

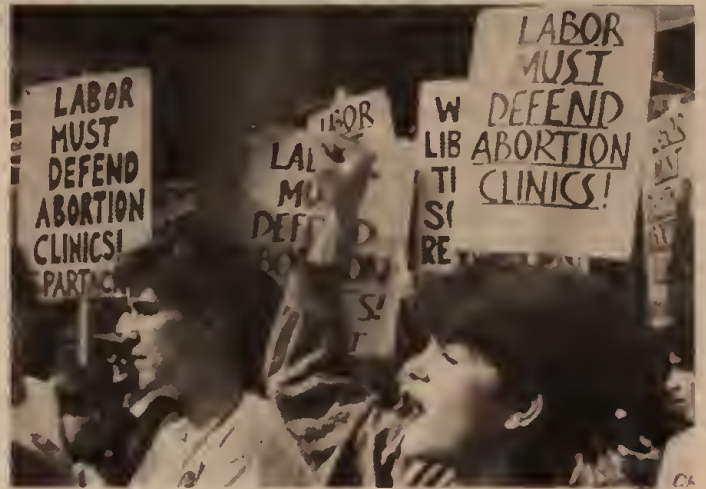
Free Abortion on Demand! Free Quality Health Care for All!

Supreme Court Tramples Abortion Rights

The Supreme Court has struck another vicious blow for death and oppression. On May 23 the presidentially appointed justices-for-life condemned thousands of poor and minority women to unwanted pregnancies, practically guaranteeing that the bitter tragedy of "back-alley abortion" will

again come to the nation's already ravaged ghettos and barrios. In its *Rust v. Sullivan* decision, the high court upheld Reagan administration regulations issued in 1988 that forbid family-planning clinics receiving Public Health Service Act "Title X" funds from even

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Defenders of abortion rights demonstrate against Operation Rescue blgots outside Boston clinic, May 2.

India: Bloody End of a Dynasty

Late on the evening of May 21 at an election rally in the town of Sriperumbudur in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu, a young woman exploded a bomb, killing herself and 16 others. The terror bombing brought the death toll in India's tenth national election to some 400 people, the bloodiest election campaign in the country's history. But this killing sent shock waves throughout India and the rest of the world. For among the mangle of dismembered bodies lying near the speaker's platform was that of Rajiv Gandhi, former prime minister, head of the Congress (I) party and scion of the dynasty which ruled India for all but 7 of its 44 years since gaining independence from Britain.

And, at least for the foreseeable future, Rajiv Gandhi's bloody end also means the end of that dynasty, founded by India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhi met his end much in the manner of many another Congress leader. Nehru's mentor and head of the bourgeois independence movement, Mohandas Gandhi (no relation), was shot by a Hindu ultranationalist in 1948. Only two years after Nehru died in office of a stroke in 1964, his daughter Indira assumed the parliamentary throne. When she was assassinated by Sikh members of her bodyguard in 1984, in revenge for her brutal massacre of rebellious Sikhs at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, it was her son Rajiv who took over as head of Congress and India.

Rajiv Gandhi's assassination highlights the deep crisis of capitalist India. The

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Rajiv Gandhi's funeral pyre. Leading figures of "democratic" India have met violent death. Above, left to right: Jawaharlal Nehru with Mohandas Gandhi; Nehru's daughter Indira; her son, Rajiv.

For Permanent Revolution in India's Prison House of Peoples!

Free Erik Larsen and All Antiwar GIs!

Hundreds of antiwar GIs, National Guardsmen and reservists face military prosecutions for refusing to join in the U.S.' mass murder of the Iraqi people. At Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, over 30 Marines who filed for conscientious objector status and refused to march off to war are awaiting court-martial. Among them is 23-year-old Lance Corporal Erik Larsen, charged with "desertion" during wartime for refusing to report when his unit was called up for training on February 9 to ready it for deployment to Saudi Arabia, though ultimately they were never sent. The government prosecutors have threatened him with possible application of a death sentence.

Larsen is one of thousands of soldiers who refused to take part in the Near East slaughter. With the military maintaining a tight lid on information concerning dissent in its ranks, the precise number of "resisters" is unknown. Some sources estimate that the military received over 2,000 conscientious objector applications since August. Many went AWOL as the Pentagon sat on the applications. Accord-

ing to the *Los Angeles Times* (24 April) over 4,400 deserters are being sought by the military.

The worst treatment has been reserved for those held at Camp Lejeune. While reservists who simply failed to report for duty have gotten short prison terms or discharges, those seeking CO status have faced the full wrath of military "justice." Sleep deprivation, threats of violence, verbal abuse, solitary confinement and continuous harassment are just some of the weapons used by the Marines to force them to drop their CO claims.

Blacks and other minorities, who recognize the "New World Order" of Bush & Co. is just the same old order of racist terror and oppression, are a large component of the Marines in the dock at Camp Lejeune. Black Marine Kevin Sparrock, who missed his troop movement by seven hours, is threatened with a lengthy prison stretch on "desertion" charges. Though Enrique Gonzalez' prosecutor asked for an 18-month sentence, the gung ho military judge, just back from the Gulf, sent Gonzalez to the brig

for 2-1/2 years. For Burmese immigrant Samuel Lwin, convicted of missing troop movements and sentenced to four months, opposition to the U.S. military began at boot camp, where he failed rifle qualification after his drill instructor called him a "gook."

Larsen, who spoke at rallies in 22 U.S. cities as well as in Germany, England and Italy, has been a special target of the masters of war. The military chaplain assigned to interview Larsen recommended approval of his CO application. But the brass turned it down because the application was based "solely on political grounds." An appeal from that denial is before the U.S. District Court in San Francisco.

Reportedly, Larsen's black Marine friend Tahan Jones, who also refused to report and like Larsen was a regular speaker at antiwar demonstrations, plans to turn himself in to military authorities. It is expected he will face the same charges. Also among those still facing court-martial is Captain Yolanda Huet-Vaughn, a 39-year-old mother of three. She faces five years of military prison on charges of "shirking" hazardous duty, for publicly abandoning her post. Huet-Vaughn rejected advice to file for CO status: "The point is that the policy is bankrupt, not that I personally should be exempt from the war" (*Nation*, 18 February).

We strongly defend the hundreds of soldiers who courageously refused to take part in the imperialist bloodbath, although we do not share the pacifist and religious stance of many conscientious objectors and "war resisters." On May 28 the Partisan Defense Committee protested to Secretary of Defense Cheney: "The 'New World Order' for which more than a hundred thousand Iraqis were brutally murdered also means increased repression across the U.S.... The Pentagon seeks to make an example of Larsen and the hundreds of GIs facing charges for opposing the war. In doing so the government seeks to stifle its political opponents in preparation for the next dirty



Simon/Daily Californian

Erik Larsen, Marine corporal who refused to fight in bloody imperialist Gulf War.

military adventure. We demand that all charges against Erik Larsen and all antiwar GIs be dropped."

For more information contact the Jones/Larsen Defense Fund, 4228 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609, (415) 655-1201.

* * *

The racist state authorities will stop at nothing in their vendetta against death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. For nearly eight years Jamal has been in disciplinary confinement for refusing to cut his hair—worn in the dreadlocks style characteristic of the MOVE group. As a death row prisoner, Jamal is confined to his cell 23 hours a day. But this isn't enough for the vindictive thugs who run the prisons. Jamal is often shackled, denied phone calls and books other than legal or religious materials. Last month the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit ruled this did not violate Jamal's Eighth Amendment right against cruel

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TROTSKY

Their Cops, Their State

From Karl Kautsky to Ernest Mandel, revisionists have obfuscated the Marxist understanding that in capitalist society the state apparatus—army, police, courts, prisons—is an instrument for the suppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie. This theoretical revision serves the appetite of opportunist "socialists" to administer the capitalist state. In his classic polemic against social-democratic reformism, *The State and Revolution*, Lenin reaffirmed that

the emancipation of the proletariat requires the smashing of the bourgeois state.

"Theoretically," it is not denied that the state is an organ of class rule, or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. But what is overlooked or glossed over is this: if the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing above society and "alienating itself more and more from it," it is obvious that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this "alienation."...

Like all great revolutionary thinkers, Engels tries to draw the attention of the class-conscious workers to what prevailing philistinism regards as least worthy of attention, as the most habitual thing, hallowed by prejudices that are not only deep-rooted but, one might say, petrified. A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power....

A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve it, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organization of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters.

—V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (1917)



LENIN



Antiwar soldiers and reservists, left to right: Kelth Jones, Collin Bootman, Wayne McWhite and Sam Lwin (standing).

Geronimo Challenges COINTELPRO Frame-Up

On June 3, attorneys for former Black Panther Party leader Geronimo ji jaga (Pratt) filed a petition for *habeas corpus* based on new and suppressed evidence. This petition dramatically documents the sinister and deadly machinations of the U.S. government and State of California's relentless drive to destroy him—a racist and political vendetta they continue today. Geronimo's application also presents new evidence of Pratt's innocence and of the sinister details behind the LAPD/FBI's targeting of Geronimo personally for "neutralization" beginning in May 1969, when he became head of the L.A. Panthers.

In retaliation for Pratt's continued fight to expose the FBI/COINTELPRO frame-up which has stolen 22 years of his life, prison officials have thrown him in the hole (solitary confinement) on bogus drug trafficking charges. To fight this outrage PDC staff counsel Valerie West has filed an amended complaint in the 1989 lawsuit which successfully stopped Geronimo's transfer to the notorious Folsom Prison. The amended complaint, also filed June 3, will seek a court order to release Geronimo from solitary confinement and removal of the false allegations contained in his file.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Nazi/Police Provocation at Berlin Trial

3

From the Coal Fields of Central Asia

In mid-May the last of well over 100,000 striking Soviet coal miners returned to work, ending a walkout which began on March 1. Support for the strike fluctuated from one region to another, though never encompassing a majority of the country's 1.2 million coal miners. While some areas raised purely economic demands, a number of leaders of the Independent Union of Miners (NPG) which called the strikes focused on demands for the resignation of Soviet president Gorbachev and solidarized with the stridently pro-capitalist leader of the Russian republic, Boris Yeltsin.

