

1917

"To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; no fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives—these are the rules of the Fourth International."

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DEH SPERGEI

Capitalism & Racism

It is hard for most people to accept that racial prejudice and antagonism, pervasive phenomena of modern life, have not been permanent features of human society. Yet the very concept of "race," and the ideology and practice of racism are relatively modern.

Racism as an ideology is a form of biological determinism, premised on the idea that different human populations ("races") have different capacities because of their genetic makeup. Inevitably such categorizations are aimed at rationalizing an existing social hierarchy.

The whole concept of "races" within the human spe-

cies is not based on physical reality, but is rather a purely ideological construction. Over the past 50 years biologists have come to the conclusion that there is no scientific means of categorizing human beings by "race." What are taken as distinct "races" (European, African and Asian) are in reality arbitrary divisions of humanity on the basis of skin color and other secondary physical features.

Geneticists have concluded that some 75 percent of genes are identical in every human being. Of the remaining portion, which account for all genetic vari-



LES STONE—SYGMA

Imperialist jingoism poisons workers

ation:

"85 percent turns out to be between individuals within the same local population, tribe, or nation; a further 8 percent is between tribes or nations within a major 'race'; and the remaining 7 percent is between major 'races.' That means that the genetic variation between one Spaniard and another, or between one Masai and another, is 85 percent of all human genetic variation...."

—Stephen Rose *et al.*, *Not In Our Genes*

In this society xenophobia and racism seem to be natural phenomena, yet they are wholly social creations. "Genetics and racism are counterposed," writes D. Van Arkel:

"The whole concept of a Nordic race, for example, vanishes into thin air if blue-eyedness and fair-hairedness are merely the results of a natural selection in favour of recessive traits. In areas with scarcity of sunlight, given an inadequate diet, the more pigmented stood greater risk of contracting rickets, which in the case of female patients, distorting their pelvic bones, made childbirth impossible. This is a mere case of an evolutionary normal survival of a coincidental mutation, which determines nothing about other genetic traits. Genetically determined blood-groups or the capacity for tasting PTC (phenol-thio-carbamide)...are just as good criteria for classification as skin colour or form of hair, but they would radically change the 'racial' distribution of mankind."

—*Racism and Colonialism*, Robert Ross ed.

Race: A Social Reality

The absence of any scientific basis for distinguishing one "race" from another makes the whole concept meaningless. Yet biological refutation does not affect the social reality. As Richard Fraser, a veteran American Trotskyist, pointed out in "The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution," a document written in the 1950s and recently republished, race remains "a reality

in spite of the fact that science reveals that it does not exist." Fraser wrote that: "The concept of race has now been overthrown in biological science. But *race* as the keystone of exploitation remains. Race is a social relation and has only a social reality."

Racism is rooted in the historical development of capitalism as a world system. It has proved through several centuries to be a useful and flexible tool for the possessing classes. It justified the brutal wars of conquest and genocide, which established the European colonial empires. It rationalized the slave trade, which produced the primitive accumulation of capital necessary for the industrial revolution.

Today racism in its various guises remains an important ideological mainstay for the capitalist elites, providing a rationale for the barbaric oppression of minorities. Racism "explains," for example, why black people in America fail to get a piece of the "American Dream" one generation after another. It can be used to "explain" why Japanese capitalism has been much more successful than its European and North American rivals. The arguments offered by racists, whether the psychotic ravings of a lumpenized skinhead or the "objective," pseudo-scientific scholarship of a Harvard professor, seek to direct popular anger away from the workings of an irrational and decaying capitalist system to some group of "outsiders."

Racism has proved integral and necessary for the proper functioning of capitalist society for a variety of reasons. In the first place, it provides one of the essential axes along which the working class can be divided against itself, encouraging one segment of the proletariat to identify with the exploiters. This impedes the development of class consciousness and undermines the unity necessary to challenge capitalist rule. The work-

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1917

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ICL/LRCI: False Assertions and Foolish Consistencies

Centrists & Soviet Counterrevolution

The International Bolshevik Tendency saw the aborted Soviet coup of August 1991 as Stalinism's last desperate stand. We said that its failure sounded the death knell of the Soviet workers' state. Because the coup makers represented the last obstacle, however weak and temporary, to the total destruction of the state power born of the October Revolution, we said that the Soviet working class should have sided with the Emergency Committee against the forces of capitalist restoration gathered around Boris Yeltsin. His victory, we argued, opened the door for the building of bourgeois states throughout the Soviet Union. Within days, the Communist Party, which formed the administrative core of the degenerated workers' state, was dissolved as the counterrevolution took hold.

The international bourgeoisie had no difficulty in recognizing the coup as an enormous defeat for the working class, or in acting on the basis of their own class interests by lining up behind Yeltsin. The ostensibly Trotskyist left, however, displayed no such consistency. The most cravenly opportunist among them simply joined the bourgeoisie in clapping for Yeltsin.

Yet, because these organizations pretended to be Trotskyist, they faced a theoretical predicament completely alien to bourgeois ideologues: how to reconcile siding with the avowed enemies of socialism and the working class in the name of socialism and the working class? We noted in the last issue of this journal that the most logically consistent rationale for this treachery came from the tried-and-true reformists of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec). Mandel's followers argued that there were no real differences between the coup plotters and Yeltsin/Gorbachev, and, further, that post-coup Russia remained a workers' state. Since the fate of the workers' state was not at stake in August 1991, the only real difference between the two sides was over the question of democratic rights, the Yeltsin camp being the more democratic of the two. It was thus in the name of democracy that the USec took up the banner of counterrevolution.

But even those supposedly Trotskyist groups to the left of the USec refused to bloc with the Emergency Committee. Their rationalizations for this failure were, however, somewhat less consistent. Workers Power (Britain) and its affiliates in the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) initially recognized that Yeltsin represented the most aggressive restorationist forces, and that the coup's defeat meant the end of the Soviet workers' state. But they sided with Yeltsin anyway, on the grounds that he was less likely to attack the democratic rights of Soviet workers. The



PETER ANDREWS-KATZSABA

Muscovite buys groceries with U.S. dollars

Spartacist League (U.S.) and its overseas satellites in the International Communist League (ICL), while denouncing Yeltsin as a counterrevolutionary, remained neutral on the coup, and claimed until recently that the ex-USSR remained a workers' state.

Since we last analyzed the views of the latter two groups, they have exchanged positions on the nature of the former Soviet Union. The LRCI now argues that the workers' state has been weakened, but remains intact. The ICL, on the other hand, has finally acknowledged that the USSR no longer exists. These line changes, made in both cases without any serious political accounting, were not occasioned by new developments in the ex-USSR. The objective situation there has not altered fundamentally since the coup. It was rather the willingness of these two groups to defend their original positions that has diminished in the interim. We can understand why. Both positions were equally untenable. But these zigzags do not succeed in solving the problems of either group.

On the empirical level, Workers Power's initial response to the coup stood in marked contrast to that of the USec. For several months after the coup's defeat,

Workers Power was reluctant to acknowledge the demise of the Soviet workers' state. However, when Gorbachev officially dissolved the USSR in December of 1991, they wrote: "The Soviet Union is dead. The spectre that haunted the capitalists for over seventy years has been laid to rest" (*Workers Power*, January 1992). WP also seemed to recognize that there was an essential distinction between Yeltsin/Gorbachev and the coup leaders. A September 1991 statement by the LRCI's International Secretariat says that Yeltsin represented "a faction of the bureaucracy that has abandoned the defence of its caste privileges and their source—a degenerate workers' state—in favour of becoming key members of a new bourgeois ruling class" (*Workers Power*, September 1991). The same statement asserted that the Emergency Committee "hoped by their actions on 19 August to defend their privileges on the basis of post capitalist property relations" (emphasis added).

Yet, by mid-1992, Workers Power was already bringing its line into closer conformity with that of the USec. In a polemic against our New Zealand comrades, *Workers Power* (NZ) argues that:

"...no section of the Russian bureaucracy had a fundamental interest in defending state property by August 1991. The Committee for the State of Emergency (CSE) faction had no principled opposition to the restoration of capitalism.

"...they had no fundamentally different strategy than that offered by either Gorbachev or Yeltsin. They simply wanted to protect their interests during the restoration process."

—*Workers Power* No. 84 (New Zealand)

The same article contains the following evaluation of post-coup Russia:

"The seizure of state power by the fast track restorationists under Yeltsin, did not completely resolve the dual power situation between the Yeltsinites and the all-union faction of the bureaucracy.

"Although this seizure of power marks a giant stride towards the restoration of capitalism, it does not constitute the end of the process. The counter-revolution is far from complete. Decisive battles...lie ahead."

This line change was affirmed in the LRCI's *Trotskyist Bulletin* of November 1992. Here we read that, "there is little or no evidence that the coup makers were committed to defending post capitalist property relations...."

Thus, contrary to their initial pronouncements, the LRCI has concluded, like Mandel, that the events of August 1991 were not decisive. Both the Yeltsinites and the coup plotters were more or less equally determined to restore capitalism prior to August, and, in any event, the victorious Yeltsinites have not yet succeeded in doing so.

Why this turn? The answer lies in the fact that the LRCI, as self-proclaimed Trotskyists, are still formally committed to the notion that the pre-coup USSR was a workers' state, and that it was their duty to defend that state against all forces of capitalist restoration, without and within. If they were to admit that Yeltsin's victory represented the final destruction of the USSR, they could not possibly take his side in the coup without throwing overboard their claim to be Soviet defensist.

Yet their fear of unpopularity drew them irresistibly into the Yeltsin camp. In their haste to respond publicly to the August events, they perhaps neglected to think through the logical implications of some of their comments. Their initial response thus came a little too close for comfort to the truth. In our previous issue we wrote:

"...While they [the LRCI] frequently analyze events and political forces accurately, their opportunist impulse to tailor their politics to radical/social-democratic public opinion prevents them from translating that analysis into a program of action, and often forces them to practical conclusions that contradict their own reasoning. They have yet to learn from Ernest Mandel and the USec that the gap between opportunist theory and practice can only be mediated by false representations of reality. To bridge that gap the USec asserts that there were no differences between the Yeltsinites and the Emergency Committee over property forms—only over whether to use democratic or authoritarian methods. Workers Power, by contrast, allows that the two rival camps did objectively represent opposing property forms, but throws in its lot with Yeltsin nonetheless...."

Did members and sympathizers of the LRCI make similar observations about their International Secretariat's initial reaction to the coup? Did this, in turn, prompt the leadership to pay closer attention to the teachings of the more practised opportunists led by Ernest Mandel? For whatever reason, Workers Power has since bridged the gap. Their current attempt to minimize the importance of the coup eliminates the logical inconsistencies of their earlier position—at the price of totally misrepresenting reality.

What Is a Counterrevolution?

The LRCI's *Trotskyist Bulletin* attempts to provide some theoretical underpinning for its position with the assertion that:

"The restoration of capitalism requires more than just the destruction of the conservatives' hold on state power (which by the way was not totally completed by the coup and counter-coup). It requires the destruction of the operation of the bureaucratic planning system and its replacement by the law of value as the dominant economic regulator of society."

