

Rabid Bankers Take Another Bite Out of NYC

Dinkins' Budget of Doom



Michael Kamber/Impact Visuals



Norcia/NY Post

Democrats Cuomo, Dinkins supervise Wall Street's war on New York's working people: more cop terror, layoffs, misery and homelessness.

Hungry predators, red-rimmed eyes glowing with insane malice, are holding NYC hostage—and we don't mean just the rabid Connecticut raccoons taking on the growing population of native rats in the city's sewers and subways. Foam-flecked bankers, driven to distraction by collapsing profits and the fallout from the savings & loan rip-off scandals, are mugging NYC's already highly stressed population. As the U.S. continues in deep recession, the Big Apple is increasingly

Break with the Democrats! For a Fighting Workers Party!

becoming a city of the very rich and the totally dispossessed.

For weeks Democratic governor Mario Cuomo has been laying down the law to

NYC mayor David Dinkins to cut and cut big. Dinkins' May 8 TV speech outlining his horrifying list of bizarre cuts topped the ratings charts, and floored the mil-

lions of shell-shocked New Yorkers who tuned in. Dinkins and Wall Street literally intend to turn out the lights on the Big Apple, cutting power to one out of four street lamps to save a few bucks. From pulling lifeguards off the beaches to slashing shelters for the homeless and cutting pest control, Dinkins painted a nightmare for NYC. The threat to close the Central Park Zoo spurred even Manhattan yuppies to protest. "Great speech,"

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Debt and Death in Latin America Cholera and Capitalism

Since January an epidemic of cholera has ravaged Peru. So far, over 1,450 deaths have been recorded in the South American country and more than 182,000 have come down with the dread disease, in which victims are seized by explosive diarrhea and vomiting. During the first two months cholera spread along the Pacific coast, with the largest number of cases in the capital, Lima. By March it had reached the central highlands, and in April it crossed the Andes into the Amazon basin. Now Peru's epidemic has spread to neighboring Ecuador and Colombia to the north, Chile to the south, and east to Brazil. There it is expected to travel along the Amazon River and eventually reach the vast favelas (slums) of the Atlantic coast cities. The death toll is expected to reach the tens of thousands.

During the Persian Gulf War, massive U.S. bombing and devastation of Iraq caused cholera to raise its ugly head in Basra and the north. The U.S. imperialist

butchers deliberately laid waste to the civilian waterworks and electrical grid claiming that they were military targets because the military benefited from clean water. Eyewitnesses reported how some waterworks were bombed over and over again as Schwarzkopf and his ghouls sought to add pestilence and disease to their arsenal of "smart" weaponry. Most recently, a hundred cases of cholera have been reported among the Kurds who languish in refugee camps in Turkey.

Virtually wiped out in the 20th century, large-scale epidemics of cholera have reappeared in direct proportion to the increasing poverty and backwardness inflicted by the Wall Street bloodsuckers upon their semi-colonial slaves. It started with flare-ups in the 1960s in Indonesia, the Philippines, the Middle East and North Africa. In recent years, cholera has become an almost regular plague in Africa, and today epidemics are

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Lentz/NY Times

Victims of Peruvian cholera epidemic in Lima hospital.

Philly TV Station Retracts Deadly Smear Against Jamal Supporters

The Partisan Defense Committee and other participants in last July's Philadelphia rally to save death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal have won a retraction of a deadly "terrorist" smear. On 14 July 1990 Philadelphia's WCAU-TV (Channel 10), a CBS affiliate, reported that Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) president Richard Costello branded Jamal's supporters as a "misfit terrorist group." Costello's remarks were made at a sinister cop counterdemonstration to demand Jamal's immediate execution held the same day as the defense

Partisan Defense Committee Statement

rally. To drive home the point Costello added, "If you don't like it you can join him. We'll take out the electric chair, we'll make it an electric couch."

WCAU-TV's retraction is a small but significant victory for the campaign to save Jamal's life. The station's broadcast of Costello's threat was an invitation to cop terror against the more than 200 trade unionists, civil rights activists, socialists, students and church leaders who rallied at Philadelphia's historic Church of the Advocate as part of the international campaign to demand "Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die!" Expressions of outrage from unionists and community activists who participated in the rally immediately followed the WCAU-TV broadcast. The black weekly

Philadelphia Tribune (20 July 1990) denounced the smear: "Fry FOP's Costello Over 'Electric Couch' Remark."

On December 6 the PDC filed a libel lawsuit against WCAU-TV. Joining as plaintiffs were rally speakers State Rep-

1034; Pamela Tucker of the Western Pennsylvania Coalition Against the Death Penalty; Father Paul Washington, rector emeritus of the Church of the Advocate; and spokesmen for the PDC and Spartacist League.

blacks, five of them children. Now they want to finish the job on former Panther and MOVE supporter Jamal, foremost among that 'new breed of journalist' whom Frank Rizzo threatened after the August 1978 raid on the MOVE home."

For more than 20 years Jamal has been a target of Philadelphia's racist cops—from his days as a teenage spokesman for the Black Panther Party to his presidency of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists. In the 1970s, when Jamal was becoming known as the "voice of the voiceless," Philadelphia's cops were gunning down unarmed "suspects" at a rate 37 times higher than even their NYC counterparts!

While the cops carry out summary executions on the cities' streets the Supreme Court accelerates the assembly line of death. In the 1987 *McCleskey* case the Court endorsed the racist application of the death penalty. In the last couple of months, one week after another Rehnquist & Co. have chopped away at the rights of those on death row to challenge the legality of their sentences. To this country's rulers they are just "dead men walking," for whom, as Jamal wrote in the January issue of the *Yale Law Journal*, "the actual execution is a fait accompli."

Our successful challenge to this deadly libel was made possible by the widespread support Jamal has won in his fight against the racist death sentence. Around the world nearly 40,000 people have written Pennsylvania's governor Casey demanding Jamal not be executed. Trade unions representing millions more have also taken a stand for Jamal. The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is becoming known as the Scottsboro case of today. It is the rallying cry of the fight against racist "legal" lynching. But like the Scottsboro defendants Jamal will not be saved by legal fights alone. It will take a mass campaign of protest to save Jamal's life. We call on trade unionists, opponents of the racist death penalty and civil rights activists to join the campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Readers who can should make a financial contribution. This lawsuit alone—a small part of the continuing campaign for Jamal—cost several thousand dollars. The state has vast resources, we don't. For more information please contact the PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013, (212) 406-4252. ■



Philadelphia, 14 July 1990—As over 200 rallied to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Philly cop association president smeared Jamal supporters as "misfit terrorists."

representative David Richardson; Mumia Abu-Jamal's wife, Wadiya Jamal; Ray Martinez, Jr., of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Pennsylvania Social Services Union SEIU Local 668; Charles Valenta, president of Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers Union Local

In settlement of the lawsuit WCAU-TV is airing the following retraction: "Abu-Jamal's supporters were described by Fraternal Order of Police President Rich Costello as misfit terrorists. Channel 10 was not suggesting that the Partisan Defense Committee, which sponsored the rally, is a terrorist organization. Nor were we suggesting that any rally participants, including Abu-Jamal's wife, Wadiya Jamal, were involved in terrorist activities."

Costello's "terrorist" smear underscored the political nature of Jamal's frame-up. As we said when filing the lawsuit:

"The PDC undertakes this lawsuit as a necessary component of defending Jamal from the state's executioner. A 'terrorist' smear from the bonapartist kill-crazy cops is a death sentence in and of itself. By retailing this vile slander labeling Jamal (and his supporters) as terrorist, WCAU-TV is declaring him to be an individual without rights, someone to whom the state can do whatever it wants. What does it mean to be branded a 'terrorist'? Ask the brothers and sisters of the 38 Panthers blown away during the COINTELPRO campaign. Ask the MOVE organization whose home was bombed on May 13, 1985, killing eleven

The Struggle for Science

Despite the great scientific and medical breakthroughs of the 20th century, most of the world's people remain impoverished and, in this epoch of imperialist decay, increasingly at the mercy of epidemics like the present cholera outbreak in Peru. As Leon Trotsky noted in his 1925 address to the USSR's "Mendeleyev Congress," socialist society will create favorable conditions for the development of scientific knowledge and its application for the benefit of all humanity.



TROTSKY



LENIN

So long as science as a whole remained a "handmaiden of theology," it could produce valuable results only surreptitiously. This was the case in the Middle Ages. It was during the bourgeois regime, as already pointed out, that the natural sciences gained the possibility of wide development. But social science remained the servant of capitalism. This is also true, to a large extent, of psychology, which links the social and natural sciences, and philosophy, which systematizes the generalized conclusions of all sciences....

Human society has not developed in accordance with a prearranged plan or system, but empirically, in the course of a long, complicated, and contradictory struggle of the human species for existence, and, later, for greater and greater mastery over nature itself....

A development of the productive forces that would lead us to attain extreme simplification of the methods of obtaining food, clothing, and shelter would also clearly lead us to reduce to a minimum the element of coercion in the social structure. With the elimination of completely useless greediness from social relations, the forms of labor and distribution will assume a communist character. In the transition from socialism to communism no revolution will be necessary, since the transition wholly depends upon the technical progress of society.

—Leon Trotsky, "Dialectical Materialism and Science" (1925)

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DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS Liz Gordon

EDITOR Jen Norden

PRODUCTION MANAGER Jorge Ramirez

CIRCULATION MANAGER Karen Valdez

EDITORIAL BOARD George Foster, Frank Hunter, Jane Kerrigan, Len Meyers, James Robertson, Reuben Semuels, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer, Merjorie Siemberg

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SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. LOCAL DIRECTORY

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

Atlanta

Box 4012
Atlanta, GA 30302

Detroit

Box 441043
Detroit, MI 48244

Norfolk

Box 1972, Main PO
Norfolk, VA 23501

Boaton

Box 390840, Central Sta.
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(617) 492-3928

Los Angeles

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(213) 380-8239

Oakland

Box 32552
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(415) 839-0851

Chicago

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(312) 663-0715

Madison

Box 1492
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San Francisco

Box 5712
San Francisco, CA 94101
(415) 777-9367

Cleveland

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Cleveland, OH 44101
(216) 781-7500

New York

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

Washington, D.C.

Box 75073
Washington, D.C. 20013
(202) 872-8240

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA

Toronto

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

Edmonton

PSSE P.O. Box 9605
Edmonton, AB T6E 5X3

Vancouver

Box 2717, Main PO
Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2
(604) 687-0353

Moncton

P.O. Box 563
Moncton, NB E1C 8L9

Montréal

C.P. Les Atriums, B.P. 32066
Montréal, QC H2L 4V5

"Hands Off Korean Workers and Students! U.S. Troops Out!"

MAY 20—Dozens of demonstrators picketed the South Korean consulate in New York to denounce the Roh Tae Woo government's brutal repression against a wave of militant student protests. Called on short notice by the Spartacist League, the demonstration demanded: "Down with Government Repression! Hands Off Korean Students! Hands Off Korean Workers!" and "U.S. Troops Out of Korea!"

Huge protests against the Roh Tae Woo government have convulsed South Korea since the police murder of 20-year-old student Kang Kyung Dae on April 26 and the supposed "suicide" of 30-year-old labor leader Park Chang Soo in police custody early this month. Workers have downed tools and joined the students in strike action demanding the ouster of this brutal, blood-soaked U.S. puppet regime, as demonstrators shout, "Overthrow the murderous regime of Roh Tae Woo!"

