

## Moscow: Falling Out Among Thieves

# Yeltsin Meets His Paymaster

APRIL 6—Fresh from the fiasco of his failed bonapartist power grab two weeks earlier, Russian president Boris Yeltsin jetted to Vancouver last weekend to hobnob with U.S. president Bill Clinton. The idea was to bolster Yeltsin's flagging prospects for a popular vote of confidence in the upcoming April 25 referendum. As Clinton pumped Yeltsin's hand, the American exhorted his Russian ally to "Win! Win!" But for Yeltsin and his imperialist patron, this could be not a "win-win" but a "lose-lose" situation. For both are playing with a weak hand.

In a joint press conference, Clinton and Yeltsin repeatedly banged away at the theme that theirs was an equal "partnership." But there was no mistaking that this was a meeting between a groveling lackey and his cheapskate imperialist paymaster. In an unusually candid piece in the *New York Times* (5 April), Thomas Friedman offered a delightful account of the whole affair: "The meeting had all the drama of a bankrupt businessman applying for a bridge loan from the president of a failing S. & L.... Before, Russian leaders presented their American counterparts with a threat. Now, they just present them with a bill."

Clinton's ostentatious promise of a \$1.6 billion "aid" package amounted to little more than credits to buy surplus American wheat and funds to dismantle Russian nuclear warheads, with a few "munificent" gestures thrown in, like 3,000 summer vacations in the U.S. and 450 (!) new houses to be apportioned among the tens of thousands of Russian army officers whose families face homelessness when they are demobilized. Any Chicago ward heeler could tell you that this is not going to buy the beleaguered Russian president a lot of votes.

And Yeltsin needs all the help he can get right now. Days after declaring "presidential rule" on March 20 and forcing a head-on confrontation with parliamentary leader Ruslan Khasbulatov, would-be Tsar Boris barely survived an impeachment vote in the Russian Congress. Even with Khasbulatov pushing a backroom deal aimed at leaving a chastised Yeltsin in place, Congress voted overwhelmingly, 617 to 268, to oust the president, falling narrowly short of the required votes. In a rambling speech to the Congress, Yeltsin was forced to concede "mistakes" in his monetarist economic program and to promise a more "socially oriented" policy.

The Congress also moved to gut Yeltsin's proposed referendum, which had been intended as a plebiscite to rubber-stamp dictatorial rule. Now voters will also be asked if they "approve of the Government's social and economic policies." Since living standards have fallen by 40 percent over the past two years, the answer to that question is likely to be a resounding "no." As David Shieler wrote in the *New York Times Magazine* (4 April), "After all, there is a clear answer to the question: Are you better off under Yeltsin than you were under Brezhnev?"

But the implicit al-



Ellis/Reuters

Yeltsin begs Clinton for a bailout at Vancouver summit. Above, Russian riot police face off against anti-Yeltsin protesters in Red Square.



Hosetros/NY Times

ternative offered is to support the nationalist-corporatist policy of the Civic Union opposition led by vice president Aleksandr Rutskoi and factory manager spokesman Arkady Volsky, with the Stalinist "patriots" and their "red"-brown coalition in tow. If Yeltsin and his Harvard-sponsored economic whiz kids, whom Rutskoi once referred to as "hoys in pink pants," want to shut down whole swaths of industry in the name of privatization, Rutskoi-Volsky's program for maintaining heavy industry requires a massive infusion of international investment—which isn't forthcoming. Russian workers have no stake in the outcome of this referendum, the continuation of a power play between two wings of the capitalist counterrevolution.

Various leftists like Workers Power in Britain argue that Yeltsin is "the main enemy," claiming the imperialists are solidly behind him, since "for Washington and London it is vital to support Yeltsin." Actually, the imperialists are in a quandary over how to proceed in Russia. Yeltsin's chief support rests in Washington, but the Clinton administration is watching its words. At the PR event in Vancouver, Clinton vowed to support Yeltsin "as long as" he is "the duly-elected president of Russia." And how long will that be? The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (21-22 March), mouthpiece of the Swiss bankers, queried in a front-page editorial "Save Yeltsin—Under All Circumstances?" and cautioned on the need to "hold open other options."

Anger over economic chaos and the IMF-dictated "shock treatment" imposed by Yeltsin permeates the population. While the Western press played up a strike threat to back Yeltsin's power bid by the CIA-sponsored Kuzbass miners union leaders, a Reuters survey found virtually no support for Yeltsin's policies even among this relatively privileged sector. "In 1991 we were promised improved living conditions and a stable economy," griped one Kuzbass miner. "All we got was the speculators." As for the military, an officer in the elite Dzerzhinsky Division said bluntly: "I don't believe any of them. If someone would pay me a good salary, give me an apartment and get me a car...that's who I'd serve."

So the stalemate continues. We noted last issue that both Yeltsin and his opponents moved rapidly to defuse a potential all-out confrontation for fear of "chaos in the streets" and to avoid drawing in the disgruntled armed forces. For the moment the heat has been reduced as both sides gear up for the referendum. But the present paralysis cannot last long. As we noted last issue: "In the absence of proletarian struggle, Russia is barreling toward bonapartist dictatorship, one way or the other, whether under Yeltsin or Rutskoi or more extreme nationalist/fascist forces" ("Dogfight in Moscow," WV No. 572, 26 March).

Karl Marx had a good deal to say about the phenomenon of bonapartism.

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Camp Followers of Counterrevolution

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# Mass Protest Against Racist Courts



Photo at left: Ten thousand demonstrators in Fort Worth, March 28, protesting probation for skinhead convicted in shotgun murder of Donald Thomas, a black man.

## Lynch Law in Texas

In Waco, Texas an army of federal agents armed with automatic assault weapons, helicopters and M-1 Abrams tanks, as well as megadecibel killer blasts of country music and Tibetan chants,

surround the compound of the Branch Davidians. They are targeted for the "crime" of being a non-conformist dissident religious sect. Meanwhile, the Waco-based Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

has been staging hate-fest rallies against the first black resident of a public housing project in the East Texas town of Vidor. Massive state repression, racist terror and lynching, legal and extralegal, are par for the course in this old slave state.

Thus, it was a real act of courage when over 10,000 mostly black protesters marched through downtown Fort Worth, Texas on March 28, chanting, "Justice! Justice! Justice!" The target of the marchers' outrage was the grotesque, slap-on-the-wrist sentence of ten years' probation given to a racist skinhead convicted of the 1991 "drive-by" shotgun murder of a black man, Donald Thomas. Three teenage skinheads have been convicted of gunning down Thomas as he stood with white friends outside his Arlington home. But the all-white jury which convicted 18-year-old Christopher Brosky of murder decided that "this might be a man who might be able to turn his life around," and set him loose to kill again.

This blatantly racist sentencing incensed the sizable black and Hispanic population of Dallas/Fort Worth. You can bet that a black or Hispanic man who killed a white person in Texas would get the death penalty, if he even lived that long. Texas has long been notorious for its lynch-law "justice," and ever since the Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, the Texas murder mills have been working overtime, executing 56 people by electrocution and lethal injection.

The most recent victim was Ramon Montoya Facundo, a Mexican citizen convicted of killing a Dallas cop in 1983. Montoya had come within hours of being executed on January 27, but was issued a reprieve to allow the Supreme Court to decide whether to hear his appeal that his confession was improperly obtained. Even the Mexican government, which usually goes out of its way to lick Washington's boots, pleaded for clemency for Montoya, one of 18 Mexican citizens on death rows in the U.S. But on March 24 his appeal was rejected, and the next day he was dead by lethal injection.

Only two days before Montoya's execution, the state of Texas also executed Carlos Santana, a citizen of the Dominican Republic. Pleas for mercy from the Dominican government were ignored. Santana's case received wide attention, especially after a TV interview with him aired on the Spanish-language *Telemundo* network. The day before he was scheduled to die, Dominican students at City College of New York sat down on Broadway, chanting "Save the life of Carlos Santana!" Later that night, as the clock ran down, 500 people rallied at the Broadway Temple church in Washington Heights, listening to speeches against the death penalty.

But the Supreme Court rejected Santana's two last-minute appeals. On March 23, Santana's body was flown from Texas

to New York, where hundreds attended his wake, prior to flying the body back to Santana's homeland. A speaker noted that Santana's execution came at the same time as the acquittal of ten racist thugs who beat a Dominican youth, Manuel Mayi, to death in Queens in 1991.

State-sanctioned racist murder is rampant in Texas: we won't forget the heinous cop killing of Loyal Garner, a black man stopped by the police in the East Texas piney woods on Christmas Eve 1988, then beaten to death for asking to make a phone call from jail. In 1990, black prisoner Clarence Lee Brandley was freed after nearly ten years on death row for a crime he didn't commit. Now the vengeful Texas judicial system is charging him for non-payment of child support during the time he was in jail on frame-up charges (*National Law Journal*, 1 March)!

One of the only states with no public defender system, Texas glaringly demonstrates that the death penalty is state-sanctioned racist murder. Amnesty International devoted an entire section of its report, *The United States: The Death Penalty*, to Texas, the state with more people, and the highest proportion of poor black, Hispanic and Native Americans, on death row than any other in the nation.

In Illinois, the large Mexican community and death-penalty opponents are fighting to save Manuel Salazar, a gifted young Mexican artist accused of killing a cop who beat him nearly to death. With pro-death Democrat Clinton in the White House, and Congress gearing up to pass the hair-raising omnibus crime bill, it's clear that escalating state repression is the bipartisan "solution" to the desperate conditions of the inner cities.

The communist movement has a long tradition of fighting against the racist death penalty by mobilizing international working-class protest. In the Scottsboro case of the 1930s, protests organized by the Communist-affiliated International Labor Defense saved the lives of nine black youths framed up on rape charges and sentenced to Alabama's electric chair.

Today, the case of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, radical black journalist and lifelong fighter for black equality, symbolizes the barbaric racism of the U.S. executioners. The Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee are fighting to save Jamal's life through an international campaign of protest. We need to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party to lead the overthrow of capitalist class rule and guarantee the rights of all the oppressed. Abolish the racist death penalty!

\* \* \*

To join the campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal, contact the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, New York 10013, (212) 406-4252. ■



TROTSKY

### Honor Warsaw Ghetto Fighters!

April 19 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising. As the last survivors of what had been the largest Jewish population center in Europe were being dragged off to the gas chambers, Communists and other leftists in the Ghetto launched a battle which succeeded in holding off elite Nazi troops for weeks. Ever defiant, the Ghetto fighters rallied in an underground bunker on May Day, the international workers holiday, to sing the



LENIN

*Internationale. In honor of these heroic fighters and the heritage of militant socialist struggle they exemplified, we reprint an excerpt from Czerwony Sztandar (Red Flag), the newspaper of the Jewish Trotskyists in the Warsaw Ghetto, in response to the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.*

The first workers state is fighting for its existence. The fate of the Russian Revolution and—to a considerable degree—the fate of the international revolution weigh in the balance. The workers of the whole world follow with bated breath the course of the greatest class war in the world, and their hearts and souls are with the Red Army.... Under which slogans will the Soviet bureaucracy lead the war? Under patriotic or revolutionary ones, "democratic" or class?