If the planning system is the only criterion for the existence of a workers' state, it is difficult to see why WP sees the counterrevolution in the future rather than in the past. The economy of the ex-USSR can no longer be described as "planned," bureaucratically or otherwise. The destruction of central planning and the monopoly of foreign trade signifies that the economy has been subordinated to the international capitalist market. Capitalist restoration does not hinge on all the trusts being liquidated, or all the means of production privatized. Huge sectors of industry are today being kept in operation through state subsidies to preserve a tenuous social peace.

The LRCI's argument confuses the triumph of the counterrevolution with the completion of the necessarily protracted process of dismantling the system of nationalized property. The workers' state is destroyed when restorationist forces achieve political/military supremacy. This is a *precondition* for economic transforma-

tion, but the two are not identical.

Nationalized property, while constituting the economic foundation of a workers' state, does not wholly define it, any more than private property alone defines a bourgeois state. One must also examine the relation between prevailing property forms and political institutions, i.e., the state in the narrower sense of the word. Are those who exercise political power the defenders or the enemies of the existing economic setup? If the character of states were defined by property relations alone, then the Bolsheviks, who did not conduct extensive nationalizations until the summer of 1918, stood for eight months at the head of a bourgeois state. But we are sure WP agrees with us in dating the birth of the Soviet workers' state from October 1917, when a government openly hostile to private property, and supported by its own "armed bodies," seized the reins of power. The death of the Soviet workers' state likewise dates from August 1991, when a government openly hostile to collectivized property took the helm, backed by elements of the military that had rallied to Yeltsin's side during the coup. Today that government's main concern is when and how to privatize the economy. It depends for this project on the support of the imperialist powers and their principal lending agencies.

It is true that the so-called hardliners did not resist marketization in the name of "socialism" or any other systematic set of beliefs. But, prior to August 1991, virtually every concrete measure aimed at privatization and the breakup of the USSR—the Shatalin plan for capitalism in 500 days, the freeing of prices on consumer items, concessions to national separatists at home and imperialism abroad—ran into significant resistance at the highest levels. Only after the coup collapsed was the situation definitively resolved in favor of the pro-capitalist wing and all those forces outside the bureaucracy that favored restoration.

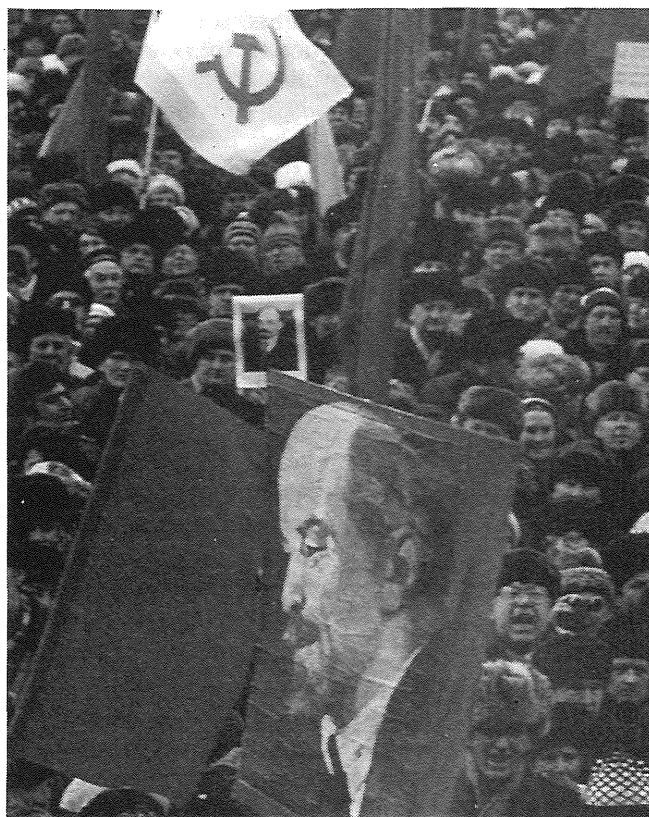
The Nature of the Stalinist Bureaucracy

To refute our contention that the "hardliners" were resisting counterrevolution, Workers Power sets up and knocks down a straw man. In a recent polemic, the LRCI imputes to the IBT and others the position that "one major faction [of the Stalinist bureaucracy] must inevitably, or at least in the present circumstances, be committed to the defence of bureaucratically planned property relations." They go on to say:

"To suggest that any bureaucratic wing...will defend the degenerated workers' state under all circumstances means to give the ruling caste a social character it simply does not have. In short, it is to give it a deformed or degenerated proletarian character. Trotsky did not characterize it in this way: he insisted that the caste had a petit bourgeois class character."

—*Trotskyist Bulletin* No. 2, November 1992

This distinction does little to clarify matters. In calling the Stalinists a petty-bourgeois layer, Trotsky did not mean to imply that it was a stratum of small property owners, as under capitalism, but rather sought to stress its *intermediary* position between the two major classes of modern society—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.



SHEPARD SHERBELL—SABA

Like the petty bourgeoisie, it had no distinct class interests or historical role of its own.

Trotsky viewed the bureaucracy as an essentially *conservative* social layer, whose main commitment was to the defense of its material privileges. These privileges depended, in the first place, upon excluding the proletariat from political power at home, and avoiding major revolutionary upheavals or confrontations with imperialism abroad. But the bureaucracy's privileges were also bound up with its role as administrator of the planned economy, whose foundations were laid by the October Revolution. The bureaucracy sought to maintain all these conditions of its existence. The Stalinist caste was inherently unstable because these conditions represented an equilibrium of class forces on an international scale that could not last indefinitely. In the event of a major offensive either by imperialism or the working class, the bureaucracy, like all intermediate layers, would split, some going over to the side of counterrevolution and others casting their lot with the working class.

The collapse of Soviet Stalinism demonstrated the fragile and transitory nature of the Soviet ruling caste, refuting once and for all those "third campists" who viewed the Stalinists as either a new ruling class or a state-capitalist bourgeoisie. The Soviet state did not fall to an imperialist military offensive. It was ultimately the economic stagnation brought about by six decades of bureaucratic rule that caused large layers of the Soviet intelligentsia and technocratic elite to look to capitalism as a way out of the impasse. This new mood among the liberal intelligentsia eventually spread to the top layers

of the party and state apparatus, some of whom attempted to overcome stagnation by introducing limited market measures and grovelling before imperialism. Perestroika, in turn, encouraged an entire wing of the bureaucracy, personified and led by Boris Yeltsin, to come out increasingly under the banner of a complete return to capitalism. This wing also found support in growing movements for national separatism in the USSR's constituent republics.

The counterrevolutionary onslaught did, in fact, provoke a split in the bureaucracy, although in a somewhat less clearcut manner than Trotsky envisioned. Within the Communist Party, there developed a "hardline" faction, which accused Gorbachev of yielding too much ground, and which drove the more right-wing elements out of the party and into Yeltsin's arms. This growing polarization culminated in the confrontation of August 1991.

Why the Working Class Had a Side

Contrary to Trotsky's expectations, the Soviet working class was not an active factor in the August events. Demoralized by decades of Stalinist misrule and suspicious of the Yeltsinite hucksters, the vast majority of workers were indifferent to the outcome of the struggle. Given the fact that both contending forces were enemies of the working class, the question was: what outcome would make it easier, or at least less difficult, for the workers to seize power in their own name in the future? Our answer was and is: a victory for the Emergency Committee.

The putschists could have vastly improved their chances by attempting to mobilize popular support, although they would have discovered that a victory over the Yeltsinites achieved with working-class participation would have significantly altered the political equation. Yanayev, Pugo, *et al.* would have remained partially dependent on a popular base for the consolidation of their rule. This would have opened the door for continued and expanded working-class political action.

In the event, the Emergency Committee explicitly called on the workers to remain on the sidelines and there was no section of the class prepared to act independently against the counterrevolutionaries. Yet even in the absence of working class support for the coupists, their victory was historically preferable to Yeltsin's.

In urging a military bloc with the Emergency Committee, we did not, as Workers Power implies, think that a wing of the bureaucracy "must inevitably" defend the workers' state. It was possible that the entire ruling caste may have gone over to the restorationists, or at least have surrendered without a fight, as in most of Eastern Europe. And, as we have pointed out previously, it almost turned out that way. But not quite. The fact remains that a section of the "hardline" faction did decide to act. They did not do so with any clear program to defend and renew collectivized property, much less, as Workers Power suggests, with some long-term strategy for restoring capitalism under authoritarian rule. They acted reflexively and belatedly to preserve what existed, to freeze a rapidly deteriorating situation. In

this, their last act, they supplied a final confirmation of Trotsky's characterization of the bureaucracy as an essentially *conservative caste*.

The Emergency Committee represented the wing of the bureaucracy most dependent upon the survival of the central state apparatus, and thus saw its threatened breakup as a mortal danger. The Soviet working class, for entirely different reasons, also had a stake in the preservation of the institutions of the degenerated workers' state, which were an obstacle to capitalist restoration. There was therefore a temporary convergence of interests between the Emergency Committee and the historic interests of the working class, which could have formed the basis for a military bloc, but certainly not for a strategic political alliance. Once the Yeltsinite danger had receded, the workers would have faced the task of overthrowing a bureaucracy already in its death throes. Working class military support to the Emergency Committee against Yeltsin would have immeasurably improved both the prospects of defeating the counterrevolution and the conditions for working class political revolution.

Democracy & Counterrevolution

Workers Power sided with Yeltsin for one reason and one reason alone. Like the petty-bourgeois democrats whose ideology centrism inevitably reflects, they view democratic rights as the holy of holies. This was why they favored a bloc with the "democratic" counterrevolution even when, immediately after the coup, they had an entirely different assessment of the aims of the contending factions. Their subsequent reappraisal, to the effect that both factions were equally pro-capitalist, was merely an afterthought, a rationalization intended to make their position appear more compatible with the Marxism they falsely profess.

While we defend democratic rights, we regard collectivized property in the means of production as a much more valuable conquest for the working class, and private property, not political dictatorship, as the greater evil. Unlike the social democrats, we do not argue that democratic rights and the struggle for socialism can never in any circumstances come into conflict. Yeltsin, or whoever replaces him, will not in the end succeed in restoring capitalism by democratic means. But the Emergency Committee was not comprised of champions of workers' democracy either. If the Emergency Committee had had reliable military units in the capital, and triumphed solely by force of arms, it might well have attacked the freedoms granted under Gorbachev sooner than Yeltsin. Many union leaders could have been jailed, union publications suppressed and meetings broken up. In the short term, there could indeed have been a choice between preserving certain democratic liberties and slowing down the assault on what was left of the planned economy. This was the choice we faced in Poland in 1981.

