

## UN Cover for Imperialist Intervention in Somalia

# U.S. Out of Africa!



AP



Guardian (London)

The Ugly Americans: Marine kicks Somali youth, allegedly for throwing rock at U.S. invaders. Imperialist commander in chief Bush glories in colonialist takeover of starving African country.

## Washington Revives Racist "White Man's Burden"

It was the ultimate photo-op: Commander in Chief Bush, posing for cameras with smiling children on New Year's Day, at an orphanage in Baidoa, the epicenter of the Somali famine. He told American troops (and the TV cameras), "we are very, very proud of this humanitarian effort." It's packaged as a Christmastime gesture of altruism and philanthropy. But U.S. rulers, Republican and Democrat alike, are using starving black babies in Somalia as a backdrop to assert American hegemony in a "New World Order." As George Herbert Walker Bush and William Jefferson Clinton promote a "civilizing mission" for Yankee imperialism under the flag of the United Nations, they want to show imperialist rivals that the U.S. can "project power" globally and sling lead—so long as they're not going up against someone who might give them a serious fight.

American troops are not going into Somalia to put up telephone wires or dig wells. Even the excuse of "famine relief"

is a fraud. For the past three weeks, food convoys under U.S. military guard have been arriving in Baidoa. But, tragically, the main reason the death rate has fallen off there (nationally an estimated 200 people per day continue to die of starvation) is that so many of the weaker victims, especially the young and the aged, have already perished. The *New York Times* (10 January) noted: "The deployment was already too late. The haunting, skeletal children whose televised pictures had shocked the world during the summer had already died by the tens of thousands."

Who could expect "humanitarianism" from the bloodminded would-be masters of the world who reveled in the wanton slaughter of more than 100,000 Iraqi soldiers and civilians in the one-sided Persian Gulf "war"? When, at the UN-brokered talks between Somali clan chiefs being held in Ethiopia, strongman Mohamed Farah Aidid stalled on accepting a truce, U.S. Marines simply blew away his Mogadishu compound in a

"firestorm" launched from helicopters, tanks, mortars and hundreds of Marines on the ground. "It's a whole new ballgame now," chorled the U.S. military spokesman. But opposition is growing among Somalis who see the occupying forces as a new colonial power. Relief workers and journalists have been pelted with rocks and met with cries of "Go home! Go home!"

Somalia is now occupied by an imperialist legion of more than 21,000 U.S. troops, plus 10,000 troops from 17 other countries, and detachments continue to pour in. U.S. officials are now saying that they may be "forced" to stay "for the long haul" in order to get the country back in order (*New York Times*, 10 January). In an article titled "U.S. Intervention Also Serves Geopolitical Interests," the *Navy Times* (14 December 1992) reports the opinion of Defense Department officials that "although the Bush administration describes it as purely humanitarian, intervention in Somalia serves U.S. strategic and political inter-

ests in Africa and the Middle East. . . Whoever controls Somalia could control the southern entrance to the Red Sea and thus the Suez Canal—a prime location from which to influence the political stability of the Middle East."

But beyond the Pentagon planners' calculations, Bush's utterances reek of racist imperialist arrogance. It recalls Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden," written in 1899 after the U.S. victory in the Spanish-American War. Bemoaning the plight of the colonialists having to make reluctant sacrifices for the benefit of their subjects, the poem counsels the U.S. to take up the "burdens" which the British had supposedly borne in India to bring civilization to the "sullen peoples, half devil and half child." "Fill full the mouth of Famine, and bid the sickness cease," wrote this poet laureate of the British Empire, and wage "the savage wars of peace." Today, imperialist thinktanker Angelo Codevilla of the Hoover Institution writes

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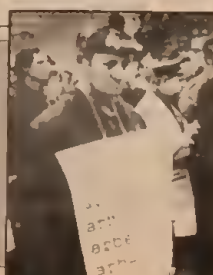
**India: Hindu Fascists  
Whip Up  
Religious Slaughter**

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**Capitalist Reunification  
Leads to Economic Crisis  
Germany  
Disorganizes Europe**

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# Hundreds Turn Out for Class-War Prisoners

The Partisan Defense Committee's seventh annual holiday appeal for class-war prisoners was a tremendous success. Hundreds turned out for our benefit fund-raisers in San Francisco, New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles and Toronto and about \$10,000 has been raised for our program of monthly stipends and holiday gifts for the prisoners and their families. As Spartacist League spokesman Ed Clarkson announced to those who turned out to demonstrate their solidarity, despite a Chicago snowstorm: "It is no small work that brings us together in this room. The defense of our heroes—of Mumia Abu-Jamal, of

Geronimo Pratt, of Robert Buck, irrespective of their particular beliefs—is a defense of what is decent and truly heroic in this decaying society."

Ashaki Pratt, wife of former L.A. Black Panther Party leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), America's foremost class-war prisoner, greeted the more than 100 people who turned out in the Bay Area. For 22 years Geronimo has been locked behind bars for a crime the government knows he did not commit. Despite overwhelming evidence of his innocence, including proof that Geronimo was in Oakland, 400 miles away from the Santa Monica killing for which he was framed,



PDC fund-raising benefit in San Francisco on December 13 hears taped message from Mumia Abu-Jamal.

the courts have repeatedly denied his appeals.

On January 29 Geronimo comes before the Parole Board once again. Ten times before they have denied him parole solely because of Geronimo's refusal to renounce his struggle for black liberation. In a September 15 letter to the Parole Board the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union reaffirmed its support for Geronimo, "the most visible remaining victim of the Justice Department's infamous COINTELPRO operation of the 1960s and 1970s." Readers are urged to send letters demanding parole for Elmer Geronimo Pratt to the PDC, P.O. Box 77462, San Francisco, CA 94107, to be forwarded to the Parole Board.

At the Wetlands club in New York, Leonard Weinglass, lead attorney for death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, provided the crowd with a vivid portrayal of the frame-up of the radical journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." In late November, officials at Pennsylvania's Huntingdon prison finally removed Jamal from the disciplinary confinement to which they had condemned him for the past five years on the pretext that Jamal refused to cut his dreadlock hair. But on December 4, his jailers threatened Jamal with further discipline. Together with over 20 other death row inmates, Jamal faces the outrageous charge of possessing a petition protesting conditions on Huntingdon's death row.

In a December 7 news release, Jamal described conditions at "the most repressive Death Row in America [which] is denying its captives anything designed to enhance one's inner and familial life. They live under 22-hour lock down, little, if any, educational opportunities, the most restrictive phone access policy (one per month!) in the state, no opportunities for work, no typewriters, and non-contact visits designed to discourage families from visiting. Men and women facing death in Pennsylvania are existing under conditions which shrivel the soul. By this non-violent act

of petition, they demonstrate they are still human."

The power of Jamal's voice, which the state is intent on silencing forever, was demonstrated in his taped greetings from death row. We print below a transcription of Mumia Abu-Jamal's message to the PDC benefits.

## Mumia Abu-Jamal: "Holidays in Hell"

For millions of Christians, Afro-Americans and Jews, 'tis the season to be jolly with traditional and ritual observances, celebrating Christmas, Kwanza and Chanukah respectively.

But for political prisoners engaged in U.S. dungeons 'tis not a season for joy but for vigilance against growing repression from the state. It is a time of aching loneliness, observances of loss, a time hanging heavier than others due to the state's cruel policies which further distance family from family and loved ones from loved ones.

It's a time made darker and more grim by the weight of memory, when one compares what once was to what is, with the present found woefully lacking.

While such feelings are undoubtedly common among all prisoners, they are acute among political prisoners, who often do harder time under harsher regimes.

Consider MOVE political prisoner Consuewella Africa, who could be free among her family today but for one thing—her family is MOVE. And MOVE people, based solely on the fact that they are MOVE members, have consistently been denied parole. Consuewella has been engaged since August 8, 1978, when Carter was president and the late Frank Rizzo was Philadelphia's mayor. For 14 years she's been denied her freedom, and Christmas 1992 finds her still engaged only because she refuses to denounce John Africa and MOVE.

Fourteen years ago she, like two other women arrested in the August 8 MOVE

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TROTSKY

## India and Permanent Revolution

*Recurrent communist slaughters on the Indian subcontinent since independence in 1947 point to the impossibility of achieving national and social equality in the semi-colonial countries under capitalism. Writing in 1930 when India was still a colony of British imperialism, Leon Trotsky counterposed to the Stalinist/Menshevik dogma of "two-stage revolution" the perspective of permanent revolution. Today as then it will require the proletarian seizure of power, led*

*by a revolutionary vanguard party and drawing behind it the broad masses of peasants, women and national minorities, to put an end to the horrors of capitalist India.*

India is the classic colonial country as Britain is the classic metropolis. All the viciousness of the ruling classes and every form of oppression that capitalism has used against the backward people of the East is most completely and frightfully summed up in the history of the gigantic colony on which the British imperialists have settled themselves like leeches for the past century and a half. The British bourgeoisie has diligently cultivated every remnant of barbarism and every institution of the Middle Ages that could be of service in the oppression of man by man. It forced its feudal agents to adapt themselves to colonial capitalist exploitation and made them its link, its organ, its convoy to the masses....

Allowing India carefully measured doses of technology and culture, exactly enough to facilitate the exploitation of the country's wealth, the Shylock of the Thames could not, however, prevent the ideas of economic and national independence and freedom from spreading more and more widely among the masses.

As in the older bourgeois countries, the numerous nationalities that exist in India can only be fused into a single nation by a revolution that will more and more bind them together as a unit. But in contradistinction to the older countries, this revolution in India is a colonial revolution directed against foreign oppressors. Moreover, it is the revolution of a historically backward nation where feudal serfdom, caste divisions, and even slavery exist alongside the class antagonisms of the bourgeoisie and proletariat, which have become greatly exacerbated in the recent period....

But if the Indian revolution will develop on a basis of a bloc of the workers, peasants, and petty bourgeoisie, if this bloc will be directed not only against imperialism and feudalism but also against the national bourgeoisie which is bound up with them in all basic questions; if at the head of this bloc will stand the proletariat; if this bloc comes to victory only by sweeping away its enemies through an armed uprising and in this way raises the proletariat to the role of the real leader of the whole nation—then the question arises: in whose hands will the power be after the victory if not in the hands of the proletariat?

—Leon Trotsky, "The Revolution in India, Its Tasks and Dangers" (May 1930)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 567

15 January 1993

## Spartacist Forum

Stalinism—Gravedigger of the Revolution

## How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled

For Socialist Revolution to Sweep Away Yeltsin Counterrevolution!