In the upshot, Yeltsin and Gorbachev struck a deal calling for increasing devolution of power to the USSR's 15 republics. As part of this deal, the central government ceded control over Russian mines, including the rich Kuznetsk basin (Kuzbass) coal field in Siberia, to the Yeltsin regime in the Russian republic. Yeltsin also reached an agreement with Gorbachev and Prime Minister Pavlov on a strike ban. Along with this stick Yeltsin offered the "carrot" of turning the Kuzbass mines into joint stock companies. Miners who recognize Yeltsin as a demagogue for his betrayal of their strike must also oppose this shell game attempt to rob the hulk of Soviet miners and piece off a privileged layer.

As we reported earlier in "Soviet Miners Strike Amid Perestroika Turmoil" (WV No. 522, 15 March), the NPG was formed last October in the Ukrainian mining center of Donetsk at a congress of delegates from various mining regions. At least a section of the NPG's leadership is blatantly pro-imperialist and hailed by the AFL-CIO, which had representatives at the congress along with Britain's scab "Union of Democratic Miners." Nonetheless, in large measure due to the active intervention of representatives of the International Communist League, the imperialists' lackeys were stymied in their attempt to enlist Soviet miners in an international anti-Communist witchhunt against British miners leader Arthur Scargill.

Among the numerous delegates who bought Spartacist literature and spoke with us at the Donetsk congress was a miner from Karaganda in Kazakhstan, who was interviewed by *Workers Vanguard* last month. While we clearly have differences with this comrade, in the first place over his illusions in Gorbachev's market-oriented perestroika "reforms," his views on the current tumultuous situation in the Soviet Union will be of interest to our readers.

WV: You were part of a delegation of miners that spoke with Prime Minister Pavlov, and then with President Gorbachev. I understand the discussion was stormy. Can you tell us what happened?

Miner: Well, in the first place, that meeting had been proposed as negotiations with Premier Pavlov and President Gorbachev, but it didn't turn out that way, because first Pavlov sent a telegram to the regions that only delegations from those mines that were working, and not striking, would be invited to the meeting, and that those that were striking would stay on the sidelines.

We decided to invite Gorbachev to a meeting, and if he refused, to simply end the talks. When Gorbachev appeared, immediately some of the comrades made a request, asking for the floor—comrades from Inta [in the Vorkuta-Pechora region]; a comrade from Karaganda spoke.

They made their political demands personally to Gorbachev, and then a few more people spoke at the microphone. I asked Gorbachev two more questions. He didn't get around to answering them. One question was about the resources we spend for defense, because as one delegate said at a session of the Supreme Soviet, we spend every third ruble on defense. And therefore I asked Gorbachev

record as a great reformer, today he's making an awful lot of mistakes, he doesn't carry out anything to the finish.

WV: Recently workers at the largest mine in the USSR, the Raspadskaya in western Siberia, went back to work after signing an agreement with the government of the Russian Federation to form a joint-stock company which would own the mines, a form of privatization. What do



Strike meeting in Donetsk, eastern Ukraine, in April. Leaders of new "independent" union seek to rally miners behind pro-capitalist demagogue Boris Yeltsin.

chev a question: Was this really true, and if so, then could not our enormous corps of generals be deprived of their privileges and placed on a common level with all the people in the country?

A lot of questions were asked about the price rises, why the president himself promised—even before our meeting—that along with the price rises all the working people would be fully compensated for their expenditures because of those increases. Fully compensated. So reasonably enough the same question occurred to all of us: In that case, why raise the prices of goods if there's going to be full compensation? As it turned out, enough days have gone by, it's already the 18th—no one has gotten any kind of compensation.

WV: When the miners strike first started, some regions only raised wage demands while others called for Gorbachev's resignation. What were the political differences among the different regions?

Miner: The Russian regions have come out in support of the Russian parliament, because the delegates to the Supreme Soviet also support them; Yeltsin himself urged them on, promised them support and aid. This is why they have come out in favor of Yeltsin and try to put forward political demands, to remove Gorbachev, to replace the USSR parliament entirely. If in the first years of perestroika, in 1985, Gorbachev made the historical

you think about privatization? Do the miners of your region support the idea of privatization?

Miner: The Kuzbass today is the most profitable coal region, where the state doesn't give any kind of subsidy for coal output, where there is coking coal with a small percentage of impurities, where the price of coal is higher than the cost of its production. That is, the Kuzbass works at a profit for itself. The other regions all operate on state subsidies. They operate at a loss, because a ton of

coal costs much less than the sum that has to be spent to produce that ton. So that if in the Kuzbass—and more so at the Raspadskaya mines—there is the possibility of creating joint-stock companies, nobody in our particular region shows much enthusiasm on this question. There are one or two mines—the newest ones—which produce rich coking coal, but their success will be temporary; after a few years they will run out of these reserves too, and will end up in the same position as all the other mines.

WV: Many leaders of the NPG support Boris Yeltsin, who is openly dedicated to capitalism—that is, his "500 days" program. What do you and your miners think of this?

Miner: Many leaders of the NPG support Yeltsin because these members of the executive bureau of the Independent Union are mainly Russians—from Vorkuta, from the Kuzbass, from other regions. I personally consider, and I know this is the opinion of many comrades I have talked with, that Yeltsin is not the figure that the country needs—that Russia needs—he's of the same ilk as Gorbachev. And then, it seems to me that to allow Yeltsin into the highest leadership circles of the country—that would mean plunging the country into a dictatorship even more brutal than under Stalin. This is well understood in Kazakhstan, in Karaganda in particular. So we ourselves don't support Yeltsin.

WV: Many claim that the so-called "command system" in the economy, that the planned economy altogether, has reached a blind alley. We Trotskyists say that the failure of Stalinist bureaucratic planning isn't an argument for capitalism, which would mean the destruction of the Soviet economy. We call for a rationally planned economy in which the workers would exercise control through a government of workers soviets, soviets of workers deputies. What do you think?

Miner: Well, I myself, on the whole, am for resolution of these questions exactly in a socialist direction, for preserving a centralized economy; for preventing the enterprises from being scattered into various hands—because then everyone will be snatching what he can for himself, some getting more than others—for proceeding in a centralized manner, under the direction of a people's government. Naturally, a competent one.

WV: Yesterday evening you told me a little about your family, about how many sacrifices it has borne. I was very impressed by the number of your relatives that died in the war.

Miner: At the beginning of the war, the



Black-shirted leader of Russian fascist group Pamyat given Nazi salute by his followers. Multinational Soviet working class must smash Pamyat!

CIA Dirty Tricks in British Miners Strike

During the bitterly fought British miners strike of 1984-85, it was clear to many strike militants that they were up against not only the cops and courts but more sinister forces. Now an exposé in the London *Guardian* (22 May) confirms that British and American intelligence agencies have been directly involved in an internationally orchestrated union-busting campaign against the militant National Union of Mineworkers and its leader Arthur Scargill for years. In a full-page spread, with articles such as "Security Services 'Broke Rules to Spy on NUM'," the *Guardian* detailed how the CIA, the National Security Agency and Britain's GCHQ spy center at Cheltenham mobilized their high-tech espionage arsenal in a massive "Get Scargill" operation.

The CIA/NSA/GCHQ operation began when the Conservative Thatcher government moved to starve out the striking miners and their families in the fall of 1984 by stealing union property and strike support funds through court-ordered "sequestrations." The speed with which government snoops were able to track down secret NUM accounts in banks throughout Europe perplexed even the bankers. Now it is revealed that surveillance by spy satellites and NSA "listening posts" was used to monitor NUM communications and intercept international banking transactions. In particular, the NSA "cracked" Soviet banking networks with the aim of preventing a \$1 million contribution from

reaching the embattled British miners.

The CIA's boys on Fleet Street then launched a lurid campaign about "Moscow gold," timed to coincide with a visit to London in December 1984 by Mikhail Gorbachev, only months before he was to become the new Soviet leader. (A year earlier, Fleet Street and the Labourite right wing had picked up on a similar anti-communist witchhunt against Scargill, instigated by Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party, lamhasting the NUM leader for calling Polish Solidarność "anti-socialist.") Gorbachev dutifully acquiesced to Thatcher's warn-

ings against Soviet assistance to the miners, and the funds were instead sent to the Paris-based International Miners Organisation, headed by Scargill.

After 12 months of militant struggle, the miners strike finally ended in defeat, as the Labourite trade-union bureaucracy worked overtime to prevent or suppress solidarity strikes. But the "Get Scargill" operation did not end. As we reported in "Sinister Frame-Up of British Miners Leader" (WV No. 508, 10 August 1990), last year Scargill and the NUM were subjected to another "Moscow gold" witchhunt centered on lies that Scargill

had pocketed or otherwise manipulated the Soviet donations.

A virtual horde of "independent" Soviet unionists, many fascist-connected, were brought over to Britain to lend credence to the anti-Scargill chorus. Among them was one Yuri Butchenko, whose claims were given an air of authenticity because his tour had been organized not by the anti-communist scab "Union of Democratic Miners" but by "socialists" like the centrist Workers Power. We denounced this smear campaign as a pack of lies from start to finish, and now the *Guardian* account confirms that it was exactly that. In fact, it reports, "Butchenko, who claimed that 10 million roubles had been raised from Soviet miners and gone missing, has now been expelled from his own organisation for misappropriating equipment."

That this exposé managed to surface in the bourgeois *Guardian* probably reflects the unease the "gnomes of Zurich" feel about their secrets being intercepted, even in the interests of strikebreaking. And many a worker at GCHQ Cheltenham undoubtedly remembers how Thatcher cracked down on their own union organizing effort in 1984. But the CIA has a long and sordid history in policing and suppressing militant labor struggle, from South America to South Korea, particularly through various "labor" fronts set up by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. Hands off Arthur Scargill! Hands off the NUM! ■



Miners battle police in great British coal strike of 1984-85.

Second World War, three of my father's brothers, that is, my grandfather's three eldest sons, were all officers, and they all went to the front. They fought there from beginning to end, and not one of them came back from the front. They were all killed. On my mother's side there were also many relatives who fell at the front.

WV: You spoke about how your family fought against German fascism. Today in Russia, Great Russian chauvinism is raising its head, the anti-Semitic fascism of the Pamyat society. We think that they should be smashed by the workers, through mobilization of the workers movement.

Miner: I myself have never met a living representative of this Pamyat, although I would even be interested to see with my own eyes what it looks like, this Russian fascism. All in all, in my opinion, this fascism and everything like it should all be destroyed, ripped out by the roots—so that we won't have anything like that in life, not even in thoughts. So I am personally completely against Pamyat and other fascist organizations.

WV: During the meeting with Gorbachev, you raised the demand for cutting military expenses in the budget. You thought that today there's no military threat from abroad against the Soviet Union. Yet the United States just killed tens of thousands of Iraqis and bombed Baghdad and other cities into ruins. Don't you think that also threatens the Soviet Union?