We say defense of collectivized property comes first. The need for political dictatorship is in inverse proportion to the strength of the ruling group. Private property in the means of production is a powerful social institu-

tion with deep roots in society, independent of any political regime. For this reason, capitalist class rule in the advanced countries is not normally threatened by the existence of universal suffrage or parliaments. Precisely because the Stalinist bureaucracy was a usurper caste, with no historical claim to legitimacy and no independent social moorings, it was forced to rely on a strict monopoly of political power. The Stalinists' use of dictatorial methods was an indication of their weakness, not their strength. The overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy by the workers would involve only a change in the forms of political rule, leaving the economic foundations intact. Breaking the rule of capital, on the other hand, involves a struggle against the domestic ruling class, as well as its powerful international protectors, and the complete economic restructuring of society—a far more formidable task. Yeltsin's victory has set the Russian working class back not years, but decades. Workers Power now seeks to avoid responsibility for siding with the perpetrators of this historic defeat by denying that such a defeat took place. The Soviet worker on the dole for the first time since the revolution and the Cuban peasant eating grapefruit rinds instead of meat have a different tale to tell.

Spartacist League: From Unreality to Inconsistency

If Workers Power denies the reality of counterrevolution for the sake of a false consistency, the Spartacist League/International Communist League plunges into inconsistency in order to acknowledge reality. Like the rest of the reformist and centrist pseudo-Trotskyists, the SL refused to extend military support to the Emergency Committee. Like the USec and the LRCI, they attempted to minimize this shirking of Soviet defensism by playing down the significance of the attempted coup. Until a few months ago, SL members were claiming that the ex-USSR was still a workers' state, and denouncing those who argued otherwise as hopeless pessimists and anti-Soviet renegades.

In a 27 September 1991 polemic against the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT), *Workers Vanguard* (WV) wrote:

"The failure of the putsch, they [the IBT] say, means that 'the major organized obstacle to the consolidation of a bourgeois state has been effectively removed.' Thus they simply write off the Soviet working class as a force against capitalist restoration.... Thus they write off every soldier and officer of the Soviet army as a repressive agent of capital."

A year after the coup, in an August 1992 letter to a BT supporter (reprinted in this issue), the ICL was still claiming that recognizing the reality of Yeltsin's victory, "reflects your failure to make a break with the equation common to the USec throughout its wildly gyrating history: *the Stalinist bureaucratic caste equals the workers state*" (emphasis in the original).

A few weeks later, the ICL chose the occasion of its second international conference (the first in 13 years!) to proclaim that it too has joined the defeatists, cynics and traitors to Trotskyism who believe that the Soviet work-

ers' state no longer exists. In a 27 November *Workers Vanguard* article entitled "How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled," we read:

"November 7 marked the 75th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. But the workers state erected by the Bolshevik power...did not survive its 75th year. The period of open counterrevolution ushered in by Boris Yeltsin's pro-imperialist counter-coup in August 1991 has, in the absence of mass working-class resistance, culminated in the creation of a bourgeois state, however fragile and reversible."

What cataclysmic events made the SL leaders adopt a position they had so vehemently denounced only months before? Had Yeltsin defeated the working class in a major showdown? Was there a major confrontation between the Yeltsin government and the officer corps? If so, these events are known only to the SL. The explanation for the abrupt line change must be sought not in Moscow, but in the SL/ICL's New York headquarters.

An Inconsequential 'Historical Turning Point'?

Until the end of November, the ICL was insisting that the ex-USSR remained a workers' state. But the passing of each day brought new proofs of the patent absurdity of such a contention.

The old line was so starkly contradicted by reality that it finally had to be abandoned if the ICL was to be anything more than a laughing stock. But the SL leaders cannot simply admit that they were wrong. In order to save organizational face, they must pretend that the objective situation has changed.

For months WV had been searching for some development that would offer a graceful way out of the still-a-workers'-state position. Hence the repeated warnings that a new bourgeois state might consolidate itself if the Russian workers did not soon rise up. Hence the constant reminders that every repressive act of the new regime—from police attacks on an anti-Yeltsin demonstration in Moscow to the breaking of a Russian air controllers' strike—was a step on the road to "consolidation." The ICL's international conference document quotes from a letter by the SL/ICL's maximum leader, James Robertson, suggesting that Yeltsin might well find "a big bloodbath to be a suitable statement to the masses that things are then different and are going to stay that way." Such an event would indeed have provided a convenient excuse for recognizing that the character of the Soviet state had changed. But it never materialized. Having waited for over a year, the SL could wait no longer.

In November, *Workers Vanguard* finally announced that a bourgeois state had "consolidated itself" in the territory of the former USSR. When did this "consolidation" occur? *Workers Vanguard* can't say exactly, but rushes to assure us that, whenever it was, it was certainly *not* in August of 1991: "The ascendancy of Yeltsin and capitalist-restorationist forces backing him was a pivotal event in determining the fate of the Soviet Union, but it was not conclusive." There is also a suggestion that the new capitalist state emerged as the result of



LIU HEUNG SHING—AP

Gorbachev shows decree ceding power to Yeltsin

a gradual, incremental process:

"The Yeltsin regime seized the advantage to tear away at every vestige of the Soviet degenerated workers state and push through the piecemeal consolidation of the counterrevolution. Quantity has now turned into quality."

—WV, 27 November 1992

The critical question is not when did the new Russian bourgeois state *consolidate* itself (it is still only very partially consolidated), but rather when did it *come into being*? Unlike the LRCI, the ICL has never claimed that there was a dual-power situation in the ex-USSR following the coup. Nor have they argued that the post August governing apparatus was not committed to either bourgeois or collectivized property. If these two possibilities are excluded, there is only one other answer: the bourgeois state came into being with Yeltsin's victory in August 1991.

The significance of the August events is so patently obvious that even the SL is forced to recognize it:

"The events of August 1991, placing the forces of open capitalist restoration in the ascendancy in the Soviet Union, marked a turning point in contemporary world history."

—*Spartacist*, No. 47-48, Winter 1992-93

One might expect that self-proclaimed revolutionaries would want to take a side in such a decisive event. Yet the ICL's conference document (passed unanimously) contains the following ambiguously phrased comment:

"The August 1991 events ('coup' and 'countercoup') appear to have been decisive in the direction of development in the SU, but only those who are under the sway of capitalist ideology or its material perquisites would have been hasty to draw this conclusion at that time."

—WV, 27 November 1992

In other words, those (like the IBT) who grasped the

meaning of the August events when they occurred, only demonstrated that they are the prisoners of bourgeois ideology, if not the paid agents of the capitalist state. WV's failure to understand what happened for more than a year after the fact, on the other hand, shows unflagging revolutionary optimism. In short, denial of reality is lauded as a revolutionary virtue.

The flip-flops we are now witnessing originate in the initial refusal of the SL leadership to advocate the only position consistent with the defense of the rapidly decomposing workers' state against the Yeltsinites: a military bloc with the Emergency Committee. It would be easy to jump to the conclusion that this represents a capitulation to liberal anti-Sovietism. But the Robertsonites are too deeply immersed in their insular cultist existence to be overly sensitive to left-liberal moods. It is more likely that their error originated in their own recent history.

In 1989-90, the Robertsonites mounted a concerted intervention in the former DDR (East Germany). They premised their activity on the expectation that a section of the Stalinist bureaucracy would rise to defend the East German workers' state against the Bundesrepublik bourgeoisie's reunification drive. This expectation was bitterly disappointed when the DDR Stalinists capitulated without a fight. It was perhaps out of disgust with the DDR Stalinists, or reluctance to admit that the Soviet Union could meet its end in such a pathetic excuse for a coup, that the SL leadership refused to bloc with the Stalinists on the last occasion when they actually did try to hold the line against counterrevolution. When the showdown came between Yeltsin and Yanayev, the ICL refused to take sides.

The SL/ICL's failure to grasp the significance of the August 1991 events immediately placed them on the horns of a dilemma. If the defeat of the Emergency Committee meant the end of the Soviet workers' state, their neutrality was tantamount to third campism. They were thus forced to invoke many of the same rationalizations as the reformists and other centrists, *viz.*, that the Emergency Committee was no less bent on capitalist restoration than the Yeltsin camp, and that the former's defeat did not alter the class character of the Soviet state.

The fact that the IBT took a clearly Soviet-defensist position in the coup made their predicament even more acute. On the one hand, the Robertsonites cannot answer the IBT without resort to standard centrist arguments. On the other hand, the SL cannot differentiate itself from the various reformist and centrist groups, who supported Yeltsin or refused to take sides, without recognizing an essential distinction between the adversaries of August 1991. Yet to do so would point to the necessity of a military bloc with the coupists, and amount to conceding that their arch enemy, the International Bolshevik Tendency, has been right against them all along. This is something the ICL can never do, especially on a matter as important as the Russian question. To do so would fatally undermine their central organizing principle: the infallibility of the All-Knowing, All-Seeing Founder/Leader, James Robertson. Instead, the SL/ICL leaders are attempting to wriggle out of this dilemma by searching for some middle ground between

neutrality and military support for the coup.

This illusory middle ground is not to be found on *terra firma*. It lies on the other side of the telling little word—"if"—which dominates all SL polemics on the Soviet coup. They say they would have blocked with the Emergency Committee *if* it had mobilized the workers to crush Yeltsin. This, they claim, distinguishes them from other centrists, who would not have sided with the coupists *if* they had called upon the working class. According to the ICL's main international conference document, a major dispute erupted in the British section over what should have been done *if* the Emergency Committee had sought workers' support. The bizarre feature of all these debates is that they take place in a *purely hypothetical universe*, conjured up by the Robertsonites to deflect attention from the fact that in the real world—the only one in which political positions matter—they took a neutral position similar to those of the groups they are polemicizing against.

James P. Cannon once said that whoever touches the Russian question touches a revolution. It is therefore of the utmost importance to understand when and how the state created by the Russian Revolution went down to defeat. The SL leaders, who claim to be the world's foremost experts on the Russian question, have proved themselves incapable of understanding the final destruction of the Soviet Union. They missed the meaning of the coup, and now play havoc with their own professed program and reason itself to cover up for their original mistake. This is the classic behavior of centrists.

Even worse than the ICL's abstentionism was the USec and LRCI's support to the counterrevolutionaries. Any thoughtful militants who remain in or around these organizations must sooner or later come to see that those who would adjust their politics in accordance with popular moods, or the requirements of maintaining the prestige of their leaders, cannot even interpret the world convincingly, let alone change it. ■

Polemics on the Soviet Coup

Robertsonites in Denial

Last summer comrade Marc D., a Montreal sympathizer of the International Communist League, was won to the program of the Bolshevik Tendency. A pivotal question was the August 1991 Soviet coup. Comrade Marc, whose lengthy analysis of the situation in Quebec appeared Spartacist Canada (Summer 1992), is a former cadre of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat. Reprinted below is a written exchange he had with two members of the ICL.

Trotskyist League of Canada

23 August 1992

Dear Marc,

We mutually agreed that the best way to continue our discussion is in written form. The central issue, of course, is the Russian Question....