Speakers:

Rachel Wolkenstein, SL Central Committee, recently returned from Moscow  
Len Meyers, WV Editorial Board

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116th St. & Broadway, Manhattan  
(take the #1 train to 116th St.)

For more information: (212) 267-1025

NEW YORK



# Somalia...

(continued from page 1)

unhappily in the *Wall Street Journal* (7 January):

"Our only realistic choice in Somalia and in all too many similar places is either to leave them to their misery or to re-establish something very much like colonialism... Bearing what used to be called the White Man's Burden entailed a net expenditure of resources. Colonialism is an act of generosity and idealism."

Fidel Castro rightly pointed to the cynicism of the imperialists who pretend to be combating famine in Africa while they try to strangle Cuba by tightening their vicious blockade. A recent article in the *New York Times* (11 January) marveled that "even as it was running out of everything from antibiotics to soap and shoes," the Cuban government "had managed to maintain a substantial... core of support." The blockade of Vietnam, imposed after the heroic victory of the Vietnamese people over imperialism, meanwhile, has had devastating consequences. Another article in the *Times* (26 December 1992) reported severe malnutrition in parts of northern and central Vietnam, and entire families haggard in the streets of Ho Chi Minh City. For the vengeful imperialists, the "white man's burden" is the white man's pleasure!

## UN Cover for Imperialist Intervention

The massive military intervention in Somalia is not exactly the product of



Victim of U.S. imperialism acting under UN cover: radical African nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba was executed in 1961 by Washington's puppets in the former Belgian Congo.

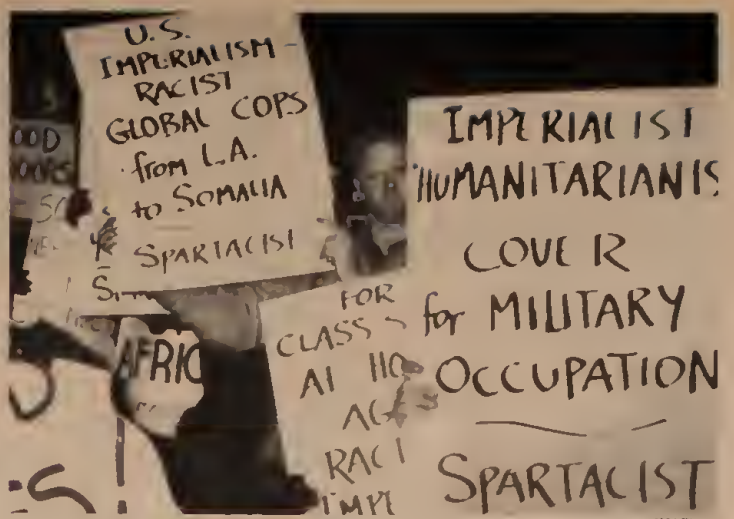
measured calculation by the imperialists of their strategic interests (its importance as a "hot spot" has, after all, diminished with the end of the Cold War). In his last six weeks in office, Bush is wildly throwing U.S. military weight around as if he was sorry he wouldn't get another "opportunity" like his "Desert Slaughter." In the last six weeks, he has threatened to shoot down Serbian planes over Bosnia, to "employ military force" if Serbia caused "conflict" in the southern province of Kosovo, and to renew air strikes against Iraq if Saddam Hussein did not withdraw anti-aircraft missiles from the "no-fly" zone decreed by Washington in southern Iraq. Like a cowboy riding off into the sunset, Bush intends to go out with his guns blazing.

Meanwhile, Clinton has supported all these hellicose moves. The "policy works" of the incoming Democratic administration want to use Somalia as a launching pad for a "multilateral force" to play world cop under the aegis of a pliant UN. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, the erstwhile Cold Warriors have been rethinking U.S. foreign policy in the pages of authoritative journals like *Foreign Affairs*. A major theme has been an emphasis on the need for the U.S. to rely on "collective military action," under the cover of international agencies like the UN. Clinton's choice for CIA director, James Woolsey, a Vietnam "dove" turned anti-Soviet warmonger,

has presented a plan for a permanent UN "standing ready force" along with a rapid deployment force of up to 30,000 troops from among Security Council members, including the U.S.

For "mainstream" Democrats, the code words for the new colonialism are "Saving Failed States," the title of a recent article in *Foreign Policy* (Winter 1992-93), which asserts that the colonial independence movements following World War II resulted in a series of "failed states" citing Somalia, Sudan, Liberia and Cambodia—that should be simply taken over as UN trusteeships. Taking its cue, the *New York Times* (28 December 1992) pontificated that "a glance around the world reveals a dozen or more 'failed states,' countries verging on collapse and ethnic strife, each a possible candidate for UN intervention." For these haughty hancie hourgeois, a UN "standing force" would be "like the cop on the beat," whose very presence could "deter genocide!"

Somalia is being recolonized in what amounts to a resurrection of the UN trusteeship system. (Southern Somalia was a UN trusteeship from World War II until independence and unification with the British-colonized north in 1960.) However, as *Time* (14 December 1992) delicately points out, the word "trusteeship" has a history which "smacks of the white man's burden." Members of Bush's circle are rather calling for turning Somalia into a "protectorate." And UN officials are talking about putting the country in "receiver-



Spartacists at NYC protest against invasion of Somalia last December.

his Belgian supporters and disarmed Lumumba's forces. Lumumba was ousted in a U.S.-sponsored coup and turned over to Tshombe, who had him assassinated.

UN troops only withdrew after installing the huncher Mobutu in power in 1964. Mobutu recruited an army of mercenaries, armed and supported by the U.S., to put down the nationalist uprising which had been sparked by Lumumba's fall. Backed up by U.S. air support and Belgian troops, the mercenaries then marched on Stanleyville (today Kisangani), indiscriminately massacring the population by the tens of thousands. They crushed the Congolese nationalists in an orgy of bloodletting and confirmed in power Mobutu, who has since then carried out an uninterrupted campaign of reactionary terror against his people while stealing the country blind.

## Fake-Lefts Join UN Fig Leaf Brigade

The U.S. left, after years of calling for the U.S. or the UN to intervene in South Africa to impose "democracy," is not surprisingly hard-put to oppose the imperialists' "humanitarian" occupation of Somalia. The Communist Party *hails* the UN-sponsored invasion as "long overdue" and admits that "to get the aid through, military force may be necessary" (*People's Weekly World*, 5 December 1992). Progressive Labor and the International Socialist Organization criticize the intervention, but refrain from calling for the imperialist troops to get out. Workers World and the Socialist Workers Party call for "food, not troops in Somalia"—i.e., for truly "humanitarian" action by the imperialists. *Workers World* (31 December 1992) spells it out most clearly: "The U.S. Air Force is by far the largest in the world. It could have easily and inexpensively provided famine relief."

Meanwhile, the *Bulletin* (18 Decem-

ber 1992) of the dubious Workers League testifies to the difficulties provoked among its members:

"In the past week the Bulletin has been asked by sympathetic readers and even Workers League supporters whether its opposition to the US intervention in Somalia is justified in the face of the starvation prevailing in that country. 'Given the situation which exists there right now, they ask, is it not permissible to be somewhat less intransigent in opposing US troops?'"

Since the WL campaigned to give the Persian Gulf War a "democratic" façade through a "referendum" on the war, it's no wonder some Workers Leaguers aren't inclined to oppose U.S. intervention when it gives itself a "humanitarian" cover. In contrast, as liberals and radicals lined up in what we termed "The UN Fig Leaf Brigade" behind George Bush over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, we noted that "it was under the UN flag that Washington carried out its brutal war against the Korean people 40 years ago. In the Persian Gulf today, the UN olive branch is even less of a fig leaf" ("Desperately Seeking Imperialist Doves," *WL* No. 510, 21 September 1990).

A host of erstwhile Vietnam "doves" are coming on board for the Bush/Clinton recolonization of Somalia, including Rev. William Sloane Coffin, the War Resisters League and of course Jesse Jackson. Just as Jimmy Carter "morally rearmed" U.S. imperialism with his anti-Soviet "human rights" campaign, now "humanitarian" concerns are trumpeted to build support for the imperialist army that slaughtered millions of Vietnamese. As Woodrow Wilson managed to enlist liberals and reformist socialists in support of the carnage of World War I in the name of "making the world safe for democracy," and Franklin Roosevelt did in World War II under the flag of the "four freedoms," today we have a new levy of recruits to imperialism's "savage wars of peace." *U.S./UN imperialists out of Somalia!* ■

## Black History Month Spartacist Forum

UN Cover for Imperialist Intervention in Somalia

## U.S. Out of Africa!

Washington Revives Racist "White Man's Burden"

Chair: Brian Manning, Spartacist League

Guest Speaker: Bernard Branche, member A.T.U. Local 30B, Chicago

Saturday, January 30, 2 p.m.

Undergraduate Library Lecture Room, Howard University

WASHINGTON, D.C.

For more information (202) 872-8240





Baldev/Sygma

## Hindu Fascists Whip Up Religious Slaughter

The following article is adapted from *Workers Hammer* No. 133 (January-February 1993), published by the *Spartacist League/Britain*.

On Sunday, 6 December, 200,000 Hindu fanatics had gathered in Ayodhya, the temple town in the state of Uttar Pradesh, at a disputed site where a disused Muslim mosque (the Bahri Masjid) stood upon the alleged birthplace of the Hindu god Lord Ram. Organised by the *Hindutva* (Hinduness) fundamentalist combine led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the fascist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and their communal and clerical fascist allies, they were there to celebrate *kar seva*, the ceremonial beginning of temple construction.

Skinheads, some of them with "Lord Ram" etched out in the stubble of their shaven heads, began throwing stones at the police guarding the mosque. Then a well-organised and prepared grouping brushed past the token police lines and stormed the mosque. The police and paramilitaries, who had already been instructed by the BJP state government not to use force against the *kar sevaks*, melted away, many of them openly and enthusiastically displaying their sympathy with the communalist mob. Thousands of other frenzied devotees soon joined the first group and proceeded to demolish the mosque with picks, tridents (the three-pronged weapons brandished by Hindu fascists) and their bare hands, egged on by the marshals beating their drums and the speeches from the platform. Later the mob attacked Muslims and their properties in the area.

When the *kar sevaks* assembled to storm the site, 13,000 paramilitaries controlled by the central government sat by

in nearby camps. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao wasn't going to take the rap for stopping the Hindu extremists, because he wants to harness the same social hate and Hindu chauvinism as the BJP. The *kar sevaks'* actions, clearly taken with the complicity not only of the local government but the central government itself, signalled successful defiance of India's nominally secular constitution and sent a frightening signal of communalist terror to India's 110-million-strong Muslim minority.

