

Fourth Reich Wins in DDR Vote

D-Mark Elections in East Germany

BERLIN, March 19—The fateful March 18 Volkskammer elections place the social gains and the existence of the DDR in mortal danger. Western bourgeois media such as the *New York Times* (19 March) quickly proclaimed the vote "a death sentence for the German Democratic Republic" and trumpeted the "end of Communism." The leader of the victorious Christian Democrats called for a broad coalition with a two-thirds majority, in order to bury the country with a simple parliamentary act.

But the heavy vote for reunification with capitalist West Germany threatens the livelihood and security of millions. With their backs to the wall, working people will find themselves forced into defensive struggles. And mobilizing the tremendous power of the working class can throw a wrench into the campaign for *Anschluss*. For questions as weighty as the existence of a workers state will not be decided by pieces of paper in a ballot box.

The near-majority for the right-wing "Alliance for Germany," bought and paid for by Kohl's West-CDU (Christian Democrats), will certainly encourage forces pushing for a quick annexation by West Germany. The SPD Social Demo-



Reuters

CDU head Helmut Kohl (above) campaigned as "chancellor of our German Fatherland," the first to use that title since Adolf Hitler. German nationalists wave banner of "Germany One Fatherland."



Der Spiegel

crats were decisively defeated, winning only 20 percent of the vote. It was a vote for the D-mark, and many no doubt figured: instead of voting for the social-democratic lackey, go for the banker with the money in his pocket.

The PDS (Party of Democratic Social-

ism, new name of the discredited SED Stalinist party which ran the DDR for over 40 years) came back from oblivion with 17 percent. It lost its worker base, but managed to win the support of various other groups who will be under the gun in a capitalist Greater Germany. Yet

far from opposing the drive to liquidate the DDR, these Stalinist leftovers capitulated at every step. The PDS' belly-crawling policy was summed up in a leaflet distributed in Rostock: "We Are One People. 1:1" In other words,

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Trotskyists Say: "Defend the Gains of Our Workers State"

NATO Imperialism Incites Breakup of USSR

Lithuania Moves to Secede

On March 12 the Lithuanian parliament voted to secede from the Soviet Union. Under the guise of "independence," the nationalist and anti-Communist Lithuanian Sajudis movement is driving this Baltic republic headlong down the road of counterrevolution. Abetted by the imperialist NATO countries and encouraged by Gorbachev's "market reforms," Lithuanian nationalists are the conscious "vanguard" of capitalist restoration in the Baltics. Their twin enemies are the sizable non-Balt proletarian population, and the gains of the 1917 October Revolution. Cries of "Lithuania without Bolsheviks" rang out as the parliamentary vote was totaled, and the "Workers of the World

Unite" on the platform was replaced with the feudal knight-and-horse coat of arms that was the symbol of the reactionary, anti-Semitic regime of the interwar period.

The March 12 declaration was accompanied by resolutions reinstating the 1938 constitution and dropping "Soviet Socialist" from the name of the Lithuanian Republic. Far from being "democratic," the interwar Lithuanian Republic was a right-wing dictatorship under Antanas Smetona, who took power through a coup in 1926 and ruled until Soviet forces ousted him in 1940, when they moved into the Baltic region as a defensive military move against the threatened German invasion.

At the time Trotsky pointed out: "It cannot be doubted that control over the military bases on the Baltic coast represents strategic advantages." But he went on:

"The invasion of the Red Army is seen by the populations not as an act of liberation but as an act of violence, and thereby facilitates the mobilization of world public opinion against the USSR by the imperialist powers. That is why it will bring in the last instance more harm than advantages to the USSR."

—"The World Situation and Perspectives,"
Writings [1939-40]

Significantly, the last time Lithuania declared independence was the day after Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet

Union in June 1941! Now, in the Washington, D.C. "legation" of the prewar Lithuanian regime (sustained for the last 50 years on stolen gold reserves), they broke out the champagne. In the NATO capitals, the vote was greeted with applause—but hardly surprise. For months, the Sajudis has been following a tactical plan "elaborated with the help of US constitutional lawyers" (*Independent* [London], 10 March). For the moment, the imperialists in Washington, London and Bonn are refraining from the provocation of formal recognition—they have muted their response in the expectation Lithuania will fall into their hands like an overripe fruit. Also they

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Social Democrats Against the Portuguese Revolution, 1974-76

SPD: Trojan Horse for Counterrevolution

We print below an article adapted from *Arprekorr* (Workers Press Correspondence) No. 27, 13 March 1990. *Arprekorr* is published by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD), the Trotskyist party of East and West Germany. Other selections from *Arprekorr* appear on pages 6-9.

The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany insists that the SPD is a Trojan horse for counterrevolution in the DDR. The SPD is what Lenin called a bourgeois workers party, a party based on the institutions of the working class but committed to the defense of capitalism. In the workers states, the social democracy acts as an agency for capitalist restoration. In the capitalist countries it derails the struggle of the working class for

socialism, in "peaceful" times trying to lull the workers off with petty reforms, at other times working to bloodily suppress revolution.

An example of this is the role of the SPD in Portugal in the period 1974-76. Following the so-called "revolution of the carnations" (25 April 1974) which ousted the dictatorship established by Salazar, there were revolutionary working-class struggles. There was a wave of mass strikes and occupations; in some areas workers started organizing councils. The prerevolutionary situation in Portugal in that period is an example of the possibility of socialist revolution in the West, and of the necessity for a revolutionary party of the working class to realize that possibility. While the Communist Party channeled



Portugal, 1975: Social democrats, run by Willy Brandt's SPD and funded by CIA, led mob attacks on Communist Party offices.

the militancy of the workers into support to a "left wing" of the officer corps, the Movimento das Forças Armadas (Armed Forces Movement), the Portuguese Socialist Party (SP) under the leadership of Mario Soares was the spearhead of open counterrevolution.

And the puppet master of this social-democratic agency for counterrevolution was none other than the Bonn SPD. In fact, the Portuguese SP was founded only a year before the upsurge in Lisbon, in 1973—in Bonn! From the very beginning this party was a creature of the SPD, dependent on it financially as well as programmatically. The main task of the SP was to make sure Portugal stayed inside the anti-Soviet NATO alliance. In the name of "pluralistic democracy" the SP organized against the workers movement and, in particular, against the working-class base of the CP.

In 1975 the SP was at the forefront of openly reactionary mobilizations which burned down Communist Party offices around the country. At this time the American bourgeoisie's mouthpiece, the *New York Times* (25 September 1975), reported that vast amounts of U.S. money were being funneled to the SP. Citing "official sources in Washington," it wrote:

"United States money for the Portuguese Socialist party and other parties is being funneled by the Central Intelligence Agency through West European Socialist parties and labor unions, the sources said. The C.I.A. involvement, the sources said, amounted to several million dollars a month over the last several months...."

"Until the spring most of the Western aid to anti-Communist forces in Portugal was being given secretly by the West German Social Democratic party and the Belgian Socialist party without any American involvement."

This report was later confirmed in public by an official of the U.S. State Department.

The timing of the CIA funds to the Portuguese SP coincided with the period

during which the SP was organizing anti-Communist lynch mobs. In the absence of a revolutionary party to organize the working class to resist the counterrevolutionary offensive, the result of the SP-led mobilizations was to strengthen the forces of the right.

This cooperation between the SPD and the CIA was not, and is not, unusual. The SPD was reorganized in the West after World War II under the aegis of the American occupation forces as an instrument for neutralizing class struggle after the smashing of the Third Reich and for purging the working class of Communist influence. In the years that followed the SPD played a special role as an ally of the CIA in Europe, East and West.

Today the SPD serves its capitalist masters in West Germany (BRD) in acting as the spearhead for annexation of the DDR. The SPD refused to participate in the anti-fascist mobilization at the Soviet war memorial at Treptow on January 3, and then led the imperialist campaign of vilification against Treptow.

The central demand of the SPD-East is for a "market economy"—i.e., capitalism. While Willy Brandt makes sugary speeches about how the poorer sections of society should not find themselves under the wheels of the train of capitalist reunification, social-democratic [West German union federation] DGB head Ernst Breite openly attacks the FDGB [DDR union federation] for demanding too many rights for DDR trade unions. And now the SPD is lining up in Kohl's campaign for *Anschluss* of the DDR under Article 23 of the BRD Basic Law. While masking its dirty work on behalf of the Frankfurt bankers with talk about "social justice," the SPD seeks to turn political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy into capitalist counterrevolution. Social democracy is truly a Trojan horse for counterrevolution. ■



TROTSKY

For Workers Power in Germany!

After enduring four years of imperialist slaughter in World War I, in November 1918 German workers and soldiers rose up, overthrew the Kaiser and formed workers and soldiers councils. The leaders of the Spartakusbund (Spartacus League), Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, warned that if the working class did not take power into its own hands, it would be crushed by the still potent forces of counterrevolution (centrally the old bourgeois officer corps). However, the Social



LENIN

Democratic agents of German imperialism derailed the proletarian revolution and restored the bourgeois order in blood. Luxemburg and Liebknecht were killed by the Freikorps fascists acting in league with the Social Democratic government.

Today, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany upholds the revolutionary internationalist banner of Luxemburg, Liebknecht and Lenin.

The imperialist bourgeoisie, the last of the exploiting classes, exceeds all of its predecessors in brutality, unabashed cynicism, and depravity. It will defend tooth and nail what is most sacred to it, its profit and its right to exploit, with the same cold malice displayed through the history of its colonial policies and in the last war. Against the proletariat it will move heaven and hell. It will mobilize the peasantry against the cities. It will incite backward layers of the working class against the socialist vanguard. Its officers will organize massacres....