For our part, the essence of the Russian Question is unconditional defense of the dictatorship of the proletariat wherever it exists. In other words, we defend the proletarian property forms which emerged from the Great October Revolution and from the post-war social transformations in Eastern Europe and the revolutions in China, Cuba and Vietnam. The Russian Question embodies the perspective of revolutionary struggle against our own ruling class because our goal is the destruction of the rule of capital and the inauguration of the rule of the working class. Some time ago you conceded that our tendency had been right in our opposition toward counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc in 1981, and in hailing the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan. Each of these cases poses fundamentally our historic legacy on the Russian Question, a result of our fight to put the Bolshevik program first, to be, in Cannon's words, "the party of the Russian Revolution."

Your new position that the Soviet state was transformed into a (nascent) capitalist state as of August

1991, in common with the Bolshevik Tendency, effectively writes off the Soviet proletariat as a force against counterrevolution. As we noted at the time, for the BT this became an opportunity to finally wash their hands of the Soviet Union—something they have longed to do for many years. This is a difference of program and perspective, not of empirical "assessment."

Central to our attitude to the events of last August is the Trotskyist understanding of the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy in relation to the workers' state. As Trotsky wrote in his 1933 essay, "The Class Nature of the Soviet State,"

"A real civil war would develop not between the bureaucracy and the resurgent proletariat, but between the proletariat and the active forces of counterrevolution. In the event of an open conflict between the two mass camps, there cannot even be talk of the bureaucracy playing an independent role. Its polar flanks would be flung to the different sides of the barricade."

If there was a chance for political revolution arising out of the events in Moscow last year this did not lie in the prospect of a wing of the bureaucracy "impelling" the working class into action against Yeltsin. No—the opening of the political revolution depended on the entry of even a few thousand workers into struggle against the Yeltsinite mobs. This would have split the bureaucracy into pro- and anti-capitalist wings. And this whole prospect was the last thing the coup plotters wanted.

You also asserted that the ICL "abstained" in the events of last August, suggesting that our tendency was "neutral" on the question of Yeltsin's restorationist counter-coup. At the time we wrote that a call on the Moscow workers was in order to sweep away the rabble

manning the Yeltsin barricades and to drive back the counterrevolution. Hardly neutral or abstentionist! Our comrades distributed tens of thousands of leaflets with this firm position to workers in Moscow, Leningrad and elsewhere in the weeks immediately following Yeltsin's coup. It would not have taken much; several thousand workers from one factory could have done the job. If the perspective our comrades fought for had in fact been realized, this would have been the beginning of the political revolution, which is exactly why the putschists told the workers to stay in their factories.

In contrast the BT saw the Soviet proletariat only as "confused and demoralized by years of Stalinist betrayal." Does this not smack of the opportunist who habitually blames the working class for his own betrayals and cowardice? BT's cynical after-the-fact call for military support to the ineffectual coup exposes their utter defeatism over the capacity and will of the Soviet proletariat to be mobilized against counterrevolution. More generally it exposes their lack of faith in the working class as the agent of revolution, classic political pessimism which is at the heart of opportunism.

As we wrote:

"the coup plotters were not simply 'irresolute'; they did not want to unleash the forces that could have defeated the more extreme counterrevolutionaries, for that could have led to a civil war if the Yeltsinites really fought back."

Under these conditions a military bloc would certainly have been in order with those wings of the bureaucracy that were willing to fight. But in the absence of such a mobilization, this pro-perestroika faction saw its role only in terms of jockeying for the same "market" as Yeltsin, namely the franchise of U.S. imperialism, and the domestic counterrevolutionaries, including Yeltsin himself.

It is therefore no wonder that the BT has written off the Soviet Union as already capitalist. The August coup was in fact the last gasp of Stalinism and, from our perspective, your support for the BT's position on this question reflects your failure to make a break with the equation common to the USec throughout its wildly gyrating history: *the Stalinist bureaucratic caste equals the workers state*. In viewing the Stalinist bureaucracy, and not the proletariat, as the key to spiking the counterrevolutionary drive last August, your position strikes us as utopian and the worst possible form of abstention.

As we wrote in our polemic against the BT (*Workers Vanguard* No. 535, 27 September 1991):

"Today we urgently seek to mobilize the Soviet proletariat and the working class internationally against the forces of capitalist counterrevolution that are assiduously dismantling every gain of the world's first workers state. The BT, which has other fish to fry in alien class milieu, offers its belated sympathies to the corpse of the Kremlin Stalinists and writes off the Soviet Union as a lost cause."

We have called on the Soviet workers to take up the fight to smash Yeltsin, Kravchuk and the other reactionary regimes. In the current issue of *Workers Vanguard* we point to the "still multinational Soviet Army," which, for Marxists, is the core of the state. Clearly the situation is

extremely grave. If the present lack of resistance to the introduction of capitalism persists on the part of the working class in Russia and the former Soviet republics, and if the Russian Government succeeds in decisively subordinating the armed forces nominally under its command to its counterrevolutionary course, the result will be the destruction of the workers state. But it is wrong to concede that the Soviet workers state is dead and gone before this is an accomplished and irreversible fact, when, as you have agreed, a "decisive showdown" has yet to take place....

Communist greetings,
Marie H. and Andrew R.

Reply to Trotskyist League

August 28, 1992

Dear Marie and Andrew,

I have had the opportunity to carefully consider your comments and reflect on past discussions with both yourselves and other comrades of the Trotskyist League.... While I appreciate a good display of tub thumping and revolutionary flag-waving as much as the next person, it is not enough to assert that you claim revolutionary leadership because you are "the party of the Russian revolution." You actually have to be such a party in order to make such assertions more than empty claims, and you have to recognize existing reality before you can act upon it and seek to lead those who would transform it.

The question of the Soviet Union poses these issues point blank. Has anything fundamental occurred since the Stalin bureaucracy gained ascendancy over sixty years ago, or do current developments still roughly correspond to those outlined by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed*, [In] *Defense of Marxism*, etc.? Does a Stalinist bureaucracy still command and defend, in its own treacherous, incompetent manner the "dictatorship of the proletariat," that is a degenerated workers' state and the collective social property forms upon which it rests, or has that which we knew as the Soviet Union ceased to exist under the blows of a victorious capitalist counterrevolution? Does the counterrevolution lie ahead of us, or behind us already, and what then are the immediate perspectives for the revolutionary workers' movement?

Previous discussion as well as your latest arguments, expressed in your letter, would lead you to conclude that no, nothing fundamental has occurred in the Soviet Union, and yes, the Soviet Union still exists as a degenerated workers' state even if the Stalinist apparatus has been liquidated, and power has "nominally" passed into the hands of capitalist restorationists.

The Stalinist "coup plotters" of August 1991 were not Stalinists at all, we were informed, but out and out counterrevolutionaries, a pro-perestroika faction jockeying for the franchise of U.S. imperialism and domestic counterrevolution, and even Yeltsin himself. These irresolute and half-hearted counterrevolutionaries did not want to mobilize the proletariat against counter-

revolution, "they did not want to unleash the forces that could have defeated the more extreme counterrevolutionaries." The whole world has turned topsy-turvy. This is third period Spartacism at its finest. I would suggest that after years of labelling your political adversaries, including those on the left, as "counterrevolutionaries," the term has lost all meaning. Now half-hearted and moderate "counterrevolutionaries" are condemned for not mobilising the proletariat against counterrevolution, against "the more extreme" counterrevolutionary Yeltsinites.

The "party of the Russian Revolution" appears not to have assimilated the lessons of this revolution, in particular the chapter dealing with the struggle against the counterrevolutionary Kornilovists. Why would counterrevolutionaries seek to mobilize anyone against counterrevolution? Why didn't the moderate counterrevolutionaries simply unite with the more extreme counterrevolutionary Yeltsinites against a confused, demoralized and leaderless proletariat? And what is wrong with being neutral and abstentionist in the struggle between two counterrevolutionary camps? This piece of fiction, this after the fact rationalization does not hold up to any serious examination.

World imperialism was certainly unaware that its fortunes were favored no matter which counterrevolutionary camp gained the upper hand. The heroes of the stock exchange panicked, as they are wont to do, and imperialism actively intervened to tip the balance in favor of the "more extreme" counterrevolutionaries. And what sense can be made of the latest WV [7 August 1992] assertion that in August 1991 the forces of counterrevolution led by Yeltsin gained ascendancy? If both struggling camps are counterrevolutionary, the ascendancy of counterrevolution is virtually assured, unless the proletariat mobilizes independently, and therewith the fate of the workers' state. If the "coup plotters" represented the pro-capitalist wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy, what became of the "anti-capitalist wing"? Are they buried somewhere within the "core" of the Soviet state, awaiting the signal for the revolutionary mobilization against counterrevolution?

There is a connection, though perhaps not immediately apparent, between "hailing" various Stalinist initiatives, hailing the Red Army, soft-peddling Jaruzelski, eulogizing Andropov, in a word cutting the corners on program in your series of maneuvers and gyrations, while most recently condemning those Stalinist functionaries who rose in a hesitant, half-hearted, incompetent attempt to apply the brakes to the outright liquidation of the remains of the October revolution, this "gang of eight who couldn't shoot straight," as nothing more than simple second-rate Yeltsinite counterrevolutionaries. Believing your own hype expressed so admirably in polemics with the BT over the Andropov brigade, you search for revolutionary virtue in the Stalinist camp. Finding none to match your expectations, you write off Stalinism's last ditch defense against counterrevolution as some Keystone comedy, as some uneventful jockeying for position between two competing brands of counterrevolution, one mild, the other hot. As if the question was, do you want anchovies with that order?



Yeltsinite rally in Moscow, early 1991

Those feeble, irresolute, uninspiring, treacherous Stalinist bureaucrats are as good as you get, as real as they get, there's no repeat performance scheduled, the show's over, they sang their "swan song," went out with a whimper and no applause. Had the proletariat been mobilized in independent action under a revolutionary leadership, the balance might have been tipped against the "Yeltsinite rabble," and the score might have been settled with the Stalinist usurpers in due course, but that particular opening has come and gone. The working class, it is true, has not yet been subjected to a decisive confrontation, has not yet been dealt a crushing defeat, yet counterrevolution has managed to score a series of victories in the former Soviet bloc in the absence of any direct engagements with the workers' movement and in large measure due to the latter's passivity. The Stalinist apparatus, on the other hand, has been swept away by the counterrevolutionary tide, bourgeois counterrevolutionaries have established and are consolidating their own state machinery, including a repressive apparatus to defend the rule of capital which they are presently introducing. The counterrevolutionaries presently hold the political momentum and thus the political advantage. The workers' movement has not, to date, risen to its feet and struck any serious defensive blows. Such recognition of the decisive turn introduced last August constitutes, by your admission, "the worst possible form of abstention."

...

Comradely Greetings,
Marc D.

Racism...

