of the FBI from the floor late Sunday, Patricia Ireland was prepared with a "point of personal privilege" to lay out the NOW line (no discussion allowed, of course).

"The executive committee had discussed it," she said. "People had a couple of opinions. Our people know who the FBI is, they know about their disruptive tactics. They know they infiltrated various groups and had campaigns that went as long as 40 years, for instance to disrupt the SWP and their relationship with other organizations. We've seen articles that the FBI has gone to libraries and pulled out of the backs of books lists to

find out who's reading certain books. And in some measure perhaps, and I don't mean to be flip, I was thinking about *The Silence of the Lambs*. I'm thinking of women who are killed by serial murderers and women agents who were portrayed in that movie as resourceful and intelligent, and who took on her supervisors when they did sexist things."

So Jodie Foster and Hollywood's Hannibal the Cannibal just swept them away? Not really. Ireland went on to say, "I'm thinking about women in positions of power and authority, to help change institutions. We also are trying to get women into positions of power and authority in the military." Sure, NOW came out against the Gulf War and they protest ROTC on campus. But what if "Stormin' Norma" Schwarzkopf was calling the shots? Their real aim is to be power brokers and influence peddlers in the world of bourgeois politics.

Many well-meaning women activists treat NOW as if it were some kind of class-neutral parliament of women. In reality it acts as a liberal ladies' auxiliary of the Democratic Party. In the '88 elections NOW was out in force ringing doorbells for Dukakis. One of its leading spokeswomen has been Bella Abzug, the ubiquitous Democratic fixture at popular-front peace crawls. Back in the mid-'70s they had an orgy redbaiting the SWP. But all it took was a phrase from Molly Yard about a "third party" for reformists like the SWP and CP to go into ecstasy.

As Marxists who fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution, we oppose the politics of feminism which obscure the critical class line. If it's a choice between fighting for social liberation or defending the capitalist status quo, NOW has no trouble deciding—they won't even call for free abortion on demand (women members of the AMA wouldn't like it).

NOW's scandalous embracing of the FBI only underlines the political gulf between middle-class and working-class approaches to the issue of women's oppression. This scandal is the tip of the iceberg, an example of how bourgeois feminism handcuffs women to their oppressors and thus is an *obstacle* to the forward movement of women, and working women in particular.

Some of the women fighting the FBI presence were veterans of the radical women's liberation movement group Redstockings, who quite rightly made an issue of Gloria Steinem's willing receipt of CIA funds early in her career. As we detailed in *Women and Revolution* (No. 38, Winter 1990-91): "The CIA funded cultural institutions like the National Student Association, *Encounter* magazine and even a 1952 Paris tour by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Gloria Steinem, one of the founders of the bourgeois feminist *Ms.* magazine, knowingly took CIA money as director of the 'Independent Research Service,' which sponsored young Americans going to youth festivals in Vienna and Helsinki in 1959 and 1962." Needless to say, Steinem was a featured speaker at NOW's convention.

The open FBI booth at the NOW conference is a sign of these reactionary times, as were the cop contingents in the San Francisco and New York Gay Pride marches and the LAPD booth at this year's "Gay Pride Festival" in Los Angeles—only a couple months after the videotaped racist beating of Rodney King! A lot of NOW's current law-and-order themes dovetail perfectly with the ruling class' attempts to hire more cops and impose police terror in cities across America.

Only a few days after the NOW conference ended, New York's *Village Voice* (16 July) published a major article titled "ACT UP Under Siege," detailing a suspicious pattern of harassment, anonymous phone calls and bizarre provocations against activists highly reminiscent of the FBI's COINTELPRO disruptions against leftists and blacks. Is Big Sister watching you, now, too? ■

Ethiopia: "New World Order" in the Horn of Africa

At the end of May, after Ethiopia's bloody military strongman Mengistu Haile Mariam had fled the country and guerrilla fighters stood at the gates of the capital, Addis Ababa, there was a brief pause as representatives of the rebel coalition and the rump "government" met in London under the aegis of the United States. With the old regime collapsing, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen "recommended" that the forces of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) "enter Addis Ababa as soon as possible to help stabilize the situation in the city."

But rather than bringing stability, Washington's highhanded actions provoked anger. While the remnants of Mengistu's army fled, thousands demonstrated in the capital, attacking a car flying a U.S. flag and marching on the American embassy protesting "Cohen's coup." The EPRDF troops mounted a guard using captured tanks and fired into the crowds, killing at least ten people and leaving hundreds wounded. For the Amhara population of the capital, for the last century the dominant people in Ethiopia, the rebel forces based largely on the northern province of Tigre were seen as an occupying army.

At the beginning of July, a U.S.-brokered conference was held in Addis Ababa to form a provisional government. Acting as an imperial proconsul, Cohen himself attended as an "observer" (while the press was excluded). EPRDF leader Meles Zenawi issued a statement affirming the right to secession for Eritrea, the nation on the Red Sea coast which has been fighting for independence from Ethiopia for over 30 years. However, other peoples who suffered under the Amhara yoke, under Mengistu and before him Emperor Haile Selassie, didn't fare so well, and formal pledges recognizing the right to self-determination may just be a delaying tactic.

After slaughtering the population of Iraq to reassert its global hegemony, American imperialism is now bringing its "New World Order" to the Horn of Africa. Instead of the stick of "smart" bombs and cruise missiles, Washington dangles the carrot of U.S. aid. But the purpose is the same: after years of Cold War contest with the Soviet Union for influence, now it seeks to clamp a Pax Americana on the region. Far from bringing peace, U.S. intervention in Ethiopia is already provoking further devastation, unspeakable suffering and carnage.

The fall of Mengistu was a by-product of the crisis of Stalinism. After almost 15 years of supporting its Ethiopian client, the Soviet Union began a couple of years ago to slash military aid to Addis Ababa, and in the fall of 1989 Cuba pulled out its troops. Moscow pushed the shaky Ethiopian regime to settle with the Eritrean rebels and indicated its readiness to "coordinate its diplomacy with Washington" (*New York Times*, 30 January).

As the Kremlin under Gorbachev cut off its Ethiopian client, Bush's White House dropped its puppet despot Siad Barre next door in Somalia, no longer useful as a counterweight to Soviet influence in Ethiopia. After Barre fled last fall, savage many-sided warfare broke out between Somali clans with hardly a semblance of a central government left. Under the thin façade of an EPRDF-led government, Ethiopia too is a seething cauldron of murderous ethnic conflicts. As dissident anti-Mengistu groups in the capital complain they are being left out, hunger spreads in the countryside with



Glynn Griffiths

New leaders of Ethiopia get American stamp of approval at London conference (above) in late May, as demonstrators near Addis Ababa protest "Cohen's coup."

relief supplies held up by rival bands.

Torn by ethnic strife, its impoverished peasants living on the edge of starvation, the Horn of Africa already counts half a million people suffering from famine (half of Africa's total), and more than a million refugees. Relief agencies say that up to seven million people will need emergency food supplies in a multi-year drought expected to be far worse than that of 1984-85. Yet the dreadful implosion of Somalia and the imminent breakdown in Ethiopia threaten to provoke a tragedy of human suffering on a scale which can scarcely be captured by statistics, as whole regions are depopulated and the survivors are driven to remote camps where they live or die depending on the next plane or truckload.

U.S. Intervention and Bloody Ethnic Conflict

For the last century, Western colonial and imperialist intervention in northeastern Africa has been based on the Roman imperial principle of "divide et impera" (divide and rule), reinforcing the oppres-

sponsored London conference and then took the last port, giving them full control of the coastal region. After years of silence in the press about the Eritrean war, one of modern Africa's longest and bloodiest conflicts which has left hundreds of thousands dead and millions more refugees, suddenly EPLF leader Issias Afwerki was the object of admiring personality profiles (turns out he was taught by U.S. soldiers in high school). And Mr. Cohen declared that a vote on Eritrean independence was a "good idea."

At the recent Addis Ababa conference, the new provisional government (which the Eritrean EPLF refused to join) agreed to a referendum on Eritrean independence—to be held in two years time. But the Tigrean-based EPRDF is viscerally hostile to anything that smacks of independence for Eritrea, which would leave neighboring Tigre, like the rest of Ethiopia, landlocked. However, they had to compromise with the Eritreans, who have a battle-hardened army and control the Red Sea ports.

Since all the guerrilla groups are ethni-

In Tigre province, which the TPLF has effectively ruled for the last two years, the provincial capital is adorned with banners depicting a hammer and sickle intersected by a Kalashnikov rifle. But "Marxism-Leninism" is an empty reference in one of the poorest spots on the planet. The Tigrean guerrillas have been careful about clashing directly with medieval traditions and interests—particularly concerning the dreadful condition of women. While it has limited the forced marriage of young girls—in certain districts—by setting the marriage age for women at 15, it has turned a blind eye to the barbarous practice of excision (clitoridectomy) which is widespread (*Le Monde*, 11 June).

The Failure of "Afrocommunism"

The events in northeastern Africa are part of a pattern across the continent that reflects shifting power alignments on a world scale. With the collapse of Stalinist rule in East Europe and its crisis in the Soviet Union, Moscow has increasingly withdrawn support from various "Third World" allies and pulled out of "regional conflicts" with the U.S. In Africa, a string of so-called "Marxist-Leninist" governments have disappeared from the map. Contrary to the claims of leftist cheerleaders in the West, these regimes were in no way socialist, but backward capitalist countries where economic growth required a relatively large state sector in the absence of a significant indigenous bourgeoisie.

First to go were the more nationalist (and isolated) military regimes such as Lt. Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), ousted and murdered in 1987, and Gen. Kérékou in Benin (formerly Togo), who was sidelined under pressure from France in early 1990. This year it was the governments more closely linked to Moscow: the ruling MPLA in Angola, after a decade and a half battling CIA/South African intervention, has dropped its claim to be a "Party of Labor" and signed a pact with apartheid puppet Jonas Savimbi. Mozambique has been pounded into subservience to Pretoria, while the Congo has also dropped its "Marxist" trappings and (like Lt. Rawlings' Ghana) is knuckling under to the dictates of the IMF international bankers cartel.