The history of the last 17 years, beginning from the foundation of the theory of "socialism in one country," and especially the "gains" of the last six years—the "people's front," betrayal of the Spanish revolution, the Moscow trials, the pogrom against the Bolshevik elite, the restoration of the officer caste in the Red Army, triumphant reaction in all spheres of Soviet life, the propagation of the cult of [tsarist generals] Suvorov, Kutuzov and similar "heroes," the assassination of Trotsky and the friendship with Hitler, all Stalin's crimes—the whole Soviet Thermidor would have had no sense if the Soviet bureaucracy were to show itself suddenly willing and capable to conduct revolutionary war....

We defend the workers state regardless of the Stalinist regime, as we defend every workers organization from the blows of the class enemy regardless of the reformist regime ruling it.... The war of the USSR against Hitler—is the war of the international proletariat, it is our war!

"We accept the workers' state as it is and we assert, 'This is our state.' Despite its heritage of backwardness, despite starvation and sluggishness, despite the bureaucratic mistakes and even abominations, the workers of the entire world must defend tooth and nail their future socialist fatherland which this state represents" (Trotsky, 1932).

Long Live the Red Army!

Long Live the Russian Revolution!

Long Live the International Revolution!

—"Our War," *Czerwony Sztandar* (July 1941)

## WORKERS VANGUARD



Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

*Workers Vanguard* (USPS 098-770) published biweekly, except 2nd issue August end with 3-week interval December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. Domestic subscriptions \$7.00/24 issues. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint

No. 573

9 April 1993

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# Bloody Communalism and Stalinism in India

21 January 1993

Dear Comrades,

Hope you are aware of what is happening in India since December 6. Conditions are far better in West Bengal than elsewhere, though the threat remains. Arson and killings occurred in certain areas of Calcutta as you may have noticed. An unholy alliance of the police and the criminals (which included Hindus as well as Muslims) was responsible for the incidents. It was not, in fact, a question of the temple vs. mosque. The miscreants needed some pretext for uprooting the slum-dwellers and occupying the land for building five to seven-storeyed buildings there and exploited the occasion for the purpose with the connivance of the police and administration. The victims belong to both religious groups and what is common to them is their poverty and slum-dwelling status. I believe, the same has happened in other cities like Bombay, Ahmedabad, etc. The predominantly Muslim areas in West Bengal like Malda and Murshidabad have remained remarkably peaceful which belies the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] propaganda that the Muslim minority in India seeks and provokes unrest.

It must be, however, emphasized that the Indian working class has not been freed from the chains of religious bigotry because the opportunist misleadership of the so-called socialist and communist parties does not care for their real political education and is itself incapable of educating them properly. So the workers remain vulnerable to the propaganda of religious fanatics. BJP-led Bharatiya Majdoor Sangha, though the youngest of all trade-union organisations, is the second largest one now—it is second only to the Congress (I)-led INTUC (Indian National Trade Union Congress). Communal killings in industrial centres like Kanpur, Bombay and Ahmedabad show that all is not well

with the trade-union movement.

Though common people belonging to both religious groups have behaved well, sometimes very heroically in saving and helping their neighbours, the role of the political parties is opportunistic and shameful. Particularly, the Congress (I) seems ready to commit political suicide. As the Muslim voters have turned definitely against the Congress (I) after the Dec. 6 events and the aftermath, the Congress (I) people have adopted the language of the BJP (no more appeasing the Muslims, etc.). That will enable the BJP to gain all the electoral support of the Congress (I) along with its usual votes and it is likely to win if fresh elections take place. It was the Congress that paved the way for the Muslim League and made the partition of India on religious basis inevitable in the 1940s. Now it is obliging BJP. I am afraid India is heading for becoming a Hindu version of Iran and Afghanistan. They have banned a number of fundamentalist organisations but that is simply a farce as the government machinery remains deeply infiltrated by Hindu fanatics.

Fraternally,  
U.N. Roy

\* \* \*

21 February 1993

What happened in Bombay is now no secret to liberate people in India. Press in Maharashtra was not free to print the truth, but then Bombay is a cosmopolitan city and Shiva Sena's original (initial) targets were not Muslims but non-Maharashtrians. So the press in other states has not hesitated to reveal their crimes and that of their allies. As for the events in Calcutta, the press has published a lot attacking the police and the miscreants. BJP is trying to raise its ugly head in West Bengal but has not achieved much success so far. While there was much trouble in certain parts of Calcutta,



As terror continues to sweep India, scores were killed in Calcutta last month as a bomb leveled two apartment buildings.

the rest of the state remained peaceful. There were attempts to create trouble here and there, but they failed. The Congress (I) has shown its bankruptcy all along by identifying with BJP ("no appeasement of Muslims" etc.) though the official line on paper is different.

Fraternally,  
U.N. Roy

WV replies: Comrade Roy points to the close connection between communalist terror and capitalist greed and venality. Underworld elements and land speculators may also have been responsible for the bomb explosions which killed more than 300 people in Bombay and at least 60 in Calcutta in March. As for the Indian police, even the *New York Times* (4 February) finally detailed their murderous role in the anti-Muslim pogroms in December and January instigated by the Hindu-chauvinist BJP and the fascist Shiv Sena gangs. At the same time, as we noted in "Hindu Fascists Whip Up Religious Slaughter" (WV No. 567, 15 January), the overriding character of the violence then was communalist (and state) terror against the Muslim minority.

The fragmented Indian bourgeoisie and its main party, the Congress (I), have always played the Hindu-chauvinist card. Criminally, as comrade Roy points out, the Indian left shares political responsibility for the communalist violence which threatens to tear apart the multiethnic and multinational proletariat of the subcontinent. In their popular-frontist tailing after one or another sector of the Indian bourgeoisie, the Communist Party (CPI) and the CPI (Marxist) foster illusions in the "secular democracy" of Indian capitalism. In a joint statement, the two CPs seek to be "left" advisers to the corrupt bourgeois politicians of Congress (I): "By refusing to fight the BJP, Congress (I) is not only digging its own grave, but preparing the country to be led to the funeral pyre of secular India" (*People's Weekly World*, 20 February).

Even worse, in a pamphlet entitled "Sangh Parivar's Hindutva Versus the Real Hindu Ethos," the CPI proposes to fight the BJP-led communalists by upholding the "real Hindu ethos," quoting the Ramayana on how the Hindu god Ram honored his pledges and citing "Gandhiji" (Mahatma Gandhi) as the correct interpreter of Ram Rajya (Kingdom of Ram)! Meanwhile the Stalinists call on the repressive forces of the Indian capitalist state. CPI(M) Politburo member Prakash Karat, writing in *Frontline*

(1 January), demands: "The Army has to be deployed effectively wherever necessary to put down communal violence." This is the same army which is carrying out the murderous repression of Kashmiri Muslims and Punjabi Sikhs—with the support of the CPI(M)! Karat does not even mention the working class, appealing instead for a popular front with the Congress (I), as he calls for "the united effort of all secular and democratic forces to rouse the people's patriotic and secular consciousness."

Tagging along behind this "secular" popular front to demobilize the working class are Indian supporters of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat. USec supporter Achin Vanaik writes:

"All parties (including the Congress) committed to the secular legacy of the National Movement must, for the first time, forge a common front to carry out sustained mobilization in major towns and cities against Hindu nationalism.... What matters is not this or that policy—for example, the banning of communal organizations—but the determination of the government to impose its moral-political agenda."

—*New Left Review*  
(November-December 1992)

The "moral-political agenda" of the Congress (I) government today centers on the increased immiseration and exploitation of the already impoverished Indian masses on behalf of the imperialist International Monetary Fund. Government bans against Hindu-chauvinist organizations, so cavalierly dismissed by Vanaik, will serve only as precedents to ban workers organizations in the future.

The USec's appeals to the hollow "secular legacy" of Gandhi and Nehru's National Movement, which paved the way for the communalist horrors of the 1947 Partition, demonstrate the Mandelites' utter inability to combat the all-sided national, caste and sex oppression in the Indian prison house of peoples. Likewise in Sri Lanka, the USec's NSSP, which orbits around the bourgeois Sinhala-chauvinist SLFP, refuses to demand withdrawal of troops from the Tamil areas in the North and East.

The burgeoning communalist terror in the Indian subcontinent can only be stopped through workers revolution led by an authentic Trotskyist vanguard. As we wrote in January: "What is required is the Trotskyist program 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." ■

## Editorial Note

### DSA: Noske's Grandchildren Groove on Murder of Rosa Luxemburg

As the imperialist rulers trumpet the "death of communism," their social-democratic assets are trying to cash in. The Democratic (Party) Socialists of America (DSA) are showing up as guests at public forums organized by groups like Solidarity and the International Socialist Organization. The Committees of Correspondence (CoC), a social-democratic split from the reformist Communist Party, has even set up a DSA liaison committee—probably to test the waters for fusion with the heirs of Michael Harrington.

But some social-democratic youth were a bit too frank about their own counter-revolutionary heritage. Among the Labor Day greetings in the DSA's *Democratic Left* (September-October 1992) was a sick ad: "WE KILLED Rosa Luxemburg Youth Section Right-wing, Beer Drinking, Meat Eating, Stodgy Social Democratic Caucus." In its following issue *Democratic Left* ran an apology that explained: "The ad's ill-advised humor derived from a long-standing, absurd charge by Trotskyite organizations that DSA 'killed' Rosa Luxemburg. In fact, Rosa Luxemburg is a hero of the socialist

movement and some DSA members have named children in her honor."

In fact, Rosa Luxemburg, the founding leader of the German Communist Party, was arrested and murdered in January 1919 along with her comrade Karl Liebknecht by the German *Freikorps*, the rightist paramilitary force (forerunners of Hitler's fascists) brought in by the Social Democratic government to smash the Berlin workers in the so-called Spartacist uprising. Justifying the slaughter, SPD defense minister Gustav Noske remarked, "someone has to be the bloodhound." Reformists and feminists have erected a mythology around Rosa Luxemburg that disappears her revolutionary struggle against capitalism and her defense of the young Soviet workers state.

Chicago DSA leader Jay Hughes told *Workers Vanguard* that such "jokes" are common among DSA youth, who are wont to sing: "Just like the tree that fell on Rosa Luxemburg, we shall not be moved." This cesspool is the political destination for the fake-lefts who supported capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and are now Bill Clinton's "socialist" lap dogs. ■



# U.Sec's Labourite Nationalization Fetish Camp Followers of Counterrevolution

"Yeltsin's coming to power in Russia heralded the spread of restorationist 'shock therapy' in the former Soviet republics," warns Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat (USec) in *International Viewpoint* (March 1993). "Down with Yeltsin's Coup!" proclaims the British Workers Power group, in a March 23 resolution of its League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) on Yeltsin's abortive bonapartist power grab last month (*Trotskyist Bulletin*, April 1993). Strange noises are emanat-

strike—should have been supported and taken up by the workers organisations."