On May 14, the police and army were sent in to attack funeral processions for the martyred student, and again four days later as over a quarter of a million people took to the streets around the country to commemorate the 1980 Kwangju massacre when South Korean troops, with the assistance of U.S. occupation forces, mowed down hundreds in the repression of a popular insurrection against military dictatorship.

SL Protests Seoul Repression



NYC protest outside South Korean consulate, May 20.

South Korea's rulers are U.S. creatures and have been since 1945. Since the imperialist attempt to conquer the whole country in 1950-53 was repulsed, South Korea has been the forward position of the U.S. anti-Soviet war machine in the

northern Pacific, with over 40,000 U.S. troops stationed below the 38th parallel which divides the capitalist police state of South Korea from the deformed workers state of North Korea. Three million Koreans were massacred in the Korean War—like the war against Iraq, a U.S. slaughter carried out under the "fig leaf" of the United Nations flag.

The U.S. has saturated South Korea with nuclear weapons—three per every 100 square miles of territory. The peninsula is literally a trip wire for World War III. As part of its services for U.S. imperialism, South Korea has repeatedly ordered civilian aircraft to overfly strategic Soviet military installations; in 1983 one such provocation caused the deaths of over 200 people. Protesters carried signs reading: "Remember Reagan's KAL 007 Atrocity—Defend the Soviet Union!" With the decomposing Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow acquiescing to every *diktat* from Washington, Soviet aid to the beleaguered North Korean workers state (as to Cuba) has been cut drastically. Now, fresh from the civilian mass graves of Baghdad, U.S. warmakers are pointing to North Korea as possibly the next "renegade state" for destruction by Bush's "New World Order."

Demonstrators carried signs calling "For Military Defense of North Korea Against Imperialist Attack!" and "For the Revolutionary Reunification of Korea" through socialist revolution against the brutal capitalist dictatorship in the South and proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist Kim Il Sung regime in the North.

At least eight South Koreans have immolated themselves in the present wave of protests against the Roh Tae Woo government. These protest suicides indicate the conviction and the desperation of the opposition movement. The current protests remain overwhelmingly student dominated. But the South Korean proletariat has a history of militant struggle, not only against the dictatorial regime, CIA/KCIA repression and the *chaebol* (monopolies) but against the government-sponsored corporatist trade unions, spawned and lavishly supported by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy and its CIA "labor" front. A similar student-centered upsurge four years ago soon drew in the powerful working class and led to the downfall of the previous strongman regime of Chun Doo Hwan. And last year, more than 20,000 workers at Hyundai's Ulsan shipyard staged a three-day occupation and battled thousands of heavily armed cops.

As Spartacist League speaker Alison Spencer said at today's demonstration: "International class solidarity with the embattled South Korean workers and students is an urgent necessity, especially by American and Japanese workers whose bosses own huge chunks of South Korean industry. Especially American workers, whose union dues to the 'AFL-CIA' go to finance counterrevolutionary anti-labor activities in South Korea (and a lot of other places), have an obligation to our embattled class brothers in South Korea! Concrete solidarity action by the American and Japanese workers movements would go a long way to undercut virulent anti-Korean chauvinism, which has expressed itself in racist protectionism here and in violent racism against the Korean minority in Japan. Key to resolving this crisis in favor of the long-suffering South Korean masses—and to resolving the crisis here where the labor movement has rolled over while the bosses wage war on the oppressed—is the construction of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party, a world party of socialist revolution." ■



Seoul, May 14: riot police move to suppress funeral procession for student killed by cops.

NYC...

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cheered the Teamsters' Barry Feinstein, while telling city workers they have to "share the pain." But Feinstein's vicarious masochism didn't speak for most of New York's working people, whose sentiments were better captured by one woman's reaction: "I felt the Mayor just looked me in the eye last night and said no more, all gone."

New Yorkers are normally pretty jaded about anything that comes out of City Hall, and it was hardly a secret that Dinkins' "nightmare budget" was intended as a blackmail budget. As a column in *Newsday* (19 May) put it, "Everyone understands that his 11th-hour tales of horror are meant to squeeze more aid from the governor and concessions from the unions." Financier Felix Rohatyn, chairman of the "Big MAC" (Municipal Assistance Corporation), was supposed to cough up a billion in bond refinancing to ease the way for the union bureaucrats' givebacks. But Rohatyn and the bankers have decided to hardline it, and

now one city official moans that "the worst case scenario is clearly going to be a worst case." Worst case or not, Dinkins, Cuomo and the bankers are talking about making this Death City, USA.

Campaigning for election as a proponent of fiscal "responsibility," Dinkins and his popular-front union allies promised Wall Street that New Yorkers would "take it from me." And now he's dishing it out. Forget about such "amenities" as nurses in public schools, weekend hours at outpatient clinics, city-run pharmacies, dental clinics, regular housing inspections. These cuts, in a situation where infectious diseases like measles and tuberculosis are again ravaging the poor, are a recipe for disaster. Already half of the one million NYC public school children live below the "official" poverty line. Some kids might see it as good news that summer schools are going to close down, but most of the time the public swimming pools they might have gone to are going to be shut down too, as well as half the city's beaches. And they won't even be able to cool out in an air-conditioned library, because a lot of those are also going to be locked up (in

contrast, during the Great Depression the libraries stayed open seven days a week). Some 30,000 unionized city workers may get pink slips, including 10,000 teachers and school aides.

It's not like things weren't already bad enough. Along with the continuing AIDS epidemic, there were 3,000 new cases of tuberculosis in the last year. In Harlem of every thousand live births more than 23 babies die—the same infant mortality rate as Malaysia. Minority and working-class students are being purged from the CUNY system by tuition hikes. Workers who still have jobs face having their wages slashed and union contracts ripped up as joblessness surged to 300,000 last month. Tempted to escape from New York? Better watch it on the bridges—70 percent of them aren't considered capable of bearing the loads they were designed for, and a concrete collapse recently opened a four-foot hole on the Manhattan Bridge.

Of course, not everybody can escape from New York—and not everybody wants to. While ruling-class yahoos have been telling New York City to "drop dead" for years as this became over-

whelmingly a town populated by blacks, Hispanics and other minorities, some sections of the bourgeoisie understand that this is still the finance capital of America. They may not want to see New York reduced simply to an island penal colony for its predominantly minority population. And they know you can't run

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NYC...

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the financial and cultural center of the country on handouts from philanthropists looking for a tax break. Even as unemployment and homelessness are skyrocketing, this year New York City regained its title as headquarters of the highest-paid chief executive officers in the U.S., whose median salary is a cool \$1.67 million.

Cop Terror and Prisons: Growth Industry

The only increase working people, blacks and Hispanics will get out of Dinkins' budget, besides misery and taxes, is more cop terror. NYC is bleeding, and the ruling class wants lots more racist, armed thugs in blue to protect their property and profits. New York City already has the largest municipal prison complex in the world, with a jail population of 22,000—twice as many as in 1986. The number of cops being added to the city's payroll exceeds the combined total of the Dallas, Baltimore,

UNIONS, COMMUNITARIANS, TEACHERS SERVE THE QUALITY OF



Hospital union head Dennis Rivera wants workers and students to "work together" with greedy bankers and union-busting politicians.

New York City, April 30: city workers and students protest bankers' plans to make NYC "Death City, USA."



Denver and San Francisco police forces. NYC's "finest" have been caught planting evidence and pistol-whipping mostly minority detainees, according to a recent *Newsday* exposé of the TNT drug-bust squads in Brooklyn. That's when they're not busy killing, in and out of uniform.

On May 4 Grady Alexis, a Haitian artist from the Lower East Side, was killed in Greenwich Village by off-duty cop Richard Frazier. Alexis was a talented artist who also taught a weekly workshop to homeless mentally ill adults in East Harlem; his body is being flown back to Haiti for burial. The cop is charged with a misdemeanor! A week later, 27-year-old Doris Cruz of Queens was shot to death by transit cops after she was nabbed for "fare-beating." Meanwhile the TA is spending millions on "jump-proof" turnstiles and new 9mm semi-autos for transit cops.

For a Socialist Fight to Save New York!

The U.S., with a decaying industrial base, is paying for the world's most expensive military machine, while the big cities have been systematically starved of funds for decades. The new "American dream" our rulers offer us is a cheap video-game substitute for the old illusion that the "average worker" could actually support his own happy little family in his own home. Today the

"dream," as seen on TV commercials, seems to be successfully bombing some small country back to the Stone Age and then getting a big hug and thank you victory parade, like the one Dinkins promises to hold in NYC—though we wonder who's going to sweep up the filthy, dark streets before and afterward.

"The fiscal crisis of the mid-'70s was precipitated by financial gimmicks and budgetary tricks," Dinkins said. "The fiscal challenge today is largely the direct result of a failing national economy." But why on earth should the working people pay for the utter incompetence, greed and savage anarchy of the capitalist profit system?

Across the country, the cities are being turned into ever grimmer hellholes. Chicago is slashing its pitiful welfare payments and eliminating almost all medical care for the poor. California is threatening teachers in Richmond that they have to give up their union rights if they want to have any schools in which to teach. And in Boston, 20,000 city and state workers turned out on April 13 for the largest labor rally there in years, protesting layoffs, pay cuts and up to 80,000 unpaid "furloughs."

Over the past year, tens of thousands of working people in New York have turned out repeatedly for protests against cutbacks and for labor solidarity demonstrations, particularly during the immensely popular *Daily News* strike.

Thousands of CUNY students demonstrated and occupied campuses to try to preserve some semblance of higher education for the city's working-class and minority youth. But the union bureaucrats—acting on behalf of their Democratic Party bedfellows and their Wall Street overlords—knife any attempt at militant struggle.

Today the most basic defense of workers' livelihoods demands challenging capitalist property rights, and for that we need a labor leadership that's not afraid to unleash the unions' power, and a workers party committed to waging the class struggle to victory for all the oppressed. It's going to take a socialist fight to save New York for the people who built it, who live and work here. Even at the turn of the century, amid the teeming slums like Hell's Kitchen and the Lower East Side, there was a nurse in every public school. Today not only are the nurses gone, but there's not much left of the schools. The money's there to rebuild the cities, but we're not going to get at it with empty pleas to "tax the rich." To rip the wealth out of the hands of the bankers and the rest of this corrupt ruling class is going to take nothing less than socialist revolution. Unlike the crazed proposals from Wall Street and City Hall that threaten to reduce what was once the most fabulous city on earth to disease-ridden rubble, this is a sane proposition. ■

Transit Cuts Kill Workers and Riders

New York's Transit Authority is trumpeting its "good news" that it may not raise the already outrageous \$1.15 fare this year. The bad news is that they intend to kill us as the price for this largesse. On top of across-the-board cuts and the already deadly working conditions on the tracks and in the shops and barns, the TA is now moving to eliminate all train conductors during "off peak" hours—18 hours a day! This action comes soon after the TA axed hundreds of provisional track and structure workers with the TWU leadership's acquiescence. New York *Newsday* subway columnist Ellis Henican revealed that "quiet tests have already been performed" to begin "one person train operation."

This proposal is not only vicious, but insane and dangerous for workers and passengers alike. The New York subway system already kills riders at twice the national rate. In the recent Clark Street tunnel fire, where toxic PVC fumes killed two riders, it was only the courageous and cool-headed actions of the motorman and conductor which saved scores of lives. And who hasn't looked for the conductor's center car taking the subway late at night? Or seen countless times when riders were

caught in the closing doors? Under the TA's plan, they will be dragged into the tunnels to their death—and you can be sure the motormen will be hauled in for "drug tests" and disciplined, just as they are every time TA cuts have led to death on the tracks. Instead of cutting train crews, there should be platform conductors hired to make the system safer.