Miner: I don't even know what to say to this question. To some degree, of course, this is a threat to us, too. But what I said about arms, I ended with the following: I proposed to more fully regulate arms expenditures. If we need arms, well, then there can't be any question. But as a matter of fact there are a lot of resources out of those which go for arms, which go for covering expenses for the well-being of our generals—their dachas, cars, servants, for a whole range of services. At the same time, if you consider the conflict in Iraq, the ceaseless strife in Afghanistan, then the earth is still far from complete peace, complete prosperity, and there have been and will be conflicts.

WV: In the course of more than a decade

the U.S. has supported the anti-Soviet *mujahedin* in Afghanistan. What, in your opinion, would happen to workers and women in Afghanistan if these Islamic fundamentalist cutthroats were to win?

Miner: First of all, I was against the kind of pullout that Gorbachev carried out, the pullout of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Of course, I fully sympathize with the Soviet mothers who lost their sons there, and I am also very sorry about the losses of life which the Soviet armed forces suffered there. But even though there were these victims, even if you don't take the other problems into account, you couldn't get up and leave just because of that blood—throw the Afghan people to the *mujahedin* to be torn to pieces. At that time, on the contrary, it was necessary to destroy all of the *dushman* [Islamic counterrevolutionary guerrilla] influence, to completely purge the country of the *dushmany*, and then it would have been possible to establish for this country the possibility for its indigenous armed forces and a people's government to continue their work and activity.

WV: At the Donetsk miners congress last fall, American trade-union bureaucrats and other representatives of imperialist interests tried to influence the miners to condemn the British miners leader Arthur

Scargill, who had drawn their hatred for being the leader of the British miners strike of 1984-85. What do the miners know about this slanderous campaign against Arthur Scargill?

Miner: First of all, we have very little information, we get almost none. At the beginning it was presented that Scargill grabbed, concealed our one and a half million pounds sterling that the Soviet miners had collected for the striking English miners as a symbol of solidarity. And this had its effect, especially on the simple miners, the congress delegates, on me. Only after discussions and contacts with different comrades, in particular with the American comrades from the "Spartacist League-Internationalists," who explained the real, genuine substance of Arthur Scargill's activity to us, and the substance of the activity of the trade union [the UDM] that was attacking Scargill and of the delegate from that union who spoke at the congress, did we understand that that union was a scab union. And that Arthur Scargill, as a leader of the union movement in England who had socialist inclinations, was more left-wing and came out for the interests of the miners in England.

Now I know that Scargill wasn't guilty. On my arrival home in Karaganda I also explained the whole thing to our

workers at the mine, that it wasn't Arthur Scargill but that union, which considers itself a "democratic union" in Britain, which was scab and which unjustly attacked Scargill.

WV: At least some of the NPG leaders look to the American AFL-CIO trade-union bureaucracy for support and in turn are hailed by it. Do Soviet miners know that the American trade-union bureaucrats act in the international arena as agents of counterrevolution? Do they know that the AFL-CIO bureaucracy aided Pinochet's bloody military coup against Salvador Allende in Chile? After that coup hundreds of miners were shot.

Miner: I personally don't know anything about that and our Independent Union, as far as that goes, doesn't know anything. So the leaders of the union are trying to find partners in the trade-union movements of various countries who would help us, support us financially. And that apparently because of this, the leadership of the union will work even with the Americans. But concretely, personally, what that union collaborated in or took part in in Chile, in the murder of Allende, in actions like that—I more than believe that our members in the union, the leaders of the union, don't know it. Because I'm hearing it here for the first time. ■



Miners conference in Donetsk last October. International Communist League representatives countered imperialist-orchestrated campaign against British miners leader Arthur Scargill (above).

USec's "Crisis of Credibility"

Ernest Mandel vs. Revolutionary Leadership

Part One of this article appeared in Workers Vanguard No. 527, 24 May 1991.

PART TWO OF TWO

The USec majority led by Mandel analyzes events in the Soviet Union today in terms of a "three-way struggle" between the forces of counterrevolution, the proletariat and the Stalinist bureaucracy. In essence this methodology is third-campist: it treats the bureaucracy as some kind of homogenous social formation—i.e., a class. Mandel portrays Gorbachev and his policies of perestroika as a rational attempt on the part of the bureaucracy to continue its social rule and maintain its privileges.

The Matti minority correctly objects to assigning an independent role to the bureaucracy: "We don't think the bureaucracy was any more capable of

between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the resurgent proletariat but between the proletariat and the active forces of counterrevolution. In the event of an open clash between the two mass camps, there cannot even be talk of the bureaucracy playing an independent role. Its polar flanks would be flung to the different sides of the barricade. The fate of the subsequent struggle would be determined, of course, by the outcome of the struggle. The victory of the revolutionary camp, in any case, is conceivable only under the leadership of a proletarian party, which would naturally be raised to power by victory over the counterrevolution."

The National Question in the Soviet Union

The two main wings of the USec are united around support to every manifestation of nationalism that is cropping

"armed struggle against Stalinism!"

Printing this article was no aberration! Every nationalist opposition from the Baltic "People's Fronts" to the Ukrainian Rukh to the Armenian National Movement has been given favorable publicity and had their documents published in *International Viewpoint*. Playing on popular grievances against the Great Russian chauvinism of the Kremlin bureaucracy and the increasing disintegration of the centralized economy, they push their own brands of nationalist ideology which range from the xenophobic to the fascistic. Since 1986 at least, a Polish USec leader, Z. Kowalewski, has been publishing apologies for the "anti-Stalinist" Ukrainian fascists, and explicitly pronounced himself against the defense "in the Ukraine" of the Soviet Union in World War II.

As Trotskyists we stand for the democratic reorganization of the Soviet Union



Mandel in Moscow last January encounters Russian-language *Spartacist Bulletin*.

Soviet Ukraine" and he strenuously argued against those who elevated the national question above the question of which class shall rule:

"The national problem separate and apart from class correlations is a fiction, a lie, a strangler's noose for the proletariat...from the proletarian standpoint, neither democracy as a whole nor national self-determination as an integral part of it stands above the classes; nor does either of them supply the highest criterion of revolutionary policy."

—"Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition," September 1929

Here we find complete unity between Matti and Mandel and complete departure from Trotsky's conception. Using the same arguments he did for "German unity," Matti writes:

"And if there is an authentic mass movement which demands, in struggle, to exercise its right of secession, then the role of Marxists is to support that openly, regardless of the class character or political character of its leadership, and to fight to win leadership of it. This would be the case even if the movement was led by forces who wanted to see the restoration of capitalism, integration into the European Community, etc., and which were vigorously supported by imperialism."

This is echoed in the draft resolution of the Mandeliste majority which declares:

"For revolutionary Marxists, this fundamental attitude translates into the unconditional defense of the right of oppressed nations to self-determination and hence the right to tactical separation. This is true even if the dynamic of such a separation is capitalist restoration, when that is the desire of a majority of the community in question."

Nonetheless, this is not sufficient for Matti, who argues that the Mandel majority only supports the "right to self-determination" as opposed to going whole hog in calling for independence.

Today in the USSR the Gorbachev/Yeltsin bureaucracy pledges to orchestrate the restoration of capitalism, as the Baltic nationalists hark back to the days of the authoritarian and fascistic "inter-war republics" and openly appeal to U.S. imperialism for support in dismembering the USSR. The bankrupt heirs of Stalin set the stage for the present crisis, not only by instituting the anti-socialist policies of perestroika but by their seemingly limitless appetite to appease imperialism with the withdrawal from Afghanistan and the despicable support for the American massacre in the Persian Gulf. As we have said: better to have fought imperialism to the finish in Afghanistan than to have to fight it now inside the USSR!

Mandel in Moscow

After six and a half decades of Stalinist rule, the Soviet Union is lurching toward catastrophe. As the economy collapses, the forces driving toward capitalist counterrevolution and bloody nationalist strife have grown apace. The Kremlin bureaucratic elite is disintegrating and tending to polarize. On the one side are the pampered children of Stalin's apparatchiks who want to live like American or German yuppies. These free marketers who call themselves "democrats" want to sell off the collectivized property of the Soviet Union to the imperialists. On the other side are conservative Stalinist apparatchiks, military men and KGB operatives who want to return

The armed struggle against Stalinism in Estonia

IN THE AREAS forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in the Second World War, one subject remains extremely sensitive even under glasnost: the armed resistance to Soviet annexation. In Estonia, a prominent figure in the Estonian Historical Society, Mart Laar, was indicted for what he said about the "Forest Brothers" in an article on the period of the Stalinist terror (see p. 157, February 20, 1989, for a translation). The Soviet central press continues to cry scandal about any defense of the "Forest Brothers," and this is an element in the intensified polemics about the Baltic peoples' movements.

The following article from the June 1989 issue of *Postipis*, the monthly paper of the Estonian People's Front in the Estonian university city of Tartu, defends the armed resistance to the mass deportations estimate of the Estonian people only in Laar's article. Some details of the article for space reasons.

HERBERT LINDBAE

International Viewpoint

18 September 1989

Mandelite journal *International Viewpoint* published article defending Estonian fascist "Forest Brothers" who fought with Nazi German forces against Soviet Red Army in World War II.



R. James Bender Publishing

developing a lasting policy independent of imperialism than it was of confronting the growth of popular, working-class and national oppositions." Instead, the Matti minority simply and conveniently equates the interests of the bureaucracy with those of world imperialism, enabling them thereby to portray each and every popular mobilization, no matter how counterrevolutionary its program, as a progressive expression of working-class anti-Stalinism:

"In our view, there was a class polarization between two camps—imperialism and the bureaucracy on one side, the working class on the other side. And not a 'triangular' fight—imperialism, bureaucracy, working class."