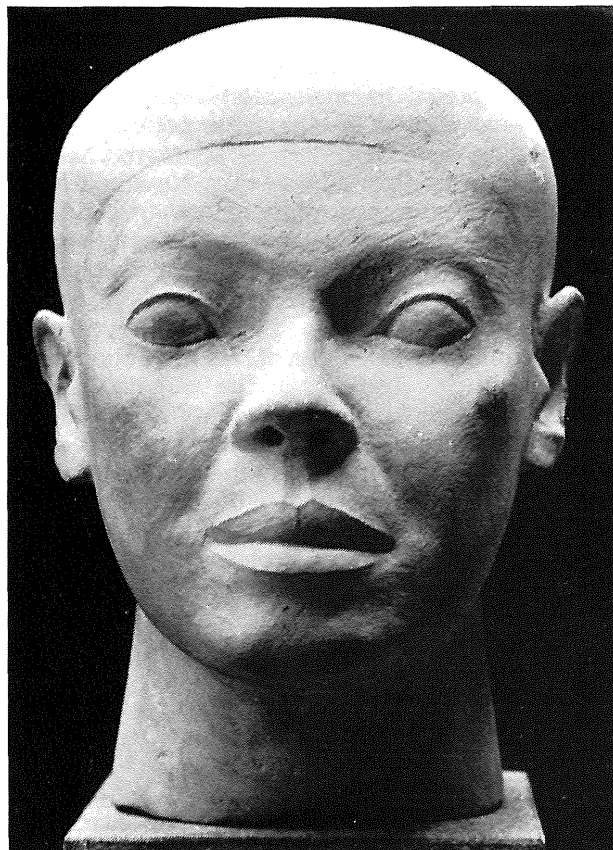
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ing class of every imperialist country has been so poisoned with chauvinism and racism (also promoted by pro-capitalist misleaderships within the workers' movement) that in "normal" periods, workers often identify their interests with those of their "own" oppressors and exploiters rather than with those of workers in other countries.

Secondly, racism, in common with other forms of biological determinism, has an essential ideological function. The bourgeoisie rose to ascendancy under the banner of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Yet for hundreds of millions of people daily reality in the world capitalist order is misery, oppression and poverty. Even in the so-called advanced capitalist countries there is a growing cynicism about the electoral process, with most adults recognizing that the "equality" of the ballot box is no different from the "equality" of the market place—every dollar is equal, and big money takes all. Racists are not burdened with the obligation to prove that capitalist society is egalitarian. Instead, they openly claim that the inequalities of class society are based on natural distinctions.

Racism in History

Racism did not originate from a single source, but rather from a combination of several strands of histori-



BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

Limestone bust of Black Egyptian princess, c. 2600 BC

Contact the International Bolshevik Tendency

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cal development that came together into an ideology with considerable persuasive power. Racialism drew upon existing cultural and national prejudices, and pre-capitalist notions about nature and hierarchies, which were gradually adapted to new economic and social developments.

It has been widely observed that the Mediterranean civilizations of antiquity were "color blind":

"The Greeks and Romans attached no special stigma to color, regarding yellow hair or blue eyes a mere geographical accident, and developed no special racial theory about the inferiority of darker peoples qua darker peoples. H.L. Shapiro notes that 'modern man is race conscious in a way and to a degree certainly not characteristic previously,' and points out that in earlier societies the ability to see obvious physical differences did not result in 'an elaborate orientation of human relations within a rigid frame of reference.'"

—Frank M. Snowden Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity*, 1970

The slave societies of the ancients were oppressive and often xenophobic. Yet the entire concept of "race," as it is now commonly understood, was alien to them. Slavery in these societies was not defined by color, but chiefly by military fortune: conquered peoples were enslaved.

The rulers of medieval Europe were also largely "color blind." Religion provided the touchstone for the medieval world: the crusades were launched against unbelievers, not against Arabs. Similar wars against "heathens" and heretics were conducted throughout Europe, for example, the campaigns of the Teutonic

Knights from the 13th to 15th centuries to crush the Prussians (non-Christian Baltic Slavs), or Pope Innocent III's crusade against the Albigensians.

Anti-Semitism: Pioneer of Racism

Anti-Semitism, an ideological expression of the economic interests of the nascent capitalist class within medieval society, was the pioneer of racism. In early feudal Europe international trade was largely carried on by Jews who maintained commercial connections with the Near East. By the twelfth century the Jewish merchants were being displaced by Christians and were forced into moneylending ("usury"—something that in theory Christian merchants could not indulge in) and other more marginal activities. Abram Leon (a young Belgian Trotskyist militant who perished in the Holocaust) noted that anti-Semitism developed in tandem with the growth of capitalist activity within feudal society:

"The definitive expulsion of the Jews took place at the end of the Thirteenth Century in England; at the end of the Fourteenth Century in France; at the end of the Fifteenth Century in Spain. These dates reflect the difference in the speed of economic development within these countries....

"Feudalism progressively gives way to a regime of exchange. As a consequence, the field of activity of Jewish usury is constantly contracting. *It becomes more and more unbearable because it is less and less necessary.*"

"...the Jews were progressively expelled from all the western countries. It was an exodus from the more developed countries to the more backward ones of Eastern Europe. Poland, deeply mired in feudal chaos, became the principal refuge of Jews driven out of every other place."

—Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*

Anti-Semitism has proved a persistent form of racism, one that has nurtured (and been nurtured by) almost all subsequent forms. It developed a way of looking at the world which was generalized in the era of European colonial expansion.

In Elizabethan England the ideas and images of racism were only partially developed. This is reflected in Shakespeare's rather ambivalent attitude toward race. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock, the Jewish usurer, is treated as a villain. Othello, a black Moor, is portrayed sympathetically as an articulate, intelligent and introspective human being. There is a suggestion that Othello's downfall may be rooted in his passionate and temperamental Moorish nature, but this tendency is balanced by a presentation of other, more complex aspects of his character:

"When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe...."

—"Othello," Act V, Scene II

It is difficult to imagine a Victorian writer creating as



French anti-Semitic cartoon, 1898

complex a black character as Othello. Stereotypes could be vehemently derogatory or relatively, if patronisingly, sympathetic, but they all presumed that biology determined destiny, for individuals as for "races."

Capitalism and Slavery

By the mid-19th century overt racism was mainstream academic orthodoxy. The growth of racialist consciousness in Europe was a direct result of colonial expansion and the resultant demand for cheap labor for the plantations. Chattel slavery, resurrected to exploit the resources of the new world, persisted far into the 19th century in the U.S. The few Europeans who ended up as semi-slaves in the New World had usually lost their citizenship because of convictions for petty crime. The demand for slave labor was not met in the homelands of the colonial powers, largely because the ruling classes feared the resulting social turmoil. The surplus population of European peasants was eventually utilized for wage slavery, whereas the aboriginal peoples of Africa and South America, whose darker skin color was an indelible identifying mark, provided the solution to labor shortages in the New World.

Slavery clearly required an ideological justification, for it was contrary both to the formal teachings of Christian charity and the notions of the inalienable "rights of man" propounded by the ideologues of the market and the Enlightenment:

"The slaves were in an inferior position economically. Gradually, white slaveowning society constructed a wall of color: that it was not the mode of slave production which was to be despised, but the slave: that the reason



BETTMANN ARCHIVES

Blacks on Georgian cotton plantation in late 1800s

the black skin was the mark of the slave was that it was first the mark of human inferiority.

"In this manner the class problem of slavery became complicated and confused by the color question. The slaves, besides being an exploited social class, became, in the perverted thinking of the dominant society, an inferior race as well."

—Richard Fraser, "The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution"

While it is difficult to date the beginning of this new racial ideology precisely, it is clear that there was an explosion of such notions beginning in the 16th century. Ashley Montagu made the following observation in his book *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*:

"A study of the documents of the English and American slave traders down to the eighteenth century also serves to show that...many of these hardheaded, hardbitten men recorded their belief that their victims were often quite clearly their own mental equals and superior to many at home.

"It was only when voices began to make themselves heard against the inhuman traffic in slaves, and when these voices assumed the shape of influential men and organizations, that, on the defensive, the supporters of slavery were forced to look about them for reasons of a new kind to controvert the dangerous arguments of their opponents."

The influence, clarity and sophistication of these "reasons" increased over the next several centuries, until by the 19th century, "race" was widely seen as the key determinant of human history. By explaining the success of European colonialism by divine sanction (or, after Darwin, "natural selection"), the ideologues of empire infused the colonialists with confidence and moral conviction. At the same time, missionaries undermined the victim's will to resist with the gospel of "turning the other cheek" to the conquistadors and slave-drivers.

While it would hardly have occurred to a feudal lord to differentiate among his serfs on the basis of their skin color or type of hair, in the age of vast international empires, racial categorization helped make sense of the world. The belief in racial identity, racial purity and racial mission was a vital part of the "laager mentality" among the isolated and outnumbered colonials. In 1890, for example, 300 million Indians were ruled by a mere 6,000 British administrators, backed by only 70,000 soldiers.

The ideology of empire painted a picture of humane, brave, industrious and intelligent colonialists bringing the benefits of modern civilization to peoples who, for the most part, were portrayed as vicious, cowardly, lazy and stupid. Even when non-Europeans were given some positive characteristics, these were inevitably coupled with fatal flaws and organic weaknesses. Rudyard Kipling's famous poem of 1899 saluting the American rape of the Philippines called on Uncle Sam to join with John Bull and:

"Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child."

'Scientific' Racism in the 1800s...

By the end of the 19th century, the proposition, "biology determines destiny" was scientific orthodoxy, and prominent scientists such as Louis Agassiz, Samuel Morton, Robert Knox, Herbert Spencer and Ernst Haeckel were busy devising hierarchies of the races in which the "European," or often more specifically "Anglo-Saxon" (for the English, Germans and Americans), were placed at the top, with the other "inferior" races ranked beneath them. For example, Agassiz, a Harvard professor who was America's foremost zoologist of the 19th century, claimed that "the brain of the negro is that of the imperfect brain of a seven months infant in the womb of the white." A whole range of quack sciences such as phrenology and craniometry arose to measure and quantify the differences among individuals as well as races.

Numerous debates about the origin and genesis of humankind raged throughout the 19th century. In the early-mid century, a debate raged between partisans of monogenism and polygenism (i.e., between those who held that all humanity has a common root and those who argued that the different "races" were created separately). The learned associations of the world discussed whether some groups could be classified as human at all, such as the Australian aborigines, who, as late as 1926, were treated as rural pests to be exterminated. By the end of the century, attention had shifted to social-Darwinist theorizing about how the dog-eat-dog ethos of capitalist society ("survival of the fittest") was beneficial for the species.

The following description of the Hottentots was typical of "science" circa 1862:

"the race called Hottentots [are] a simple, feeble race of men, living in little groups, almost, indeed, in families, tending their fat-tailed sheep and dreaming away their lives. Of a dirty yellow colour, they slightly resemble the Chinese, but are clearly of a different blood. The face is set on like a baboon's; cranium small but good; jaws very large; feet and hands small; eyes linear in form and of great power; forms generally handsome; hideous when old and never pretty; lazier than an Irishwoman, which is saying much; and of a blood different and totally distinct from all the rest of the world."

—Robert Knox. *The Races of Man: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Influence of Race over the Destinies of Nations*

The layering of prejudice is interesting in the above quotation—an Irishwoman, generally considered "white," is the standard for laziness against which the Hottentot is measured. While there was a definite ordering of "races" among whites, in general the "fairer races" were destined to conquer and supersede the "darker races": "Before the go-ahead Dutchmen it was easy to see that this puny, pygmy, miserable race [the Hottentot] must retire...." To Knox and his contemporaries it was axiomatic that race was a determining force in history.