The ignominious fall of Mengistu underlines the bankruptcy of so-called "Afrocommunism," of which Ethiopia was the premier example. The Derg (junta) spouted "socialist" rhetoric, created



File/Sipa

Addis Ababa mural of military bonapartist Mengistu with "Marxist-Leninist" trappings. Crisis of Stalinism has pulled props out from under Soviet-supported nationalist regimes in Africa.

sive domination of minorities in power. The Cold War drive of U.S. imperialism for strategic advantage against the Soviet Union raised these conflicts to fever pitch as rival ethnic groups were armed and mobilized in savage "proxy" wars. Washington propped up Haile Selassie's decrepit empire in exchange for diplomatic subservience and military installations like the Kagnew communications station in Eritrea. For the same reasons it opposed Eritrean independence.

But in May the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) rolled into the capital of Asmara on the eve of the U.S.-

cally based, domination by any of them in Addis Ababa will necessarily be oppressive of the other ethnic groups. Meanwhile, their leftist rhetoric is fast disappearing. The EPRDF is led by the Tigre People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which had a bust of Stalin at its 1989 congress and until recently looked to Albania as its model. But with the mounting crisis of Stalinism, the TPLF/EPRDF began espousing the benefits of a "mixed economy." Last year TPLF leader Zenawi traveled to Washington to peddle his services to the State Department, Congress and columnists.

the "Workers Party of Ethiopia" and erected arches to "proletarian internationalism," but this was a cover for military bonapartist nationalism. The Derg's slogan was "Ethiopia Tikdem" (Ethiopia first), the first point in its platform was the unity of the country—and anyone, like the Eritreans, fighting for independence was subject to the death penalty. Moreover, although it came to power in September 1974 on the back of a strike wave, its first act was to outlaw all strikes and unauthorized demonstrations.

In the following years the military regime moved to physically obliterate all independent forces in Ethiopian society—trade unions, student radicals, peasant association activists, and rebellious minority peoples. It destroyed Ethiopia's fledgling workers movement, exterminated an entire generation of radical intellectuals and drowned in blood the national rebellions against Amhara domination. Yet even as Col. Mengistu was stepping over the bodies of his fellow officers of the Derg, talking of "red terror" and invoking a "historical obligation to clean up vigilantly using the revolutionary sword," U.S. Communist Party leader James Jackson showered fulsome praise on this blood-drenched regime:

"The newest and a most thoroughgoing revolution has taken place in the oldest country in the world: Ethiopia.... This revolution has propelled aged Ethiopia from a society of oppressive feudal-bourgeois backwardness into the orbit of socialist countries with rocketlike speed."

—introduction to Raúl Valdés Vivó, *Ethiopia's Revolution* (1978)

The bottom-line argument which was put forward by assorted "leftists" to claim that the Derg was "progressive" was that it formed a diplomatic alliance with the Soviet Union. But such alliances have nothing to do with a "socialist road" of development as claimed by the Stalinists and various nationalists. If the ruling despots couldn't get enough aid from Washington or their former colonial



John Jameson

High proportion of Eritrean guerrilla fighters are women.

masters, they turned to Moscow for the funds to run their countries, reinforce their armies and build up their Swiss bank accounts.

Nowhere is the fragility and instability of such diplomatic alliances more apparent than in the Horn of Africa. In the late '60s the Somali regime, seeking to capture the Ogaden, the vast region populated by Somali peoples which had been conquered by Ethiopia in the late 19th century, declared itself "Marxist-Leninist" and turned to the USSR for military aid. When the Derg came to power in the mid-'70s and stepped up the bloody repression of the Eritrean rebellion, Washington balked at its heavy demands for arms, so Mengistu turned to the Soviet bloc—and declared his regime "Marxist-Leninist." Somalia thereupon threw out its Soviet advisers and switched back to being a client of Washington.

We condemned the cynical *Realpolitik* of Brezhnev and Castro who helped Mengistu crush the Somali people's struggle for national self-determination



Il Mondo

Emperor Haile Selassie

and unity, and wage bloody war against the Eritreans (the cause of Eritrean independence had previously been fulsomely supported by the Kremlin Stalinists, and it had been enshrined in Havana's Tricontinental Congress movement). We wrote of this operation: "by rushing military aid to the Ethiopian army the Russian and Cuban forces in Ethiopia become its direct ally in grinding the rebellious minority peoples into bloody submission" (WV No. 195, 3 March 1978).

The Ethiopian Empire: Product of Imperialism

Because it was for many years the only country in Africa which remained independent from European colonialism, Ethiopia acquired a heroic stature for generations of colonized Africans and oppressed blacks. Kwame Nkrumah recounts in his autobiography that when Italian imperialism invaded Ethiopia in 1936 he decided to devote himself to "bringing about the downfall of such a system." Marcus Garvey, the black nationalist whose "back to Africa" movement achieved widespread popularity in the U.S. in the 1920s, preached belief in "the God of Ethiopia" (the Ethiopian monarchy claimed descent from the legendary King Solomon and Queen of Sheba). And the Rastafarians, a Jamaica-centered spin-off of the Garvey movement, to this day worship Haile Selassie as god on earth. (Ras Tafari was his name before being crowned emperor.)

In reality Ethiopia was created as the result of the jockeying between rival European powers in their scramble to seize the riches of Africa. With modern arms supplied by one imperialist power and then another, Menelik II, the king of Shoa (an Amharic-speaking region in the Abyssinian highlands), conquered surrounding African peoples. In 1896 he decisively defeated the Italians at Adowa (using machine guns supplied by the French). The British then further armed Menelik and encouraged him to expand his empire to the south, hemming in the French at their Red Sea outpost of Djibouti. While Britain and France raced for control of the rich Nile Valley, they were unwilling to go to war over the hinterland of the Horn of Africa.

The creation of the Ethiopian empire exacerbated ethnic conflicts, deepened the oppression of the peasant masses and reinforced the worst manifestations of tribal backwardness. Something approximating a feudal system arose, in which an Amhara aristocracy lorded it over conquered peoples such as the Oromo and Somalis, whom they viewed as racially inferior. Deprived of their land and reduced to the status of serfs, they were forced to yield to their new masters as much as three-fourths of their produce. One of the cruelest ironies in the fact that many blacks looked to Ethiopia as a beacon in their fight for liberation is that this was one of the last bastions of chattel slavery:

"To the wealthy, slaves were often luxuries to whisk flies, carry guns or umbrellas and to serve food and drink. Above

all, their acquisition was a matter of pride by tradition. Even high ranked matrimony entailed gifts of slaves as part of the dowry."

—*Horn of Africa*, July-September 1979

Yet while the empire of Menelik's heir, Emperor Haile Selassie I, the *Negus nagam* (king of kings), was a prison house of peoples, revolutionaries defended it against the onslaught of Italian imperialism in the 1930s under the fascist Mussolini. Against those who called this a "conflict between two rival dictators," Leon Trotsky wrote:

"If Mussolini triumphs, it means the reinforcement of fascism, the strengthening of imperialism, and the discouragement of the colonial peoples in Africa and elsewhere. The victory of the Negus, however, would mean a mighty blow not only at Italian imperialism but at imperialism as a whole, and would lend a powerful impulsion to the rebellious forces of the oppressed peoples. One must really be completely blind not to see this."

—"On Dictators and the Heights of Oslo" (April 1936)

Self-Determination for Eritrea!

From the 1800s to today, imperialist intervention was key in shaping the political map of the Horn of Africa, and locking its oppressed populations into hideous backwardness and oppression. The subjugation of Eritrea by the Ethiopian empire was a direct consequence of the imperialist Cold War drive against the Soviet Union.

Under Italian colonial rule since the end of the 19th century, Eritrea underwent an economic and social development which propelled it far in advance of the sleepy feudal kingdom of Menelik and Haile Selassie. When the British seized Italy's Eritrean and Ethiopian colonies early in World War II, they put the emperor back in power in Addis Ababa. When a popular insurrection flared in Tigre, the British dispatched fleets of bombers to massacre the population. Yet in Eritrea under British occupation a strong labor movement and a multiplicity of political parties emerged.

As the U.S. took over for declining British imperialism in the region after World War II, Washington needed a dependable overseer for Eritrea to guarantee its strategic ports and future military bases. When Haile Selassie proved himself by sending a unit of the imperial bodyguard to fight in Korea, the U.S. State Department noted the "great propaganda value" of "a contingent of troops from an independent, colored nation in Africa." The U.S. sponsored a UN resolution attaching Eritrea to Ethiopia (under a phony "autonomy" plan), and the U.S. was granted a naval presence and a military base.

As the U.S. armed and trained his army, Haile Selassie not only suppressed trade unions and political parties in Eritrea but sought to reverse the region's economic development. Entire factories were dismantled and reconstructed around Addis Ababa. When the underground Eritrean trade unions called a general strike in 1958 to demand independence, the army fired on demonstrators, killing or wounding more than 500 people. In 1962 the last vestige of "autonomy" was brushed away as the hand-picked Eritrean parliament was forced at gunpoint to dissolve itself.

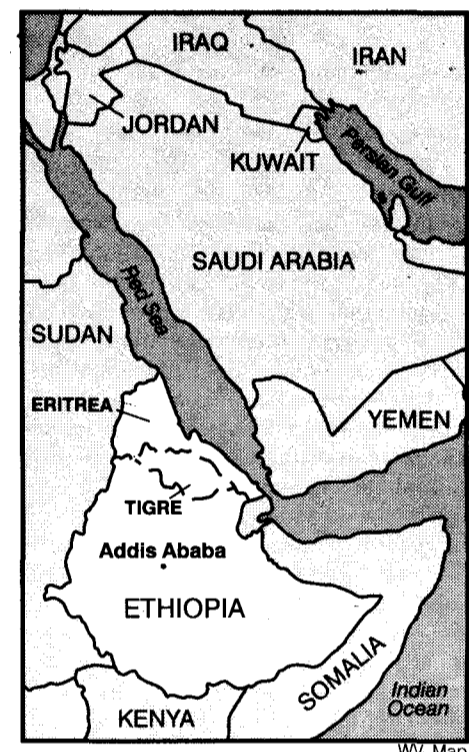
There followed a guerrilla struggle for Eritrean independence that has lasted more than three decades. The Eritrean EPLF emerged in 1970 from the early, Muslim-dominated independence movement as a split claiming adherence to "Marxism" and seeking to unite Christians and Muslims. Today the Eritrean liberation movement claims to be carrying out a "democratic revolution," but in Stalinist-nationalist parlance this formula has always meant preserving and administering capitalist rule...to the detriment of the oppressed.

