

Soviet Workers: Fight "Free Market" Misery!

USSR Lurching Toward Catastrophe



AP
Outrage over drastic price rises (left). Pro-Western "democrats" stage rally in Moscow. Sherbell/SABA

APRIL 8—"I am very worried now simply how I am going to feed my children," exclaimed a Moscow mother of two. On April 2, the price of bread, meat, flour and rice was tripled. The cost of milk, eggs and tea doubled. A child's school uniform which had been 12 rubles now costs 62. The long-expected and long-feared shock of "price reform"—the cutting edge of Gorbachev's declared "transition to a market economy"—hit Soviet working people with a vengeance.

Two days later the expected mass strikes and protests had begun. In Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia, tens of thousands of workers streamed out of automobile, tractor, engine and other factories and marched on the central square. Standing atop the pedestal of a statue of Lenin, speakers demanded wage increases to fully offset the price rises and called for the resignation of Gorbachev.

A month ago the Soviet president personally assured angry workers at the huge Minsk tractor factory that they would not suffer as a result of the "price reform." Now Minsk workers are defending their living standards by turning their power against the decomposing Kremlin oligarchy. An elected strike committee declares it will call a citywide general strike if its demands are not met by April 10.

A commonly voiced sentiment among Soviet working people is that they're willing to pay higher prices if only there

Bread Price Triples



Zhigailov/TASS
In February Gorbachev promised Minsk tractor factory workers they wouldn't suffer from price increases. They have now held strikes against slashing of their living standards.

was something to buy in the state stores. But the shops are empty. "I don't have a family to feed, so I've just said to hell with meat," said a schoolteacher in the capital. A coal miner's wife in the Donbass of the eastern Ukraine described a scene at the Children's World department store: "People were literally fighting over some two-ruble tights that came in."

The Gorbachev regime has promised compensatory increases in wages, pensions, student grants and child benefits such that there will be no overall fall in living standards. But with the Soviet economy visibly collapsing, such promises are unbelievable and unbelievable. The state planning agency, Gosplan, predicts a 12 percent fall in national output this

year coming after a 3 percent drop in 1990. A Gosplan forecaster, Yakov Urinson, prophesies darkly: "I see an abyss ahead—economic, political and social—a return to the horrible times that we lived through in our country in the past" (*Independent* [London], 11 March).

Soviet working people can avoid falling into this abyss only by sweeping away all wings of the disintegrating Stalinist bureaucracy—the hardline apparatchiks and military men, the Gorbachevite "centrists" and the openly pro-capitalist "democrats" around Boris Yeltsin—and taking political power into their own hands. The price increases reveal more sharply than anything else that all of these contending forces are enemies of the working class.

The "patriotic" apparatchiks and colonels, who denounce the "democrats" as agents of Western imperialism (which they are), will support Gorbachev against the workers in the name of "law and order" and of preserving a strong Russian-centered state. While condemning Gorbachev for ruining the economy, the "free marketeers" criticize the price hikes only for not going far enough. They want an end to all government price controls without any compensation. Yeltsin is now reintroducing into the Russian republic's parliament the "500 days" to capitalism plan, which calls for the privatization of housing, agricultural land and 70 percent of industrial enterprises.

As we wrote in Part One of our three-part article "Where Is the Soviet Union Going?" (WV No. 520, 15 February):

"Working-class struggles in defense of social equality and the emergence of an authentic Leninist pole of attraction would shatter the present alignments within the bureaucracy and intelligentsia.... The Soviet working people must cut through the false polarization between the 'democrats' and the 'patriots,' each in their own way heirs of the parasitic and reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy."

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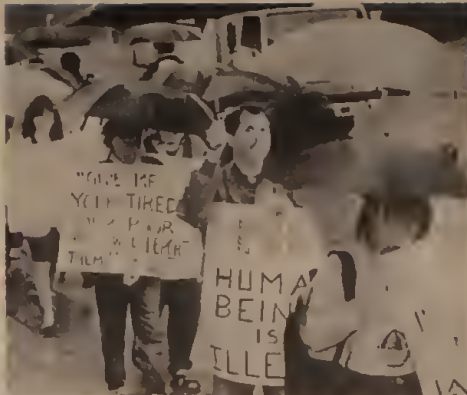
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Immigration cop dragnet seizes hundreds of foreign-born workers (left). Arrests and deportations.



Protesters outside Atlanta INS office denounce

Stop Migra Raids in Georgia!

ATLANTA—Hundreds of "undocumented" workers have been rounded up in vicious raids by *la migra* culminating in Easter week. The operation, dubbed "Atlanta Storm," targeted foreign-born workers at low-wage food processing plants and carpet mills throughout Georgia, including Atlanta. Hundreds of INS and U.S. Border Patrol agents and local cops surrounded plants with vehicles and dogs. Copters and planes were used to nab fleeing workers. Ostensibly to break

up a forgery ring for residency/citizenship papers, the operation was months in the planning and aimed to deport 500. The INS fell short of their objective, they claimed, because of publicity. Workers got wind of the impending raids and fled minutes before the INS arrived.

Some captured workers were immediately deported, families ripped apart. Most left with only the clothing on their backs. In Whitfield County near Tennessee, the workers were tried "en masse"

with no opportunity to speak. They will be arrested on *felony* charges if they return. The INS reneged on an agreement allowing two pregnant women to stay in Georgia to have their babies (the children would then be citizens). They were denied medical care and proper food, and went on a food strike. The Mexican consul from Atlanta was denied access because the jailers couldn't "verify his credentials." Apparently his diplomatic status is not recognized outside the perimeter highway which circles "liberal" Atlanta.

At Zartie, Inc., a poultry processing plant that is the largest employer of foreign-born workers in the country, the *migra* raid sparked pandemonium. "In the resulting confusion, workers escaped into the ceiling or hid in the plant's huge meat freezers" where they could have frozen to death in ten minutes (*Atlanta Constitution*, 29 March). The INS was forced to cut short the raid for fear that they would be held liable for the workers' deaths. In detention other workers were prevented from showering, brushing their teeth or using the bathroom. A prison inmate called the local newspaper to protest: the workers were told if they

"couldn't speak English they didn't need to go to the bathroom" (*[Dalton] Citizen-News*, 30 March). The inmate has been punished for revealing this brutality to the press.

The INS and local authorities "justify" the raids, claiming jobs are taken away from American citizens. Typically the jobs, like weighing boxes of raw chickens, pay \$5 an hour or less. Conditions are hazardous and the hours long. Meanwhile, cities and counties throughout Georgia use prison labor (the latter-day version of the chain gang) on public projects! No amount of racist chauvinism can hide the fact that Georgia's soaring unemployment has its roots in the capitalist recession. Immigration "reform" laws making the employer liable for hiring "illegal aliens" have meant more repression against workers, while for employers who superexploit their labor the occasional fine is a modest business overhead expense.

While most of the victimized workers were from Mexico, others were from Argentina, Peru, Guatemala, El Salvador and Ghana. Deportation to El Salvador or Guatemala could mean death at the hands of a fascist death squad. The growing number of Hispanics in towns like Gainesville and Cedartown have been victimized in turn by homegrown fascist Klan groups. The Mexican consul lamented, "it's misguided to do a 'Desert Storm' like this..." (*Citizen-News*, 27 March). On the contrary, this is the domestic face of Bush's "New World Order."

The INS dragnet caught 20 production workers at All American Gourmet Foods in Atlanta. A subsidiary of Kraft Foods, it is organized by SEIU Local 679 in Atlanta. The union informed WV that it is providing legal assistance to prevent the workers from being deported. The key is to mobilize the power of labor. The solid strike and organizing drive by janitors in Los Angeles last June was the best defense of that heavily Latino workforce. Union organization by a class-struggle leadership of the historically unorganized American South will find leaders and strong support from among the ranks of foreign-born workers. Labor must demand: Stop the deportations! Full citizenship rights for the foreign-born! ■



TROTSKY

How to Fight Fascism

In the wake of Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, fascism in France grew to dangerous proportions. Today Bush/ Mitterrand's imperialist slaughter of the Iraqi people has emboldened the fascist thugs of Action Française and Le Pen's Front National, who attack Arabs and leftists with seeming impunity. Our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France are fighting to mobilize working-class action to stop the fascist terrorists along the lines

laid out by Leon Trotsky in 1934, who commented on a clash between CP-led anti-fascist workers and police in a Paris district



LENIN

What is the objective, not just for the moment but for the entire coming period? It is to get the workers to take up the struggle against the fascists before these elements have become the dominant force in the state, to get the workers used to not being afraid of the fascists, to teach them how to deal blows to the fascists, to convince them that they are stronger in numbers, in audacity, and in other ways.

In this period it is very important to distinguish between the fascists and the state. The state is not yet ready to subordinate itself to the fascists: it wants to "arbitrate." We know what this means from the sociological point of view. However, this is not a matter of sociology but of giving blows and taking them. Politically it is part of the nature of a pre-Bonapartist, "arbitrator" state that the police hesitate, hold back, and on the whole are far from identifying with the fascist gangs. Our strategic task is to increase these hesitations and apprehensions on the part of the "arbitrator," its army and its police. How? By showing that we are stronger than the fascists, that is, by giving them a good beating in full view of this arbitrator without, as long as we are not absolutely forced to, directly taking on the state itself. That is the whole point.

In the case of Menilmontant, as far as I can tell from here, the operation was handled in the diametrically opposite way. *L'Humanité* reports that there were no more than sixty fascists in a thoroughly working class neighborhood! The tactical, or if you will, "technical," task was quite simple—grab every fascist or every isolated group of fascists by their collars, acquaint them with the pavement a few times, strip them of their fascist insignia and documents, and without carrying things any further, leave them with their fright and a few good black and blue marks.

—Leon Trotsky, Letter to French Ligue Communiste leadership (March 1934)

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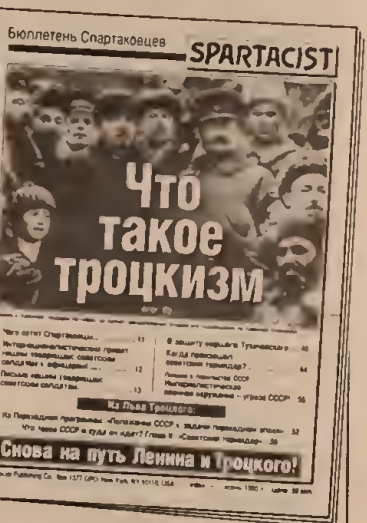
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Hands Off Vietnam Liberation Fighter Georges Boudarel!

France: Labor Must Crush Fascist Offensive!

The imperialists' victory in the Persian Gulf War has emboldened reactionaries in France who want revenge for decades of lost colonial wars. Fascists have spearheaded a hate campaign against Georges Boudarel, a history professor at Jussieu university in Paris, who joined the Viet Minh liberation forces fighting French colonialism 40 years ago. Vituperating against the "Communist traitor Boudarel," these thugs have unleashed a wave of murderous attacks on leftists. Ever since French society was torn apart a century ago by the campaign against Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer who was framed up on treason charges, the reactionaries and then the fascists have whipped up such hate/slander campaigns to further their sinister designs.