Over the next ten days, the official death toll in communalist violence climbed to over 1,200, spreading beyond the northern Hindi-speaking belt to many parts of India, including areas that had seen no significant communal vio-

lence since the India-Pakistan Partition in 1947. The actual death total is undoubtedly two or three times the official figure. In scenes reminiscent of the Partition, mobs pulled people off trains, beating them to death. Indeed, the growth of anti-Muslim communalism, organised and led by the BJP/RSS, raises the spectre of the destruction of India and a slaughter to equal and even surpass the horrors of Partition, when more than 600,000 died.

Indian prime minister Narasimha Rao, throughout his negotiations over Ayodhya in the last year, sought to conciliate the fanatics. His strategy was to wrest the mantle of being pro-temple and pro-Hindu from the BJP. "I can fight the BJP, but I cannot, and no one else for

that matter, can fight Lord Ram" (*India Today*, 15 December 1992). Assailed with charges of ineptness and weakness by domestic critics, including within his own Congress (I) party, and imperialist concern about stability, Rao announced a series of measures to uphold "law and order," including curfews in major cities like Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta. The BJP government in Uttar Pradesh was dismissed and central rule imposed, and later the central Congress (I) government dismissed the three other BJP state governments in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

Rao promised to rebuild the mosque (along with a temple), but when central paramilitary troops took over the site a few days later, they were very careful not to interfere with the new temporary Hindu temple. Hindus have been allowed to worship at the site, while Muslims have been prevented. Moreover, though leaders and thousands of activists of the BJP and associated organisations have been arrested, the measures taken reveal the government's own deep Hindu-chauvinist, anti-Muslim prejudice. The demonstrative parades of troops were mostly in Muslim neighbourhoods. And the overwhelming majority of the dead are Muslims killed in indiscriminate police shootings against Muslim protests.

Indian "secular democrats" and the imperialist bourgeois press have noted the deadly threat posed to India's "secular" character. An editorial in *India Today* (31 December 1992) noted "India has almost every ill in the world—hunger, poverty, disease, casteism, communalism. But it has always prided itself, quite justifiably, as the world's largest democracy and a secular one at that. Today that has been put in doubt

Top: Hindu fanatics storm Muslim mosque in Ayodhya in December. Below: Cops in Bombay fire tear gas as communalist mobs rampage through India's largest city.



AP



And that is the real shame." But India is a capitalist prison house for its myriad oppressed, from the horribly exploited workers of its great industrial cities to all the victims of the caste system, to the oppressed nations and minorities, to those slaves of slaves, the women of India.

There is no possibility of secular democracy under this capitalist regime which necessarily preserves the most horrific backwardness. For to get rid of the caste system, to get rid of the fundamentalist strongmen and communally organised religious fanaticism, will require a social revolution that brings the whole edifice of Indian capitalism tumbling down, even if it starts out as a purely democratic struggle. "Progressive" nationalists like Turkey's Kemal Atatürk outlawed the veil, for example, but this only suppressed symbols of backwardness without eradicating the underlying conditions, so in time these practices have come back.

What is required is the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution, the seizure of power by the working class rallying behind it the peasant masses, the oppressed castes and national minorities, the subjugated and enslaved women. Only the working class leading the agrarian masses and all the downtrodden in workers revolution can save India from further communalist bloodbaths.

### Ayodhya: Flash Point for Communal/Fascist Bloodbaths

The reverberations of the destruction of the Bahri Masjid are not confined to India itself. India has the second-largest Muslim population in the world (after Indonesia), and more than the entire Arab world put together. Its neighbours Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan are Muslim, and India has already fought two wars with the latter since independence. Like the struggle for national self-determination of Muslim Kashmir, a communal bloodbath in India could be the trigger for renewed war between India and Pakistan, both of which already have nuclear capacity.

In Pakistan (where there are still one and a half million Hindus), mobs chanting "Crush India!" and "Death to Hinduism!" attacked Hindu temples, Air India offices and the Indian embassy. Twelve Hindus, including six children, were burnt to death in a village near Quetta, and in Baluchistan six Hindu women were burnt alive. In Bangladesh and Afghanistan there were similar mob attacks on Hindu temples and properties. And in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, where Muslims have become an increasingly distinct community, presently allied with the chauvinist Sinhala Buddhist government against the national struggle of the predominantly Hindu Tamil minority, Muslim commu-



Der Spiegel  
Victims of Hindu/Muslim violence in Calcutta in 1946. British imperialism's partition scheme fueled massive communalist bloodletting.

nal organisations called demonstrations.

Further afield, there was a wave of arson attacks on Hindu temples, cultural centres and businesses across England in major cities like Bradford, Coventry and London where there are significant South Asian communities. In some cases, the attacks may have been the work of white racists and fascists seeking to find a cover for their own genocidal programme and to sow division among the communities from the subcontinent, who have in the past tried to prevent the inter-communal violence from spreading to Britain.

The Ayodhya dispute has long been a communal flash point. The Hindu chauvinists allege that the mosque, built in 1528 by a lieutenant of the Moghul emperor Babur, was erected after a temple was destroyed at this exact place (among other places with identical claims) where Lord Ram is supposed to have been born 5,000 years ago. Since the mid-'80s the demand that a temple replace the mosque has been the cutting edge of the BJP's mobilisations, which have seen it grow from two seats in the Delhi (national) parliament in 1984 to 119 in 1991, becoming the largest single opposition party. Born out of the paramilitary fascist RSS, an organisation which goes back to the days of independence and one of whose cadre assassinated Mahatma Gandhi, the BJP is riddled with RSS members and supporters from other fascist organisations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP—World Council of Hindus) and the youth-based Bajrang Dal.

The BJP wants a Hindu state, the "Ram Rajya" (Kingdom of Ram), and alleges that Indian governments have betrayed Hindus by favouring the Muslims (referred to as "ungrateful guests") and other minorities. One journalist noted that "A freeze-frame of India today would show a nation wrecked by the same changes that gave birth to fascism in the Europe of the 1930s" (*Independent*, 9 December 1992). The government's economic "liberalisation" policies in the '80s, and the more recent IMF/World Bank-dictated "reforms," have created a large urban capitalistic-minded middle class, grasping to make ends meet, resentful of the entrenched and filthy-rich Congress tops and their big business cronies, and fearful of the impoverished toiling masses below them.

The BJP is an upper-caste Hindu-led party, oriented to maintaining the traditional caste hierarchy in the context of capitalist urbanisation which undermines the old rural-centred system. It appeals to a layer of urban educated petty bourgeois who can find no jobs, and traders and petty entrepreneurs who often see the Muslims in the same way as the European fascists viewed the Jews before World War II. In India anti-Muslim communalism is the reactionary rallying cry for the fascist mobilisation

of the new middle classes in the context of general urban plebeian rage and economic desperation—a feature of modern capitalist India, not some feudal leftover. At the end of 1990 the BJP's attempted *kar seva* at Ayodhya resulted in more than 2,000 communal killings and led to the fall of V.P. Singh's National Front government.

### "Secular Democratic" India: A Lie

The mouthpieces for the imperialist bourgeoisies have been talking a lot about the fate of "secularism" in India. An editorial in the *New York Times* (8 December 1992) says the task is to maintain a secular state. The *Economist*

aspirations in the anti-colonial struggle which were consumed in the flames of sectarian strife fuelled by the British colonialists.

The Congress (I) is still the only genuinely all-India party and still the main party of the fragmented bourgeoisie, maintaining a posture of representing all India's peoples. But despite its "secular," "democratic" and even formerly "socialist" pretensions, it has always been chauvinist. Mahatma Gandhi was the first advocate of the "Ram Rajya," and couched his appeals in reactionary, mythical Hindu terms. The Congress party presided over the bloody Partition in 1947 and two wars with Pakistan. It has mercilessly sought to crush national struggles like those of the Sikhs in Punjab and the Kashmiris.

Sikh militants avenged themselves for the Indian government's slaughter at the Golden Temple in Amritsar by assassinating its architect, Mrs. Gandhi, in 1984. In response, Rajiv Gandhi condoned the butchering of thousands of Sikhs in Delhi and elsewhere by Hindu communalist mobs, mobs often led by Congress politicians. Two years later that playboy of the Western world got his from the Lankan Tamil Tigers, who had faced the murderous brutality of the expeditionary force he sent to Sri Lanka. Like the other "secular" parties, Congress seeks to play to communal and caste blocs for electoral advantage. During the last elections Congress (I) thugs opened fire on "Untouchables" in Bihar trying to vote for a Communist Party candidate.

The imperialists' concern about "secularism" is just a mask for their real concern. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and consequently of India's "non-aligned" stance (underpinned by Soviet aid), the IMF and World Bank have a clear field. They demand economic



Prashant Panjari  
Bhawan Singh  
L.K. Advani (left), leader of the right-wing Hindu BJP, is being conciliated by "secular" Congress party prime minister Narasimha Rao.

(12 December 1992) asks, "Can India survive as a secular democracy or will it degenerate into a theocratic Hindu state?" In Sri Lanka, the popular-frontist editor of the *Lanka Guardian*, Mervyn De Silva, advises: "Mr. Rao has to assert himself, restore law and order, but without compromising an inch on the Nehruvian ideal of a modern, secular, democratic India. And that, there's little doubt, is what is now at stake" (*Sunday Times* [Colombo], 13 December 1992).

In the struggle against colonial rule, the idea of a united Indian people struggling for freedom mobilised millions, in particular against British attempts at "divide and rule" along religious, national and caste lines. From Nehru on, bourgeois nationalists have touted secularism, but Indian nationalism always contained a strong element of Hindu and Hindi-language chauvinism. This reflected the late, uneven and arrested development of the Indian bourgeoisie in the context of multiple national, language and religious divisions. It is a lie that India was ever a secular democratic state. India and Pakistan were born out of the defeat of secular-democratic

"liberalisation"—that is, removing the obstacles to untrammelled imperialist and capitalist exploitation—which is heaping new burdens on the Indian masses, whose condition already in many places begs description. The head of one of India's foremost companies, the Tata conglomerate, laments: "The world is going to look at India as an unstable country. Political stability is one of the main considerations governing foreign investment." And the *Economist* (12 December 1992) worries that Rao "will find it more difficult to push ahead with his economic reforms."