All this resistance must be broken, step by step, with an iron hand and relentless force. The violence of the bourgeois counterrevolution must be met by the revolutionary violence of the proletariat. The proletarian masses must respond to the attacks, intrigues, and conspiracies of the bourgeoisie with their own unshakable clarity, vigilance, and activity, always at the ready. They must reply to the ever-present danger of counterrevolution by arming the people and disarming the ruling classes; to the bourgeoisie's obstructionist parliamentary maneuvering they must counterpose the vigorous organization of associated workers and soldiers—the concentrated, united, and heightened power of the working class. Only the united front of the entire German proletariat, south and north, urban and rural, workers and soldiers; only living, intellectual contact between the German revolution and the International; and only the extension of the German revolution to a world proletarian revolution can lay the granite foundation upon which the house of the future can be erected.

—Rosa Luxemburg, "What the Spartacus League Wants" (December 1918)

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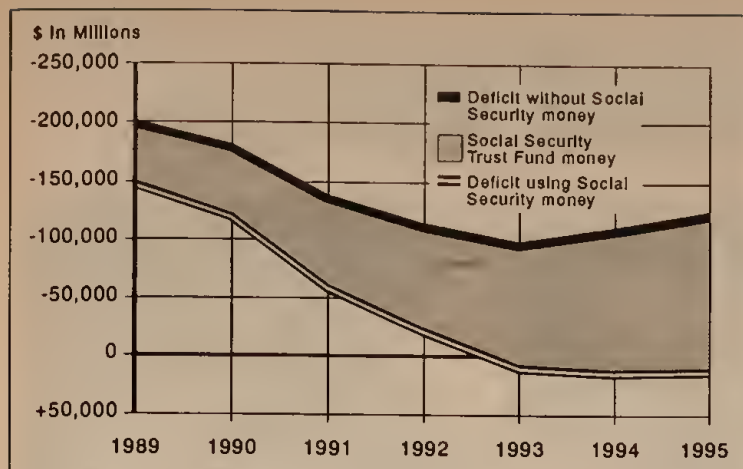
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SPD campaigns in DDR as an accomplice of Kohl's drive for an Imperialist Greater Germany.



Source: OMB 1990 Budget Estimates

AFL-CIO Graphic

Bush's voodoo economics: using Social Security reserves to cover massive budget deficits. Retirees depend on Social Security benefits to survive.



Greenwood/Gamma-Liaison

Pentagon Loots Social Security

Remember when presidential candidate George Bush swore "No new taxes"? Well, take a look at your paychecks since New Year's. You're taking home less than you were in '89 due to increased Social Security (FICA) deductions. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. Last year the federal government spent more than \$50 billion of these Social Security deductions, not for anyone's retirement, but to pay for everything from Star Wars first-strike missile systems to \$600 toilet seats for the Pentagon. While the taxpayers were reading George Bush's lips, "Poppy" was picking the public's pockets. As the president of the liberal Economic Policy Institute put it, "It's been the dirty little secret of economic policy-making of the past decade."

The scam works like this. A 1983 law increased payroll taxes to assure Social Security benefits for the huge "baby boom" generation which will begin retiring in the year 2010 or so. But the government has been helping itself to the surplus thus generated and treats it as revenue. The Institute for Policy Innovation pointed out:

"...the federal government has already borrowed and spent the \$170 billion in [Social Security] reserves; it will borrow and spend the \$70 billion collected this year; and, at least until the federal budget debt is eliminated, it will borrow and spend all the reserves generated in the future."

—Washington Post, 26 February

Bush uses the scam to claim he's winning the battle of the budget, that the federal deficit is shrinking and that in fiscal year 1989 it was "only" \$152 billion. He's lying. The true deficit, not including the Social Security surplus and \$71 billion snatched from other government funds, was \$275 billion. Bush is giving voodoo economics a bad name.

The lid blew off in January when New York Senator Daniel Moynihan introduced legislation to roll back this year's increase in Social Security payroll tax deductions. It was an embarrassing turning of the tables for the White House. Throughout the Reagan/Bush decade the Democrats have taken a pounding from the GOP for being the party of big taxes and big spending. Moynihan's bill put Bush in the position of opposing a cut in payroll taxes while he's simultaneously pushing a cut in capital gains taxes, 83 percent of the benefits of which would go to those making more than \$100,000 annually. As Brookings Institution economist Barry Bosworth put it, "How can the President claim Moynihan's tax cut is bad because it goes for workers, but his own tax cut is good because it goes for capitalists?" (*U.S. News & World Report*, 29 January).

The administration's first response was scare tactics. "I'm not going to do it to the older people of the country," Bush said, as if he weren't already "doing it" to them with a vengeance. He followed

Mugging the Elderly

up with a budget which included the Social Security Integrity and Debt Reduction Fund. With a name like that you know it's time to grab your wallet. It calls for the feds to *gradually* stop using the Social Security surplus for operating expenses. Even GOP Senate leader Bob Dole called this one "phased integrity."

Moynihan's proposal had politicians in both capitalist parties up in arms. Right-wing Georgia Republican Newt Gingrich called Moynihan "irresponsible," because "he's led every senior citizen to ask what happened to their money" (*Newsweek*, 5 February). On the other side of the aisle, big-shot Democratic Congressman Dan Rostenkowski called Moynihan's bill "a disaster."

What really upsets the bourgeois legislators is the public debunking of the myths surrounding the Social Security system. Foremost among these is the belief that Social Security is fundamentally a retirement account financed by payroll deductions made during working years, that the government is saving your money, with interest, for you. It isn't true. Your weekly deductions pay the benefits now due to *current* retirees. What's left for future retirees after the government takes the surplus? Nothing but IOUs from the Treasury and when they come due, they'll have to be paid off with new taxes and/or reduced benefits.

Since each generation pays for the retirement of its parents and grandparents, it becomes clear that Social Security

deductions are just another form of taxes. But unlike income tax, Social Security is paid at the same rate by all income brackets, and is cut off at \$51,300. Those making more than this amount don't pay a dime of Social Security taxes on the difference. The tax thus discriminates against wage earners, part-time workers and women and minorities, who are more likely to earn most of their income in wages, while those receiving interest, dividends, capital gains and the like pay no Social Security taxes on that income. If you make \$51,300 this year, the FICA deduction from your pay will be the same as someone making \$500,000.

While other taxes were cut during the Reagan years, payroll taxes went up. During the 1980s, the share of federal revenue accounted for by Social Security taxes rose by 23 percent. The share coming from corporate taxes fell by the same amount. The celebrated Reagan tax cut? For the rich, it was great; for working people, it didn't happen.

"What Peace Dividend?"

The breakdown of Stalinist rule throughout the Soviet bloc and the fracturing of the Warsaw Pact has spawned a widespread debate over how best to spend the "peace dividend," the billions of dollars supposedly no longer needed by the Pentagon and therefore available for everything from housing to day care.

The administration quickly put the kibosh on all that "swords into plowshares" talk. Bush's budget director Richard Darman derided as "a true Wonderland phenomenon" the notion of "spending 50 times a dividend that has not yet definitively materialized" (*New York Times*, 27 January). Indeed not. Aside from some Army troop reductions, Bush's Pentagon budget maintains military spending at the bloated level established under Reagan, a level *double* that of the late 1970s.

Bush's 1991 budget calls for the Pentagon to get \$295 billion including funding for the B-2 bomber and other new strategic weapons systems. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney has stressed that the U.S. will continue to need a large navy to deal with "brushfire" conflicts around the world. This means imperialist assaults like the rape of Panama. One cut suggested by Cheney, the grounding of Bush's airborne command center, was rejected by Bush himself. Why? Because nothing has altered U.S. imperialism's basic goal: the destruction of the USSR. Gorbachev's capitulations and givebacks only embolden the imperialists. As Bush himself said, "What peace dividend?" What Bush does propose to cut in 1991 includes mass transit grants, cost-of-living pension increases to retired Federal employees, subsidies to Amtrak, payments to poor families for home heating and weatherization, and grants to public libraries. About half of the \$36.5 billion in deficit reduction that Bush proposes comes out of housing, transportation and Medicare. It adds up to more industrial rot, more unemployment, more homelessness.

It is worse, of course, for black people. One out of three blacks now live below the poverty line. Unemployment is double that of whites. Nearly 30 percent of all AIDS victims are black. As two Harlem doctors pointed out in the January *New England Journal of Medicine*, due to an epidemic of diseases of poverty, "black men in Harlem were less likely to reach the age of 65 than men in Bangladesh."

Reagan/Bush's America: "Socialism for the Rich"

Yet even as hundreds of thousands of poor and working people were being driven onto the streets, government officials were lining their pockets with taxpayers' money. At the Department of Housing and Urban Development, where under Reagan federal money for housing was cut from \$33 billion to \$7 billion, more than 100 Reagan administration appointees have been implicated in scandals and rip-offs.

Consider Bush's plan for the taxpayer to bail out the Savings and Loan banks (S&Ls). To take just one example, there's Texas billionaire Robert Bass.

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Harvey Finkle/Impact Visuals

Homeless sheiter in Philadelphia. Black poor are victims of bipartisan cutback racism.

The Bosses' Press Discovers Mine Safety

It is rare to read anything in the *New York Times* about worker safety, so we took a closer look at the statistics in a recent *Times* piece (22 January) headlined "U.S. and Soviet Miners Meet and Find Surprises." Quoting a visiting Soviet miner as saying "They'd spit on our mines," the *Times* reported that U.S. miners were stunned to learn that "10,000 Soviet miners died on the job from 1979 to 1989, roughly eight times the figure in the United States."

Hold on a minute. In the next paragraph one finds out that according to the *Times* there are 2.5 million Soviet miners, compared to 140,000 in the U.S. That means the *fatality rate* is more than twice as high in the U.S. (one in 112 miners killed in the U.S.; one in 250 in the Soviet Union). Even the figures from the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), which are diluted with office workers and contractors, show a U.S. fatality rate of one in 215.

But what the labor-hating *Times* doesn't mention is that every measure of protection in U.S. mines was won through hard class struggle, and paid for with the blood of thousands of miners maimed and killed over the years. Island Creek Coal Company's Virginia-Pocahontas No. 6, the mine the Soviets toured, is notorious for high levels of deadly methane gas—levels which MSHA would



Soviet and Virginia coal miners compare notes. Utah's 1984 Wilberg mine disaster—27 dead (right). Fatality rate for U.S. coal miners is double that for Soviet miners.