Armed with baseball bats and ax handles, on March 18 several dozen fascists marched on Jussieu and burned Boudarel in effigy. On March 27 some 1,000 fascists of Le Pen's Front National and the royalist Action Française tried to storm Jussieu, with chants of "Boudarel assassin!" and "Jussieu will be the Dien Bien Phu of the traitors!" That same day, at the university of Mont-Saint-Aignan in Rouen, some 30 helmeted fascists armed with baseball bats chanted Nazi songs around a bonfire of leftist literature and attacked students, including comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, who were preparing a rally in defense of Boudarel.

And on March 26, in the Paris suburb Sartrouville, an 18-year-old "Beur" (second-generation North African immigrant youth), Djemet Chettouh, was shot pointblank in the back by a security guard. Enraged Beur youth exploded against the police and the mayor, a notorious anti-Communist racist. The LTF has appealed for mass labor action to stop the fascist offensive; along these lines the class-struggle defense organization Comité de Défense Sociale (CDDS) approached unions and other groups for a united-front mobilization in Rouen under the slogans "Stop the Fascists! Hands Off Georges Boudarel!" In its call, the CDDS wrote:

"The organizations of the working class—parties and trade unions—'Beurs,' 'immigrants,' Jews, former members of the Algerian FLN, 'porteurs de valises' [those who smuggled money and arms to the Algerian resistance], homosexuals, students, teachers—everyone must mobilize....

"Rage is not enough. We must organize the social power of our class before it's too late. We'd better not wait until

the next assassination to organize our response....

"The first step is a powerful show of force to stop them in Rouen."

The fascist offensive has aroused worries among French workers. Unions of building trades, chemical and electrical workers in the Normandy region responded positively to the CDDS' appeal. However, on the spot in Rouen, which is key, the unions decided not to mobilize. This will only postpone the

colonialism, now, 40 years later, he is accused of treason and torture.

The fascists and monarchists demand that Boudarel be sacked from his university post, and legal proceedings were initiated against him by a former French prisoner for "crimes against humanity" (it's no coincidence that this is the same charge used against René Bousquet, chief of police in the Vichy regime, being tried for collaborating with the Nazis). The thirst for blood vengeance runs across a

ed from among the prisoners inspired by the Vietnamese example.

Those who would wallow in the greater glory of French imperialism have had a hard time finding any glory in the long list of France's great defeats: by the Germans in 1940, the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the Algerian war of independence. Now, finally, they think they have a chance to wreak blood vengeance for the humiliations of past defeats. As an article on the Boudarel affair



Rouen, December 1981—Hundreds came out for labor-centered anti-fascist demonstration initiated by Ligue Trotskyiste de France. At right, March 27 fascist/monarchist provocation in Paris targets Vietnam liberation fighter Georges Boudarel.



showdown. The next confrontation may come on May Day, when Le Pen's fascists have taken to countermobilizing around the symbol of French nationalism, Joan of Arc.

Two, Three, Many Dien Bien Phus!

In 1950, as a young Communist militant teaching high school in Saigon, Boudarel joined the Viet Minh guerrillas to liberate their country from the yoke of French colonialism—a courageous act of internationalist solidarity. Today, while renouncing his Stalinist past, Boudarel still insists he has "no regret at having made a radical commitment on the side of the Vietnamese people and of colonized people in general" (*L'Express*, 21 March). Because he served as political commissar at a Viet Minh prison camp for captured French soldiers, and tried to educate them about the evils of French

brouder political spectrum. One Gaullist former minister declared that Boudarel "would be shot immediately if we could do it." Socialist Party education minister Lionel Jospin echoed the fascists' accusations, calling Boudarel the "kapo in a concentration camp" (*Libération*, 18 March). Marchais, leader of the French Communist Party (PCF), was quick to distance himself: "Of course I won't support him, if he engaged in torture."

In a message of solidarity to the March 28 anti-fascist demonstration in Boston, our comrades of the LTF denounced the campaign of murderous calumny against Boudarel: "The bourgeoisie accuse him of being a torturer. Except his accusers could not find a single prisoner from camp 113 who had been tortured. The torturers in Vietnam were first French and then American imperialists. Today they're trying to reverse the roles of the executioner and his victims!"

Boudarel points to the real source of the wretched conditions in the camps: "We had enormous problems with supplies. Vietnamese had also been dying of starvation." Famine was widespread, the deliberate result of a French blockade aimed at starving the Viet Minh areas into submission. Starvation, torture, summary executions were a key element of French policy aimed at terrorizing a population which overwhelmingly supported the struggle for liberation.

As our comrades wrote in *Le Bolchévique* (No. 110, April 1991): "Dien Bien Phu was, like the liberation of Saigon in 1975, a victory for the exploited and oppressed worldwide. This victory was in particular a formidable encouragement to the Algerian struggle for national liberation." In fact, in the Viet Minh's camp 114, where captured North African soldiers were held, cadres of the Algerian Communist Party and FLN were recruit-

in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* (26 March) observed:

"At a moment when the French view their armed forces with some pride in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the case of the university professor recalls a war which seemed to be largely repressed from public consciousness. But it was not just shadows from a 40-year-old colonial war that suddenly reappeared; also revived is the perennial debate over how France deals with the dark side of its recent history, from collaboration with the Germans during World War II through the Indochina War to the Algerian War."

Indeed, the fascists of the OAS (Organisation de l'Armée Secrète), who viewed de Gaulle as the traitor who gave away Algeria, and organized repeated attempts to assassinate him, were the lineal descendants of the Pétainists who collaborated with the Nazis and carried out torture, executions and deportations of leftists, unionists, Jews. And this tradition is carried forward by today's fascist-monarchist rightists, who aim their murderous violence at those they consider "traitors," those who fought against the imperialist military aggression against Iraq.

Fascists Target Ghettos, Campuses, Picket Lines

The "immigrant" community, the French population of North African origin, has been singled out for police repression and subjected to racist attack. They were viewed as "the enemy within" during the imperialist war in the Gulf. Antiwar demonstrations were ringed with massive deployments of police, pro-Iraq Arabic newspapers were banned, and North Africans were subjected to constant police harassment, searches, surveillance and deportations. As the CDDS call for united action to stop the fascists

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Above, Georges Boudarel joined Viet Minh to fight against French imperialism. Today, he defends himself against witchhunt by fascists and Gaullists abetted by ruling "Socialists."



Soviet Union...

(continued from page 1)

Now this possibility is posed directly. The organization of workers resistance to the price increases can become the basis for *soviets* uniting the workers with collective farmers, Red Army soldiers and officers, old-age pensioners, oppressed minorities and others who embrace the cause of the working class. The light for genuine soviet power requires the forging of a new Bolshevik party which can lead the working class against the forces of capitalist counterrevolution and bloody nationalist strife.

Gorbachev and Yeltsin: End Products of Stalinist Degeneration

The descent of the USSR into economic chaos parallels the disintegration of the Stalinist bureaucratic elite. The Soviet Union is today politically paralyzed at the top as the two main factions arising out of the decomposing Kremlin oligarchy for the moment counterbalance each other. Yeltsin's propagandists and many Western commentators portray the conflict as one between the advocates of capitalist democracy and the defenders of a refurbished "Communism" (i.e., Stalinism).

There is no question that the "democrats" are agents of Wall Street, the City of London and the Frankfurt hanks. Recently, a top Yeltsin aide, Gennady Filshin, was forced to resign as deputy prime minister of the Russian republic after a financial scandal that starkly reveals this gang's real program and masters. Filshin reportedly arranged a deal with a shady British outfit, Dove Trading International, to import consumer goods for the fantastic sum of 140 billion rubles. These rubles would then be used by Western investors to buy up state-owned factories, mines and other enterprises. The deal was scotched by the central Soviet government.

However, the Gorbachevites, too, aim to transform the Soviet Union into a capitalist market economy although at a slower pace and for the benefit of different elements of the bureaucratic elite. A leading Gorbachev supporter, Yuri Prokofiev, Moscow Communist Party chief and a member of the CPSU Politburo, declared, "We must go the way of Japan and South Korea" (*Financial Times* [London], 5 February). Prokofiev even included Pinochet's Chile among the model countries where "developed market infrastructures were created in a short period of time"! In other words, the Gorbachevites are looking to introduce a corporatist system, if necessary through massive police-state repression.

Yeltsin's main appeal is that he promises a radical alternative to the present intolerable situation. Yet the mass of Soviet working people reject, indeed dread, the effects of "free market" capitalism. A poll, reported in the *Wall Street Journal* (2 January), indicates that only 5 percent of the Soviet population supports allowing the market to determine prices. Leningrad workers have reportedly refused to vacate the premises of stores, restaurants and service centers recently privatized by the Yeltsinite city council.

Yet Yeltsin remains an extremely dangerous demagogue because he can exploit the increasing economic desperation and growing hostility to Gorbachev among the Soviet masses. Witness the month-long coal miners strike. When half a million miners struck in the summer of 1989, the government offered sweeping concessions. At the same time, Gorbachev claimed sympathy with the miners' plight and used the strike, with some success, as an argument for perestroika, his half-baked program of market-oriented "reforms." But as perestroika produced only greater misery and government promises were inevitably broken, the miners turned sharply against Gorbachev.

The current strike leaders are staunchly in the Yeltsin camp. In addition to eco-

nomics demands, they are calling for Gorbachev's resignation and the transfer of effective political and economic power to the various pro-capitalist republic governments. Viktor Filimonov, a strike leader in the Kuzbass, states: "We fight for Yeltsin, but we don't believe he can change anything quickly. It took centuries to build capitalism, and he's talking of 500 days. But we have to get rid of the Communists" (*New York Times*, 28 March).

From a distance, it is not clear whether a significant section of the miners actually buy Yeltsin's pro-capitalist demagoguery. Many mines are *not* on strike and there are reports of heated debates over the action. It may be that the miners are being manipulated by a small group of anti-Communist activists, with well-established ties to American imperialist circles, who formed a "free" union last fall (see "Soviet Miners Strike Amid Perestroika Turmoil," WV No. 522, 15 March).

In any event, Soviet miners must understand that the Yeltsin forces are deadly enemies of the working class. It is not Communism that has produced the present economic chaos but the Stalinist perversion of Communism during decades of bureaucratic mismanagement and parasitism. A return to capitalism would mean even greater misery for Soviet working people.

Look at East Germany! A year ago many East German workers believed that unification with the wealthiest state in capitalist Europe would quickly bring them the good things of life. Instead it has brought them mass unemployment, rent-gouging, the closing of day-care centers and generalized immiseration. Suicides are up, the birth rate is down. Today, many East German workers are saying "it was better before" under a collectivized economy.

Soviet workers do not have to experience for themselves the ravages of capitalist restoration. Resistance to the price



Demagogue Boris Yeltsin spearheads drive for capitalist counterrevolution in 500 days or less.

increases can be the beginning of a *proletarian counteroffensive* against the forces of "free market" misery.

For Socialist Planning Under Workers Democracy

The last time the Kremlin bureaucracy raised the price of food and other consumer goods was in 1962 under Khrushchev. This provoked large-scale strikes and protests, which in at least one case (Novocherkassk in the Ukrainian Donbass) was suppressed with appalling bloodshed by the KGB political police and army units. When Brezhnev ousted Khrushchev a few years later, he sought to secure social peace by freezing consumer prices at 1962 levels.