Nor do the reformist Communist parties present any fundamental challenge to the plans of the bloodsucking IMF imperialists. Along with the BJP, the CPs backed V.P. Singh's National Front government. Now, instead of mobilising the working class and the oppressed in independent action, the Communist parties are playing around with a new popular-front alliance with Congress (I). And the inability of these reformists to solve the burning needs of the toiling masses breeds disillusionment.

continued on page 9



Benoit Lange  
India's reformist Communist parties have betrayed impoverished masses in the service of bourgeois nationalism.



## Germany Disorganizes Europe



Italian workers (right) rose up against government austerity program ordered by Frankfurt bankers.



La Repubblica

Part One of this article, published in WV No. 566 (1 January), dealt with the unraveling of the "German model" of institutionalized class collaboration under the impact of capitalist reunification, and the massive economic devastation in eastern Germany following Anschluss (annexation) of the DDR (German Democratic Republic).

There is a parallel between economic developments in Germany since reunification and those in the U.S. in the early-to-mid 1980s. In both cases there was a massive increase in government expenditure for non-productive purposes—in America for military hardware exemplified by the Star Wars boondoggle, in Germany to support the millions thrown

the ruling class. Influential sectors of finance capital believed that Kohl was offering too much for the leveraged buy-out of the DDR. Bundesbank president Karl-Otto Pöhl openly opposed exchanging D-marks for DDR marks on a 1:1 (one-to-one) basis. And when Kohl refused to raise taxes in western Germany, the Bundesbank chief resigned in

Treuhand shelled out \$65 billion in interest, an amount equal to 3.5 percent of Germany's gross national product. At the present rate, interest payments will absorb 18 percent of all government expenditure by 1995, compared to 8 percent in 1989.

The annexation of the DDR has radically altered Germany's international

facturers diverted exports from foreign markets to their own newly captured market east of the Elbe, while excess consumer demand spilled over into increased imports.

By 1991 Germany's trade surplus had been reduced to \$25 billion. But this was more than offset by the spending of German tourists abroad, remittances of immigrant workers to their families in Turkey, Yugoslavia, etc., and Bonn's contribution to the European Community and aid to the new counterrevolutionary regimes in East Europe. Thus Germany ran a balance-of-payments deficit of \$20 billion, which was financed by liquidating financial assets abroad and borrowing in world money markets. The wealthiest country in Europe was drawing in money from Britain, Italy, Spain, etc. In order to prevent the massive outflow of capital to Frankfurt, these countries had to raise their own interest rates, further depressing their already depressed economies.

### Class Struggle in the Fourth Reich

Last spring the world bankers' cartel, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), told the Kohl regime to clean up its act. The Fund's *World Economic Outlook* (April 1992) stated:

"The large deficit which has emerged in connection with the reunification process initially provided considerable stimulus



Bosch/Black Star

Capitalist reunification has fueled growing fascist terror in Germany. For worker/immigrant mobilizations to crush the Nazi skinheads!

late 1990 to protest what he later called the "impossibly costly promises" made to the citizens of the DDR to sell *Anschluss*.

However, Pöhl's colleagues would soon exact vengeance against "the chancellor of the German people," and the rest of Europe's heads of state as well. The German central bank flaunted its famous "independence" by raising interest rates to the highest level in the post-war era. The discount rate charged to member banks was increased from 3.5 percent in 1989 to 8 percent by the beginning of last year.

The Bundesbank's "defense" of the sacred D-mark further weakened the German economy and bled the rest of capitalist Europe. The high cost of borrowed funds was an additional barrier to productive investment in eastern Germany, thereby increasing the reunification deficit. The Bundesbank's proposed solution is to cut the rations of unemployed East Germans. But this would be throwing matches into a cauldron of inflammable, indeed explosive, material.

At the same time, interest payments to Frankfurt and foreign bankers are now growing faster than transfer payments to impoverished East Germans. Last year the federal, *Länder* (state) and local governments and public agencies like the

financial situation as well. In 1989, West Germany ran an \$80 billion balance-of-trade surplus, of which more than \$60 billion was recycled back into world financial markets in the form of bank loans and purchases of foreign securities. With reunification, West German manu-



Spartakist

Union banner calls for unity of German and immigrant workers as Bosch-Siemens metal workers demonstrate in Berlin last May.

### PART TWO OF TWO

out of work as the industrial economy of the former DDR was dismantled. In both cases tax revenues were not raised (Reagan actually cut taxes for the rich), resulting in a quantum leap in the government deficit. German public-sector debt is projected to go from 45 percent of gross national product in 1990 to almost 70 percent by 1996.

In both cases the inflationary effect of runaway deficit spending, which would have devalued the financial assets of the wealthy, was dampened by raising interest rates to historic highs. In the early 1980s, West German Social Democratic chancellor Helmut Schmidt complained that U.S. policies had produced the highest real interest rates "since the birth of Christ." And Wall Street economist Sam Nakagama quipped that countering inflation solely by super-tight money was like strategic bombing: it worked by leveling the country's industrial plant. The deficit was financed almost entirely at the expense of productive investment.

Just as Reagan's America went from being a creditor to a debtor nation, so post-*Anschluss* Germany has become a net borrower in world money markets. And just as Reaganomics helped precipitate the world depression of 1982-83, so the Fourth Reich deficit/Bundesbank extortionate interest rates have pulled down the entire West European economy.

Whereas Reaganomics was a more or less deliberate—if disastrous—policy, economic developments in Germany since reunification are the outcome of a continuing factional struggle within



to activity in Germany and its partner countries, but growth in Europe is now being constrained by the high level of interest rates required to deal with the resulting inflationary pressures in Germany."

The IMF prescribed for Germany the same hither medicine it usually prescribes for Third World debtor countries: raise taxes on consumption, cut social programs and government subsidies to industry, curb wages. This kind of IMF-dictated "austerity" program is usually carried out by military juntas which jail and torture union leaders and shoot down hungry people protesting cuts in food subsidies. Germany's rulers cannot now do this without risking a social revolution.

When Kohl tried to get tough on the labor front, the workers' movement showed it was tougher. Last April, the official government arbitrator proposed a 5.4 percent annual wage increase (about 1 percent above the inflation rate) for the nearly three million public workers in western Germany. Given increased productivity, this would have held relative labor costs roughly constant. But German capital was determined to increase the rate of exploitation of its proletariat. So Kohl rejected the offer and deliberately provoked a strike. The German ruling class then got a small taste of what real class struggle could bring. The right-wing *Die Welt* (5 May 1992) wrote:

"Stinking piles of garbage on the sidewalks of the inner cities, despairing vacationers in stifling waiting rooms, and hopeless traffic jams on the way to work: Germany in the blissful month of May. Everywhere the insignia of the strength of the public service sector unions are apparent. The strike sinks to high heaven...."

Of course, the Social Democratic bureaucrats had no intention of using the

### East German metal workers protest in Leipzig in December against the Treuhand's dismantling of the industrial economy of the former DDR.



tion, pessimism is spreading in both halves of the country" (*Financial Times*, 17 November 1992).

In their own way, these bourgeois ideologues understand the potential for mass, centrally working-class opposition to the new order of the Fourth Reich. The long-complacent social-democratic workers in the west are facing a capitalist drive to reduce the consumption levels and social benefits which the workers have come to regard as their right. The working people of eastern Germany, who retain strong egalitarian values, are deeply antagonistic to the present political leadership of the Fourth Reich.

And a large fraction of the two million Turkish, South Slavic and other immigrant workers in Germany are integrated at the bottom into the strategic unionized proletariat. These foreign workers are

minister Jürgen Möllemann resigned under fire, the fifth federal minister to how out in the last nine months. With the conservative government fraying after a decade in office, pressure is building for a "popular front." Such a class-collaborationist coalition would be directed against labor and immigrants, and would serve the interests of German imperialism. The SPD special convention agreed to a "modification" of the constitutional right to asylum, gutting it of any content. The party fathers are also pushing for a constitutional amendment to allow the Bundeswehr (army) to intervene militarily outside of NATO. And the purpose of a union-employer-parties "pact" would be to slash social programs and push pay settlements down to the rate of inflation, and below—i.e., wage cuts.

Kohl wants to cobble together this "solidarity" deal by the end of January. So the Treuhand is modifying its policy of wholesale shutdowns of former DDR state-owned companies, agreeing to maintain certain key industries if no buyer can be found. Now the screws are being turned on the union tops. The ÖTV is only asking for a 5 percent hike this year, less than half its demands for 1992. And even the leader of the traditionally more militant IG Metall, which hills itself as the most powerful union in the world, Franz Steinkühler, declared at the union's conference last fall that "Who needs the solidarity pact is us" (*Metall*, 23 October 1992). That the Social Democratic union tops are ready to sell out is clear; Steinkühler and other DGB federation leaders were already engaged in secret negotiations with the government in November. But trying to ram it down the workers' throats is another matter.

### The European Community Unraveling

The European Community (EC, formerly known as the Common Market)

was set up in the mid-1950s as part of the American-directed reorganization of West Europe for Cold War against the Soviet Union. Washington was concerned that a resurgence of the traditional enmity between France and Germany could wreck NATO. Thus West Germany's inherent economic dominance was tempered by built-in concessions to France, especially a high level of agricultural protectionism. The Common Agricultural Policy—which absorbs 60 percent of the entire EC budget—enabled France to become Europe's largest producer and exporter of food.

However, with German imperialism's annexation of the DDR, followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, neither Bonn nor Washington have any reason to placate the French bourgeoisie, which has little standing or leverage in the "New World Order." Thus, when the lame-duck Bush administration threatened punitive tariffs against certain European imports unless EC agricultural subsidies were cut, Germany stabbed its French "partner" in the back.

Why then did Kohl and French president François Mitterrand trumpet a new era of "European unity"—expressed by a single European monetary system—at the December 1991 Maastricht EC summit? The bourgeois leaders said they wanted to tie the expanded post-Anschluss Germany into a European framework. But the Maastricht treaty was from the outset a diplomatic fraud, designed to disguise growing conflicts between the Fourth Reich and its Gallic EC partner.

The French social democrats have long fantasized about "sharing" control over Germany's financial wealth through a West European monetary system run by Brussels Eurocrats. This project was originally called "the Delors plan," after the French social democrat who runs the

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Free Democrat Kinkel (left), Christian Democrat Kohl and Social Democrat Engholm (at podium) seek "solidarity pact" to impose social order and class peace.

demonstrated strength of the unions to harm the interests of German capital. When Kohl backed off, the strike was settled for the original offer of 5.4 percent. A few weeks later IG Metall—the key union in Germany—negotiated a contract with the industrial bosses on similar terms. Thus the last round between labor and capital in Germany ended in a draw, maintaining the economic status quo.

