

## Israel Starves Palestinian Ghettos

# Down With Zionist Terror Machine!



AFP

Israeli troops fire on Palestinian youth in Gaza Strip. Amid mass slaughter of Palestinians, Zionist regime moves to permanently seal off and strangle Arab areas in Occupied Territories.

## Defend the Palestinian People! For Workers Revolution Against Zionist, Arab Capitalist Regimes!

OCTOBER 30—Only days after the U.S. secured promises to “end the violence” from Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat, Zionist troops slaughtered ten Palestinians in one day. With the death toll topping 140, more Palestinians have been killed in four weeks of the “Al Aksa Intifada” than in the first four months of the original Intifada in 1988. That uprising led to the 1993 U.S.-sponsored “peace” accord between Israel and Arafat’s Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) creating a sham Palestinian “autonomy.” Today, Israel’s rulers are dispensing even with the rhetoric of “peace” and “autonomy” as they unleash U.S.-supplied helicopter gunships and tanks against Palestinians and order troops to shoot at the heads of children.

As pogromist rampages by fascistic “settlers” target Palestinian farmers to prevent the reaping of crops and drive them off the land, Israeli government spokesmen are mooted a plan for “unilateral separation.” Israel would formally annex a huge part of the West Bank

and Gaza Strip where the settlers are concentrated, while permanently sealing off the Palestinian ghettos, even cutting off water and electricity. Arab day laborers whose wages account for one-fifth of all income in the Occupied Territories would be denied access to their jobs in Israel. *This is a plan for strangulation and starvation of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories.*

While the Israeli bourgeoisie is riven over how much access to its reservoir of cheap labor in the Occupied Territories to retain, some such plan was Israel’s aim in the “peace process” from the outset. Immediately following the seizure of the territories in 1967, the (thoroughly bourgeois) “Labor” party, which preceded Barak’s One Israel, proposed a similar scheme called the “Allon plan.” The Zionist rulers began “creating facts on the ground,” encouraging the creation of militarized “settlements” by ultra-chauvinist religious fanatics in strategic parts of the West Bank. Following the 1993 accord, Labor prime minister Yitzhak Rabin escalated the development of the settlements and sped up the construction of “strategic” highways carving up Palestinian areas. Gaza was surrounded by an electrified fence reminiscent of the walls built around the Jewish ghettos in Nazi-occupied East Europe. The Israeli capitalists began importing

tens of thousands of “illegal” immigrants from Southeast Asia and East Europe to do the low-paid, backbreaking jobs previously reserved for Arab laborers.

It is urgently necessary for working people and the oppressed around the world to rally to the defense of the Palestinians. This is a particular responsibility for workers, black people and other minorities in the U.S., the Zionist state’s chief imperialist sponsor and the most deadly enemy of the world’s peoples. U.S. imperialism continues to bomb and starve the Iraqi people while plotting a

further terror strike against some Islamic country as “retaliation” for the attack on the USS *Cole* in Yemen earlier this month. *Down with the bombing and starvation blockade of Iraq! U.S. out of the Near East! All Israeli troops, settlers out of all the Occupied Territories! Defend the Palestinian people!*

### Zionist Israel Founded Through Anti-Palestinian Terror

The potentially genocidal “final solution” Israel’s capitalist rulers have in  
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## “Market Socialism” and the Legacy of Mao



# Whither China?

See Page Three



# Defeat Safeway Union-Busting: Shut It Down!

## Victory to the Summit Teamsters Strike!

OAKLAND—Some 1,600 members of Teamsters Local 439 walked out of the giant Safeway distribution center run by Summit Logistics in Tracy on October 19 in a critical fight against vicious speedup and union-busting. In the strike's first two days, hundreds of unionists clashed with scabs who were protected by the California Highway Patrol and local police. Nevertheless, the strikers successfully stopped some scab trucks. Scab vehicles gunned for the picketers, hitting one in the knee. This is class war. Safeway has schemed for years to weaken and destroy the unions in order to gouge increased profits out of the workers. But the Teamsters union, backed up by the strength of California's multiracial working class,

has the power to crush this attack. **Victory to the Summit strike!**

The unions' power lies in their ability to stop the flow of profits by shutting down Safeway, beginning with the Tracy plant. But Teamsters officials capitulated to the capitalist media's violence-baiting of the strikers by publicly echoing it themselves and diverting the plant-gate pickets into leafletting Safeway stores to urge a consumer boycott. Teamsters spokesman Danny Beagle declared, "This strike will be won or lost at the stores, not at the warehouse" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 19 October). Such "corporate campaigns" are *counterposed* to the strategy needed to win this strike. The Teamsters, the United Food and Commercial Work-

ers union (UFCW) which represents Safeway supermarket workers, and other Bay Area unions must be mobilized to build mass picket lines around the Tracy plant that no one dare cross. The UFCW should be on strike now as an elementary act of class solidarity.

Safeway bosses lyingly claim that the strike has nothing to do with them, even declaring themselves to be "pro-union." This is the company which provoked a 1995 strike by 18,000 UFCW clerks, baggers and butchers in a failed attempt to slash health benefits (see "California Supermarket Strike Beats Back Attack on Health Benefits," WV No. 621, 21 April 1995). Today, Safeway is splitting the cost of scabherding with Summit.

The union-busting attack at Summit is part of a broader capitalist offensive against Bay Area warehouse unions, a strategic sector of the labor movement. Safeway built the Tracy warehouse—one of the largest in the world, serving nearly 250 stores in Northern California, Nevada, Oregon and Hawaii—with the specific aim of busting the union. When the complex opened in 1992, a year after a fire destroyed Safeway's Richmond warehouse, Safeway transferred all work from its previous Bay Area locations to the complex in the Central Valley town of Tracy in an attempt to weed out union activists. Turning the facility over to a separate management firm, Safeway was able to gut the previous union contract. "We lost everything," one veteran warehouse worker said.

When Safeway brought in Summit, a subsidiary of the union-busting British firm Tibbett and Britten, in 1997, the new managers imposed ruthless "production standards," i.e., piecework quotas, as soon as a new union contract was ratified. The spoils for Safeway have been immensely lucrative. "When we were in Richmond," one striker said, "we did 150, 200 cases an hour. Now it's 300 to 400 cases, and the shift runs until the job is done" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 20 October). This means lifting up to 5,000 pounds of product in 35 minutes, for shifts of up to 12 hours under mandatory overtime. "We lost a lot of people" who were fired for not keeping up with the



S.F. Chronicle

**Summit strike picket lines were met with attacks by scabs, cops.**

rate, one striker said. Workers in the mammoth freezers say that piecework quotas force them to work for hours without a break in the sub-zero temperatures. Another Summit worker told the press that Latinos who got jobs there after doing stoop labor in Central Valley agricultural fields say that "this work is for donkeys."

Strikers are demanding lower quotas and longer breaks, as well as reducing the *five years* it takes to reach top pay under a two-tier wage system. Truck drivers are demanding to be paid by the hour instead of by the load, the same elementary union demand which over-the-road Teamsters truckers fought for in the 1930s. Drivers for Summit often have to work 13- to 15-hour days to make ends meet.

In contrast to the strikers' determination, the Teamsters bureaucracy tried to obstruct the strike from the start, desperately seeking not to imperil the electoral fortunes of the capitalist Democratic Party, and in particular those of Teamster-endorsed Al Gore in the pivotal state of California. Summit began hiring more than 1,600 scabs nationally a full *six weeks* before the union contract expired, paying their meals and hotel bills and training them alongside union members. Yet Local 439 and Teamsters

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### Communism and Public Education

7 November 1917 marked the seizure of power by the working class of Russia under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky's Bolsheviks. Even under the enormous poverty faced by the young workers state, the 1919 program of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) mandated free public education for all. Despite subsequent Stalinist betrayal, the tremendous achievements in literacy and education in the Soviet



TROTSKY

Union before its counterrevolutionary destruction show that revolutionary transformation of society is the prerequisite to achieving education for the masses. For Marxists, knowledge is an essential weapon in the fight for social equality and for a classless, communist society in which the distinction between mental and manual labor will no longer exist.

In the period of dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., in the period of preparation of conditions suitable for the realization of communism, the school must be not only the bearer of communist principles in general but it must also become the bearer of the intellectual, organizational, and educational influences of the proletariat on the semi-proletariat and the non-proletarian sections of the toiling masses, in order to educate a generation definitely capable of establishing communism. The immediate task in this direction is at the present time the further development of the following principles of school and educational work, already established by the Soviet government:

1) The introduction of free and compulsory general and polytechnical education (instruction in the theory and practice of the principle branches of production) for all children of both sexes up to the age of 17.

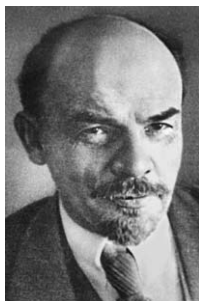
2) The establishment of a system of pre-school institutions: nurseries, kindergartens, homes, etc., to improve the social development of women and assist in their emancipation.

3) Full realization of the principle of a uniform industrial school with instruction in the native language, with co-education for children of both sexes, unconditionally secular, i.e., free of any religious influence, a school where instruction is closely connected with socially useful labour and which turns out all-round mature members of the communist society.

4) To provide all pupils with food, clothes, boots, and school supplies at the cost of the state....

9) Making all institutions of higher learning accessible to all who desire to study, in the first place to workers; attracting all people able to lecture to become instructors in these universities; abolishing all artificial barriers standing in the way of young scientists reaching professional chairs; material support of students in order to offer the proletarians and the peasants a concrete opportunity to take advantage of the institutions of higher learning.

—“Programme of the RKP(b),” March 1919, printed in *Resolutions and Decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 2 (1974)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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

EDITOR: Len Meyers

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CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mara Cadiz

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

*Workers Vanguard* (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and with a 3-week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net). Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals 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.

The closing date for news in this issue is October 31.

No. 745

3 November 2000

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# “Market Socialism” and the Legacy of Mao

# Whither China?

## Defend China Against Imperialism, Counterrevolution! For Workers Political Revolution!

We conclude below an article begun in WV No. 743 (6 October).

In analyzing the transition from capitalism to socialism, Marx in the *Critique of the Gotha Program* and Lenin in *The State and Revolution* assumed an international context in which proletarian revolution had triumphed in all major capitalist countries. However, Soviet Russia and People’s China from their inception had to engage in a life-and-death struggle against *more powerful* capitalist-imperialist states. The pressures of world capitalism—economic, military and political—have had a profound impact on every aspect of post-1949 China (as they

### PART TWO OF TWO

did on the former Soviet Union), from the top echelons of the officialdom to the most remote rural villages. It is impossible to understand the history of China over the past half-century independently of the Cold War waged against it by the U.S. and its imperialist allies.