The Eritrean front has been unusually forthright in affirming its commitment to the liberation of women, and over 30 percent of its guerrilla fighters are women. However, in semicolonial countries

even the first steps toward the liberation of women require a deep-going social revolution. In Algeria, where there was also a high proportion of women fighters in the FLN, after independence the National Liberation Front demobilized the women and sent them home to endure semi-feudal oppression. The EPLF has taken a stand against infibulation, the scarring and suturing of a woman's labia, widespread among Muslim tribes in Eritrea. However, a spokesman for the Eritrean Relief Association admitted that "if a woman insists," infibulation is carried out—saying that the "more hygienic techniques will do less damage" (*Wall Street Journal*, 18 May 1990).

For Permanent Revolution!

Today the Eritrean EPLF (like the Tigrean-based EPRDF) looks to U.S. imperialism as their sponsor and overlord. But while there is a shift in the personnel at the top, without a struggle for social liberation the masses will remain subjugated and condemned to grinding poverty. In 1975, shortly after the Derg came to power, the youth group of the Spartacist League was invited to present greetings to a conference of left-nationalist Eritrean students in North America. Our greetings (which were suppressed by Stalinists in the conference



WV. Map

leadership and instead distributed by us as a leaflet) outlined the road to liberation for all the peoples oppressed by imperialism in Asia, Africa and Latin America:

"The Spartacist League wholeheartedly and unconditionally supports the struggle for the independence of Eritrea. But political independence in itself will neither place land in the hands of the toilers, nor will it give decent wages and working conditions to the proletariat, nor will it place food in the mouths of the starving....

"Even if the proletariat is a numerical minority in countries whose economic development has been retarded by imperialism, nonetheless their social coherence in the productive process means that they alone can draw together and lead the ethnically diverse and geographically dispersed rural toilers. The workers' strikes in Addis Ababa which contributed to the downfall of Selassie were but a partial, episodic and spontaneous demonstration of the massive social power of the proletariat....

"The urgent democratic tasks can only be undertaken with the proletariat, the only consistently democratic class, in power. This dynamic of the Russian Revolution is codified in Trotsky's *Permanent Revolution*."

—*Young Spartacus* No. 36, October 1975

The weight of backwardness in Ethiopia is enormous and the working class is tiny. But the international impact of a truly proletarian struggle for power could inspire the more powerful working class in Egypt, in South Africa, or among black workers in the U.S. The revolutionary transformation of Ethiopia cannot be posed within the narrow national limits of one of the most impoverished countries of the world. It is part of the struggle for world proletarian revolution led by a reformed Fourth International. ■



Beruvides/Granma

Hundreds of thousands of Cubans, many of them on bicycles, celebrated May Day 1991 in Havana. Billboards reading "Socialism or Death" express determination to resist Yankee aggression.



Bartoli-Rea/SABA

Cuba in the Cross Hairs of Yankee Imperialism

The White House and Pentagon, with the blood of a hundred thousand Iraqis still wet on their hands, are looking around for the next target of their drive for untrammelled world domination. And Cuba stands, unbowed, defiant, the only nation in the Western Hemisphere which successfully stood up to the might of the imperialist colossus. Bush, the godfather of repressive tyrannies around the world, lashes out at Fidel Castro as the "hemisphere's last dictator" and hypocritically rails about "human rights" in Cuba to justify the economic strangulation and the spectre of open military intervention.

The U.S. economic blockade against Cuba—like those against Vietnam, and Iraq—is an act of war. The embargo, now in its 30th year, is intended to cause untold suffering among Cubans, to punish them for having overthrown the capitalist rule of the U.S. sugar barons and mafia bosses. For three decades, the Cuban Revolution bought time with the aid of the Soviet Union and East Europe. With the collapse of Soviet bloc trade, the capitalist annexation of East Germany and economic paralysis in the Soviet Union, the blows of counterrevolution are being felt acutely half a world away in Cuba, which is valiantly holding out.

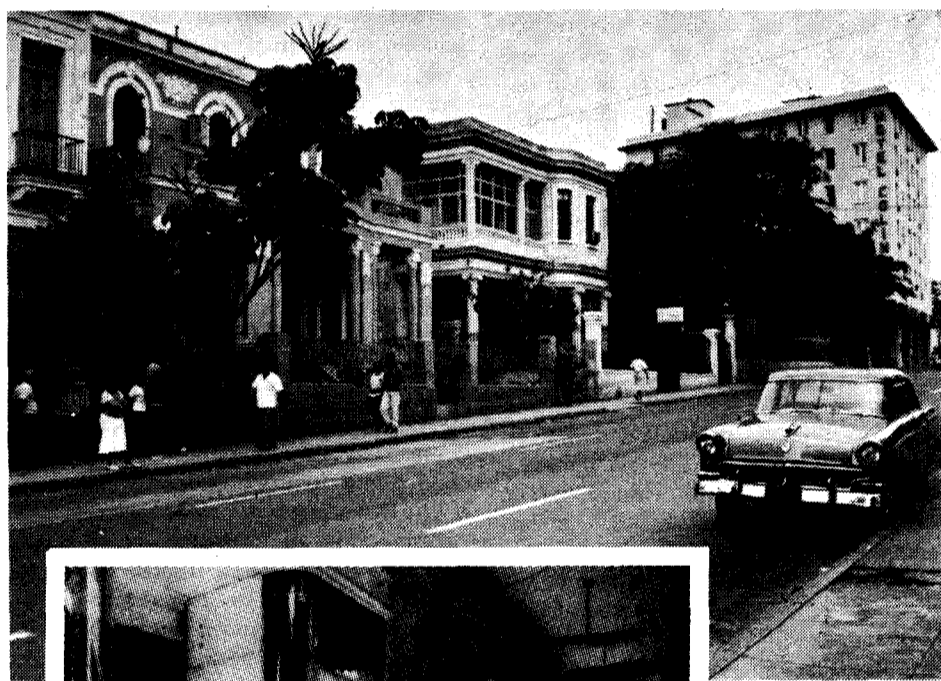
Two *Workers Vanguard* correspondents recently traveled to Havana to attend a conference on "The Future of Socialism," sponsored by the philosophy department of the University of Havana, and returned with these impressions of conditions in Cuba today.

* * *

The first thing that strikes you in Cuba are the hardships and shortages felt everywhere. These days, there's not much traffic in Havana at rush hour. No oil, no gas. All you see are a few tourist taxis and ancient buses. Gasoline is rationed strictly. Tractors stand idle in the countryside; horse carts are more common. Thousands of bicycles are being imported from China. Factories have been closed or workdays cut for lack of fuel and raw materials. On the coast outside Havana, there is a string of little oil wells pumping. They are said to supply 10 percent of Cuba's oil—the rest must be bought with precious hard currency.

At a briefing by the staff of the Americas Department of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, we were told that since January nothing has arrived from the Russians except a few shipments of oil. Despite the Soviets'

Havana Eyewitness



WV Photo



Der Spiegel

Cuba under siege: Empty Havana streets as gas is tightly rationed (above). Long wait in food lines (left).

assurances that contracts will be honored, their economic chaos at home is paralyzing trade with Cuba. We heard there are warehouses filled with sugar, waiting, but the Soviet ships haven't showed up to take it.

So the Cubans are short of almost everything. Hard to find any newspapers at all, there's a shortage of ink and paper. The phones don't work, especially when it's raining. The effects of the imperialist blockade and the breakdown in trade bring to mind Marx's admonition, in *The German Ideology*, that without international extension an isolated communist society would be condemned to "want made general"—collectivized poverty.

In Cuba under the gun, what's euphemistically called a "special period in peacetime," there are a few privileges for the elite, the bureaucracy, mostly higher salaries which can buy very little. The real goodies go to those Cubans who've kept up their ties to relatives who ran off to Miami. They're the ones who can get VCRs and designer jeans.

There are lines all over. Things are grim, and getting worse. In Havana, bread is now rationed, four ounces a day. So is milk, and eggs, and fish and chicken... And people have to stand in line to collect the rations. But there is no hunger like you see in any Latin American city, or U.S. ghettos for that matter.

Rations for children aren't cut back.

We wander into a day-care center at a dairy co-op on the outskirts of Havana: the kids get meals with meat, milk, vegetables, fruit. The contrast strikes you, between the tropical Third World surroundings, rough grimy buildings and dirt floors, and the children: plump, healthy, grinning. They get regular visits from the doctor, the speech therapist, the psychologist. Compares favorably to day-care centers at home, ones that cost \$5,000 and up a year for those that can find and afford them.

It's one thing to read the statistics, how Cuban infant mortality is lower than much of the developed world, about half what it is in the South Bronx and Harlem. It's something else to see the difference in the lives of the children. With all the scarcity and austerity here, you can see the value placed on the children, the future. In the U.S. many of these same children would be among the homeless, facing the daily violence of a society indifferent to their pain.

Our van driver introduces us to his wife and two-year-old daughter. She's a doctor, studying for exams to become her community's family physician. We go by their tiny house, with a statue of José Martí in the yard. In the racist U.S., it would be improbable: a black woman, married to a bus driver, with a two-year-old child, being a doctor. Here it's ordinary.

The Cuban public health system is the best in Latin America. But supplies of some vital medicines are running out, because of the blockade and the breakdown of trade. Shortages of imported chemicals mean inadequate chlorination of the water supply, so the citizens of Havana have to use scarce fuel supplies to boil the tap water. Not a few North American visitors came down with stomach problems—and were impressed by the prompt, competent, free medical care they received at Cuban hospitals.

Bush, in a speech to gusano leaders on May 20, demanded that Cuba adopt capitalist-style "free elections" and free all "political prisoners" before the U.S. will restore diplomatic relations. The Cubans responded: You want us to free a few dozen prisoners, most convicted for acts of terrorism? Well, we demand you release the thousands of prisoners held unjustly in U.S. jails, we demand you provide jobs, and homes, and medical care and education to your population.