UMW Journal

allow to go up under proposed changes. Max Kennedy, UMW mine safety committeeman at the mine, told *Workers Vanguard* that "It's a show mine. But not because of Island Creek. It's because the safety committee at the mine kept it in that condition."

The *Times* claims that the Soviet miners' tour was "organized and paid for by the A.F.L.-C.I.O." Not quite. The *Bulletin* of the AFL-CIO Department of International Affairs (January 1990) says the cash came from the U.S. Information

Agency (Langley, Virginia branch?). The "AFL-CIO" tops toasted the Soviet miners at a Washington dinner, where professional anti-Communist labor traitors like teachers union president Albert Shanker and Bricklayers president John Joyce presided. And while they were touring the U.S., the anti-Communist "Radio Liberty" broadcast interviews with the miners back to the USSR.

The Soviet miners strikes last summer shook the Stalinist bureaucracy. Provoked by the anti-working-class "re-

forms" of Gorbachev's perestroika, the strikes spread across the Soviet Union, with workers creating instruments of proletarian power like strike committees and workers militias, and raising anti-bureaucratic political demands. Far from the anti-Communist dreams of the *New York Times*, and their friends in the AFL-CIO gang, Soviet miners were not fighting for capitalism and the "freedom" to be treated like the Pittston miners, or like Polish workers under the "free market" whip of Solidarność. ■

Social Security...

(continued from page 3)

In December 1988, Bass took over the Stockton, California-based American Savings and Loan Company (total assets \$30 billion) for a total investment of \$500 million. The company will be split into a "good" S&L to hold \$15.4 billion in healthy assets and a "bad" one that will liquidate \$14.4 billion in sour loans and other assets. The Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation gets what's left after the Bass Group gets 70 percent of the healthy S&L. As part of the deal Bass was also rewarded with some \$300 million in tax benefits. Should he decide to sell his "healthy" part of the S&L, Bass stands to make a cool \$1 billion or more.

It seems that no financial scam today is complete without a tie-in to the Nicaraguan contras. Some Texas S&Ls appear to have made unsecured mortgage loans to these CIA-organized terrorists. The *People's Daily World* (9 February) quotes a report in the *Houston Post* that "the CIA has intervened in criminal investigations involving agency operatives accused of S&L fraud."

Bush estimates the tab for hailing out the S&Ls at \$90 billion. Forty billion

dollars is to come out of the Treasury, increasing the budget deficit, and the other \$50 billion from a government-backed bond issue. The combined interest payments alone to finance the bailout will run about \$10 billion a year. Financial experts agree the real cost to taxpayers will be more like \$200 billion. That's \$200 billion of *our* money! The bankers make bad loans and we pay for it.

Nobody likes to pay taxes, least of all the people hardest hit by them—working people—and there are plenty of other people who'd like nothing better than to get their hands on a "revenue" around the second week of April. Yet under bourgeois leadership "tax revolts" can easily take on a reactionary and racist character. Many whites, certainly including workers, believe their high taxes are due to "welfare state" liberalism primarily benefiting black people. In the early '70s Reagan exploited this myth and identified himself with California's tax-cutting "Proposition 13" forces.

The Democrats paved the way for Reagan reaction, and the wholesale dismantling of social programs in the '80s was very much a *hipartisan* operation. No one personifies cutback racism better than Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The notorious 1965 Moynihan report pioneered the now-widespread view that black poverty is caused by the failure of black family life, not the workings of the "last

Daniel "Maligned Neglect" Moynihan



hired, first fired" capitalist system. As Nixon's adviser on domestic affairs, in the early 1970s Moynihan coined the phrase "benign neglect" to justify scrapping the Great Society programs enacted to cool down the black militancy of the '60s. Moynihan is the principal author of the most viciously racist legislation in decades—the 1988 Family Security Act—designed to throw millions of poor black mothers off the welfare rolls (see "Genocide U.S.A.," *WV* No. 463, 21 October 1988). And just last month the Democratic Senator from New York enraged students at posh Vassar College when he reportedly told a Jamaican-born woman to "go back where she came from" if she didn't like the U.S.

So how is it that Moynihan is now being denounced as a "fiscal radical" and populist demagogue for proposing to roll back the Social Security tax increase? Moynihan is a vicious bourgeois politician, but he is by no means stupid. He understands that in this deeply racist society the political base of support for Social Security is fundamentally broader than for welfare, food stamps, Head Start, Medicaid and other programs seen as mainly benefiting ghetto blacks and Hispanics.

A majority of the American people—including politically right-wing, white homeowners—are depending on Social Security benefits for part or all of their retirement income. Tens of millions of

people in all walks of life have parents and grandparents who depend on Social Security to survive. Any reduction in these benefits means they will have to pay more out of their own pockets to keep their aged relatives from starving and freezing. Thus any suspicion that the Social Security system is being manipulated, ripped off or mismanaged is politically explosive. As a defender of the bourgeois order, Moynihan is quite right to worry that the Treasury spending the Social Security surplus "invites massive loss of trust" in the government.

Under the last ten years of Reagan and Bush the government cut taxes for the wealthy while raising them for workers and ripping off the Social Security reserves. But it still wasn't enough to finance the massive military buildup against the USSR, so they borrowed massively from the Japanese and German hankers, turning the U.S. from the world's biggest creditor nation into the world's biggest debtor. The stage is set for a financial collapse and another worldwide depression.

For working people there will never be "tax justice" or any other kind of justice under capitalism. The struggles of workers and the oppressed will be fought on the picket lines and in the streets. To win, these battles require a multiracial workers party to lead the fight against the rotting capitalist system and replace it with a rational, socialist society. ■

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For Mass Picketing to Shut Down Greyhound!

The strike by 9,000 drivers, mechanics and clerks against Greyhound, now in its fourth week, is widely popular among working people and minorities across the country. Like the Pittston coal and Eastern airline strikes, they know the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) strikers are on the front line against the capitalists' war on labor. After Greyhound driver Robert Waterhouse was crushed to death by a scab bus on picket duty in Redding, California, union members turned out at rallies from New York to San Francisco on March 9 to honor this labor martyr.

The strikers want to fight—after all the givebacks in 1983 and 1987 there's nothing left to give. But Greyhound chairman Fred Currey is playing hardball—he has a \$50 million war chest to hire scabs and break the union for good. As we go to press, Currey has walked out of negotiations, labeling the strikers "violent"—after his scabs have run down pickets across the country! A bosses' press campaign violence-baits the union, while the cops rough up pickets on the line. The labor-hating *New York Times* notes the strike shows "the collapse of traditional labor relations.... Hiring permanent replacements means a labor strike is now a fight to the death, rather than a periodic test of wills."

But it is a "fight to the death" where the strikers are being knifed in the back by the union bureaucracy. When Brother Waterhouse was murdered, the ATU tops' first response was to take down the picket lines! They're afraid of the kind of outpouring of labor support that the



Union militants stop scab bus at March 9 San Francisco rally to honor Robert Waterhouse, striking driver killed by scab bus.

1983 Greyhound strike brought out. Then the union tops dissipated the picket lines and lost the strike with their useless consumer boycotts and reliance on capitalist politicians and city council resolutions. And they're repeating that defeatist strategy today. At bus terminals and garages across the country, picket lines are kept small or nonexistent.

At the San Francisco rally on March 9 union militants abandoned the hot air speeches of the trade-union piecards and rushed across the street to block a scab

bus. SF Central Labor Council chief Walter Johnson and longshore Local 10 president Jimmy Herman crossed the street to pull back the pickets. One class-struggle union militant countered these company cops: "Strikes are won on the picket line, not across the street. They didn't win in '34 [SF General Strike] by going across the street." A striker responded to Johnson, "We've been here since 4 a.m. Who the hell is he?" Another striker, a veteran of the 1983 strike, pointed out another bureaucrat, "I re-

member that guy, he's the one who let the buses go through in '83!"

At the New York City rally, the speakers list was a veritable rogues' gallery of slick-talking bureaucrats who have recently sold out their members' struggles, from Jan Pierce of the CWA (NYNEX phone workers) to Leroy Washington of the IAM (Eastern strike). The 600-strong rally chanted, "Scabs must go!" But the policy of Greyhound ATU Local 1202 president Harold Mendlowitz, who is lionized by the fake-socialist Greyhound World Party, is to push the consumer boycott and rely on the bosses' courts to stop Greyhound from hiring scabs in New York City. So Greyhound hires across the river in New Jersey, and the buses continue to run out of Manhattan's Port Authority bus terminal.

No wonder some frustrated strikers are driven to desperate attempts to stop the buses on the highway. But this strike is popular—especially among the thousands of blacks, Hispanics and working poor who ride Greyhound buses and solidarize with the largely minority Greyhound workforce. To win, the ATU must win on the picket line. The AFL-CIO traitors wring their hands and whine that Taft-Hartley stops them from having mass pickets and secondary boycotts, but any good unionist knows that unions were illegal until the workers organized, fought and won their recognition against the bosses, the cops and the courts. The only illegal strike is one that loses. Greyhound strikers must forge a new leadership that would wage an all-out fight to stop the buses from rolling! ■

Motorman Victimized Philly Transit Death Trap

The worst mass transit crash in Philadelphia's history occurred March 7, when a crowded morning rush-hour Southeast Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) train derailed just outside the 30th Street station. Three people were killed, 150 injured. A traction motor on the fourth car of the six-car train broke loose, tripping a track switch that sent the car along two separate tracks, slamming it into a tunnel pillar and twisting it like a soda can. Massive death was averted only because the wrecked car carried only 40 passengers. The car just in front of it was crammed with over 200 commuters.

In the grisly carnage, there were acts of genuine courage and heroism. Doctors, in scenes resembling Civil War-era field hospitals, desperately tried to save the lives of trapped victims by amputating limbs with a buck knife borrowed from a fireman. The conductor, Steven Young, despite severe injuries, immediately began kicking out windows as smoke filled the car, and attempted to help the most seriously injured passengers.