The TA's plan has been met with

outrage among transit workers, who have initiated petitions against the job-slashing and demanded union action. But the position of the Sonny Hall bureaucracy in TWU Local 100 remains the same as always—prone. To keep the ranks divided, the union tops don't even allow motormen and conductors to have joint meetings—workers feel the division like a noose around their necks. The Hall gang not only knew of the TA plan to

ax conductors, a TWU staff rep sat on the management committee that drew up the plan while motorman division head James Jefferson was denying anything was in the works!

The transit system should have been shut down by strike action on April 30, when the contract expired. But Hall ordered transit workers to stay on the job. And the house-trained "oppositionists" of "Hell on Wheels" who sit on the executive board joined with Hall. Whatever happened to "no contract, no work"? Hall and his "opposition" won't strike because they cringe before the no-strike Taylor Law and want to stay buddies with the anti-labor Democratic Party.

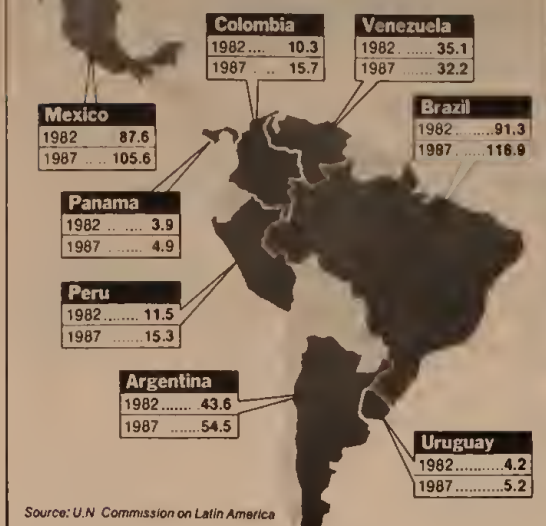
Transit workers can make short work of the TA's murderous cuts and rip up the slave-labor Taylor Law. A union fight for safety for transit workers and passengers would galvanize tremendous popular support—and while we're on the subject, why not rip out the turnstiles and fight for free mass transit (which the union nominally stands for already). What's needed is a mass meeting of all Local 100 members which organizes strike action, led by an elected strike committee, to put the TA's plans "out of service." ■



Subway tracks in Gravesend, Brooklyn, where two transit workers were crushed to death by train in May 1990.

Latin America's Climbing Debt (in billions of dollars)

In the past five years, Latin America's total disbursed debt increased 24 percent to reach \$409.8 billion in 1987



International Herald Tribune Map

Alan Webb

Debt, Cholera and Poverty

Imperialist bankers bleed Latin America dry, while impoverished millions live without safe water or sewage disposal in squalid shantytowns.



United Nations

Cholera...

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raging in Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. In Latin America, even in the poorest areas, the threat of cholera had been eliminated long ago. No major outbreaks had been reported in the last 70 years. But today this pestilence is stalking these cruelly impoverished countries, condemning untold thousands to hideous death.

Cholera is not a natural disaster. Like the waves of famine lashing Africa in recent years, it is a manmade disaster. More specifically, this epidemic is a capitalist disaster. It is a direct consequence of imperialism, which squeezes the life out of the poor to fill the coffers of the capitalist bankers. It is one of the prime examples of diseases of the poor which can be stopped by basic public health measures. The disease is caused by bacteria which lodge in the intestine; it is spread by the contamination of water supplies with human feces. Control sewage and make the water safe and you have effectively stopped the scourge of cholera. But in the impoverished shantytowns of Third World countries, there is no sanitary public water supply, and untreated sewage is simply dumped into streams. Unlike the AIDS epidemic, we know how to wipe out cholera—it just costs money.

Moreover, virtually all those who have been infected can be saved. The victims can lose as much as eight quarts of bodily fluid in a few hours. Without medical attention, they suffer acute dehydration and, as their blood pressure fades, can die of cardiovascular collapse or shock within ten hours. But even in advanced cases of infection, death can be prevented by large doses of saline and sugar solution. Yet in the hideous backwardness of urban slums and remote villages, safe water, personal hygiene and medical care are an impossible dream. Scarce dollars are used to pay off the staggering foreign debt. Peru is saddled with a \$22 billion debt—eight times the country's yearly export earnings. For Latin America as a whole, there is an annual net capital outflow of \$20 billion, and every year 700,000 people die of hunger.

Cold War ideologues have proclaimed the triumph of capitalism over Communism. Now the Catholic Pope comes out for capitalism with a human face. But what the vast majority of the human population see as they toil under real existing capitalism is the face of death.

Disease and the "Debt Bomb"

The pestilence in Peru made its appearance against a backdrop of general immiseration of the urban and rural proletariat. Since President Alberto Fujimori took office last year, real incomes have been slashed a staggering 50 percent. This is the culmination of a decade

of growing debt and deepening impoverishment, called by some the "lost decade," during which "urban poverty rose in Peru from 28 to 44%" (*Excelsior*, 1 July 1990). Today the per capita foreign debt is \$1,000—in a country where many workers earn less than half that amount in a year! Needless to say, the money was spent on prestige enterprises like skyscrapers and atomic power plants, where presidents could affix plaques, and not on badly needed public health services and a sanitary infrastructure.

Now cholera is spreading on this breeding ground of imperialist-imposed poverty and filth. At the start of Peru's epidemic, the health ministry cautioned Peruvians to boil drinking water for ten minutes. But the population could not afford the fuel! When the Peru epidemic hit the coastal fishing and metallurgical center of Chimbote, hundreds of people were prescribed intravenous solutions which cost a few dollars a day. But this was far beyond their pitiful means.

In Lima, a city of seven million, the three million people who live in the new *pueblos jóvenes* (shantytowns) and hovels are without running water and sewer systems. The city's harbor is badly polluted, as is its main river, and the city dumps 97 percent of its raw sewage into the Pacific. *Newsweek* (6 May) observed: "Decent water and sewage for all 22 million Peruvians would cost \$3.2 billion over the next decade—10 times what Peru spent over the last 10 years."

The cholera epidemic has had a catastrophic impact on the Peruvian economy, slashing the market for agricultural products and fish. A leading exporter of fish meal and fish oil (used for cattle feed and fertilizer), Peru suddenly saw its exports rejected by former clients like France, Italy and Argentina, some of whom burned their stocks. In the space of six months Peru lost almost \$1 billion in precious hard currency.

A major factor in spreading cholera has been *ceviche*, a popular snack sold by street vendors that consists of marinated chopped raw fish mixed with onions, lime and peppers. The fish feed near sewers, and are caught and sold by people who can wash only in contaminated water. During the height of the epidemic Fujimori, under pressure from the fishing industry, appeared on TV with his wife happily eating *ceviche*. The next day the number of cholera victims skyrocketed to catastrophic proportions as people followed his example. Fujimori's obscene ad for the fishing interests provoked outrage on the part of medical personnel right up to the health minister—who was then forced to resign. To allay fears, the fisheries minister took his turn at "proudly sampling ceviche," and was "quietly hospitalized with what health workers and the local press reported was a case of cholera" (*Boston Globe*, 28 March).

Alberto Fujimori is a bourgeois populist who last year beat the right-

ist candidate of the white elite, the Cambridge-educated pro-British novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, winning the presidential sash. Vargas Llosa's blunt calls for a massive "shock" austerity program drove the frightened electorate to vote for Fujimori. The new president rammed through precisely the same austerity program—dubbed "Fujishock." As the *New York Times* (24 February) reported, Fujimori's attacks meant "removing long-standing Government subsidies and raising prices between 1,000 and 3,000 percent on some products, such as gasoline, electricity and food."

In order to attract imperialist investment, Fujimori abolished labor legislation that protected workers from layoffs—provoking a massive strike wave in the middle of the cholera epidemic. The mounting social misery has provided a fertile recruiting ground for the *guerrilleros* of Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), whose Maoist program of "the countryside surrounding the cities" leads to the systematic practice of assassinating leftist union leaders. Under the guise of Bush's "drug war," U.S. special forces have been "aiding" Peruvian counterinsurgency units in guerrilla-dominated areas for four years. Now Fujimori appeals for more U.S. military aid and a free trade pact inviting increased imperialist economic penetration. U.S. troops out of Peru!

Capitalism in the Era of Decline

Peru is not the only country to endure the ravages of cholera epidemics imposed by the imperialist jackals. In Mozambique, where the sadistic killers of the South African-controlled Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) are waging a savage war against the government, a dreaded cholera epidemic is carrying on what imperialist slaughter commenced. Terrorized by Renamo atrocities, which have killed an estimated 100,000, masses of poor peasants flee their lands and villages. The UN recently warned that in Mozambique one half of the population of sixteen million face famine, and fully two million are threatened with immediate starvation.

The cruel inhumanity of the profit system is highlighted by the fact that an effective oral vaccine against cholera has existed for several years. However, it is not being used to check the epidemics which are ravaging Third World countries, because the market is not considered "profitable." According to a spokesman for Pasteur-Mérieux, the French pharmaceutical company which developed the vaccine, "its cost of production is much too high for it to be proposed for the countries which are directly concerned by the risk of epidemic" (*Le Monde*, 6 March). Instead, the drug is being sold to travelers from Europe and the U.S. to prevent annoying diarrhea attacks when they visit

Third World countries!

The recent wave of cholera epidemics is the product of a dying social system that spreads death and disease, whether by Bush's smart bombs or by bankers through a stroke of a pen in their plush Wall Street offices. Even natural disasters like floods and hurricanes, which kill relatively few people when they strike industrialized countries, are able to wreak cataclysmic destruction in the Third World only because of the poverty of those countries.

The recent cyclone in Bangladesh left over 100,000 people dead and condemned untold thousands more to slow starvation—or to the ravages of a threatening cholera epidemic. Many of them were landless peasants driven to scrape out an existence in shallow, sandy areas which are regularly swept away by high waves and storms. Many others died because they had no access to cyclone shelters. As the *New York Times* (11 May) reported: "Bangladesh has 302 cyclone shelters, while 5,000 to 10,000 are needed. But each shelter costs \$50,000 to build, and Bangladesh already had a budget deficit before the cyclone."

Lenin said that imperialism is capitalism in the era of terminal decay. Capitalism was progressive in the 18th and 19th centuries relative to the feudal system it displaced because it fueled a spectacular development of the productive forces with which mankind increasingly learned to regulate nature. One result was the progressive overcoming of diseases like cholera. However, in the 20th century as capitalism has outlived its progressive role, it has more and more deprived the masses of humanity of the benefits of science, medicine and technology, especially in the Third World, leaving them defenseless in the face of resurgent epidemics.

In Latin America glittering showcases of capitalist "development," like fancy shopping centers for the rich, sprout up in the urban centers. Yet in the surrounding slums and shantytowns, in the appallingly impoverished hinterland, the masses are condemned to medieval backwardness and disease. The "lost decade" of the Latin American masses was also the "Reagan decade" of yuppies living high off Wall Street, those would-be "masters of the universe" with their BMWs paid by debt peonage. At the same time, the bourgeoisie has cut vital social services for the poor in the U.S. and pushed them into deepening poverty, provoking (localized) outbreaks of cholera—as well as measles, tuberculosis and other easily preventable diseases.