Yet the Maoist Maurice Meisner writes about China as if it were located on some distant planet light years from the American imperialist state. During the Korean War of the early 1950s and again during the Taiwan Strait (Quemoy and Matsu) crisis in 1958, the U.S. threatened to use its nuclear weapons against China. The threat by the militarily most powerful state in the world to turn China into irradiated rubble is for Meisner so trivial, so unimportant that it is not even mentioned in his *The Deng Xiaoping Era: An Inquiry into the Fate of Chinese Socialism, 1978-1994*, a book of over 500 pages. By contrast, page after page is devoted to scrutinizing Mao’s and Deng’s ever-shifting economic policies and “socialist” theorizing. For Meisner, the history of the People’s Republic of China has been primarily determined by the ideological concepts, attitudes and prejudices of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping!

The pressures of world capitalism on post-1949 China have been compounded by the country’s economic backwardness and the misrule of the Stalinist-Maoist bureaucracy with its anti-revolutionary dogma of “socialism in one country.” A proletarian political revolution ousting the Beijing bureaucracy would install a regime committed to the goal of world revolution, providing a powerful impetus for socialist revolution from Indonesia to Japan and the U.S.

For the sake of theoretical clarity and generality, let us project the following historical situation. A workers revolution takes place in Japan. A planned, socialized economy is thus established in this major advanced industrial country under a government based on democratically elected workers councils and led by a Leninist-Trotskyist party. Furthermore, the Japanese revolution precipitates a proletarian political revolution in China, the revolutionary reunification of the Korean peninsula and also a proletarian political revolution in Vietnam. There thus comes into existence a bloc of East Asian workers states centered on an advanced industrial country (Japan) and governed by revolutionary Marxist (*not* Stalinist) parties.

Let us further assume that a proletar-

ian revolution does not occur at this time in the United States, which remains the military stronghold and dominant political power of world capitalism. There would thus be a new Cold War between an East Asian Communist bloc and an American-led imperialist alliance. The East Asian workers states—their populations and economic resources—would have to be fully mobilized to prevail in

tended more or less uniformly on a worldwide basis, but they later *abandoned* that view in light of subsequent historical experience. The founders of scientific socialism were by no means blind or indifferent to the monumental crimes committed by the Western colonial powers against the indigenous peoples of Asia, Africa and the Americas. But they initially considered such crimes



Storia Illustrata

**People’s Liberation Army enters Beijing, 1949, heralding overthrow of capitalist class rule. Unemployed workers in Guangzhou today. “Market reforms” undermine gains of 1949 Revolution, embolden counterrevolutionary forces.**

this global conflict. A large part of the economic surplus produced in Japan would be expended on increasing and upgrading its military-industrial capacity. Another large part would be used for economic and military aid to China, Korea and Vietnam. Improving living standards and reducing the workweek in the countries of the East Asian Communist bloc would be limited by the enormous expenditure of resources necessitated by the global Cold War. Obviously, there would be no possibility of the state withering away in China or Japan in this international context.

In short, there can be no transition to socialism for any workers state—whether economically advanced or backward—unless based on proletarian revolution in all major capitalist countries, centrally and ultimately the U.S. As long as the “world’s only superpower” is ruled by the Wall Street banks and Fortune 500 corporations, humanity will be ever threatened by nuclear holocaust.

### The Socialist Transformation of Backward Countries: From Marx to Trotsky

Just as Meisner falsifies through omission and selective quotations Marx’s views on the relationship between capitalism and socialism in general, he likewise falsifies Marx’s views on the socialist transformation of backward countries. He begins his book by insisting that Marx held that socialism can be built only in an advanced industrial society previously developed under capitalism.

Marx and Engels *initially* did believe that industrial capitalism would be ex-

as a historical overhead cost for the modernization of these backward regions. In an 1853 article, “The Future Results of British Rule in India,” Marx wrote:

“England had to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of the old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia....

“Modern industry, resulting from the railway system, will dissolve the hereditary division of labour, upon which rest the Indian castes, those decisive impediments to Indian progress and Indian power.”

This projection was not borne out by the actual course of development. While the Western bourgeoisies introduced certain elements of modern industrial technology (e.g., railroads) into their colonies and semicolonies, the overall effect of capitalist imperialism was to *arrest* the social and economic development of backward countries. Thus, British colonial rule deliberately perpetuated and utilized traditional reactionary institutions such as the caste system in India and tribalism in sub-Saharan Africa.

Moreover, the economic development which was introduced under European colonial rule had a *deformed* character. Thus, the British built the railways in India only from the hinterland to the port to facilitate trade with the imperialist metropolis. The rail lines did not connect the different regions of the Indian subcontinent. By contrast, railway construction in the United States during this same period was a prime factor in the economic and social integration of the American nation-state.

By the late 19th century, Marx and

Engels had become champions of colonial independence and recognized that the modernization of Asia, Africa and Latin America could take place only within the context of a *world socialist order*. Engels wrote to Karl Kautsky in 1882:

“India will perhaps, indeed very probably, make a revolution and as a proletariat in process of self-emancipation cannot conduct any colonial wars, it would have to be allowed to run its course.... The same might also take place elsewhere, e.g., in Algeria and Egypt, and would certainly be the best thing *for us*.... Once Europe is reorganized, and North America, that will furnish such colossal power and such an example that the semi-civilized countries will of them-



Far Eastern Economic Review

selves follow in their wake: economic needs, if anything, will see to that. But as to what social and political phases these countries will then have to pass through before they likewise arrive at socialist organization, I think we today can advance only rather idle hypotheses.”

Marx was still alive at this time and was collaborating closely with Engels. So this represents their final, mature judgment on the socialist transformation of backward countries. Contrary to Meisner, Marx did *not* maintain that the backward countries had to go through a prolonged period of *capitalist* development emulating the experience of West Europe and North America.

In the 1880s, at the beginning of the era of modern capitalist imperialism, it was understandable that Marx and Engels assumed that proletarian revolution would first take place in the advanced capitalist countries and that the socialist transformation of the more backward regions of the world would gradually follow in consequence. However, imperialist domination and exploitation strengthened the bourgeois order in West Europe and North America, not least by infecting the working class of these countries with the ideology of national chauvinism and racism. As Lenin pointed out in his 1916 pamphlet, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, superprofits derived from the colonial and semicolonial countries made it “economically possible to bribe the upper strata of the proletariat” in the imperialist countries.

At the same time, imperialism tended to destabilize the traditional social order

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# China...

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in backward countries, generating contradictions which Leon Trotsky termed “combined and uneven development.” A sizable industrial proletariat, working with modern technology, emerged alongside the mass of impoverished peasants still subject to feudal-derived and other pre-capitalist forms of exploitation. The day-to-day struggle against capitalist and precapitalist forms of exploitation was organically intertwined with, and reinforced by, the struggle for national independence.

Recognizing the international contradictions in the era of modern imperialism, Trotsky in his theory of permanent revolution challenged the hitherto accepted *sequencing* of the world socialist revolution from the advanced to backward countries. It was now possible that the proletariat of a backward country, leading the peasant masses in the struggle against feudal-derived exploitation and foreign imperialist domination, could come to power *in advance* of the workers of West Europe and North America. Such revolutions would severely weaken the bourgeois order in the imperialist centers while giving a powerful impetus to the revolutionary consciousness of the workers in the advanced capitalist countries.

Drawing on the understanding first laid out by Marx and Engels in their 1850 “Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League,” Trotsky developed this concept of permanent revolution at the beginning of the 20th century specifically with regard to tsarist Russia, and it was validated by life itself in the Bolshevik-led October Revolution of 1917. In the late 1920s, in light of the experience of the defeated Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, Trotsky generalized the theory and program of permanent revolution to what is now called the “Third World.” Trotsky recognized that while the socialist revolution could well *begin* in a backward country oppressed by imperialism, it could be completed only by proletarian revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries:

“The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet....

“In a country where the proletariat has power in its hands as the result of the democratic revolution, the subsequent fate of the dictatorship and socialism depends in the last analysis not only and not so much upon the national productive forces as upon the development of the international socialist revolution.”

—*The Permanent Revolution* (1929); reprinted in *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects* (1969)

## China and the Permanent Revolution

The Bolshevik Revolution issued out of World War I, which also transformed China into a classic case of combined and uneven development. The war choked off the supply of consumer goods and capital to China from the West European powers, giving a powerful impetus to local capitalist industry. Both Chinese- and Japanese-owned enterprises burgeoned during the war, supplying the huge domestic market. By 1919 there were some 1.5 million industrial workers in China, most of them newly urbanized and retaining strong links with the countryside.

At the same time, the Bolshevik Revolution profoundly affected this new proletariat and the left wing of the Chinese intelligentsia, exemplified by Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, who now saw in communism the road forward to the national liberation and social and economic modernization of China. Within five years of its formation in 1920, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had grown from a small circle of left-wing intellectuals into a mass workers party.

But by then the Soviet Union and the



Labor Defender

**1922 Hong Kong seamen's strike against British colonialists. Inspired by 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, early CCP led by Chen Duxiu quickly developed into mass party of Chinese proletariat.**

Communist International (CI) had come under the control of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Reviving the Menshevik notion of “two-stage revolution” and thus insisting that the coming revolution in semi-colonial China would be limited to a “national-democratic revolution” placing the national bourgeoisie in power, the CI under Stalin and Bukharin instructed the Chinese Communists, despite repeated objections from CCP leaders, to liquidate into Chiang Kai-shek's bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang (KMT). This class-collaborationist strategy led to the bloody defeat of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27.

As Chiang's army approached Shanghai in early 1927, over 500,000 workers staged a general strike which turned into an insurrection. But the Shanghai proletariat had been disarmed both politically and militarily as a result of Stalin's treacherous policy. Shortly after entering the city, Chiang staged a bloody coup that beheaded the Chinese proletariat, as tens of thousands of Communists and trade unionists were slaughtered.

Trotsky had fought against Stalin and Bukharin's disastrous policies. A significant section of the CCP cadre, including Chen Duxiu as well as younger party leaders like Peng Shuzhi (Peng Shu-tse), now adhered to the Trotskyist Left Opposition. But after the proletariat was smashed, the CCP leadership, soon taken over by Mao, abandoned the cities altogether in favor of peasant-based rural guerrilla warfare. The CCP was thus transformed from a proletarian into a petty-bourgeois nationalist party. Commenting on this in his 1932 document “Peasant War in China and the Proletariat,” Trotsky wrote:

“Had the Chinese Communist Party concentrated its efforts for the last few years in the cities, in industry, on the railroads; had it sustained the trade unions, the educational clubs and circles; had it, without breaking off from the workers, taught them to understand what was occurring in the villages—the share of the proletariat in the general correlation of forces would have been incomparably more favorable today.

“The party actually tore itself away from its class. Thereby in the last analysis it

can cause injury to the peasantry as well. For should the proletariat continue to remain on the sidelines, without organization, without leadership, then the peasant war even if fully victorious will inevitably arrive in a blind alley.”

It was left to the Chinese Trotskyists to rebuild a proletarian revolutionary party. But they were not able to do so given the effectiveness and intensity of state repression directed against them under the KMT white terror and Japanese occupation. Even basic trade-union struggles were suppressed. Furthermore, the international depression of the 1930s sharply reduced China's export markets, leading to a contraction of the industrial labor force. The Japanese invasion and occupation further devastated Chinese industry. At bottom, the problem faced by the Chinese Trotskyists in this period, above and beyond fierce repression, was that there was very little in the way of a proletariat to organize for socialist revolution; the Chinese working class was not, as it had been in the 1920s, a contender for political power (see “The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997).