This tragedy was no accident! This was a crime of capitalism. The train cars on that SEPTA line are 30-year-old Budd Co. cars. For 20 years it has been known the traction motors break loose. Extra support brackets installed in recent years



Three dead, 150 injured as 30-year-old subway car derails.

did not hold. An official of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 234 told the *Philadelphia Daily News* (9 March) that mechanics reported "it's common that the motor bolt shears off and breaks from the wear." "Drag detectors" designed to warn the motorman of anything dragging beneath the train did not activate. The post-crash inspection by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) found over half the trac-

tion motor supports to be faulty. Yet SEPTA's in-house investigation found that none were below standard. Why? Because SEPTA has not followed even the feds' minimal standards for 30 years!

The obscene sequel to every recent made-by-capitalism disaster is again being played out in Philly. The SEPTA bosses suspended the motorman, Melvin Thomas, claiming drug tests indicated he used cocaine the day before the accident.

So another innocent worker is scapegoated to cover up for this rotting system. The TWU in Philly must mobilize to defend Thomas. Reinstate him now!

SEPTA boss Louis Gambaccini glibly fobs off the crash with the statement that these 30-year-old cars are "nearing their life expectancy." Eight days before the wreck, Michael Beerhalter, a 12-year veteran signal maintainer, was slammed from behind and killed by a SEPTA train. Because of nearby construction, Beerhalter couldn't hear the train. He never knew what hit him. Beerhalter was an outspoken union activist in TWU Local 234. He fought against SEPTA's unsafe and deadly practices, especially for signalmen, who often work alone on the tracks with no flagman and no lanterns to warn oncoming trains. Beerhalter paid with his life. For the SEPTA bosses, Beerhalter is just another part which reached its "life expectancy."

The crisis of capitalism is played out on the large scale in wars and depressions. But the slow, steady decay of American capitalism also continues to claim victims every day. Planes fall from the sky, trains wreck, refineries explode into fiery infernos. And usually some innocent worker is made the scapegoat. Right now, the individual acts of courage of a pilot, a flight attendant or transit worker shutting down some deathtrap transport are all that stand between innocent people and probable death. Union-run safety committees with the power to shut down all and any unsafe operations are increasingly an immediate life-and-death necessity. But it is the workers' struggle for power, ripping this irrational, decrepit system out of the hands of the capitalists, that will be decisive for rebuilding the decaying and deadly infrastructure of this country. ■

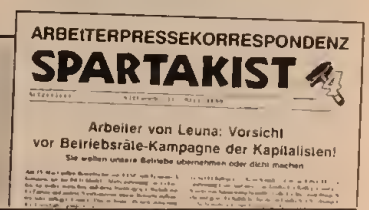


Spartakist banner (above) calls for "A Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist Europe!" Clockwise from upper left: campaigning at Bergmann-Borsig electrical products factory; candidate Toralf Endrweit bullhoring in Alexanderplatz; Spartakist-initiated protest against privatization law; Spartakist speaker at International Women's Day in Kathe Kollwitz Platz.

Spartakist Photos



Selections from Spartakist Arbeiterpressekorrespondenz



Leuna Workers: Fight the Sellout!

Reprinted from *Arprekorr Supplement*, 14 March 1990

On March 15 *Betriebsräte* (plant council) members from BASF are supposed to come to the Leuna Works to sell us the West German model of "Mitbestimmung" (co-determination). They want to help make it possible for this successor company to IG Farben and for other giant Western firms to buy up or close down our plants. This is not a "democratization of the economy" but a con job. Its purpose: the workers should participate in their own expropriation and exploitation.

The SPD Social Democrats, the PDS [Party of Democratic Socialism], Western bosses and even ostensible leftists are taking part in this plant council hoax. What's involved here is the sellout of our VEBs [state-owned plants], of the working people and of the DDR altogether. The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany says loud and clear: instead of plant councils which prepare the way for capitalism, we need workers councils to defend our collectivized economy.

How is that to be done? Very simply, by all [production] departments electing their representatives, who then join with delegates from other enterprises in a joint council to carry through the interests of the workers.

Do the West German plant councils represent the workers' cause? Not at all. People aren't very well informed about that in this country. But let's take a look at the West German industrial relations law. There it says, literally:

• "Measures of labor struggle between

"They Want to Take Over Our Plants"

the employer and the plant council are not permitted." The plant councils are instructed to "refrain from activities which adversely affect the work process or peace in the plant."

- "The plant council may not unilaterally intervene in the management of the plant."

- Members of plant councils are "duty-bound...not to reveal company or business secrets."

So what that means is: strike ban, class peace with capital, exclusion from management decisions and the obligation to keep silent about "business secrets" such as planned layoffs, for example. Obviously such SPD-model plant councils only serve to prevent the workers' class struggle.

And in practice: when HDW shipyard workers in Hamburg occupied the plant in 1984 in order to prevent announced layoffs, the plant council first tried to keep the layoffs secret from the workers and then sabotaged the plant occupation with the threat of dismissal of the entire workforce.

By law and in their actions, therefore, these plant councils—together with the union bureaucracy—are a tool of the bosses against the workers. And that's

just what they want to force on us! Now the West German employers association and the DGB [union federation] are jointly railing against the new [DDR] trade-union law. No wonder, since they're planning mass layoffs. Our foreign coworkers are already being threatened with expulsion. For full citizenship and trade-union rights for foreign workers!

To take an example, the plant council of Volkswagen A.G. is making an effort to achieve "more intensive cooperation with their fellow workers in the plants of the [East German] IFA-Kombinat," according to the hankers' mouthpiece *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (13 March). What they don't tell the DDR fellow workers is that as a result of the joint venture "a substantial part" of the IFA workers will be out of a job. According to IFA general director Voigt, as much as 60 to 70 percent.

In the last issue of *Spartakist* (1 March 1990) you can read a historical presentation on plant councils and workers councils in Germany [see "East Germany: For Workers Councils to Stop the Sellout!" WV No. 496, 23 February 1990]. It is recounted there how the plant council law of 1920 was pushed through with the

bloody suppression of workers' protests. Just as, after World War II, so-called "co-determination" served to crush combative plant councils. Prepare for struggle—buy *Spartakist*!

Today West German capitalists, Social Democrats and sellout Stalinist bureaucrats are for setting up plant councils in order to push class collaboration. That's how the *Anschluss* is supposed to look on the plant level: establishing plant councils is intended to accompany the introduction of capitalism.

But Leuna workers have a long tradition of struggle, from the March struggles of 1921 to the workers' uprising against Stalinism in June 1953.

On March 6, the trade-union group of the Urea Department at the VEB Leuna Works sent a resolution to the Volkskammer in which it condemned "the transformation of our state-owned plants into stock companies" as the "first step to the reprivatization of our industry."

The privatization law was passed, and subsequently ratified by the Round Table. It's necessary to fight, and in this the working class must rely on the independent mobilization of its own strength. We must make common cause with the West German workers against the capitalist exploiters who now want to extend their lust for profits to the DDR.

The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany is the only party which says, without any ifs, ands or buts: No to capitalist reunification! Against the privatization of the state-owned companies! Stop the sellout—workers councils to power!

Vote Spartakist, Slate 21, on March 18! ■

East German Elections— No to Capitalist Reunification! Vote SPARTAKIST



Reprinted from *Arprekorr* No. 27, 13 March 1990.

What's at stake is whether our workers state will be or not be. The March 18 Volkskammer [parliamentary] elections constitute a plebiscite, albeit grossly distorted by the imperialist onslaught, on the continued existence of the DDR. Following the collapse of the Honecker regime last fall, the rulers of capitalist West Germany have been on a campaign to intimidate and buy up this land which was torn from their hands when the Soviet Red Army crushed the Third Reich in 1945. Now with Stalinist rule crumbling throughout East Europe, Hitler's "democratic" heirs have embarked on a new "drive to the East." So as we stand at our posts in defense of the DDR against a capitalist reunification, we are also defending the homeland of the October Revolution.

As BRD [West German] federal chancellor Kohl refuses to sign a treaty recognizing the Oder-Neisse border, Polish leaders Jaruzelski and Mazowiecki appeal to Gorbachev and even Mitterrand to stop the West German juggernaut. In Bonn, Christian Democrats and Social Democrats have abandoned talk of a step-by-step unification. Now it's simple annexation, through Article 23 of the BRD Basic Law, like the Saarland in 1957. But many fear that it could be a replay of the *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938, a decisive step toward a Greater Germany. Increasingly, it seems that for today's generation of West German leaders, Hitler's only sin was to have entangled the Reich in another losing two-front imperialist war.

No wonder that in the face of this blatant attempt to swallow the DDR, as Bonn politicians arrogantly swarm across the country in their Mercedes limousines, even many who were initially blinded by the all-overshadowing D-mark are now sobering up. What will happen to their jobs, their social benefits, their savings? The early euphoria over reunification has diminished, a shift in the mood of the masses is perceptible. But this is being reflected in what is essentially a nostalgia vote for the PDS [Party of Democratic Socialism, formerly Socialist Unity Party, SED—the government party]. For despite their talk of the "sovereignty of the DDR," these sold-out Stalinists are the main force for the sellout of the country.

Those who are now returning to the SED-PDS fold do so because they do not see a "realistic" political alternative and do not have an alternative program to capitalist reunification. Many understand how the precipitous election favors the SPD, and argue this is necessary in order to avoid even worse. But just as in 1918-1919, the social democracy has acted as the advance guard of the counterrevolution, this time to head off a political revolution against Stalinism which would return to the internationalist road of Lenin and Trotsky. The SPD's role as bloodhounds was shown in the vicious attack on leftists in Neubrandenburg last week.