But that status quo is now intolerable for German capitalism. "What we need is a couple of years with no wage increases," exclaimed the director of an auto parts company. The rate of exploitation is not only totally inadequate for the Frankfurt bankers and Ruhr industrialists to establish a neocolonial empire in East Europe, it is not even satisfactory enough to maintain the existing level of production in Germany itself, especially amid a world recession.

For the past year, the German economy has been on a downward course. The big industrial guns—Volkswagen, Daimler-Benz, Opel, Siemens, MAN, Brown Boveri and others—have announced tens of thousands of layoffs and even plant closures. The official council of economic advisers—the so-called "five wise men"—are predicting zero growth in 1993. And even they are wise enough to admit: "The danger is looming that the economy will fall into a recession. Two years after German unifica-

alienated from the German bourgeois order and can act as a militant counterweight to the conservative, nationalistic Social Democratic bureaucracy. It is necessary to build a revolutionary vanguard party which can truly unify all sections of the working class and its social allies in Germany against the successors to Hitler's Third Reich.

### Social Democrats Push "Solidarity Pact" with Deutsche Bank

As the downhill slide of the German economy accelerated in the fall, calls escalated for a "solidarity pact" bringing together employers and unions on a common line. Christian Democrats, Free Democrats and Social Democrats are united in wanting no repeat of the powerful ÖTV public workers strike. While SPD leader Bjorn Engholm turns down calls for a "grand coalition"—for now—there already exists a "point-by-point coalition" on key issues. At a special SPD conference in October, Engholm appealed for changes in policy to make the party "capable of governing"...by adopting Christian Democratic positions. And in a year-end message, the top Social Democrat wrote in the financial paper *Handelsblatt* (31 December 1992), "We need a genuine solidarity pact, a grand common effort embracing all economic policy actors."

In early January, German economies

## Just Out!

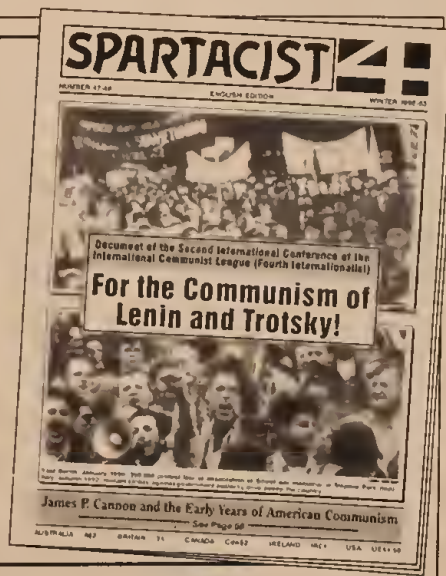
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# Berkeley: Leaky Picket Lines Cripple TA Strike

BERKELEY—The strike by teaching assistants at the University of California at Berkeley and Santa Cruz, which began with a lot of enthusiasm and student support, has been run into the ground by misleadership. The graduate students

## Young Spartacus

at Berkeley, organized in the Association of Graduate Student Employees (AGSE), affiliated with United Auto Workers District 65, launched their strike for union recognition on November 19. Four days later, the Graduate Student Employee Association (GSEA) at UC Santa Cruz also struck. In the face of the arrogant union-hustling UC administration's insistence that the teaching assistants are students, not employees with collective bargaining rights, the only way to win is by shutting down the university with picket lines that mean *don't cross!* This is the message that Spartacus Youth Club members and supporters have brought to the campus as they have walked the picket lines, and boycotted their classes and final exams.

But the AGSE leadership views picket lines as a pressure tactic to embarrass the administration, not as battle lines in the class struggle. AGSE has not called on AFSCME, which organizes both the maintenance and clerical workers at Cal, or University Council-American Federation of Teachers (UCAFT), or University Professional and Technical Employees (UPTe) to stay off the job, and the leaders of these unions how to the no-strike clauses in their contracts. Against such backstabbing company "unionism," we fight for one



Striking TAs outside Sather Gate. To win you need picket lines that mean *don't cross!*

campuswide union—from dishwashers to professors. Basic industrial unionism—especially an alliance with manual labor—is anathema to the aspiring academics in AGSE's leadership.

Students initially responded enthusiastically to AGSE's call for a class boycott—up to 70 percent of classes were shut down in the first days of the strike—but AGSE never attempted to marshal this support to *build mass pickets*. AGSE and GSEA even sanctioned the holding of some strike "support" meetings *behind picket lines* on the struck campuses. Support crumbled as final exams approached, and even many TAs crossed the porous picket lines to administer exams. With a new term beginning on January 20, AGSE must get a new strike authorization vote, but they couldn't even get a quorum at their last two membership meetings and only skeletal picket lines remain up. The danger of

reprisals against strike militants is real. The administration has cut off all negotiations, and individual TAs were sent letters demanding to know what work they accomplished last semester.

*This strike could have been won*, rallying the support of millions of people throughout California who are worried and angry that they can no longer afford a decent education for their children. This year's \$605 fee hike is the fourth hike in four years and will make fees *double* what they were at UC in 1989. Fee hikes coupled with cuts in financial aid deprive most working-class youth of their right to an education. Last year, 76 percent of all eligible applicants for state financial aid were rejected (*San Francisco Examiner*, 13 December 1992). Facing a huge budget shortfall from the state, UC plans to cut enrollment by thousands, lay off workers, eliminate classes and expand class size over the next few years.

While the venal bureaucrats on the Alameda Central Labor Council have refused to sanction the AGSE strike, the AFL-CIO in Santa Cruz is supporting the GSEA and many workers are honoring the lines there. And Teamster truck drivers in the Bay Area are honoring AGSE lines. Chuck Mack, president of Teamster Joint Council No. 7, explained that there would be no truck deliveries to the UC Berkeley campus because "To the Teamsters, a picket line is a picket line" (*Daily Californian*, 8 December 1992). AGSE should demand open admissions and free tuition—so the sons and daughters of these Teamsters could go to the elite Berkeley campus!

Meanwhile, self-avowed socialists—including the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL) and Labor Militant, an American offshoot of the British Militant group—are *scabbing* on the strike, and *calling to take down the picket lines!* A Labor Militant supporter has crossed the picket lines every day to work in the campus bookstore ("What do you expect me to do, lose my job?" he whined when Spartacists confronted him.) The RWL, a veritable cult for scabbing, created yet another front group called the "Ad Hoc Committee for a Campus-Wide Strike." A lofty name for a committee whose intervention into the strike was to urge TAs to *leave the picket lines*...to organize scabs on campus. The Ad Hoc Committee's "strike support" rally—*held on the struck campus*—drew nothing but the handful of RWLers.

It is urgently necessary that the arrogant millionaires who run the University of California be stopped, but it's going to take social power to do it. The hundreds who poured out of Berkeley last spring in response to the Rodney King outrage, partially shutting down the Bay Bridge, are an indication of the combative potential which exists on UC campuses. These students should have been mobilized on the picket line with thousands of organized campus workers to defend the right to an education. Ultimately, in order to provide free, quality education for all, it's necessary to fight against the fetters of irrational capitalism and fight for a socialist society. ■

## Germany...

(continued from page 7)

EC Commission. Of course, Frankfurt bankers had no intention of allowing Delors and his friends to share their financial assets. Instead of openly opposing the proposed EC monetary union, which would have provoked a diplomatic row, Frankfurt laid down *impassable conditions* for such a system.

In late 1990, the Bundesbank issued a statement of "unconditional, not negotiable, requirements" for a European monetary system. These included not only a central bank with "durably guaranteed independence" but that inflation throughout Europe had to be "very largely stamped out" (quoted in WR. Smyser, *The Economy of United Germany*, St. Martin's Press, 1992). Yet at that time the inflation rate in Germany itself was fast rising to a ten-year high.

At Maastricht Kohl and Mitterrand agreed to impossible conditions for a monetary union that would never be formed. Only three of the 12 EC countries met the treaty's requirements—Denmark (which soon rejected it), tiny Luxembourg and France. Germany itself did not qualify for the European monetary union, because its budget deficit exceeded the limit of 3.5 percent of its gross national product specified in the treaty. And if anything is certain in this uncertain world, it is that Germany's budget deficit is going to increase for the next several years. In any case, the fraudulent nature of Maastricht was exposed last September, when the Bundesbank torpedoed the

European Monetary System on the eve of the French referendum on the treaty (see "Fourth Reich Bankers Detonate... Euro-Chaos," WV No. 560, 2 October 1992).

While at Maastricht the growing tensions between Germany and France were covered over by diplomatic sleight of hand, they were revealed for all to see in the latest round of the trade war between the United States and the EC. Here we can clearly see the intensification of *inter-imperialist conflict* with the disappearance of the Cold War alliance against the Soviet Union.

When the Common Market was originally formed, agricultural protectionism was not one-sidedly in French interests. West Germany had its own politically influential rural smallholders, many of them in Bavaria, home base of right-wing Christian Democratic strongman Franz Josef Strauss. However, with the passage of time Strauss died and West Germany's farm lobby lost much of its political clout. It is in the interests of German capitalism to reduce the costs of its huge food imports in order to keep wages down. The Common Agricultural Policy was tolerated only to keep France in the Atlantic alliance.

Likewise, for the U.S. agriculture is one of the few sectors in which American capitalism has a strong competitive advantage internationally. U.S. ruling circles have been especially nettled that West Europe is a protected market for French farmers. However, Washington refrained from all-out trade war against France to avoid disrupting NATO.

But no longer. At an academic conference in late 1990 on the effects of German reunification, Michael Aho of the

prestigious Washington-based Council on Foreign Relations observed:

"In the past, U.S. foreign economic objectives were often subordinated to security concerns in a desire not to alienate allies. But without the constraint of the Cold War, America will not be as reluctant to aggressively pursue its economic goals on trade and macroeconomic issues. At the same time, it will have less leverage because Europe and Japan are less reliant on U.S. military protection. As a result, a more assertive America will confront a more assertive world, a prescription for confrontation."

In Paul J.J. Welfens, ed., *Economic Aspects of German Unification*

A few months later, such a confrontation broke up and broke off the so-called "Uruguay round" of negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Japan was adamant in protecting its rice farmers, and Germany reluctantly supported France's diehard defense of the Common Agricultural Policy. So the American delegates staged an angry walkout.

To "reopen" negotiations, this November Washington announced it would impose 200 percent tariffs on \$300 million in European imports, mainly French wines, unless the EC capitulated on agricultural subsidies. While farmers in France stormed city halls, hurled American flags and blockaded McDonald's, German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel laid down the law for Europe: "compromises will be needed and France will, in the end, have to join in" (*New York Times*, 14 November 1992).