Only through international proletarian revolution, sweeping away the imperialist leeches and their semicolonial lackeys—will the masses of Latin America and the rest of the world free themselves from pestilence, famine, war and other catastrophes unleashed by the decaying imperialist order. ■



WV Photo

USec's "Crisis of Credibility"

Ernest Mandel vs. Revolutionary Leadership

At a public meeting "On the Future of Socialism" in New York City on April 8, United Secretariat leader Ernest Mandel spoke grimly of the "crisis of credibility" of socialism. "Stalinism on the one hand and social democracy on the other hand have dismally failed to change the world," the USec leader declared. Let's

PART ONE OF TWO

be accurate—the Stalinists and social democrats have *betrayed* the working class for decades, sabotaging and even bloodily repressing revolutions on behalf of the bourgeoisie. This "crisis of revolutionary leadership" led Leon Trotsky to found a new international vanguard party, the Fourth International. In the "epoch of wars and revolutions," an intransigent revolutionary leadership is an indispensable condition for proletarian victory.

Now Stalinist rule has collapsed in East Europe while in the Soviet Union the gains inherited from the October Revolution of 1917 which have survived despite the bureaucratic degeneration are threatened. The ever greater appeasement of imperialism by Stalin's heirs in the Kremlin—from withdrawing Soviet troops from Afghanistan to caving in to the annexation of the DDR by West German imperialism—is brought home in the one-sided imperialist slaughter of the Iraqi people. Imperialist ideologues crow with triumphalism of the "death of Communism." In Germany the Social Democrats acted as the Trojan Horse of counterrevolution, paving the way for capitalist reunification in an expanded Fourth Reich of German imperialism (long the intent of the SPD's *Ospolitik*). So what does the leader of the self-styled "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" advocate? Well, lately in Moscow, he called for "unity" of the Stalinist and social-democratic parties! Seems like the "crisis of credibility" is in the USec.

The quintessential character of the USec is tailism, and it has deep roots. Forty years ago, Ernest Mandel became a leading and able apologist for the revisionist current led by Michel Pablo. Adapting to apparent stability and geographical extension of Stalinism into East Europe following World War II, Pablo and Mandel projected that the future would be "several centuries" of deformed workers states, and invented a "new world reality" in which the Stalinist parties could be compelled into "roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation." Pablo called for the Trotskyists to enter the mass Stalinist and social-democratic parties to pressure them to the left (see our February 1990 pamphlet, "Trotskyism: What It Isn't and What It Is!").

During the next decades, the followers of Pablo and Mandel discovered myriad "new mass vanguards." In the 1960s, it was "Algerian socialism" à la Ben Bella, the Cuban Revolution and guerrillaism, Mao's "Red Guards," the "Red University" radicalism and many more. In the '70s it was Portuguese military officers, Khomeini's "Islamic revolution" in Iran. You name it, they tailed it—because they had no confidence in the proletariat fighting for power under the

leadership of a Trotskyist world party.

But now when it comes to a frontal battle with counterrevolution, these inveterate opportunists don't have much room to maneuver. Mandel cries about "the crisis of credibility of socialism" and desperately looks for some palatable force to tail in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. As for the supporters of "his" majority—a heterogeneous conglomerate running from Greens to state capitalists—they are not too concerned with Mandel's machinations in Moscow. For Mandelite national sections, the main appetite is always at home.



USec pushed "Solidarity with Solidarność" and hailed Waleśa's "socialist" adviser Jacek Kuron (above), now labor minister responsible for repressing Polish workers' struggles like militant May 1990 rail strike (below).

ność. Mandel declared Solidarność to be the best socialists in the world while the Mandelites made much of their relations with Waleśa's "Trotskyist" advisers such as Jacek Kuron. As late as September 1989—five months after the election of a Solidarność-led regime in Poland which immediately began to implement its program for capitalist restoration—the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire was still calling for a 100 percent Solidarność government (*Rouge*, 31 August/6 September 1989)! Only one month later Mandel was shamelessly announcing that he had written his "last letter" to "com-

Havel, in his capacity as government-appointed director of the Czechoslovak Press Agency (CTK)? So what's wrong with Kuron, whose only crime is success—as the labor minister in a Solidarność government, a formation the USec spent some ten years championing?

But the USec has years of experience in renouncing the forces they have tailed when their crimes against the working class are becoming obvious to all. Take the example of the USec's former section in Ceylon, the Lanka Samasamaja Party (LSSP). In 1960, the LSSP made a popular-front electoral pact with the Stalinists and bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom Party—the party whose 1956 "Sinhala Only" language act codified anti-Tamil communalism as official state policy and laid the basis for the bloody communalism that now engulfs Sri Lanka. The "International Secretariat" of Michel Pablo didn't object to this pact. It was only after the LSSP had eagerly accepted ministerial portfolios in the SLFP government in 1964 that it was hastily expelled by an embarrassed USec. Now the USec is welcoming into its ranks the New Samasamaja Party (NSSP) whose cadres remained inside the LSSP throughout its participation in the capitalist government, including during that government's bloody suppression of the 1971 uprising of radical Sinhala youth led by the (now fascistic) JVP.

The NSSP is currently engaged along with the Stalinists in a popular-front "oppositional" alliance with the SLFP and has made clear that it would support the anti-Tamil SLFP's Mrs. Bandaranaike, who presided over the bloodbath against the JVP, as a presidential candidate. In his capacity as a Member of Parliament, NSSP leader Vasudeva Nanayakkara voted for the UNP government's supplementary "defense" budget raised for renewed bloody suppression of the insurgent Tamil minority!

Political Scandals, Organizational Disarray

When the USec's "13th World Congress" was convened in early February of this year, the bottom line was negative. A desultory report on the congress in the German *Sozialistische Zeitung* written by a longtime USec member says it all in the title: "More Problems, Fewer Members." The membership has shrunk 25 percent in West Europe since the last world congress in 1985 and the organization is particularly weak in the major imperialist powers: Japan, the U.S. and Germany. (At the world congress, all the men were expelled from the Japanese section, following several years of subterranean scandal and the formation by female members of a separate group in response to incidences of sexual violence.) In several countries—like Britain and Italy—the very existence of the section is impossible to detect as they have simply liquidated into social-democratic or other leftist groups.

In Germany, Mandel's forces in the West have spent the last five years in a cold fusion with ex-Maoists, predicated on the condition that the fused group (VSP) not affiliate with the USec. And what did the VSP do when an incipient



Der Spiegel



Spartakist

Meanwhile a significant minority openly hails the advance of capitalist imperialism in Germany and Eastern Europe. They too stand in the tradition of the USec, which over the last decade supported virtually every pro-Western "Soviet dissident" and manifestation of reactionary nationalism, from hailing Polish Solidarność to memorializing pro-Nazi Baltic fascists. Mandel the eternal centrist may draw back from the consummation of his liquidationist program as he has done before. But he surely should not be surprised when his followers, having howled with the imperialist wolves over Afghanistan and Poland, just keep on howling.

Ministers, Cops... and War Credits for Anti-Tamil Repression

At public meetings in the 1980s, Mandel raged against Spartacists as "Stalinist strikebreakers" for our emphatic warnings about clerical-reactionary Solidar-

rade Kuron," who was now serving as the labor minister in the Solidarność-led government, repressing the struggles of Polish workers against the brutal austerity and clerical reaction brought in by Solidarność. At a meeting in Montreal in October 1989, Mandel declared, "I don't speak to ministers." And today, at least one member of the pro-USec Kret group in Poland belongs to Solidarność 80, a more militantly anti-Communist split from Waleśa, whose leaders push open anti-Semitism.

Would Mandel "speak to" his comrade who is top cop in a region of that socially nasty, complacent little capitalist enclave of Switzerland? In a joint electoral campaign with the Greens, a leading member of the USec's Swiss section was recently elected as Minister of Justice and Police in the Swiss canton of Zug. And what about USec supporter Petr Uhl, who serves as one of the main spokesmen for the Czechoslovakian capitalist-restorationist government of Vaclav

political revolution shook East German society, and every ideological prop and institution of the deformed workers state was called into question? *The VSP forbade its members to conduct any political work in the East.* Even today, with the two Germanys united into a single state, Mandelites East and West are supposed to stick strictly to their "own" terrain!

Leading up to the congress, the youth organization of the former "star" section, the French LCR, was in open if programmatically contradictory rebellion against the European majority's social-pacifist line on the anti-Iraq war. Hundreds of the more than a thousand paper members of the LCR didn't even bother to vote in the pre-congress deliberative sessions. And then there was the opposition bloc (known as the HCMM) whose main spokesman is the French section's longtime oppositionist Matti, who unabashedly rejoiced in the growth and triumph of the forces of "anti-Stalinist" capitalist reaction.

Meanwhile, after having publicly renounced Trotskyism some years ago, the eclectic Fidelista reformists of Jack Barnes' American SWP finally split from the USec last June. But even with the SWP removed from the scene, there are still two and a half organizations in the U.S. claiming adherence to the USec: Socialist Action (SA), the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, and a faction of the state capitalist Solidarity. SA, which was in an informal bloc with the Matti faction during preconference discussion on the basis of virulent Stalinophobia, harkens back to the tradition of the 1970s SWP in which Joseph Hansen ably wielded Trotskyist "orthodoxy" against the vicarious guerrillists of the Mandelites to cover for the abject reformism and cringing legalism of the SWP.

Weinstein's SA finally didn't go with the Matti opposition, declaring its own "international" tendency which got 1 percent of the votes at the international congress. SA—whose policies are if anything to the right of Matti's—has taken on importance only because of their distance from Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, where the ferment in the USec is currently the strongest. To avoid watching Matti's corrupt maneuvers and sleazy courtship of the French Socialist Party up close, those who are reticent to draw the programmatic conclusions from their disgust with both Mandel and Matti willfully give credence to SA's spurious postures of Trotskyist "orthodoxy." They would like to sustain an illusion that SA has cleaner hands.

Socialist Action: Case Study in Social-Patriotism

In fact Socialist Action's real appetites have been quite clear since their organizational debut, when they stepped forward during the 1983 U.S. Greyhound bus strike, seeking at the union bureaucrats' behest to block militant workers from stopping scab buses from rolling. During the Persian Gulf War, the USec's American supporters worked to outdo one another (but only SA had much effect) in imitating the SWP's popular-frontist "leadership" of the movement against the Vietnam War. For all of them, that period was the "golden age" of the SWP, the tradition that they look back to fondly as they deplore the degeneration of the present SWP into an eccentric Stalinoid sect.

During the Vietnam era, the SWP threw off its centrist coloration to make a bid for "the big time." They beat the Stalinists at their own time-dishonored games—e.g., attempted censorship through imposition of "official" slogans, manipulation of antiwar committees by hiding their affiliation, all so as to keep the participation of "reds" including themselves as invisible as possible—and thereby became the "best organizers" of the peace movement. It was the SWP's organizing of the *right wing* of that antiwar radicalization—building "mass mobilizations" entirely dominated politically by the Democratic Party—which marked



France: While International Communist League (above) called for defeat of imperialists in Gulf War, Mandelite LCR joined in popular-front pacifist appeals for negotiated "peaceful solution."



their passage into the camp of outright reformism. Opposing and redbaiting the large numbers of student youth who wanted to oppose U.S. imperialism and championed the victory of the Vietnamese revolutionary forces, the SWP was the incarnation of "peaceful-legal," "single issue" popular-frontism, organizing for the liberal politicians and union hacks against the challenge to the capitalist system represented by the *losing* war and the growth of the heterogeneous New Left. They were *detested* by masses of radicalized youth for their role.