However, as the Soviet economy stagnated after the mid-1970s, money wages, salaries and procurement prices for state and collective farms continued to be increased. The ever-growing gap between

official prices and costs of production was covered by ever-greater subsidies from an ever-growing money supply. In the last Brezhnev years, rife with corruption, an increasing fraction of foodstuffs and other necessities were diverted into the black and grey markets. But under Gorbachev's perestroika goods have simply disappeared from state shops and are available only in private markets at 10 or 20 times the official price.

To begin with, the black marketeers were legalized under the misnomer "co-operativists," and their activities greatly expanded. Administrators looted their factories, warehouses and shops, turning over state-produced goods to their partners in the private markets. Real economic power is passing to what Russians call "the mafia"—a mélange of corrupt apparatchiks, private operators and outright gangsters. Early this year the deputy chairman of the state pricing commission reported that the cost of producing and distributing consumer goods was 25 percent greater than the state's receipts for selling them. The Soviet government is in effect subsidizing the mafia's price extortion!

Perestroika has also led to the fragmentation of the Soviet economy along national and regional lines. Republics, regions and even cities are waging economic warfare against one another: erecting trade barriers, tariffs, separate currencies, preventing sales to non-residents. Meanwhile, large numbers of Soviet Jews, who constitute a significant section of the technical and scientific cadre, are emigrating out of fear of anti-Semitic pogroms. The prominent "free market" economist Nikolai Shmelyev complains that the situation is "reminiscent of medieval times." However, economic nationalism along with communalist blood-letting (like the current Georgian pogrom against the Ossetian minority) is *inseparable* from the drive for capitalist restoration of which Shmelyev is a leading ideologue.

Spokesmen for the Gorbachev regime as well as its "free market" opponents argue that a pricing system which encourages farmers to use bread as cattle fodder is crazy. And it *is* crazy. Prices bear no relation to either relative or absolute costs of production. But the answer is not the introduction of a "market economy"—code word for capitalism. If the workers take political power, a genuinely socialist government would enormously increase the efficiency of the democratically planned economy, rationalizing prices and also soaking up the present hoards of unspendable rubles (for example, exchanging them for long-term bonds).

Market calculations have an important role in aiding the plan in areas such as the output of consumer goods and services. As long as everyone is guaranteed

an income adequate to cover basic necessities, the price of specific consumer goods should in general be proportional to the cost of production. If someone wants to buy a leather jacket that costs twice as much to produce as a cloth jacket, he should pay twice as much for it. But to find out what people want to buy doesn't require unleashing anarchic market forces—all you need is product codes and a computer network linked to inventories!

As Trotsky called for in the 1938 Transitional Program, democratically elected consumer committees should oversee the quality and pricing of goods. And soviet bodies can democratically decide on which social programs should be provided free (such as medical care, day-care centers and education) and subsidies for certain items (for example, children's books to encourage reading).

Such a rationalization of the Soviet Union's pricing and financial system is possible only in the framework of the socialist revitalization of the economy as a whole. This means the elimination of all forms of bureaucratic waste and parasitism. It means radically increasing productivity through scientific planning and, no less important, through the renewed discipline and dedication of working people who know they are building a better future for themselves and their children. But that requires defense of the system of collectivized property.

To go from the present conditions of chaos and misery to a genuinely socialist system requires a *proletarian political revolution* to oust the degenerate remnants of the Kremlin bureaucracy and to crush all of the forces driving pell-mell toward bloody counterrevolution—the pro-Wall Street "democrats" around Yeltsin, the reactionary nationalists in the Baltics, Caucasus and Ukraine, and the Great Russian chauvinists now masquerading as Soviet "patriots."

The bureaucratized anarchy of Gorbachev's perestroika has fueled the growth of all these anti-working-class forces. But now worker resistance to the price increases offers a *crucial opportunity* to turn the entire political situation around. The Soviet Union can be polarized along lines for or against the interests of working people; whether the cost of living will be hostage to the mafia and Western financiers or determined by the democratic mandate of society.

Under revolutionary leadership—a reformed Bolshevik party built on the principles of Lenin and Trotsky—the Soviet working class can reclaim their genuine communist heritage. Just as the October Revolution shook the capitalist world, so the re-establishment of soviet power in the USSR will inspire the revolutionary struggles of the working class in the heartlands of imperialism, opening the road to a global communist order. ■

Financial Times



Soviet coal miners in the Urals debate strike as pro-Yeltsin activists openly push for capitalist restoration.

U.S. Set Up Iraqi Suppression of Kurds

Less than a month after raising the Kurdish red-and-green flag over Iraq's main border crossing with Turkey, Kurdish rebels are being routed by the army of Ba'athist strongman Saddam Hussein. Fearing punitive retaliation by the Iraqi regime, hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees are reportedly flooding toward the Turkish and Iranian borders, where they huddle in freezing rains, with little or no food and shelter. One refugee raged that when the Iraqis came, "they started to kill all the Kurdish and Turkish people. Just shoot, shoot, shoot by the government. The United States caused all this."

Barely a month after George Bush proclaimed victory in his Persian Gulf blitzkrieg, Washington is now hated not only by relatives of the 100,000-plus Iraqi troops who were slaughtered as they retreated from Kuwait and by civilian survivors of the Pentagon's merciless bombing of Iraq's cities, but also by the Shi'ites and Kurds who rose up against the Ba'ath regime expecting American backing. In the U.S., the postwar euphoria has been undercut as even supporters of the war are shocked at the open cynicism of the administration, which called for an uprising against Hussein one week only to set it up for suppression the next.

We said from the beginning that this criminal war had nothing to do with self-determination or democracy, but was for U.S. imperialist domination of the region and the world. Shortly after the war ended, we noted that "the U.S. seemed to be again tacitly backing its former Iraqi ally" Hussein (WV No. 522, 15 March). Now White House "officials say they do not want either the Kurds or Shiites to triumph" (U.S. News & World Report, 1 April).

The Kurdish rebellion unfolded with dramatic rapidity, and collapsed just as quickly. On March 14, as the Iraqi army was busy clearing out Iranian-backed Shi'ite rebels in the south, Kurdish fighters seized 12 towns in Iraqi Kurdistan in the north. They soon took control of Kirkuk, the third largest city in Iraq and the center of the northern oil fields, and were fighting their way into the other major northern city of Mosul. Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Massoud Barzani appealed to the rest of the disparate Iraqi opposition to form a provisional government in Kurdistan.

As we remarked last month, the Ba'athist regime is clearly far more adept at fighting its own population than opposing the imperialist invaders. Rather than waging "the mother of all battles" against the U.S.-led invaders, Saddam salvaged what he could of his army and weaponry to attack Kurds and Shi'ites. As the main body of Iraqi forces turned their attention from the south to the north, the Kurdish offensive was



AFP



As a Kurdish woman fighter shouts her defiance, bodies of Kurdish rebels lie in the street of Erbil, Iraq.

Golestan/Sipa

sharply reversed. As U.S. reconnaissance planes circled overhead, Iraqi helicopters bombed Kurdish towns, retaking Kirkuk and driving the rebels back to the border. "We never made any promises to these people," a White House spokesman declared. But, as the *New York Times* (6 April) reports, the CIA was recruiting Kurds to broadcast anti-Saddam appeals during the war "in the belief that a revolt would receive Western assistance."

So once again the Kurdish people have been the victims of imperialist duplicity. As one Kurdish leader put it, "The West never misses an opportunity to forget about the Kurds." Except when it wants to use Kurds only to then discard them. A U.S.-sponsored overthrow of the Ba'athist regime in Baghdad would not further the rights of the Kurdish people one iota, only installing an equally murderous, if perhaps more pliant, dictatorship. But a genuine struggle for the self-determination of the oppressed Kurdish people would have revolutionary implications throughout the Near East.

As we go to press, the UN Security Council is talking of setting up a "safe haven" for Kurdish refugees in northern

Iraq, what the U.S. delegate called an "area of tranquility." Whether this would be a Gaza-style concentration camp or a hantustan, certainly the UN, that fig leaf for the imperialist invasion, will hinder Kurdish liberation.

The International Communist League placed at the center of our agitation against Washington's murderous war on the Iraqi people the call to "Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!" We insisted that a defeat for the American empire would embolden the working people of the Near East to sweep aside their own reactionary rulers—including Saddam Hussein—through revolutionary class struggle. At the same time we reiterated our longstanding support to the Kurdish struggle for an independent state. This down-the-line opposition to imperialism brought yelps from the Democrats' social-chauvinist and pacifist lap dogs who wanted to build a red-white-and-blue "antiwar" movement tied up with yellow ribbons.

But some among those who have faced the lash of Ba'athist repression found it difficult to understand the need to defend Iraq. One Kurdish militant wrote to us that our call "implies you are giving 'military support' to the government of Iraq.... There is no Kurd that would defend the government of Iraq." We would reply to this militant that, yes, the present government of Iraq is an enemy of the Kurdish people, as are all of its predecessors, all the neighboring bourgeois regimes and all the imperialist powers. And the U.S. war on Iraq meant even sharper oppression for the toiling masses of the Near East, including the Kurds, by the most ruthless imperialist power on earth.

"The enemy of my enemy is my friend" is not always a good maxim. For decades various Kurdish groups have subordinated themselves either to Washington or to capitalist regimes next door that are hostile to their direct oppressors, but no less oppressive to indigenous Kurdish minorities. Repeatedly, these

treacherous patrons turned on their Kurdish clients, just like George Bush, as soon as they were no longer useful as pawns. None of these regimes will tolerate an independent Kurdistan anywhere: Kurdish national liberation requires sweeping away all the bourgeois oppressor regimes, and fighting the imperialist powers that prop them up.

As proletarian internationalists we bluntly told the truth about the brutally repressive Ba'athist regime, as in our article "Saddam Hussein's War on Kurds, Leftists—Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Reign" (WV No. 517, 4 January). But in the face of the neocolonial U.S. war it was necessary—yes, even for Iraqi Kurds—to defend Iraq, not least because a strengthened imperialist stranglehold on the region would give its local satraps an even stronger whip over their subject peoples, whether or not Saddam Hussein stayed in power. A better watchword here is: "The imperialist enemy of my local enemy is not a friend, but the bigger and deadlier enemy."

What has been the result of Iraq's defeat by the U.S.-led imperialist alliance? The very day the U.S. announced its cease-fire, NATO Turkey launched the biggest anti-Kurdish offensive in recent years, carrying out bloody raids and mass arrests throughout Turkish Kurdistan. During the buildup to the shooting war, they deployed an additional 100,000 troops in Kurdish districts along the Iraqi border. And both Turkey and Iran flatly ruled out an independent Kurdish state, even on Iraqi territory.

Of course the Kurds seized on the weakened state of the Baghdad regime to strike out for their own interests. But where could they hope to find allies in their struggle? The working class in Iraq and throughout the region has been demoralized by the victory of the imperialists, while around them is nothing but death and devastation. But the leaders of the Kurdish rebellion were not looking to the workers of Iraq as allies in their struggle, but rather to the U.S.

Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), wasted no time in flying to Washington last August, immediately after the U.S. war mobilization had begun. The State Department refused even to meet with him. At the beginning of the uprising Iraqi Kurdish leaders also met with the brutally anti-Kurdish Turkish regime of Turgut Özal, vowing "that they would not foment rebellion among their brethren in Turkey." Tailoring their demands to satisfy Washington, Ankara and Teheran, the leaders of the Kurdish rebellion did not even claim to fight for independence but only for "autonomy" in a "democratic" (or not so democratic) Iraq.