A few weeks later, Germany forced through such a "compromise" between the European Community and the United States. French Socialist prime minister Pierre Bérégovoy declared this trade

agreement "unacceptable," but nonetheless accepted it while making noises that Paris might exercise a veto at some future date. The ruling French social democrats are almost certain to lose the upcoming parliamentary elections in March, and are evidently stalling so that the right-wing bourgeois parties will have to take the heat from angry farmers on one side and France's big-power trade "partners" on the other. Whatever the outcome of the latest U.S.-EC trade clash, tensions between Paris and Bonn/Berlin are bound to increase in the future.

The West European political and economic order—long defined by NATO and the Common Market—is coming unstuck amid increasing social turmoil and struggle. The prospects for a Social Democratic-led popular front putting the clamp on class struggle in Germany are far from certain. The powerful public workers strike in Germany, the spontaneous workers revolt in Italy and massive strike wave in Greece point to the perspective of proletarian revolution leading to a Socialist United States of Europe. As the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany wrote in "Strikes Rock Kohl's Germany" (WV No. 552, 29 May 1992):

"Germany remains the key to Europe, for barbarism or socialism. To rebuild this country in the interest of all the working people and plan the economy sensibly on an international scale, it is necessary to fight for a workers government that *expropriates capital*, putting the means of production into the hands of those who produce the wealth. To organize that struggle and lead it to victory, the workers need a revolutionary workers party. Such a party, in the internationalist tradition of Lenin and Trotsky, is what the Spartakists are fighting to build. ■



# PDC Notes...

(continued from page 2)

confrontation, could have avoided prison entirely if she'd but denounced John Africa and MOVE—not one day. She refused, and it is now 14 years in hell for being a MOVE member.

The same could be said for MOVE's Carlos Africa, in prison now since 1981. Freedom could be his today if he uttered one sentence—I renounce John Africa and MOVE—six words, words he will not say. Other MOVE veterans, facing 100 years for a crime their trial judge admitted he hadn't the faintest idea who committed it, are Chuck Africa, Debbie Africa, Delbert Africa, Eddie Africa, Janet Africa, Merle Africa, Mike Africa, Janine Africa and Phil Africa, political

prisoners caged for their opposition to the system.

There are others who will spend their holidays in hell for their opposition to the powers that be:

- Geronimo ji Jaga, former Deputy Minister of Defense for the L.A. Black Panther Party, highly decorated Vietnam vet, set up, framed and caged by the same system he went to Vietnam to defend, now held in California hellholes for over 22 years, a prisoner of the system which cites his revolutionary consciousness, his politics, as the deciding factor as to why he can't be freed

- Hugo Darbariki Pinell, over 27 years in hell, a comrade of Soledad Brother George Jackson, buried in California's high tech torture chambers for his radical history and revolutionary politics—an Afro-Nicaraguan political pris-

oner who still sends his spirit beyond the walls of Pelican Bay, California.

- Ravenswood, West Virginia steel worker Robert Buck, now jailed for refusing to wear an undercover wire for the FBI to union meetings to set up his fellows. A worker who learned the hard way that the state defends the interests of the bosses not the workers, and that those who strike against big business get struck back by the government.

These and more are provided stipends by the PDC, which although modest amounts are symbols of solidarity. More importantly of course are the PDC's propaganda efforts, which expose the direct government injustices which fed these revolutionaries to the prison gates.

On behalf of them all, our thanks for your continued generous support and the valuable work you do towards

our eventual freedom.

Ona MOVE. Long live John Africa! Free MOVE! Free all political prisoners!

From death row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Send your protests demanding all charges be dropped against Mumia Abu-Jamal and all the death row protesters to: Superintendent, SCI, Drawer R, Huntingdon, PA 16652

We encourage WA 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, NY, NY 10013 ■

# India...

(continued from page 5)

Some land reform in West Bengal has helped to build support for the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in that state, but without a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution which expropriates the feudal landlords and the big capitalist farmers, the poor peasants still have no land and can be sucked in by the communalists. While corruption increases and his son gets rich, West Bengal CPI(M) premier Jyoti Basu tries to attract imperialist investors to the state, on the promise that the working masses can be held in check.

Today, the CPs administer capitalist governments and defend the bourgeois order. There were also communal outbursts in Calcutta, capital of West Bengal, where the CPI(M) has ruled for 15 years. While both the CPI(M) and the CPI derive their mass support at least in part from an anti-communist reputation, they undercut any decent impulses of their own militants by making alliances with communal and casteist organisations, as well as by denouncing the independence struggles of the Sikhs in Punjab and Muslim Kashmir as "terrorism," backing the central government's ruthless repression of these legitimate struggles.

In the absence of working-class-centred struggle, one tragedy is that the oppressed may turn to the most obscurantist, reactionary extremists in their own communities. In the Punjab, the Sikh struggle is dominated by Khalistami religious fundamentalists. In Kashmir, the sway of Islamic fanatics who identify with Afghan CIA-aided euthroat zealots like Hekmatyar has increased at the expense of more secular-minded Kashmiri liberation groups. Nationalists and communalists take their cue from the "Death of Communism" reaction spawned by the counterrevolutionary victories in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In Shillong, capital of Meghalaya in the northeast, graffiti directed against Bengali and other migrants proclaims: "When the Germans & English are anti-alien, why not we?" (Frontline, 20 November 1992).

## Workers Revolution Must Crush Communalist Vermin

Muslims are the first targets of the BJP/VHP/RSS communal thugs, but not their only victims. Muslims are generally poorer, reflecting the fact that many are descended from converts among Harijans ("Untouchables") and low-caste people seeking to escape caste oppression. Though they constitute about 14 per cent of the population, they make up only 2 per cent of those who pass senior civil servants' exams, for example. After the Muslims, the Hindu fanatics will go after other religious minorities—Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Jains. The 1990 mobilisation at Ayodhya was an obvious reaction to the National Front government's Mandal Commission proposals to reserve jobs for certain lower castes, which elicited violent protests from

mainly upper-caste students.

While Hindu fundamentalists protested about alleged favouritism to the Muslims over the notorious Shah Bano case, where a divorced Muslim woman was denied alimony in the name of upholding Muslim personal law, there are plenty of atrocities on the other side of the communal divide. A recent horrendous example of what the BJP/RSS stand for was when two young lovers and their friend were murdered in a village in Rajasthan, because they dared to defy the taboo on relationships between upper-caste people and "Untouchables." And it is exactly among the urban social layers most attracted to the BJP that the barbarous murders of women for their dowries have increased most. Similarly, it is these layers who avail themselves of modern medical science to selectively abort female foetuses.

Explosions of religious fanaticism and pogroms have to be ruthlessly suppressed. But the capitalist rulers will institute only a white (counterrevolutionary) terror, one that will inevitably set one community against another. The strengthening of the central state power will in no way prevent communalist slaughter, but on the contrary will serve to bolster the Hindu chauvinists, suppress working-class struggle and fan the flames of future massacres.

The relatively small but strategically placed and combative Indian proletariat can crush the marauding communalists by carrying out a workers' revolution. They have a special and immediate interest in crushing these vermin, since the workers are frequently drawn from local and migrant minorities. In the great industrial cities like Kanpur, Bangalore, Bhopal and Lucknow, the proletariat should defend the Muslim quarters from the communalists and the chauvinist police rampage, just as the Bolshevik-led workers defended the Jews in tsarist Russia from the Black Hundreds. They should also deal with any Islamic fundamentalists who simply want to reciprocate the crimes of the Hindu extremists.

But to extirpate the pathological killers who have whipped up communalist passions to a fever pitch will require strong measures that can only be successful by uniting the oppressed and exploited of all the myriad communities in the Indian state in defense of socialist revolution, offering the fundamental prospect of a better life through common effort rather than the desperate competition for the crumbs of capitalism.

An article in the *New York Times* (6 December 1992), only a day before the Ayodhya mosque was destroyed, waxed eloquent about Bombay as a capitalist mecca, a "cosmopolitan" "city of opportunity": "It is where India is being reshaped and, if India is to claw its way from poverty and socialism, where it will happen first." But in December some of the worst communal killing was in Bombay, the metropolis at the heart of the Maharashtra industrial belt. More than half of Bombay's 12-million-plus population are slum dwellers, many of them migrants from other areas of the country. Most of the deaths in Bombay

Hindu fascists of the paramilitary Shiv Sena, brandishing tridents, target Muslim minority in terror attacks.



came when the local police fired indiscriminately on Muslim protesters. Muslims then attacked Hindus and vice versa.

The Bombay police are heavily infiltrated by Shiv Sena, a local fascist group, named after a 17th century Hindu ruler, Shivaji, who fought the Muslim Moghul king Aurangzeb. Shiv Sena denounces "outsiders" and was formed in the '60s to combat the influence of the Communists and trade unionists in the burgeoning working class of the state. With the indifference or active connivance of the police, Shiv Sena targeted Muslims. Muslims were forced to flee in some areas, but in other parts of the slums Muslims and Hindus joined together to fight off the attackers, barricading the alleys to keep out Shiv Sena and the police. One fisherman from a mixed Hindu/Muslim shanty community said:

"They had come before—outsiders, Hindus and Muslims both," he explained. "We were able to persuade them to leave us in peace. But this time, I don't know what happened. I don't think they like seeing Muslims and Hindus living together peacefully."

*Independent* [London],  
11 December 1992

Today in India the bourgeois politicians scarcely bother to mask their corruption, nepotism, venality and outright criminality. Every election is accompanied by hundreds of deaths, and hundreds of thousands among the lower castes and "Untouchables" are denied a vote. Under capitalism, scientific and technological progress doesn't supplant,

but rather reinforces social backwardness. The "Green Revolution" in agriculture utilised new grain varieties to largely eliminate grain imports, yet tens of millions still go hungry. A large industrial capacity and output has not transformed the lives of the great bulk of the Indian people; indeed they are ground down even further, with child labour endemic from textile shops to the great coal fields of Dhanbad. There are millions of VCRs, but far from purveying enlightenment, they are used to propagate religious fanaticism.

Writing in 1942 on the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat in India, the Trotskyists of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party (BLPI) stated:

"The realisation of the combined character of the Indian revolution is essential for the planning of the revolutionary strategy of the working class. Should the working class fail in its historic task of seizing the power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the revolution will inevitably recede, the bourgeois tasks themselves remain unperformed, and the power swing back in the end to the imperialists without whom the Indian bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself against the hostile masses. A backward country like India can accomplish its bourgeois-democratic revolution only through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Such is the perspective we in the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) fight for today. Forward to the construction of Bolshevik parties in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Forward to the soviet socialist federation of South Asia! ■

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# Hoffa...