On every front—from East Germany to Poland, the Baltics and Russia—these groups gave open or back-handed support to the forces of counterrevolution. Even now, the USec's *International Viewpoint* (March 1993) provides a platform for erstwhile idol Jacek Kuron—who as Walesa's labor minister is chief strikebreaker for the Solidarność regime—to pontificate on the question of "social justice"!

Spartacist

Power insists that "Russia remains a degenerated workers' state." Mandel continues to call the East European countries "bureaucratic post-capitalist societies."

How do they pull off this sleight of hand? On Russia, as elsewhere, the Mandelites claim that the Stalinist bureaucracy remains in place, and talk of "the rule of the old nomenklatura." The Polish Mandelites vituperate against the "red bourgeoisie." Likewise the followers of the late Nahuel Moreno argue, in

Sigma

But the bureaucracy as a caste has now been shattered. Yeltsin himself demonstratively broke from the Communist Party—the bureaucracy's "apparatus of domination," as Trotsky called it—well before becoming Russian president. He offered himself up as spokesman for the new layer of yuppie speculators and Western-oriented entrepreneurs.

So on what basis do these pseudo-Trotskyists claim that East Europe and the ex-USSR are still workers states? Their bottom line is that nationalized property remains. The USec takes this to its logical absurdity when it comes to the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany).

The East German economy was formally subordinated to Bonn and the Frankfurt bankers on 1 July 1990, when the D-mark became the common currency. Later that year, East Germany's state apparatus was literally dissolved and its territory bodily incorporated into the Greater German imperialist state. More than half the population in the east is now unemployed, the planned economy is gone, virtually every social service created by the workers state has been swept away, and the *Treuhand* which oversees the "sale" (read: destruction) of industry is a direct agency of the capitalist banks. Yet Mandel & Co. still insist, "Even in the former GDR capitalism has not yet prevailed" (*International Viewpoint*, March 1993).

In Walesa's Poland, the private sector accounts for almost half of all non-agricultural production and employs 42 percent of the labor force. Yet the Polish Mandelites around the newspaper *Dziś!* speak of "our economy" and raise as their maximum demand: "An immediate program for rescuing the economy and defending state industry" (*Socialist Action*, June 1992). So they want to "rescue" the new bourgeoisie's economy! Meanwhile the Catholic church is the predominant social force in society, dictating religious indoctrination in the schools and a sweeping ban on abortion (to which the Mandelites capitulate with a lame call for "the right to choose motherhood"!).

Arguing that foreign capital is "essential to any restorationist project," *International Viewpoint* continues its obfuscation:

"It is not necessary for all the means of production to be privatized for this to be achieved nor that the only logic at work is capitalist. But capitalist logic must prevail. Such a state of affairs does not exist in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union now and there is no inevitability that it will exist."

We have described the situation in the ex-USSR and East Europe as "capitalism without capital." But the absence of significant imperialist investment does not

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**workers power**

... of this mutation, Yeltsin will be without doubt its midwife. It was necessary without hesitation to oppose the coup, and in this respect to struggle alongside Yeltsin, but beyond this it is also necessary to say in advance what the effects would be of the application of the 500 day reform he supports and to judge him on his acts.

Revolutionary Marxists should have stood in the front ranks of those fighting to smash the 19 August coup. At the same time there could be no political support for Yeltsin. With

USec (left), Workers Power and other fake-Trotskyists took their place with Yeltsin on barricades of capitalist restoration in August 1991 (top). Today in the name of nationalized industry they back forces pushing corporatist capitalism.

ing from the fake-leftists who fell over each other trying to scramble (mostly vicariously) onto the Yeltsin barricades in August 1991. What's going on?

Now that the Soviet workers are being plunged into dire poverty by capitalist restoration, these groups are desperate to "disappear" their former support to the Yeltsinite "democrats." At a recent talk in New York, Mandel volubly denied that his organization had sided with Yeltsin in August 1991 (see WV No. 571, 12 March). And Workers Power would now have us believe that it took no side between Yeltsin and the "Emergency Committee": "Just as Russian workers should have opposed both Yannaev and Pugo's August 1991 coup and Yeltsin's previous coups [in August and December 1991], so now they should oppose Tsar Boris' latest measures."

But they weren't screaming "Down with Yeltsin!" when he seized on the botched August 1991 coup attempt by Gorbachev's former lieutenants to seize the reins of power and usher in the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state. When it counted, the USec, WP and their ilk all lined up with Yeltsin and the forces of capitalist counterrevolution.

The USec loudly proclaimed: "It was necessary without hesitation to oppose the coup, and in this respect to struggle alongside Yeltsin" (*International Viewpoint*, 16 September 1991). *Workers Power* (September 1991) wrote, "Revolutionary Marxists should have stood in the front ranks of those fighting to smash the 19 August coup," while a 22 August 1991 LRCI resolution stated baldly: "Yeltsin's call—for active resistance against the coup and for a general

Uniquely, we of the International Communist League opposed capitalist restoration across the board. Against Walesa's bid for power in 1981, we demanded: "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!" In Germany in 1989-90, we alone unambiguously proclaimed: "No to Capitalist Reunification!" At the time of Yeltsin's August 1991 countercoup, we declared, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" We fought for the Trotskyist program of proletarian political revolution, from East Berlin to Warsaw and Moscow, to defeat the counterrevolutionary onslaught and oust the bankrupt Stalinist bureaucracies.

And when it was clear that the forces of capitalist restoration had succeeded in destroying the workers state, we told the bitter truth: "The period of open counterrevolution ushered in by Boris Yeltsin's pro-imperialist countercoup in August 1991 has, in the absence of mass working-class resistance, culminated in the creation of a bourgeois state, however fragile and reversible" ("How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled," WV No. 564, 27 November 1992). We raised the call, "For Socialist Revolution to Sweep Away Yeltsin Counterrevolution!"

In the difficult conditions of counterrevolutionary chaos, we Spartacists have sought to cohere a Soviet nucleus around the banner of Trotsky's Fourth International.

**"Disappearing" the Counterrevolution**

To cover the tracks of their treachery, the fake-Trotskyists hide in a fantasy world which denies that the counterrevolution has conquered in East Europe and the former Soviet Union. Workers

their journal *Correo Internacional* (September 1992), that "to the extent that the relations of property and production haven't changed, the bureaucracy cannot renounce power, from which it is directing the transition."

The idea that the Stalinist bureaucracy remains intact in the wake of—and indeed presides over—capitalist counterrevolution is of a piece with the view that Stalinism is "counterrevolutionary through and through," or in the Workers Power version, "invariably a counterrevolutionary force." Such Stalinophobic arguments were used to justify the refusal to defend the Soviet Union whenever it was concretely posed. Trotsky, in contrast, characterized the bureaucracy as a brittle, contradictory caste, parasitically resting on the proletarian property forms of the degenerated workers state.



USec pushed "Solidarity with Solidarność" and hailed "socialist" Jacek Kuron (right), now chief strikebreaker for Walesa's clerical-nationalist regime.



Der Spiegel

WORKERS VANGUARD



# Berkeley Spartacus Youth Club Protests "Right to Life" Bigots

BERKELEY, April 1—When the Spartacus Youth Club heard that anti-abortion bigots planned to meet on the Berkeley campus, we swung into high gear to mobilize an effective protest against the "right to life" provocateurs. On less than two hours notice, the SYC mobilized a picket line demonstration. Teams of comrades agitated in the dining halls and dormitories to pull students out to demonstrate in defense of abortion.

Emboldened by the murder of Dr. David Gunn by right-wing terrorists in Pensacola, Florida, a group calling itself "Berkeley Students for Life" thought they could hold a meeting unchallenged on the Berkeley campus. Instead they were met by a spirited picket of some 30 demonstrators in front of Barrows Hall chanting, "Defend the clinics! Take a stand! Free abortion on demand!"

A Spartacist supporter dispatched to inform a meeting of the "Committee for Justice for Jerrold Hall and John Henry Owens"—a black youth killed by a BART cop, and a victimized survivor—of the urgent protest found ready support. The Committee shut down their meeting to join the demonstration; members of the Revolutionary Trotskyist League and the Revolutionary Workers League spoke at the protest. Supporters of the Spartacist League and the Labor Black League also participated.

In her speech, Kathleen Hayes from the Spartacus Youth Club noted that the campus liberals of "Berkeley Students for Choice" knew about the "right to life" meeting, but did nothing:

"Pro-choice" groups like NOW think they have the wind in their sails because their man's in the White House, and there is nothing for them to do but get a 'pro-choice' Supreme Court justice. That this is grotesque and wrong was demon-

strated by the murder of Dr. Gunn. These terrorists have to be stopped. Next time, let's mobilize to run them off campus!"

The Bible-thumping, woman-hating squads of Right to Life and Operation Rescue should be run off campus, and everywhere else they dare to stage their provocations. Since losing the overtly sympathetic ear they had in the Reagan/Bush White House, they have escalated their campaign of intimidation, terrorism and murder. Abortion rights will be won through struggle against the anti-abortion terrorists at the clinics and on the streets, not by maneuvers in the courts

or lobbying Democrats in Congress.

The SYC says "Labor: Defend the Clinics!" What's needed are large, organized contingents of unionists and all supporters of abortion rights mobilized to stop the right-wing thugs. The bourgeois feminists of NOW are pushing Congress for a "freedom of choice" bill (grotesquely including a "parental consent" clause). But even formal legality of abortion denies poor, minority and working-class women access to safe abortions, if there are no doctors to perform them, no clinics left to perform them in and they don't have the money to afford them.

That's why the Spartacist League fights for "Free Abortion on Demand!" and "Free Quality Health Care for All!"

Capitalist society rests in part on the oppression of women, its bedrock being the family, which relegates women to bearing children and household drudgery. Women's liberation is possible only through workers revolution to destroy capitalism, making obsolete and replacing the social functions of the family. The Spartacus Youth Club appeals to young people who want to link up with the working class to bury this rotten capitalist system. Join us! ■

## Defend the Clinics—Free Abortion on Demand!



April 1: Berkeley Spartacus Youth Club initiated united-front demonstration against a meeting of anti-abortion bigots emboldened by the recent murder of abortion doctor David Gunn. Young Spartacus photos

# Michigan Padlocks Schools

Nothing reflects the accelerating decay of capitalism like the fact that the system of secular public education, a product of 19th century liberal enlightenment, is now targeted for destruction by the ruling class. And in this class society, the impact is concentrated among working-class and minority youth. Under Democrat Clinton or Republican Bush, the result is a bipartisan budget of cutbacks everywhere.

Last month the school system literally collapsed in the impoverished Michigan district of Kalkaska County, where the school board closed the entire system ten weeks early because of a \$1.5 million deficit, leaving over 2,300 students out in the cold. State administrators for Republican governor John Engler cynically responded by suggesting that the district could have kept the schools open by cutting over a million dollars from "unemployment costs for laid-off teachers" and "pension credits" (*Ann Arbor News*, 25 March).