—"Counter-Revolution on the International Situation"

Missing from both sides of this debate is Leon Trotsky's profound understanding of the bureaucracy as an unstable, heterogeneous caste whose privileges have no basis in the economic foundation of society. The Stalinist bureaucracies are today disintegrating under the combined impact of the world imperialist market and popular protest, with a good portion openly looting state property in an attempt to buy their way into a new capitalist class. An independent working class fighting in its own name has not yet entered the historical stage. When it does, events would likely proceed along the lines sketched by Trotsky almost 58 years ago in his essay, "The Class Nature of the Soviet State":

"A real civil war could develop not

up in the Soviet Union, particularly the sinister Baltic separatist movements which under cover of "national independence" are aiming to carry out a bloody capitalist counterrevolution. Grotesquely, this led Mandel's USec to print an article in its journal *International Viewpoint* (18 September 1989) praising the Estonian Nazi "Forest Brothers" as "liberation" fighters in the

and for the right of any nationality with a leadership that opposes counterrevolution to withdraw to any extent it sees fit. But we stand in utter opposition to all attempts at capitalist counterrevolution in the deformed workers states. The USec attempts to wield Trotsky's writings on the Ukraine as a cover for tailing the counterrevolutionary Baltic nationalists. But Trotsky called for an "independent



Lithuanian separatists rally in Vilnius last year. USec hails anti-communist nationalist movements throughout the Soviet Union.

to the days when they gave the orders and everyone kowtowed. Appealing to Great Russian nationalism and even vile anti-Semitic demagoguery, they call themselves the "patriots."

What is missing in the present ideological division is the Soviet working class, which to date has been trapped within the political framework set by the contending factions of the bureaucracy and the intelligentsia. The "democrats" have tried to harness the proletariat to the cart of capitalist restoration by insisting on the identification of centralized planning and management with the bureaucratic commandism, arbitrariness and parasitism of the Stalinist bureaucracy. But working-class dissatisfaction with the wholesale looting of state enterprises, by local managers seeking to buy their way into a new bourgeoisie, is growing by leaps and bounds in the Soviet Union today. So the "democrats" are cynically trying to co-opt popular outrage by raising the call for workers "self-management."

This dynamic was spelled out quite clearly by Alexander Buzgalin, a representative of the "Marxist Platform" in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, who was an invited guest at the USec World Congress. In an interview printed in *International Viewpoint* Buzgalin argued that "one of our most important tasks is work within the mass democratic movements. The majority of these movements say that they are anti-socialist, anti-Marxist and anti-CPSU. But if you ask them if they would support real self-management for the workers they reply: yes." Buzgalin, evidently a member of the right wing of "Marxist Platform," reports sadly that other members of his organization find it "impossible to work in a movement that says 'no to socialism.'" But this is no problem for the Mandelites, who have much experience swimming in the stream of pro-imperialist democracy.

The Mandelites have long been big advocates of "workers self-management" and "workers control" precisely because these are elastic formulas which cover over the essential class questions, i.e., which class shall rule. In the Soviet Union today their advocacy of "self-management" allows them to pander to, rather than combat, the predominant syndicalist prejudices of the active sectors of the Soviet working class such as the miners, and to coexist with openly pro-capitalist forces in the so-called "democratic" movement.

Now in the Soviet Union advocates of piecemeal privatization are quite willing to raise demands for "workers control"—e.g., that workers of a particular enterprise have the "right" to market their product, make their own deals with foreign capitalists, buy and sell on the world market, etc. Competition among atomized enterprises even if under workers "self-management" can only foster greater inequality and undermine the social solidarity of the working class. This is exactly what happened in Yugoslavia, where a program of "market reform" coupled with "self-management" has increased



Left: Trotsky, head of the Red Army, during Russian Civil War. Demonstration by Left Oppositionists in Siberian exile on anniversary of the 1917 Revolution: "Turn the Fire to the Right. Against Kulak, Nepman and Bureaucrat." "Long Live the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."



Basil Blackwell Inc.

economic disparities between the different nationalities, fueling national antagonisms and capitalist-restorationist forces that are now tearing the country apart.

That many Soviet citizens, including demoralized proletarians, may support or at least accept the creation of a "market economy" as the means to revitalize the economic life of the USSR is not surprising. Stalinism has preached for decades that capitalism was the alternative to "our

"theirs"—we better figure out how to get a share for ourselves. And sure enough, along comes Ernest Mandel to enthuse over these impulses toward generating a program for the dismantling of the collectivized economy "under workers control."

It is a cliché that reformism is the ideology reflecting the social interests of the layer in capitalist society termed the "labor aristocracy." The classic role of

while cozying up to "democratic" forces that say "no to socialism" in Moscow? Mostly, it is this: a program of opportunism toward the bureaucratically deformed workers states today means not "merely" a refusal to fight for a revolution where capitalism exists, but going over to support for counterrevolution to dismantle what still remains of the great social gains that millions gave their lives for in the Bolshevik Revolution, the Civil War and World War II.

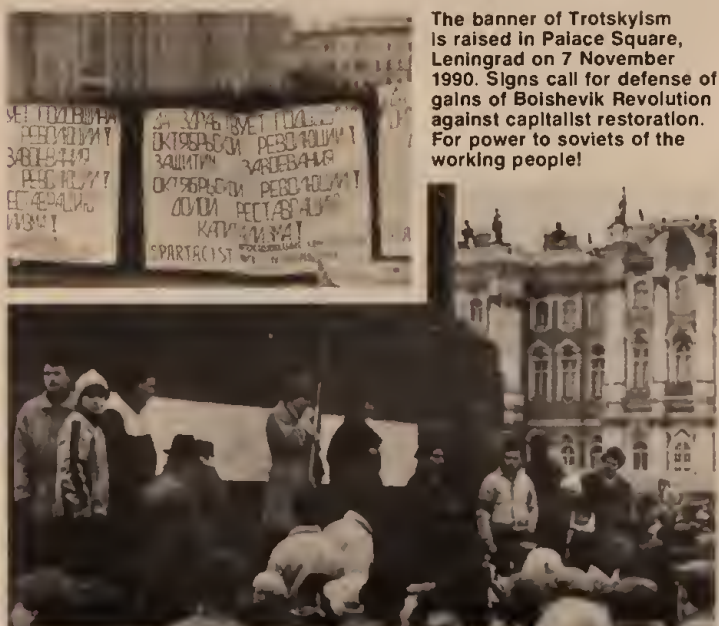
As Trotskyists, we fight more urgently than ever for political revolution against the defeatist and discredited Stalinist bureaucracy which now puts forward the reintroduction of private property as the way out of the mess they have created. We call for independent workers committees in the enterprises "to prevent bureaucratic sabotage as well as attempts at privatization".

"Such workers committees can be the basis of soviets, drawing into their ranks collective farmers, oppressed minorities, working women, Red Army soldiers and officers, old-age pensioners, those at all levels of society who would be communists and those few members of the intelligentsia who overcome their corrupt appetites and embrace the cause of the working class. There must be no place in these soviets for the new parasites and exploiters, nor for those within the bureaucracy who are their ideologues and sponsors. The workers and their allies will themselves, by their free vote, indicate which parties they recognize as soviet parties. We stand for a government based on soviet democracy such as was established by the October Revolution of 1917."

—"Where Is the Soviet Union Going?" WV No. 522, 15 March

On the level of economics, the analysis and program laid out by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed* is so cogent and so obviously applicable to the deformed workers states today that East German readers repeatedly asked us, "Was this written yesterday?" Trotsky envisioned a role for market calculations in economic planning, this being the most obvious way to determine what consumer goods people actually want. But the

continued on page 8



Spartacist Photos

socialist system," and now their own leaders tell them that "socialism has failed." It is understandable too, for example, that miners driven to desperation by the unavailability for months of essential consumer commodities like soap would put forward demands to be able to sell their product themselves on the world market and buy what they need. If capitalism is coming, they figure, we know the boys on top will be sure to get

the reformists to put themselves forward as "fighting for the workers" within the framework of the continued existence of the system: the Rockefellers will of course keep their billions, and the rest of us will squabble over who gets what's left over. What is the essential difference between an American union hack or French "Socialist" politician serving their bourgeois masters and an Ernest Mandel urging the protection of "workers' rights"

Ernest Mandel and the Sheriff of Zug

Recently, United Secretariat leader Ernest Mandel toured the United States. In Chicago on April 13, a supporter of the Spartacist League made the following remarks in the discussion period.

Really I find all this whining about what's happening in Poland to be fairly shameless. And neither Ernest Mandel nor the United Secretariat can look the Polish working class in the eye by any means, because of course this organization told the Polish working class to support Solidarność and actually hailed them as the "best socialists." The depth of the hypocrisy of what's been said here tonight is evidenced by the fact

the two organizations co-sponsoring this, one of them's called "Solidarity," the other one has Solidarity's logo proudly emblazoned across the top of their newspaper. Obviously they still [interruption from the floor]—excuse me, excuse me, I have two minutes—obviously they still hind Solidarity, as they smash the Polish working class, smash Polish working women in particular, to be somebody that they want to tail after.

And less there's any doubt that the United Secretariat and Mandel do not defend the workers states, they actually have a member of their organization in the parliament of Vaclav Havel in

Czechoslovakia who's gone on record as being in support of the market economy and is actually Minister of Information of the press agency of this capitalist-restorationist government.

They're willing to serve the bourgeoisie in the capitalist states quite directly, as they are now in Switzerland, where a leading member of the Swiss section of the USec has actually been elected Minister of Justice and Police in the canton of Zug. So, I'd say that's pretty repulsive and it goes right along with the fact that here tonight they actually called the campus police on the Spartacist League and insisted on ejecting our table from the

lobby here. Well, if they were in Switzerland they could have simply called on their own comrade [laughter]. [Chair: "Your time's up."] Excuse me, it is not up. Or perhaps they would be interested in Leroy Martin's [Chicago police commissioner] job, which is opening up.

Finally, I'd just like to say that there's a lot of complaining going on about the "crisis of socialism" here on Mandel's part. And yes, it's true, the Stalinists have dragged the name of communism through the mud. But I'd like to say the USec and Mandel have really done their utmost over the years to drag the name of Trotskyism through the mud, and aid in the disorganization of the working class. That's what the Spartacist League thinks, and the International Communist League [applause].

Usec...

(continued from page 7)

framework in which market mechanisms can play a role in the democratic determination of production and pricing is the preservation of nationalized property and centralized economic management. If the workers take political power from the Stalinist usurpers and once again assume the leadership of Soviet society, if economic policy and social priorities are democratically and collectively determined by the mass of the working people, productivity and economic efficiency will make an enormous leap.

As Trotsky wrote in 1932: "only through the interreaction of these three elements, state planning, the market, and Soviet democracy, can the correct direction of the economy of the transitional epoch be attained." It should go without saying that the blind operation of market forces will never provide adequate child-care, education, medical care. The equitable determination of wage levels, rents, pensions, and so forth requires the conscious setting of social policies through full debate in a workers state where the workers really rule. A developing Soviet economy must be part of an international division of labor achieved by the spread of socialist revolution internationally.