The disintegration of Chiang's KMT regime in the aftermath of World War II opened the way for the victory of Mao's peasant-guerrilla army. While Mao had called for a coalition with Chiang under the formula of “New Democracy,” the 1949 Revolution was itself a refutation of the “two-stage revolution” since it resulted not in a bourgeois “new democracy” but in a bureaucratically deformed workers state. Meisner simultaneously falsely ascribes Stalin's positions to Lenin while painting as Mao's innovations the politics which Mao inherited from Stalin. “New Democracy” was simply another term for the class-collaborationist Stalinist program which led to the liquidation of the CCP and the defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution.

## Wei, Soviet Stalinism and Maoism

Trotsky's concept of permanent revolution directly addresses one of the central



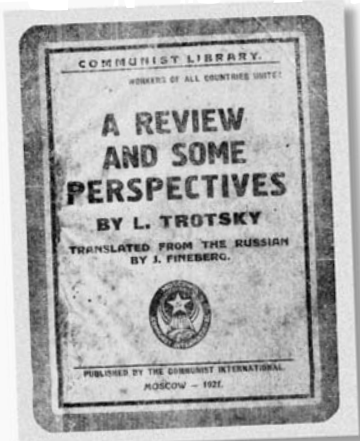
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themes of Meisner's book: social revolution in backward countries and their socialist transformation. Yet there is no mention of Trotsky at all in this lengthy work. As a veteran American academic of leftist sympathies, Meisner is certainly aware of Trotsky's views. Indeed, in his earlier book *Mao's China: A History of the People's Republic* (1977), Meisner not only correctly outlines Trotsky's theory but takes pains to describe the entirely different meaning “permanent revolution” had for Mao, who turned it into a recipe for insane economic adventurism (e.g., the “Great Leap Forward”) and intrabureaucratic factional warfare (the “Cultural Revolution”). One recalls that during the “ideological” conflict between the Mao regime and the Kremlin leadership under Nikita Khrushchev in the late 1950s and early '60s, both sides denounced the other for “Trotskyite deviationism.” Meisner's failure to consider Trotsky's views in the more recent book is a deliberate act of intellectual dishonesty.

There is also no mention of Trotsky in neo-Maoist Wei Wei's lengthy article in the Chinese journal *Central Current*, “At the Doorstep of a New Century,” a polemical overview of 20th-century history mainly focusing on Soviet Russia and post-1949 China. Wei contends that Lenin was the first Marxist to maintain that a successful proletarian revolution was possible in a relatively backward country. In fact, prior to 1917, the Bolshevik leader believed that a revolution in Russia in itself would lead to a very radical form of bourgeois democracy which he termed “the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.” Despite this limitation, Lenin's views were diametrically opposed to those of the Mensheviks, who propounded that the coming “democratic revolution” would necessarily place power in the hands of the Russian bourgeoisie and argued that the role of the workers party was to be a loyal opposition, not an active contender for power.

It was only with the February Revolution of 1917 that Lenin came to understand that the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy could bring the workers directly to power, establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia. At the same time, Trotsky came over to Lenin's conception of a hardened, democratic-centralist vanguard party. On the basis of this convergence, in 1917 Trotsky joined the Bolshevik Party, thereby enabling him to play a central role alongside Lenin in leading the first and to date only successful proletarian revolution in history.

Wei's knowledge of Bolshevism, the October Revolution and Soviet Russia is clearly fragmentary as well as deeply distorted by his Stalinist-Maoist outlook. Thus he attributes the perspective of “building socialism in one country” to Lenin, asserting that the Bolshevik leader maintained that “the working class can rely on their political power, together with all the laboring people, to overcome the economic and cultural backwardness in their own countries.” In reality, Lenin, no less than Trotsky, insisted on the inter-



**Trotsky in prison after 1905 Russian Revolution. In his 1906 *Results and Prospects* (1921 Comintern edition above) laying out theory of permanent revolution, Trotsky explained that resolving democratic tasks in backward Russia required proletarian revolution.**



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national character of the socialist revolution. Speaking a year after the Bolsheviks came to power, Lenin stated:

“Comrades, from the very beginning of the October Revolution, foreign policy and international relations have been the main questions facing us. Not merely because from now on all the states in the world are being firmly linked by imperialism into a single system, or rather, into one dirty, bloody mass, but because the complete victory of the socialist revolution in one country alone is inconceivable and demands the most active co-operation of at least several advanced countries, which do not include Russia. Hence one of the main problems of the revolution is now the extent to which we succeed in broadening the revolution in other countries too.”

—“Speech on the International Situation” (November 1918)

This was *the* Bolshevik view until the triumph of the political counterrevolution in early 1924. Later that year, Stalin revised his own earlier statement that socialism could be victorious only on the basis of proletarian state power in at least a number of the most advanced countries and propounded the *anti*-Marxist dogma of “socialism in one country,” which corresponded to the narrow, nationalist perspective of the bureaucratic caste for which he was chief spokesman. This nationalist outlook was also promoted by the Stalinized CCP under Mao.

Interestingly, Wei’s ideological outlook is much closer to Soviet Stalinism than to Maoism, despite his exaltation of the latter. This is most evident in his attitude toward the former Soviet Union, which he describes as a “communist fortress” right up to the moment it was destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. That’s a far cry from orthodox Maoism.

Mao contended that capitalism had been restored in the Soviet Union because of the “revisionism” of the Kremlin leadership under Nikita Khrushchev. By this he meant in particular Khrushchev’s 1956 denunciation of Stalin’s crimes and his subsequent denunciation of Mao and the cutting off of Soviet military and economic aid to China in the late 1950s. By the late ’60s, Mao went further, branding the USSR a “social imperialist” state even more dangerous to China than American imperialism. As we pointed out earlier, this was the ideological justification for China’s criminal alliance with the U.S. against the Soviet Union beginning in the early 1970s.

Despite the Maoists’ denunciations of Soviet “revisionism,” at no time did the CCP attempt to set up a new, “anti-revisionist” international. No less than Moscow’s, Beijing’s brand of “socialism in one country” meant betraying revolutionary opportunities abroad. The fruits of this policy were seen in Indonesia in 1965, when the pro-Beijing Communist Party, the largest in the capitalist world, subordinated its mass working-class and peasant base to the bourgeois-nationalist Sukarno regime. Thus the Indonesian Stalinists disarmed the workers, both politically and militarily, leaving them defenseless when General Suharto, backed by the CIA and Islamic fundamentalists, launched an anti-Communist military coup which resulted in the slaughter of hundreds of thousands (see “Lessons of Indonesia 1965,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999).

Wei argues that Khrushchev’s “revisionism” merely set into motion political developments which, three decades later, led to the restoration of capitalism. He thus presents a revision, so to speak, of Mao’s position on Soviet “revisionism”:

“Although Khrushchev was holding the communist flag on the surface, in fact what he carried out was a revisionist line and a series of revisionist policies. Mao said that quantitative change contains partial qualitative change. Because quantitative change leads to qualitative change, in the end after 30 years the heirs of Khrushchev—Gorbachev, etc.—completed this dramatic change, rendering the overnight destruction of the communist fortress which Hitler’s million-man army failed to break through.”

Obviously, we don’t know whether Wei is consciously falsifying Mao’s position or genuinely thinks this is a correct



Bettmann Archive



Earl Swisher

interpretation of Mao Zedong Thought. That is not, in any case, an important question.

But *why* a Chinese leftist intellectual today should differ with Mao on the class nature of the former Soviet Union is a question of some political import. The answer lies not in what happened in Russia in the past but in what is happening in China now. Here it is clarifying to contrast Wei with Meisner. Meisner emphasizes that during the Cultural Revolution, Mao denounced the Chinese Communist officialdom as a “bureaucratic class” whose members were becoming “bourgeois elements sucking the blood of the workers.” In this way Meisner claims Mao’s authority for his own position that under Deng—one of the main targets of the Cultural Revolution—the Chinese economy became one of “bureaucratic capitalism.”

Now, however, there have arisen powerful forces in China—Western and Japanese investors, the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie, top officials and their “princeling” sons, wealthy farmers, small and not-so-small entrepreneurs, many intellectuals—who really are driving to restore capitalism, that is, private property in the means of production. And the Chinese workers want to defend “socialism” as they understand it; they are resisting the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the accompanying attacks on the “iron rice bowl.” Thus the realities of the class struggle are forcing leftist intellectuals like Wei to abandon Mao’s idealist version of capitalist restoration and the reactionary notion that the Soviet Union was “bureaucratic capitalist” or “state capitalist.”

While Wei’s views on the Soviet Union are far less reactionary than those of Mao, they are still fundamentally distorted by his adherence to the dogma of “building socialism in one country.” He, too, resorts to subjectivist idealism to explain (though not to define) the restoration of capitalism in East Europe and the former USSR. In the mid-1980s—it is not explained why—the Soviet government and the ruling Communist Party were taken over by a man, Mikhail Gorbachev, who was even more of a “revisionist,” much more, than Khrushchev had been. Wei emphasizes that in Gorbachev’s memoirs, “He frankly admitted that he started doubting communism since his college years,” as if one man’s intellectual outlook was a decisive cause of capitalist counterrevolution.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union—a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat—cannot be explained by the ideological

**Workers militia in Shanghai during 1925-27 Revolution. CCP’s liquidation into bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang under Stalin’s orders paved way for anti-Communist slaughter, as in Canton (Guangzhou).**

attitudes of the Kremlin leadership. It can be explained only in terms of the deep-going social and economic contradictions within the Soviet Union as a bureaucratically degenerated workers state under the relentless and all-sided pressure of world imperialism.

### The Illusion of “Building Socialism in One Country”

In marked contrast to “Cultural Revolution” Maoism, Wei’s defense of socialism rests heavily on the superior economic performance of Soviet Russia under Stalin and in the immediate post-Stalin period (and also in China under Mao). He writes: “The growth rate for the USSR from 1928 to 1958 was 54 percent (44 percent per capita) per decade.” He then points out that this was not only higher than the growth rate of any capitalist country during this period but also higher than any capitalist country had experienced historically over a comparable period. Thus, in Wei’s view, the Soviet Union was successfully “building socialism” and was well on its way to overtaking Western capitalism economically.

Ironically, the same argument was made at the time by that arch-“revisionist” Nikita Khrushchev. In 1960, the Kremlin leader captured world attention when he declared that 20 years hence the Soviet Union would not only overtake the United States in economic production but would achieve full communism. While the latter claim was manifestly utopian, the former was simply a projection of the

relatively higher Soviet growth rate during the 1950s over the next two decades. However, in the 1970s the Soviet economy lost its former dynamism as the rate of growth declined sharply and steadily.