The only major budget increases in Engler's budget are for more cops and prisons, while the counties are starving for funds for essential services. Kalkaska County is a poor rural area where many retirees live and so, not surprisingly, proposals to raise property taxes for schools were rejected three times by the voters.

The condition of Michigan schools is a reflection of the capitalist economy, where the once-dominant auto industry has abandoned Detroit for greener profit pastures, throwing the heavily black

proletariat into mass poverty almost overnight.

In New York State, meanwhile, the Commissioner of Education Thomas Sobol announced with fanfare a plan to make work a part of the educational system, requiring students to work a certain number of hours on a real-life job in order to qualify for graduation.

Amid applause from "progressive" educators, Sobol spoke of solving "a crisis for many young people in the transition from education to employment" (*New York Times*, 25 March). But his proposal fell apart immediately when it dawned on school officials that they would have to find jobs for over 300,000 seniors every year. The capitalists aren't hiring raw youth because there are no jobs in this bankrupt economy.

In Los Angeles, the recent agreement by the teachers union to swallow a 10 percent pay cut in lieu of launching a strike against the school board—a "deal" foisted on them by Democratic Assembly Speaker Willie Brown and the union hureaucrats—has only accelerated the decline of the state's school system at all levels. Sensing the lack of organized labor opposition, and the miserable collapse of the recent UC Berkeley TA strike, the University of California regents has cut staff pay by 5 percent while student fees have soared. The fee increases will of course drastically raise the barrier to college education for minorities, who make up 43 per-

cent of the state's population.

And in San Francisco, parents in the affluent yuppie districts are massively opting out of the money-starved public school system and sending their kids to expensive private schools which have the funds for good teachers, textbooks and equipment.

World-famous physicist Albert Einstein, whose views reflect the positive side of 19th century humanist liberalism, once spoke of the "crippling of the social consciousness of individuals" as the "worst evil of capitalism," ascribing it to "an exaggerated competitive attitude" and the "worship [of] acquisitive success" ("Why Socialism?" from *Out of My Later Years*, 1950). He concluded that "there is only one way to eliminate these grave evils, namely through the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system which would be oriented toward social goals."

In *The ABC of Communism*, Nikolai Bukharin and Yevgeny Preobrazhensky noted that in bourgeois society the educational system first of all "inspires the coming generation of workers with devotion and respect for the capitalist régime," and "creates from the young of the ruling classes 'cultured' controllers of the working population." In contrast, the young Soviet republic created the unified labor school and established that "instruction and education must be united with labor and must be based upon labor.... We can more easily un-



Kalkaska, Michigan: Students sent home as schools shut down for lack of funding. AP

derstand our natural surroundings when we get to work upon nature in our attempts to modify it."

But for this, a socialist revolution is necessary. Conversely, as a signal of the recent counterrevolution in the former East Germany, the vengeful bourgeoisie did away with the polytechnical educational system for all youth—the capitalists see no need to teach girls how to be lathe operators—and the old class-track system with its elite *Gymnasium* for the privileged has returned (along with witchhunting thousands of teachers out of their jobs).

The lesson for today's youth is: without a working-class revolution, school's out. ■



# Bloody Outcome of U.S. Anti-Soviet Crusade



## Afghanistan: Mujahedin Rape Kabul

AP

Girard/Asiaweek

On March 8, rival Afghan warlords signed a pact in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad. Under this "power-sharing" plan, the bloodthirsty arch-reactionary Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is designated "prime minister." But the Pakistan-engineered "peace" settlement is likely to be short-lived—Hekmatyar immediately declared that his chief rival, Ahmad Shah Masud, would have to go as "defense minister." This presaged continued fighting as the fractious alliance of Pashtun and Hazara tribesmen led by Hekmatyar tries to seize the spoils

Above left, cutthroat *mujahedin* (holy warriors) devastated Afghan capital of Kabul early this year with U.S.-supplied rockets. Right, victory by Islamic fundamentalists means women are imprisoned in the stifling *chadori*.

by refugees fleeing 15 years of civil war. The death toll among the civilian population sometimes exceeded 300 a day, while more than 750,000 people have fled Kabul in the last year.

Reuters news agency (10 February) reported one refugee's lament that the *mujahedin* are shooting Afghanistan back into the Middle Ages. Already under Masud, all women have been driven out of public employment and into the stifling *chadori* (head-to-toe veil) while the entire populace has been subjected to a reign of terror and plunder. "The destitute tell harrowing tales of murder, mutilation, torture, abduction or rape at the hands of defence ministry or rebel forces," writes a London *Guardian* correspondent (26 February). Now the upper hand is held by Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami thugs, who regularly murder innocent refugees and flay war prisoners, and the Iranian-allied Shi'ite group Hezb-i-Wahadat led by Khomeinist fanatics.

In the early 1970s, Hekmatyar gained notoriety for throwing acid at women students at Kabul University whose legs and faces were uncovered. Outlining his vision of a "strict Islamic state" in 1989, Hekmatyar said: "Democracy and Islam do not go together.... A group of wise men will adapt the laws to Islam, all alcohol will be banned, women will stay at home once again, and mullahs will have more power" (*New York Times*, 6 March 1989). Last spring Western reporters watched as a Hekmatyar warrior shot down a Red Cross worker on the outskirts of Kabul, declaring, "I don't want infidels in Afghanistan" (*Washington Post*, 23 April 1992). Now, thanks to the deal brokered by Hekmatyar's patron, Hamid Gul, former head of Pakistan's secret Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), these horrors will be visited on Kabul.

The all-sided bloodbath in Afghanistan is the rotten fruit of American imperialism's unremitting drive to undermine and destroy the Soviet degenerated workers state. From the moment the Soviet-allied People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came to power in April 1978, Washington started fun-

neling arms to *mujahedin* guerrilla groups based in Pakistan. In December 1979 the Soviet Army directly intervened in the civil war to prevent the collapse of the petty-bourgeois nationalist PDPA regime, whose meager modernizing reforms—land redistribution, education of women, freedom from the *chadori*, lowering of the bride price—had outrun the social forces prepared to implement and defend them against medieval reaction.

Democratic U.S. president Jimmy Carter then drastically escalated aid to the Afghan counterrevolutionaries, launching what became the biggest covert CIA operation in history. Still smarting from its ignominious defeat in Indochina five years earlier, the U.S. government launched a drive to hurry the "Vietnam syndrome." Behind Carter's hypocritical anti-Soviet "human rights" campaign, including the U.S. boycott of the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics, came the biggest military buildup in human history, including a massive increase in nuclear weaponry aimed at the Soviet Union. Afghanistan, where American-supplied weapons could be used to kill Red Army soldiers, was the hottest hot spot of Cold War II. Carter and The Company didn't give a goat's fart for the "self-determination" of Afghanistan: their goal was the destruction of the Soviet Union.

Carter's proxy war in Afghanistan marked the start of Cold War II. All organizations claiming to stand for revolutionary Marxism were put to the test: For or against the defense of the Soviet Union? For or against imperialist-sponsored counterrevolution? Maoist currents openly lined up with Washington. Stalinist parties fractured between anti-Soviet "Eurocommunists" and reformist adherents of Moscow's line of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. Fake-Trotskyists joined the anti-Soviet chorus and denounced the Kremlin "invasion," some ludicrously arguing that it made their bogus "Soviet defenseism" harder to maintain! The only group that consistently and emphatically stood with Soviet troops and their Afghan allies against CIA-backed Islamic coun-

terrevolution was the international Spartacist tendency, now the International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section.

It is now acknowledged by both officials of the former Gorbachev regime in Moscow and their counterparts in Washington that the battle for Afghanistan was a decisive turning point in the demise of the USSR, which despite Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration embodied gains inherited from the October Revolution of 1917. Today the Islamic counterrevolutionaries mobilized in a *jihad* (holy war) against Communism in Afghanistan are continuing their deadly work around the globe, laying waste to Kabul and spreading fundamentalist terror from Tadjikistan to Egypt and Algeria, and possibly New York City.

### Imperialism's Jihad

The Spartacists greeted Soviet intervention in Afghanistan with the headline: "Hail Red Army!" Not only was Moscow's military action fully justified by the need to militarily defend the Soviet workers state's southern flank, but it also opened up the possibility of liberating Afghanistan's masses—



Der Spiegel

**Bloodthirsty CIA-armed reactionary Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, now prime minister of Afghanistan.**

of war from Masud's Tadjik guerrillas and the militia of Uzbek general Abdul Rashid Doestani. Doestani has been frozen out of the new arrangement as a former "Communist" and infidel.

Holy hell rained on the population of Kabul during January and February as rival factions of fundamentalist Islamic *mujahedin* ("holy warriors") battled for control of the nominal capital of a fracturing Afghanistan. For the third time since the fall of Soviet ally Najibullah last April, medievalist reactionaries armed with U.S.-supplied modern weapons poured mortar fire and rockets into residential communities in a conscious effort to drive out a population flooded



Eaton/LA Times

**Moscow: the grave of a Soviet soldier killed in Afghanistan. Honor the Red Army men and women who did their internationalist duty!**



especially women—from feudal oppression and tribal backwardness reinforced by imperialism. We demanded: "Extend social gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!" (WV No. 247, 11 January 1980). Noting that this ran straight up against the Stalinists' program of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, we warned that Moscow might betray by withdrawing from Afghanistan, and said: "Only a proletarian political revolution in the USSR can truly restore the Red Army and the Soviet state to its internationalist and revolutionary mission."

Recently released Soviet documents, as well as some "insider" memoirs of the CIA's Afghan operation, confirm that the civil war was an imperialist dagger thrust at the Soviet state, and the Moscow leadership knew it. According to Soviet Communist Party Political Bureau minutes from early 1983, Kremlin leader Yuri Andropov saw no basis for compromise with the United States over Afghanistan. Countering Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko's proposal for a "political agreement," Andropov said: "Our main opponent here is American imperialism, which understands full well that it has lost its position in this particular corner of the international arena. That is why we cannot make any concessions" (*Washington Post*, 16 November 1992).

By 1984 the Red Army and its PDPA allies had essentially reduced the *mujahedin* forces to demoralized remnants, as we reported in "Red Army Mops Up CIA's Afghan Feudalists" (WV No. 370, 11 January 1985). But then Washington suddenly shifted gears and vastly expanded its "aid." Why? A two-part series in the *Washington Post* (19 and 20 July 1992) on the "CIA's Covert Afghan War" reported:

"An intelligence coup in 1984 and 1985 triggered the Reagan administration's decision to escalate the covert program in Afghanistan, according to these Western officials. The United States received highly specific, sensitive information about Kremlin policies and new Soviet war plans in Afghanistan."

What was this information? The November 1992 *Post* series on "The Afghan Archive" reports that under the new general secretary Gorbachev, "By October 1985, the Politburo had worked out a new line on Afghanistan. The aim, according to Politburo minutes, was to 'speed up the withdrawal' of Soviet troops while assuring the survival of a 'friendly' regime in Kabul" through "a more vigorous prosecution of the war in the short term."