As consistent opponents of all national oppression, we Marxists defend the right of the Kurds to get arms and support from any quarter. But the Kurdish people have a bitter history of "leaders" who use the struggle for an independent Kurdistan to make them cannon fodder for the aims of one or another imperialist or regional power. Meanwhile, even self-styled Marxist groups like the guerrillaist Iranian Komala and Turkish Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK) capitulate to the Kurdish landholding classes through popular-frontist appeals to "patriotic landowners."

KDP leader Barzani is the scion of a wealthy landowning family. His father, Mullah Mustafa Barzani, was notorious in the 1970s for being a direct agent of the CIA, the shah of Iran and Zionist Israel who used the Kurds to keep Ba'athist Iraq on the boil. In 1975, the shah struck a deal with Saddam Hussein. Barzani and the Kurds were dumped, left

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Kurdish homeland is divided among four capitalist states and the USSR. For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!

The terminal crisis of Stalinism, from East Europe and the USSR to China—and including even tiny, “go it alone” Albania—has put all organizations whose ideological roots go back to Joseph Stalin up against the wall politically. Face to face with the undeniable fact that decades of hureaucratic misrule have laid the basis for an escalating assault on the fundamental gains of the October Revolution, even the most hard-bitten Stalinists are forced to confront the bankruptcy of their ideology. For Stalinism is

the false consciousness justifying the political rule of the conservative, nationalist bureaucracy that balanced parasitically atop the gains of the revolution. The collapse of these bureaucracies has thrown Stalinist groupings around the world into total disarray.

As capitalist ideologues proclaimed the collapse of Stalinist rule to be the "death of Communism," the commander in chief of the American empire unleashed the Pentagon war machine to create a "New World Order" through a blitzkrieg in the Near East. In the face of this across-the-board imperialist offensive, many erstwhile radicals have turned sharply to the right. As popular-front "peace" demonstrations were awash with red-white-and-blue flags and signs to "support our troops," liberals insisted on no support to "the enemy" in the Persian Gulf War. But while the Spartacist League defiantly proclaimed "Defeat U.S. Imperialism—Defend Iraq!" the "Marxist-Leninist Party of the U.S.A." *denounced* those who defended the country which had been targeted for destruction in the U.S./NATO attack (see Part One of this article in WV No. 522, 15 March).

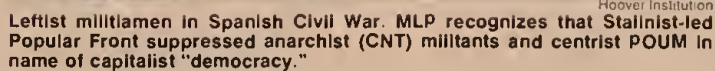
In contrast to the bulk of the American left, which shifted to the right during the Reagan years, the MLP initially moved to the left—although in a partial and distorted way. This small, eclectic group puts itself forward as an organization that seriously seeks to get to the root of “what went wrong” in the history of the “Marxist-Leninist movement.” After a series of “study campaigns” they decided that the turning point came at the Communist International’s Seventh Congress in 1935 where the Stalinists definitively went over to reformism, binding the parties of the Comintern to the “popular front” of class collaboration. But having reached that point, knowing full well that one step further would call into question the Stalinist lie of “socialism in one country” and take them into the realm of Trotskyism, they stopped short and don’t know where to turn.

Over the course of the years, the MLP has attracted a number of militants who genuinely want to be communists. These comrades are faced with some hard thinking and some hard choices, since their party is today hursting with contradictions, whose logic will either drive it into mainstream social-democratic reformism, blow it out into a political never-never land like the "Mao more than ever" RCP with Chairman Bob's clanking bullet necklace, explode it up entirely—or lead its best elements to pursue the study of the history of Stalinism through to revolutionary conclusions. And that means coming to terms with the dreaded "T-word": Trotskysm.

The MLP has made quite an odyssey since it began life as the American Communist Workers' Movement (Marxist-Leninist) in 1969, when the New Left was splintering into a myriad of collectives, many of them Maoist. ACWM(ML) and its successor, the Central Organization of U.S. Marxist-Leninists (COUSML), prided themselves

on being "hard" Maoists. They sported saucer-sized Mao buttons and plastered entire cities with posters of an obscure would-be Stalin named Hardial Bains, leader of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist). Those who witnessed their antics will never forget the sight of COUSMLers striking heroic "socialist realist" poses in the study lounges of Midwest colleges as they draped the halls with huge banners of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, and befuddled hapless onlookers with mind-numbing "mass democracies" to promote Mao-thought.

Being a Stalinist always meant being an apologist for betrayal of the working class in the hopes of cutting a deal with imperialism. The young Maoists who had



come out of the Vietnam antiwar movement lost their innocence in December 1971, when Nixon was clinking glasses in Peking with Mao Tse-tung as the U.S. rained bombs on Hanoi. Some Western Maoists had qualms about this, others reveled in "Marxism-Leninism-Henry Kissinger Thought." COUSML sought to outdo other Maoists in anti-Sovietism. Thus when South Africa invaded Angola in 1976, using CIA stooge Jonas Savimbi's UNITA as black front men, Soviet-supplied Cuban troops managed to beat back the apartheid-imperialist assault. COUSML, however, proclaimed "Down with the Intervention of the Soviet/Cuban Aggressor Troops" and "Long

Live UNITA! Long Live Jonas Savimbi!" (*Workers' Advocate*, 24 June 1976).

When Mao died, COUNCIL found a new helmsman and a new Stalinist fatherland: Enver Hoxha's "socialist Albania," whose "main enemy" was its neighbor, Yugoslavia. As China made noises about reconciling with Yugoslavia's Tito, COUNCIL published the stirring headline, "Against Reversing the Verdict Condemning the Yugoslav Revisionist Tito Clique, Murderers and Spies for U.S. Imperialism" (*Workers' Advocate*, 1 November 1977). COUNCIL soon discovered that Mao wasn't such a glorious anti-revisionist fighter after all. They wrote documents denouncing the "Three Worlds theory" that Mao & Co.

used to justify alliances with the shah of Iran, Chile's Pinochet, and other butchers; they attacked Mao for setting a "great barrier between the democratic and socialist revolutions" and for "opposition to the hegemonic role of the proletariat" ("Mao Tse-tung and Mao Tse-tung Thought Are Anti-Marxist-Leninist and Revisionist" [1979]).

Breaking with the megalomaniacal Bains when his weird dictates became too much to hear, at the beginning of the '80s COUSML renamed itself the MLP. And then something rather interesting began to happen. The MLP's "study campaigns" led to a series of historical investigations in which they kept pushing

**MAO TSETUNG THOUGHT
WILL SHINE FOREVER!**

**Deeply Mourn the Death of Chairman Mao Tsehung,
the Great Teacher and Leader of the Workers, Oppressed Nations
and Oppressed People of the Whole World!**

back the date when Stalinism went bad. "Even in the period of the 1960's," they wrote, the Chinese leadership put forward an "opportunist stand towards the national bourgeoisie, and the denial of socialist revolution" (*Workers' Advocate* Theoretical Issue, 10 August 1984). As followers of Mao (and Hoxha), they had maintained that the USSR went from "socialist" to capitalist as a result of Khrushchev's secret speech at the CPSU's 20th Congress. But now they discovered that *Stalin himself* was pushing a class-collaborationist line after World War II.

Thus "peaceful coexistence" was no longer held to be a post-1956 invention, but could be found in "the pacifist policy of the World Peace Congress" between 1949 and 1954. And while French CP leader Jacques Duclos had denounced Earl Browder for dissolving the CPUSA into FDR's Democratic Party, "the FCP acted like a typical government party of capitalist slave drivers" and took "a shameless imperialist stand" against independence struggles in Vietnam and elsewhere. As if that weren't bad enough, they find that "Stalin wasn't ignorant of the general line being followed in the post-World War II period, but took part in it." No kidding.

Summarizing their conclusions in 1984, the MLP declared Stalin to be good coin up until 1945: "But the orientation of his activity changed at some point...in his later period, he himself championed replacing the Leninist orientations on various key questions with something else" [sic]. Overall, despite "good works" (such as having "fought the Trotskyites"), Stalin's life and work "does not have the necessary consistency to be described as a classic model of Marxism-Leninism" (*Workers' Advocate* Theoretical Issue, 1 May 1984). Moreover, although an MLP resolution called for "Solidarity with Socialist Albania, the Only Genuinely Socialist Country in the World Today," they wrote that the Party of Labor of Albania "seems to have lost its bearings." A speech by "Comrade Enver" was attacked for "nationalist and 'three worldist' style rhetoric" and its "lack of any revolutionary spirit."

Hoxha, Mao and the later Stalin toppled—where does that leave the MLP? "The wrong stands of the post-World War II period naturally raises the question of how far back certain of these errors go," they wrote. The next stop was

the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935, at which Dimitroff proclaimed the "united front against fascism" or, as it became known in France and Spain, the "popular front." This is described as "a turn away from Leninist united front tactics," as if the call for class collaboration were a "tactical" question. Among the "errors" of the Seventh Congress were "abandoning the revolutionary struggle for the liberation of the colonies," "creating illusions in the bourgeois-democratic imperialist powers," and "a liquidationist perspective of worldwide merger with social-democracy" (*Workers' Advocate Supplement*, 1 May 1985).

The MLP presents the Seventh Congress turn as a series of mistakes and bad ideas, not as the expression of the politics of the bureaucratic caste that had usurped political power in the Soviet Union a dozen years earlier. They completely divorce the Comintern line from the 1935 Stalin-Laval pact that endorsed French imperialism's rearmament policy—the Kremlin leader's panicked bid for an alliance with the imperialist "democracies" in the wake of Hitler's victory in Germany. Thus the MLP's 50-years-later revelations about the Seventh Congress are utterly idealist, ignoring the material and political causes of the Stalinist's betrayals. And then they call a halt:

"The line of the first six congresses of the CI... was both consistent and Marxist-Leninist. This was also true of the 'Sixth Congress Period' from 1928 to 1934, until a year or so before the Seventh Congress when the line began to change."

Prior to this point the MLP finds only "certain rigid views on certain tactical questions."

There was indeed a turn at the Seventh Congress. But it was not, as the MLP imagines, the beginning of the process of degeneration of the revolution—this was the reformist culmination of a series of centrist zigzags and vacillations, and Communist parties worldwide were officially chained to the camp of social-patriotism, of coalition with the bourgeoisie, as the "People's Front" was declared binding on all sections. Seventh Congress participants were "busy in practice with the liquidation of the program, principles, and tactical methods established by Lenin," wrote Trotsky, "and are preparing the complete abolition of the Comintern as an independent organization." He added: "Nothing now distinguishes the Communists from the Social Democrats except the traditional phraseology, which is not difficult to unlearn" ("The Comintern's Liquidation Congress" [August 1935]).

Off Limits: "Socialism in One Country"

As Trotsky noted in an article on "The Stalinist Turn" (September 1935), "we warned that from the theory of 'socialism in a single country' would inevitably flow social patriotic conclusions with all their treacherous consequences. The Seventh Congress of the Comintern provided a truly remarkable confirmation of the Marxian prognosis." For all its "study campaigns," the MLP is studiously avoiding going to the origins of Stalin's policy of global class collaboration. Thus at the MLP's congress in 1988, after a report on "the degeneration of Soviet socialism," a member asks from the floor if "the ideological victory of Stalin over Bukharin, Zinoviev, Trotsky played any role" in the USSR's "change of policy." The response: "I don't have any answers to that question" (*Workers' Advocate Supplement*, 15 April 1989).