We heard a moving talk by black militant Assata Shakur (Joanne Ches-

mard, one of the New York Panther 21), who survived shooting and imprisonment at the hands of racist cops, finally escaping to safety in Cuba. For her, the survival of Cuba's revolution is a matter of life or death. She spoke of the many others who find refuge here, like young Salvadoran guerrilla fighters blinded or maimed in combat against the death squads. To a visitor from the U.S., she said, things may look hard down here. But to a Palestinian from the West Bank, to a Latin American slum dweller, Cuba looks very different.

Articles have appeared in the U.S. press about apolitical Cuban youth who are only interested in rock and roll. Cubans we talked to said that of course there was a difference of perception between the older generation which had lived through the Revolution and Playa Girón (the CIA's ill-starred Bay of Pigs invasion attempt) and young people who take many of the gains of the Revolution for granted. But they also pointed out that this year's May Day celebration was huge (close to a million people), and they were struck by the spirited participation of large numbers of youth.

The Price of Tourism

The Cubans are pushing frantically to finish preparations for next month's Pan American Games, the centerpiece of an all-out campaign to establish a flourishing tourist industry. At the magnificent Cuban beaches, once the playground of North American millionaires, luxury hotels are springing up.

While the Cuban people endure terrible hardships today, the contrast with the tourist luxuries is ever more painful. With U.S. dollars, you can buy anything: Coca-Cola, Marlboros, you name it. Prostitutes are available too, but only for dollars or the goods they buy. Cuban economist Carlos Tablada says, "Sure, we know there's prostitution. We accept it as the price of tourism." The tourist stores at the Habana Libre are covered with long white curtains, to hide from the Cubans the goods they're not allowed to buy.

The Cubans view tourism as a necessary evil, a way to buy time, enough hard currency to survive a few more years. Self-sufficiency in food, perhaps, in five years. Cubans are focusing on high-tech medical and biotechnology industries to generate enough to fund future development. They're earning significant amounts of hard currency selling vaccines to Brazil, advanced medical diagnostic systems to the Soviets.

Even under this tremendous pressure, virtually everyone we talked to said they were determined to resist, to survive,



WV Photo

Ex-Panther Assata Shakur fled murderous repression in U.S.

whatever it takes—and they speak for many more. Antonio Toledo, dean of the University of Havana philosophy department, ended the conference on a somber note: "We look forward to meeting with you again next year. If there's no gasoline, we'll meet you out at the airport and have our conference there. If there's no electricity, we'll sit and talk around a bonfire."



Ernesto Fernández

Bay of Pigs, 1961: Cuban soldiers and workers militia crushed CIA's invasion attempt on the shore at Playa Girón.

One U.S. visitor, calling himself a "revolutionary Guevarist," says straight out, "it's hopeless": Cuba is too isolated, the U.S. will just bomb Havana to rubble and the gusanos lurking in Miami will march back in triumph. But Cuba is not Grenada, or Panama. The U.S. could squeeze the lifeblood out of the Nicaraguan economy and buy an election victory for the forces of counterrevolu-

ing socialism in one country, we're building socialism on one island." He explicitly rejects the idea of an international communist party, counterposing a broad movement of "progressive forces": leftists, Greens, women, Latin American nationalists. It's the old Stalinist popular-front strategy again, what Fidel advised for the Chileans and the Nicaraguans—don't follow the Cuban road, ally with



University of Havana: Display honors martyrs who fell in struggle (above). Cuban students today (right).

tion there, because private property, the capitalist economy, was never dismantled. But even in poverty, Cuba's socialized economy gives them a tremendous strength. And while there are "capitalist roaders" dreaming of a lush lifestyle, many Cubans are fiercely determined to resist.

Socialism on One Island?

At the university conference the question of the one-party system was discussed. Some of the U.S. professors, reflecting social-democratic and liberal proclivities, politely argue for political "pluralism" and "free elections"—Bush's code words for counterrevolution. The Cubans defend a single party, saying it's not based on Stalin's model, but on José Martí's call for a single party of the Cuban nation. In retreating from Soviet-style Stalinism, they fall back on old-fashioned Cuban nationalism.

The Spartacist tendency from its inception has fought to defend Cuba's revolution against the vengeful U.S. rulers. But we recognize that any isolated workers state, deformed by the pressures of poverty and imperialist encirclement, must undergo bureaucratic degeneration—which makes so crucial the international extension of social revolution. And we call for workers democracy for all parties and tendencies which defend the revolution, and in this framework we seek to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party, a Bolshevik party contending for leadership of the Cuban working class.

A professor at Havana University, discussing the relevance of the debate in the 1920s Soviet Union between Trotskyists and Stalinists, says: "I don't know, maybe they could have built socialism in one country in Russia. But we sure as hell can't do it here all alone." But Juan Antonio Blanco, of the CC staff, says bluntly: "We're not just build-

ing socialism in one country, we're building socialism on one island." He explicitly rejects the idea of an international communist party, counterposing a broad movement of "progressive forces": leftists, Greens, women, Latin American nationalists. It's the old Stalinist popular-front strategy again, what Fidel advised for the Chileans and the Nicaraguans—don't follow the Cuban road, ally with

the "progressive" bourgeoisie. And look where it got them. After the failure of the Guevarist strategy of sparking peasant-based guerrilla struggle in Latin America, the idea of internationalism became identified with support of the Soviet bloc. Now, with the crumbling of the Stalinist regimes of East Europe and the USSR paralyzed by social and economic chaos, with the dissolution of COMECON and the Warsaw Pact, the Cubans dig in and prepare to go it alone. But the Cubans' triumph over capitalism cannot be defended with the bunker mentality of Stalinist nationalism. The Cuban Revolution inspired a generation of revolutionaries around the world—today it is urgently necessary for all opponents of imperialism to mount an international defense of Cuba under siege in Bush's "New World Order." And the best defense is the struggle for revolution throughout the Americas.

A *Workers Vanguard* reporter spoke in the opening plenary session of the conference:

"The victories won through the heroism of the Cuban people are threatened as never before, as much by the slow economic strangulation of the imperialist blockade as by the danger of overt military aggression.

"If we, as internationalists, as communists, want to defend the victories that have been won, we have to look not to the illusion of peaceful coexistence with vengeful imperialism, not to appeasing capitalist reaction, but to extending social revolution, not only to the countries of the Third World but also in the belly of the imperialist beast, where all the social and economic contradictions of capitalism have sharpened dramatically. "This means intransigent class struggle which is not deflected into the dead end of a coalition with bourgeois forces as we saw with Allende in Chile, or the illusory trap of a mythical 'third way' between capitalism and socialism as in Nicaragua.

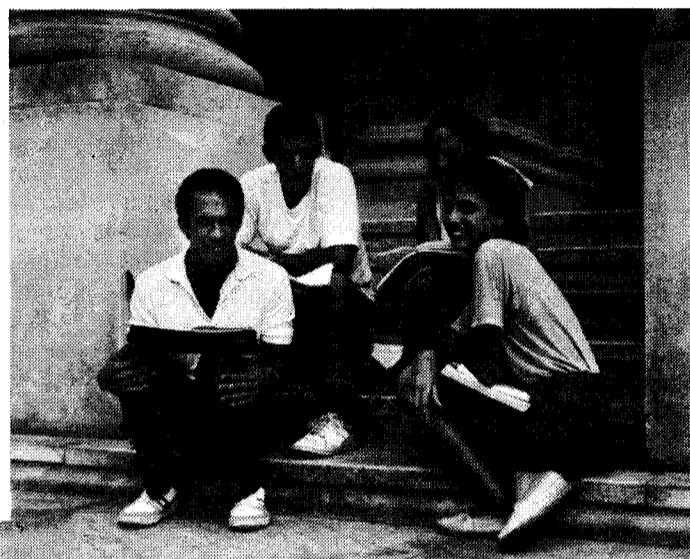
"Above all, this presupposes the con-

struction of a conscious vanguard at an international level, as envisioned by Lenin and the other founders of the early Communist International. The CI was weakened and finally liquidated altogether by Stalin as a concession to the so-called 'democratic' imperialists. The future of socialism depends decisively on an international revolutionary leadership that can assimilate the history of the international class struggle, and assure a communist future of social justice and material abundance for all of humanity."

Some of the Americans were heard to mutter about ultraleft Trotskyites. But the Cubans applauded, warmly.

A book published here last year, *El Gran Secreto*—"The Great Secret"—finally reveals the heroic role of the Cubans in helping build and maintain the network of roads known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail, strategic in the transport of troops and equipment to southern Vietnam, and crucial to the victory of the Vietnamese liberation forces. For Cubans, internationalism is still seen as a cause worth fighting for, and dying for. One of the WV reporters recalled coming to cut sugar cane with the first Venceremos Brigade 22 years ago, and the huge brightly colored billboards everywhere proclaiming "COMO EN VIETNAM"—like in Vietnam.

At the ornate Museum of the Revolution are displayed relics of the Indians massacred by the Spanish, the slaves



WV Photos

brutalized for the sugar trade, the Cuban wars of independence, the siege of the Moncada barracks, the guerrilla war in the Sierra Maestra. One wall is painted with a huge map of Angola, where the big battles are highlighted, honoring the heroic Cuban soldiers who defeated and humiliated the army of South African apartheid. Assata Shakur spoke movingly of how the Cubans thronged to line the roads last year when they brought back the bodies of those who fell in Angola, "los internacionalistas."

At the museum, we were struck by a display on Cuba's earlier wars for independence and against slavery: in the 1868 campaign against Spain there were military commanders from China, Poland, Russia, England, Santo Domingo ... and Brooklyn. Should Washington try another Bay of Pigs, they will be confronted by *internacionalista* fighters, among them North Americans. And we must fight to mobilize a vigorous and massive opposition by the workers and oppressed against the imperialist rulers who would sink Cuba into the sea. ■

Spartacist League Public Offices

— MARXIST LITERATURE —

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Chicago, Illinois, Phone: (312) 663-0715

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41 Warren St. (one block below
Chambers St. near Church St.)
New York, NY Phone: (212) 267-1025

Supreme Court...

(continued from page 1)

misery of millions, expressing their contempt for minorities, women, workers and the fundamental democratic rights supposedly guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. The Court upheld federal regulations which assisted coal companies in evading benefits to miners suffering from black lung disease; prohibited family planning centers which receive federal funds from even mentioning abortion to patients; gave the green light to segregated school districts to shelve court-ordered busing plans; and even condemned nude dancing as a "perceived evil," despite acknowledging that it is an expression of free speech "protected" under the First Amendment.