Meanwhile, the Stalinist turncoats switch from their schema of building socialism in one country to building capitalism in a Greater Germany. For the

purposes of vote-catching, the "new" PDS is peddling Prime Minister Modrow as Mr. Clean and party chairman Gysi as "the man with the broom" who sweeps out the Augean stables of the bureaucracy. Gysi got a rock star's reception from thousands in Erfurt's cavernous Thüringenhalle on Friday. But empty slogan-

the last minute. But this ignores the key question, namely which class holds state power. The bureaucrats hope to entrench themselves in the enterprises; but if the Social Democrats and their prospective bourgeois coalition partners take office in a few weeks, PDS members will be blacklisted wholesale. Party members say

to the PDS' attempts to get a "popular front" together to slow down (but not stop) capitalist reunification, and its pathetic appeals to the Soviet leadership to bail them out, the SpAD's election manifesto and program of struggle present the only realistic way to an effective defense of the DDR against counterrevolution.



Trotskyist spokesman Renate Dahlhaus (lower right) addresses 250,000-strong united-front protest against fascist desecration of Soviet war memorial, Treptow Park, January 3.

earing, publicity stunts (such as Gysi's attempt to portray himself as a skydiver, to bolster his youthful image!) and longing for stability solve nothing. Only the Spartakist Workers Party has presented a class-struggle program to resolve the crisis.

The PDS and smaller left parties such as the United Left and the Nelken [Carnations] are spreading fantasies that everything will be able to be maintained after reunification as long as a social charter or a few more laws are passed at

they're afraid to openly fight against reaction because it would mean civil war. But by refusing to politically fight capitalist reunification now, they are preparing to surrender outright—and the result definitely won't be peaceful.

Last week we sought to mobilize a class opposition to attempts to break up the collectivized economy, calling for a demonstration outside the Volkskammer against privatization and capitalist reunification. Few came out on short notice and in the pouring rain. But in contrast

Those who say they stand in defense of the working class—such as the KPD [a split from the SED], which refused to support the demo, and the Communist Platform (of the PDS), which endorsed but did not mobilize anyone—cannot evade crucial issues. As a spokesman for the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany stated in a radio campaign statement:

"We workers ourselves know best what has been wasted in decades of bureaucratic mismanagement. But we also know what sort of consequences the sellout of our plants to the capitalists would have. Therefore, build workers councils in the plants and public institutions. Therefore, build soldiers councils in the NVA [East German army] to defend our workers state. For a Germany of workers councils!"

Today these questions are posed point-blank not just in the DDR. What happens here—a political revolution or a social counterrevolution—will have an incalculable impact on the Soviet Union. Hundreds of thousands showed on January 3 at the Soviet war memorial in Treptow Park that they were prepared to fight the fascist menace. Millions of working people want to protect what we have built up with our labor over 45 years—despite the Stalinist deformation of the DDR—and are prepared to prevent a Fourth Reich from arising on German soil and threatening all mankind. In steadfastly opposing capitalist reunification, we seek to be their voice. Vote for the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany on March 18! ■

We reprint below a brief profile, released on 15 March by the East German news agency ADN, of Toralf Endruweit, one of the Spartakist Berlin candidates.

Short Biography of SpAD Lead Candidate Toralf Endruweit

BERLIN (ADN). Toralf Endruweit was born on 6 June 1967 in Neustrelitz and has lived in Berlin since 1972. He learned the trade of mechanic and, counting his apprenticeship, worked for more than four years in this capacity at the VEB Elektrokohle Lichtenberg on the three-shift system. Thereafter he became an employee at the German State Library and began to work on getting his *Abitur* [Gymnasium degree] in night school.

Toralf Endruweit has been interested in revolutionary Marxism and

Leninism since his school days. He believes that "political power in our workers state belongs in the hands of those who create value in our country, that is, the working people." In his opinion the Stalinists betrayed the workers and now intend to hand the country over to the capitalists. "An internationalist program in the spirit of Lenin and Trotsky is the only realistic way to achieve socialism, which millions all over the earth and here in our country have fought for," said the lead candidate.

Interview with East German Army Officer

The following piece is reprinted from
Arprekorr No. 28, 20 March 1990.

On Wednesday, members of the Friedrich Engels Guard Regiment of the National People's Army (NVA), which watches over the eternal flame at the Monument of the Victims of Fascism and Militarism on Unter den Linden, staged a warning strike demanding better living conditions and continuation of their military service in civilian life. By the end of the month, the former NVA Guard Regiment Felix Dzerzhinsky will be dissolved, its former 10,000 men have already been mustered out. When the Western media talk of a looming dissolution of the NVA, this is no invention.

While the military leadership talk of "military reform" and dream of nonsense about an integrated NVA-Bundeswehr (West German army) under the sign of German reunification, at the base of the People's Army discontent is rife. Last month, the soldiers councils of the 43rd Fla-Raketenbrigade "Erich Weinert" addressed themselves to the Round Table, which turned a cold shoulder, with a statement complaining that "soldiers and NCOs are worried about their jobs, apartments and social security for their families." The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) demands that every soldier be able to return to his job after his military service is over, a right which is now threatened by the introduction of a market economy.

The SpAD calls for democratically elected soldiers councils to be organized throughout the NVA, pledged to vigilant defense of the DDR against imperialism, to create a strong proletarian military power in which rank and privilege have been abolished. We concur with Lenin, who foresaw an armed workers militia, although in the present situation, facing heavily armed imperialist armies, we cannot do without a standing army. Today, with the mounting drive for *Anschluss* of the DDR with capitalist West Germany, we must fight against victimization of former and present SED-PDS members in the armed forces.

We print below excerpts from an interview with an officer who is a member of the Communist Platform of the PDS. While our views do not coincide in all particulars, the common commitment to internationalism and defense of the workers' gains provides a basis for genuine dialogue.

* * *

Arprekorr: In the past period there have been numerous reports that the NVA is being dissolved in preparation for reunification, to station NATO and the Bundeswehr in the DDR. Is that true?

Answer: There are attempts going in many directions; just as with the political spectrum in this country, so it is reflected in the army. I can see it from the standpoint of a communist. And I would say there are preparations on the part of rightist forces who would like there to be civil servant status, who would like to be taken into the Bundeswehr.

There are likewise forces who have recognized the important role of this army for this country and for the world political situation. They say the army is necessary since it is a decisive factor for sovereignty, a decisive factor for preserving the nationalized property in this country. That, you see, is the last hurdle capitalism would have to clear to get this nationalized property. The army would always hinder it in doing so.

The army was trained and structured

On the Defense of the DDR

in a relatively communist way. There are many people in it, especially also officers, who believe in communist ideas, who would never go against the people and who understand very well how important their role is, in the international sphere as well. Anyone who dissolves the NVA is dissolving once and for all the possibility of creating a socialist alternative.

As communists we are attempting to take part in the founding of a trade union so that this army becomes unacceptable for, say, NATO and the Bundeswehr. At the beginning of January there were some cases where soldiers councils went on strike. That spilled over into the Bundeswehr and likewise was reflected there. They were very afraid that it could

major social world event is unfolding. Now we are facing the big question: are the peoples of the Warsaw Pact states really going to let their property, or what they have created, be taken from their hands by the capitalists, or will they say at a decisive point: "this far and no further; now we will really continue the revolution that we started."

The revolution can, you see, flow into a capitalist counterrevolution. The spirits which people invoked were actually completely different from the ones that then came onto the scene. Perhaps this revolution in the whole system will extend over umpteen years. And perhaps this revolution, if you view it as a total process, will also increasingly have to be extended to the leading capitalist countries.



March 6—Spartakist Workers Party demonstrates outside East Berlin Volkshaus: Against privatization! No to capitalist reunification!

become even more extensive in the Bundeswehr.

Even now, what is now being demanded, the elimination of universal compulsory military service, can also have consequences for the NATO armies, especially for the Bundeswehr. But you can't totally disarm and say to yourself, "well, the other guy will soon follow my lead." Because anyone who totally disarms runs up the white flag and surrenders his country to the other guy. It would be naive to think that we disarm and the others disarm too. That only works when you have bilateral steps.

Arprekorr: Now, the fact that the Red Army has played a restrained role has meant that the revolution [in the DDR] was able to take its course peacefully. And that was a good development. But obviously it's very contradictory, since Gorbachev's policy is giving a green light to capitalist reunification. What do you think the effects of this policy will be in the DDR and the Soviet Union, and upon the Soviet Army?

Answer: On Gorbachev's policy, I see it clearly like this: He is struggling at the moment with the fact that the theory of socialism in one country has failed, and he doesn't yet accept that in its full scope. The process which has taken place in the DDR is also gradually—only somewhat longer, since it is a bigger country—taking place in the Soviet Union.

Seen from our side, at the moment a

Yes, and Gorbachev's policy—I don't give it any future. Unless Gorbachev himself breaks, himself turns around 180 degrees, recognizes the given situation and above all undertakes something to bring this revolutionary situation into the developed capitalist countries. That means, for example, supporting communist international movements, seizing the initiative, as Lenin once did, to forge a strong international communist movement. And would put a stop to the civil peace that has been agreed to with capitalism, and the social-democratic tendencies that are now being practiced.

At the moment it looks like the vanguard is now coming from the Western world, the proletariat coming to us. Because we are revolutionary babies, revolutionary children who are taking our first steps, who were crippled by Stalinism. And now for us a world is being opened, where we first have to manage to get an overview. And so that means, for example, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany overtakes social-democratic forces and tendencies among us, creates anew a vanguard party here for the first time.

But again, that has to be a dialectic, or an interaction. We want to be creators, too. We seek contact with the proletariat of the capitalist countries. Because here the ostensible socialism has failed. Now people are asking the workers of the capitalist countries, is it really so much better for you? Or do we both

now want to finally make the conscious revolution together that has already been talked about for ages?

There may be conflicts, even armed conflicts, in the course of this world revolution that is being worked toward. But I don't put an equal sign between world revolution and military conflicts. We are military officers, communists, and if there are these kinds of limited conflicts then there have to be capable officers, there have to be organized workers armies, people's armies, there have to be generals of the people who lead it in an expert manner.

And the shaping of the workers can only happen—in this country and in general—in universal compulsory military service. If universal military service is dropped, then a professional soldiers caste will automatically form, which splits away from and cuts itself off from the proletariat, and there will be the danger of a putsch and of becoming independent. There really must be, in the most general sense, a universal obligation for military service, but if someone doesn't want to serve for us then he isn't useful to us, he is someone who will shoot us in the back when things get serious. I had to deal with that as an officer for years under the Stalinist system—that I was obliged to go into battle with soldiers who wouldn't have fought for us.