The underlying cause of the Soviet economic malaise was actually predicted decades before by Trotsky in his classic study of Stalinist Russia, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936). He explained that the exceptionally high rate of industrial growth achieved during the early five-year plans, which were based on constructing factories modeled on ones already built in the West and manned by surplus labor from the countryside, could *not* be sustained at a higher level of economic development:

“The progressive role of the Soviet bureaucracy coincides with the period devoted to introducing into the Soviet Union the most important elements of capitalist technique. The rough work of borrowing, imitating, transplanting and grafting, was accomplished on the basis laid down by the revolution. There was, thus far, no question of any new word in the sphere of technique, science or art. It is possible to build gigantic factories according to a ready-made Western pattern by bureaucratic command—although, to be sure, at triple the normal cost. But the farther you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow.... Under a nationalized economy, *quality* demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery.”

These contradictions came to the fore in the 1970s when continuing quantitative expansion of industrial capacity and output by the old methods was blocked by an increasing shortage of labor. The Soviet Union now had to switch from extensive to intensive economic growth, a goal proclaimed by the Kremlin leadership under Leonid Brezhnev. This entailed introducing a new, higher overall level of technology and a corresponding increase in the technological capacity of the working population. To maximize labor productivity also required a qualitative raising of managerial efficiency. But the Stalinist bureaucracy—increasingly corrupt, politically cynical and self-interested—was organically incapable of a dynamic modernization of the Soviet economy.

When Gorbachev came to power, he denounced the last years of the Brezhnev regime as an “era of stagnation.” He offered market-oriented “reforms,” dubbed *perestroika* (restructuring), as the only means of transforming the USSR into an “intensive, highly developed economy,” enabling “her to enter the next millennium with dignity as a great and flourishing power” (quoted in Anders Aslund, *How Russia Became a Market Economy* [1995]). We wrote at the time:

“Within the framework of Stalinism there is an inherent tendency toward economic decentralization as an *alternative to workers democracy*. Since managers and workers are not subject to the discipline of soviet democracy, a section of the bureaucracy sees subjecting the economic actors to the discipline of the

*continued on page 10*

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No. 53, Summer 1997

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# Young Spartacus

**Not One Man, Not One Penny for the Imperialist Military!  
Smash Imperialism Through Socialist Revolution!**

## ***Military Recruiters Off Campus!***

NEW YORK CITY—On October 16, recruiters for the Army's Judge Advocate General (JAG), the legal arm of the military, came to the NYU Law School to recruit students to serve the bloody interests of U.S. imperialism. The JAG recruiters were met with protest by members of SQUAD (Straights and Queers United Against Discrimination), an NYU Law School student group. The attempt of military recruiters to extend their tentacles back into campuses across the nation, after being kicked off by mass protests by students against U.S. imperialism's dirty war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants, must be opposed. The Spartacus Youth Club says: ***Military recruiters off campus!*** Our opposition to military recruiters on campus is derived from our opposition to imperialist militarism in general. ***Not one man, not one penny for the imperialist military!***

The military forces are the iron fist of the U.S. imperialist state, used to protect the profits and possessions of the capitalist ruling class, both at home and abroad. The American imperialists are engaged in a ruthless struggle to improve their competitive position by increasing the rate of exploitation of the domestic working class, plundering the colonial and semicolonial world and seizing markets at the expense of their rivals. This struggle is the natural outgrowth of the capitalist system and its need for ever-increasing profits gained through the conquest of new markets; it inevitably leads to wars to redive the conquered markets.

The NYU administration postures as a "progressive institution" for gay rights and against military recruiters coming to campus. The university had banned military recruiters for 22 years because the Defense Department will not hire people who are openly gay. But NYU receives more than \$200 million in Defense



Bengiveno/NY Times

**NYU Law School students protested a military recruiter on campus on October 16, the first such visit in 22 years.**

Department research funds, and after the Defense Department issued regulations saying that it would withdraw all research funds if any division of a university barred recruiters, the administration reversed its policy. An editorial in *Washington Square News* (17 October), the campus newspaper, wrote: "New York University is a progressive institution.... It was pleasing to see students and institution both fighting side-by-side for something they believe in." Don't be fooled! The university administration is the representative of the ruling class on campus. For example, the NYU administration is hell-bent on seeing that the graduate students do not form a union. Only social protest got the army recruiters off campus in the first place, not reliance on the "benevolence" of the administration. In fact, universities serve as the training ground

for the next generation of the bourgeoisie and those who serve it, in and out of uniform.

SQUAD has protested the pervasive persecution of homosexuals in the military, which has, if anything, been worsened by Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. The SYC solidarizes with the protesters against the very real anti-gay discrimination in the military, which has led to the purging and even murder of gay soldiers and sailors. However, we also understand that "democratization" of the imperialist army is impossible. As we stated in "Right-Wing Bigots Mobilize Against Gays in the Military": "Even if the formal ban [on gays in the military] is dropped, gays will still face harassment and violence at the hands of bigoted officers and fellow soldiers in this bigoted society.... Gay oppression is rooted in the ideology of the family, an institution which is a bedrock of capitalism" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 569, 12 February 1993). As Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the Bolshevik Revolution and founder of the Red Army, noted in his *History of the Russian Revolution* (1930): "An army is always a copy of the society it serves—with this difference, that it gives social relations a concentrated character, carrying both their positive and negative features to an extreme."

The U.S. imperialist rulers perpetrate vicious exploitation of the American working class, driving down wages and attacking working conditions, and attempting to smash unions. This is accompanied by the increasingly hideous oppression and degradation of the black and Latino masses in the inner cities. The fight for the liberation of the American black population, which is forcibly segregated at the bottom of society but is integrated into the working class, is central to the destruction of American imperialism.

The bloody history of U.S. imperialism spans a century of butchery: from the war against Filipino insurgents in the 1890s, through two imperialist world wars, the failed attempt to drown the Vietnamese social revolution in blood,

and most recently NATO's assault against Serbia and continual bombings of Iraq. The U.S. imperialists are the only ones to have used atomic weapons, incinerating some 200,000 Japanese civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Currently, Palestinians are being gunned down by U.S.-supplied tanks and Apache helicopters of the Israeli state. As revolutionaries, we oppose our "own" bourgeoisie wherever it rears its head. We call to ***defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution! The main enemy is at home!***

We do not believe that U.S. imperialism can be a force for human rights in the world, contrary to what the bulk of the IMF/WTO protesters in Seattle and elsewhere might think. When the U.S./NATO forces launched their bombing campaign against Serbia, we stood forthrightly for the military defense of Serbia, without giving one iota of political support to Milosevic, and for workers revolution to defeat the imperialists. In contrast, the nominally "socialist" International Socialist Organization (ISO), which has a group at NYU, limply pleaded with the imperialists, "NATO Bombs Won't Stop the Killing," buying into the imperialists' lie that this was a war in "defense" of Kosovar Albanians.

The ISO is now in the midst of a fervent campaign in support of the capitalist candidate of the Green Party, Ralph Nader, for president. Hardly opposed to either the imperialist military or its use, Nader simply states that if he were president he could use the army better, cutting down the military budget in order to obtain a lean, mean fighting machine which can continue to protect "American sovereignty." As he states on his Web site, "It is important to have a lean defense; a wasteful defense is a weak defense." Nader's patriotic defense of "American sovereignty" has at its core the anti-communism central to his anti-China policies. He campaigned heavily against Congressional passage of Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China, saying that "passage of PNTR will also eliminate a crucial lever in the advancement of democracy and human rights in China." We *oppose* the entry of imperialism into China! "Democracy" and "human rights" are code words for *capitalist counterrevolution* in China. The SYC stands for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state. We call for a proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, in order to preserve and extend the gains of the 1949 Revolution. Similarly, we Trotskyists defended the former Soviet Union, which long served as a bulwark against the predations of U.S. imperialism.

What we need is a conscious revolutionary leadership of the working class based on the understanding that society is divided between two classes, workers and capitalists, whose interests are irreconcilably counterposed. We fight for a multiracial revolutionary workers party to lead a socialist revolution to emancipate all those ground under the boot of U.S. imperialism. ■

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# ***SYC Defends Mumia Against Reactionary Smear Campaign***

# UC Berkeley

*As the following article explains, sinister forces at UC Berkeley invited Accuracy in Academia's (AIA) Dan Flynn to speak on campus on September 27 in a vicious smear campaign against Mumia Abu-Jamal. Flynn was met with protests by outraged students, who burned his literature and shouted Flynn down. As a result, there has been a huge hue and cry on campus about "free speech." The Bay Area SYC submitted a shorter version of this article as a letter in defense of Mumia to the Daily Californian, the student paper at UC Berkeley, but it was politically censored by the editors. The version they printed on October 19 attempted to transform our revolutionary understanding of the need to link the fight for Mumia's freedom to the fight against capitalism as a whole into liberal "fight the right" mush. Not only did they omit all mention of Clinton, but they even took out our forthright assertion of Mumia's innocence!*

\* \* \*

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man sitting on death row. Targeted by the state because he is a fighter for black liberation, he was framed up on charges of killing a cop and then sentenced to death expressly for his political views. On Sept. 27, the Berkeley College Republicans (BCR) and the Berkeley Conservative Foundation (BCF) invited Accuracy in Academia's Dan Flynn, author of the scurrilous "Cop Killer: How Mumia Abu Jamal Conned Millions Into Believing He Was Framed," to propagate the Philadelphia police lies which framed Mumia. The only weapon Mumia ever used was his pen and his voice! It is obscene that the BCF, whose supercilious campus organ *The Patriot* runs the bloodthirsty headline "Fry Mumia," has been able to posture as a defender of "free speech" against the outraged students who protested Flynn's talk. It is even more obscene that last week the ASUC [Associated Students of the University of California, the student government] joined the chorus, passing a bill condemning the protesters.

Targeting campus leftists is *modus operandi* for the AIA, who in the 1980s compiled a list of 10,000 alleged Marxists and 35,000 liberal professors on campuses around the country to harass and drive out of public life. In 1986 these sinister junior McCarthyites targeted the Marxist Spartacist League (SL) with the Big Lie slander that the publications of the Spartacist tendency, including *Workers Vanguard*, “urge...the killing of police officers.” The SL sued and forced them to retract this purposefully deadly slander. The AIA is still at it. Besides lusting after Mumia’s execution, Dan Flynn’s other central activity is seeking to rehabilitate Joe McCarthy! Now on the Internet and in the pages of the Moonie-owned *Washington Times* AIA is seeking to slander Mumia’s defenders as violators of free speech. It’s too bad that the Berkeley protesters fell into Flynn’s trap. It would have been much more effective to expose AIA’s smear campaign against Mumia for what it is: a bunch of lies. We in the Spartacus Youth Club believe in *refuting* the views of right-wing ideologues.

The evidence that Mumia was framed is overwhelming. The police's murder



## Young Spartacus

**Revolutionary Contingent at May 13 San Francisco rally called for mobilizing labor's social power in fight to free Mumia, opposed reliance on racist capitalist courts and politicians.**

scenario contradicted autopsy results and there is no evidence that the supposed murder weapon was even fired. Mumia's alleged "confession" was not reported until two months after the fact and the cop who was with Mumia after the shooting originally reported that "during this time the negro male made no comment." Mumia was stripped of his right to represent himself and removed from the courtroom for much of his trial. In a 1995 hearing, witnesses testified that they had been coerced and pressured by police into changing their testimony in order to implicate Mumia at the original trial. At the sentencing hearing the prosecution introduced the Panthers' use of the Maoist slogan, "political power grows out of the

barrel of a gun,” to paint Mumia as a convinced cop killer who deserved to die.