Now along comes Thomas, who not only praises his education by Catholic nuns, but fondly quotes his mother's concern "that when they took God out of the schools, the schools went to hell." The Moral Majorityites, that immoral minority, would like to turn this country into a theocracy, like Ireland or Israel. But the U.S. bourgeoisie has a problem. Unlike Ireland or Israel, the U.S. is neither religiously homogenous, nor does one religious group unambiguously rule over another. There are Baptists, Catholics, Hindus, Jews, Methodists, Mormons, Muslims—exactly *whose* god would reign supreme in an American theocratic "covenant"? Just look at all the religious banishments in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

In his last dissent, Marshall wrote: "The majority today sends a clear signal that scores of established constitutional liberties are now ripe for reconsideration." He warned that this "will squander the authority and legitimacy of this court as a protector of the powerless." But the Supreme Court has never been a protector of the powerless. The "liberal" Warren Court was a reflection of the capitalist state's response to the level of social struggle, particularly the mass-based civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. Likewise, its conservative successor reflects the reactionary capitalist counteroffensive aimed at extinguishing those limited and partial reforms in the absence of social struggle. It is a sign of the times that after threatening "the mother of all confirmation hearings," the NAACP couldn't even bring itself to denounce Bush's latest nominee.

Behind the Black Robes

For Rehnquist, Scalia, Connor et al., the protections of the Fourth Amendment prohibition of unreasonable search and seizure, the Fifth Amendment proscription against compelling an individual to bear witness against himself and the Sixth Amendment right to counsel have no place in the "New World Order"—



As Southern cops beat civil rights protesters, FBI "informer" Gary Rowe carried out Klan terror.



SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

No. 7.—DECEMBER TERM, 1856.

DRED SCOTT, (A COLORED MAN,)

vs.

JOHN F. A. SANDFORD.

Argument of Montgomery Blair, of Counsel for the Plaintiff in Error.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE.

This is a suit brought to try the right to freedom of the plaintiff and his wife Harriet, and his children Eliza and Lizzie. It was originally brought against the administratrix of Dr. Emerson, in the circuit court of St. Louis county, Missouri, where the plaintiff recovered judgment; but on appeal to the supreme court of the State, a majority of that court, at the March term of 1852, reversed the judgment; when the cause was remanded it was dismissed, and this suit, which is an action of trespass for false imprisonment, was brought in the circuit court of the United States for the district of Missouri, by the plaintiff, as a "citizen" of that State, against the defendant, a "citizen" of the State of New York, who had purchased him and his family since the commencement of the suit in the State court.

The defendant denied, by plea in abatement, the jurisdiction of the circuit court of the United States, on the ground that the plaintiff "is a negro of African descent, his ancestors were of pure African blood, and were brought into this country and sold as slaves," and therefore the plaintiff "is not a citizen of the State of Missouri." To this plea the plaintiff demurred, and the court sustained the demurrer.

Thereupon the defendant pleaded over, and justified the trespass on the ground that the plaintiff and his family were his negro slaves; and a statement of facts, agreed to by both parties, was read in evidence, as follows: "In the year 1834, the plaintiff was a negro slave belonging



Culver Pictures

In Dred Scott case, Supreme Court in 1857 upheld slaveowners' laws, ruling blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

even to the limited extent to which they have been enforced. As for the right to a trial by a jury of one's peers, in late May the court decided that bilingual jurors could be barred from trials of Hispanics, because their ability to understand the defendant might prejudice them against the official court translations.

The racists in black robes find it particularly intolerable that some 40 percent of death sentences are overturned in federal *habeas corpus* challenges. James Lee Richardson, Clarence Brandley and Ronald Monroe are just a few of those recently proven innocent after being sentenced to death. To Rehnquist, who idolizes notorious post-Reconstruction Arkansas hanging judge Isaac C. Parker, this is an "abuse of the writ." And so with *McCleskey v. Zant*: no matter how glaring the constitutional violations at trial or overwhelming the proof of their innocence, death row inmates now get at most one federal court challenge. For McCleskey, it was the second time he struck out before the Supreme Court. In his famous 1987 appeal, *McCleskey v. Kemp*, the Court endorsed the racist application of the death penalty in the U.S., reopening wide the floodgates to death row.

For years, liberals have been pushing reliance on the courts as the motor of social progress, harking back to the Supreme Court era ushered in by the 1954 *Brown* decision and led by Chief Justice Earl Warren until his retirement in 1968. A series of rulings, which are now rapidly becoming mere footnotes in the law books, gave some meaning to the protections most Americans were taught to believe were embodied in the Constitution by requiring that they be extended to the states: inadmissibility of evidence

seized in an unreasonable search and seizure (1961), right to counsel (1963), right to a jury trial (1968), protection against double jeopardy (1969). It wasn't until the *Miranda* decision of 1966 that an individual had to be told of his rights upon arrest, and only with the 1965 case of *Griswold v. Connecticut* were even married adults guaranteed legal access to contraceptives.

Those court rulings came in the context of mass struggles, beginning with the marches against Jim Crow and culminating with the mass protests against the Vietnam War, which shattered the Cold War climate of the early 1950s. Unable to sustain popular support for rabid McCarthyite witchhunting, court rulings after 1956 tended to "restrict" the applicability of the "speech crime" laws, though never declaring them unconstitutional. Most of the landmark decisions of the '60s recognizing the rights of defendants in criminal cases involved disenfranchised blacks caught in the web of racist police-state terror in the South. After World War II and particularly with the Korean War, when the Army was finally integrated, many blacks refused to put up with Jim Crow any longer. Even before 1954 the NAACP had won a number of legal victories for school desegregation in the South.

With a generation of youth repulsed by U.S. imperialist atrocities in Indochina and stultifying sexual and cultural puritanism at home, more far-sighted sectors of the bourgeoisie recognized the need to loosen up state control over personal matters and acceptable modes of dissent. But that was a brief and unusual moment in U.S. history, a period when the capitalist state was attempting to contain, co-opt and eventually destroy the mass civil rights movement and the burgeoning radicalization centered on opposition to the Vietnam War. And the bourgeoisie succeeded. After the 1973 U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam the antiwar movement fell apart. Most black militants of the '60s who weren't cut down by the FBI's COINTELPRO were co-opted by the Democratic Party.

So, with minimal personnel changes the Court immediately began to erode the gains of the preceding 20 years. While liberals today speak of the Warren/Burger court, it was really the Eisenhower/Nixon court, and the replacement for Eisenhower appointee Warren was a Nixon appointee who sought to rein in the court. In 1976 the Supreme Court restored the death penalty in *Gregg v. Georgia*. The racist *Bakke* decision of 1979 against affirmative action signaled the end of any pretension of upholding black rights. And the 1980 *Harris v. McRae* case, affirming the Hyde Amendment (passed under Democrat Carter) which denied Medicaid funds for abortion, gutted the *Roe* decision for the millions of poor, mostly minority, women to

whom it was a question of life or death.

For all the conservative "Impeach Earl Warren" billboards, Warren was no pinko liberal. He was groomed as a protégé of Senator Joe Knowland's big business right wing of the California Republican Party. Warren first received statewide attention as Alameda County D.A. in orchestrating the 1936 red-baiting frame-up of three organizers of the Marine Firemen's union on charges of murdering an anti-union chief engineer on the *SS Point Lobos*. The judge in the case was Warren's former assistant, the jury was handpicked from lists supplied by banks and big business, and several jury members were either blackmailed or bought. As the case was being brought to trial, Warren ranted that it was a "paid assassin's job and the basis of the plot was communistic." Warren also knifed a pardon for long-imprisoned labor organizer Tom Mooney, and the *Point Lobos* trial came to be known as the "Little Mooney" case.

Having thus won his spurs for the bourgeoisie, Warren was elected state attorney general in 1938. Immediately after the U.S. entry into World War II, Warren, a member of the xenophobic Native Sons of the Golden West, spearheaded a drive to evict all Japanese Americans from the area. He mobilized California D.A.s, testified to the Congressional Tolan Committee, lobbied the FBI, Justice Department, Army, Navy and General DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command. On DeWitt's request FDR issued the executive order that led to the "internment" of more than 110,000 people of Japanese descent in concentra-



Davis/Greensboro Daily News

KKK/Nazis worked hand in glove with government in 1979 Greensboro massacre of five leftists, then were acquitted by racist courts.

tion camps. Liberal writer Carey McWilliams said of Warren, "No one person had more to do with bringing about the removal of the West Coast Japanese during World War II." It also helped win him the governorship in 1942.

Nor was the record of the other members of the Warren Court better. Hugo Black, for example, had been a member of the KKK in the 1920s and wrote the Supreme Court decision upholding the concentration camps. Even at its most "liberal," the high court never struck down the anti-Communist Smith Act, the Internal Security Act and the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act excluding from this country leftists, homosexuals and anyone this reactionary government deems deviant.

Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement

Fearful of mobilizing labor/black power in struggle and confronted with a Dixiecrat-controlled Congress and entrenched racist reaction in the South flying the banner of "states' rights," the liberal leadership of the civil rights movement banked everything on the federal courts, federal troops and the federal government. The Court's 1954 decision was touted as vindication of legalistic reformism, even though it took many years of fighting in the streets before it was given any teeth.

As part of his legal strategy, NAACP leading counsel Thurgood Marshall sought to ingratiate himself with the Eisenhower administration by privately denouncing Martin Luther King as a "first-rate rabble-rouser" for attempting to organize a "Prayer Pilgrimage" to Washington on the third anniversary of the *Brown* decision. The march idea died that year, only to come to fruition in 1963. King at least understood that for school desegregation to become reality, it was necessary to have mass pressure. But he delivered the masses up to the Democratic Party and led them unarmed—literally and politically—into the teeth of the bourgeois state and its KKK dogs of war.