Washington's Afghan war was a *bipartisan* undertaking. In 1984 the Democratic Congress tripled the Republican administration's proposed appropriations for the Afghan reactionaries. House Democrat Charles Wilson from Texas said: "There were 58,000 [American] dead in Vietnam, and we owe the Russians one." By the time the Soviets left Afghanistan the CIA's Afghan "freedom fighters" had received (by official estimates) more than \$2 billion in military hardware, a figure reportedly matched by Saudi Arabia and supplemented by other U.S. allies like China and Egypt. At the height of Washington's proxy war against the USSR, the *mujahedin* were receiving up to 65,000 tons of war matériel annually. The *Post* quotes a Western official saying that the escalation beginning in 1985 "was directed at killing Russian military officers."

Instead of Korean War-era Soviet and Chinese arms, the *mujahedin* began receiving state-of-the-art weaponry made in the USA. Despite the U.S.' claim that it no longer engaged in assassination, Washington dispatched sniper rifles via Pakistan which were requested for the purpose of killing Soviet generals. Despite American condemnation of indiscriminate terror in Beirut, the *Post* reports that Washington supplied C-4 plastic explosives: "Some *mujaheddin* trained at the CIA-assisted guerrilla schools used the materials and training

Afghan women armed with Soviet AK-47s.

Thousands volunteered for women's militia, fighting for their rights and their lives.

Withdrawal of Soviet troops was betrayal of Afghan women, and of the Soviet Union.



supplied to carry out a number of car bomb and other assassination attacks in Kabul...." In June 1986, seeking to counter the Soviets' effective use of helicopter gunships against the guerrillas, Reagan ordered the CIA to begin distributing Stinger heat-seeking, shoulder-fired missiles to the *mujahedin*.

Though the technology to neutralize the Stingers was available, the Soviets didn't employ it. This was a *political* decision that undermined Soviet battlefield performance. Gorbachev came to power pushing a series of policy changes: "restructuring" (*perestroika*) of the Soviet economy, "openness" (*glasnost*) in Soviet society and "new thinking" in international affairs. This "new thinking" amounted to Soviet *retreat* on a global scale: the cutoff of arms to leftist guerrillas in El Salvador, aid cutbacks for Sandinista Nicaragua, Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia, the pullout from Angola of Cuban troops fending off South Africa's army of racist apartheid, one-sided nuclear arms reductions by the USSR.

As part of this strategy of surrender, Gorbachev's Politburo decided in November 1986 to get out of Afghanistan within two years. The withdrawal was completed on 15 February 1989. "At CIA headquarters in Langley, operations officers and analysts drank champagne," reported the *Post*.

#### ICL Backs Heroic Resistance to Mujahedin Cutthroats

"The Red Army withdrawal from Afghanistan is a cold-blooded betrayal of the Afghan and Soviet peoples," we declared (see "Battle for Afghanistan," WV No. 471, 14 February 1989). The Moscow bureaucracy's attempt to trade Afghan blood for good will in Washington only whetted the appetites of the imperialists, who remained intent upon the destruction of the entire Soviet Union. Inside the USSR, it strengthened pro-capitalist forces. The Red Army pull-out was an important link in the chain of events that led up to the collapse of the USSR: nationalist civil war in the Caucasus, counterrevolution in the Baltics, capitalist reunification of Germany, Boris Yeltsin's pro-capitalist counter-coup in Moscow. According to Gorbachev's foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, "The decision to leave Afghanistan was the first and most difficult step. Everything else flowed from that" (*Washington Post*, 16 November 1992).

The ICL solidarized with the Afghan masses who waged the bitter struggle for survival in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal. On 7 February 1989 the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), the class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the SL/U.S., sent a letter to the government of Afghanistan

offering "to organize an international brigade to fight to the death" to defend "the right of women to read, freedom from the veil, freedom from the tyranny of the mullahs and the landlords, the introduction of medical care and the right of all to an education." Though this offer was declined, the ICL raised over \$44,000 to aid civilian victims of an all-out *mujahedin* offensive later that year against Jalalabad, the Afghan city closest to the CIA's guerrilla bases in Pakistan. This attack was defeated (see "Report from Heroic Jalalabad: Front Line Afghanistan," WV No. 482, 21 July 1989).

#### Fake-Left: Confusion and Capitulation

Moscow's intervention produced deep turmoil, confusion and capitulation across the spectrum of the left internationally. Various impostors who try to pass off their Stalinophobia as Trotskyism eagerly joined the imperialist chorus calling for Soviet withdrawal, and supported the *mujahedin* either enthusiastically (followers of Nahuel Moreno and of Pierre Lambert) or shamefacedly (followers of Tony Cliff). In Britain a grouping called Workers Power split from the "state-capitalist" Cliffites, declaring the Soviet Union to be a workers state while condemning the Soviet Afghan intervention as "counterrevolutionary" and seeking a mythical Third Camp between the combatants (see "Afghanistan and the Left," WV No. 475, 14 April 1989).

The ostensibly Trotskyist United Secretariat led by Belgian professor Ernest Mandel came down simultaneously on all sides of the issue: the British and French USec sections initially called for "Soviet troops out" but withdrew this openly pro-imperialist slogan later on: the Australian and American SWPs

backed the Soviet/PDPA forces, although the latter later flip-flopped out of fear of sounding like Spartacists. In January 1980 the USec adopted a resolution that condemned Moscow's intervention, denounced the Moscow bureaucracy for its disregard of the "national sentiments" of Afghans and opposed the "annexation of new territories," while declining to call for Soviet withdrawal. Yet 16 months later the USec issued a statement calling "For an End to the Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan!"

So what had changed, or—in Mandel's case—what was the "new world reality"? It was *Poland*. During 1980 and 1981 the rise of Lech Walesa's *Solidarność*, a pro-capitalist nationalist movement masquerading as a "labor union," made counterrevolution "respectable" among leftists susceptible to the pressure of imperialism's anti-Soviet war drive. Those chary of hacking woman-hating fundamentalists in Afghanistan could easily get behind *Solidarność*, on the grounds that ten million Polish workers can't be wrong. And once they lined up behind Wall Street and the Pope on Poland, supporting the CIA/*mujahedin* anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan was just a matter of consistency.

For Mandel's American followers a new (or was it just another?) low was registered last fall in an article titled "War and Tragedy in Afghanistan" by Tom Barrett, an editor of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism (BIDOM)*, September 1992. The article appeared just as the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT), publisher of *BIDOM*, was liquidating into *Solidarity*, an explicitly anti-Soviet and anti-Leninist organization. The article retails lies and CIA disinformation from the Western media, much of which had already been disowned: "the Soviet army turned to terror tactics against the Afghan people, including chemical warfare, cluster bombing, and napalm." Afghanistan was Moscow's "Vietnam-like quagmire," a hopeless attempt to crush a popular revolt led by *mujahedin* whom Barrett likens to the National Liberation Front that fought U.S. imperialism in Vietnam!

Barrett grotesquely labeled the PDPA government "a regime whose tyranny differed only quantitatively from that of Pol Pot of Cambodia." An example of such "tyranny"? "Decreeing coeducation"! Further, in the spirit of USec pundits who in 1979 lectured Iranian women that the veil was a symbol of "liberation," the *BIDOM* article denounces the PDPA for trying to ameliorate women's subjugation by lowering the bride price: "Such seemingly restrictive traditions were actually protective mechanisms for women" against divorce, etc. So why not raise the bride price? Barrett echoes America's paternalistic slavemasters, who argued that chattel slavery "protected" the laborer from low wages, unemployment, homelessness, etc. In fact the Red Army was the best "protective mechanism" Afghan women ever saw.

continued on page 10



ICL waged campaign on behalf of besieged Afghan city Jalalabad.

WV Photo



# Usec...

(continued from page 4)

in itself make a country non-capitalist, as much of neocolonial Africa shows. Nor does the presence of widespread nationalizations—by the logic of these arguments, Third World nationalist regimes (which use state action to build up a domestic bourgeoisie) might have been labeled workers states. Indeed, in the mid-1960s, Italian Usec leader Livio Maitan foresaw the "passage to a workers state" through a "cold" process (not involving revolutionary mass mobilization) in Nasser's *Egypt* and *Burma*—and even the West African states of Guinea and Mali, which hardly had the beginnings of a proletariat!

State-owned collectivized property, central planning and state monopoly of foreign trade are indeed the defining features of proletarian property forms—the necessary economic foundations for the development of a classless, socialist society on an international scale. But to the extent state property remains predominant in the former Soviet-bloc countries, it is not organized through a central plan (in the USSR, the planning principle was done away with in 1988) nor is there a state monopoly of foreign trade. Even in state enterprises in the ex-USSR, the factory managers act more and more like outright owners, with decisions relating to production and pricing being made autonomously and inter-enterprise relations based more on barter than on central directives.

In our recent article "Russia's New Exploiters" (WV No. 572, 26 March) we noted: "Marxists fight to defend the industrial base of the country, and thus oppose the wholesale 'privatization'—meaning shutdown—of productive capacity." But only through the prism of social democracy, which claims that the bourgeois state is "class-neutral" and promises a gradual, parliamentary road to "socialism" through incremental nationalizations, is the question of nationalized industry *per se* primary. As we recently noted in regard to the Revolutionary Workers League, which likewise argues that the ex-USSR remains a workers state on the basis of nationalized property: "Like the Labourite social democrats, the RWL elevates nationalized property to the highest pedestal—and remains utterly indifferent to the key question of *which class rules*" ("RWL: Mitosis of a Cult," WV No. 570, 26 February).

In positing nationalized property as defining a workers state, these groups fundamentally *deny the Leninist understanding of the state*. As Lenin explained in *The State and Revolution*, "the state is a 'special coercive force'.... And from it follows that the 'special coercive

force' for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, of millions of working people by handfuls of the rich, must be replaced by a 'special coercive force' for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (the dictatorship of the proletariat)."

Today we are talking of counterrevolution. Let's look at the question from the other end. The Bolsheviks seized power in Russia on 7 November 1917, yet major industry was not nationalized until late in 1918. In the interim, as Lenin noted, "petty-bourgeois capitalism prevails in Russia" ("Left-Wing Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality," May 1918). So what was the class nature of the Soviet state between November 1917 and the autumn of 1918? Lenin was categorical, declaring in his October 1919 article, "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," that 8 November 1917 was "the first day of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

The key question was who held state power, whose class interests did their armed bodies of men serve? If industry remained under the ownership of the bourgeoisie, albeit under workers control, for a period of time, there was no doubt that from day one of its rule, revolutionary soviet power served to suppress "the profiteer, the commercial racketeer, the disrupter of monopoly"—the forces Lenin termed "our principal 'internal' enemies." The Red Guards in power served the interests of the workers. In Yeltsin's Russia, the new counterrevolutionary *bourgeois* state seeks to suppress the proletariat in the interests of the profiteer and commercial racketeer.