For Revolutionary Leadership! For the Fourth International!

On January 18, at the Moscow offices of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Mandel was one of the featured speakers presenting the Russian edition of *Socialism of the Future*—the

theoretical journal of the Spanish, Italian, French and German social-democratic parties which includes on its editorial staff, among others, Willy Brandt and Mikhail Gorbachev. Here Mandel makes clear his project to broker unity between the Second and Third Internationals:

"After a long period of persecution and isolation the Fourth International is today recognized as a part of the workers' movement and of the 'new social movements' in a series of countries, thanks to the role which we play within the mass movement. We have developed within these movements a profoundly unifying approach. We advocate unity in the struggle for common objectives, overcoming all the differences that separate the Communist parties and the ex-Communist parties on the one hand, and the Social Democratic parties on the other."

—*Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, April 1991

Here is Mandel, who claims to uphold the banner of Trotsky's Fourth International, boasting about a project aimed at political "unity" of the Second and Third. No doubt there will be some takers among the Stalinists moving rapidly in the direction of social democracy. For a revolutionary, what "common objectives" could there be with those who uphold the tradition of the last 75 years of political betrayal? But Mandel does not have to worry about that.

It is not communism which has "failed," but Stalinism. And social democracy has long since surrendered the goal of socialism, in favor of defending the order and interests of their own bourgeoisies. But having deluded themselves and their followers that some other force—Stalinism, Mitterrand, the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, the PLO, you name it—

would do the job that Trotsky believed was the job of the Fourth International, no wonder the Usec is undergoing its own "crisis of credibility."

As we noted in our declaration founding the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) in 1989: "Stalinism has created millions of anti-Communists and the general level of identification of human progress with the idea of communism stands at a relative low point. Yet as the workings of capitalist imperialism create millions of new subjective communists across the globe, the absence of genuinely communist leadership is acutely felt by many and the program of Leninist internationalism can be put forward with great impact."

From time to time, it occurs to disgruntled followers of Ernest Mandel to wonder what he needs with a "Fourth International." At the present moment it is perhaps more clear than usual that the kind of undertaking he has in mind has little need for an "International" of any kind—indeed, other notables like Pierre Broué or Vanessa Redgrave are hiding for a similar niche as advisers to elements of the "perestroika" intelligentsia and bureaucracy without too much in the way of an organized support group. But the important question is: what does the world need with another party whose role is to purvey organized confusionism, which will tell the workers whatever they seem to want to hear? Whose "transitional method" is to go with the flow no matter how misguided or reactionary (and let's not forget the Usec's Brian Grogan enthusing over how good it felt to be at one with the masses—chanting "Allah Akbar" in pro-Khomeini dem-

onstrations in Iran). All reformists say "it's important to go through these experiences with the working class." Well, some experiences should be gone through kicking and screaming all the way, and the working people will remember who told the truth and tried to lead.

For Mandel and his ilk, it's axiomatic that only "sectarians" and "elitists" would dare to say: our organization is a necessary component of the future communist vanguard which will lead the working class, because our program embodies the real and long-term interests of the proletariat. But really, what other justification could there be for having an organization at all? Pro-socialist followers of Ernest Mandel: you did not become socialists only in order to become cheerleaders for "objective" forces. What use to anyone is an organization whose claim to "leadership" is in the best case that they were the "consistent" advocates of whatever was popular (and that's only when the outcome has come out to their liking—when it's a bloody disaster, they aren't in a hurry to take the blame). As a follower of Mandel and his Usec, the best you can aspire to is to work alongside the social-democratic and Stalinist reformists in the worship of the accomplished fact, vicarious "participants" in "mass movements" right and left, from Solidarność to the Sandinistas, over whom you in fact exert no influence whatever for good or ill. Like the man riding backward in the train, you can see nothing until it has passed you, and sometimes not even then.

As Trotskyists, we aim to build a world party of revolutionary struggle, a crucial factor in shaping the outcome of history. To supporters of the Usec we suggest: get some Trotsky off the shelf—*In Defense of Marxism*, for example. You will find a vast gulf between the programs of your leaders and the uncompromising revolutionary spirit which animated Trotsky as he fought to build an authentic revolutionary party, the Fourth International. In Trotsky's work, as in Lenin's, you will find no trace of the "method" of the Usec, pandering to the illusions of the moment, but rather the effort to discern and embody the fight for the real interests of the international proletariat and oppressed masses. You must place this same uncompromising spirit at the center of your interventions into social struggle, or all your energy and activism will serve only the reformist betrayers of socialism. We of the International Communist League seek to assist you in fighting your way from the Usec to Trotskyism. ■



Spartacist League/U.S. contingent at January 26 San Francisco demonstration against Persian Gulf War.

Moabit Anti-Fascists...

(continued from page 3)

recently passed anti-foreigner laws and the deportation drives. Not only the Christian Democrats of Chancellor Kohl, but the Social Democrats as well have joined in whipping up the anti-foreigner frenzy. The government is almost daily deporting Kurds to prison, torture and possible death in Turkey. On Sunday,

May 18, an attempt to deport a Kurdish leftist from Berlin's Tegel airport was stopped by a mobilization of leftists and immigrant groups, and the courageous action of a Turkish pilot who refused to let German authorities bundle the deportee onto the plane.

And once again the Fourth Reich is targeting Jews, reimposing a ban on Jewish immigration (*Judenstopp*) from the Soviet Union and threatening to deport the 269 Soviet Jews who fled Israel during the U.S./NATO massacre in Iraq. Bonn wants them to return to Israel to serve as cannon fodder for the Zionist "final solution" to the Palestinian question in the Occupied Territories. Last September the SpAD and KfsV initiated a protest demonstration in Berlin demanding "Down with the Fourth Reich's *Judenstopp*!"

While the fascists are becoming emboldened, repugnance against the Nazi/skinhead attacks has sparked protest. At the Monday demos in Leipzig in March and early April, workers demonstrating against escalating unemployment angrily denounced the chauvinist anti-Polish attacks on the Oder border. In Dresden, where Mozambican Jorge Gomondai was brutally murdered by skinheads in a streetcar in April, 12,000 went into the street to protest. Speaking at the rally outside the court, Renate Dahlhaus noted that to stop the

fascist scum, "The working people must organize to finally control the wealth of society themselves, to build up a planned economy themselves and create a society in which racism, chauvinism, exploitation and the oppression of women are no longer, because there is no more private property. The power must be in the hands of workers and soldiers councils."

What is at stake in the case of the Moabit anti-fascists is the right of working people, immigrants and other minorities to defend themselves against fascist attacks. The Partisan Defense Committee has taken up the vigorous defense of the Moabit anti-fascists. We urge our readers to send donations and statements of support earmarked to: Committee to Defend the Anti-Fascists of Moabit, c/o Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. ■

MOVE to be a religious organization to which First Amendment protections apply, ignoring a 1986 jury decision upholding MOVE's status as a religious organization. The courts have no business determining what constitutes a religious organization. But in its ruling these racists in black robes express that their very real business is to give judicial endorsement to state authorities to do whatever they want to the inmates of this country's overcrowded prisons.

The court's denial of Jamal's appeal gives the prison officials free rein to continue the unrelenting harassment and persecution of Jamal and the imprisoned MOVE members. This ruling demonstrates once again that Jamal will not get justice from the racist courts. It will take mass protest to save him from the executioner's hands. We call on all defenders of democratic rights to protest this outrage. Join the campaign to save Jamal!

* * *

We encourage WV readers to continue to support and build the PDC. Become a monthly sustaining contributor. Send a donation of \$5 or more and receive a subscription to *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*. For a single copy send \$1 to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. ■

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PDC Notes...

(continued from page 2)

and unusual punishment.

Jamal, a supporter of the MOVE organization, filed suit to challenge the harshest regulations on religious grounds. In rejecting his appeal, the court arrogantly held that Jamal had not proven

Abortion Rights...

(continued from page 1)

mentioning abortion, which, believe it or not, is still legal in this country. Clinics will only be allowed to say, "The project does not consider abortion an appropriate method of family planning."

This barbaric ruling will affect three-quarters of all family-planning clinics in the U.S. (Abortion clinics are already barred from receiving federal funds.) The 4,500 clinics that receive Title X grants serve 4.1 million women annually. For many clinics this money is vital to their ability to provide services to women and teenagers with no other access to medical care or information. Nonetheless, many have courageously vowed to defy this outrageous decision by continuing to provide responsible medical advice to their patients, seeking private funding rather than comply with these deadly dangerous regulations. Planned Parenthood said: "What we're talking about is government-enforced malpractice.... Our principles aren't for sale.... We're giving up the government's funds."

This ruling comes in the context of a broad-scale judicial assault on the rights of women, minorities and anyone deemed vulnerable in this brutal society. A few days after the anti-abortion "gag rule," the Court decided that Spanish-speaking jurors could be barred from trials of Hispanics, because their ability to understand the defendant might interfere with official "English only" court translations! The 1989 *Webster* decision, upholding Missouri's right to ban abortions in institutions receiving state money, was recognized as an opening wedge in overturning abortion rights. Now with this decision, the first in which Bush appointee David Souter has cast a clear anti-abortion vote, it appears that bourgeois reaction has got a solid majority to wipe out legal abortion in this country.

On June 1 the anti-woman Operation Rescue fanatics, emboldened by the black-robed bigots, staged their largest provocation in over a year in the Boston area. At the Preterm clinic in Brookline, clients were only briefly prevented from entering, but at Repro Associates, police allowed the anti-woman fanatics to block the doorway for about two hours, doing their usual ever-so-slow-and-careful arrest procedure. Hundreds of clinic defenders showed up to confront Operation Rescue. Many took up the Spartacist League chant, "Defend the Clinics, Take a Stand! Free Abortion on Demand!"

"Family Planning" Supreme Court Style

One of the targeted clinics, Planned Parenthood's "Hub" center in the South Bronx, is located in the poorest Congressional district in the U.S. Infant mortality

rates here equal or surpass those of some Third World countries, maternal death rates and low-weight births are hundreds of times the national average, and the area has New York City's highest rate of births to teenagers. The devastation of the South Bronx has been infamous for decades, but today in whole sections of New York conditions of human life are as bad as the beginning of the 20th century when Planned Parenthood's founder Margaret Sanger was a young nurse on the Lower East Side, if not worse.