Mumia had no criminal record before being arrested and framed in 1981, but the FBI had amassed an 800-page file on him starting from the time he joined the Black Panther Party at age 15. Mumia was a defender of the MOVE organization, against which the Philly police waged a vicious vendetta which resulted in 1985 in the firebombing of a MOVE house, the incineration of eleven people, including five children, and the destruction of an entire city neighborhood. While the frame-up system is standard operating procedure across this country, the Philly police department is particularly notorious for it. Since 1995 more than 300 peo-

# The “Nader Challenge”: Getting Gore Elected

From the outset, we have opposed the Green Party's Ralph Nader on principle as a capitalist candidate who is, moreover, a shill for the Democratic Party of war and racism. In contrast, the social-democratic International Socialist Organization (ISO) has energetically boosted Nader's campaign as a challenge to "the two parties of big business," even trumpeting "The Nader Challenge" on the cover of *International Socialist Review* (October/November 2000).

But with Democrat Al Gore increasingly looking like a loser in the weeks before the election, the real challenge facing Nader supporters is to convince voters that Gore will win. A leaflet issued in Boston, reproduced at right, avers: “George Bush will NEVER win in Massachusetts, so HAVE NO FEAR.” (Notably, this leaflet asserting Nader’s stand for “strong unions” was printed with no union bug—i.e., by non-union labor.) The same message was featured in a full-page ad in the *Village Voice* (31 October): “Don’t worry, you’re not giving New York to Bush.”

As the ISO's more "mainstream"

social-democratic cousins readily admit, Nader's supposedly "independent," "pro-labor" campaign was always aimed at pressuring Clinton/Gore's "New Democrats" and refurbishing illusions among radical youth in capitalist electoral politics. In a recent piece in the *New York Times* (26 October), Democratic Socialists of America spokesman Barbara Ehrenreich wrote: "I see the Nader campaign as a chance to prod the Democratic Party to the left and, beyond that, to re-energize American democracy." Similarly, Committees of Correspondence co-chairman Manning Marable says, "Gore doesn't need your vote, and by supporting Nader, we can send a powerful, progressive protest message to the Democrats" (*Along the Color Line*, October 2000). The message of revolutionary Marxists is that the power of labor will continue to be shackled until the working class breaks with the Democratic Party—and all bourgeois parties—and forges a revolutionary workers party committed to sweeping away the capitalist profit system through socialist revolution.



**IF YOU'RE WORRIED  
A VOTE FOR RALPH NADER  
WILL HELP ELECT BUSH,  
Read This:**

Al Gore is going to win Massachusetts by a **HUGE** margin over George Bush.

That's why it's **COMPLETELY SAFE** to vote for **Nader in Massachusetts**. Even if Nader gets a lot of votes, Gore will win Massachusetts by a landslide. Your vote has **NO INFLUENCE** on the outcome of any other state.

George Bush will NEVER win in Massachusetts, so  
**HAVE NO FEAR**  
**&**  
**VOTE FOR WHOM YOU BELIEVE IN!**

**Ralph Nader – the only TRUE progressive candidate** is for:

- Universal health care • A sustainable environment • Living wages
- Increased spending on education • Progressive taxation • Strong unions
- Ending corporate welfare • Campaign finance reform • No death penalty
- Reduced military spending • Alternative energy • International trade that values people & the environment over corporate profits

- If Nader wins 5% of the vote nationwide, the Green Party will qualify for public financing of up to \$12 million in the 2004 election.
- If Nader wins 3% of the vote in Massachusetts, the Green Party will obtain minor party status.

**VOTE YOUR HEAD & HEART - VOTE NADER!**



# Zionist Terror...

(continued from page 1)

store for the dispossessed Palestinian Arab people underscores the inherently chauvinist character of the Zionist state, which was founded upon the brutal suppression of Palestinian national rights. In the course of the 1948 “War of Independence,” 800,000 Arabs were driven out of Palestine—their land stolen, their homes demolished, their lives destroyed—to be warehoused in squalid refugee camps throughout the region, where their children and grandchildren were born and remain to this day. Only 150,000 remained in Israel, with the Palestinian population of cities like Jerusalem and Haifa reduced from over 70,000 each to barely 3,000.

These remnants of the Palestinian nation within the 1948 borders, today numbering a million, were nominally made “citizens,” forced to live in exclusively Arab towns and villages—often lacking even sewage systems—in three small parts of the country which remained under military administration until 1966. Today only 8 percent of all Israeli Arabs live in “mixed” cities like Haifa and Tel Aviv. Over the years, some 80 percent of remaining Arab-owned land has been expropriated by the regime. A 1976 general strike against such land confiscations led to the massacre of six Israeli Arabs by police, which is annually commemorated by Palestinians as Land Day.

Denied participation in the military and until 1960 in the Histadrut—the corporatist “labor” federation founded on the program of “Hebrew only” labor—these Palestinian “citizens” were thereby denied a whole range of social benefits and excluded from a whole range of jobs. Many of those who have work are con-



AP  
**Palestinian protesters in Jordan burn Israeli flag, October 24. Arab bourgeois regimes are no less oppressors of Palestinians, as over three million languish for decades in squalid refugee camps in Baqa'a, Jordan and elsewhere.**

centrated in unskilled construction, service and agricultural jobs along with laborers from the Occupied Territories—and, increasingly, “illegal” immigrants. It was such conditions, as well as national solidarity with their compatriots under Israeli occupation, which fueled the recent protests by Israeli Arabs. As their communities were completely sealed off by Israeli police, 13 were killed. Now a leading police commander threatens to “settle accounts” with Israeli Arabs.

Conditions within the Occupied Territories are immeasurably worse. Average annual income has plunged from \$2,500 in 1987 to \$1,500 (compared to \$17,000 in Israel), while unemployment ranges up to 40 percent. As a result of the “peace process,” wrote correspondent Amira Hass in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*

(18 October), Israel has been able to “double the number of settlers in 10 years, to enlarge the settlements, to continue its discriminatory policy of cutting back water quotas for three million Palestinians, to prevent Palestinian development in most of the area of the West Bank, and to seal an entire nation into restricted areas, imprisoned in a network of bypass roads meant for Jews only.”

“Transfer”—the forced population transfer of all Arabs from the Occupied Territories, and perhaps from within Israel itself—has long been the rallying cry of the Zionist right. But it originated with the Zionist “founding fathers.” The head of the Jewish Agency’s Colonization Department, Joseph Weitz, wrote in 1940: “Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country.... And there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries; to transfer all of them; not one village, not one tribe should be left.”

—quoted in introduction to  
Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* (1973)

Under capitalism, there is no “room” for two peoples in this small country. To secure the national rights of the oppressed Palestinian people—without thereby denying the national existence of the Hebrew-speaking people—the Zionist garrison-state must be shattered from within through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution. Only within the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East can the right of national self-determination of both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples and the many other minority peoples of the region be equitably realized.

This elementary truth, denied by much of the opportunist left, is formally acknowledged by the fake-Trotskyist Committee for a Workers International (CWI, represented by Socialist Alternative in the U.S.) in an October Web site statement by its Israeli group, Maavak Sozialisti (Socialist Struggle), which argues regarding Israel that “it is impossible to genuinely solve the national question under capitalism.” The statement issues the following appeal:

“A class socialist leadership of Israeli Palestinians could make an appeal to Jewish workers to struggle together with them in order to overthrow the hated Barak government, and for the overthrow of the corrupt capitalist system....

“This could be achieved because in Israel the capitalists and their servants in government continually attack Israeli workers and youth by means of privatization, unemployment and attacks on wages and work conditions, and the dismantling of the welfare state.”

This is a flagrant capitulation to Zionist “laborism.” The statement despicably fails to raise even the simple unambiguous demand for defense of the Palestinian people against Zionist terror and for all Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories, calling only “for the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli army from Gaza, Hebron and Bethlehem.” This is not surprising. The CWI’s British mainstay, Peter Taaffe’s Socialist Party,



U.N.

is notorious for its refusal to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland and its capitulation to anti-Catholic Loyalist reaction, even regularly providing a platform for a fascist Loyalist killer.

The Hebrew-speaking proletariat is indeed no less exploited by its “own” ruling class than are workers elsewhere. In recent years, there have been a series of militant strikes and protests against austerity and privatization. Secular Israel is suffocated by a semi-theocratic state in which even basic questions like marriage and divorce are determined by the whims of ultra-Orthodox rabbis. The Askhenazi (European-derived) elite lords it over the Sephardic (Near Eastern) Jewish population, many of whom live in conditions of poverty not qualitatively better than those of Israeli Arabs.

But Arab/Hebrew class unity will not be forged on the basis of reformist economism, as the CWI believes. The Hebrew-speaking workers, not least the Sephardic Jews who form the base of the right-wing and religious parties, are saturated with anti-Palestinian chauvinism, which has only intensified in recent weeks. If they are to be won to revolutionary class struggle against the Israeli exploiters, the Hebrew-speaking workers must be broken from the stranglehold of Zionist chauvinism and won to internationalist defense of the Palestinian people. For their part, the militant Palestinian workers and youth who courageously defy the Zionist military juggernaut must be won from petty-bourgeois Palestinian nationalism and anti-Semitic Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas, who are deadly enemies of Arab women and workers.

## For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

While the CWI capitulates to the chauvinist backwardness of the Hebrew-speaking working class, most other reformist groups offer nothing more than a “leftist” gloss on the treacherous PLO policies which have brought the Palestinian masses to the current bloody impasse. Even as it acknowledges that

## Spartacist Youth Addresses NYC Palestinian Rally

The following is a speech given by SYC'er Quincy Levinson at a protest in New York on October 20 against Israeli state terror.

I’m here on behalf of the Spartacist League/U.S., a Marxist organization. We are here to express our solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian masses. We feel that all working people and oppressed throughout the world must rally to the Palestinians in the face of Zionist terror. The Israeli rulers are entirely capable of carrying out a massacre of Palestinian Arabs on a truly genocidal scale. We in the Spartacist League say: Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories now!

Behind the Israeli capitalist government stands American imperialism. Clinton is using the deaths in Yemen of 17 sailors on the USS *Cole* as a chauvinist war cry to provoke imperialist retaliation. American imperialism is the most dangerous enemy of workers and oppressed. Likewise, the United Nations since the outset has been involved up to its neck in the repression of Palestinian people.

One should have no illusions in the capitalist rulers of the Arab nations. We must remember Black September of 1970 when 10,000 Palestinians were massacred by the government of King Hussein of Jordan. We say: Down with the starvation blockade of Iraq! U.S./UN troops out of the Near East now!

We have long warned that the peace accords signed by Arafat would not end the national oppression of Palestinians, but merely *cede* the job of administering that oppression over to the PLO. It is an indictment of the PLO’s petty-bourgeois nationalism which relied on the good



Young Spartacus

graces first of the Arab capitalist regimes and then of U.S. imperialism that many Palestinian workers and intellectuals have been driven into the arms of Hamas, a violently anti-Semitic and anti-woman Islamic fundamentalist group.