The debates that raged in the scientific community a few generations ago about the hierarchy of "racial superiority" and the destiny of "inferior" races—extinction, extermination, servitude or assimilation—were not the province of a lunatic fringe. They represented the mainstream of scientific thinking. Overtly racist ideas pervaded every aspect of intellectual life: literature, the arts, philosophy and history. Even the most militant sectors of the workers' movement were polluted.

Racism, like other forms of capitalist ideology, reflects the reality of social oppression and exploitation, but it inverts cause and effect. It is bourgeois not only in its historic origins, but also in its social function—providing a rationale for the misery, suffering and injustice which are an inevitable part of the free-market package. Peoples that were enslaved, conquered or dispossessed, are not victims of an irrational social order, but rather doomed by biological predetermination.

Racism is one of the key means by which the economic and social hierarchies of the capitalist world are ideologically "naturalized." At the top of the pyramid, because of their fitness to rule, sit white, bourgeois men. The rest of the world—whether female, black, Asian or even the white male working class—are to the ruling class as children to parents. There has always been a close connection between racism and male supremacist ideology. "According to the anthropologist McGrigor Allan in 1869, 'The type of the female skull approaches in many respects that of the infant, and still more that of the lower races.'" As an example of the pervasiveness of such attitudes the authors of *Not In Our Genes* quote Charles Darwin, the greatest scientist of the 19th century, as remarking: "some at least of those mental traits in which women may excel are traits characteristic of the lower races." Liberals, who dismiss such absurdities as evidence of the scientific backwardness of that age, and comfort themselves with the thought that such vicious ignorance has been transcended, fail to see how, at



STANLEY FOREMAN—BOSTON HERALD AMERICAN

Anti-busing racists attack Black man, Boston 1976

every stage, science is conditioned by the prejudices of the existing social order.

...And Today

The experience of Nazism discredited the notions of racial superiority in the eyes of millions around the world. Today mainstream science tends to reject race as anything other than a social construct. Those members of the intellectual community who advance "scientific" racist arguments are usually pretty thoroughly rebutted by their colleagues. Yet while crudely racist academics have been pushed to the periphery for several decades, the same groundless "theories" are regularly revived.

In 1969 the *Harvard Educational Review* published an article by Prof. Arthur Jensen entitled "How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?" Jensen argued that the lower scores of American blacks on IQ tests are evidence of their genetic inferiority. Shortly after this, Richard Herrnstein, a Harvard psychology professor, "discovered" that the whole working class was genetically predisposed to low IQs. Herrnstein's conclusions were no doubt gratifying to the assortment of corporate bigwigs and millionaires sitting on Harvard's governing body:

"The privileged classes of the past were probably not much superior biologically to the downtrodden, which is why revolution had a fair chance of success. By removing artificial barriers between classes, society has encouraged the creation of biological barriers. When people can take their natural level in society, the upper classes will, by definition, have greater capacity than the lower."

—*IQ and the Meritocracy*, 1973

Hans Eysenek, a British psychologist whose work ran along the same lines as Jensen and Herrnstein, asserted that Asians and blacks were intellectually inferior to whites. Eysenek's arguments were embraced by the fascists of the National Front in Britain as "scientific" evidence for their campaign against non-white immigration.

In recent years "socio-biology," which recycles much of the same reductionist mythology, although with a more carefully constructed "objective" cover, has gained wide respectability in the academic community.

Cui Bono?

The resilience of racism as an ideology stems primarily from its function in preserving and rationalizing the capitalist order. It legitimizes the glaring disparity between the democratic ideology of equal opportunity and the reality of systemic discrimination, prejudice and oppression. Individual capitalists benefit in a direct and immediate fashion by paying some categories of workers (typically non-white, immigrant and female) sub-standard wages. Such discriminatory practices, in the eyes of the biological determinists, are, if not equitable, evidently "natural" and thus must be accepted.

By splitting the workforce along racial and gender lines, the capitalists create the illusion of privileges for white male workers. Yet even in the short term the cost of these "privileges" far outweighs their minimal benefits for white workers; for by dividing the working class, the price of labor is forced down across the board.

The racism that pervades capitalist society and infects the working class is not a "natural" thing, nor is it simply the product of ignorance or lack of education. Racist attitudes (like homophobia, sexism and nationalism) are fostered within the working class by the myriad educational and ideological processes of bourgeois society, and are passively accepted (when not enthusiastically promoted) by the class-collaborationist parasites who dominate the unions, and other mass organizations of the working class.

Karl Marx once observed that labor in a white skin would never be free while labor in a black skin was branded. For the working class to advance its own interests, it must champion the cause of *all* the oppressed. Workers who imagine that they benefit from the relatively greater oppression faced by other sectors (blacks, women, immigrants, etc.) forge their own chains.

Racism and nationalism are also used to prepare the working class for new military adventures and slaughters. Racist sentiments are being stirred as the pressure of international inter-imperialist competition heats up. Xenophobia is on the upsurge across the globe, as the supposed leaders of the working class in every nation throw in their lot with "their own" rulers against foreign competitors. The treatment of Japan in the capitalist mass media in both Europe and America is crudely and transparently racist. Japanese workers are dismissed as mindless robots—oblivious to the finer things in life and pathetically loyal to their companies. The Japanese capitalists are no better with their depiction of North American workers as lazy and indigent, and their tendency to attribute the decline of U.S. capitalism to race mixing.

Exposing the idiocy and vileness of racist ideas is both important and necessary. But ultimately racism cannot be eradicated simply through debate or education. The ideology of race is an inextricable component of the historical development of this exploitative eco-

nomie system. The fight against racism is therefore organically connected to the revolutionary struggle to uproot the capitalist social system, which has created and perpetuated it, and to create an egalitarian socialist world order in which cooperation, not competition, is the norm. Only in such a society, based on the rational planned organization of production sufficient to meet the essential needs of all, will every human being, regardless of color, gender, or nationality have the opportunity to develop themselves to the fullest. Only under socialism will racial prejudice and discrimination be eliminated once and for all. ■

John Brown Society Banquet

On 19 October 1992 the John Brown Society held its second annual awards banquet at Fraunces Tavern in New York City. The recipient of the 1992 gold medal was Dhoruba Bin Wahad who was falsely imprisoned for 19 years in New York state because of his leadership role in the Black Panther Party. Since his release he has continued to face legal harassment. He is active in the defense of other leftist political prisoners unjustly jailed in the United States. He stands in the fighting tradition of Robert F. Williams and Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt, the two recipients of the 1991 gold medal.

Two silver medals were awarded for cultural contributions to the study and preservation of the history of militant abolitionism. Both recipients have made important efforts on behalf of historical truth. Martin Litvin, author of a book on August Bondi, received one of the medals. Bondi was a veteran of the 1848 revolution who rode with John Brown in Kansas. The other 1992 silver medal was awarded to the John Brown Heritage Association of Meadville, Pennsylvania. Ed Edinger accepted the award on behalf of the Association, whose members have worked hard to preserve the site of John Brown's 1820s tannery.

As the struggle for social justice escalates in the years to come, there will be ever greater numbers of heroic fighters who deserve serious recognition. Defense of class-struggle militants and celebration of their courage and sacrifice are two ways in which great fighters can be sustained, and the day hastened when the chains of oppression and exploitation will be broken forever.

For further information, contact John Brown Society chairman, Larry Lawrence, c/o Post Office Box 1046, Canal Street Station, New York, NY

Defend the Left and Workers' Movement—

German Fascism on the Rise

CHAUMSY—SIPA



The following is an edited version of an article from the December 1992 issue of Bolschewik, publication of the Gruppe Spartakus, German section of the International Bolshevik Tendency.

Last year when asylum seekers in Hoyerswerda had to flee for their lives from a fascist mob, bourgeois public opinion criticized the "inefficiency" of the police. Recently, when the living quarters in Rostock of immigrants seeking asylum went up in flames, a great sigh of relief was heard throughout the land: "The reason for the attacks is finally gone!" The German public is growing accustomed to the daily reports of fascists burning down houses, desecrating Jewish cemeteries and launching murderous attacks on immigrants, lesbians, gays and leftists.

The latest mass demonstrations in Berlin and Bonn have shown that hundreds of thousands of people support the retention of the democratic right to asylum. The fact that these actions were limited to one-day events, and the opportunism of the major organizations that participated (particularly the Party of Democratic Socialism [PDS—the successor to the former Stalinist ruling party of East Germany] and the Greens), made it

easy for the German Social Democratic Party (SPD—the main parliamentary opposition to the three party coalition government) to use the demonstrations to push their own nationalist/racist plans for dismantling the right to asylum.

Racist Hatred and Fascist Action

The interplay between the parliamentarians and the fascists is clear for anyone to see. The stage is set with the "official" expressions of xenophobic nationalism, such as the constant complaints about the "flood" of asylum seekers (often described as "economic refugees") who supposedly threaten to "overwhelm" Germany. The fascists eagerly seize on these sentiments, and set out to "solve the problem" through terrorist attacks. The police, who pretend to be unable to do anything about these attacks, are utilized only when the Nazis threaten to get out of control.

When the authorities decide that the right-wing thugs need to be reined in a bit, they usually only place them under "temporary arrest." Meanwhile, leftist anti-fascist demonstrations (for example, those in Hof and Rostock) are met by overwhelming mobilizations of po-

lice and border control troops. Last year the black/yellow (conservative/liberal coalition) government began stepping up their campaign of racist nationalism. Of course, the German bourgeoisie and the democratic politicians do not embrace the murderous program of the Nazi mobs; they only want to modify immigration procedures to make them more closely correspond to the requirements of German capital.

When the international coverage of pogroms against asylum seekers and immigrants begins to threaten Germany's image and export markets, these democratic servants of capitalism announce that the fascists have gone too far. But while deploring fascist excesses, the capitalists still use the fascist attacks to anchor more deeply in the "soul of the people" the big lie that asylum seekers are the cause of the embarrassing racist/nationalist violence. German nationalism does not cost anything, yet it is very profitable for the bourgeoisie. Nationalism obscures the reasons for sinking living standards, unemployment and housing shortages. The campaign against asylum seekers is the marching music accompanying the emergence of German imperialism as a new, more aggressive, world power. The re-emergence of German imperialism on the world stage means the erosion of social and political rights at home.

Theodor Waigel, the minister of finance, indicated the sort of game bourgeois democrats and fascists are playing over the asylum question when he said he thought the coalition government should have a "right profile." In the midst of a three-day long fascist assault on immigrant living quarters in Rostock, the SPD decided to drop its opposition to amending the constitutional right of asylum. An SPD spokesperson in the state parliament for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (where Rostock is located), who had earlier pointed to SPD complicity in the pogroms in Rostock, was fired. Oscar Lafontaine, SPD vice-chairman and the party's candidate for chancellor in the last general election, went even further than the government and advocated the cancellation of the right of individual appeal procedures for asylum seekers. The SPD leaders have now effectively agreed to the abolition of the right of asylum. They apparently hope that their pursuit of a "grand coalition" will enable them to retain the support of the rightward-moving elements in their electoral base. The fascists have good reason to feel heartened by all of this.