Desperately poor, overworked immigrant women begged Sanger then for "the secret" they believed rich women had, of how to stop unwanted pregnancies. The women tried every desperate measure from ingesting weird patent medicines, herb tea and turpentine to rolling down stairs and inserting button hooks and knitting needles into their bodies—and when all failed they lined up, sometimes a hundred at a time, on Saturdays at the

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



\$5 abortionist. Many bled to death at home afterward, but no one dared complain, as it was all *illegal*.

In her autobiography Sanger wrote of the scenes she saw on the Lower East Side, of "women writhing in travail to bring forth little babies; the babies themselves naked and hungry, wrapped in newspapers to keep them from the cold; six-year-old children with pinched, pale, wrinkled faces, old in concentrated wretchedness, pushed into gray and fetid cellars...." Sanger recalled one woman who almost died of blood poisoning in a self-induced abortion. Everyone knew another child would kill her, so she desperately asked for help, but the doctor just chuckled, "You want to have your cake and eat it too. Tell Jake to sleep on the roof!" The woman did get pregnant again—and she did die.

And that is what the Supreme Court of social reaction wants to bring back

at the end of this century.

Many clinic operators are now pushing for an emergency letter-writing campaign to pressure Congress to get rid of the Supreme Court abortion "gag rule." But the first and the highest restriction on abortion rights came from the U.S. Congress, supported by both Democrats and Republicans. It was the 1976 Hyde Amendment, which prohibits the use of Medicaid funds to pay for poor women's abortions, even when medically necessary. The year after this was passed, federally funded abortions dropped from 295,000 to 3,000 per year! The only response poor women got from "liberal" Democratic Party president Jimmy Carter was "There are many things in life which are not fair."

International Counterrevolution Targets Women

This assault on women is part of U.S. imperialism's worldwide attempt to reim-

pose its reactionary sway. In his majority decision, Supreme Court Justice Rehnquist made the political intent of the decision utterly explicit, attempting to explain by analogy why the federal government shouldn't have to use taxpayers' money for things the president opposes: "When Congress established a National Endowment for Democracy to encourage other countries to adopt democratic principles, it was not constitutionally required to fund a program to encourage competing lines of political philosophy such as communism and fascism" (*Washington Post*, 25 May). In this crackpot counterrevolutionary mindset, abortion must go in the greater interest of funding contras.

If Rehnquist wants to equate the ability to get an abortion with communism, he's not alone. Certainly the anti-Communists seeking to restore capitalism in Eastern Europe have gone all out to crush the gains women made in those societies. The capitalist-restorationists want to reassert the ancient oppressions of religion and the monogamous family as pillars of social repression, as they throw women out of work and children out of day-care centers.

In the Fourth Reich of German imperialism, bourgeois reactionaries are attempting to subject East German women to the notorious anti-abortion Paragraph 218, which stems from Bismarck's Reich. The "paragraph of shame" forbids abortion except in the case of rape, danger to the woman's life, or "indications" of dire need as determined by the state. Our comrades of the Spartacist Workers Party of Germany are fighting for the elimination of Paragraph 218 and for free abortion on demand, in the struggle against the catastrophic consequences of capitalist reunification. In addition to abortion rights, free childcare, free medical care, low rents and subsidized housing for single mothers are being eliminated while *millions* of women are driven out of social labor and back to the home.

And in Poland, the right to abortion has come under frontal assault by

the Solidarność government. The anti-Communist Polish nationalist movement headed by Lech Walesa was forged as a vehicle of clerical reaction. Now Pope Wojtyla tours his native land, provocatively holding outdoor mass on the Soviet border, in a celebration of counterrevolution. But the harsh realities of capitalist impoverishment are wearing down the patina of religious fervor. The crowds are greatly reduced, and efforts to ban abortion on the eve of the Pope's visit failed in parliament, as polls showed that 60 percent of the population opposed the overturn of this gain. The Spartakusowska Grupa Polski fights to defend abortion rights as key to its defense of the working population under siege from the brutal austerity program dictated by the White House and Wall Street.

Free, Quality Health Care for All

Legalization of abortion in this country came in the context of the rise of a movement for women's liberation, and in the wake of the civil rights movement. Under the impact of mass protests against the Vietnam War and ghetto upheavals, the bourgeoisie found it necessary to enact various social reforms to head off a social explosion. But over the past two decades, the ruling class—Democrats and Republicans alike—has been slashing away at any and every social program benefiting the poor, immeasurably increasing misery through a maze of bureaucratic barriers. It is not simply a question of legal rights. The Spartacist League has always called for the right to free, safe abortion on demand, and for free, quality health care for all. Access to health care for everyone is a basic necessity, just like education, a place to live, a job—but this decaying capitalist society does not and cannot provide it.

The crisis of health care in the United States is so bad that liberal social critics point out with dismay that the U.S. and apartheid South Africa are the only two industrialized countries in the world without some kind of national health system. In capitalist America if you have money, you can get the best health care in the world, for a price—which is why Saudi princes come to New York for medical attention. But if you have no insurance—and 34 million Americans have no health insurance at all, not even the pathetically inadequate Medicaid or Medicare—you can suffer lifelong debilitation from treatable disease like asthma, or die when simple preventive treatment could have saved your life.

Free, quality health care should be an elementary right. But like every other basic right worth having, decent medical care must be fought for in hard class struggle. In fact, over 75 percent of strikes today are over health care issues. But the strikes aren't winning, because the hidebound union bureaucracy isn't willing to wage the hard struggle that can break through the "gentlemen's agreement" they have with their buddies in government not to rock the capitalist boat. As we pointed out in "Wealth Care USA" in *Women and Revolution* (No. 39, Summer 1991):

"The struggle for decent health care exposes the gaping holes in all the pathetic patchwork reform schemes advocated by liberal social workers, social democrats and officials of the twin capitalist parties. The treacherous U.S. labor bureaucrats, the grandsons of Samuel Gompers, today pass motions calling for a national health system and argue about it at their fancy poolside confabs in Bal Harbour. But such schemes are just handouts for cancer, more halfway measures guaranteed to ration medical care by class, race and sex. The AFL-CIO executive board couldn't even pass a motion to support women's right to abortion, let alone fight for equal rights for blacks, women and gays. The working class must oust the trade-union bureaucrats... and build a revolutionary, class-struggle workers party which will take up all the struggles of the exploited and oppressed, and fight for a workers government.... When the workers of the world are in charge of this planet, the only limits of human health will be scientific—and these will be constantly enlarged by thoughtful, energetic research." ■

El Paso...

(continued from page 12)

border can serve as a human bridge for revolutionary class struggle throughout the Americas." This is not "pie in the sky." In 1983-84, heavily Chicano and Indian copper miners struck in Morenci, Arizona and faced the National Guard. This is barely 150 miles from Cananea, Sonora where in 1989 Mexican miners occupied the mine-smelter and stood off the Mexican army. Eight decades earlier, the syndicalist IWW organized a copper strike against Phelps-Dodge at Morenci and "Wobblies" helped spark a battle against Anaconda in Cananea, where a combined force of Arizona Rangers and Mexican *federates* massacred striking miners, an incident that led to the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17.

Today, the El Paso strike should serve as a spark for an organizing drive of garment and textile plants on both sides of the border, from Reynosa to El Paso.

Bush is forging ahead on his "fast track" to a "free trade" pact with Mexico, approved in a Congressional vote last week, with the help of Mexican president Salinas and the participation of the U.S.' junior partner Canada. Common struggle by Mexican and U.S. workers can answer Yankee imperialism's attempt to extend its stranglehold over Mexico into a wholesale takeover, which would multiply the exploitation and misery of the workers north and south of the border.

When Marx and Engels founded the first revolutionary international in 1864, the International Working Men's Association, strong impetus came from English and European workers organizations who sought to defeat the capitalists' use of foreign workers to break strikes. We echo today the call by the First International to workers of the world: "It is one of the great purposes of the Association to make the workmen of different countries not only *feel* but *act* as brethren and comrades in the army of emancipation." ■

India...

(continued from page 1)

imperialists are worried at the prospect of an already turbulent India being pushed further down the road to chaos. Even before the killing, the London *Economist* (4 May) wrote:

"The future of India looks more threatening than for many years. In recent months its government has been all but paralysed by political squabbling. The country is divided by violence over caste, religion and demands for regional autonomy. Economic growth is slowing, and poverty on a scale that defies the imagination seems beyond all remedy."

Though no longer the hegemonic party it was in Nehru's day, Congress remained the main party of a fragmented all-India bourgeoisie, with pretensions of representing all caste, religious, national and ethnic groupings. And, as an editorial in the London *Independent* (22 May) wrote, "Congress (I) was the Gandhi family." (The "I" stands for Indira, to distinguish it from the rump party of Congress bosses who fell afoul of her in a power fight.)

For decades, the imperialist press has hailed India as the "world's most populous democracy" and upheld it as the model of a "democratic" alternative to social revolution in the Third World. The *New York Times* (22 May) editorialized, "Whoever killed Rajiv Gandhi yesterday struck at democracy itself." Erstwhile



Hindu fascists of the paramilitary Shiva Sena target Muslim minority in terror attacks.

retribution, the Congress party in Tamil Nadu is demanding the deportation of 200,000 Lankan Tamil refugees. But such is the squalid morass of Indian bourgeois politics that the assassin could have come from virtually any ethnic or political direction. The states of Punjab, Kashmir and Assam are under martial law aimed at suppressing regional insurgencies. Even with 1.5 million police and

parties, the Communist Party of India and CPI (Marxist). The immediate backdrop to the present crisis stems from Singh's decision last August to implement affirmative action measures for the country's lower castes based on a report issued ten years earlier. Designating more than 3,700 of the country's castes and subcastes as "other backward castes"—in contrast to high castes like Brahmins and "forward" farmer castes like the Rajputs, and to "untouchables" like the Harijans who are outside and beneath the caste structure—the Mandal Report called for reserving 27 percent of federal government jobs for them.

In line with an earlier 1950 provision, another 22.5 percent of government jobs were already reserved for the lowest "scheduled castes" (untouchables) and "scheduled tribes" (so called because the constitution specifically schedules them for protection). In fact these "job reservations" are effectively meaningless in undermining pervasive caste oppression. To this day, fewer than 5 percent of the elite Indian Administrative Services are from the scheduled castes and tribes, while 70 percent are high caste. Untouchables often fill their quota in the lowliest work traditionally associated with their status—like cleaning or trash collection—whether or not they have a college degree. Indeed, some 600,000 untouchable families eke out an existence solely by cleaning latrines. As one student pointed out:

"I belong to the backward caste. I have been looking for a job in vain for the last five years. What good is job reservation to me? Who will give me a job? We all know that only the children of the rich and powerful will get jobs, reservation or no reservations."