We have news for you, comrades of the MLP: the answer is "yes." The popular front was the corollary internationally of Stalin's anti-Leninist dogma (formulated with Bukharin's aid and Zinoviev's acquiescence) of "socialism in one country," which was at the heart of the Stalin-Trotsky fight all the way back to 1924. Today the MLP pretends to be the first Marxists since Lenin died, the first ones to seriously search for the roots of

Stalin's "errors." To make this arrogant pretense, it must turn its back on the tens of thousands of Soviet Communists who fought together with Trotsky for the continuity of Leninist revolutionary internationalism. For this they were murdered by Stalin at the head of the conservative nationalist bureaucracy which claimed to rule as Lenin's heirs. There is not a mysterious half-century gap in revolutionary continuity, but an unbroken line of struggle for Bolshevism represented by Trotskyism.

But try as it might, the MLP can't hold the line at the mid-'30s. For there is a continuity in Stalin's anti-revolutionary policies. Take the example of Spain. In spelling out the consequences of the Comintern's Seventh Congress, the MLP published a series of articles in 1986-87 on the Spanish Civil War. Labeling the CI's policies "grievously wrong," it denounced the Stalinists' suppression of the anarchist workers and the centrist POUM during and following the Barcelona May Days of 1937. "Trotskyism was denounced as anything that smacked of working class militancy," *Workers' Advocate* wrote. It noted that "harnessing the struggle to the alliance with the treacherous bourgeois liberals undermined and demoralized the resistance," and explained the collapse of the Spanish Republic as the result of "bourgeois democratic opportunism and liquidationist merger with reformism and social democracy."

All quite true enough. But *ten years earlier* in China, Stalin followed a class-collaborationist line that foreshadowed the popular front, only then it was known by Bukharin's formula of the "bloc of four classes." The Communist Party was bound to the "progressive" bourgeoisie by being part of and subordinated to Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist Kuomintang. Stalin even made the KMT a sympathizing party of the Comintern, and Chiang an honorary member of the CI's executive committee! But in April 1927, Chiang conquered Shanghai and KMT squads proceeded forthwith to massacre thousands of Communists and workers. Only a week before Chiang's coup, Stalin rejected Left Opposition warnings and said in a meeting of Moscow functionaries that the Chinese bourgeoisie would be used and then tossed away like a squeezed lemon!

The Sixth Congress of the Comintern, which the MLP holds up as good Marxist-Leninist coin, endorsed Stalin/Bukharin's class-collaborationist line that wrecked the second Chinese Revolution, and put it forward as the strategy for all the countries of the East. In his famous

critique of the draft program of the Sixth Congress, Trotsky denounced this as "a classic Menshevik noose for the proletariat of the Orient" ("Summary and Perspectives of the Chinese Revolution" [June 1928]). In summing up his critique of the Sixth Congress program, Trotsky wrote:

"If it is at all possible to realize socialism in one country, then one can believe in that theory not only *after* but also *before* the conquest of power. If socialism can be realized within the national boundaries of backward Russia, then there is all the



April 1927:
eight years before
Comintern's
Seventh Congress,
Stalin's class-
collaborationist
policy of
subordinating
Chinese CP to
Kuomintang led to
mass slaughter
of Communist
workers.

more reason to believe that it can be realized in advanced Germany. Tomorrow the leaders of the Communist Party of Germany will undertake to propound this theory. The draft program empowers them to do so. The day after tomorrow the French party will have its turn. It will be the beginning of the disintegration of the Comintern along the lines of social-patriotism."

Or again in the same document:

"If our internal difficulties, obstacles, and contradictions, which are fundamentally a reflection of world contradictions, can be settled merely by 'the inner forces of our revolution' without entering 'the arena of the world-wide proletarian revolution' then the International is partly a subsidiary and partly a decorative institution, the Congress of which can be convoked once every four years, once every ten years, or perhaps not at all."

—Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* (1929)

Stalin in fact dissolved the Comintern in 1943 on behalf of the "Grand Anti-Fascist Alliance." If you seek to find the roots of the "turn" at the Comintern's Seventh Congress, here is a guide.

Up Against the Russian Question

In rejecting the traditional Mao-Stalinist line of portraying Khrushchev

as the *diabolus ex machina* who transforms socialism into capitalism in a six-hour speech, and by registering the anti-revolutionary nature of Stalin's policies back to the mid-'30s, the MLP got itself in some pretty hot water with their erstwhile comrades of the international pro-Albania "trend." (Thus, at the same time as it was advertising the politics of the Nicaraguan MAP-ML, the MLP was barred from having an official delegation at the 1986 "Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Fascist Youth Camp" of

Albania-line groups in Managua.) But having chucked overboard most everything it once believed, it is left with a big zero... except for visceral anti-Trotskyism. How long will the MLP ranks consent to living in a political limbo as "sort of ex-Stalinist anti-Trotskyist Marxist-Leninists" without even "socialist Albania" to cling to?

Pulling up short in fear that one more step would take them into Trotskyland, the MLP is stuck masquerading as some kind of critical "Third Period" Stalinists. But while that other brand of Stalinists—without-a-country, Progressive Labor, might be comfortable with such a posture, the MLP has no desire to follow PL into the wilderness. And they have to go through all sorts of contortions in order to buttress their present theoretically and politically untenable position. Thus the MLP pretends that Trotsky's call for a workers united front to smash the Nazis in the streets of Germany was the same as the formation of a popular-front government with the shadow of the bourgeoisie in Republican Spain, while today the MLP "supports" patriotic peace crawls organized by sundry liberal Democrats and the social democrats, what Stalin and Thälmann used to denounce as "social fascists."

Deep in the pages of *Workers' Advocate* Theoretical Issues they may denounce the "incessant unity-mongering" of post-World War II Stalinism, but in practice there isn't a Democrat-led "movement" around—from "pro-choice" abortion groups to South Africa "divestment" to pro-imperialist "peace coalitions"—that the MLP doesn't yearn to be the "left wing" of. The "Third Period" window dressing is only dusted off as a way to ward off the demon Trotsky. The MLP refuses to honestly confront the Trotskyist program because it fears that this would mean cutting loose from the popular-front swamp of which they are somewhat esoteric, but tolerated, inhabitants. Genuine Bolshevik politics mean breaking with, not being the "left" tail of, class collaboration.

The badge of loyalty to the imperialist popular front throughout the Reagan/Bush years has been anti-Sovietism. And in all the hot spots of Cold War II, these "Marxist-Leninists" refused to defend the remaining gains of the October Revolution from the assault of their "own" bourgeoisie. More often than not, this refusal was couched in the queasy "neutrality" that has become the MLP's trademark: "on the one hand," the CIA's Afghan *mujahedin* are cutthroat reactionaries, Walesa's Polish Solidarność is a clerical-nationalist right-wing movement

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Challenge to Debate

Chicago, IL
March 7, 1991

To the MLP:

Your article "More on the 'Defend Iraq' slogan..." printed in the February 20 *Workers' Advocate Supplement* along with an excerpt from our article "Break with the Imperialist 'Doves'..." (*Workers' Vanguard*, No. 518) addresses our differences head on. You point correctly to crucial differences in our appreciation of the U.S./Iraq conflict, as regards the nature of the Eastern European states (and, of course, the USSR) and, therefore, the tasks revolutionaries face in mobilizing the working class with specific reference to the "antiwar" movement.

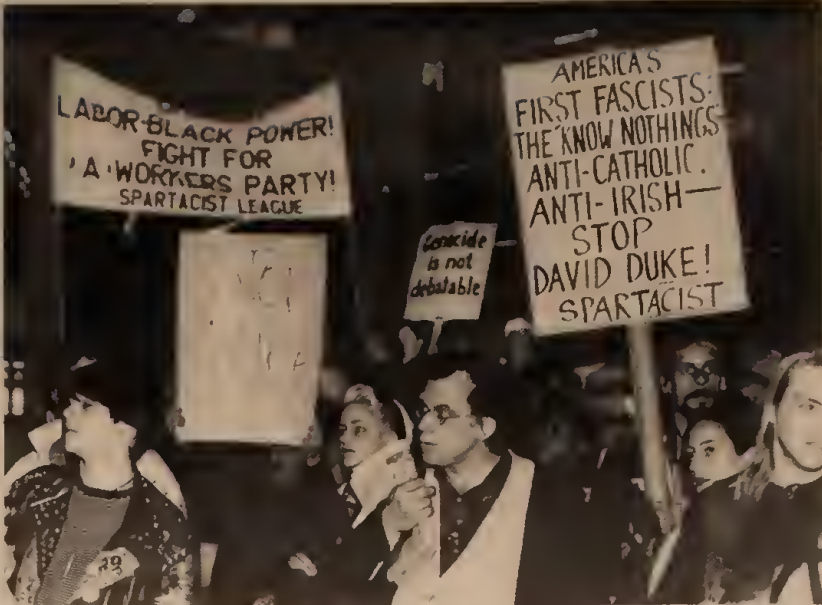
A correct orientation on these questions is made even more urgent for communists, especially in this country, in light of the vicious smashing of Hussein's army by the now-exultant U.S. imperialists. We propose a debate on these questions between representatives of our respective organizations. Given that the war has

now ended, it might be best to approach our differences under the general heading "The Struggle Against Imperialism: From the Gulf War to the Russian Question" which would address the specifics raised in the respective articles as well as the more general programmatic thrusts of our organizations.

Should this proposal be acceptable to you we will need to meet to come to agreement on democratic norms for discussion as well as on chairing the debate and on such specifics as time, place, advertising, etc. It might also be helpful to exchange other relevant literature by our organizations on these questions to assist preparation.

Needless to say, we will want sufficient time to mobilize a large turnout for the event, however, we would hope to be able to schedule this within a month or so to attempt to attract interest generated by the U.S./Iraq war. In any event, we hope to hear from you soon concerning this proposal.

Ed Clarkson
for the SL



Crowd surged to windows of Old South Meeting House chanting against KKKer Duke (left). Fascist terrorists are emboldened by bipartisan imperialist war and official racism. Spartacist says: Genocide is not debatable. Build a workers party!

Boston Protest...

(continued from page 12)

the moment he and moderator Steven Curwood took the podium."

As soon as it was announced from the rally microphone that Duke was starting to speak, the crowd outside surged to the windows of the hall. For the next 45 minutes their resounding chanting could be heard in the hall as well. Inside, separate groups of gay activists, members of Progressive Labor and some Zionists interrupted Duke with chants and cat-

calls. A couple of Nazi-saluting Duke supporters attacked PL supporters in the audience. The police moved in and pulled out a half-dozen anti-racist protesters in the audience. One PL supporter, Joshua Barnett, was arrested on phony charges of assault and battery on a cop. The PDC contributed to a hail fund outside the hall. Drop the charges against Barnett now!

All Out to Stop Fascist Duke!