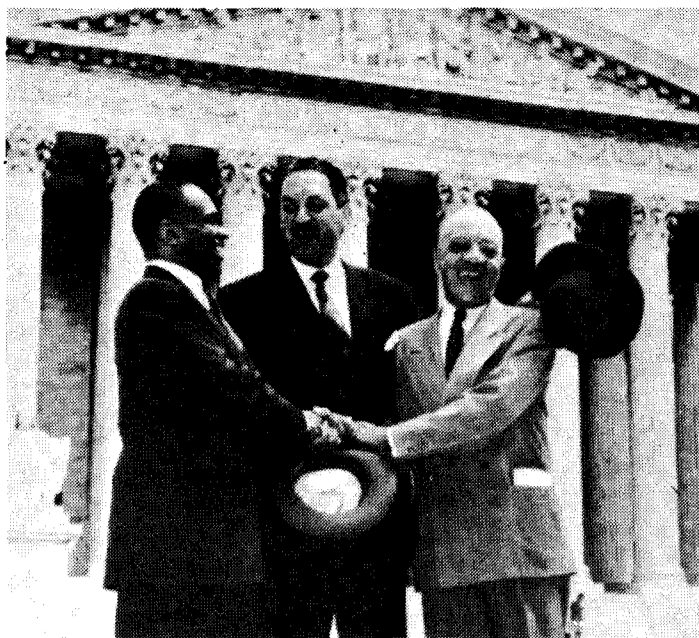
And so when the Freedom Riders, intent on desegregating public bus terminals in the South, pulled into the Greyhound terminal in Rock Hill, South Carolina in May 1961 and youthful black activist John Lewis of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) tried to go to the "white only" waiting room, he found his way blocked by white racists. "I have a right to go in here on grounds of the Supreme Court decision in the *Boynton* case," he told them. "Shit on that," they said, and landed a punch on his mouth. Despite rumors that the Freedom Riders would be ambushed by the Klan in Birmingham, in the name of "nonviolence" nothing was done to organize a defense. The rumors were everywhere because the police were in on the set-up: FBI informant Gary Rowe, a member of the "Klavern," participated in the attack while the local cops conveniently disappeared (see Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters* [1988]).

This pattern of complicity of all levels of the government with the racist terrorists was not limited to the '60s. Nearly two decades later, in November 1979, five labor, black and leftist activists were gunned down in broad daylight by a death squad of Klansmen and Nazis in the streets of Greensboro, North Carolina, the home of the Freedom Riders. In the lead car was an "ex"-FBI informer, pulling up the rear was a Greensboro cop, accompanying this cavalcade of death was a state trooper, and a federal agent planned the attack route. The fascist killers were let off by a lily-white state court jury, and were again white-washed by a federal court. Together with the smashing of the PATCO air controllers strike two years later, the hail of bullets in Greensboro signaled the opening of the coming decade of reaction.

"Checks and Balances"— Against the Working Class

Today, with the courts and the federal executive in the firm grip of avowed reactionaries, liberals have come full circle and now run to Congress and the states as a bulwark against the courts' onslaught on civil liberties. Thus the ACLU and others seek to do an end run around the push for capital punishment by appealing to Congress to enact a Racial Justice Act, which does not oppose the death penalty outright but seeks only to "make it unlawful to execute someone whose death sentence is the product of race discrimination." As if it were even possible to have capital punishment that was not racially discriminatory in this racist country! Likewise NOW and other bourgeois feminists look to Congress to override the high court's anti-abortion "gag rule."

But from its very origins, the Supreme Court was consciously designed to be a ruling class protection against the masses, a bastion of conservatism, "an essential safeguard against the effects of occasional ill humors in the society," as Alexander Hamilton put it in the *Federalist Papers* (1788). And so the "Founding Fathers" created "checks and balances" to make a government well insulated from the "ill humors" of the unpredictable masses, with a powerful executive, the president, who nominates the high court with consent from that exclusive club of millionaires called the Senate. At



Thurgood Marshall (center) celebrates victory in landmark school integration case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

its inception American "democracy" combined slavery with democratic forms and lofty principles.

In its time the Supreme Court has declared that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect" in the infamous *Dred Scott* case (1857); proclaimed "separate but equal" segregation the law of the land in the post-Reconstruction counterrevolution; used the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act to hold unions responsible for "damages" to employers in a strike; upheld strikebreaking injunctions against the 1894 Pullman strike; upheld the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII; affirmed the executions of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg during the anti-Communist witchhunt of the 1950s.

On this 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights, the Supreme Court has yet to rule that it is fully applicable to the states. The First Amendment protections of speech, press, assembly and religion were only applied to the states piecemeal, beginning in the 1920s; the prohibition against state establishment of religion as late as 1947. Harold Laski noted in his treatise *The State in Theory and Practice* (1935):

"...how accidental was the union of capitalism with democracy. It was the outcome, not of an essential harmony of inner principle, but of that epoch in economic evolution when capitalism was in its phase of expansion. It had conferred political power upon the masses; but it was upon the saving condition that political power should not be utilized to cut at the root of capitalist postulates. It would offer social reforms so long as these did not jeopardize the essential relations of the capitalist system. When they did as occurred in the post-war [World War I] years, the contradiction between capitalism and democracy became the essential institutional feature of Western civilization."

Class Struggle and Proletarian Justice

Under capitalism, whatever its constitutional format—be it a democratic republic, a constitutional monarchy or a fascist dictatorship—the judiciary is an arm of the bourgeois state aimed at defending the interests of the ruling class against those whom it oppresses and exploits. This is as true of the august Supreme Court justices as it is of company judge Byrd Hogg in Kentucky, who issued injunctions against striking Harlan County miners in the '70s. The "independence of the judiciary" removes most judges from even a modicum of democratic control by having them appointed for life. Marx described the "separation of powers" as the product of an age in which "the royal power, the aristocracy and bourgeoisie are struggling for supremacy." Indeed, the Supreme Court of the American republic has much in common with the British monarchy's high court—the aristocratic House of Lords—whose members are either hereditary peers or are appointed for life in the name of the queen.

In contrast, under the proletarian democracy of a workers state, judges no less than other officials would be elected and subject to the democratic will of the

masses through the right of immediate recall. This is precisely what happened following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. People's Commissar for Justice Kursky laid out the Bolshevik policy: "The proletariat and the poorest peasantry, having conquered political power, were inevitably bound, in order to strengthen their power, to smash the whole juridical superstructure of the bourgeois state and, consequently, the courts. Henceforth the decisive voice in the courts must rest with the workers and poorest peasants in the person of assessors elected by the Soviets."

Under capitalist class "justice," ordinary criminals are subjected to vindictive "punishment" (revenge) and used as slave labor to produce license plates. Talk of rehabilitation is a cruel joke in America's prison hellholes, from Southern chain gangs to Rikers Island and Attica to Folsom Prison. In contrast, the institution of labor camps by the early Bolshevik government for the first time made possible the education and rehabilitation of those found guilty of crimes by the people's courts, through participation in social labor. This was later perverted by Stalin's anti-revolutionary bureaucracy into a monstrous police state, filling the camps with Old Bolsheviks as a way station to the execution wall. But in its first few years, the Soviet Russia of Lenin and Trotsky was the most democratic society on the face of the earth. Women, homosexuals and all national, ethnic and religious minorities were granted full and equal rights. Separation of church and state was strictly enforced. The right to free abortions was decreed and the death penalty was abolished as a standing part of the criminal code.

Today in America, every democratic

right supposedly enshrined in the Constitution is under attack. *Newsweek* (8 July) asks in its cover story on the Supreme Court, "How Far Right?" The answer is: pretty far. To women facing back-alley abortions, to the increasing numbers of blacks and Hispanics on death row, to everyone subjected to escalating cop terror, the liberals counsel reliance on Congress one day, on the courts the next, always on some institution of the capitalist system.

The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization launched by the Spartacist League in 1974, has initiated labor/black mobilizations against fascist terror in cities across the country. In Washington (1982), Philadelphia (1988) and elsewhere, the SL and PDC have been able to spark mass united-front actions, based on the power of organized labor, which have stopped the Klan and Nazis in their tracks. The PDC is also fighting for the freedom of framed-up ex-Black Panthers Geronimo Pratt in California and Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row in Pennsylvania. The campaign seeks to bring the force of labor, minorities, death penalty abolitionists, human rights organizations into the struggle to save Jamal's life.

We look to the tradition of the International Labor Defense, whose first secretary, James P. Cannon, was the founder of American Trotskyism. In the ILD's campaign to save Sacco and Vanzetti from the electric chair, Cannon elaborated the strategy on which we fight:

"One policy is the policy of the class struggle. It puts the center of gravity in the protest movement of the workers of America and the world. It puts all faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the justice of the courts. While favoring all possible legal proceedings, it calls for agitation, publicity, demonstrations—organized protest on a national and international scale....

"The other policy is the policy of 'respectability,' of the 'soft pedal' and of ridiculous illusions about 'justice' from the courts of the enemy. It relies mainly on legal proceedings. It seeks to blur the issue of the class struggle."

—"Who Can Save Sacco and Vanzetti?" *Labor Defender*, January 1927

Ultimately it is only socialist revolution that can end the system of capitalist lynch law and guarantee the rights of the oppressed. And for that it is necessary to build a revolutionary workers party modeled on the Russian Bolsheviks, following Lenin's dictum to serve as a "tribune of the people" in fighting all instances of capitalist injustice. Then the Supreme Court of injustice will join the other relics of the barbaric past, the medieval rack and the modern death chamber. ■

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Yugoslavia...

(continued from page 12)

with these provocations, the Yugoslav military command, overriding the civilian authorities in Belgrade, struck back with warplanes, artillery and additional tank units. Army chief of staff Blagoje Adzic, who saw his entire family massacred by the Ustasha in 1942, declared: "We are going to carry this war through to the end."

However, over the weekend of July 6-7 another cease-fire arrangement was brokered by the EEC on terms more favorable to Slovenia. The Ljubljana and Zagreb regimes are now slated to negotiate the conditions of secession with the central Yugoslav institutions. In the interim, Slovenian police will man the border posts as "agents" of the federal government. Everyone claims to stand for a peaceful solution and everyone knows the breakup of Yugoslavia will be a very bloody affair. Western leaders and the bourgeois media now deplore the revival of "primitive" nationalism in the Balkans. But the counterrevolution in Yugoslavia and throughout East Europe is orchestrated by the ever-so-civilized men of Wall Street and Washington, of Brussels and Frankfurt.