Classless society is what the communists strive for. The capitalist disciplines the workforce via the civil service officialdom. This stratum wields the stick against the proletariat. If here today a large part of the Stalinist officials are now officially calling for civil servant status, that is open counterrevolution. That would be a big step backward for society, and capitalism would acquire a means in this country to once again be able to wield the knout.

That would also be one of the most important points for the army. No civil servant status! No splitting off from the working class! My parents are workers, not civil servants. I don't want to become a civil servant. Certainly I would be socially secure, but I am a communist. I'm not a police thug—I stand in the service of the people. I will of course never act against the people.

On the question of foreigners serving in our army, I regret, and others also regret, that with the new election law the matter of foreigners being allowed to vote here was simply swept under the table. Everyone who defends the communist idea can serve both in this army and in any other internationalist army. If I stand here as a red officer, I stand not only for this people, I stand for all communists in the entire world. So it would be a signal if foreigners were also allowed to serve with this army. ■

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The March 18 elections to the East German Volkskammer were a distorted referendum on capitalist reunification, the annexation of the German Democratic Republic (DDR) by the German imperialist bourgeoisie. Therefore the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) proposed a no-contest agreement with any other parties which clearly and unambiguously opposed capitalist reunification, whatever our differences on other questions. That is, in districts where we ourselves were not running candidates we would call for a vote to such parties. In turn, they would support our candidates in districts where they were not fielding any. However, on the eve of the elections SpAD spokesman Toralf Endrweit reported "that all other left parties have refused to submit an unequivocal declaration against capitalist reunification."

One of the organizations we approached for a no-contest agreement was the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD), a contradictory left split from the disintegrating Stalinist party. Its initial programmatic statement called for "two sovereign German states" and for "keeping collectivized ownership of the means of production as the dominant form of property" in the DDR. However, a recent KPD election poster now calls for a "German Confederation—Democratic, Nonaligned"—a position substantially similar to Modrow, Gysi and the other "liberal" Stalinist sellouts.

In the Halle district, when the KPD candidate was bureaucratically excluded from the ballot, the SpAD sent the

East German KPDer Says: Vote Spartakist in Halle

electoral commission a formal protest against this act of "political censorship." We also proposed a no-contest agreement to the KPD organization in the Halle district. As a result the prospective KPD candidate wrote a letter to his comrades, which we reprint below, translated from the SpAD's *Arbeiter-Korr* Supplement dated 14 March.

The KPD combines a good deal of old-line Stalinist posturing, including visceral hostility to Trotskyism, with Gorbachev-like appeals "to the mutual rapprochement of all European peoples by way of a deepening of their joint cooperation" ("Discussion Paper of the Initiative for the Re-Founding of the KPD"). At the same time, it aims to attract naive New Leftish youth with talk of "the free development of culture and an educational system oriented to the humanistic ideals of mankind."

While its actual politics are a confused mishmash, the KPD (as its very name indicates) claims the tradition of the German Communist Party of the 1920s and early '30s, whose leading figure was Ernst Thälmann. Originally a protégé of Zinoviev, Thälmann slavishly followed whoever was master in the Kremlin. In the early '30s, he was singularly responsible for implementing the catastrophic "Third Period" line

opposing united-front actions with Social Democratic-led workers to combat the rising Nazi danger. This suicidal policy was summed up by Thälmann's KPD colleague Heinz Neumann in the infamous slogan, "After Hitler, us."

When the Nazis came to power in 1933, Thälmann was thrown into a concentration camp, where he died in 1944. Today, Thälmann is widely regarded as an anti-fascist hero and martyr among socialist-minded workers and leftist intellectuals in the DDR. However, many of Thälmann's colleagues in the KPD leadership (e.g., Neumann) were killed not by Hitler but by Stalin in the Great Purges of the late '30s. This is not the least of many contradictions which would beset the would-be successors to Thälmann's KPD.

14 March 1990

To my comrades in the Halle district:

As you know, the KPD is not running in the Halle district. Thus the question is posed for us: who do we vote for on March 18? When I take a look at the election programs of the left groups and look for similarities with the election program of the KPD, I find several. But which point is decisive, which one determines everything else?

In my opinion, the following is decisive:

1. *Anschluss* of the DDR—yes or no (even a confederation will ultimately amount to *Anschluss*)
2. What is to be done if this can no longer be prevented

On point 2, in few of the programs do I find an answer that allows me to hope. On point 1, virtually nowhere.

The KPD says: no *Anschluss*, and in the event it happens anyway, then we want... (I obviously don't need to spell this out to you). But is there any other force that is clearly opposed to a capitalist reunification? There are such forces in the United Left, but there are other forces in it as well.

Only one party remains: the SpAD. It has the drawback of saying nothing about point 2 ("what if"). It is concentrating completely on struggling against that. Now I have to say that the SpAD is a Trotskyist party. But we shouldn't let this scare us off, because

1. the program is the decisive thing;
2. after 1925 there were quite a few Trotskyists in the KPD; and
3. they call themselves **Spartakist**..., i.e., named after the predecessor of the KPD.

Besides, what is at issue is not Trotsky but the DDR. So can I recommend to you to vote for the SpAD? I believe that I can. What I am sure of, though, is that even struggles that appear hopeless have to be fought through to the end.

In thoughtful determination,

J.A.C.

Member of the Merseburg KPD

East German Elections...

(continued from page 1)

"One People, One Reich, One D-Mark"? ("One People, One Reich, One Führer" was Hitler's slogan justifying German expansionism.)

The DDR political revolution was marked from the beginning by the absence of any organized participation by the working class as such. Why? The SED was not "an elite," as the bourgeois press claims, but a mass party embracing much of the working class. Small wonder that the workers experienced a deep sense of betrayal at the revelations of their leaders' corruption and mismanagement. And quickly there followed the demoralizing spectacle of every major party including the PDS seemingly accepting the inevitability, if not the desirability, of *Anschluss*.

The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany was the only party which took a categorical stand against capitalist re-

unification. We ran candidates in four districts (Berlin, Halle, Leipzig and Rostock), receiving 0.06 percent of the vote in those districts (2,396 votes). Various left satellites of the PDS who capitulated to the drive for D-mark *Anschluss* got nothing in return for their opportunism.

We have repeatedly stressed that the March 18 elections were a plebiscite, distorted by the imperialist campaign of intimidation, on the fate of the DDR. Responsibility for the fatal results must be laid squarely at the door of Stalin and his heir Gorbachev. Stalin's regime of bureaucratic tyranny, privilege and lies had only one answer to all problems: repression up to and including mass murder. Now Gorbachev's policy of appeasing imperialism has emboldened the most aggressive Cold Warriors and Greater Germany revanchists seeking to reverse the verdicts of history. The Spartakists call for a determined resistance to this imperialist *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East).

"Biggest Leveraged Buyout in History"

When up to a million people poured into Berlin-Alexanderplatz last November 4, they were for democratizing this bureaucratically deformed workers state after the collapse of the Honecker regime. On January 3, a quarter million came out to Treptow Park to protest the vile Nazi desecration of the war memorial to the Soviet Red Army troops who freed the country from the Hitler Nazi regime.

The bourgeoisie saw the beginnings of a political revolution which would replace the decrepit Stalinist bureaucracy with the political power of the working people, opening the way to authentic socialism. In response, the imperialists stepped up their attempts to stampede the DDR into West Germany. Social Democrats and Christian Democrats in Bonn demanded a currency union, subordinating the collectivized East German economy to the Frankfurt bankers. The "caretaker" government of PDS lead candidate Hans Modrow capitulated. Modrow himself proclaimed "Germany—Single Fatherland."

At the same time, the German bour-

geoisie organized a campaign to disrupt and "destabilize" the economy. "The Planned Chaos: How Bonn Makes the DDR Economy Kaput," headlined the West German magazine *Stern* (12 March). Rumors of shortages led to hoarding; purchases of meat in Berlin more than doubled in one month. Bonn poured in D-marks to buy the elections, over 20 billion through the foundations connected with the CDU and SPD. Records of Chancellor Kohl speaking were paid for by the federal government.

On Wall Street they talk of an *Anschluss* of the DDR as "the biggest leveraged buyout in history." But the primary "asset" of the DDR is one of the most skilled working classes in the world. And a combative proletarian leadership can stop the sellout by leading sharp class struggle. Such a fight can mobilize millions.

Women will be hit particularly hard by social cuts affecting childcare, kindergartens and rent subsidies for single mothers. At the EKO steel plant in Eisenhüttenstadt, where one-third of the workforce are women, the night-shift crèche is being eliminated on weekends. "That's it for me here," laments one mother speaking for many.

Tens of thousands of foreign workers, from Angola, Cuba, Mozambique, Vietnam and elsewhere, are facing wholesale cancellation of their contracts and being sent home (i.e., mass deportations). Almost three million pensioners will be



Gregor Gysi (left) and Hans Modrow succeeded in giving new liberal face to old Stalinist party, now called the Party of Democratic Socialism, which received almost 20 percent of the vote.



Leipzig: Fascist skinhead burns leftist literature. No to a Fourth Reich!

Lithuania...

(continued from page 1)

do not want to weaken Gorbachev—viewed as the “free world’s” best hope in the Kremlin—by openly fomenting the dismemberment of the USSR.

The Kremlin oligarchy, even under Gorbachev, does not want to oversee the dissolution of the multinational USSR. Last summer, after flagrantly anti-Communist demonstrations by the reactionary nationalist movements in the Baltic republics, the Central Committee of the CPSU issued a condemnation of the “nationalist hysteria,” stating that the “fate of the Baltic peoples is in serious danger. People should know into what abyss they are being pushed by the nationalist leaders.” But the discredited Stalinist bureaucracy has no political means to combat nationalism except moralistic appeals for friendship and comradely cooperation among the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev’s arguments against the deluded Lithuanian separatists were wholly ineffective. So now the Kremlin chief’s only argument with the Sajudis is over the price to be paid. He is demanding \$34 billion in hard currency in exchange for the massive industrial plants built in Lithuania by the USSR over the last 50 years, transforming what was a largely agricultural economy. Already one-third of the state-owned factories in Lithuania have been shifted to local control, under last fall’s law on Economic Autonomy of the Baltics passed by the Supreme Soviet in Moscow as part of perestroika.