From Harvard Square to Mattapan Square, tens of thousands of leaflets motivating the call to "Stop KKK Hitler-Lover David Duke!" were distributed to build the demonstration. Leaflets were

posted by storeowners near Roxbury's Dudley Station and the integrated South End neighborhoods. One record store owner who lost relatives in the Holocaust volunteered to include a leaflet with every record she sold. Black transit workers took stacks to circulate among "T" drivers and at the bus barns. PDC spokesmen appeared on radio stations, from a student station in Amherst to a Creole talk/music program popular with the Haitian community.

Endorsers of the united-front action included: James Barrett, executive board member of USWA school bus drivers Local 8751, and Michael Holden, vice president of ATU Local 1205 striking Greyhound bus drivers—both endorsed the effort early on. Cesar Chavez, in town to give a speech at MIT, endorsed the rally—farm workers remember that it was Duke who set up the Klan Border Watch to target immigrant workers at the Mexico-California border. Jean McGuire of the Boston School Committee endorsed, saying: "The Klan is patently anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, anti-black, anti-everything." Support also came from State Representative Alvin Thompson, a member of the Massachusetts Black Caucus, and from the Boston Unit of Irish Northern Aid.

In building the united-front protest against David Duke, trade-union leaders who had participated in previous PDC-initiated anti-fascist mobilizations gave important support. The day of the demonstration, Rev. James L. Stovall, organizer and chairman of the Louisiana Coalition Against Racism and Nazism, flew to Boston to speak at a press conference with the PDC on his efforts against Duke in his home state.

In contrast to the way Boston students, minorities and unionists took up the building of the anti-KKK mobilization, the liberal and pop-front "establishment" in Boston either ducked or unsuccessfully sought to divert anger away from the Stop Duke demonstration. Black state representative Byron Rushing not only refused to endorse, but penned a letter to the *Boston Globe* claiming the rally against Duke would "play into his hands." Other liberals began a whisper campaign, mixing slanders of violence against the PDC and the Spartacist League (for stopping the Klan with a 5,000-strong labor/black mobilization in Washington, D.C. in 1982, after which the cops took revenge by beating some dispersed groups of young black demonstrators) with the complaint that we "take all the credit" for our initiatives.

What do they mean by "taking the credit"? Those who are looking for "credit" are the Democratic Party politicians who want to use such opportunities for grandstanding and hustling votes. And they don't want reds around who tell the truth about this racist capitalist system. What's really behind the refor-

mists' and union bureaucrats' cynical lament is that the Spartacist League and PDC refuse to self-censor our revolutionary politics before the unionists and minorities who want to stop the fascists.

As an "alternative" to the PDC-initiated protest, an "Ad Hoc Committee for a Klan-Free Boston" announced a picket line on March 28. But the only evidence of this crew on site was a handful grouped around Rev. Ellis-Hagler quietly singing freedom songs.

David Duke's first appearance in Boston came in 1974, when he sought to recruit from the racist anti-busing mobs led by Ray Flynn and the South Boston Marshals. Busing was killed on the streets of Boston as liberal Democrats in City Hall and the U.S. Congress put the knife in school integration programs. While the reformists and union bureaucrats told black children to rely on the capitalist state for protection, we fought for mobilizing the one force which could have won the battle: union defense guards to defend busing and fight for its extension to the better-off suburban schools.

Seventeen years later, Flynn is in the mayor's chair and Duke returns to recruit for his fascist terror. And official racist terror continues unabated. A black MBTA bus driver, Selbert Lewis, just filed suit against four cops who assaulted him while his bus was stalled on the Mass. Avenue bridge. A black worker from Mattapan who went into Dedham to see a movie (since there are no movie theaters in black Boston neighborhoods) was kicked in the face and choked by two cops while handcuffed.

But the Stop Duke mobilization on March 28 showed that there is a determined and militant core of students and workers who will not put up with racist terror. From their ranks will come fighters who will transform this sick, racist society. As the Spartacist League speaker told the rally: "Only when working people rule this land will we be rid of the white hood, the swastika, and all forms of racist oppression once and for all!" ■

Bay Area Labor Black League:

Drive Out Duke Like Boston Drove Out the Slave Catchers

The following statement was sent to the Boston demo by the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense.

Comrades and Friends! We in the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense wish we could be with you today. KKKer David Duke thinks he can ride a wave of war hysteria and economic misery and make an appeal to poor white people in Boston, especially the Catholics. Who does he think he's fooling! The KKK killed Catholics! Like their capitalist masters, the fascists want to set working people at each other's

throats: black against white, Christian against Jew, Protestant against Catholic. The racist terrorists primarily target black people, but the Klan's hit list targets all of us who oppose or are in any way "out of step" with the Anglo-Saxon Protestant ruling class in this country.

David Duke is a fascist. Duke is a leash dog of capital who wants to terrorize immigrant workers and their families, kill black people and union organizers, and drown in blood the struggles of the oppressed against the imperialist "new world order."

We need labor/black mobilizations to clean out the fascists. David Duke deserves the kind of welcome that this city used to reserve for the "fugitive slave" catchers before the Civil War. When those dreaded mercenaries tried to kidnap black people and drag them to slavery, the decent citizens of Boston drove them out of town! Mobilize the independent power of the labor movement. Then we could do something to address the unemployment, homelessness, education cutbacks and police terror that is capitalist America right now.

What we urgently need is integrated working-class struggle. For militant unity in action to beat back the fascist David Duke! March with the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee! Fight for a workers party! The U.S. bloody massacre of the Iraqi people is only a foretaste of what this very arrogant bourgeoisie has in mind unless power is taken from their hands. Working people must rule! Fight for a workers America, a socialist America! For a Third American Revolution to Finish the Civil War!

27 March 1991

CAUTION!!

COLORED PEOPLE OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,

You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and advised, to avoid conversing with the Watchmen and Police Officers of Boston,

For since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR & ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as

KIDNAPPERS

AND

Slave Catchers,

And they have already been actually employed in KIDNAPPING, CATNIBING, AND KEEPING SLAVES. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY, and the Welfare of the fugitives among you, inform them in every possible manner, as so many HOUNDS on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.

Keep a Sharp Look Out for

KIDNAPPERS, and have

TOP EYE open.

APRIL 24, 1861.

Abolitionist placard called for vigilance against slave catchers.

Spartacist League Public Offices

— MARXIST LITERATURE —

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Young Spartacus

Boston Youth Mobilize Against David Duke

Klan Terror Will Not Ride!



Young Spartacus



Young Spartacus

The news that David ("Klan in a suit") Duke was coming to town to organize white-supremacist reaction ignited a powerful response from youth in Boston high schools, colleges and neighborhoods. Spartacus Youth Club members swung into high gear, gathering endorsements and support from other youth organizations to build a united-front protest to "Stop KKK Hitler-Lover David Duke!" Leafletting at Brookline High, we met starters from the school basketball team who were already mobilizing their friends to come out and dunk Duke. Organizations representing the whole broad swath of Duke's intended victims—Latino students at UMass, black students at Boston University, Jewish students at Brandeis, gay and lesbian students everywhere—were all part of the militant 1,500-strong protest outside Old South Meeting House on March 28.

David Duke became a focal point for all the anger and revulsion of young people fed up with this decaying capitalist society of racism, war, and unemployment. They welcomed the united-front protest as an overdue opportunity to *fight back* against all the racist garbage that's been shoved in their faces—from Confederate flags at Harvard to cop harassment of black youth in Mission Hill. In Cambridge's Central Square, a young black man took a stack of leaflets, saying, "I was there in Government Center when we ran the Klan out of Boston in 1982—they better not come back! I'm gonna be there!"

The protest against David Duke, initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee, provided a rare opportunity for the hundreds of youth to join forces with other anti-fascist militants, speak their minds and organize against racist attacks. Our rally outside Old South Meeting House became a genuine speakers' corner as one youth after another stepped forward to address the crowd.

A young black woman told of how she was harassed by Boston police and declared, "I'll be damned if I'm gonna be looking over my shoulder for David Duke! This is *my* home!" Shea Justice, spokesman for UMOJA at Boston University, vowed, "We will not allow the state of America to step back to the way it was 20, 30, 40, 50 years ago. We're

standing for the same cause which is the freedom and liberation of all Americans, not just one section—*everybody*. There is no place for David Duke!" A white youth from Bunker Hill Community College captured the crowd with his impassioned appeal, "*We don't want to live in a generation of hate!*" He continued, "I love history, but let me tell you there are things that make me ashamed, things that make this country not so great—like slavery! These are things David Duke stands for. Damn him to hell!"

A young Haitian woman took the microphone and spoke with conviction of the impact participation in this united-front action had on her:

"I am not with a particular group but I know from tonight that I do not stand alone. I am American by the flag but I am Haitian by the blood. If I have any respect for the American flag it's because of the backs of the good people that this country rides on. What I'm about to say today, and it's the first time I've consciously said it, but I've asked myself, 'Why am I 22 years old today and I've never voted?' It's because when I looked at what's been offered to me, I rejected it, just as I reject David Duke! Nothing has satisfied me yet! I want it all! I want freedom! I want equality! For all of us! I want to work for the day when Bush will see my words in front of him and I will say, 'I denounce you as my govern-

ment. I denounce everything that you stand for.' I want to see a free America and I will die fighting for it!"

Unity in Action, Freedom of Criticism

While the masses of youth and working people present relished the opportunity to speak out in defiant opposition to the race-hate terror threatened by David Duke, representatives of ostensibly socialist organizations were peculiarly tongue-tied. Surveying our many signs and banners on a range of issues from defense of the Soviet Union, to the need to forge a workers party, to opposition to David Duke, members of a group called Socialist Action sneered, "You call this a united front? You've got your full program up there!" To reformists like Socialist Action, schooled in tailing liberal Democrats and building popular-front coalitions that *suppress* all but the lowest-common-denominator liberal demands, open political debate is unthinkable!

We built this demonstration the same way we've built every other successful mobilization against the fascists—as a genuine *united front*, based on unity in action and freedom of criticism. That's how to mobilize the many intended vic-

times, diverse political organizations and the labor movement in the largest possible force to defeat our common enemy, while providing all participants with the right to express their own views and debate others. With the exception of the ISO (which endorsed and spoke at the demonstration) other "socialists" present were dumbstruck by our offers to address the rally. The Marxist-Leninist Party said they "couldn't find a good speaker," the Revolutionary Communist Party and Progressive Labor said "no...yes...maybe" and never rose to the occasion.

The clash of opinion and test in action of competing political organizations are important elements in raising the consciousness of working people and youth. Key political questions, like which side the government is on, are critical for anti-fascist fighters to see clearly. Groups like the Communist Party and Young Communist League actually call on the government to "ban the Klan," and on March 28 a small circle of middle-aged white ladies with "ban the Klan" leaflets stood outside the demonstration singing songs to protest Duke.

It is dangerous to peddle the illusion that this government can be made to defend the interests of the oppressed. The

continued on page 10

High school and college students, gay activists, socialists, minorities came out against fascist Duke—and spoke out against cop terror and this racist government.

Young Spartacus



Boston Youth...