—*The Hindu*,
15 September 1990

Yet in a country with over 50 million unemployed, where even a menial position in the railways or post office may be the difference between relative comfort and utter destitution, this is an explosive

question. In 1989, there were more than 450,000 applicants for some 4,500 jobs in the Union Public Service Commission. Moreover, even the slightest tampering with the caste system is viewed with alarm by the high castes who continue to dominate Indian society in all aspects.

Though the last census enumerating caste status was taken 60 years ago, caste prejudice and oppression remain a powerful and pernicious force, reinforced by popular culture and television epics like the *Mahabharata*. While the British colonialists hypocritically condemned caste discrimination, they cultivated and recruited the higher castes to their administrative and military apparatus and then tried to build up the lower castes as a counterweight to nationalist agitation, much as they used Muslim-Hindu communalism, to divide and rule. Capitalism and urbanization have impacted on old caste practices and adjusted the status and power of some castes, but the division between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, still broadly parallels that between high and low caste. Indicative of the depth of the problem is that some see progress in the fact that urban upper caste families now keep separate plates for their untouchable employees instead of throwing scraps from a safe distance.

Nowhere is the degradation inherent in this hierarchy of power and poverty more apparent than in the treatment of women. Untouchable and tribal women are routinely subjected to rape, while upper caste women are disinherited and secluded in the name of caste purity. The caste-related dowry system has led to a shocking decline in the ratio of women to men (now 929 to 1,000). This disparity is fueled by infanticide of female babies, deliberate maltreatment of young girls by their parents and murder of young brides by the families of husbands greedy for more or a second dowry—the fate of 690 women in the capital of New Delhi alone last year. "Bride-burnings...are escalating exponentially in modern urban India, where a new wave of consumerism has spawned a greedy, growing middle class" (*Los Angeles Times*, 29 April).

One recent incident of caste/sex violence shocked the country. When the 16-year-old daughter of a Jat landowner in the town of Mehrana near Delhi eloped with her 18-year-old outcaste Jatav lover, with the help of his Jatav friend, the higher caste Jat families in the town captured the three youths and subjected them to an inquisition. When the couple refused to renounce their relationship, the two young men were tortured for hours—beaten with clubs and burned with torches in their mouths and genitals while hung upside down. Then the Jat-dominated town council "sentenced" all three to be hanged—by their own parents. When the young men's fathers balked, they too were clubbed until they finally acquiesced.

Communal Terror Escalates

Far from being the "social revolution" depicted by the Western press, Singh's



pseudo-Trotskyist Tariq Ali joined in the bourgeois breast-beating, lamenting "the tragedy of the Nehru-Gandhi family" and moaning: "In one foul blow the country's leading secular politician has been eliminated from the race. Who will now rescue India from the prophets of hate?"

Its "secular" and even "socialist" pretensions notwithstanding, Congress ruled over India's prison house of peoples with an iron fist. Nehru presided over the grisly communalist slaughter of the 1947 Partition which created Muslim Pakistan. Indira Gandhi calculatingly played the Hindu-chauvinist card; her massacre of the Sikhs was characteristic of her long and bloody reign. And despite his "Mr. Clean" image, Rajiv followed firmly in his mother's footsteps, right from the start. As thousands of Sikhs were being hunted down and lynched following his mother's assassination, Gandhi encouraged the bloodbath, intoning: "When a great tree falls, the earth shakes." Several years later, he sent Indian "peacekeeping" forces to Sri Lanka who, under the guise of protecting the country's Tamil minority from a Sinhalese-chauvinist bloodbath, waged a war of annihilation against the separatist guerrilla Tamil Tigers.

Today the Tigers, who are also suspected of blowing away hawkish Sri Lankan defense chief Ranjan Wijeratne two months ago, are considered prime suspects in Gandhi's assassination. In

paramilitary forces deployed, the elections had to be staggered over three days to allow for concentration of forces to defend the balloting, with two further dates set aside for Punjab and Assam and no vote slated for Kashmir. "Booth-capturing" by gangs of rival party thugs, who shoot their way into polling places in order to stuff the ballot boxes, alone claimed the lives of dozens during the first day of balloting on May 20.

Meanwhile, a sinister rise in anti-Muslim communalism has been registered with the dramatic growth of the Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The spectre looms of a slaughter to match that of the Partition of India in 1947. Commenting on the assassination, the *Times of India* wrote: "At no time since it won freedom has India been as polarised along antagonistic lines as it is today. Caste has been pitted against caste and religion against religion with relentless fury." At no time has the need been clearer for a socialist revolution in India that sweeps away all the encrusted backwardness and hideous oppression that are bound up with capitalist rule.

Caste Hatreds Explode

Following the elections of November 1989, Gandhi's Congress (I) was replaced by a National Front government led by V.P. Singh's Janata Dal and supported from the outside by both the rightist BJP and the two main Stalinist



Muslim refugees in New Delhi after British-engineered 1947 Partition of India. As many as a million people were killed, many millions more driven from their homes in bloody communalist strife.

"job reservation" proposal was purely and cynically aimed at cutting into the lower-caste "vote banks" of the other bourgeois parties. But in response to Singh's announcement, violent high-caste anti-reservation protests erupted across north India, spearheaded by students, scores of whom immolated themselves. Though none of the other parties dared to openly repudiate the scheme for fear of alienating potential voters, Singh's opponents—including a split from his own party—seized on the uproar to move on him. On November 7, Singh resigned and a minority government headed by a split-off led by Chandra Shekhar governed precariously with Congress (I) support.

The BJP in particular responded to this attempt to divide its base by launching an ugly Hindu-communist campaign of anti-Muslim provocations. Screaming "Break the mosque!" and "Hail the Lord Rama!" in late October BJP-led mobs stormed a 400-year-old Muslim mosque in Ayodhya which Hindu fundamentalists claim is located on the birthplace of the Hindu god Ram. Anti-Muslim terror and Muslim reprisals escalated throughout the region, leaving over 2,000 dead in a matter of weeks. The scenes evoked the horror of Partition. In Hyderabad alone, 130 people were slaughtered, including 30 children stabbed or axed and burned alive. In Aligarh, the site of an old Muslim academy, Hindu thugs provocatively marched through Muslim areas and three Muslim men were dragged from a train



Communist Party election rally in Nepal. Stalinist mass parties in Indian subcontinent tie workers to reactionary bourgeois order.

engulf the subcontinent in another India-Pakistan war, as *India Today* (15 October 1990) put it, "Punjab burns, Kashmir burns." The war against the Punjabi Sikhs continues relentlessly, while the Muslims of Kashmir have been subjected to a "scorched-earth policy" of "terror and violence." "Kashmir is now beyond solution," shrugs one Indian political analyst in a *New York Times Magazine* (19 May) article by Barbara Crossette. And in February, 26,000 were arrested during a general strike in Tamil Nadu

country out of the quagmire of conflicting nationalist and communist antagonisms. The working class has a direct and immediate interest in combatting communalism. Frequently drawn from local and migrant minorities, it is often particularly the working class that is the main target of communalist terror.

Likewise, drawing behind it the agrarian masses, the proletariat is the only force capable of rooting out the deeply embedded structure of caste and sexual oppression. Even the most elementary demands against caste discrimination—like an end to all discrimination in jobs and social facilities, decent housing for the poor and safe water and sewage systems—requires sweeping away the capitalist system. And integral to the perpetuation of the caste system is the land question. The post-independence land reforms and the so-called "Green Revolution" of agrarian development have benefited a layer of capitalist farmers, including some of the "backward" farmer castes. But half of rural households own no land, while 5 percent own well over a third of the cultivable land. Rural indebtedness is endemic, bonded labor widespread and growing.

Even the Mandal Report linked land reform to the question of countering entrenched caste privilege, but none of the bourgeois parties dare draw that connection. As the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia demonstrated, the road to agrarian revolution in the countryside lies through the seizure of power by the proletariat in the cities. Only then will it be possible to nationalize the land and expropriate large landlords and capitalist farmers. And the call for land to the poor peasants and a program of government

loans and provisions for modern farming equipment can win the peasants and agricultural workers to the side of the proletariat.

The key is forging a Trotskyist party to lead the Indian working masses to power. The thoroughly reformist Stalinist CPI and CPI(M) are both mass parties, holding governmental power in several states. They have gained a certain amount of authority for steering clear of the manipulative communalism which marks all the bourgeois parties. Sikh CPI militants in the Punjab, for example, risked their lives to defend their Hindu neighbors against pogroms by Sikh fundamentalists. And the CPI(M) has been able to retain control over Calcutta and West Bengal for 13 years, largely because of its ability thus far to avert communal clashes. Even in the neighboring Himalayan kingdom of Nepal, the Communists recently scored resounding successes in the first election in 30 years.

But both the CPI and CPI(M) are wedded to the politics of coalitionism, tying the proletariat to the wheels of one or another bourgeois party in the name of democracy, and both uphold capitalist India's "unity" against "secessionists." The CPI(M)-led government of West Bengal is aggressively encouraging capitalist businessmen, including the chief minister's son. India more than perhaps any other country on the face of the earth is proof positive of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, an object lesson in the futility of seeking to fulfill the tasks of the democratic revolution in a backward country under capitalism. There has been capitalist development: the "Green Revolution" of applying science to agriculture virtually eliminated India's import of grains; the country has built up large-scale heavy industry. Yet this is combined with truly horrendous social conditions, the bride burning, caste oppression, national subjugation, hunger and grinding poverty on a mind-boggling scale—the list is endless.

As we wrote seven years ago, after the Golden Temple massacre (*Spartacist Britain* No. 60, August 1984):

"If India is not to be wracked by another convulsion of communalist slaughter in the interests of imperialism, what is needed is a mass proletarian party rallying behind the banner of Permanent Revolution the myriad minorities, the agrarian masses and the multitudinous victims of caste and sex oppression....

"The problems of South Asia are interrelated and will not be solved separately. Only the working class can guarantee the right of self-determination to the oppressed nations from the Baluchis in Pakistan to the Tamils in Lanka, the liberation of women from bondage and backwardness, and land to the tiller." ■



Indian troops in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, 1987. Rajiv Gandhi sought to suppress separatist Tamil Tigers.

passing through the station and butchered. A 20,000-strong paramilitary force drafted in to stop the communalist terror instead began disintegrating in the face of the Hindu mobs. By the beginning of November, some 40 cities had been placed under curfew.