By selling off the farms, fisheries and small businesses, Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene dreams of Lithuania’s “dramatic leap to an independent free-market economy,” restoring the prewar “litas” as currency in three to six months. (They have even “discovered” the 50-year-old plates to print it.) But like the counterrevolutionary program of their cointerthinkers in Polish Solidarność, the Sajudis’ “liberation” will bring the economic shock treatment of the international market. Currently 97 percent of Lithuania’s petroleum products come heavily subsidized from the Soviet Union. The Frankfurt bankers and North Sea oil companies won’t be so generous.

The secession of this Baltic republic would weaken the military defense of the Soviet Union. The Lithuanian port of Klaipeda is the main port of entry for military supplies in the region. Boris Gromov, the commander of the Kiev military region and former head of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, noted that independence of the Baltic states would remove this “key route to the ocean,” along with Kaliningrad one of the Soviet Union’s two ice-free Baltic ports. For-



Lithuanian nationalist leader Vytautas Landsbergis (left). In Vilnius this January, Gorbachev’s appeals to Lithuanian separatists fell on deaf ears.



merly part of the territory of East Prussia, a historic capital of the German Junkers, the Kaliningrad Oblast is part of the Russian Republic. Located between Lithuania and Poland, it would be completely cut off from the rest of the Soviet Union in the event of Lithuania’s secession.

But Gromov, like Gorbachev’s conservative Politburo opponent Yegor Ligachev, is resigned to secession. Ligachev remarked following the vote that “Tanks do not help in this sort of situation.” And given the political bankruptcy of the Kremlin Stalinists, the use of military force in Lithuania at this time would certainly inflame nationalist-separatist currents throughout the USSR.

Lenin was able to forge the various peoples of the former tsarist empire into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics because the Bolshevik Revolution was

based on the principles and practice of proletarian internationalism. But with the bureaucratic degeneration of the revolution under J.V. Stalin, the expansion of the Soviet Union was widely viewed as a form of Great Russian national oppression, as Trotsky observed.

Today, despite the provocative cries of “Estonia and Latvia will now be free” that were heard from the Lithuanian Sajudis on March 12, Lithuania’s neighbors to the north are treading more cautiously—and with reason. Unlike Lithuania, in Latvia almost 50 percent of the population is Russian, Ukrainian or Byelorussian. In Estonia, the figure is 40 percent, overwhelmingly concentrated in the proletariat. Many came as Red Army soldiers and stayed after discharge. The bigoted reactionaries of the Estonian Citizens Movement dream of transforming themselves wholesale into an elite

ruling class, riding the backs of the Slavic workers. Their recent “elections” were only open to those who could prove their families were residents before 1940!

In response there have been strikes and demonstrations by the predominantly Russian-speaking Internationalist Movement, demanding democratic rights for all nationalities. On March 14, following the Lithuanian vote to secede, several thousand workers gathered in Tallinn to protest Estonian moves toward secession. The virulent chauvinism of the nationalist “democrats” is graphically conveyed in a *New Yorker* (18 September 1989) article by David Shieler. They long to see Estonian industry bankrupted by the “free market” discipline of Gorbachev’s perestroika, so that the Russian proletariat can “all be put on trains to Siberia.” Gorbachev may have decided to give up on Lithuania, with its relatively more homogenous population and Catholic tradition. But given the reactionary Sajudis, an independent Lithuania will still mean forced population transfers of hundreds of thousands of Slavs, Siberians, Jews. What is urgently required is the intervention of the multinational Soviet workers under the banner of Leninist internationalism, combatting all wings of the fractured Stalinist bureaucracy. In the miners strike last summer the lines of bitter national division were visibly breaking down under the proletarian solidarity in the strike committees. In the Ukrainian Donbass coal region, miners refused to join in the nationalist Popular Front formation.

First and foremost, the working class must assert its internationalism against Great Russian chauvinism and in particular its most virulent expression—the deadly fascism of Pamyat. By the authority of such a battle, the proletariat would be able to break down the wrenching nationalist divisions which are cutting to the heart of the Soviet degenerated workers state. The defense of the October Revolution requires the forging of a Bolshevik party which can lead the Soviet workers in political revolution to sweep out the bureaucracy. ■



Secession of Lithuania would cut off major port of Kaliningrad, populated by Russians and other Soviet nationalities, from the rest of the USSR.

East German Elections...

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defend leftists in the labor movement, the old, the women, the children, youth, students and foreign workers.

When the PDS talks of a “strong opposition on behalf of the weak,” what they mean is introducing motions in a counterrevolutionary Volkskammer. And the first one, announced PDS chairman Gregor Gysi on election night, will be to eliminate the draft—a step toward disarming the workers state. Despite all their talk of realism, the idea spread by Gysi & Co. (as well as the United Left, the Nelken [Carnations] and others) that reunification can take place while the social gains remain intact is a dangerous and utopian illusion. The PDS pipe dream of being a loyal opposition to an SPD undertaker government has gone up in smoke.

As opposed to the appeasement of Modrow/Gysi, the Spartakist Workers Party calls on working people to continue

the fight against capitalist reunification in the plants and in the streets. And workers’ struggles are already beginning, even in areas dominated by the rightist CDU-led Alliance. In Borna, a Spartakist speaker addressed a demonstration of brown-coal miners protesting the threatened closing of their mines. Trash haulers in Halle, who have CDU posters in their office, staged a warning strike

against plans to privatize their economy. Mansfeld copper miners also face the threat of shutdowns.

On March 18, many bought the election fairy tale of a new “economic miracle.” A DDR opinion poll showed that 92 percent saw “improving living conditions” as a task of the new government. There will soon be a rude awakening. Class-conscious workers must look for

those struggles where the hard fights can be most powerfully waged. In doing so, they must also look to their class brothers, from West German metal workers to Soviet miners. In this way we continue our internationalist struggle. The key is the forging of a Leninist-egalitarian party. This is the task to which the Spartakist Workers Party dedicates its efforts. ■

Soviet soldiers at East Berlin’s Treptow war memorial. The 380,000 Soviet troops in East Germany remain a powerful force facing NATO imperialism.



Panama...

(continued from page 12)

the helicopters were over there, maybe six blocks away, shooting the soldiers on the ground.

YSp: You had mentioned that a lot of the Panamanian military was housed in civilian apartment housing. Were those also targets for shelling?

Santana: That was all destroyed. I went there on Sunday the 24th after the invasion, around noon, on my own. The only thing they had sectioned off was *la comandancia*, which was still just barely standing, but it had humongous holes in it. I just started walking through the area, stopping here and there. And you could smell the rotting bodies, but you couldn't see one. They were all under the rubble, who knows where they were.

I stepped right into somebody's kitchen—the refrigerator all burnt, overturned furniture, kids' toys, utensils, beds, all burnt up. There were two buildings, they look like project buildings here, about 15 stories high, those were the only ones that survived, but those are ready to fall at any minute. Nobody's living there now. They are also full of bullet holes, rockets, mortars, grenade holes.

I remember one thing that Major General Marc Cisneros of the U.S. Army Southern Command said, on the morning of the 20th: some journalist had asked him, how long do you think the military operation will last? He says, well, if there's no resistance, maybe four or five hours, but if there's resistance, this will last about two and a half hours, 'cause we're gonna come in with everything we have. He said, this is how long I think it will last: I'll go to my refrigerator, take out a beer, open it, drink some of it, go do what I have to do, and when I come back the beer will still be cold.

YSp: And a beer in Panama gets warm in about five minutes! Was there any kind of trade-union struggle going on? I read that, since many of the unions were affiliated with Noriega's coalition, the U.S. is now rounding up and jailing these labor leaders. Did you hear of any strikes occurring before or after the October coup?

Santana: I don't remember seeing any. No kind of struggle, or anything like that, because the unions were all controlled by the government.

YSp: What about the universities? Did you go visit them?

Santana: Yes. The universities had been closed down after the invasion, and they were still closed when I left. They claimed to have found arms caches at the universities, so they closed them down. They said they were worried about "subversive" activities—there's this big picture of Che Guevara on the campus. The only university that's open now is the

private one, the University of Santa María la Antigua, the one for rich people. And of course, the Panama Canal College is open.

YSp: We got information in *Excelsior*, the Mexican paper, about the Río Hato massacre, where 100 students were massacred by the imperialist forces. What do you know about that?

Santana: Río Hato is in Coclé province, right smack in the center of the country. It's very campesino. They had a military school there, and a military fort, and when the U.S. attacked, the majority of the people that got killed were high school age kids. It was like ROTC, a military academy. It is said that Noriega had put it into the students' heads that, if the invasion ever came, they too would have to pick up arms and defend themselves. But the U.S. again came in with everything, Rangers, and helicopters, and fighter planes. Because they expected a lot of resistance. And these poor kids, who thought they were doing their patriotic duty, did defend Río Hato more than

that one of his contacts that called the Papal Nuncio said that one of their nuns was at the Dairy Queen, and she was frightened and wanted to go back to the Nunciature, and come and get her. I think it was the actual Papal Nuncio, he went to pick her up in a car. And when they got there, they found themselves with Noriega. His people forced the Nuncio at gunpoint to take Noriega. And that's how he got into the Papal Nuncio's house.

YSp: Guillermo Endara, just to show his loyalty to his puppet masters, made his presidential acceptance speech from a U.S. military base, didn't he? In fact, he even faxed communiqués from the base to embassies around the world.

Santana: He made the speech at the U.S. Army base, Fort Clayton. That was not popular with a lot of people.