(continued from page 9)

government has been up to its eyeballs in abetting heinous Klan and Nazi murders. An FBI informer was involved in the 1963 Birmingham church bombing which killed four little black girls attending Sunday school. Police and a government federal agent were involved in plotting the 1979 KKK massacre of five leftists and union organizers in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Advocates of "hanning the Klan" should think about the Smith Act, whose hackers said it was for "outlawing" the Nazis. It was first used in 1941 against the Trotskyists and became the weapon of choice for the 1950s McCarthyite witchhunt against the Communist Party. Any hanning orders by this government will be used against the left, like Boston's recent ordinance against antiwar protests.

For Class Struggle Against the Racist "New World Order"!

Many of the demonstrators were wise beyond their years as to the racist nature of this society because they'd already been on the receiving end of injustice. Few saw Duke and the Klan as an isolated problem but as part of a whole system of oppression. The notorious television clip of the Klan in blue uniforms—gun-toting Los Angeles police officers clu-hing the living daylight out of a defenseless black man—was never far from people's minds. Many spoke of police rampages against oppressed minorities in Boston. That image of unbridled racist terror meted out by the supposed guardians of "democracy" has been seared into people's consciousness and goes a long way toward conveying the fundamental truth that the government is *not neutral*.

From the mass racist murder of the Iraqi people, including civilian women and children in a Baghdad bomb shelter, to the 1985 bombing of Philly MOVE, to cop brutality against blacks and Hispanics in every city in this country, the U.S. ruling class is the biggest organizer of racist terror on the planet. Against illusions in the government, its cops, its courts, and its university administrations, the Spartacus Youth Clubs fight to win students to an understanding that youth must ally with the social power of the integrated working class to smash racist attacks.

Perpetuating the *illusion* of equal rights and democracy is very important for a government of the exploiters in maintain-

ing its rule over the exploited. The capitalists and their political parties prefer to keep the fascists in white hoods and swastikas in reserve as shock troops for extralegal terror. Thus the Republican and Democratic party political machines tried to distance themselves from David Duke (once a Democrat, now a Republican, still a fascist).

The Republican Party in particular is nervous about an open Klansman in their midst—after all, George Bush's racist "New World Order" must rely on an army that's disproportionately black and Hispanic. So College Republicans, who've unleashed a lot of the ugly racist crap on the campuses (from the *Dartmouth Review* crowd to UMass-Amherst's *Minutemen*), actually came out in competition for Duke's supporters outside the Old South Meeting House bearing placards reading, "GOP not KKK!"

In the U.S. today, the KKK and Nazi fascists are emboldened because of the *bipartisan* policies of the Democratic and Republican parties. Boston's Democratic

mayor Flynn was part of the fevered racist mobs in the streets against busing for school integration that enticed KKKer Duke to come to Boston for the first time in 1974 to extend Klan influence in New England. Democrats and Republicans were united in the campaign of racist murder against the Iraqi people, and skinhead fascists stepped up their attacks on Arab Americans and other dark-skinned peoples at home.

When gays and the ghetto poor are killed through the government's malign neglect of the AIDS epidemic, blacks and Hispanics are shot by the cops, poor women are targeted with genocidal "workfare" and rollback of abortion rights, and union workers have their contracts and jobs ripped up and thrown in their faces, the fascists see a green light from the government to goose-step against us.

To fight the fascists we have to fight the capitalist economic system that breeds them. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution put an end to the fascist Black

Hundred pogroms by overthrowing the rule of the capitalist class and establishing equality throughout the vast and multi-ethnic Soviet Union. Now that Gorbachev is giving up Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union to the "free market," all the old crap—including Hitlerite fascists—are back on the scene with a vengeance. Throughout the former DDR (East Germany), workers, youth and women are realizing that rights they had taken for granted (like housing, health care, full employment, day care, education) were the result of a planned collectivized economy and are now ruthlessly being ripped away by the capitalists.

Even a basic democratic right—like equal access to education—requires a revolutionary fight to bring the working people to power. That means building a class-struggle workers party that will fight for all of the oppressed as a tribune of the people. It is to the task of building such a party that the Spartacus Youth Clubs are dedicated. Join us! ■

Kurds...

(continued from page 5)

to the tender mercies of the Ba'athist strongman, much as Barzani Jr. has been.

This practice was by no means restricted to Barzani. In the 1960s, Talabani's forces fought alongside the Iraqi army against Barzani supporters. In the '80s, Barzani joined forces with Khomeini's Iran, not only against Iraq but against Iranian Kurdish groups, while the (dis-

tinct) Iranian KDP lined up with former Khomeinists Bani Sadr and the mujahedin behind the Iraqi regime. Meanwhile, the PKK—which for the past seven years has waged a guerrilla war against both the Turkish army and any Kurdish leftists who disagree with it—is supported by Assad's Syria.

Kurdish militants must learn the bitter lessons of the past and break with the sordid history of nationalism and class collaboration. Under the leadership of Bolshevik parties committed to the Trot-

skyst perspective of permanent revolution, the Kurdish working people can play a decisive role in the liberation of all the toilers in the region.

In 1958-59, Kurdish oil workers were the strategic core of the Iraqi Communist Party, which squandered a key revolutionary opportunity in Near East history by subordinating the workers struggle to a popular front with bourgeois-nationalist military leader Qassem. And this January, as Turkish Kurdistan was swept with antiwar protests demanding "Freedom for Kurdistan," a militant strike wave spearheaded by miners from northern Turkey threatened to bring the country to the verge of civil war.

In greetings to a 1984 conference of Kurdish militants in Europe, a Spartacist representative laid out the alternative to the nationalists' history of betrayal:

"The Kurdish masses must look to an alliance with the Arab, Persian and Turkish proletariats, who in turn must be made to become determined champions of the Kurdish right of self-determination against the great power chauvinism of their own bourgeoisies...."

"The solution to the oppression of the Kurdish masses can only be regionwide, involving the smashing of four reactionary bourgeois regimes.... We understand that the struggle for a United Socialist Republic of Kurdistan will be shaped by and in turn shape the future of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole region toward a socialist federation of the Near East." ■



Turkey's military-based government brutally oppresses Kurdish minority. Iraqi Kurdish leaders pledged to Turkish president Özal not to spread uprising to Turkey.

France...

(continued from page 3)

warned: "The target of the fascists' attacks for years has been the ghettos; today it's the campuses; tomorrow it will be the picket lines."

The fascists have already targeted the most militant expressions of labor struggle. Among some sectors, resistance to the imperialist war in the Persian Gulf took the form of strikes: CGT sailors at Toulon, railway workers of Chambéry, Marseille longshoremen. When in February the CGT dockers at the Port of

Marseille refused to load war matériel destined for the Gulf, they were denounced by the rightists, and the dockers union hall at Port-du-Bouc was machine-gunned and bombed. Inscribed at the scene was "Dockers = Traitors to the Fatherland" (*Rouge*, 21 February).

French writer Gilles Perrault (author of *The Red Orchestra*) was denounced for "treason" because he urged French soldiers in January to organize resistance to the war effort; the minister of justice demanded his prosecution on charges of promoting mutiny in the ranks. At a March 28 meeting of the antiwar group "The 250," Perrault argued against those

who helittled the danger of Le Pen coming to power, while noting that many of the fascists' ideas have permeated much of society, and he strongly defended Boudarel. Perrault is among those who have endorsed the call for a united workers mobilization to stop the fascists and defend Boudarel.

The social-chauvinists of the French Communist Party (PCF) are visibly embarrassed at the prospect of a campaign on behalf of a "traitor to the fatherland." After all, the CP leadership joined the bourgeois government which waged the war in Indochina, and actively supported the "restoration" to French imperialism of "its" colonies after World War II. Their Vietnamese comrades initially toed the line, joining with the imperialists in the violent suppression of the 1945 Saigon workers uprising led by the Vietnamese Trotskyists, and succeeded in restoring French colonial rule. The imperialists showed their gratitude by trying to wipe out the Vietnamese Stalinists, forcing the Viet Minh to undertake the armed struggle culminating at Dien Bien Phu.

The Boudarel affair has provoked no little consternation among the "far left" which for years has trailed after social democracy. While forced to condemn the fascist violence, Alain Krivine's LCR, which in the 1970s acted as uncritical cheerleaders for the Vietnamese NLF, keeps trying to separate this from the matter of Boudarel and his defense. Yet Boudarel is today the fascists' main target. With no perspective of mobilizing

the weight of the organized workers movement, the "far lefts" have recourse only to the equally futile and dangerous tactics of small, isolated confrontations with the fascists and appeals to the bourgeois state and university authorities to repress them.

Our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste, French section of the International Communist League, have distinguished themselves by their successful united-front mobilizations against fascism and racist attacks, most notably at Rouen in 1981 and the 1987 boycott campaign against a restaurant which refused to serve North Africans. The LTF is well known as the only left party which consistently refused to support Mitterrand, the "Socialist" who presides over France's bloody actions in the Gulf and the iron fist of police terror against the "immigrant" population in France. While the "far left" camp followers of Mitterrand have waffled on defending Boudarel, the LTF has forthrightly taken up his defense.

In its call for a working-class mobilization in Rouen to stop the fascists in their tracks, the CDDs wrote:

"Such an action must be based on the muscle and social power of the organized working class. Hundreds of thousands of trade unionists demonstrated against the imperialist war against Iraq. Some waged strikes against this war. Mobilizations uniting even a fraction of these forces could drive the fascists back into their holes—if the experience and organization of the unionists are applied to teach these vermin, should they dare to show the lesson they so richly deserve." ■

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MLP Adrift...

(continued from page 7)

backed by the U.S., Pol Pot is a blood-thirsty running dog for imperialist designs in Southeast Asia, etc.—but "on the other hand," you can't give even military support to the Soviet (Polish, Vietnamese) "revisionists" by taking a side for the defeat of imperialist-sponsored counterrevolution.

On the one hand, on the other—the MLP found itself caught in the crossfire of the class war, hardly distinguishable from Cold War liberals when confronted pointblank with the Russian question. In rejecting Maoism, the MLP never broke from the Maoists' "theoretical" cover for de facto alliance with U.S. imperialism: the assertion that the Soviet Union is "state capitalist" and "social imperialist." This is not a scientific analysis but a fig leaf to cover naked anti-Soviet prejudice. Who would seriously contend that the Soviet economy is characterized by the drive to maximize profits, generating cyclical crises and depressions? Yet "capitalism" without competition is a contradiction in terms. The claim that the USSR is "state capitalist" is absurd on the face of it, and all the more today in the face of the drive to restore *real* capitalism in the bureaucratically degenerated



Leaders of the Left Opposition in 1928: they fought Stalin's betrayals as they happened, most paid with their lives. Seated, from left: Serebryakov, Radek, Trotsky, Boguslavsky, Preobrazhensky. Standing, from left: Rakovsky, Drobni, Beloborodov, Sosnovsky.

to forge a communist vanguard to lead workers resistance against capitalist restoration and its devastating effects. The MLP itself is bereft of any kind of program for revolutionary *intervention* in these world-historic events.

Yet you have only to page through the

what 'pseudo-revolutionary' slogans the Trotskyites use to camouflage themselves, their fascist ears stick out everywhere," the MLP commented: "According to this logic, even the works of Marx and Lenin showed the 'fascist ears' of Trotskyism." Actually, if you seriously investigate the works of Marx and Lenin you will find their writings shot through with "Trotskyism," from the permanent revolution to the distinction between military defense and political support. Meanwhile, the MLP is shocked and disappointed, but politically helpless, when people in their milieu—like the Swedish Röd Gryning ("Red Dawn") group they recently had hopes in—are drawn to the likes of Tony Cliff, a tendency that presents its anti-Soviet brand of left social democracy as some kind of watered-down "unorthodox" semi-Trotskyism.