If nationalization is the *sine qua non* of a workers state, then those who claim that Russia today is still a proletarian state must perforce hold that Bolshevik Russia was *not* one before the autumn of 1918, or, for that matter, after the introduction of widespread petty capitalist commodity production with the New Economic Policy of 1921.

The Bolsheviks, as the conscious vanguard of the proletariat, made clear their intent to collectivize the economy from the outset. But even in the case of social overturns led by petty-bourgeois Stalinist forces, the nationalization of the means of production did not necessarily mark the creation of a (deformed) workers state. In China and South Vietnam, protracted and bloody civil wars meant that by the time the peasant-based Stalinist forces took power, there was no viable section of the bourgeoisie left with which they could form a popular front and they were thus forced to rule in their own name. Yet those remnants of the Chinese bourgeoisie which did not immediately flee to Taiwan were not expropriated until late in the Korean War (1953). The Hanoi regime did not col-



The dictatorship of the proletariat: Red Guards and Baltic fleet sailors in Moscow, October 1917.

lectivize the South until three years after its 1975 victory.

One instance where nationalization of the economy was decisive in determining the class character of the state was Castro's Cuba (see "Cuba and Marxist Theory," *Marxist Bulletin* No. 8). Castro's victory in 1959 led to the crumbling of the corrupt Batista dictatorship and its armed force, and brought to power a peasant-based guerrilla movement. In the absence of a proletariat politically organized as a class for itself and with its ties to the old bourgeois order ruptured, the petty-bourgeois Castro regime was initially autonomous from the two major classes in society. A state in the Marxist sense—armed bodies of men committed to the defense of a definite set of property forms—did not exist. Faced with the relentless pressure of U.S. imperialism, which effectively demanded that the new regime commit suicide, the Castroites were compelled in the fall of 1960 to expropriate the U.S. sugar companies, the Cuban bourgeoisie and its Mafia patrons, thereby defining the new Cuba as a deformed workers state.

In general, in periods of revolution or counterrevolution, economic forms can be, and often are, at variance with the political character of the state, of the *ruling class* in society. Trotsky explicitly addressed this question in "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?" (November 1937):

"Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalized economy. But what does such a type of temporary conflict between the economy and the state mean? It means a *revolution* or a *counterrevolution*. The victory of one class over another signifies that it will reconstitute the economy in the interests of the victors."

In his decisive analysis of Stalinism, *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky likewise emphasized that denationalization would not follow immediately on the heels of a counterrevolutionary victory, laying out a scenario which fairly accurately depicts what is now taking place:

"In the sphere of industry, denationalization would begin with the light industries and those producing food. The planning principle would be converted for the transitional period into a series of compromises between state power and individual 'corporations'—potential proprietors, that is, among the Soviet captains of industry, the émigré former proprietors and foreign capitalists."

## Tailing the Corporatist Wing of Counterrevolution

The logic of fetishizing nationalized property leads the Usec to tail after those forces who appear to be defenders of state property against the pro-IMF monetarist policies of Yeltsin and his former economic adviser Yegor Gaidar—notably the Civic Union bloc of militarist vice president Aleksandr Rutskoi and industrialist power broker Arkady Vol'sky, which represents the powerful fac-

tory managers. In her article in the March 1993 *International Viewpoint*, Usec Soviet "expert" Catherine Samary sees "a tense but real convergence of interests between workers and managers."

The same issue has an article by Russian Usec supporter Alexander Buzgalin, a leading light in Boris Kagarlitsky's social-democratic Labor Party. The Labor Party braintrusts the Moscow bureaucracy of the former official trade-union federation (FNPR), which is a bloc partner of the Civic Union, and it joined with Rutskoi's Free Russia party in a recent "Congress of the Democratic Left." Buzgalin hails this as a "real breakthrough" and explicitly lauds the Civic Union: "The economic programme worked out by experts close to the GC [Civic Union] would indeed be far more helpful in getting the country out of the crisis than Gaidar's monetarist experiments." Samary and Buzgalin don't bother to mention that Civic Union leader Rutskoi ran point for the Yeltsin regime in breaking last summer's strike by Russian air traffic controllers.

Workers Power similarly argues in the March LRCI resolution that the parliamentary opposition to Yeltsin is somehow anti-capitalist:

"Yeltsin wants to destroy the rival power of the Congress and the Supreme Soviet. As long as this alternative power exists it will obstruct his programme of mass privatisation of industry and agriculture, it will impede the emergence of the mass unemployment and factory closures that Yeltsin knows are necessary if Russia is to go back to capitalism."

WP ludicrously paints the ragtag Russian Unity bloc (the parliamentary voice of the fascist-infested "red"-brown coalition) as a powerful force seeking a "restoration of bureaucratic central command planning," while claiming the Civic Union is a confused and "heterogeneous" formation: "Either they would have to adopt the very measures over which they brought down Gaidar or they would have to roll the restoration process backwards and restore key elements of the central command economy."

In effect, both the Usec and Workers Power argue that Yeltsin/Gaidar represent the *only* program for bringing capitalism to Russia and thus any opposition, however hesitant or contradictory, is objectively anti-capitalist. In fact, there is *no* significant political force in Russia today which argues for a return to bureaucratic central planning. Where Yeltsin/Gaidar, based on the new layer of yuppie "entrepreneurs" and speculators, seek to ram through rapid privatization of large state enterprises, which in practice would mean an end to state subsidies and thus widespread closures, the factory managers call for privatization under the enterprise "work collectives," over which they exercise control. They seek to maintain state subsidies because they aim to be the *new owners* of the factories. The Civic Union has a well-worked-out program for *corporatist capitalism*, aiming to maintain a stream-

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# Yeltsin...

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when a national "savior" raises himself above the contending cliques and factions to embody the common interests of the ruling class. In his 1852 pamphlet *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, on the seizure of power by the upstart emperor who ruled France from 1850 to 1871, Marx noted how during the revolutionary "June days" of 1848, "all classes and parties had united in the party of Order against the proletarian class," and the parliament was hailed for having "'saved' society from 'the enemies of society'." But two years later, having failed to forge a coherent counterrevolutionary policy, the parliament-

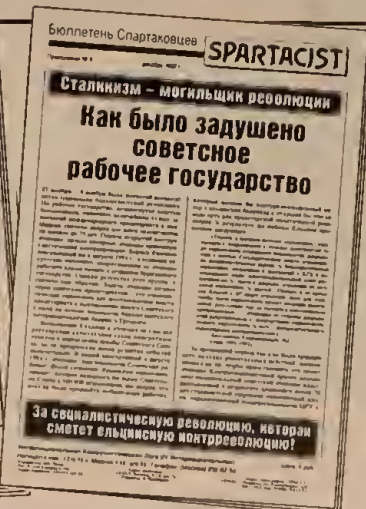
ary party of order was summarily dismissed after trying to impeach the "president" Louis Bonaparte:

"The aristocracy of finance, therefore, condemned the parliamentary struggle of the party of Order with the executive power as a disturbance of order, and celebrated every victory of the President over its ostensible representatives as a victory of order."

In short, as the London *Economist* wrote on 29 November 1851, "The President is the guardian of order, and is now recognised as such on every Stock Exchange of Europe."

Less than two years ago, during the "August days" of 1991, international finance capital hailed Yeltsin's "struggle for democracy"; a solid majority of the Russian parliament closed ranks behind Yeltsin against "Communism." Now the

"March of empty pots" in Moscow on International Women's Day, March 8, protested exorbitant food prices.



Issue No. 3 of Russian-language *Blulleten Spartakovtsev* on "The Leninist Party—Tribune of the People," and supplement on "How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled." To order send \$2.50 to Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

lined state-subsidized heavy industry sector as the motor force for building a strong Russian capitalist state (see "Russia's New Exploiters," WV No. 572, 26 March).

Volsky/Rutskoi seek to emulate fascist dictator Mussolini's corporatist state, which boasted of controlling three-fourths of the Italian economy. In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky cites a mouthpiece for the Mussolini regime: "The corporative state directs and integrates the economy, but does not run it, which with a monopoly of production, would be nothing but collectivism." The Russian corporatists seek to make the factory managers the legal captains of industry, while maintaining a strong state and state subsidies to "direct" and "integrate" the new capitalist economy. This too will require imperialist investment, massive layoffs and the whip of repression to regiment the working class. That is hardly an alternative to capitalist restoration.

## The Bankrupt Methodology of Bankrupt British Labourism

The political methodology and program underlying the position of the USec and the other fake-Trotskyists is not crypto-Stalinism, however, but the "Clause IV socialism" of the British Labour Party. This called for "common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange" under the auspices of the British Crown. When Labour was swept into power under Clement Attlee in 1945, the working class entertained enormous illusions that "its" government would implement socialist measures. In the U.S., the right wing of the Shachtmanites argued that Britain in the late 1940s was becoming incrementally socialist.

The Attlee government was faced with a British capitalism which had been in a state of decline for decades and had emerged from World War II with its empire looted and in the process of disintegration. Industries vital to the economy, such as the mines and railroads,

were bankrupt and falling apart. Attlee proceeded to nationalize—by and large with broad acceptance by the capitalist class—only the most inefficient and failing industries, which then continued to operate through heavy subsidies extracted from more productive sectors of the economy and, ultimately, from the pockets of the working class. The end result was the continued impoverishment of the British workers, whose standard of living over the years was to sink to one of the lowest in West Europe.

Originally adopted to counter the influence of the Bolshevik Revolution on the British proletariat, Clause IV was ultimately watered down to the point where today's Labour Party does not even promise to reverse most of the denationalizations carried out by the Thatcher government. We of course oppose the denationalization of industry under capitalism when, as is almost always the case, it means an attack on the union organization, working conditions and living standards of the workers. In neocolonial countries, revolutionaries defend nationalizations which are directed against imperialist holdings, such as Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal in Egypt and Cárdenas' nationalization of oil in Mexico. But we do not defend bourgeois nationalizations in principle (see "Chrysler and the Bankruptcy of Social Democracy," WV No. 247, 11 January 1980).

Yet the perspective of Labourite nationalizations remains the lodestar of the British fake-left and other social democrats who masquerade as "Trotskyists." Indicatively, the USec's British affiliate is today buried deep inside the Labour Party. In the case of the Morenites, what's behind their nationalization fetish is their support to Argentine bonapartist general Juan Perón in the 1950s, who had earned out extensive nationalization of foreign-owned railroads, oil and slaughterhouses. At bottom, what motivates these pseudo-Trotskyist outfits is support to their own bourgeoisie.

It was their fealty to the social democracy which led the USec and the rest to tail behind the imperialist anti-Soviet war drive and to cheer on the same counterrevolutionary forces whose victory they now seek to hide under a rug. The USec rejoiced over the victory of Mitterrand's anti-Soviet popular front in France, which became the ideological spearhead for Cold War II. The Mandelites glorified the Nazi-collaborationist Estonian Forest Brothers and idolized Solidarność ideologue Jacek Kuron. In Czechoslovakia, USec supporter Petr Uhl was even a member of Vaclav Havel's capitalist-restorationist government. For its part, Workers Power solidarized with anti-Communist mobs in East Berlin, called on Thatcher's Britain to aid the ultra-nationalist Lithuanian Sajudis against the Soviet degenerated workers state, and sponsored a speaking tour by a fascist-connected, pro-Yeltsin Russian miner.