(continued from page 12)

A longtime Republican and supporter of capitalism, Hoffa rejected the Marxist program that stood behind Dobbs' successful class-struggle methods. But he was no prisoner to the abject legalism that cripples labor struggles from the get-go. Arrested numerous times for his organizing activities (18 times in one particular day!), Hoffa later commented that anyone "who didn't get in trouble with the police was either buying them off or he wasn't doing his job." So he was receptive to the militant tactics—mass picketing, secondary strikes, refusing to handle struck cargo ("hot-carguing")—employed by the Trotskyists in the over-the-road campaign; legal or not, they worked. In 1938-39 he saw firsthand how Dobbs and his organizers won union recognition in anti-labor Nebraska by calling secondary boycotts in the surrounding states: "You push a button in Kansas City and Omaha jumps."

As pro-war fever swept the country in 1940-41, the Trotskyists found themselves increasingly isolated from many former allies in the labor movement. Opponents of imperialist war and defenders of the Soviet Union, the first workers state in history, despite Stalinist degeneration, the Minneapolis Teamster leaders in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP, founded by the Trotskyists in 1938) were a sharp thorn in the side of Tobin, who was one of President Roosevelt's foremost supporters in the AFL. In 1941, as the federal government was gearing up to prosecute and jail them for treason, Tobin moved to purge the Trotskyists from the Teamsters. To head up the dozens of goons Tobin dispatched to Minneapolis to carry out this dirty work, he called on Jimmy Hoffa.

Years later, Hoffa bragged "I went... into Minneapolis... took over the office, brought in a hundred crack guys, had the war. We won every battle." But Dobbs responded that Hoffa was backed up by the cops, courts, mayor and governor, "and by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Department of Justice and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who then happened to be President of the United States... Under those circumstances you got to admit Hoffa had just a little help, didn't he?" After the Trotskyists were jailed, Hoffa was rewarded with Dobbs' former position as vice president of the Central States Drivers Council.

## Enter the Mob

This is the period when the real Hoffa turned to the underworld, not for help

**The "Battle of Deputies Run," May 1934. Trotskyists led the victorious Minneapolis strikes, which laid the basis for explosive growth of the Teamsters and inspired the militant struggles which formed the industrial unions of the CIO.**



in organizing truck drivers and winning contracts with the bosses, but for muscle in the Teamsters' squalid jurisdictional war with the CIO. From then on, the Mob took a hand in the collection and distribution of Teamster wealth—dues money, bribes, real estate and, later, pensions. Hoffa was as much a business minionist as West Coast Teamster head Dave Beck, who was to precede Hoffa as IBT president in the mid-'50s. Hoffa proclaimed, "We're not labor statesmen," we're here "to sell your labor at top dollar" (*Washington Post*, 24 December 1992).

Teamster power continued to expand despite and not, as the movie suggests, because of this corruption. Hoffa still employed some of the tactics he had learned at the knees of Dobbs and Dunne, such as the use of secondary boycotts to bring recalcitrant employers around to the bargaining table. His power to "deliver" came from his power base in the organized drivers' network built under the leadership of the revolutionary Trotskyists and then wrenched from their hands. From this base Hoffa was able, by the end of the 1940s, to organize over-the-road drivers in the racist, open shop South, and wages for workers under his jurisdiction tripled. After another decade, the union had one and a half million members and was close to achieving a master contract covering all long-haul drivers in the country.

"If you got it, a truck brought it," went the Teamster slogan. That is indeed what

scared America's rulers as IBT locals popped up across the country in the 1950s. Trucking had grown explosively as the hourglass began construction of the interstate highway system (authorized in 1944 for explicitly military reasons). During the 1950s, the share of intercity freight carried by trucks more than doubled, while that carried by rail fell by a third. By 1961 trucking revenues almost equaled those of the railroads. Hollywood even produced a movie, *World Without Trucks*, in which the all-powerful Teamsters are shown threatening to stop milk for hungry babies.

Congressional witchhunters increasingly turned their attention from Communism to organized labor, especially the Teamsters, after the Democrats seized control of the Senate Permanent Committee on Investigations from Joseph McCarthy in 1955. Its offshoot, the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, was created in 1957 to go after the unions, particularly the IBT. Both its chairman, John L. McClellan, and staff counsel Robert Kennedy had served with relish on the earlier McCarthy witchhunting committee. Senator John F. Kennedy also sat on the new McClellan Committee. "All of our lives are too intricately interwoven with this union," said McClellan in 1958, "to sit passively by and allow the Teamsters under Mr. Hoffa's leadership to create such a superpower in this country—a power greater than the people and greater than the government."

The bosses' government has always sought to eliminate militant labor activity in transport. The 1894 Pullman strike was ruthlessly crushed by an army of federal marshals, and its leader, socialist Eugene Debs, jailed. This was followed by government takeover of the railroads in World War I, the draconian postwar Railway Labor Board and the brutal suppression of the 1922 railway shopmen's strike. And just as the Railway Labor Act of 1926 was written to virtually outlaw rail strikes and guarantee the capitalists uninterrupted freight transportation, the war against Hoffa was intended to crush the increasing power of the Teamsters in the post-World War II era, particularly Hoffa's campaign to forge the Master Freight Agreement, a single national trucking contract. The hearings marked a shift in the liberal wing of the Democratic Party from the older New Deal "friend of labor" posture to advocating increased state control of the unions.

## Capitalist Vendetta Against Teamsters

Some of Hoffa's best scenes deal with the massive, decade-long effort by the

government to cripple the IBT and jail its leader. With dialogue lifted straight from the transcripts, the film shows McClellan Committee counsel Robert Kennedy, ruling-class twit that he was, grilling Hoffa on his links to organized crime figures. (What about that rum-running, Mob-connected anti-Semite and admirer of Hitler, Robert's father Joe Kennedy?) Robert Kennedy especially goes after the Teamster pension fund as "an unholy war chest." The pension fund did make loans to "legitimate" Mob enterprises, but unlike many of today's S&Ls, it actually collected on those loans. More to the point, its establishment in 1955 was an important gain for IBT members, who up until then never had any pension coverage. When the government finally gained control of the Teamster pension fund in 1977, it was a defeat for union members that prefigured the government's takeover of the entire union 12 years later.

The movie also shows Hoffa defending himself against Kennedy's redhailing attack on his links to West Coast longshore union leaders Harry Bridges and Lou Goldblatt. The government fought for years to deport Bridges, a prominent supporter of the CP. Hoffa was of course a staunch anti-communist. But Kennedy's motivation for this attack was Hoffa's 1958 attempt to form a powerful bargaining alliance of all transport unions—in trucking, rail, airlines and maritime, including Bridges' International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU).

Hoffa was dragged four separate times before the McClellan Committee. In just 30 months, there were 270 days of hearings, with 1,525 witnesses and 46,150 pages of testimony, the work of a squad of 45 accountants and 35 investigators, who issued 8,000 subpoenas. Hoffa was also tried and acquitted for bribery and tried twice and acquitted for wire-

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tapping his own office in a defensive move against government links

In 1959, Congress used the propaganda generated by this anti-union witchhunt to pass the Landrum-Griffin Act, which gave the feds vastly enhanced power over internal union affairs and strengthened Taft-Hartley provisions against secondary strikes and "hot-cargoing." After John F. Kennedy took office in 1961, his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, set up a special "Get Hoffa Squad" in the Justice Department, staffed by 20 full-time lawyers. In a series of trials over the next three years—for fraud, receiving bribes, assault and jury tampering—RFK did finally "get" Hoffa. It was the biggest government operation against a U.S. citizen in the history of this country. No wonder that when told JFK had been assassinated, Hoffa snarled, "I hope the worms eat his eyes out."

Hoffa's End

Two scenes toward the end of the movie, taken together, express the contradictions of the Teamsters under Hoffa. In the later scene from 1967, Hoffa is shackled and driven to prison along with his union buddy, Bobby Ciara (a composite character played by Danny DeVito). As the van approaches Lewisburg Federal Prison, Hoffa is greeted by a demonstration of potential union power: as far as the eye can see, 18-wheelers line both sides of the road. It looks like a fantasy from the truckers' song "Convoy" or a scene from the 1970 Ohio Teamster wildcat strike. It's the kind of power that no IBT official since the Minneapolis Trotskyists—Hoffa included—has ever summoned into action.

The earlier setting is a fancy dinner for Teamster big wheels decked out in tuxes with their glittering dates, enjoying a banal Las Vegas-type show. Their self-satisfaction is evident as Hoffa tells them, "The Teamsters have led the American working man into the middle class, and we intend to stay there!" The scene reeks of the conservatism of a hardened leadership crust, intent on enjoying the perquisites of power. But it pales next to the gluttony of Hoffa's successors, like the FBI fink Jackie Presser, who was home into a \$675,000 party at the 1986 Teamster Convention in Vegas on a palanquin carried by mock Roman centurions. This was a labor "leader" the feds could, and did, do business with.

Before leaving for prison, Hoffa appointed as his temporary replacement



Union daily during 1934 Minneapolis strike. Trotskyist leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, including those who led the 1934 Minneapolis strike, were sent to prison in 1943 for opposing imperialist world war.



Pathfinder Press

Frank Fitzsimmons, accurately portrayed in the film by J.T. Walsh as an ineffective numbskull who served as the IBT leader's gofer. Instead of taking orders from his jailed mentor, Fitzsimmons eventually decided to stay in office by handing power back to local Teamster fieldmen and accommodating the gangsters that gathered at the IBT trough. In effect the government, by removing Hoffa from power for his links to the Mafia, actually handed the union over to a true godchild of the Mob. Hoffa's threat to disrupt this relationship is what got him killed.

Labor Will Clean Its Own House

Fitzsimmons and his successors have presided over a catastrophic decline in Teamster fortunes. His name once the very symbol of union power to millions of American working people, the IBT has seen its membership decline by 800,000, decimated by givebacks and "double-breasting" (where trucking companies shift their work to non-union subsidiaries). In December 1991, New York UPS Teamster chief Ron Carey won the IBT presidency in a government-controlled election. He was supported by Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), a social-democratic outfit (supported by almost the entire fake-left) that had been railing against "corruption" for years.