But the MLP can't exorcise the Trotskyist demon by attacking the Cliffites (who really are what Stalin falsely claimed Trotsky was, social democrats covering themselves with left verbiage), all the while playing coalition games with the miserable picket-line-crossing fake-Trotskyists of the Ann Arbor-based Revolutionary Workers League. The real heritage of Trotsky's revolutionary fight to defend Leninism against the Stalinist usurpers is embodied today in the Spartacist League and the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

With all the MLP's idealist, moralistic hand-waving about how revisionist ideas peacefully produced "capitalism" in the Soviet bloc at some undetermined (and unnoticed) time after the mid-'30s, the world according to *Workers' Advocate*

must be a pretty depressing place. If all that is required for the defeat of "socialism" and restoration of "capitalism" is for the current Número Uno (Khrushchev, Mao, Hoxha, Stalin...) to adopt some bad ideas, prospects for socialism would seem pretty bleak. And indeed, the Portuguese Política Operária (Workers Politics) group, which the MLP used as specialists in Trotsky-bashing, have now decided that Bolshevism was a lost cause way back in 1920-22 under Lenin. Consistent anti-Trotskyism leads to anti-Leninism: this should give thoughtful MLPers pause.

Many 1960s radicals were attracted to "Third World" variants of what we have called "Stalinism under the gun"—China, Cuba, North Korea, Albania—regimes which, while they shared the general political program of the Kremlin, did not have at the time much opportunity for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. Back when the MLP's founders were apologizing for Mao's alliance with Nixon, the Los Angeles-based Communist Working Collective decided to get to the roots of Maoist betrayals: their evolution "From Maoism to Trotskyism" is documented in the SL's *Marxist Bulletin* No. 10, which would make fruitful reading for MLPers today. The MLP was part of this broad "trend." Having split from the "ML movement" and from its pro-Albania wing, and now with their Swedish friends decamping to social democracy and their Portuguese cothinkers becoming explicit anti-Leninists, by all rights the MLP should be in crisis.

So we would like to make a candid appeal to the better elements of the MLP. Those of you who have been trying to find the roots of Stalinist betrayals, and want to make a break with them in order to fight for the internationalist program of Bolshevism, should study the works of Leon Trotsky. The Left Opposition were the ones who took the hard positions and knew how to swim against the stream. The Trotskyists fought against Stalin's betrayals as he was committing them, and tens of thousands were killed for their heroic stand. Trotskyism can explain what is going on in the world today, which the MLP is manifestly incapable of doing. It is the program of Trotsky's Fourth International that represents the real continuity of Lenin's Communist International. Only through fighting for authentic Trotskyism can you avoid becoming yet another bunch of embittered pop-front ex-"revolutionaries" or whacked-out denizens of a PL- or RCP-style political no man's land.

And when you want to look up the real Trotskyists, you know where to find us. ■



"Long live victory at Jalalabad!" July 1989. Spartacists said "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" as Soviet Intervention fought CIA-backed feudalists. When Gorbachev pulled out Soviet troops to appease imperialism, we raised funds worldwide in solidarity with victims of mujahedin assault on Jalalabad.

and deformed workers states.

For all their pages of historical disquisitions on "the degeneration of Soviet socialism," the MLP's talk of "state capitalism" is an empty label. Rejecting the Maoist "Khrushchev coup" variant, dismissing the claim by British left social democrat Tony Cliff that the USSR is just a giant capitalist firm, what are they left with? Asked at their last congress "what was the basis of the turn that took place during the 30s in the Soviet Union," MLP leaders respond again: "We cannot answer that question...." Nor can they explain the class nature of their once-shining model of socialism, Albania. Having applied the all-purpose label of "revisionist" to Tirana, the MLP's Platform on "Tasks of Workers' Communism During the Collapse of Revisionism" states: "We do not have sufficient information to judge where Albanian institutions have already degenerated decisively into capitalism" (*Workers' Advocate*, 1 January 1990).

The MLP is worse than irrelevant in the face of imperialism's counterrevolutionary offensive today. They sneer at the "Spart" program for defense of the gains of October through proletarian political revolution to oust the sellout Stalinist bureaucrats. They retail distortions borrowed whole hog from the professional anti-Spartacist slanderers of the "Bolshevik Tendency" to disparage our mobilization of resources and personnel from throughout the International Communist League to intervene in East Germany. They dismiss our international struggle

MLP's own newspaper to read that "workers' living standards are decimated" by the Solidarność government's "free market disaster in Poland"; that East German women "face loss of abortion rights" and East German workers are up against "severe hardship"; that this is just a taste of things to come "throughout Eastern Europe," while in the USSR the Gorbachev-Yeltsin "500-day" program for capitalist restoration would "devastate the working class." How do they explain all this, since according to the MLP the planned, collectivized economies were not worth defending as the whole Soviet bloc has been "capitalist" since long before the current generation was born?

Unable to explain why what they call "state capitalism" simply "collapsed," the MLP comes off like a bunch of social democrats who think capitalism can be "improved" through a few nationalizations and social-welfare schemes. By denying that what is at stake is a struggle against capitalism's drive—abetted by Stalinist bureaucrats, whose decades of misrule laid the basis for the present crisis—to carry through a social counter-revolution all the way to the cradle of the Bolshevik Revolution, the MLP is covering over the bloody designs of imperialism. In the same way, their scandalous "neutrality" in the Gulf War covered over the real nature of the bloody U.S. imperialist war of annihilation against Iraq.

The MLP is hedeviled by the spectre of Trotskyism. Quoting Spanish CP leader José Díaz' remark that "no matter

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Boston: 1,500 Protest KKKer David Duke

"Fascist Duke, Klan in a Suit!"



BOSTON—On March 28, chants of "Duke Stands for Genocide—Klan Terror Will Not Ride!" and "David Duke, Klan in a Suit, Still a Fascist Killer!" echoed through the brick corridors of historic downtown Boston. Over 1,500 people crowded into the street and lined the sidewalk in front of the Old South Meeting House in determined opposition to Klan terrorist and Nazi-lover David Duke. His appearance was sponsored by the liberal Ford Hall Forum, but there was an angry, combative response from hundreds of Duke's intended victims, who came out against the lynch mob terror that this "respectable" fascist from the Deep South is out to whip up.

Under the Partisan Defense Committee banner "Stop KKK Hitler-Lover David Duke!" there was a broad united front of those who wanted to do just that. Other groups went inside to heckle or debate Duke, a few huddled near the hall and sang civil rights songs. But it was the PDC-initiated effort which insured that there was an outpouring of trade unionists, defenders of women's rights, Catholics, Jews, gays and students—black, white, Hispanic and Asian—from across the city. Activists from Boston's large Haitian community came on board early and strong. And this mobilization was built in the face of a quiet but persistent campaign of violence-baiting and sabotage by liberals and reformists who would give the streets over to Duke rather than support a real united-front protest.

Two hours before Duke was scheduled to show, protesters began to gather and organizers set up a picket line outside the hall. Spartacist League supporters carried signs saying "Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution" and "America's First Fascists: The 'Know Nothings'—Anti-Catholic, Anti-Irish—Stop David Duke!" They joined with protesters who brought their own signs ("David Duke Is Pond Scum") or made them on the spot ("New Suit, Same Homophobic Bigot").

Duke and his fascist scum had some help from an early provocation by a small clot of Jewish Defense League thugs, who tried to rush the stage when a PDC spokesman called for uniting all the intended victims of Duke's Klan/Nazi terror, including Arab Americans. The



Integrated, youthful demonstrators came out in force: "Klan terror won't ride in Boston!"

fascistic JDL goons were repelled by a defense guard for the demonstration.

The rally began with greetings from Rev. Nelson Johnson, a survivor of the 1979 Klan attack in Greensboro, North Carolina where five union organizers and leftists were murdered. Yves Isidor, a Roxbury Community College professor, brought greetings to the rally from Boston's Haitian community, linking the fascist terror of the KKK to the work of the dreaded Tontons Macoutes thugs in Haiti. Also speaking was Sheila Parks of the Reproductive Rights National Network.

In this city where 15 years ago racist mobs attacked black schoolchildren being bused to rigidly segregated schools, the rally was striking for its integrated character and the felt need for a common defense against racist terror and all forms of oppression. Groups as diverse as the Boston Intercollegiate Lesbian and Gay Association, the high school group New Nation, the New Alliance Party, ACT UP and UMOJA, the black student

organization at Boston University, denounced Duke's bigotry. Also impressive was the number of gay activists who came early, and fired up the picket line chants.

Warren Blumenfeld, speaking for Boston ACT UP, told of his family members who were killed in Nazi death camps, and vowed "We'll never be silent again." Phyllis Bailey, representing Women Against Violence, pointed to the role of the government in protecting the KKK: "How is it that the Klan is allowed to speak when organizations such as the Black Panther Party, SNCC, and other organizations were destroyed by CO-INTELPRO and the United States police forces?" As the crowd swelled to over 1,500, a young black woman from Dorchester started a rap/chant, "Hit the Road Duke!" The crowd roared.

As PDC labor coordinator and rally co-chair Gene Herson introduced the speakers, he stressed the centrality of mobilizing the social power of the working class to crush the fascist threat. In a

message read at the rally, Linda Bowman, a negotiating committee member of Service Employees Local 509, pointed to what lay behind Duke's targeting Boston: he sees an opportunity in a city where the labor movement is traditionally weak, where ethnic communities are pitted against each other for crumbs and unemployment is skyrocketing. Black hospital worker and labor organizer John Sprigs denounced the Democratic city administration for "setting the police" on the black people of Boston. Also present and participating as marshals were members of the Vulcans Society (black firefighters).

Partisan Defense Committee spokesman Tom Daley linked the fight against Klan terror to the struggle against U.S. imperialism's bloody slaughter in Iraq. "Duke and his filth think they have a green light to carry out the domestic agenda of Bush's New World Order." Daley emphasized the PDC's strategy of mobilizing the power of labor against the fascists, used with success in Washington in 1982 and Philadelphia in 1988.

Spartacist League speaker Alison Spencer drove home the point that "Every one of us here is engaged in a basic act of self-defense." The crowd was electrified when she blasted the muddleheaded liberals who prattle about free speech for fascists: "David Duke is not about words, he's about corpses! The Holocaust was not a viewpoint, the Holocaust was genocide! The lynching of blacks in the South was not an idea, it's racist murder—and we will not let it ride in this city!" Spencer pointed out:

"The fascists are emboldened by the official racism of the Democratic and Republican parties.... It's time for the working class to organize its own class-struggle workers party committed to the fight for black freedom, to lead the integrated labor movement to sweep fascists like David Duke back into their sewers."

Just before 7 p.m. a massive cop presence including canine units was deployed to spirit Duke into a side door of the Old South Meeting House. But even inside the confines of the building, the racist provocateur did not have an easy time of it. The *Boston Globe* (29 March) said: "Duke was sweating profusely and was visibly unnerved by the crowd, which began voicing its resentment at 7:29 p.m.

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