YSp: The U.S.'s pretext for the invasion was the "war on drugs," but aside from Bush and the CIA's known drug-running operations, isn't it widely known that many of Endara's lieutenants are *narcos* themselves?



Crisostomo/Detroit Free Press
Bush's Panamanian puppet president Endara protected by U.S. soldiers (above). Thousands of Panamanians were killed by Yankee invaders.



Rodriguez/El Pais

the actual soldiers who were stationed there.

YSp: It was reported that they used infrared technology for the choppers, which detects the heat coming out of bodies, and as the kids ran out from the school, they blew them away with machine guns.

Santana: Then the invaders excused themselves, and said, well, this is a military academy, this is a military fort, how were we to know that these weren't soldiers who were going to fight against us? Most of the ones that got killed were just boys.

YSp: Noriega actually hid out at the ice cream store in your neighborhood, before he got sanctuary at the Papal Nunciature, right?

Santana: I've eaten at that Dairy Queen! Noriega is said to have been dressed up as a nun. What I heard was

Santana: Well, [Second Vice President] Guillermo "Billy" Ford has a brother named Henry, who's been implicated and charged in a lot of that stuff. It's the same crap all over again. But now instead of being in gray fatigues, it's business suits. One thing about Endara, he is always saying how now that we have democracy restored in the country, we can start being free again, living a proper life. That was his main thing, democracy. But Endara's party, the Partido Liberal Auténtico, has fascist roots.

YSp: It was founded by Arnulfo Arias, who at one point wanted to sterilize blacks and send them back to the islands.

Santana: What he did in the '40s was, he banned citizenship for all Panamanians born of black West Indian descent. Anybody born in Panama of black West Indian descent was stripped of their citizenship for a couple of years. That's the party from which Endara comes. So, that tells you something. But now he's propped up by the U.S. as being a democratic and liberty-loving individual.

YSp: Endara's part of the elite, the commercial elite, and he's on about 20 boards of directors, for different corporations. And the First Vice President, Ricardo Arias Calderón is on them, and Billy Ford is, too.

Santana: Big money. Calderón owns a lot of territory around the airport, and a lot of shantytowns have been built up. When people started putting up the squatter towns on Calderón's territory, Noriega never said anything, and who was Calderón going to complain to? But now that he's in power, he wants all those people off his land. These are very poor people, people who maybe make 90 cents a day, if anything; now they're homeless.

YSp: These "opposition" politicians installed by the U.S. all belong to the wealthy families of Panama, the ones that run the economy.

Santana: It's known in Panama as *la oligarquía*, the oligarchy.

YSp: Ford, Endara and Arias Calderón all belong to this oligarchy. And they're in power now, thanks to Bush and his invading forces. Now Manuel Noriega is not a nice man. He was a vicious military despot on the CIA payroll, and George Bush's man in Panama since at least 1976; however, he had a certain amount of backing from the non-white, or *mestizo*, population of Panama—how would you explain that?

Santana: Noriega's backers were mainly composed of people who were somehow or other of mixed blood. Meaning they could be black, or they could be black and white, black and Indian, Indian and white. Anything that's not white, that's clearly not *criollo*, of Spanish descent. When you see Calderón and you see Noriega, you see there's a clear distinction in terms of color. And Noriega was a guy born in poverty. When the military took power in 1968, the bourgeois sector saw it as a setback for them. Of course they never lost money, but they didn't have the political power that the military now had. So they sought to

gain this hack, and it took them 21 years. It wasn't their doing, of course, but the U.S. military which put them in place. One of the things being said was that now *los rabiblanos* ["white-tails"], the people who are whiter and richer, are back in power. And you're going to see that all the people they put into power will be white too.

YSp: What about the Nicaraguan Embassy, and the Cuban Embassy? Did you see what the invaders did?

Santana: I went to the house of the Nicaraguan ambassador in Panama—man, they ransacked that place, and you could see the tracks of a small tank on the entrance to the garage, like they tried to bust it down. They didn't allow me to go in there. I was there with a Chilean journalist, and they let him go in, but I had to stay in the car. The Cuban Embassy was still surrounded by soldiers when I saw it, Americans and Panamanians. Up to the day I left, it was surrounded by razor wire. The street in front of it is sectioned off.

YSp: Are there actual concentration camps set up?

Santana: The Panamanian people call them concentration camps. But the Panamanian press, the oligarchy, the bourgeoisie is calling them "detention centers." To hold all the bad elements of Noriega's regime. But many prisoners were complaining about the bad conditions. They were housing thousands in these places, out in the sun practically all day.

YSp: This is separate from the camps for the survivors of El Chorrillo?

Santana: These concentration camps hold ex-Dignity Battalion [Noriega's personal guard] members, PDF members, government officials. The refugee camps were in Balboa, for all the victims of the U.S. invasion. Because their houses got blown away, and they've got nothing left in their life. Many people wanted Noriega out, because they thought once they threw him out that the country was going to get better. And it hasn't gotten better; it's gotten worse. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Panama

Eyewitness to U.S. Invasion

The bloody U.S. invasion of Panama last December 20 was a classic example of Yankee imperialism's arrogant claim to super-sovereignty in its Central American "backyard." Democrats, Republicans and the kept U.S. media enthused over the success of "Operation Just Cause," the savage action which leveled whole neighborhoods and killed thousands of Panamanians. In contrast, the revolutionaries of the Spartacist League denounced the rape of Panama, demanding "U.S. Troops out of Panama, now—all of them!", and participated in demonstrations across the country. In a leaflet issued the day after the invasion, we pointed out that "the 'war on drugs' was particularly intended at re-establishing American 'manifest destiny' over Latin America—and that means, first and foremost, crushing Sandinista Nicaragua and rolling back the Cuban Revolution." This is clearer than ever following the election of a U.S.-financed *contra* government in Nicaragua on February 25, setting the stage for a direct attack on the Cuban deformed workers state.

We print below an interview with Ricardo Santana, a Panamanian sympathizer of the New York Spartacus Youth Club, who was in Panama during both the failed October 3 coup and also during the invasion, and who recounts the real story of "Uncle Sam's" brutality, including the bombing of the El Chorrillo barrio, the storming of the Nicaraguan and Cuban embassies, and the Río Hato massacre.

Young Spartacus Interview

YSp: You just recently returned from Panama. How long were you there, and what were your impressions of the political situation at the time?

Santana: I got back last week, and I had been there since August 1989. I was there during the coup attempt in October, and during the invasion; I was staying with my aunt, who lives in Panama City. I immediately knew something was bad because a lot of stores, department stores, banks, were all closed. Especially after the October 3rd coup, people were even more reluctant to talk about politics, or anything. There was a real atmosphere of intimidation, because Noriega had slaughtered just about everybody involved in the coup. They were stuffing two or three corpses at a time into body bags, then dumping them out of helicopters over San Blas, an Indian territory. This was discovered when the Cuna Indians of San Blas began complaining that their fishing industry was being ruined, because all those decomposing corpses were attracting hundreds of sharks. The Indians couldn't go out fishing in their dugout canoes with their spears and arrows, because of all the sharks, so they filed a formal protest with the government. That's how the body dumps were found.

YSp: Was there a sense in Panama that the invasion was coming?

Santana: Well, nobody really knows what happened with that Marine that got



Reuters

Bush's bullyboys maul Panamanian youth.

killed, which George Bush used as an excuse to invade the country. But right before the invasion, the Canal Zone newspaper, *The Tropic Times*, reported that Noriega had declared war against the U.S., and of course that was another pretext for the invasion.

I didn't really get a sense that the invasion was about to happen. At midnight on December 20th, I was home in my aunt's dining room, reading the newspaper. I began to hear the homardment, but I thought it was only thunder. I went to the window, and looked up at the sky, but I didn't see a cloud! Then I thought that maybe the government was doing military maneuvers, because behind my aunt's house is a Panamanian military precinct. The noise would stop for a couple of minutes, then start up

again. Boom! Boom! Bombs. I said to myself, it sounds just like when I was in El Salvador at night—off in the mountains you would hear the bombardment, then the machine-gun fire.

Then my aunt called me about 15 minutes later, and she yelled, "Guess what's happening!" She was saying, "The gringos are here, the gringos are here! Don't even think of going into Panama City! It's crazy—there's Americans all over, helicopters are flying overhead, and they're dropping bombs!" She had been talking to her mother-in-law, who lives just three blocks from Noriega's headquarters, *la comandancia*, in the barrio of El Chorrillo. Luckily her house didn't get hit, I don't know how. She told my aunt they were all hiding out in the bathroom; they were in the shower, all of

them—the lady, her daughter, and her three grandchildren—because the noise, smoke and fire was unbearable. They just huddled in a corner of the shower and hugged each other all night.

After we woke up everybody else in the house, we went outside, and off in the distance you could see smoke clouds, black, white and yellow, and the red flames. You could hear it clearly out in the street, and all the neighbors came out. Somebody said, gather up water, in whatever you can, because you don't know how long it's going to last, it could be years or it could be days! So everybody ran into their houses, and started filling whatever they could grab that would hold water: pots, pans, coolers, whatever. Nobody slept that night. The only channel transmitting was Channel 8, the U.S. English military channel, and they were transmitting the CNN News; that was the only source of information. So everybody was watching that, and everybody was demanding, "What are they saying? Translate!" Everybody thinks it's easy to translate! I finally went to sleep about six in the morning.

Around twelve noon the next day, I heard a big blast which woke me up. I heard people yelling outside, so I went to see. I saw everybody out in the street running in one direction, and I ran out with just my shorts on, no shoes, to see what was going on. And there were Apache helicopters rotating in the air, looking for something. They would stop and hover, and then you'd hear a small click, and see a burst of smoke, and then, POW! And everybody would yell "¡Ay mierda!" They were so close, I could see the guys moving from one side of the helicopter to the other! Between the Panama Defense Force [PDF] precinct and my neighborhood, there's a mangrove forest, and the soldiers were abandoning their precinct, running through the trees and the bushes, and

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Crisostomo/Detroit Free Press

Resident of El Chorrillo amid devastation after U.S. terror bombing.