As the U.S. and its imperialist "allies" rained down bloody destruction on the masses of Iraqis, Socialist Action led the pack of "peace activists" crying "No More Vietnams"—in other words, no more defeats for U.S. imperialism. In the name of "unity," in the open attempt to find a common ground with bourgeois and other forces supporting America's war aims—for example, the myriad proponents of securing a better "UN" cover for U.S. imperialism's "liberation" of Kuwait—SA worked consciously to blend its "antiwar" agitation in with the predominant spirit of the moment, which was *support for the war*. Their social-patriotism was explicit and unashamed as they opined that "Support Our Troops—Bring Them Home" should be the main slogan of the "movement" and defended the yellow ribbon as an appropriate symbol for "peace activists." In a centerfold photo spread following one of the big marches, *Socialist Action* even chose to feature a demonstrator holding up a sign: "Vietnam is 56,000 reasons why we need to get out of the Gulf." So the *two million* Vietnamese killed by U.S. imperialism don't count—only the "American lives"? They deliberately appealed to the most right-wing incarnation of the "Vietnam syndrome"—that the problem is "we" lost—incidentally making common cause with the *racist* mindset, so useful to the pursuit of colonial wars, which enabled General Schwarzkopf to say of Saddam Hussein's forces, "They're not a part of the same human race."

Those "clean hands" people of Socialist Action cringed in the face of the duty to oppose "their own" imperialism, which happens to be the biggest gang of mass murderers on the face of this planet. We chose instead to call for the *defeat* of imperialism, whether or not it was "pop-

ular" (and it was a lot more attractive to serious youth, black workers and others than some people might think). We stood with Trotsky, who wrote in a "Declaration to the Antiwar Congress at Amsterdam" (1932): "Whoever attempts to put all the programs, all the parties, all the flags into one package in the name of pacifism, that is, of a superficial struggle against war in words, performs the greatest service for imperialism."

Last fall as the U.S. massed its forces for the Persian Gulf adventure, we wrote:

"Iraq is not Vietnam. Saddam Hussein is not any kind of revolutionary, not even a Stalinist like Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh, who despite conciliating imperialism at several crucial points (and killing the Vietnamese Trotskyists) did lead his people in a revolutionary war which liberated Vietnam from the imperialist overlords.... But what is *not* different in the present conflict is the role of U.S. imperialism. America's rulers are the world's number one war criminals.... A defeat for the U.S. in the Persian Gulf today would be a blow on behalf of the working masses of the whole world."

—WV No. 514,
16 November 1990

Meanwhile, SA and its similars were quite explicit that they considered the call for *defense of Iraq* to be wholly inappropriate for their "antiwar movement." "End the war," they said, and it

doesn't matter how it ends. Doesn't it? Is it clear enough now to you now that the ending of the war through the one-sided slaughter of the Iraqi forces, a victory for imperialism in which almost no American blood was spilled, constitutes the deadliest danger to the future of this planet, bringing the next wars a giant step closer? Now that everyone's having their public forums bemoaning the triumphalism of the (highly unstable) "New World Order," it's obvious they all know very well that it matters how the war ended—they knew it all the time that they were waving their yellow ribbons. Cynical, patronizing opportunism.

The HCMM faction has sometimes been able to give an orthodox-sounding cover to its essentially rightist thrust by posing as wanting to build parties and the "International," unlike the Mandelite majority. For example, both HCMM and Socialist Action are capable of sounding leftist in arguing against the majority's sycophantic support for the petty-bourgeois nationalist Sandinistas, whose policies of appeasing Nicaraguan and international capital through the "mixed economy" and "political pluralism" paved the way for the election victory of the pro-contra bourgeoisie around Violeta Chamorro. Having baptized the Sandinista government a "dictatorship of the proletariat," the USec majority now incredibly claims the Chamorro government still heads a proletarian state ("Central America Today," adopted by the USec's JEC in June 1990).

But the visceral Stalinophobia that defines both HCMM and Socialist Action is also the operable factor in their line toward Nicaragua. While HCMM whines at the lack of "socialist democracy" in Nicaragua "even though that country was qualitatively more free than any Stalinist state," SA supported ex-Sandinista Moises Hassan's Movement for Revolutionary Unity which ran in the February 1990 elections. In March, with the contras thirsting for vengeance, Hassan compared the top Sandinista leaders to Romania's Ceausescu and suggested they be put on trial for "corruption, abuse of power and other major crimes."

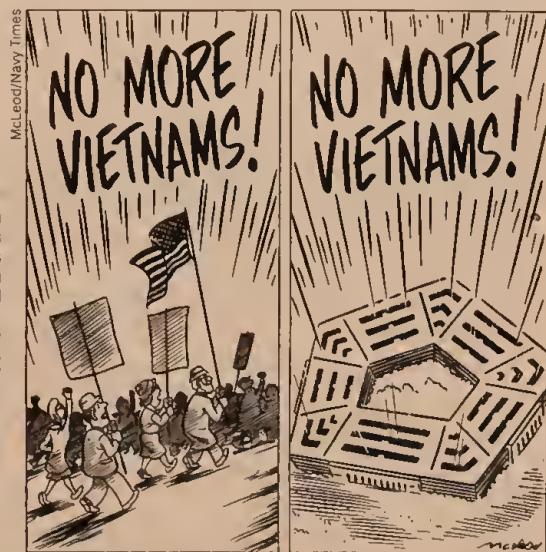
USec disarray and scandals may make good copy for Mandel's opponents, like ourselves, but it isn't really funny. The erudite professor is running a school for chicanery and gross opportunism, but his "students"—or at least some of them—joined avowedly socialist organizations to fight to free this planet from injustice, exploitation and war, not to take lessons in social-chauvinism, suck up to French SP politicians, and comfort themselves with the "mass influence" possessed by "cothinkers" like Czech "free marketers" and left apologists for anti-Tamil state terror in Sri Lanka.

German Unity Divides Mandel's USec

Today, Mandel finds it expedient to renounce Kuron. But when it comes to

continued on page 8

Cartoon from Navy Times captures common ground between Pentagon warmongers and "antiwar" movement opposed to defeat of U.S. imperialism.



Ernest Mandel...

(continued from page 7)

the Russian question a significant section of the USec's cadres and ranks are no longer so flexible. After a decade of being foot soldiers for Cold War social democracy, when Erich Honecker's regime collapsed in the DDR a whole wing of the USec led by Matti openly greeted capitalist counterrevolution in the name of "German unity."

For the Matti opposition, the bottom line was that the right to German unity is unconditional. Despite the claim to be for a "united socialist Germany," the Matti faction made no attempt to deny that their position was an overt call for capitalist reunification: "To make socialism a precondition for German unity would be to give up getting a hearing from those who are for unification but who reject socialism because of the caricature they are familiar with" (*Critique Communiste* No. 92, January 1990).

Since the 1948 abolition of capitalism in East Germany following the Soviet Army's victory over Hitler's Nazis, Germany was a nation divided along class lines. Yet in the face of a barrage of imperialist lies, threats and destabilization aimed at the annexation of the DDR by West German imperialism, for Matti and Socialist Action the question of "self-determination" for the "German nation" was elevated, in the purest Kautskyst tradition, above the class defense of the proletarian property forms and social gains of the former East German workers state.

Matti dismissed as "scholastic" any argument that "Germany is not an oppressed nation." On the contrary, he asserted:

"East Germany is certainly an oppressed country. It is oppressed by the Soviet Union, which denies it the right to self-determination, maintaining in power for 40 years a regime with no legitimacy and stationing 180,000 troops within its borders."

The former editor of *Socialist Action*, Alan Benjamin, took this one step further by declaring the Soviet forces in East Germany to be an army of "imperialist" occupation with the statement that the German working class "was subject to the occupation of four imperialist armies" (May 1990). This wailing about the "oppression" of Germans by the Red Army puts them in league with the worst revanchist elements of the German right, who yearn to "reclaim" all the German lands lost through the Soviet victory over the Third Reich.

For the Matti tendency support for capitalist counterrevolution is the ticket into the mainstream of Mitterrand's Socialist Party—which is already inhabited by other ex-leaders of the LCR like Henri Weber and Julien Dray (one of Matti's former lieutenants in the LCR leadership), who serve as SP deputies and aides-de-camp in governmental palaces. But the social interpenetration between the LCR leadership and the ruling Socialist Party is pervasive; in the



East Berlin, 3 January 1990—250,000 protested Nazi desecration of Red Army monument in Treptow Park. Spartacist banner reads: "Down with NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!"

LCR central committee meetings, it is the "shadow" of the SP which determines votes. As for Socialist Action, their appetite is to be water boys for the Cold War labor bureaucracy in the U.S., where capitulation to anti-Communism is a conditioned reflex.

Enter Stage Right—Pierre Lambert

With Socialist Action taking up Matti's position on the capitalist reunification of Germany, it seems Pierre Lambert's Stalinophobic Parti Communiste Internationaliste turned its attentions to Socialist

to hail the CIA-funded Portuguese Socialist Party in 1975 when it was leading anti-Communist riots and trashing CP offices. The Lambertistes had long demanded the unconditional reunification of Germany under the agency of the West German SPD, which was also bankrolled by the CIA to serve the cause of counterrevolutionary "German unity."

Trotsky analyzed the Stalinist bureaucracy as a brittle and contradictory caste, whose rule is simultaneously dependent on collectivized proletarian property forms while being the product of, and reflecting, the pressures of world imperi-

spread and reign the world over as a precondition for any socialist revolution"! In the 1950s, the heyday of American McCarthyism, Max Shachtman and his organization used exactly the same rationale to enlist in the Cold War against "Stalinism."

Alka-Seltzer or Champagne: The USec's German Hangover

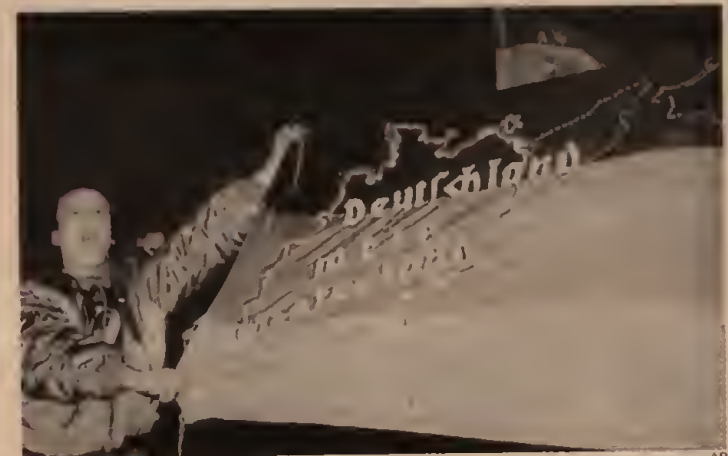
Matti writes: "When the Berlin Wall fell under the blows of the East German people, we said 'Champagne!' Those who hadn't understood the extent of their anti-bureaucratic hatred cried 'Alka-Seltzer!'" The latter is in reference to Mandel and his supporters.

In his pamphlet "When Stalinism Crumbles" (December 1989), Mandel characterized the demand for the "unconditional reunification" of Germany as a "totally reactionary position." Instead, echoing the DDR nationalism nurtured by the regime (building socialism in half a country?), Mandel elsewhere defended the "sovereignty of the popular masses of the DDR."