Now the Zionist rulers have not yet taken on the myriad peoples of the region in a nuclear Armageddon, but it could well happen. The Hebrew-speaking workers must place themselves against the prison of chauvinism and become as one with their class brothers. They must join in building a revolutionary Leninist workers party of both the Arab and Hebrew-speaking people to fight for a socialist federation of the Near East where *all* people can have their national rights. *For a socialist federation of the Near East!* ■



**Women and Revolution**  
No. 39, Summer 1991  
\$1 (40 pages)

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the Arab regimes have suppressed pro-Palestinian protests, the Workers World Party (WWP) enthuses: “This strong progressive Arab nationalism and inter-Arab solidarity has not been seen since the 1960s.... The wave of demonstrations has already swept away the wedge that Washington drove between Arab governments during the 1991 Gulf War” (*Workers World*, 26 October).

WWP’s line is a rehash of the mythical, trans-class “Arab Revolution” pushed by many opportunist leftists in the 1960s and ’70s to justify tailing petty-bourgeois Palestinian nationalism and the “progressive” Arab bourgeoisies (see “Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism,” WV Nos. 740 and 741, 25 August and 8 September). Until 1967, it was Egypt in Gaza and Jordan in the West Bank which subjugated and oppressed the Palestinians there. In “Black September” 1970, Jordan’s King Hussein, father of the current monarch, ordered the massacre of **10,000 Palestinian fighters**. Twenty years later, after the imperialist war against Iraq, the emir of Kuwait expelled 200,000 Palestinian workers whose labor in the oil fields helped make his billions of dollars. Yet for decades Arafat’s PLO relied on the “good offices” of these bonapartist and feudalist regimes, finally embracing U.S. imperialism following the 1991 Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had backed the PLO.

Over three million “stateless” Palestinians continue to languish in refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan—which is historically majority Palestinian—subsisting on little more than United Nations food parcels. While spouting off against Zionism in order to divert the anger of the poverty-stricken masses they exploit, the Arab capitalist regimes are enemies of the Palestinian people and of indigenous religious, ethnic and national minorities in their own countries: Shi’ite Muslims, Coptic Christians in Egypt, Berbers in Algeria, the Kurdish nation in Syria, Iraq, as well as Iran and Turkey. We fight for the revolutionary overthrow of all the murderous capitalist states in the Near East and for a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan.

The British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which remains nominally allied with the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S., likewise borrows from the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the PLO. According to the British *Socialist Worker* (14 October):

“Socialists argue for a democratic secular state in Palestine where Jews and Arabs have equal rights....

“A longer term alternative in the Middle East is revolution across the region to overthrow the corrupt regimes which live in wealth while their populations live in grinding poverty.”

In the mouths of Palestinian nationalists like Arafat, who for years called for a “democratic secular state,” it meant denying the right to self-determination for the Hebrew-speaking nation, which was deemed to be simply a religious minority. The Stalinophobic SWP apes the “two-stage revolution” dogma of the Stalin-

# Free Mordechai Vanunu!

Joining some 2,000 Palestinian fighters locked away in Israeli prisons, there is also an Israeli of Jewish origin, Mordechai Vanunu. In the eyes of the Zionist rulers, Vanunu is a “race traitor” for revealing to the world the scale of the Israeli nuclear arsenal. For this “crime,” Vanunu has languished in a dungeon in the Negev desert for 14 years—all but the last two in solitary confinement, denied any human contact except with the guards who fed him and his two brothers who were allowed to visit every other week. Based on his experience as a technician at the top-secret Dimona nuclear facility, in 1986 Vanunu told the *London Times* that the war-crazed Zionist rulers had produced and stockpiled upwards of 200 nuclear warheads, making Israel the sixth-largest nuclear power in the world at the time. Lured to Italy by an Israeli Mossad secret police agent, Vanunu was then abducted by the Mossad and whisked off to the desert prison in Ashkelon where he remains to this day.

As a Sephardic Jew whose family had emigrated from Morocco, it was Vanunu’s own experience of discrimination at the hands of the European-derived Ashkenazi Israeli ruling estab-

**Mordechai Vanunu protesting for Palestinian rights one year before his 1986 arrest for revealing extent of Israeli nuclear arsenal.**

Yoram Peretz



lishment that led to his alienation from Zionism. This impelled him to take up the cause of Palestinian rights. As a student at Beersheba’s Ben-Gurion University, Vanunu befriended Bedouin and Palestinian students and fought for their rights when he served as a representative in the student government. He was instrumental in helping these students gain equal access to university housing and participated in protests for Palestinian equality and against the 1982 Lebanon war.

Vanunu’s revelations made it clear that Israel’s capitalist rulers had

enough nuclear weapons—and missile delivery systems developed with U.S. aid—not only to incinerate every Arab capital, but to bomb major cities in the Soviet Union as well. As we wrote shortly after his arrest, “For his courageous act, the working people, indeed all of humanity, owe Vanunu a tremendous debt of gratitude.... Vanunu acted in the cause of humanity. Now the international working class must champion his cause” (WV No. 429, 29 May 1987). **Free all Palestinian political prisoners! Freedom now for Mordechai Vanunu!**

ists—“democracy” first and socialist revolution later—which has always meant that the “second stage” consists of the massacre of Communists. In the case of Israel/Palestine, any talk of a “democratic” capitalist stage is a cruel hoax from the get-go.

The right to self-determination is a democratic question. But in situations of interpenetrated peoples—as in Israel/Palestine, Cyprus and Northern Ireland—it cannot be equitably resolved under capitalism. The capitalist nation-state is premised on the domination of one nation and the suppression or expulsion of the other. Where two peoples lay claim to the same land, the national rights of both can only be secured through the overthrow of capitalism. And in the case of the Palestinian people, this requires socialist revolutions in at least Israel, Jordan and Lebanon (which has a sizable Palestinian minority), as well as its patron Syria.

## Smash Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

In an informed 26 October piece on the Independent Media Center Web site outlining the background to the Barak plan for “unilateral separation,” left-liberal academic Noam Chomsky cites a British article comparing U.S.-backed Zionist Israel to apartheid South Africa and comments:

“Such conclusions will come as no surprise to those whose vision has not been constrained by the doctrinal blinders imposed for many years. It remains a major task to remove them in the most impor-

tant country. That is a prerequisite to any constructive reaction to the mounting chaos and destruction.”

As usual, behind Chomsky’s seeming “anti-imperialist” rhetoric is an appeal for U.S. imperialism to adopt a more “constructive,” humane and rational foreign policy. During the Gulf War, Chomsky called for the imperialist embargo of Iraq—which has since killed well over a million people—as a “peaceful” alternative to war (*Z Magazine*, February 1991).

U.S. support for Israel is not the result of “doctrinal blinders” but of its own imperialist interests in the strategic, oil-rich Near East. While far from simply a puppet of Washington, Zionist Israel serves as a bastion for imperialist order and stability in this volatile region, for which it is lavishly rewarded to the tune of some \$5 billion in aid annually. We do not look to the American imperialist state, the most rapacious and deadliest nuclear power on the planet, to chastise its Israeli junior partners or otherwise

intervene in the Near East. Like countless charlatans before him, Chomsky seeks to obscure the fact that imperialism is not a doctrine or policy which can be reformed but a system—the highest stage of capitalism. In this, Chomsky aims to deflect radical youth from the struggle against the capitalist system.

The International Communist League seeks to forge internationalist proletarian vanguard parties bringing together Arab, Kurdish, Persian and Hebrew-speaking workers to overthrow all the Zionist butchers, sheiks, mullahs and military strongmen and create a socialist federation of the Near East. In the U.S., the Spartacist League fights to build a multi-racial revolutionary workers party, section of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International, to sweep away bloody American imperialism through proletarian revolution. That would be a huge step toward ending the genocidal terror and nationalist fratricide which is endemic to the capitalist system in its epoch of decay. ■

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**1993 “peace” accord meant walled Palestinian ghettos policed by Yasir Arafat’s Palestinian Authority.**

China...

(continued from page 5)

market as the only answer to the Soviet Union's serious economic problems." [emphasis in original]

—"Where Is Gorbachev's Russia Going?" *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 41-42, Winter 1987-88

Gorbachev's *perestroika* generated economic chaos and greatly strengthened the internal forces of capitalist restoration throughout the USSR. Within a few years, those forces—actively supported by Western, centrally American, imperialism—would triumph under Gorbachev's one-time lieutenant and successor, Boris Yeltsin.

From Mao to Deng: The Economic Dimension

The People's Republic of China demonstrates the superiority of a planned, collectivized economy, even with bureaucratic parasitism and mismanagement, over a backward capitalist country. But it also demonstrates the impossibility of an economically backward workers state catching up with, much less overtaking, an advanced capitalist country.

The Chinese Revolution occurred about the same time that India achieved its independence from British colonialism. For the next several decades, this South Asian country—the most populous in the world after China—was governed by Nehru's bourgeois-nationalist Congress Party. The economic conditions which Nehru & Co. inherited from the British Raj (colonial administration) were, on balance, more favorable (or less unfavorable) than those which confronted Mao and his colleagues in 1949. The Chinese economy—the agricultural as well as industrial sector—had been devastated by decades of war and civil war.

Yet within 20 years, China had surpassed India in all significant measures of economic and social progress. At the end of the Mao era, in 1977 China was producing 30 to 40 percent more food per capita than India even with 15 percent less arable land, and in China food was distributed far more equitably. By the early 1980s, per capita gross national product in China was 20 percent higher than in India. The infant mortality rate in China was 70 percent that of India, while life expectancy at birth was 67 years compared to 55 years in India. Secondary school enrollment was 44 percent of the school-age population in China compared to only 30 percent in India.

However, if one compares China to the United States or even the Soviet Union the picture is entirely different. When in 1978 Deng became the country's paramount leader, crop yield per agricultural worker in China was 1,000 kilograms compared to 10,000 kilograms in the USSR and 95,000 kilograms in the U.S. China was generating 257 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity, the United States 2.2 trillion kilowatt-hours. And since the population of China at this time was three times greater than that of the U.S., the difference in per capita output for the U.S. was three times greater than the difference in total amount.

It was precisely the acute contradiction between China's relative economic back-



Mao (left) with Stalin and Khrushchev (right) during 1949 visit to USSR. As nationalist Moscow and Beijing bureaucracies fell out in late 1950s, Mao denounced Khrushchev as "revisionist," later forged criminal anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism.

wardness and the "great power" nationalism of its bureaucratic rulers which impelled Deng & Co. down the road of market-based "reforms." The neo-Maoist publicist Wei Wei is organically incapable of understanding the social and economic factors underlying Deng's policies. In defending the achievements of the Mao era, he writes: "In Mao's China, from 1952 to 1972, the growth rate [per decade] was as high as 64.5 percent (34 percent per capita). The economic development of China was not 'moving forward at a snail's pace,' as many Western reporters erroneously told their readers." It is true that many Western ideologues as well as the propagandists of the Deng regime deliberately understated the substantial economic gains China made during the Mao era. However, Wei is blind to the contradictions and extreme unevenness of China's economic development during this period.