Having repudiated the Trotskyist struggle for an independent proletarian vanguard party, these opportunists are driven by inveterate tailism, capitulating to any force that seems momentarily

popular. Twenty years ago, the Mandelites were the loudest cheerleaders for Third World Stalinism, only to flip over a decade later to slavishly tailing anti-Soviet social democracy. Two years ago, they hailed the struggle for "democracy" spearheaded by Yeltsin & Co. and every counterrevolutionary nationalist who claimed to be fighting "Russian domination." Today, with Yeltsin discredited in the eyes of the Soviet masses, they hloe with the corporatist faction of the counterrevolution which claims to be opposed to Western imperialist domination.

From pushing "solidarity with Solidarność" to metaphorically climbing atop Yeltsin's barricades of counter-revolution, the Mandelite United Secretariat—which abuses the name of the Fourth International—hears its fair share of political responsibility for the final destruction of the greatest gain yet of the international proletariat, the USSR, the homeland of the October Revolution. This crime will not be forgotten as a new generation of militants goes on to reforge a genuine Fourth International, one Trotsky would have recognized as his own. ■

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# Los Angeles...

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a racist slur harking back to chattel slavery! Presiding judge Davies disallowed this evidence, stating that "it would create unfair prejudice." It is no wonder that there are grave suspicions among workers and minorities here that these racist cops will walk away from it again. And if there are some convictions, what provocations will the police stage then?

In a plan worked out with Republican governor Pete Wilson, Judge Davies will delay announcing the verdicts for a minimum of three hours while the Police Department, Sheriff's Department and National Guard deploy their forces. For the past few months, Southern California has looked like a staging area for an imminent attack. The entire 7,000-member LAPD has participated in "riot control" exercises in the parking lots of Dodger Stadium, decked out in camouflage khakis and combat boots like an invading army. Last week at Norton Air Force Base near San Bernardino, the California Highway Patrol secretly engaged in their own battle maneuvers, including the tactic of tossing gas grenades into stores containing "suspected looters!"

Even the coroner's office has devised contingency plans for "recovering bodies." After last year's unraveling of capitalist "law and order," the bourgeoisie is deadly serious about crushing any protest. Fanning the flames of racist hysteria with fictional stories of black and Hispanic gangs organizing assaults on the suburbs, the state has the beleaguered working people and impoverished masses squarely in its sights.

Meanwhile, racist cop terror goes unchecked throughout Greater L.A. On March 9, Michael James Bryant, a popular and outspoken barber from nearby Pasadena, was brutally slain by the cops. Bryant was well known in the community for giving free haircuts to low-income teens the week before school starts. His shop had been a gathering place with lively discussion about the case of Rodney King, an area resident and occasional customer. Bryant had been a target of the cops at least since 1989, when he won a police brutality suit against the Pasadena cops and was awarded \$1,500 in an out-of-court settlement.

Witnesses have now come forward to describe how Bryant was killed. In a sickening game of cat-and-mouse replete with racial slurs, the cops alternately beat Bryant and told him to run when he tried to surrender. Screaming for his



Der Spiegel  
**Rodney King, following sadistic cop beating. Right, Sgt. Stacey Koon, smirking during first trial in white enclave of Simi Valley.**  
Sloan/Newsweek

life, Bryant sought refuge in the apartment complex pool, only to be hit by three darts from a 50,000-volt taser gun. He was then dragged from the pool, hog-tied and left to die in the back of a squad car. Resident Teresa Ramirez said one white cop looked her in the eye and mocked, "Ha, ha, ha. That black nigger thought he could swim, huh?" (*Pasadena Star News*, 2 April). One of the cops, Jeffery Sandofur, is a veteran of the infamous 1989 LAPD raid on Dalton Avenue in South-Central, where two well-kept apartment buildings in a black neighborhood were demolished by the vindictive cops, who upon leaving scrawled an ominous warning on the wall—"LAPD Rules."

The threat of naked police-state terror looms over the sprawling ghettos and barrios of Southern California. The 1991 videotaped beating of defenseless black motorist Rodney King by a swarming lynch mob of cops has become the symbol of cop terror USA. The first "trial" of King's tormentors, held in the racist white enclave of Simi Valley, ended in acquittal one year ago and lit the match that set L.A. aflame. Fifty-three people were killed, most of them by the cops, 2,400 injured and thousands more arrested. Now, as rage over this hideous injustice again approaches the boiling point and a blanket of ruling-class repression threatens to smother the minority populations of L.A., it is critical to demand: *Cops, National Guard, army of occupation—out of the ghettos and barrios!*

We wrote in a Partisan Defense Committee leaflet issued last April 30, as a state of emergency was declared and dawn-to-dusk curfew imposed: "The working class must not allow the black population to be isolated—the powerful

L.A. unions such as longshore, aerospace and city workers should organize work stoppages and mass mobilizations to solidarize with and defend the black community as the LAPD looks to spill more blood to 'celebrate' their racist victory over Rodney King." If tomorrow the ruling class unleashes its guns against the minority, poor and working people of L.A., the organized workers movement must respond with militant labor action, including an area-wide general strike.

Key to this defense is a fight against the pro-capitalist union tops, who tie the workers to the Democratic Party and thus stand as an obstacle to the mobilization of the power of labor in the cause of

black emancipation and defense of immigrants. In recent weeks, two potentially powerful strikes of the Los Angeles teachers and Kaiser Permanente hospital workers have been sabotaged by union leaders who have shown their loyalty to their bourgeois masters, who want *nothing* to move in L.A. until the verdict "crisis" is past.

This weekend, at a tiny rally calling for "Unity, peace, jobs and non-violence," local union leaders welcomed Jesse Jackson to town. In a situation which cries out for common class struggle and *real action* to defend the oppressed, Jackson and his popular-front cronies will preach faith in the racist status quo by diverting the seething anger of minorities into votes for the racist Democratic Party. To counsel illusions in reforming this increasingly vicious state disarms the working class and oppressed in the face of their class enemy.

Meanwhile, the upcoming trial of three black youths charged in the vicious and indefensible beating of white Teamster driver Reginald Denny could lead to further racial polarization in this city. Unlike the black nationalists and fake-leftists who enthuse over random lumpy violence against whites, communists understand that the only road to black freedom is through the forging of an integrated revolutionary workers party to smash racist American capitalism and establish a workers government. Under such a government, a workers tribunal would make short shrift of the likes of the killers of Michael Bryant and the thugs-in-blue who beat Rodney King to within an inch of his life. ■

## Hospital Workers: Strike Kaiser!



LOS ANGELES, April 1—Chanting, blowing whistles and surrounding Kaiser Permanente's hospital on Sunset Boulevard, 12,000 workers struck the country's largest HMO today. With premiums skyrocketing, the giant firm made \$290 million in profits last year—but they are offering peanuts to the janitors, clerks, technicians, food workers and other support staff who run the huge system. Especially galling is Kaiser's demand for a blank check to impose "cost reductions" at will.

The workers, members of Local 399 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), are eager to fight. They rejected Kaiser's "last, best final offer" with a massive "no" vote, and swelled spirited picket lines all over town, with over 1,000 strikers at Sunset alone. But the Local 399 tops called just a one-day protest strike, sending everyone back tomorrow.

As the LAPD is parading its SWAT teams, itching to smash any popular outrage over another acquittal of the racist cops who beat Rodney King, the situation cries out for militant, integrated labor action. A sharp struggle at Kaiser could inspire workers and minorities throughout L.A.—the largely black, Latino and Asian members of Local 399 have a unique history of struggle that is respected by workers here.

In the spring of 1990, Kaiser workers rejected a deal cooked up by the 399 tops and struck for nine days. That June their fellow local members in Janitors for Justice stood up against the LAPD and won a contract after workers, including women with babies, protesting the union-busting building owners were brutally beaten in glitzy Century City. And a year ago, as cops and National Guard swept through the ghetto and barrios in the wake of the trial verdict, the only unionists to protest were the members of Local 399, who marched through the largely Central American Pico-Union area.

This last February, teachers union bureaucrats derailed a strike which could have sharply polarized the city along class lines. As the city waits for the next verdicts, the Democratic Party mayor and supervisors have lined up a massive cop threat against the working people of L.A. Every time a union calls a protest or picket in L.A. these days, the LAPD "labor squad" comes out in force.

It will take mass picket lines that shut down all Kaiser facilities tight and are respected by the Teamsters and nurses to bring Kaiser to its knees. And that could spark a labor upsurge and give the LAPD a long overdue lesson in the power of the working class.

## Afghanistan...

(continued from page 7)

Barrett is so busy conjuring up a fictitious all-Afghan struggle against the Soviet behemoth and its local puppets that he "forgets" the real imperialist intervention in Afghanistan: not once does the article even mention the CIA's massive infusion of money, arms and personnel to the *mujahedin*, without which aid there would have been no civil war after 1984. That's quite a slip for an American "socialist" living in "the belly of the beast," as Che Guevara put it. *BIDOM* and its adherents want to whitewash U.S. imperialism's dirty war in Afghanistan to cover their own trajectory to State Department socialism. In contrast, we Trotskyists honor Soviet *afgansky* (war veterans) for carrying out their internationalist duties, and condemn their Stalinist political leaders (both Gorbachevite and "hardliners") who capitulated to imperialism.

### The Russian Question Pointblank

The almost universal failure of leftists—except for the International Communist League—to take a forthright

stand against imperialism in Afghanistan starkly illustrates the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the world proletariat—and its tragic results. That the 1989 retreat from Afghanistan helped pave the way for the counterrevolutionary disaster that destroyed the Soviet Union is recognized by both the imperialist CIA and the Stalinist bureaucrats who brought it about. The urgent tasks posed for revolutionary communists by imperialism's anti-Soviet Afghan war were to *unconditionally defend the Soviet workers state while fighting to build a Trotskyist party to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy through working-class political revolution.*

In the face of the restoration of capitalist rule in Russia and the rest of the ex-Soviet Union, the ICL is seeking to cohere the nucleus of that Bolshevik party in our struggle for the rebirth of Trotsky's Fourth International. The revolutionary party that will be forged in the future struggles of the Soviet working masses will be the party that told the truth about Afghanistan. And when the program of Lenin and Trotsky brings the proletariat to power once again in Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov—then Tashkent, Kabul and Islamabad won't be far behind. ■



# "Felony Lesbianism" in Las Vegas

by John Roemer

This piece first appeared in the SF Weekly (24 March) and is reprinted with permission of the author.

Berkeley porn star Nina Hartley and 10 other women were charged last month with felony lesbianism for performing oral sex at a lingerie show in Las Vegas. The prosecutor invoked an archaic state law banning "infamous crimes against nature" to make his case against the women.