Lecturing at Humboldt University in East Berlin in November 1989, the USec leader called for a "politically capable vanguard" to "open the way for the victory and consolidation of the political revolution." Of course he wasn't talking about the USec's own supporters in the West German United Socialist Party (VSP)—which incidentally at the time did not even have a paper position of defending the DDR against imperialism. The "vanguard" that Mandel's USec pushed was the United Left (VL)—one of the various left satellites of the remnants of the former DDR Stalinists (SED, later renamed PDS). VL capitulated to the drive for reunification while peddling the popular-front fantasy of a slow, peaceful process of capitalist restoration, a "market economy" in which the gains of the East German workers state could be preserved through legislation. Echoing the Stalinist bureaucracy, VL always talked about defending the "sovereignty of the DDR"...and when that parochial, ersatz nationalist defense of collectivized property collapsed under the West German onslaught, they had no more answers than the Stalinists. VL's own election platform called for a "cooperation agreement" and a "confederation," echoing the SED/PDS which simply sought to slow down the process of reunification.

Today as the West German imperialists are completely leveling the economy in East Germany and dismantling every social gain, a USec majority resolution, "On the Capitalist Reunification of Germany" (November 1990), declares shamelessly that this confirms "the correctness of our determined opposition to German capitalist reunification." But in "When Stalinism Crumbles," Mandel had presented this scenario:

"Unification of Germany? Of course. But on the condition that the unified Germany



Rightists in 1989 Leipzig demo flaunt German-nationalist colors with map of Third Reich and slogan "Germany my fatherland." Matti called for unconditional support to capitalist reunification, while Mandelites talked out of both sides of their mouths.

Action. On the eve of the USec's World Congress, Socialist Action expelled Alan Benjamin and a half dozen or so supporters who had attended a Barcelona conference of Pierre Lambert's "Liaison Committee for a Workers' International" in January.

It is certainly fitting that Benjamin would be attracted to Lambert's organization, whose visceral Stalinophobia led

alism. The understanding of the dual nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy is the cornerstone of Trotsky's position on the Soviet Union: for unconditional defense against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, and for workers political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist misrulers whose conciliation of imperialism undermines the defense of the gains of October.

Matti explicitly renounces Trotsky's position. In an article in Pierre Broué's journal *Le Marxisme Aujourd'hui* (March 1991) entitled "Champagne and Democracy," the Mattistes hail the revolts "from Warsaw to Bucharest, from Sofia to Prague and Leipzig" with the declaration that "these systems...did not constitute progress and did not to any extent or in any way 'go beyond' capitalism." The social gains that were won through collectivizing the economy are reviled by Matti as a reactionary and retrogressive alternative to imperialist "democracy." He writes that these states "were prisons for the peoples. Like animals in a zoo, human beings were supposed to be fed, cared for, protected from predators, but they were behind bars." Deriding Trotsky's program for political revolution as "an idealistic and ultraleftist schema," Matti calls for a "fight to the end" against Stalinism "so that democracy can

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leaves NATO. That foreign troops first be withdrawn from all of Germany. That the Bundeswehr be reduced to the bare minimum. That the repressive apparatus and legislation be dismantled. That the salaries in the DDR be rapidly adapted to those in the BRD...."

This was the same line as that of the PDS, which accepted the inevitability, if not necessarily the desirability, of capitalist reunification. (One slogan of the PDS at the time of the March 18 elections was "We Are One People—1:1"; thus, their sole condition for unification was a one-to-one exchange rate of the currencies.) Notice that Mandel, like Matti, wants to see the withdrawal of Soviet troops, which had constituted the front-line defense of the DDR against NATO, while urging a reduction in the strength of the armed forces of German imperialism, like reformists everywhere who plead for curbs on "excessive military spending" consistent with "our national defense." Mandel's "conditions" envision a "neutralist" capitalist state, like maybe non-NATO Switzerland or the supposedly "nonaligned" nations of the Third World.

The International Communist League was the only tendency whose forces fought tooth and nail against the capitalist reunification of Germany. Intervening into the unfolding political revolution in the DDR following the collapse of the Honecker regime we raised the call for "A Germany of Workers Councils!"



Berlin, March 15—Workers with union banners protest ravages of reunification in front of Treuhand offices, hated agency of capitalist dismantling of East German economy.

under which the "national question" in Germany would be resolved through socialist revolution in the West and proletarian political revolution in the East.

Despite our small forces we published a very frequent press, distributing millions of pieces of Trotskyist literature to workers, soldiers and youth in the DDR. When fascists desecrated a monument to the Red Army fighters who fell in the battle to smash Hitler's Nazis, the Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands and the Spartakist Gruppen (who subsequently fused to form the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany [SpAD]) initiated a call for a massive workers united-front action to stop the fascists. This was met with a positive response at factories and workplaces throughout Berlin, leading the then-ruling Stalinists of the SED to mobilize their forces.

On 3 January 1989 a crowd of 250,000 people rallied at Treptow Park in East Berlin. Our comrades put forward the program of Trotskyism, calling for a workers united front against the fascists, for workers militias and for forging "a new workers party—of equal rights, equal duties—in the spirit of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg." Our warnings of the danger of capitalist restoration and the SPD's treacherous role, our criticisms of the incompetence of the former Stalinist misrulers, our opposition to Gorbachev's "perestroika," drew boos and heckling from the largely SED crowd.

The West German imperialists and

their social-democratic front men in the SPD were enraged at this massive pro-Soviet, anti-fascist mobilization in which they quite correctly saw the forces that could prevail against capitalist *Anschluss*. They belittled the fascist menace and claimed the SED had itself manufactured the provocations. This was echoed by Mandel's allies in VL who demanded the SpAD disavow the Treptow demonstration!

Following Treptow, the imperialists

turned up the heat in their drive to annex the DDR for capitalist exploitation. They launched a massive campaign of destabilization which rivaled the CIA's efforts to "make the economy scream" in Allende's Chile. The elections, scheduled for May, were moved up to March 18. More than 20 billion D-marks were poured into the DDR through agencies linked to Kohl's CDU and the SPD. Gorbachev gave the green light and the SED/PDS capitulated to the imperialist onslaught.

In the elections our comrades of the SpAD campaigned under the slogan, "No to Capitalist Reunification—For a Germany of Workers Councils!" The SpAD's election manifesto declared:

"Today the question is revolution or counterrevolution. We, the working people, built the collectivized economy from the rubble of Hitler's Third Reich. Stalinism has wretchedly demonstrated its bankruptcy. But no one has the right to hand over to capital what millions have created! We must defend our social gains and our workers state. We have much to lose and everything to win.... Today a resolute struggle by workers in the DDR can be the spark for BRD workers to beat back the attacks of the bosses and open the way to real class struggle, for power: *social revolution in the West.*"

We fought against a torrent of imperialist lies and destabilization. Millions were intoxicated by the prospect that reunification would bring D-mark prosperity. The SpAD's warnings—that the takeover of the DDR by imperialist West Germany would mean mass unemployment, attacks on women and foreign workers, the

growth of fascist forces and of Greater German imperialism—were reviled by the Stalinists, Social Democrats and their various hangers-on.

Today more than 50 percent of the population of the DDR openly regrets support for reunification. The Mattistes and all pieces of the now fragmented Socialist Action—swooning over last year's mass right-wing demonstrations in Leipzig which demanded "Germany, One Fatherland!"—declared that anyone who did not support the unconditional reunification of Germany would be relegated to the sidelines. Now the mass protests in Leipzig march under red union banners, as the East German workers desperately fight to resist the ravages of capitalist reunification. Who's on the sidelines now?

Now the Mandelites are crawling inside the PDS, the burned-out social-democratic leftovers of the former Stalinist regime in the DDR. The Mandelite majority resolution argues "the evolution of the PDS is not finished" and calls for "debate, unity in action." Electoral agreements with this party," indeed, a long-time West German Mandelite, Jakob Moneta, got himself elected to the PDS central committee!

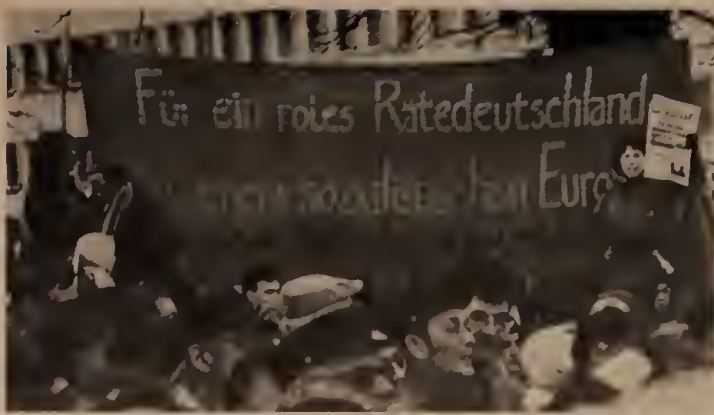
This might have caused some discomfort among the opposition whose leader Matti calls for "trying the Stalinists...as the Nazis were in Nuremberg." But, as we've seen, in this anti-Leninist "International" there's room for everyone. The Leninist norm of democratic centralism corresponds only to a revolutionary program, and to a party which wants to take power at the head of the insurgent and conscious proletariat. This has nothing to do with the USec's appetites.

The German events are a litmus test for any tendency which claims—like

Mandel & Co. do now—to stand against capitalist restoration in the former Soviet-bloc states. We Trotskyists of the ICL threw our modest forces into the incipient political revolution in the DDR, fighting to make a difference as a revolutionary leadership in a briefly wide-open situation. We sought to enlist the masses of working people in defending the DDR against the danger of capitalist *Anschluss*, for example through the Treptow demonstration. But the PDS capitulated and the working class, politically demobilized under years of bureaucratic misrule in the DDR, and lacking the remotest faith in the international class struggle, remained atomized and passive.

West German capital, spearheaded by the SPD "Trojan Horse," struck with all its formidable weapons and took back the DDR. This defeat for the world's working people must not be underestimated, nor its apologists and complicitors forgotten. Now that the mood of the masses of the former DDR has turned, the ICL has earned great credit in the eyes of many East German working people for having fought the capitalist reunification with all the modest forces at our disposal. And not only there. It was our intervention into the German events that won to the ICL's banner new recruitment and regroupments. Our fight for political revolution as the only truly potent obstacle to imperialist *Anschluss*, our defense of the social gains of the DDR, our work for internationalist solidarity with Soviet Army soldiers, as well as with Vietnamese, Polish and African foreign workers in the DDR, won fresh forces to the ICL from militants breaking from the orbit of Stalinist or "Trotskyist" currents in Poland, Canada and Mexico as well as the DDR.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



German Spartakists called for "A Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist Europe," campaigned in March 1990 DDR elections for "No to Capitalist Reunification."

Wählt

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Kurdish Struggle...

(continued from page 12)

the Crusaders in the 12th century. Even before the end of World War I, Britain and France set about dividing up the Ottoman areas as the spoils of their impending victory in the secret Sykes-Picot treaty of 1916. While promising the numerous subject peoples of the moribund Ottoman Empire independence in return for their support, they proceeded not only to violate those promises but to deliberately carve up the various peoples of the region into artificially created states. British prime minister Lloyd George cynically wrote afterwards: "There could be no question of a peace conference until we had conquered Iraq and Syria." The name of the imperialist game was "divide and rule."