The Prospects for Fascism

In *Bolschewik* No. 1 (May 1992) we wrote: "The left and the workers' movement must succeed in driving the fascist rats back into their holes before they grow into a mass movement." Recent events have underscored the urgency of stopping the resurgent fascist movement. There is a growing danger of the development of a centrally organized mass fascist party. Such a formation, recruiting from sections of the petty bourgeoisie, the unemployed and rightist workers, could use traditional fascist anti-capitalist demagoguery to gain a mass base. The widespread sympathy shown for the fascist attacks in Rostock, for example, should sound a warning.

The experiences of the 1930s demonstrate the nature of fascism. It aims to destroy the workers' movement, while politically atomizing the rest of the population and suppressing all bourgeois-democratic rights. The fascists aspire to replace parliamentary democracy with a ruthless terrorist dictatorship, committed to maintaining the rule of big capital. In spite of all the talk these days about Helmut Kohl's "Fourth Reich," things have not gone that far yet. The fascist actions in Rudolstadt last August and Rostock in September, however, show that the fascists are coordinating their activities. The German Alternative, a Nazi group, is seeking to create a "Special Mobile Detachment East," to link the forces of the German National Party, the Free Workers' Party, NSDAP/AO and the Halle German Youth (*Tageszeitung*, 17 October 1992). The targets for their terrorist attacks are clear: first the asylum seekers, then the immigrants, and then they will begin large-scale, organized attacks on the left and the workers' movement. The banning of fascist groups by the bourgeois state will have no effect. As in the past, every banned group will rapidly reappear as a "new" formation, with the toleration of the authorities.

Reformist Betrayal by SPD, DGB, PDS

The Nazis are not yet attacking larger gatherings and demonstrations of the organized left and workers' movement. However, the obvious inexperience, ignorance and disorientation of the left, (for example, the deluded appeals to the state) and the active sabotage of the SPD, threaten to lead to tragedy in the coming confrontation with the fascists. In spite of all their "immigrant-friendly" propaganda, the PDS has refused to differentiate itself from the treacherous policies of the SPD, and failed to call for real actions against fascism. The outrage of tens of thousands of PDS militants has been squandered by their leaders (Gregor Gysi and Hans Modrow) in a series of impotent protests and assemblies.

The PDS, as well as the DGB (the main West German trade-union federation) called for participation in the 8 November 1992 demonstration in Berlin initiated by two of the government parties to prettify the international image of "the ugly German." Leftists could not participate in this sham aimed at covering up for the democratic racists and nationalists, but instead had a duty to denounce the official hypocrisy, and to organize counteractions and try to influence those well-meaning demonstrators who were being used. The justified disruption by the anarchoid Autonomen of this cynical maneuver at least partially lifted the mask of hypocritical concern worn by German president Weizäcker & Co. for the occasion. The capitalist media was full of denunciations of "red fascists" and "rally terrorists" in their coverage of the event.

The SPD leadership has had some problems implementing their leaders' pro-government policies on the asylum question. But the results of several SPD state conventions show that the so-called leftists in the SPD are not really concerned about retaining the present unrestricted right of asylum. Instead, they agreed to limit

Article 16 of the constitution governing the right of asylum, and they also endorsed a restrictive immigration law. In reference to the latter, Hans-Ulrich Klose, the SPD's parliamentary fraction chief, has already indicated that this anti-democratic decision is insufficient. The banner carried by the Young Socialists (SPD-Youth) in Rostock, which asked: "Racism in instalments, Social Democrats?" indicates that there may be elements in the SPD base opposed their leaders' capitulation to the right. Yet it appears unlikely that there will be any real pressure from the SPD base for militant action against the Nazis.

The DGB bureaucrats must proceed a little more cautiously than their parliamentary colleagues, because some unions have concentrations of immigrant members. On paper the DGB leadership advocates keeping Article 16, but in practice, the union bureaucrats willingly associate themselves with the initiatives of the bourgeois democrats and the employers. The left's attempts to organize large mobilizations to counter the Nazis in Wunsiedel and Rostock were both deliberately sabotaged by the DGB leadership.

Which Way Forward Against Fascism?

Only the workers' movement, with its large component of immigrants, has the social power to smash the fascists. To do so, it will be necessary to go beyond the bounds of what the capitalists are willing to approve. Every day the contradictions of German capitalism produce new cadres for fascism, yet so far the workers' movement has been very slow to respond. After the murderous fire-bombing in Mölln, people all over the country began talking about the need for organized self-defense. Today there are thousands of trade unionists and leftists participating in hundreds of local anti-fascist alliances and anti-racist groups. It is vitally necessary to bring together and coordinate these diverse initiatives. The best way to do this is through the trade unions.

Despite the passivity or hostility of the trade-union

bureaucrats, union militants must seek to forge united-front alliances for self-defense. Union-based defense groups should be based on a few clear demands: expel all fascists from the DGB; for mass mobilizations to prevent fascist demonstrations; no free speech for fascists; full citizenship rights for all immigrants; defense of the right to asylum.

Effective self-defense can ensure the security of all the potential victims of Nazi attack. The mass industrial unions, with branches throughout Germany, are the natural means of connecting the dispersed forces of all the organizations of immigrants, asylum seekers, gays and lesbians, leftists and other anti-fascists. A first step for trade-union defense groups would be to organize protection for immigrant and minority living quarters, as well as demonstrations and forums of the left and immigrants. Then it is necessary to find out when and where the fascists meet, to locate their headquarters, and move against them. It is necessary to break up major national fascist gatherings, such as their annual rally at Wunsiedel. Only by successfully confronting the fascists can they be demoralized and dispersed. If the left and workers' movement fails to take steps in this direction today, the fascists will launch even more brutal attacks tomorrow. Those who naively imagine that they can set about "peacefully persuading" the Nazis to reform themselves are likely to be rewarded with a whack on the head.

The precondition for effective anti-fascist action is organization on an independent working-class basis. This precludes any concessions to democratic racism or nationalism. The impotence of pacifist/liberal protests that straddle the class line is underlined by the current growth of the fascists. The Gruppe Spartakus participates in anti-fascist actions, even ones limited in scope, as long as they do not sabotage the struggle against the Nazis. Ultimately, the struggle against the fascists can only be successful to the extent that it brings to bear the social weight of the organized proletariat, involving the masses of workers throughout the country. ■

The Anti-Fascist Wunsiedel Campaign

The following is an edited translation of an article which appeared in Bolschewik No. 2.

The annual national fascist mobilization at Wunsiedel to honor Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy, is an important event for German fascists, as they attempt to coordinate their forces and organize a unified national party. This year [1992] their plans were more ambitious than usual, and the aim was to extend fascist influence as widely as possible into the broader German nationalist milieu. A determined anti-fascist mobilization, particularly supported by trade-union members, could

have spiked this Nazi show of strength in the Bavarian village where Hess is buried. Unfortunately the opportunity was thrown away.

The anarchoid Autonomen, unlike all the major anti-fascist organizations, understood the importance of a national counteroffensive, while, as usual, the SPD, DGB and PDS [Social Democrats, trade-union federation and successor to the former East German Stalinist party, respectively] looked the other way. The Autonomen's rejection of a working-class orientation restricted the possibilities of an effective struggle—with the result

that nowhere in Germany were the anti-fascists successful in breaking out of their relative political isolation.

In Berlin the Gruppe Spartakus played a major role in initiating a united-front committee (the Berlin Alliance Against the Rudolf Hess Memorial) and managed to get "Prevent the Nazi March" adopted as its central slogan. The main political initiatives for the Alliance came from the Independent Anti-fascists Berlin (UA), the Socialist Workers Group (SAG) and Gruppe Spartakus. The Alliance was unable to broaden the number of groups participating, and did not extend outside of Berlin. Most of the leftist organizations in Berlin took a dive; the Critical Trade Unionists remained deliberately aloof, while only a few individual members of the PDS participated.

The united front's ability to mobilize was undercut by the UA's attempt to take over. A united front is supposed to bring together the largest possible number of groups for common action. To do so, each of the participants must be assured that they are not required to endorse or support the politics of any of the other organizations. The UA rejected this approach, and attempted instead to impose their own conception of anti-fascist work on the bloc by bureaucratic means. Two weeks before the projected demonstration in Wunsiedel, the UA split the Alliance after failing to get the other participants to accept their diktat.

The SAG's Anti-Fascism

The SAG [German adherents of Tony Cliff's state capitalist tendency], acted in a consistently opportunistic fashion in the Alliance. At the beginning, they did not like the orientation of "Prevent the Nazi March" as the main slogan of the united front. The SAG representatives were worried that this was too "militant" and "frightening" to attract participation from the social-democratic spectrum. Of course, we Trotskyists also seek united-front actions with social-democratic forces, but not at any price, and absolutely not by endangering the political basis for effective united action. We wanted to mobilize the widest possible forces for an *action* to abort this Nazi mobilization. But the SAG seemed more interested in trying to find reformist bloc partners to snuggle up to than building a militant anti-fascist alliance. It took two weeks for the SAG to agree to the Alliance call for action....

This opportunist behavior is not unusual. The SAG is known to many militant anti-fascists as a political "weathervane," which tends to capitulate to the SPD milieu. Arguing that they wanted to build the "greatest possible unity," they have proved ready to bloc with bourgeois liberals against those who are serious about confronting the Nazis militantly. At the core of this opportunism is the SAG's conception of a classless, leftist "anti-fascist mass movement." The SAG does not have a perspective of building a mass anti-fascist *workers'* movement based on the unions. Such a movement can only be built through struggling *against* the influence of the petty-bourgeois liberal anti-fascism of the SPD, the PDS and the Green Party. By making the political "breadth" of anti-fascist activity their main criterion,



German police surround neo-Nazis at demonstration

SAG militants are likely to end up in a very different movement from what they intend: instead of breaking the masses from their bourgeois illusions, the SAG is likely to end up as a left cover for the social democrats.

Anti-Fascists Demonstrate in Hof— As Fascists Parade in Rudolstadt

The demonstration that took place in the city of Hof, Bavaria, on 15 August 1992 failed to prevent the Nazis paying homage to Rudolf Hess. The logistics of the Autonomen proved insufficient for the task of keeping track of the whereabouts of the Nazis, who simply moved the site of their demonstration. The Autonomen's organizational breakdown was compounded by their total political disorientation. The Nazis though could claim a victory, having defied both the leftist demonstrators and a police ban, to rally 1500 thugs in Rudolstadt (near Hof). This demonstration sparked the most recent wave of fascist terror in Rostock, Quedlinburg, Berlin, Mölln and many other places throughout Germany.