Western Imperialism and Counterrevolution in Yugoslavia

With the rotating collective presidency paralyzed, the leading figure in what remains of the central government has been the prime minister Ante Markovic. Since taking office in early 1989, Markovic has been the principal agent for the Western bankers in bleeding Yugoslavia. Industrial production has plummeted 30 percent in the last 18 months, over a quarter of the country's 20,000 enterprises are insolvent, workers have not been paid for weeks and 20 percent of the labor force is unemployed. Speaking to the Yugoslav legislature in April, Markovic lambasted those who talked of "social justice," declaring:

"There is no market without its own 'justice,' based on the superiority of the strong over the weak regardless of nation or republic. This must be the basis of economic, political and national programmes."

Lacking any popular support at home, Markovic's entire political strategy lies in convincing the Western powers to transform Yugoslavia as a whole into a neocolony of the Common Market. At a meeting of European leaders in London a few months ago, he argued: "It is not in the West's or in Europe's interests for an explosion to occur in Yugoslavia. European countries want to see Yugoslavia Europeanised, not Lebanised or Balkanised" (*Guardian* [London], 16 April).

Until the present crisis Markovic's line met with diplomatic success. In late March Bush wrote a letter to the Belgrade prime minister expressing "admiration" for his policies and support for a "united and democratic" Yugoslavia. Similar statements were made by West



WV Map

European heads of state. And no foreign capital recognized Slovenia and Croatia following their declarations of independence.

The right-wing nationalists in Slovenia and Croatia, and their followers abroad, were of course incensed that the Western powers favored preserving Yugoslavia, still a nominally Communist state. But Washington and the other Western capitals do not view the Yugoslav govern-

ment as any longer Communist. Markovic is just as committed to restoring capitalism as the secessionists in Ljubljana and Zagreb.

of Washington and Brussels, the issue is not the breakup of Communist Yugoslavia. It is whether capitalism is restored within the framework of Yugoslavia or through its dissolution into small, contending states.

International financiers and multinational corporations want to operate in a broad-based market with few restrictions on foreign trade and a convertible currency. What they are now facing in the

Scherl-Fellingga



During World War II, Croatian Ustashi fascist führer Ante Pavelic (left) unleashed slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews and gypsies.



Federal Committee for Information, Belgrade

Balkans is the creation of fanatically nationalistic micro-economies. One U.S. official lectured, "if they balkanize into little countries, they will set themselves back economically. And if they do, they shouldn't come to us to help them out of the economic mess that they created through runaway nationalism" (*Washington Post*, 17 May).

However, the Western rulers' main concern is not just that Balkanization is bad for business. It is that the breakup of Yugoslavia will usher in a wave of ethnic blood feuds and nationalist border wars in East Europe. Bulgaria and Greece have long-standing claims on Macedonia. The new, right-wing regime in Albania could well intervene in Kosovo, where the Albanian majority is brutally oppressed by Serbia. A border war between Serbia and Croatia over Krajina could rekindle a similar conflict between Hungary and Romania over Transylvania. And the secession of Slovenia and Croatia will mightily encourage Slovak separatists in Czechoslovakia. (Father Tiso's Slovakia, like Ustashi Croatia, was a clerical-fascist puppet state of Nazi Germany during World War II.)

In the land of the South Slavs, where the several peoples are far from geographically compacted but rather heavily interpenetrated, with a good deal of intermarriage besides, national separation and capitalist restoration will be a bloody affair. Undoubtedly, the most important repercussion of Yugoslavia's disintegration will be felt in the multinational Soviet Union, where the Baltic nationalists will be inflamed to fever pitch. This

would come at an embarrassing moment for the American and West European imperialists, since Gorbachev has just made a major move toward the outright restoration of capitalism. A new law allows Soviet industry to be sold off to private parties, including and especially foreign corporations.

Western financiers and industrialists would like to see an orderly restoration of capitalism in East Europe. But forces of counterrevolution, on the march from the Baltic to the Adriatic, are inseparable from fratricidal nationalism. And counterrevolution in East Europe has also intensified inter-imperialist rivalry over who will dominate and exploit this half of the continent.

German Fourth Reich Bids for Mastery of the Balkans

The West European bourgeoisies seized on the Yugoslav crisis to assert themselves vis-à-vis Washington. "This is the hour of Europe. It is not the hour of the Americans," proclaimed Luxembourg's Jacques Poos, who headed the EEC delegation to Belgrade. There is no small irony in the foreign minister of lilliputian Luxembourg proclaiming supremacy over the United States. But if the Luxembourg's posturing is comical, the strongest European power—newly reunified Germany—is dead serious about gaining hegemony in the Balkans and throughout East Europe. There is now a virtual all-party front in Bonn for the breakup of Yugoslavia.

A few days after Slovenia and Croatia declared independence, Germany broke the Western diplomatic united front in favor of preserving Yugoslavia. Chancellor Helmut Kohl declared that the presence of the Yugoslav federal army in Slovenia and Croatia was "completely unacceptable." Bonn foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher stated that if the decision were his alone, the Common Market would recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. And Volker Rühle, general secretary of the ruling Christian Democrats, called to "recognize the right to self-determination in Slovenia and Croatia," a demand trumpeted even more loudly by the opposition Social Democrats' spokesman Norbert Gansel.

The German rulers' newfound enthusiasm for "self-determination" in East Europe has naturally upset their West European partners, such as Spain, who have large, oppressed national minorities demanding independence. If the Croats can have it, why not the Basques and Corsicans? It is obscene for Kohl & Co. to preach about the "rights of minorities" when superexploited Turkish and Yugoslav *Gastarbeiter* ("guest workers") in Germany are treated like dirt and are attacked by neo-Nazi terrorists buoyed by the Greater Germany nationalist mania over reunification. In the mouths of Kohl, Genscher and the Social Democrats "self-determination" is but a formula for a new German-dominated empire in East Europe.

The masters of the Frankfurt banks and Ruhr factories believe that with reunifi-

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Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!

GM Workers Strike for Safety

JULY 14—In a strike over life-or-death safety issues, 3,200 auto workers at GM's Baltimore, Maryland minivan plant, members of UAW Local 239, have been on the picket line for over four weeks. On June 24, workers shut down the line in the middle of the day shift, after a union rep blew a whistle indicating the start of the strike. Since February, when General Motors laid off 400 workers, there has been a *tenfold* increase in injuries caused by the killing pace of the assembly line. One worker told the press the body shop is "like an amusement park—jobs come flying in and stop in front of you."

After absorbing 3,000 layoffs in the past few years, plus in-transfers of workers from closed-down GM plants, those who are left chasing the vans down the line tend to be older, high-seniority workers. Local 239 president Rodney Trump told the *Baltimore Sun* (28 June) that workers are driven 55 minutes every hour, without enough "time to get a drink of water, blow your nose or tie a shoestring." Strikers on the picket line told WV that many of the worst injuries are carpal tunnel injuries to the wrist from repetitive, heavy motion.

This is what GM calls "using workers to the maximum of their abilities," as the company moves toward "100 percent" use of its North American plants. Such three-shift, 24-hour production, common in European plants of the Big 3, results in huge profits—while other plants are shuttered.

It's about time there was a strike to defend beleaguered auto workers! But from Dodge Main in 1979 to Chrysler's Jefferson Avenue plant last year, the UAW tops have let the companies close scores of plants, giving away hundreds of thousands of jobs without so much as a whimper. Instead they wrap themselves in the American flag while spewing poisonous anti-Japanese and anti-Mexican protectionist swill.

GM workers have plenty of power. Baltimore is the only source of GM's immensely profitable minivans. Within hours of the strike's beginning, parts plants in the closely integrated supply network began laying off. On the Port of Baltimore docks right next to the plant, longshoremen are under attack from the state port



Strikers outside GM's Baltimore minivan plant, June 27. WV Photo

authority, which wants to slash the cost of labor, whip-sawing them against their union brothers in the Tidewater, Virginia ports. A win against GM, in Baltimore would have a big impact in the D.C./Baltimore area—and throughout the auto industry.

Strike BART! Government Hands Off!

OAKLAND—When their contract expired, nearly 2,000 union workers at Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) walked out at midnight, June 30. Both maintenance and clerical workers, members of Service Employees Local 790, and the train operators, who belong to Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1555, were eager to fight—BART is out to gut health care benefits and effectively freeze wages. But the union bureaucrats quickly caved in when California governor Pete Wilson invoked anti-strike legislation to order the unions back to work, citing the "great harm to the Bay Area in terms of gridlock and pollution" that would be caused by a strike.

Gridlock? Damn right! In order to win, a solid BART strike must be joined by Muni, AC Transit and the rest of the transit workers of the Bay Area. That would give a lot of grief to Wells Fargo and Bank of America, who are sitting on a financial San Andreas Fault. Instead the union tops folded: "Of course, we'll go back to work," said Milt Waalkens, president of Local 790 (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 July). ATU Local 1555 president Jim McGrath blustered that "a strike is unavoidable at the end of 60 days," giving Wilson and the BART board lots of time to wear down the workforce and impose their "last best offer" under which union members could end up paying a big chunk of their health insurance.

Around the country the capitalists and their political agents, Democrat and Republican, are slashing everything from wages to homeless shelters, with health care a particular target. A day before he imposed his strike-breaking order on the BART unions, Wilson banned a strike by 5,000 Los Angeles-area bus drivers. In the Bay Area, city workers from San Francisco to Richmond face budget-ax layoffs and wage freezes and speedup. Denouncing the "greed" of workers injured on the job, Wilson has added workers' compensation to his hit list. And California state workers, whose contract expired June 30, are being targeted with a 5 percent wage cut and another 15 percent cut in health care.

By hitting the bosses hard, BART workers are in a good position to show the rest of Bay Area and California labor how it's done. BART now carries 250,000 passengers a day—up 70 percent from when the unions last struck in 1979. And the freeways destroyed in the 1989 earthquake are still down. Labor has a strong hand, but if you play by the bosses' rules, you lose. Shove Wilson's "back to work" order down his throat—the only "illegal" strike is one that loses. Shut down the maintenance barns tight, and if they try to run trains with management scabs, mass picketing to shut down "Central" (the computerized control center in Oakland) could turn BART into one giant snafu.