By 1952, most branches of Chinese industry had recovered, reaching or surpassing their pre-1949 peaks. The basis was thus laid for the First Five Year Plan (1953-57), which was closely modelled on the early Soviet five-year plans. In economic terms, this was far and away the most successful period of the Mao era. Industrial output grew at 18 percent per year, more than doubling China's industrial capacity. But this very development revealed a central economic dilemma facing Chinese Stalinism. Agricultural output failed to keep pace with the rapid industrial growth. Thus a continuing rapid growth of an urban proletariat threatened to produce increasing food shortages and a rising cost of living.

While the First Five Year Plan was highly successful on its own terms, the results came nowhere close to satisfying the aspirations of Mao and his colleagues to transform China into a world power on a par with the U.S. and USSR. In the late 1950s, Mao launched the "Great Leap Forward"—an adventurist economic program attempting massive rural industrialization symbolized by the construction of "backyard steel furnaces." It should be pointed out that the Great Leap Forward was initially supported by the "pragmatic" elements of the CCP leadership, represented by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, who later were strongly critical of it. The consequent economic collapse amid widespread

starvation in the countryside severely damaged Mao's hitherto unchallenged authority among the upper and middle levels of the bureaucracy. This situation underlay the outbreak of violent factional warfare in the mid-late 1960s known as the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," as Mao sought to regain supreme control in Beijing.

Discussions of the last decade of the Mao era usually focus on the political-ideological sphere—the Cultural Revo-



South Korean Hyundai workers on strike, 1998. Struggle for proletarian political revolution in China must be linked to fight for a socialist Asia.

lution, the rise and fall of the "Gang of Four," including Mao's widow Jiang Qing, which briefly ruled after Mao's death. Economic developments during this period get relatively short shrift. Yet these economic developments are key to understanding the recourse of Mao's successors to market-based "reforms."

Mao's last decade coincided with the Third and Fourth Five Year Plans (covering 1966-70 and 1971-75). Industrial growth, while down from the exceptional rates of the First Five Year Plan, was still substantial at 9.5 percent per annum. Agricultural output, however, barely kept pace with population growth. Per capita grain output was 312 kilograms at the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan, only marginally higher than it had been at the end of the first plan 18 years earlier. Per capita output of raw cotton—the country's most important industrial crop—had not increased at all over the course of almost two decades.

Soviet economic development was also characterized by a marked imbalance between industrial and agricultural growth. But the margin of subsistence in the Chinese countryside was qualitatively narrower—by large orders of magnitude—than it had been in Russia even in the 1930s. As we pointed out earlier in this article, when Deng came to power the crop yield per agricultural worker in the Soviet Union was ten times that of China! The low level of agricultural productivity in China was thus a fundamental barrier to rapid and extensive industrialization.

The first major economic "reform" undertaken by the Deng regime was the decollectivization of agriculture. The intent was to harness the acquisitive appetites of peasant families to drive forward the rural economy. Initially, the new

"household responsibility" system did lead to an upturn in agricultural production. Also contributing to this was increased production of farm equipment and chemical fertilizers.

In the longer run, the decollectivization of agriculture generated a class of wealthy farmers exploiting the labor of their poorer neighbors. At the same time, sections of the urban industrial economy were opened to Western and Japanese investors and the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong, Taiwan and elsewhere. The social gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution are today threatened by powerful forces striving toward capitalist restoration.

The mass unemployment and starvation racking the masses of Indonesia, South Korea and other countries caught up in the Asian economic depression give a picture of what capitalist restoration would mean for the Chinese workers and poor peasants, who were protected from the full brunt of the crisis by China's collectivized economy. Undermining that economy, the Beijing bureaucracy continues to pursue market "reforms" and the growth of a capitalist sector (e.g., the "Special Economic Zones") on the fatuous assumption that the world capitalist market will expand limitlessly.

Stalinist bureaucratic rule is leading China to a crisis which will determine the fate of the proletarian and peasant masses in that country and well beyond. As we wrote a few years ago in "China on the Brink: Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997):

"The aims of China's would-be exploiters—centrally to secure the right to buy and sell property and hand it down to their offspring—can only be achieved through smashing the existing state apparatus by one means or another and replacing it with a new one based on the principle of private ownership of the means of production. The one force which can stop the drive toward capitalist restoration is the Chinese proletariat....

"The program of political revolution is needed in China today if the workers and impoverished peasant masses are to emerge victorious in the class battles that lie ahead."

The way forward for the Chinese proletariat lies in constructing a proletarian-internationalist party whose goal is world socialist revolution. This was the aim of the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International under Lenin and Trotsky; it was the aim of the early CCP led by Chen Duxiu and of the Chinese Trotskyists; and it is the aim of the International Communist League as we fight to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. A Leninist-Trotskyist party in China would link the struggle against the corrupt Stalinist bureaucracy with the class struggles of the militant Indonesian and South Korean workers against their capitalist rulers, and with the workers and oppressed minorities in the imperialist centers, such as Japan, the U.S. and Germany. Only through extending socialist revolution to these countries will the threat of capitalist re-enslavement be eliminated once and for all and the basis laid for the development of China in a socialist Asia. ■

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# Voucher Plan...

(continued from page 12)

prominent Democrats from San Francisco mayor Willie Brown to Governor Gray Davis and President Clinton have come down against school vouchers, support for union-busting privatization schemes runs through both parties. Al Gore’s running mate, Senator Joseph Lieberman, is a longtime advocate of vouchers, while Republican governor John Engler of Michigan, where a voucher proposal is also on the ballot, opposes them. The Democratic Party platform calls “for schools to be more accountable for student performance” (*New York Times*, 14 August)—i.e., attacking union wages and protections through proposals like “merit” pay for teachers.

Liberal Democratic mayor Jerry Brown’s “answer” to the pitiful condition of Oakland schools is to militarize them! For months, he has been seeking to open a charter school co-managed by the California National Guard at the former Oakland Army Base. Brown’s proposed military academy, where students would wear uniforms and participate in marching drills, is being touted as an “alternative” to Oakland middle and high schools with poor academic records. While substantial community opposition has so far prevented this, the Pentagon has agreed to bankroll the project to the tune of \$2 million, while Gray Davis has pledged \$1.3 million.

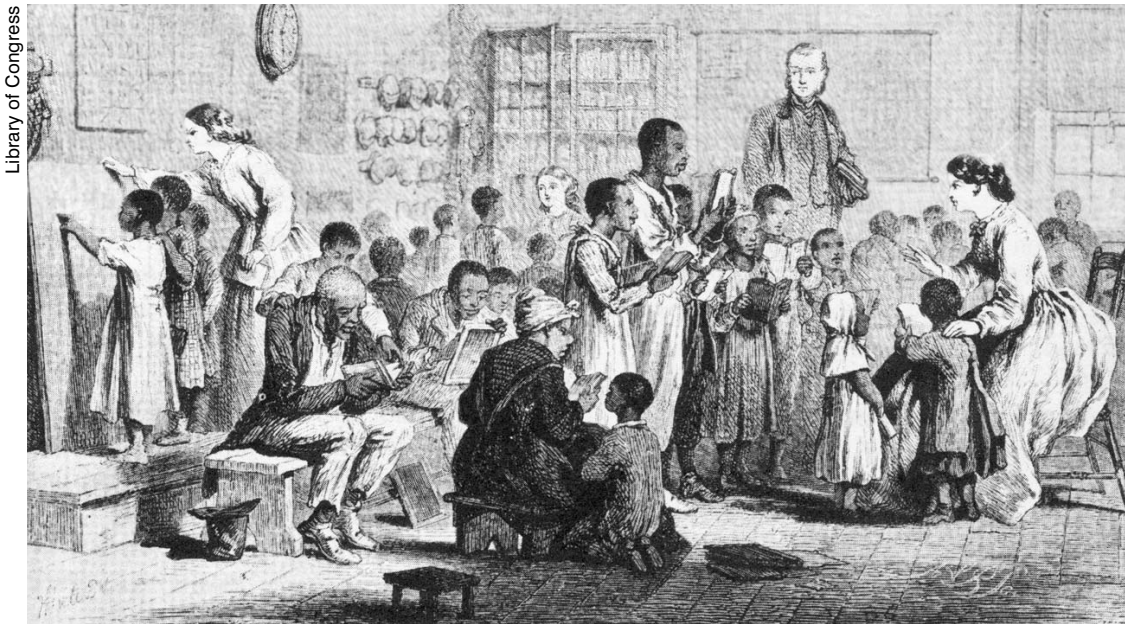
The sellout of the 1996 Oakland teachers strike underlined the need to forge a new, class-struggle leadership of the workers movement, one that will break with the Democrats and Republicans and build a workers party that champions the interests of those who create the wealth of this country. Such a party must lead labor to take up the struggle of blacks, women, Latinos and immigrants, fighting for a workers government where quality education will be a right for all and not restricted by class privilege.

## Education U.S.A.—Separate and Unequal

Public education is a historic gain of the working class, won through hard struggle. It is a sign of the utter decay of capitalism that conditions are being rolled back to the 19th century, when Marx and Engels called for public education as a vital democratic demand aimed at breaking the old aristocratic private school system and the hold of the church. The 1848 *Communist Manifesto* called for “free education for all children in public schools.” This gain fueled the growth of dynamic American capitalism a century ago as wave after wave of immigrants arrived and went to school (see “Education U.S.A.—Separate and Unequal,” *WV* No. 544, 7 February 1992).

That was then. Close to two decades ago, a 1983 report on education (“A Nation at Risk”) stated, “For the first time in the history of our country, the educational skills [and economic attainment] of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach, those of their parents.” And like everything in cap-

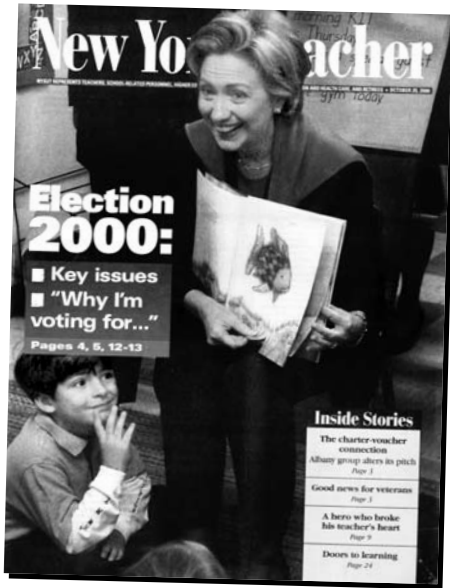
**Southern schoolroom for freed slaves during Radical Reconstruction. It took the Civil War to establish public education for black people in America.**



Library of Congress

italist America, the attack on education has a racist edge.