The BJP's mixture of rabid anti-Muslim communalism and mythological Hindu fundamentalism, exemplified by the title of its 1991 manifesto "Towards Ram Rajya" (the rule of Ram), has catapulted it from two seats in parliament in 1984 to 88 five years later to now being a serious contender to form the next government. Much of its explosive support has come from the growing middle class spawned by Gandhi's economic "liberalization" in the 1980s, who live in terror at the prospect of sinking back into utter destitution. While advocating Thatcherite economic policies and a pro-American tilt, the BJP offers them a scapegoat for the degradation and misery of Indian capitalist society in the more than 110 million Muslims and other minorities of the country, who are denounced as "ungrateful guests."

The BJP's parent organization is the fascist RSS (it was an RSS supporter who assassinated Mohandas Gandhi). While BJP leader L.K. Advani—who is also a longtime member of the RSS—presents the party's parliamentarianist face, his agitators mobilize anti-Muslim pogroms on the streets. "Moslems are like a lemon dropped into cream. They turn it sour," rants one. "What do we do with the lemon? We cut it up, squeeze out the pips and throw them away."

And while Hindu/Muslim communalism ominously escalates, threatening to

protesting against the imposition of direct rule by New Delhi.

For a Trotskyist Party in India!

Forty-four years after independence, the vast majority of the country's 850 million people live in ghastly poverty, dispossessed and effectively disenfranchised, as flagrantly corrupt politicians, capitalists and landlords amass their wealth and determine election outcomes with naked brute force. For the Sikhs, Muslims and hundreds of millions of lower-caste and "outcaste" Hindus as well as women of all ethnic and caste backgrounds, India's "secular democracy" has meant only uninterrupted and unendurable oppression. And neighboring Pakistan is no less a prison house for its minority peoples. Already ruled as an Islamic theocracy, Pakistan's rulers are now attempting to shove through an even stricter, fundamentalist "Shari'a Law."

With all the gin-and-tonic arrogance that comes so easily to it, the London *Economist* (4 May) sneers that India's misery "is largely India's own doing" and "not the fault of former colonial masters or wicked western capitalists." Calling for opening India up to even greater imperialist exploitation, this mouthpiece for the former colonial masters insists, "The changes India needs are not far short of a revolution."

A revolution is precisely what India needs, not the untrammeled imperialist exploitation envisaged by the *Economist*, but thoroughgoing proletarian socialist revolution. The small but strategic Indian proletariat, which has historically demonstrated militancy and organization, is the only social force capable of dragging the

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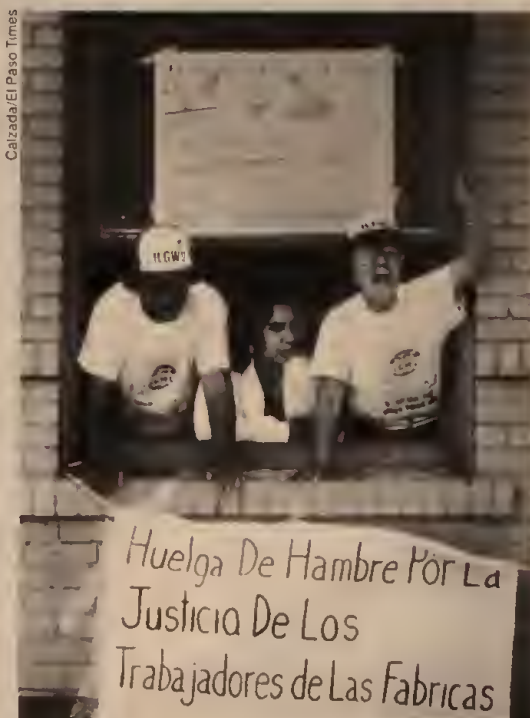
Hispanic Women Strikers Occupy El Paso Plant

A militant strike and plant occupation by mostly immigrant women garment workers is into its second month in El Paso, Texas. Sparked by the withholding of tens of thousands of dollars in back pay—incredible sums for these minimum wage workers—at Sonia's, one of the shops, the strike began on April 29. It has spread to three other shops (ACC, DCB and H&R) that are part of the private fiefdom of Andres Diaz, known locally as the "king of the sweatshops." The 120 strikers are demanding Diaz pay all back wages immediately, and sign a contract with and recognize their union, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). On May 13 six of the workers, including a 60-year-old woman, began a hunger strike to dramatize their struggle.

The strike was organized by La Mujer Obrera (Working Woman), a community organization of women garment workers founded in 1983. It comes at a critical time for the 15,000 workers in El Paso's garment factories, the city's largest industry. Working under brutal conditions, without medical or any other benefits, these women face disaster, as thousands of garment jobs are expected to disappear with the looming "Free Trade Agreement." This strike battle is no less important for the thousands of garment workers just across the river in Ciudad Juárez, or in *maquiladora* (free trade zone) plants deeper in Mexico, who produce for the same U.S. market but lack union protection and are subject to even more brutal exploitation than their sisters in El Paso.

A year ago, workers' anger at not getting paid boiled over into a dramatic protest at Diana Fashions, a subcontractor for Diaz. The sweatshop had shut down, moved overnight to a new location, changed its name and opened its doors with a new crew, without notifying the former employees and neglecting to pay their long overdue wages. While workers carried picket signs outside the factory, their sisters chained themselves to the sewing machines inside. Police quickly responded to their masters' howls and cut the chains, throwing the workers in jail for three days. In response to the protests, Bush's Labor Department did a "sweep" of a tiny handful of sweatshops, "discovering" that workers

Strikers at window of occupied garment factory cheer on supporters below. Protectionist appeals by ILGWU tops undercut militant struggle.



were owed \$85,000 in back wages.

The June 1990 action was followed by a hunger strike in El Paso's central park. In the fall there were work stoppages demanding back wages at Sonia's in September and again in November. In one protest, the women invaded an IRS auction of sewing machines held by one bankrupt owner, demanding they be paid before the banks and other creditors. The ILGWU got involved and Diaz offered to pay half the amount owed. This was rejected by the union, but Diaz never even paid that much. Fed up after all the stalling and fraud, five weeks ago the workers struck the sweatshop king and occupied Sonia's. In a phone interview with *Workers Vanguard* from inside the struck plant, Eustolia Olivas, secretary of La Mujer Obrera and a garment worker for 15 years, described the working conditions in the sweatshops:

"The working conditions are the same as 100 years ago when women started to demand their rights: the right to work in

a safe place, and have all the benefits of any worker or any human being, to live with dignity. These factories don't have emergency doors, heaters or air conditioning. There isn't any cooling, ventilation is non-existent, the wiring is broken. The sewing machines are in very bad shape. Production is met in spurts, these machines are 25-30 years old. We work between 12 and 14 hours a day."

It was conditions like these that led the Mexican women garment workers to found La Mujer Obrera. As the huge outfits like Farah, Levi Strauss and Billy the Kid slashed their workforces in El Paso and moved across the border in the '80s (Farah alone went from 7,000 workers down to 700), hundreds of fly-by-night shops have filled the void—but not the wallets of garment workers. Olivas described how "these plants have resettled in Piedras Negras, in Torreon, in Chihuahua, Juárez City, Sonora, Baja California. Other plants come from California, stay here for awhile and then cross the border. El Paso is more like a diving board. This has been going on since the twin plants started."

Olivas described to WV the degrading and thieving piecework rates in the El Paso shops, where production is taken away so fast that workers don't even know how much work has been done. She described how the women are treated in the shops doing Diaz's work:

"When we have approached him with a petition or demand for some change in our favor, he laughs at us, he makes fun of us. Or when we point to certain conditions in the factory that endanger our lives, our health, all he and his supervisors do is mock us. We are not human beings to him."

"Women are always sexually harassed by the bosses and the supervisors. I have always been very brave. I never think about losing my job. I just get very angry. I reply and defend myself. I don't care what happens. This is one of the reasons we decided to go on strike. We

cannot tolerate this situation any more on top of all the other bad conditions."

Protectionism is Poison

The ILGWU has entered the organizing battle of these women workers as part of a high-profile series of unionization drives across the U.S. Called the "Campaign for Justice," it was launched last year on the anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire that killed 146 young women immigrant workers in 1911. In New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago and El Paso the ILGWU announced it was going to recapture some of the over 200,000 union jobs wiped out in the last decade. But in Brooklyn, the strike of 250 Haitian and Central American workers at the Domsey Trading Corporation was sabotaged by the union tops, who relied on the capitalist labor boards and their Democratic Party "Friends of labor" and refused to call on the Teamsters and longshoremen to "hot cargo" scab production. It is this kind of labor power—a "workers' boycott"—that will bring the sweatshop bosses to their knees.

The ILGWU bureaucracy, infamous for their jingoist attacks on foreign workers, has draped these union struggles in racist protectionism and flag-waving appeals to Congress. In the Sonia's plant occupation, the ILGWU has issued T-shirts to the women strikers reading "Made in the USA" and hung a banner with the anti-Mexican worker slogan "Stop Exporting Our Jobs"—and this in a strike by immigrant Hispanic women! This is not only stabbing the strike in the back, dividing the workers in El Paso from their sisters and brothers across the river, it is feeding the government's racist campaign against foreign-born workers. La Mujer Obrera points out that sweatshop bosses continually "blackmail 'amnestied' workers with the threat of withdrawing" proof of employment. A class-struggle leadership would mobilize labor's power to demand no deportations and full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers!

Activists in La Mujer Obrera have roots in the 1972-74 Farah strike and boycott centered on El Paso. At that time, Farah workers in Ciudad Juárez demonstrated their solidarity in action by striking in aid of the El Paso strikers. And in the 1987 strike by hundreds of garment workers at the Vestamex plant in Ciudad Juárez, the Frontera Labor Support Committee and UTAF farm workers on the U.S. side of the border held forums and raised funds for the strikers (see "Mexican Women Workers Arise, Class Struggle in the 'Global Sweatshop,'" *Women and Revolution* No. 34, Spring 1988). With the increasing integration of the U.S. and Mexican economies, as the hoes treat the border as no more than an administrative annoyance, Mexican and U.S. workers must respond in common class struggle.

As we stressed in "Labor: Smash Racist Immigration Law!" (WV No. 427, 1 May 1987): "Proletarian internationalists greet the fact that massive infusion of Hispanic workers from south of the

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Cops arrest women workers who chained themselves to sewing machines in June 1990 in protest against sweatshop bosses.