Having denounced the imperialist secret diplomacy which sent millions to the slaughter in World War I, the Bolsheviks published Sykes-Picot and all the other secret treaties immediately after taking power in Russia. Leon Trotsky, the first commissar of foreign affairs, wrote in introducing the treaties, "To a considerable degree the whole of the present war is a war for the partition of the 'Turkish Legacy,' for the 're-partition' of Turkish lands between the banks, industrialists and merchants of the strongest capitalist powers." The Bolsheviks aggressively sought to foster anti-imperialist upheavals in the region, summoning a Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku in 1920. The Communist International's call declared:

"Workers and peasants of the Near East! If you organize yourselves and set up



Kemal Atatürk, Turkish nationalist leader.

your own workers' and peasants' government, if you arm yourselves, uniting with the Russian workers' and peasants' army, you will beat the British, French and American capitalists, get rid of your oppressors and find freedom...."
—Baku: Congress of the Peoples of the East (1977)

In the same year, the Western imperialists codified their annexation of the region in the Treaty of Sèvres, which laid out vague promises of a highly truncated and impoverished Kurdish state while effectively turning Turkey into a protectorate under imperialist military occupation. Though national consciousness was largely subordinate to tribal loyalties among the Kurds, a British political officer in Baghdad reported that "the idea of Kurdistan for the Kurds was already popular," with four out of five people in southern (Iraqi) Kurdistan supporting independence. "Perfidious Albion" proceeded to grab this oil-rich region, formerly the *vilayet* (province) of Mosul, and attach it to its own mandate of Iraq. In the years to come, British troops and planes suppressed one uprising after another in Iraqi Kurdistan, bombing and gassing towns and villages.

Not surprisingly, the Turks rejected



1920 Baku Congress, organized by the Communist International to spread revolutionary struggle among Eastern peoples.

Sèvres and, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, waged a war to drive out the British-allied Greeks and Armenians and secure the borders of the modern Turkish state. Atatürk initially appealed for unity of Turks and Kurds. The 1920 Amasya Protocol, which effectively declared the new bourgeois Turkish state, "recognized the national and social rights of the Kurds." Atatürk's movement, which at the time was backed by Soviet Russia, so frightened the imperialist Allies that they invaded Istanbul and dissolved the legislature. Numerous Kurdish intellectuals, who were responsible for forming the first Kurdish nationalist organizations, joined with Atatürk and the "Young Turk" movement. But Atatürk was a Turkish nationalist, and like all nationalists he recognized "equality" for only one nation—his own.

Before adopting his "progressive" nationalist coloration, Atatürk had been a proponent of a greater "pan-Turanian" state, whose pursuit led to the massacre of more than a million Armenians and 700,000 Kurds under the cover of World War I. As soon as he consolidated power, he began to suppress both the Kurds and the workers organizations in Turkey. The day the caliphate was officially abolished in March 1924, all Kurdish institutions, organizations and publications were banned. A year later, all workers organizations were also banned. The new state was formally declared a "Turkish state," and by 1930 the Kemalist minister of justice could proclaim: "Those who are not of pure Turkish stock can have only one right in this country, the right to be servants and slaves."

The escalating Turkish repression was met by a series of Kurdish revolts continuing through the late '30s. Already in 1922, a Committee for Kurdish Independence had been formed by petty-bourgeois intellectuals who in turn subordinated themselves to traditional Kurdish tribal and religious leaders. The first rebellion, in 1925, was crushed with the aid of Turkey's enemy of yesterday, French imperialism. Hundreds of the rebels were hanged and many tens of thousands of peasants died in the subsequent "pacification" campaign, as villages throughout the region were burned to the ground.

Almost immediately, a second revolt erupted, which spread so rapidly that the Turks were ready to enter negotiations. Then, as was to happen so often in the future, the shah of Iran reached an agreement with Turkey to cut off support to the Kurdish rebels and to aid in their destruction. The murderous repression which followed was so widespread and promiscuous that a special law was promulgated decreeing that murders and pogroms by soldiers or civilians which aided "extermination of the revolts... will not be considered as crimes." By the time the last revolt was suppressed in 1938, more than 1.5 million Turkish Kurds had either been massacred or

deported. The repression was so savage that it would be 30 years before any significant political struggle reasserted itself in Turkish Kurdistan.

Until 1950, the entire region was under a permanent state of siege: foreigners were not allowed to enter for 15 years thereafter. Though only a handful of Kurds could speak Turkish, all use of Kurdish in public was banned—with violators subjected to a huge fine for each word spoken. Even the words "Kurd" and "Kurdistan" were outlawed, and the Kurdish people were officially pronounced to be "mountain Turks." When the social-democratic Turkish Workers Party became the first legal party to recognize the existence of the Kurdish people in 1970 during a brief period of liberalization, it was immediately banned. Only this year was the word Kurdistan again allowed to be used publicly, as part of a cosmetic reform by the Özal regime aimed at appeasing Turkey's imperialist patrons.

When demonstrations again started sweeping Turkish Kurdistan in the late 1960s, U.S.-trained anti-guerrilla commandos (now called "Ramhosh" by the Kurds) launched a reign of terror against the Kurdish population along the lines of the U.S. "pacification" program in Vietnam. Armored units and helicopters went from village to village, herding the residents into camps and demanding the surrender of all arms. "Should a peasant declare that he has none, he is severely beaten and humiliated. The Turkish troops force both men and women to strip; often they rape the women. 'Suspects' are hanged by their feet from a gallows," notes an account in the book edited by Gerard Chaliand, *People Without a Country* (1980).

Regional Unity... Against the Kurds

The same gruesome cycle of repression and revolt has been played out in the other capitalist states which rule over parts of Kurdistan. The consolidation of bourgeois nation-states out of the artificial entities carved out by the imperialist powers meant massacres and suppression for the minority peoples of the region. The fact that Kurdistan was a relatively well-defined territory only meant that the Kurds were seen as even more of a threat to the new states and were thus subjected to even greater persecution. The one thing around which all these regimes could unite was the need to suppress any serious Kurdish struggle. Over the years, Turkey, Iraq and Iran would all participate in joint military actions—and even sign treaties pledging "mutual military assistance"—against the Kurds.

The bloody suffering of the Kurdish people throughout this century underscores—albeit negatively—the validity of the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution. In the epoch of imperialist

decay, the weak bourgeoisies of the colonial world—even in the guise of "progressive" nationalists like Atatürk—are incapable of achieving national liberation. The dominant bourgeoisies become oppressors of their own subjugated minorities. And in the Kurdish countryside, powerful landlords and tribal leaders make common cause with the central governments whenever their own class interests are served.

If anything, the most "progressive" nationalist regimes tend to be the most oppressive to the Kurds. Thus, the Kurds in Syria were relatively unpersecuted until the "Arab socialist" Ba'ath party came to power. The formation of the United Arab Republic with Nasser's Egypt in 1959 was heralded with the suppression of the recently formed Syrian Kurdistan Democratic Party. Under the guise of a campaign to "save Arahism" from the "Kurdish threat," the Syrian Ba'athists drove tens of thousands of Kurds from their homes as part of an "Arab Cordon" policy aimed at forcibly removing all the Kurds from the frontier region. Not until 1976 did Syrian leader Assad publicly disown the "Arab Cordon" program.

On the other hand, the Russian Revolution of 1917 was a positive demonstration that only through proletarian revolution can the bourgeois-democratic tasks of agrarian revolution and national emancipation be achieved. The October Revolution inspired uprisings throughout the Near East. In fact, Atatürk's drive to power began with a 1919 military campaign—at the behest of the British and the sultan—to "repress the *choura* (soviets) which were beginning to organize themselves in the north of Kurdistan" (quoted in *People Without a Country*).

Inside the Soviet Union itself, the small population of some 200,000 Kurds was granted full equality with other nationalities. For a short time under Stalin, there was even a rather artificial autonomous republic of Kurdistan, inhabited primarily by Azerbaijani-speakers. While some 70 to 80 percent of Kurds in Turkey or Iran remain illiterate, among Soviet Kurds illiteracy had been completely eliminated by the 1930s. By 1960, 238 Kurdish-language books had been published in the Soviet Union, compared with perhaps a dozen for the overwhelmingly larger Kurdish population in Turkey.

Indeed, the only manifestation of Kurdish independence, the short-lived Mahabad Republic of 1946, came about as a result of Soviet occupation of northern Iran. But the republic had a narrow base of support and, when the Red Army withdrew from Iran as part of Stalin's agreement with the imperialist Allies, Iranian troops rapidly moved in and overwhelmed the Kurds. The leaders of the republic, largely local clerical figures and tribal chiefs, were executed, a printing press donated by the Red Army was shut down, and all Kurdish books were publicly burned. Mullah Mustafa Barzani, who had fled to Mahabad to escape RAF attacks in Iraq, made it to the Soviet border with several



Kurdish nationalist leader Mullah Mustafa Barzani.

hundred guerrillas in what became known as the "retreat of the Five Hundred."

CIA Knifes the Kurds

Barzani was the emhodiment of the treachery visited upon the Kurdish people by their supposed leaders. While describing itself as "Marxist-Leninist inspired," the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Iraq has since its formation in 1946 been dominated almost exclusively by the feudal interests of the Barzani family (the current leader is Barzani's son Mas-soud). A wealthy landowner and head of the Barzani tribe in Iraq, Barzani devoted his political career to seeking the patronage of one or another imperialist or regional power, who would then dump him and slaughter his people. Only two years before the RAF drove Barzani out of Iraq, he had appealed for support to the British ambassador, offering blind obedience "whatever your orders may be," against the Iraqi government, which was then leaning toward the Germans.

When the monarchy was overthrown in 1958 by a military coup led by Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qassim, Barzani returned to Iraq after 12 years in exile in the Soviet Union. As we have detailed in previous articles, the coup touched off a deepgoing revolutionary upsurge (see "Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Road to Power," WV No. 511, 5 October 1990, and "Saddam Hussein's War on Kurds, Leftists," WV No. 517, 4 January 1991). A measure of the revolutionary turmoil was the new constitution's designation of Kurds as equal partners with Arabs in society (without of course accepting the Kurds' right to independence). For a brief period Iraq was even called the Arab and Kurdish Republic. The KDP joined with the Iraqi Communist Party in supporting the new regime.

Assured that the CP had kept the powerful working class in check, Qassim soon turned against both Communists and Kurds. Barzani launched another Kurdish revolt, which he initiated by trying to eliminate rival tribal chieftains. He then

**Berlin, April 20:
Spartakists
protest repression
of Kurds, calling
for Socialist
Republic of
United Kurdistan,
workers revolution
to topple all
the sheiks,
colonels and
Zionist butchers.**



throughout Iranian Kurdistan as a warning to others!

In 1970, another cease-fire was arranged with the new Ba'athist regime which had returned to power in Iraq two years earlier. The March 1970 agreement, which is now the basis for the current deal between the Kurdish leaders and Saddam Hussein, provided for substantial Kurdish autonomy. The sticking point—as it is today—was over who would control the oil-rich area around Kirkuk. Assured of military support by the shah, Barzani hardlined it and the war resumed yet again. When Soviet defense minister Grechko visited Baghdad, he proposed a new agreement, which according to William Safire (who should know), "Barzani rejected on the advice of Iran and the United States." Around the same time, Barzani told the *Washington Post* that he would deliver the recently nationalized Kirkuk oil fields to American companies.

Throughout this time, Mustafa Barzani was working not only for the shah but for the Israelis and the CIA as well. This became so notorious that his eldest son split with him, arguing that Barzani was fighting not for the Kurds but only to

Baghdad on "the restoration of peace and national unity following the solution of the Kurdish question in the north of the country."

The cynicism of this whole operation was captured in a 1974 CIA memorandum which stated: "Both Iran and the US hope to benefit from an unresolvable situation in which Iraq is intrinsically weakened by the Kurds' refusal to give up their semi-autonomy. Neither Iran nor the US would like to see the situation resolved one way or the other" (*Independent* [London], 2 March). When Barzani wrote a pleading letter to his former patrons in Washington after the Algiers agreement, Kissinger dismissed it without a reply, snidely observing that "secret service operations are not missionary work." Yet this did not prevent Barzani Jr. from turning to Washington once again during the latest uprising.