The TDU actually invited the bosses' state to take over the union and even sent a blueprint for government control to the Justice Department! Before the

feds filed suit, TDU National Organizer Ken Paff wrote the Justice Department that "We strongly urge the government to seek reorganization of the IBT under Section 1964(a) of the RICO Act" (Dan La Botz, *Rank and File Rebellion*, Verso, 1990). The capitalists generally prefer the predictable betrayals of social-democratic unionists like the TDU, who function as lapdogs of the courts and Labor Department.

And just who's calling who "corrupt"? Is it somehow less corrupt to sell out to "legitimate" bosses like the Rockefeller, the grandsons of the original robber barons? Is handing a workers organization over to the government—the executive committee of the entire capitalist class—less corrupt than letting some underworld thieves loot its treasury? *Those who would sell their union to the bosses' state are as low as dirty scabs!* Jack Nicholson—who believes that "in terms of what he did for labor, Hoffa is a hero"—said of the "progressive" labor statesmen who expelled the Teamsters from the CIO, that Hoffa "had no respect for those guys who he thought were selling the unions out to Congress" (*New York Newsday*, 20 December 1992).

Almost half a century of government intervention into the Teamsters has repeatedly shown that, no matter how venal or corrupt the labor bureaucracy, the bourgeoisie's attacks have nothing to do with "corruption" or "union democracy" and everything to do with gutting the unions. The Spartacist League has uniquely stood for the defense of

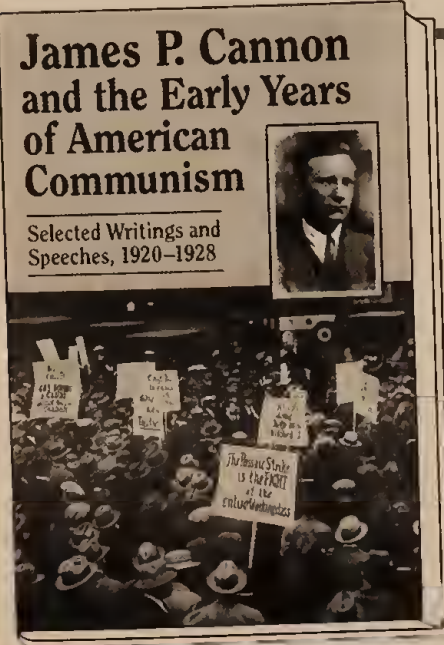
the Teamsters and all labor against the intervention of the capitalist state into the workers movement. To sweep the pro-capitalist misleaders out will take a revolutionary leadership that mobilizes the working class in a class-struggle program to smash the profit system.

Jimmy Hoffa remains an immensely popular figure among truck drivers. But it will take a lot more than another Hoffa to get the Teamsters union on its feet again. In the '50s and '60s, Hoffa delivered because he *could* deliver, without even calling the nationwide trucking strike the bosses feared so much. A business unionist concerned for the bosses' bottom line—and himself a con man and small businessman on the side—Hoffa had no answer for workers confronted with falling profits, urban decay and rust bowl industries. As we wrote at the time of Hoffa's disappearance in 1975:

"Jimmy the con man" and "Jimmy the tough trade unionist" are the same Hoffa, and his Janus-faced image is only an expression of the contradictions inherent in 'pure-and-simple trade unionism.' "Of all the major union leaders in the post-World War II period, Jimmy Hoffa had the most militant reputation. This is a sad commentary on the state of the U.S. labor movement."

—*"The Hoffa Myth,"* WJ No. 76, 12 September 1975

The struggle to defend working-class living standards can't be tailored to the "possibilities" of the profit system. What's required is a revolutionary program for workers power—a workers government—embodied in the leadership of a mass workers party such as the Spartacist League is striving to build. ■



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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## WHY THE LIBERALS HATE HOFFA

Liberal tongues are clucking in response to *Hoffa*, Danny DeVito's biographical film starring Jack Nicholson in the title role. Based on a David Mamet screenplay, the movie sketches a sympathetic portrait of James R. Hoffa, the rough-hewn Teamster bureaucrat who was hounded to prison by Robert Kennedy in 1967 and assassinated eight years later when he tried to reclaim the union presidency. While erroneously justifying Hoffa's well-known links to organized crime as a necessary by-product of effective unionism, the DeVito/Mamet treatment of Hoffa's life correctly portrays the capitalist government's relentless vendetta against the union leader as an attack on the Teamster union.

In 1960, Robert F. Kennedy wrote in *The Enemy Within*: "Quite literally your life—the life of every person in the United States—is in the hands of Hoffa and his Teamsters.... As Mr. Hoffa operates it, this is a conspiracy of evil." The capitalist demonization of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) and its foremost leader fueled the 1989 government RICO takeover of the union and is echoed today by media opinion makers and culture vultures. A "conniving, deceitful scoundrel," sermonizes veteran labor reporter A.H. Raskin, "Hoffa was the engineer of his destruction, brought down by the intemperance of his disdain for conventional morality" (*New York Times*, 20 December 1992). The often (but not this time) insightful Murray Kempton adds that Jimmy Hoffa was an "anti-social rebel" with "lawless contempt for society's speed limits. He was out to own the road and so is the interstate truck driver" (*New York Newsday*, 20 December 1992).

Dan Moldea, author of the anti-union book *The Hoffa Wars*, is incensed that "the film depicts Robert Kennedy as obsessed, egomaniacal and power-bungry.... The Kennedy brothers waged a legitimate and effective war against Hoffa, the underworld, and their associates" (*Washington Post*, 27 December 1992). Another reviewer complains that "The movie is so enamored of its subject it's as if Hoffa were a paid consultant."

The liberals accuse Jimmy Hoffa of everything from driving Marilyn Monroe to suicide by taping her sexual liaisons with Bobby and Jack to taking out a contract on JFK himself, according to New York columnist Jack Newfield. It's not enough that Hoffa's dead—they just keep right on killing him. The liberal critics launched their barrage because Hoffa lifts a corner of the sheet of lies covering their Kennedy icons. In contrast, *Village Voice* critic J. Hoberman captures how in *Hoffa*, like *Malcolm X*, "another American martyr has been identified, another historical mission labeled, and another chunk of popular memory defined.... The embodiment of trade unionism in the colorful persona of Hoffa only goes to show that the movie fills the void of the movement it represents." *Malcolm X* and Hoffa are popular figures today precisely because they defied and were hated by the rulers of this country.

*Hoffa* demolishes the myth of Kennedy white knights vanquishing the corrupt labor racketeer. But the movie also divorces Jimmy Hoffa from the historical events that built the IBT and shaped



Liberal Democrat Robert F. Kennedy (left), former counsel for Joe McCarthy, spearheaded anti-labor witchhunt against Teamster leader Jimmy Hoffa.

its leadership. Fire bombings, strikes and deals with the Mob are jumbled together as equally necessary steps to forge the union. Thus *Hoffa* obscures the real source of Teamster power—the organizing of hundreds of thousands of over-the-road drivers—and blots out the people who made it happen, a hard nucleus

of striking workers in pitched combat against scabs and cops. In Sylvester Stallone's anti-union *F.I.S.T.* (1978), such militancy is the result of Mafia influence. *Hoffa* also plays fast and loose with the truth, as the Teamster organizer's first strike victory is portrayed as the product of a deal with the Detroit

### CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE REAL HISTORY OF THE TEAMSTERS

of Minneapolis Trotskyist communists (members of the Communist League of America, later to become the Socialist Workers Party), political forerunners of the Spartacist League.

#### Class War, Teamster Style

No Teamster epic is complete without a scene of mass struggle, with hundreds

Mob, and his links to the Mafia are sealed on the heels of defeat in a bloody battle with scabs.

But *Hoffa* is frankly pro-union—one strike scene reasserts that people who cross picket lines are lowlife scabs. As Jack Nicholson's Hoffa leads his ranks into battle, he tells a fretful reporter, "Every struggle has its casualties. The



Teamster convoy blocks downtown Philadelphia bus terminal during 1983 Greyhound strike. Teamsters don't like scabs, finks and feds!

point is what has been lost and what has been gained." Such basic points are lost on most union officials today. But the confused and bloody fight ends in tragedy, inducing Hoffa to turn for support to Carol D'Alessandro, a composite of various gangsters who surrounded the real Hoffa. "Never happened," says Kempton: "Such epic pitches of the class war were not for Hoffa and an AFL Teamsters union that was too strategically well-placed to need them."

In fact, the industrial organization which gave strategic power to the over-the-road Teamsters came out of one such battle, but it was neither Mob-inspired nor tragically defeated. The real-life event that inspires such Hollywood portrayals was the "Battle of Deputies Run," a key episode in the 1934 Minneapolis Teamster strikes that smashed the open shop and set the stage for the explosive growth of the IBT.

This militant organizing drive was led by the CLA Trotskyists—Vincent R. Dunne, Carl Skoglund, Farrell Dobbs—who understood that the government with its police and courts is an agency of capitalist rule. The Trotskyists rejected arbitration and relied instead on the collective strength and consciousness of the working class. They issued the first daily strike newspaper in American labor history, and organized mass pickets and roving squads to shut down virtually the entire city.

And they didn't cave in when the police recruited hundreds of deputies to move scab cargo in the city's wholesale market district. When a scab truck began to move out under police protection in the early morning of 21 May 1934, hundreds of strikers armed with clubs poured out of a nearby AFL building to stop it. In pitched battles over two days, dozens of cops were sent to the hospital and two strikebreaking deputies were killed. The trucks stayed put. The Minneapolis Teamsters hung tough, and were victorious later that summer in their drive to unionize Minneapolis truck drivers and related warehousemen because they had a battle-tested leadership with a class-struggle program.

Dunne and Dobbs then turned their attention to organizing the intercity drivers that the Teamsters union had until then ignored. IBT chief Dan Tobin, who had tried to break the Minneapolis strikes, initially opposed this campaign to sign up the over-the-road drivers as an infringement of the union's exclusive craft character. But he changed his tune when new members—and dues money—began to pour in. The author of a well-written recent Hoffa biography gives credit where it belongs: "the Trotskyites were generally, if quite begrudgingly, being recognized by other Teamsters as having been the greatest single cause of the appreciable IBT growth in this period—from 75,000 in 1933 to 277,000 in 1937" (Arthur A. Sloane, *Hoffa*, MIT Press, 1991).

In Detroit, Jimmy Hoffa was assigned to lead this spreading campaign, and in 1937, as Dobbs was founding the Central States Drivers Council to represent over-the-road drivers in 12 states, Hoffa went to Minneapolis to work directly under him. "I was studying at the knees of a master," Hoffa later said.

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