The unions can make a strike wildly popular with the working people of the Bay Area by adopting as one of their demands free public transportation! To guarantee victory, BART workers must appeal to the Golden Gate Transit workers, whose contract just expired, to Muni drivers and to AC Transit to join them in a solid *Bay Area-wide transit strike!* ■

cation last year they have reversed the Third Reich's defeat in World War II. In Yugoslavia they are seeking to reverse Germany's defeat in World War I. One of the members of the Christian Democrats' recent "fact-finding" mission to Ljubljana and Zagreb (referred to as Laibach and Agram in the German press) was Otto von Habsburg, the 78-year-old son of the last ruler of the Austro-Hungarian Empire!

Before 1914, Slovenia and Croatia were provinces of this ramshackle empire, the junior partner of the Second German Reich. Serbia, then an independent monarchy, claimed territory in the Habsburg-ruled Balkans and looked to tsarist Russia as its great-power protector. It was the assassination of the

Austrian heir apparent by a Serbian nationalist in Bosnia which triggered the first imperialist world war.

After Germany's defeat, the victorious Western powers established Yugoslavia under the domination of the Serbian monarchy. During the interwar period, King Alexander's Yugoslavia was a client state of France and Britain. In reaction, the Croatian nationalists of the Ustasha appealed to fascist Italy and later Nazi Germany for support, and were installed in power when Hitler's Wehrmacht overran the Balkans in 1941.

The defeat of Nazi Germany by Soviet Russia and the struggle waged by the Communist partisans laid the basis for the reconstruction of Yugoslavia as a

socialized economy on a genuinely federal basis. Having come to power through a popular revolution, Tito was able to break with Stalin in 1948 and govern Yugoslavia as an "independent" "national-Communist" state tacking between Washington and Moscow.

Only Communism Can Defeat Murderous Nationalism

However, it was impossible to build socialism in one relatively backward Balkan country. Economically, the bureaucratically deformed Yugoslav workers state became heavily dependent upon exporting its surplus labor to capitalist Europe, particularly West Germany. The 1974-75 world depression hit the Yugoslav economy especially hard. Tito, like other East European Stalinist regimes, responded by mortgaging his country to Wall Street and Frankfurt bankers. As the Yugoslav economy was drained by debt peonage, the forces of nationalist ranchism grew apace.

During the past few years the loudest voice in Yugoslavia against the Croatian and Slovenian secessionists has been Serbian nationalist strongman "Slobo" Milosevic, who has had substantial sympathy among the federal army officer corps, which is heavily Serbian. However, Milosevic is more interested in building a Greater Serbia than in preserving Yugoslavia. He has been talking about forming a separate Serbian army with this aim. And in a dramatic about-face he has now given the green light to the secession of Slovenia. In his own way Milosevic realizes that Yugoslavia cannot be preserved on the basis of Serbian nationalism with or without the cover of "socialist" verbiage.

The basis for the Yugoslav Revolution of 1941-45, despite its Stalinist deformations, lay in the Communists' entire

previous struggle against nationalism, especially the then-dominant Serbian nationalism. In 1929, when King Alexander staged a royalist coup in the name of Yugoslav "unity," the Communist Party declared that "the great-Serbian bourgeoisie, with the support of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations" aimed to bring about "the division of oppressed nations, their even greater and more ruthless oppression and exploitation."

A decade and a half ago, we wrote:

"Now even the great achievements of the Yugoslav revolution—the overthrow of capitalist property relations and the overcoming of bloody national conflicts which racked bourgeois Yugoslavia—are themselves threatened by the bureaucracy's fostering (largely against its own will) of centrifugal forces. The conditions are being accumulated for a bloody civil war in Yugoslavia, and, given the regional economic differences, one which may well be cloaked in the form of a 'national liberation' struggle. This is the legacy of Titoism, of Stalinism 'with a human face.' It is a legacy that the working masses must overcome by constructing a Trotskyist vanguard party capable of carrying through a workers political revolution to oust the Tito bureaucracy and thereby create the conditions for international extension of the revolution."

—"The National Question in Yugoslavia," WV No. 110, 21 May 1975

Today, the peoples of Yugoslavia and throughout East Europe face ruthless oppression and exploitation at the hands of resurgent bourgeois nationalist forces manipulated by American and West European imperialism. Only a return to proletarian internationalism, to the principles of the Communist International under Lenin and Trotsky, can save the workers and peasants of East Europe—from the Balkans to the Baltic—from a new wave of communalist massacres and nationalist wars. ■

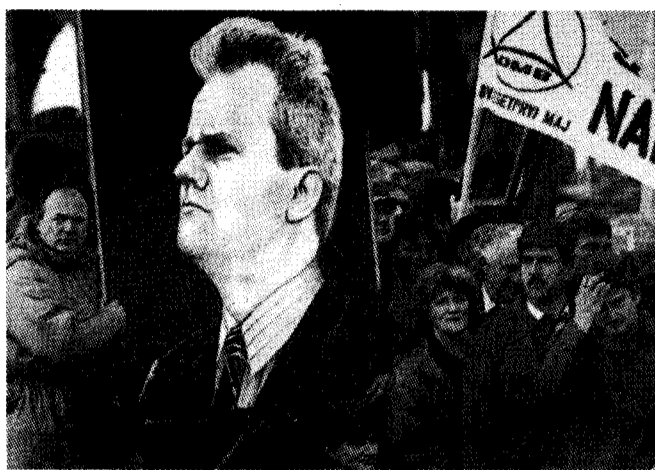


Workers demonstrate last year carrying portrait of Josip Broz Tito, the founder of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and leader of Communist partisans in World War II.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Bloody Nationalist Warfare and Counterrevolution

Yugoslavia Shattering



Ponzio/Lucky Star



Panorama



Sebastiano Visintin

In the vortex of new Balkan wars. Top left: Demonstration for Serbian ex-Stalinist nationalist demagogue Slobodan Milosevic. Bottom: Croatian militia confronts rebellious Serbian communities. Right: Tanks set aflame during fighting between Slovenian nationalist forces and Yugoslav federal army.

Long predicted and long prepared, the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia has begun. In late June the wealthiest, northernmost republics of Slovenia and Croatia—traditionally Roman Catholic and more Westernized—declared their independence. This led to several days of sharp fighting between Slovenian militias and the federal Yugoslav army. A cease-fire now in place can at most postpone the show-down for a few months. Meanwhile, armed conflict is escalating between the Croatian authorities and rebellious Serbian communities which rightly fear for their existence under the right-wing nationalist regime in Croatia's capital Zagreb.

The Western imperialists, having economically bled Yugoslavia for the past 15 years, are exploiting and manipulating the forces of local nationalism in the service of capitalist counterrevolution. The German Fourth Reich in particular is bidding for mastery of the Balkans by championing secession for Slovenia and Croatia. While Serbian papers accuse Germany of seeking hegemony over a "chain of Catholic nations" stretching "from the Baltic to the Adriatic," the Paris *Le Monde* (4 July) writes: "Having regained its unity and sovereignty, Germany is determined today to play, without complexes, a major role in a region with which it has always maintained close ties." And the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (14 July) headlined, "Phantom of the Fourth Reich."

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is now being ripped apart by the same forces defeated by Tito's Communist partisans in World War II—the fratricidal Croatian and Serbian national-

ists and their imperialist godfathers. The pro-Western Yugoslav liberal Aleksa Djilas (son of the dissident ex-Communist Milovan Djilas) recently wrote:

"The Partisans' simultaneous campaign against occupiers, collaborators, and Croatian, Serbian, and other nationalist extremists made it possible after the war for the Communists to present themselves as the sole unifying force and to receive support even from many non-Communists. Their postwar federal system was an irreversible step toward national equality among the nations that compose Yugoslavia."

—*The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919-1953* (1991)

Unfortunately, it was *not* irreversible. The Yugoslav Revolution was from the outset deformed by Stalinism. And now with the passing of the partisan generation and disintegration of the Titoist bureaucracy, the forces of fratricidal nationalism have returned with a vengeance.

Croatia's new leader Franjo Tudjman, a former general and history professor, is a notorious apologist for the wartime Croatian fascist Ustashi regime, which killed hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews and gypsies under the protection of the Nazi Wehrmacht. Serbian irregulars now fighting Tudjman's gendarmes call themselves "Chetniks" after the Serbian royalist guerrillas who slaughtered Croatian villagers and attacked the Communist partisans. Croatian information minister Hitrec remarked that "bloody battles are likely in Croatia, with thousands of dead," compared to which "what happened in Slovenia will be remembered as something out of Disneyland" (*La Repubblica* [Rome], 7-8 July).

Only the construction of a genuinely communist party can counter the new wave of genocidal massacres which again threaten the peoples of Yugoslavia.

Slovenia Overcome by Nationalist Mania

For the past few months Croatia has been in a state of low-level civil war between armed Serbian communities and the nationalist regime in Zagreb. Serbs constitute 10 percent of the republic's population and are a majority in the region of Krajina. Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic—erstwhile Stalinist party boss turned nationalist demagogue—is demanding that this region become part of a Greater Serbia if Croatia secedes from Yugoslavia. And Milosevic has been bargaining secretly with Croatian *Führer* Tudjman over redrawing the borders, including carving up Bosnia-Herzegovina, with its predominantly Muslim population.

Thus the Tudjman regime in Zagreb has moved more cautiously in carrying out its declaration of independence than the Slovenian secessionists. When Slovenian militias took over the border

posts, tore down the Yugoslav flag and hoisted their own, the army sent in tanks and armored personnel carriers to retake control of the international frontiers.

At this point the European bourgeoisies moved in to act as arbiters of Yugoslavia's fate. On June 30, a delegation from the European Common Market (EEC) announced a cease-fire arrangement. Slovenia and Croatia would suspend implementing their declarations of independence for three months, while federal army units returned to their barracks. Key to the agreement was that the "moderate" Croatian nationalist Stipe Mesic would take over Yugoslavia's rotating collective presidency. Mesic was to assume this post in May but was blocked by Milosevic's veto.

But by now Slovenian leaders in their capital of Ljubljana were in the grip of nationalist mania and illusions of martial grandeur. They refused to give up the border posts. They blockaded army units seeking to return to barracks, demanding these surrender their weapons, held army families hostage and even ambushed troops withdrawing from the fray. Faced

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Havana Eyewitness

Cuba in the Cross Hairs of Yankee Imperialism

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