One section of the KDP which split from Barzani went on to form the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) under Jalal Talabani. While the PUK has pretensions to greater "anti-imperialism" than the KDP, the differences are primarily cultural/tribal, with Barzani's group today based on the Kurmanji dialect speakers in the mountainous areas and Talabani's on petty-bourgeois Sorani speakers in the southern urban areas. Both organizations uphold the interests of the large landowners and are equally prepared to make deals with the imperialists and the regional bourgeoisies—usually against each other. During the Iran-Iraq war, the KDP was supported by Teheran while the PUK made a deal with Baghdad. Recently they have been working together, both in their appeals to Washington and in the negotiations with Saddam Hussein.

For Permanent Revolution in the Near East!

Even the most left-wing of the Kurdish nationalist groups operate within the same framework, seeking allies not among the workers and oppressed of the region but from one or another bourgeoisie. Both the Iranian KDP and the ex-Maoist guerrillaist Komala/Communist Party of Iran hailed Khomeini's Islamic revolution. Today, the CPI/Komala talks of "the suppression of the 1979 revolution by the Islamic regime" (*Bolshevik Message*, February 1989). But the Islamic regime was installed in power by the 1979 revolution. And it wasted no time in turning on its leftist and Kurdish supporters, slaughtering some 30,000 Kurds by early 1984. The Iranian Kurdish groups then turned to Baghdad. Martin van Bruinessen reports that "Iraq has given money, logistical support and arms" to both the Iranian KDP and Komala ("The Kurds Between Iran and Iraq," *Middle East Report*, July-August 1986). CPI/Komala statements on the end of the Iran-Iraq war conspicuously make no reference to the oppression of Kurds by Baghdad, calling for struggle only against the Iranian regime.

And in Turkey, the "Marxist-Leninist" Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK) relies on Syria for support. The PKK has been waging a guerrilla struggle for the past

several years against the Turkish army, while simultaneously carrying out a campaign of assassination against its leftist Kurdish opponents. The PKK collaborates both with Barzani's Iraqi KDP and with "patriotic" landlords in Turkish Kurdistan. Committed to the Stalinist dogma of "two-stage revolution," both the PKK and Komala subordinate the interests of the proletariat in alliances with "progressive" nationalists who in turn look to imperialist patronage. In an interview published in the PKK's *Voice of Kurdistan* (August 1990), leader Abdullah Ocalan talks endlessly of "democratic unity" and the like, but does not even make a passing reference to socialism or proletarian revolution.

These groups call themselves Marxist and communist, but in fact they are nationalists. They look to the peasantry as a battering ram for the national struggle. But rent by tribal divisions and dominated by wealthy landowners who are always prepared to sacrifice them for their own interests, the peasantry has neither the social power nor the coherent outlook to lead a struggle for national or social emancipation. So the left nationalists end up tailing the nationalists of more powerful nationalities—who want to destroy the Kurdish struggle.

In the imperialist balkanization of the Near East, some national, ethnic and religious groups came out on top—like the Turks, the Hebrew-speaking people in Palestine, the Persians in Iran, Sunni Muslim Arabs in Iraq. Their nationalist bourgeoisies now oppress the other nationalities, as well as the women and workers of their own countries. The Kurds were among the losers, largely because of their social backwardness, confined primarily to mountainous regions. It is precisely this backward element of traditional Kurdish society that the Kurdish nationalist groups look to. A reflection of that is the huge number of such organizations, which are separated largely by clan, clique, and cultural and regional differences but are fundamentally indistinguishable in terms of their ostensible programs.

As long as they are trapped in this nationalist roulette, the Kurdish people will remain the big losers in the Near East. Under the leadership of petty-bourgeois nationalism, even the highly educated and politically sophisticated Palestinian people have been led only from one massacre to another. But while Kurdistan remains largely a backward area, there is a long history of proletarian struggle in the region. Kurdish oil workers in Kirkuk formed the strategic core of the Iraqi CP; indeed, the first political newspaper in Kurdistan was the CP's *Azadi* (Salvation), which appeared in 1944. As poor peasants left the land in search of jobs, the urban Kurdish population grew enormously. By the mid-1970s, some 300,000 Kurds lived in Baghdad, over 500,000 in Istanbul, and hundreds of thousands more are dispersed throughout West Europe as industrial workers. In Germany alone there are some 400,000 Kurds, strategically placed in the working class.

It is in the urban centers, among the industrial proletariat, that the power exists to lead the Kurdish people to freedom, a struggle necessarily pitting them against the capitalist rulers who oppress them in unison. As our address to a conference of Kurdish militants in 1984 noted:

"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 fight of self-determination against the great power chauvinism of their own bourgeoisies."

As part of the multinational proletariat of the region, the Kurds can play a leading role in bringing down the whole rotten structure set up to serve the imperialist overlords. The key lies in forging an internationalist leadership modeled on the Bolshevik Party which led the multinational proletariat to power in the tsarist prison house of peoples. ■



Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq during brief moment of triumph after Gulf War.

made approaches to the Ba'ath, which had been attacking Qassim for being too soft on the Kurds. According to an article by Peter Sluglett in *Saddam's Iraq—Revolution or Reaction?* (1989), "when the Ba'ath-Nationalist alliance eventually overthrew Qasim in February 1963, they had had previous assurances from both Barzani and the KDP leaders that if they were successful the Kurds would announce a ceasefire, which duly materialized." The Ba'ath, not surprisingly, also moved against the Kurds, and the fighting continued on and off through various regimes until 1975.

Throughout this time, Barzani's forces were receiving support from the shah of Iran. In return, Barzani ordered a "freeze" on any Kurdish struggle in Iran. When leaders of the KDP of Iran finally refused to continue this suicidal policy in 1967, Barzani began hunting them down and turning them over to the shah. One of them was executed by Barzani and then handed over to the Iranians, who publicly displayed the body in towns

"remain absolute ruler" over them. Equipped with modern heavy weaponry by Iran, the Barzani forces were able to tie down much of the Iraqi army. Finally Iraq agreed to cut a deal with Iran in the 1975 Algiers agreement, ceding the Shatt-al-Arab waterway to the Persian Gulf, and Barzani was left hanging high and dry. Barzani in turn left his supporters hanging, telling them they could continue fighting if they wanted, while he took off for Iran and eventually the U.S., where he died in 1979.

In a demonstration of "Arab solidarity," Algeria sent troops to assist Iraq in sealing off the Kurdish frontier areas with Iranian aid. The Ba'athists' campaign of "Arab oil for the Arabs"—nominally directed at imperialist interests—was in fact aimed primarily at the Kurds. Baghdad launched a program of "Arabization" of the Kirkuk area, driving some 200,000 Kurds out of the region by April 1976. All this was dutifully approved by the United Nations, which fulsomely endorsed a 1976 report by

Kurdish Struggle: Near East Flashpoint



Bloody Pax Americana in Near East: U.S. Marine helicopter in Turkish refugee camp for stranded Iraqi Kurds. Washington set up Kurdish people for suppression by Saddam Hussein.

As hundreds of thousands of Kurds fled their homes in northern Iraq last month, the oppression of the Kurdish people became an unprecedented focus of attention for the Western press. When the imperialist plan for a "safe haven" for the Kurds was first raised last month, we warned that this would be either "a Gaza-style concentration camp or a bantustan" policed by U.S. or United Nations forces. And amid all the talk of humanitarian concern for the plight of Kurdish refugees stranded along the mountainous borders with Iran and Turkey, the U.S. has proceeded to occupy a sizable chunk of northern Iraq. Now the London *Independent* (4 May) reports that a secret U.S. military plan calls for setting up "a permanent, secure autonomous Kurdish region as part of Iraqi reparations."

Washington appears sharply divided about how deep to sink into the Near East quagmire (the new "Q-word"). The Kurdish cause is being exploited by Zionist right-wingers, like former Nixon aide William Safire and Abe Rosenthal, who dubbed the Kurds "the Jews of Iraq." More accurately, they are becoming "the new Palestinians," deprived not only of a homeland, but of their very homes. Kurdistan remains the largest nation in the world without a state of its own, a "people without a country," as one history of the Kurds is titled. Washington's latest ploy will do nothing to advance Kurdish liberation, but only add to the list of their direct oppressors.

When Bush announced "Operation Provide Comfort," the *New York Times* cheered, "At Last, the Kurds Find Friends." The Kurds have a long history of such "friends" who use them for their cynical power plays and then turn on them. Carved up by the imperialists among four capitalist countries after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I, the people of Kurdistan have been the victims of repression, forced population transfers and massacres by all of the capitalist regimes under which they suffer. Today they are again

For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!

being used as pawns in interimperialist rivalry, as British, French and American troops occupy northern Iraq, while the resurgent German Fourth Reich seeks to compete in military "relief" efforts in Iran, as the influential *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (25 April) writes, "to demonstrate to Washington that this time Bonn won't shirk its duty."

The imperialist press has conveniently focused only on the repression and savagery suffered by the Kurds at the hands of the Iraqi regime, ignoring the hellish nightmare under which the Kurds live in neighboring Turkey, Iran and Syria. But with Turkish troops terrorizing and stealing food and supplies from the Kurds, even the *Times* was compelled to note that Turkey "has traditionally regarded the Kurds as a restive, potentially subversive minority." Washington's NATO ally

in Ankara pushed for the U.S. operation in the first place only in order to keep the refugee situation from igniting rebellion among its own Kurdish population.

Days after Iraq's capitulation before the one-sided U.S.-led imperialist slaughter in the Gulf War, Kurdish nationalist groups, responding to appeals and assurances of support by the CIA's Voice of Free Iraq, launched an uprising against the government of Ba'athist strongman Saddam Hussein. The promised American aid of course never materialized and the Kurdish nationalists were again left to the tender mercies of the Ba'athist army. Now the same nationalist leaders who looked to Bush to back their rising against Saddam have apparently cut a deal with Baghdad behind Washington's back, negotiating yet another "autonomy" agreement. Like the rest, this one will be

torn up when it suits the Iraqi rulers.

The Kurdish people have a history of fierce struggle for their national rights, repeatedly challenging the oppressor bourgeoisies of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Just as repeatedly, the feudalist and bourgeois-nationalist misleaders of the Kurdish people have sacrificed that struggle for ephemeral and illusory support from the imperialists or their regional lackeys. As consistent defenders of the national rights of the Kurdish people, we of the International Communist League have stressed the centrality of the Kurdish struggle in the fight for socialist revolution throughout the region.

Today the Kurdish struggle can be key in exploding Bush's "New Order" in the Near East. But for this to happen, the Kurdish masses need leaders who look not to the imperialists who have betrayed and huddled them over the years, but to the Arab, Persian and Turkish proletarians, to the Palestinians and the other national minorities oppressed in the various prison houses of peoples in the region. Only when the working class, in league with its class brothers and sisters throughout the region and under the leadership of an internationalist vanguard, takes its place at the head of the Kurdish nation can this long-suffering people finally achieve their liberation. For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan! For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

Lies and Slaughter

The hundreds of thousands of Kurds left homeless today are but the latest victims of an unbroken chain of imperialist perfidy and chauvinist oppression against the Kurdish people since the turn of the century. During the height of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds effectively had "self-rule" under tribal chieftains who owed their loyalty to the Ottoman caliphate. For centuries the Kurdish tribes were distinguished as a warrior people, whose military prowess was exemplified by Saladin's victories against

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Kurdish nation carved up by imperialists among four capitalist countries.