Hartley, a high-profile crusader against censorship of sexual expression, is bemused by her arrest. "What a concept," she laughed in an interview last week. "What century is Nevada in? Have the last 30 years been for naught?"

Trouble began in January at the annual Consumer Electronics Show, where Friends of X-Rated Entertainment held a lingerie show to raise funds for sexual freedom causes. According to the *Las Vegas Sun*, between 800 and 1,500 people paid \$10 apiece to crowd into a large tent behind the Pure Pleasure Book & Video Store to watch the show. Winners of a raffle took off the performers' bikinis with their teeth and some audience members had sex with the performers, the newspaper reported.

As many as 10 undercover cops watched the show and then arrested the women on misdemeanor prostitution charges, even though the event was a benefit and the women were not paid. After prosecutors viewed videotapes of the performance, they decided to take the case to a grand jury, which raised the charges to felonies because the acts involved lesbianism, said John Lukens, Las Vegas' chief deputy district attorney. "The lesbianism did make it a violation of the 'infamous crimes against nature' statute."

But lesbianism alone didn't lead to the charges. "If two ladies wish to have a relationship in the privacy



Nina Hartley, star of *Debbie Does Wolf Street*.

of their home, it may be illegal, but you'd have to find another prosecutor to handle the case. I wouldn't do it," said Lukens.

The grand jury brought the charges because the acts

were done in public and for money in Las Vegas, one of the few counties in the state where prostitution and homosexuality are illegal. "We've never had a live sex show of this type in Las Vegas," Lukens asserted.

Dominic Gentile, the Las Vegas lawyer representing all 11 defendants, said they were singled out for prosecution. "There was heterosexual conduct on those tapes, yet nobody is being prosecuted for that nor was any male audience member arrested," he said.

Gentile also plans to challenge the Vegas law against homosexuality. "I got the best case on earth to test this statute," he said. One of his clients, Beatrice Valle, is a French citizen. "If she goes home she could never be extradited because France abolished its sodomy laws in 1791," he said.

Gentile added that the videotapes are a hot bootleg item in Vegas police circles. One private cop club shows the tape nightly, he said.

The veteran lawyer said he has come to dread taped evidence against his clients. "I'm used to cringing as I watch my mob guy threaten a kill on tape," he said. "But for once I'm delighted to have this tape. It clearly shows a crowd of alleged victims having a wonderful time with nobody holding a gun to their heads to make them watch my clients."

**WV notes.** If convicted, the women face penalties of up to 12 years each in prison. The bizarre escalation of charges in this case is a "family values" vendetta, as the Mafia-founded "sin city" tries to clean up its act and lure mom and the kids with promises of a "wholesome" Disneyland in the desert. According to Bobby Lilly, chairperson of Californians Against Censorship Together, a group defending the "erotic eleven," lawyers' fees are already over \$30,000. Send contributions to help pay the women's legal expenses, made out to "The Freedom Fund," to: Bobby Lilly, 2550 Shattuck Avenue No. 51, Berkeley, CA 94704. ■

## Toronto...

(continued from page 12)

many months that fascists have rallied publicly in the streets of Toronto. On January 19, thirty psycho skinheads organized by the Heritage Front staged a provocation outside a high school anti-racist meeting. Six days later fascists raised the Confederate flag of slavery at a hate-fest near City Hall, where riot cops on horseback came to their aid by charging into protesters organized by the Anti-Racist Action (ARA) group.

Skinhead punks have led murderous assaults on gays, and spray-painted swastikas and hate slogans on synagogues, a leftist bookstore and the Native Canadian Centre. Last year, the abortion clinic of Auschwitz survivor Dr. Henry Morgentaler was destroyed by a bomb only days after the Heritage Front defaced the area with racist graffiti. Fascist thugs forced the closure of two homes for teenage girls through a campaign of violence and death threats. One of the homes was firebombed, while fascists broke into the residence of a black woman staff member and scrawled "N----r, we are here to get you" on the refrigerator.

Once a lily-white bastion of the British Empire, Toronto is now, in the words of a United Nations report, "the world's most multicultural city." People from more than 140 different cultures live side by side, while more than a third of the population speaks a first language other than English. With official unemployment at 11 percent amid a wave of factory closures which has destroyed tens of thousands of union jobs and gutted Toronto's industrial base, the fascists seek to channel desperation among the white urban poor into nativist reaction against minorities. They feel emboldened by the tide of counterrevolution which has engulfed East Europe and the ex-USSR, bringing forth waves of nationalist hatred and neo-Nazi terror against immigrants.

If the Nazis think they can raise

their ugly heads today, it's also because the racists in government have set the stage. New anti-immigrant legislation by the Tory federal government targets refugees as "terrorists," scapegoating them for unemployment. Meanwhile the social-democratic New Democratic Party, which runs Ontario for the Bay Street bosses, has enacted unprecedented cutbacks in health care and welfare while preparing mass layoffs and wage rollbacks for public-sector workers.

The fascists must be stopped! But looking to the racist cops, courts and governments is worse than useless. It will take mass action centered on the multiracial working class: the transit, auto, hospital, city and other unions which have the social power to hit the bosses where it hurts. The union misleaders, who continue to preach allegiance to the NDP even as it cuts the workers' throats, have been criminally inactive in the face of rising fascist terror. Instead, protest action has come almost entirely from student youth, especially in the high schools.

The Nazis have also raised their heads at the downtown campus of the University of Toronto, which has thousands of Asian and other minority students. Last month, fascists were "invited" to a political science class and later "interviewed" live on campus radio. On March 31, supporters of ARA, the Jewish Feminist Anti-Fascist League and the TLC responded with a united-front protest rally on campus. While eleven Nazi goons (flanked by their ever-present police protectors) showed up across the street, dozens of militant protesters chanted, "Fascists off the streets, fascists out of the schools!" and "Cops and Nazis hand in hand—Stop the Heritage Front!"

The ARA group has mobilized hundreds of student youth in anti-fascist protest, representing for many the beginning of a broader political awakening. But while demonstrating to "Smash the Nazi Front," ARA has also fostered illusions in the bosses' government and institutions like the Board of Education.

Thus it calls for the provincial Education Minister to "act now to remove Paul Fromm from the classroom" and to "investigate" other teachers with "racist or neo-Nazi links." A TLC leaflet distributed on April 2 warned:

"We say this fascist can and must be driven out of the school system by a militant, independent campaign of protest and exposure by students, teachers, parents, workers! But the pressure campaign launched by Anti-Racist Action and others to fire this Nazi teacher is misguided and potentially dangerous. Demands on the government to 'investigate' or 'silence' racists will ultimately be used to go after gay teachers, anti-racists, communists and others who 'undermine' capitalist society's 'core values' of Family, God and Straight Sex (after you're married)."

Outrageously, the teachers union is

allowing Fromm, who like all fascists is a murderous enemy of the very existence of unions, to remain within its ranks. The union must expel this Nazi immediately—there's no place for fascists in the labor movement!

A massive display of labor's power, mobilizing blacks, Asians, Jews, gays—everyone the fascists want to destroy—is what is needed to sweep the Heritage Front Nazis off the streets. It would give a real taste of labor's might which, led by a revolutionary workers party, can be galvanized in a fight for socialist revolution to overthrow the decrepit rule of racist capitalism and construct a new society. When the working people run this society, the poisonous fascist vermin will be crushed under our heels for good! ■

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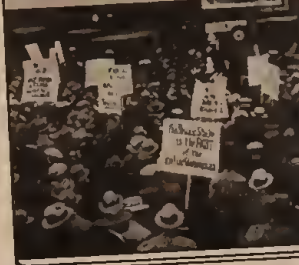
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### James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism

#### Selected Writings and Speeches, 1920-1928





# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Black Community Activist Killed as City Awaits Verdict

# L.A. in the Crosshairs of Cop Terror



Roester/L.A. Times



George Holliday Video

Cops gear up for police-state repression as verdict nears in second trial of LAPD torturers of Rodney King. Labor must defend the ghetto and barrio!

LOS ANGELES—On April 1, attorneys for the defense rested their case in the federal "civil rights" trial of the racist cop torturers of Rodney King. This clears the way for the case to go to the jury as soon as this week. The state is already champing at the bit to unleash an unprecedented military mobilization of its forces in anticipation of another

social explosion when the verdicts are announced. The L.A. city council just passed sweeping new curfew laws. If LAPD chief Willie Williams has his way, South-Central L.A. will resemble Panama City after the U.S. imperialist invasion. "We want people to be able to come out, turn, blink and see an LAPD officer," said Williams. In other cities

around the country, from San Francisco to Atlanta and New York, cops are also provocatively preparing to smash a repeat of the 1992 "riots."

For more than two weeks, L.A. has been bombarded with nauseating testimony claiming, among other things, that King's shattered face was caused not by the pummeling of the frenzied nightstick-

wielding cops, but by a fall to the ground. One item that the jury *did not* get to hear was an excerpt from Sgt. Stacey Koon's book, *Presumed Guilty*, which characterized King's supposed reaction to California Highway Patrol officer Melanie Singer the night of the near-fatal beating as a "Mandingo sexual encounter."

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## Labor, Minorities: Crush the Fascists!

# Nazi Provocations in Toronto

TORONTO—Outraged over a local Nazi outfit's attempts to recruit students to their crusade of racist terror, some 400 youthful demonstrators took to the streets here April 2 chanting, "Smash the Heritage Front!" The protest was particularly directed against Paul Fromm, a notorious fascist organizer who teaches at a suburban school. Jumping up and down in unison as they marched ten abreast, militant young demonstrators chanted, "Paul Fromm, Nazi scum—Students say your time has come!"

The protest came in the context of an ominous escalation of fascist provocations locally and across Canada. On the evening of March 27, fifty fascist thugs giving Nazi salutes paraded outside an anti-racist meeting organized by the Canadian Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Society in downtown Toronto. To enter the meeting, the largely Jewish audience had to file past Nazis screeching "Hail 'The Order'!" and "White Canada Wake Up!" "The Order" is the American

white-supremacist outfit that murdered Jewish talk-show host Alan Berg in Denver in 1984. This shows what the neo-Nazis intend for everyone who isn't part of their demented nightmare of white Christian "civilization."

On January 22 in Vancouver, Nazis of the Canadian Liberty Net and their gang of skinhead punks boasted they would rally and organize a "secret meeting" to "welcome" infamous American Nazi Tom Metzger. But determined contingents of longshoremen, postal workers and other unionists responded to a call by the Trotskyist League of Canada (TLC) and Partisan Defense Committee for a mass labor/minority mobilization to stop the fascists. Nazi skinheads fled in fear upon the arrival at their "secret" meeting place of 500 anti-Nazi demonstrators, part of the 3,000 protesters who earlier occupied the fascists' planned rally site at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

March 27 was the third time in as

*continued on page 11*



April 2: Trotskyist League contingent joins hundreds of Toronto youth in march protesting fascist schoolteacher.

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