Before the Civil War, black slaves who dared to learn to read met the lash of their masters’ whips. It took the smashing of the Southern slavocracy to establish public education for black people in this country. The Reconstruction Acts of 1867 that provided for military occupation of the former Confederate states also pro-



**NY teachers union stumps for Hillary Clinton’s Senate campaign, even as Democrats seek to undermine union power.**

vided for universal public education. Those Southern states that refused to comply or that mandated racially segregated schools had their state constitutions invalidated by Congress and sent back for revision. The defeat of Radical Reconstruction, signaled by the Compromise of 1877, ushered in Jim Crow “separate but equal” segregation, which was enshrined by the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1896 *Plessy* ruling.

The fight for school integration was a key battleground of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and ’60s, which attempted to remove the formal legal inequalities imposed on black people in America. But the liberal strategy of pressuring the government for legal reforms could not answer the *systemic* racial oppression, the forcible segrega-

tion of blacks at the bottom of the economy, that is the bedrock of American capitalism. The 1954 *Brown* decision mandated court-ordered desegregation in the South where schools had been segregated by law. But the de facto segregation of Northern cities, where blacks were legally “equal” yet systematically discriminated against in housing, jobs and education, was a nut that the liberal-led civil rights movement could not crack.

In response to the 1954 Supreme Court ruling, private whites-only “academies” began mushrooming throughout the South. In the North, court-ordered busing to integrate inner-city schools provoked a violent racist backlash in the early 1970s, while many whites moved to the suburbs or transferred their kids to parochial schools. The Spartacist League called for labor-centered mobilizations to defend busing and for its extension to the better-funded suburban schools. The defeat of even the most minimal steps toward school integration underlines the fact that black oppression cannot be overcome within the framework of racist American capitalism. Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution!

## Defend Separation of Church and State!

The American bourgeoisie is not about to simply do away with public education or turn the country’s schools over to a bunch of ignorant bible-thumpers. The NASA project that crashed onto the surface of Mars last year because some engineer confused miles with kilometers cost the government a quarter of a billion dollars. The largest industrial economy in the world—and a military dependent on nuclear submarines and missiles—cannot be run without skilled,

educated workers and competent scientists, engineers and technicians. There remain plenty of good public schools in the country—largely in white middle-class suburbs, where spending per pupil is twice or more what it is in the inner cities.

Although the 1950s were rife with religious superstition, after the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik satellite and followed this with the first manned space flight, the frantic American bourgeoisie pushed for a massive increase in public science education in order to keep U.S. technological capacity from falling behind. Today, particularly in the aftermath of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the capitalists are not disposed to provide anything but the most rudimentary educational skills to most of the population. Not only do they not want to cut into profits in order to pay to educate working-class and minority youth for whom they can’t provide jobs, it’s easier for them to rule over an ignorant population in the grip of religious backwardness. This was exemplified by the decision of the Kansas Board of Education last year to remove Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution from the state curriculum. But the religious bigots who pushed that through were soon voted out, and their anti-science dictate will likely be overturned later this fall.

The fact that historic achievements like the universal right to secular public education are today being pushed aside is a sign of the advanced stage of decay which capitalism has reached. The fight for free, quality, integrated education for all from kindergarten to college and for the strict separation of church and state can only be won through a workers revolution that sweeps away racist American capitalism and establishes an egalitarian socialist society. ■

# Teamsters...

(continued from page 2)

International officials repeatedly postponed the strike. Union members voted down the company’s contract offer by more than 9 to 1 *three separate times* and briefly blocked officials from carrying out last-minute talks with management the day the strike began.

Teamsters officials have refused to appeal to the unionized supermarket workers to honor the strike, claiming that since they are technically not on strike against Safeway, it is “illegal” under the Taft-Hartley law to picket the stores. Such anti-union laws exist for the sole purpose of banning any tactic that is effective in labor’s fight against the capitalists. If you play by the bosses’ rules, you lose! The Teamsters tops are even telling Teamsters drivers to continue making deliveries to Safeway stores from other locations (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 October). And in 1995, Teamsters officials stabbed UFCW strikers in the back by allowing union truck drivers to continue hauling groceries to the supermarkets.

The Tracy warehouse workers are heavily Latino, including many relatively recent immigrants. The organizing of

immigrant workers and the fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants* are key tasks for organized labor. But this requires a struggle against the union misleaders like Teamsters president James Hoffa Jr., who pushes vile racist campaigns against Mexican truckers.

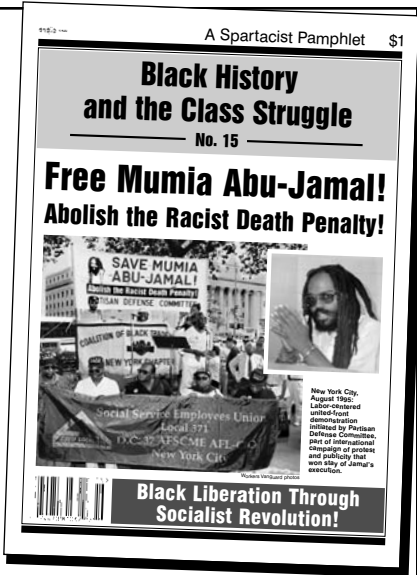
The chauvinist protectionism of both Hoffa and “progressive” AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney expresses the labor tops’ program of class collaboration, which preaches reliance on the government, Democratic Party politicians and other agencies of the capitalist exploiters. These policies have also weakened the unions in the face of a concerted effort by the bosses to drive them out of the warehouses throughout California. What is needed is a new, class-struggle leadership of labor which can lead the working class in struggle not only to improve its current conditions but to get rid of this entire capitalist system based on the exploitation of labor. The necessary instrument that must be forged is a revolutionary workers party which champions the cause of black people, immigrants and all the oppressed in the fight for a workers government to expropriate the capitalist rulers and build a planned, socialist economy based on production for the needs of society, not profit for a few. ■

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**\$1** (48 pages)

**Order from:** Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116



# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Down With California Prop. 38!

# Defeat School Voucher Plan! Defend Public Education!

OAKLAND—California's Proposition 38, the "school voucher" ballot initiative, is an attack on the state's already crippled public education system. The so-called "National Average School Funding Guarantee and Parental Right to Choose Quality Education Amendment" would drain already scarce resources from California's public school system in order to provide a \$4,000 voucher for annual tuition to every private and parochial school student from kindergarten through high school.

Prop 38 is cynically packaged by its promoters as a program to benefit the ghetto and barrio poor, whose children are forced to attend dilapidated schools which are little more than holding pens. But decent private schools charge far more than \$4,000 a year, placing them far out of the reach of working people. Prop 38 represents an assault on working people and minorities that takes aim at the very *right* to public education for all. A similar initiative in 1993 largely backed by the religious right, Prop 174, was resoundingly defeated. This one should be, too—Vote No on Prop 38!

Prop 38 was initiated by Tim Draper, a Silicon Valley millionaire who dubs public education "socialistic" (*New York Times*, 17 April). It would abolish the existing requirement that education receive 40 percent of the state's general fund. According to one study, the state stands to lose as much as \$2.6 billion in federal aid, which is based on the number of students enrolled in the public schools. Current state funding sources for adult education, community colleges and day care would be abolished, putting these already inadequate programs at risk.

Private education has long been a bastion of racist "white flight" from integrated schools as well as the refuge of the Catholic church, bible-thumping, anti-

## Quality, Integrated Education for All!



Riesterer/Oakland Tribune

**Already underfunded inner-city California public schools are threatened by school voucher plan which would subsidize religious and other private schools.**

science "creationists" and advocates of school prayer. Private schools are legally allowed to discriminate against students based on religion, race and sex, cannot be held to state and local educational standards and may hire unqualified teachers. Such "schools" could be in somebody's basement—or in somebody's church. Indeed, some 85 percent of all existing private schools in the state are religious schools, and a spokesman for Draper's "Prop 38 Yes" organization has been soliciting promises from inner-city pastors that "if vouchers pass, their churches will become schools during the week."

Nothing could more indict the wretched state of inner-city public education than the support for school vouchers among layers of the black and Latino population, who embrace private schools

as the only way for their children to have a chance given the virtual prisons that pass for schools in the ghettos and barrios and the absence of decent union jobs and training programs. It was this same sense of desperation that fueled support two years ago for Prop 227—the chauvinist "English only" initiative abolishing bilingual education—among many Spanish-speaking people who feared that the vastly underfunded bilingual programs would not provide their children with the English proficiency needed to get anywhere in this bigoted country. Last May, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a class-action suit against the state Department of Education on behalf of parents whose children attend overcrowded schools with filthy, broken bathrooms, no textbooks, leaky roofs and a critical shortage of accredited teachers.

The precipitous fall in school funding dates back to the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, which spearheaded the "taxpayers revolt" by slashing property taxes. As a result, public education in California has not only deteriorated but is even more class- and race-biased than before. In this capitalist country where public schools are primarily funded by local property taxes, even the term "public education" is an oxymoron. There are two "publics"—those who've got property and those who haven't. And families from housing projects cannot provide a tax base for education comparable to that of families from the gated suburban communities.

California, which once touted itself as the "education state," is now near the bottom of the 50 states in spending per pupil (and near the top in prison spending); heavily minority districts in the miserably poor inner cities, stripped of assets, can scarcely educate anybody. Dedicated

teachers in these poor schools have to pay for supplies out of their own pockets to provide the children with even minimal education. The ruling class' message to the youth, particularly the increasingly minority and non-English-speaking youth of California, is: "You don't need a future—just work and shut up."

### Bipartisan Union-Busting Against Teachers

Limited voucher programs for low-income children already exist in Milwaukee, Cleveland and Florida. Notable proponents of privatized education nationally include the Edison Schools—a union-busting corporation which takes over public schools and runs them for profit—and the Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation, which pushed school vouchers in that city and also contributed financially to *The Bell Curve*, the 1994 tome by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray that sought to give a pseudo-scientific justification for the bourgeoisie's racist attacks on black rights (see "The 'Bell Curve' and Genocide U.S.A.," WV No. 611, 25 November 1994).

Like publicly funded "charter schools," which have proliferated in California and elsewhere, vouchers and other school privatization measures are aimed in large part at undermining or smashing teachers unions. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* (28 September), right-wing economist Milton Friedman, who fathered the idea of school vouchers in the 1950s, railed that teachers unions "control the government school monopoly."

In response to mounting attacks by the racist ruling class, the last decade has seen teachers strikes throughout the state. When the Oakland Education Association (OEA) struck in 1996 after five years without a pay raise, the Democratic mayor and state officials threatened to impose strikebreaking injunctions. School board officials and the Oakland NAACP tried to mobilize black parents against the integrated union. But this strikebreaking failed, as the strike won widespread sympathy from poor, minority and working-class parents who supported the union's demand for smaller class sizes. However, the OEA leadership refused to mobilize mass pickets to stop scabs while the Alameda County Central Labor Council refused to sanction the teachers' picket lines and its affiliated unions encouraged their members to cross them. The strike was ultimately sold out by the pro-capitalist union tops, who sought to put a "friendlier" face on the overseers of education cutbacks by backing a slate of Democrats in the school board elections.

The right-wing social democrats who head the American Federation of Teachers have long been a solid bastion of support for the Democratic Party. While

*continued on page 11*



WV Photo

**1996 Oakland teachers strike won wide support from black and Latino parents for demanding smaller class sizes.**