So far there has yet to be a major test of strength between the left and the workers' movement, on the one hand, and the brown plague, on the other. There is no reason to be complacent; the current situation is unstable. Those who think that the 29 August anti-fascist demonstration in Rostock was a "victory" (as its organizers claimed and the SAG agreed) fail to understand the seriousness of the Nazi threat. The fascists deliberately avoided a confrontation with the demonstrators, and instead used the occasion to launch a series of attacks on undefended immigrant living quarters. The current passivity toward Nazi attacks by many who oppose fascism must be politically overcome—toothless protests won't work, candlelight vigils will get increasingly dangerous. At the same time, militant actions by small groupings of Autonomen become more and more dangerous as the fascists grow in size. *Neither pacifism nor adventurism, but militant mass working-class mobilizations to smash the Nazi vermin!* ■

United Front Campaign for Working-Class Independence

Canada's Constitutional 'Crisis'

The 26 October 1992 pan-Canadian referendum on constitutional reform provided the Bolshevik Tendency (BT) a chance to present its program to wider audiences in both Quebec and Ontario, in conjunction with several Quebec-based left groups. This was the first public political work undertaken by the BT in Quebec.

The initiative originated with tentative political discussions between members of a Maoist group (Action Socialiste—AS) and Montreal sympathizers of the Trotskyist League (TL) in June 1992. In the course of the summer one of these comrades, who was meanwhile won to the BT, maintained contact with AS. On 6 September, AS called a meeting to discuss the proposed constitutional referendum. Comrades from the BT, as well as the TL and Mobilisation (a regroupment of former cadre from the 1970s Maoist organization, En Lutte, and Action Socialiste) attended. Before the meeting began, some 35 Nazi skinheads staged a provocation outside the hall. All the leftist groups present cooperated in preparing to defend the gathering and, after the arrival of the police, the fascists eventually departed.

At the meeting Action Socialiste proposed a united front to undertake an independent working-class campaign against both the YES and NO camps in the upcoming constitutional referendum. In the weeks that followed the Regroupement progressiste pour l'annulation/ Progressive Coalition for Annulment was formed by Mobilisation, AS and the BT, while the Trotskyist League opted to call for a NO vote.

In the weeks leading up to the 26 October referendum, the members of the coalition campaigned for workers and the oppressed to spoil their ballots. Over 25,000 leaflets were produced in both English and French, which were distributed in a dozen cities and towns in Quebec and Ontario. Thousands of posters were pasted up, and coalition members intervened at union meetings, campus debates and rallies. In Montreal, the coalition organized a protest against Preston Manning, leader of the right-wing populist Reform Party, when he was campaigning for a NO vote at Concordia University. This demonstration received national media coverage. Another protest was organized on 12 October in front of the Teleglobe Canada building, where the televised debate between Quebec premier Robert Bourassa, for the YES coalition, and Parti Quebecois leader, Jacques Parizeau, for the NO, was broadcast.

Numerous individual union, student and left activists, as well as the unemployed and welfare rights group, l'UNION, subsequently joined the Regroupement progressiste campaign. Public meetings of the Regroupement were held in both Montreal and Toronto. The Trotskyist League attended both of these meetings and tried to make a case for voting NO. They shrilly denounced the coalition, and particularly the BT, as capitulating to "Anglo chauvinism." Their interventions,

if not exactly elevating, at least provided an illustration of how choosing sides in an intra-bourgeois wrangle can politically disorient leftists.

Despite the serious political differences in program and historical traditions that separated the coalition partners, there was sufficient convergence on the importance of providing a working-class alternative to the YES/NO bourgeois camps to allow for productive collaboration, and, given our very limited resources, a successful agitational campaign. It allowed the participating organizations to demarcate themselves politically from both the nationalist, class-collaborationist labor bureaucracy in Quebec, which plunged into the NO coalition, and the business/labor YES coalition in English Canada. The NO forces in English Canada took on quite early a chauvinist coloration with anti-Quebec, anti-aboriginal appeals, whereas bourgeois nationalists in Quebec fueled the fires of linguistic and ethnic tension with demagogic appeals in order to rally their vote.

In Quebec, where the working class is generally more militant than elsewhere in North America, the coalition had the most forces and made the greatest impact. There were many more spoiled ballots in Quebec (90,000) than anywhere in English Canada. In Ontario, where the margin between the two camps was only 10,000, 28,000 people elected to spoil their ballots.

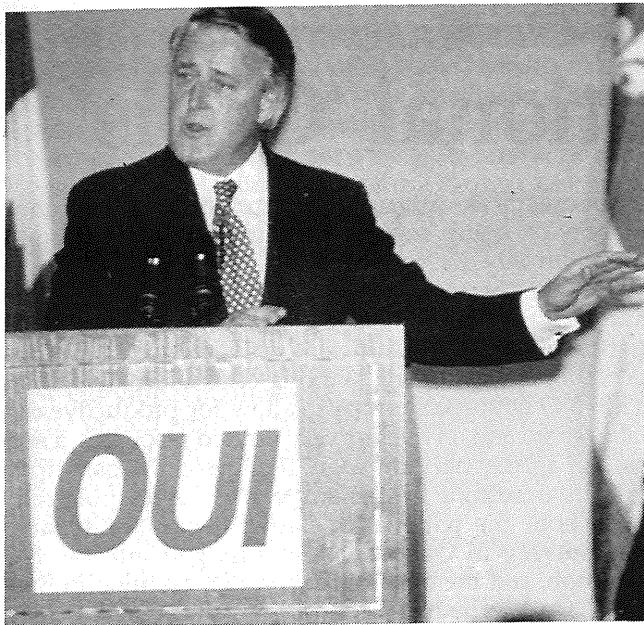
The referendum debate produced a series of sharp, and some rather dull, polemics within the left. One of the heated exchanges took place between Action Socialiste and the Trotskyist League. The AS launched a broadside against the "Trotskyism" of the TL as well as Gauche Socialiste/Socialist Challenge and Jack Barnes' Communist League/Ligue Communiste (who no longer even claim to be Trotskyist), all of whom called for a NO vote.

We take no responsibility for Action Socialiste's political views, nor do they for ours. Our joint initiative was a conjunctural bloc around certain limited common perspectives. But for the TL it was a "propaganda bloc" aimed at politically uniting a nest of "totally repulsive" provocateurs on the one hand, and cowardly Quebecois federalists and "capitulators to Anglo chauvinism" on the other.

IS Backed Mulroneyste Deal

The 4 November 1992 Montreal *Gazette* published the following account of the referendum by Allan Gotlieb, a former Canadian ambassador to the U.S.:

"In a period of 35 days, ending on October 26, 1992, the Canadian people were asked to agree to 51 pages of amendments to their constitution. For the most part, these changes reflect the demands of regional politicians for more power. By a substantial margin, Canadians from every region of the country said 'No'....Their No vote constituted a stunning rejection of the political class



PHOTOPRESSE INTERNATIONALE—GAMMA LIAISON

Mulroney campaigns for 'YES'

in Canada....

"...The prime minister, premiers, bank presidents, chief executive officers, 'high purpose' cultural figures and media elites all warned—certainly in good faith—that a No vote would lead to the breakup of Canada and cause great economic harm.

"What we witnessed instead was a staggering act of protest against the whole Canadian establishment—the peasants' revolt Canadian-style. The coalition that mobilized almost overnight around the NO option gave voice to the concerns of those who felt alienated and disenfranchised by the Canadian establishment...."

This is all common knowledge among informed observers of Canadian politics, a category which apparently does not include most of those who write for the papers of Canada's leftist organizations. Many of the latter are more interested in making the facts fit their own preconceived notions.

While most of the fake-Trotskyist currents grumbled that the "deal" cooked up in Charlottetown did not have enough in it to make it worth supporting, the International Socialists (IS) surprised everyone by actually endorsing Mulroney's constitutional "reform." The post-referendum *Socialist Worker* (November 1992) advanced the following argument:

"Any sober assessment of the No victory in the referendum must acknowledge that it represents a setback for working class unity. Millions of workers in English-Canada bought into anti-Native, anti-Quebec arguments. Divisions among oppressed groups have been deepened by the success of the No campaign.

"It is because we understood this reality that *Socialist Worker* argued for a critical Yes to the Charlottetown Accord. We did so not because we were enamoured of the constitutional deal, but because we held that the principal duty of socialists in such a campaign is to challenge the bigotry that infects workers in the country's dominant nation—English Canada."

These arguments are worthy of the right-wing social democrats of the New Democratic Party. Marxists leave

it to liberals and reformists to "oppose" racism and bigotry through candlelight marches, bogus constitutional tinkering and appeals to national unity. The duty of Marxists is to challenge the capitalist economic system which fosters every kind of social backwardness and the national bourgeois state which institutionalizes it.

This same issue of *Socialist Worker* complains that the bourgeois forces running the YES campaign were not aggressive enough:

"The failure of the Yes campaign to carry its argument was fundamentally because the dominant forces that had endorsed it had only grudgingly accepted its main elements. These were the partial recognition of the historic demands of Canada's two oppressed peoples, the Quebecois and Native peoples...."

"It is time for the Left to learn the lessons. The tragedy was that the Yes campaign was left largely to the politicians. And they botched it royally."

In order to justify calling for a YES, the preferred option of the bulk of the ruling class, the IS points to the rightist character of much of the opposition to the deal:

"It was the Reform Party and its kindred spirits in the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada (APEC), the National Citizens Coalition, COR and the Christian Heritage Party who defined the politics of the No campaign throughout English speaking Canada."

—*Ibid.*

The racist nature of the NO campaign as portrayed in IS publications is the standard "lesser evil" argument which opportunists traditionally use to rationalize political support to one capitalist politician over another. The NO vote was a *rejection* of the political status quo, as Gotlieb relates. It was not purely an expression of reaction, as the IS would perhaps like to imagine.

If, as the IS asserts, the defeat of the Charlottetown corporate agenda of decentralized federalism constituted a "setback for working class unity," then a YES vote would presumably have qualified as a victory for the oppressed. Action Socialiste is far too generous in describing the IS call for a YES vote as an indication of "superior political sensibilities" to the dangers of Anglo chauvinism. In reality, it was a reflection of opportunist appetites in the direction of the radical-liberal milieu that constitutes the left wing of the NDP. *Socialist Worker's* praise of the NDP for having "challenged the racism and the Reform Party's bigoted arguments from the left" is an indication of a certain sensibility, but hardly a superior one.

It is simply not true, as the IS claims, that the only way to challenge the racist Reform Party campaign was to vote YES to Mulroney. Our campaign for an independent class-struggle opposition to the corporate constitutional reform agenda, and the reactionary Quebec nationalist/ Anglo-chauvinist NO campaign, is proof of that.

Mandelites in the NO Camp

The Canadian supporters of Ernest Mandel's pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) professed to find it "shocking to see the IS...give critical support to the ruling class constitu-

tional plan" (*Socialist Challenge*, December 1992). Having seen the IS celebrate the victory of counterrevolution in the USSR, we are not shocked. But things stand a bit differently with the members of Gauche Socialiste/Socialist Challenge who stood with the IS on Yeltsin's side of the barricades. A small dose of opportunism shocks them, and leaves a bitter taste in their mouths, but they can swallow counterrevolution whole without flinching.

In a mild polemic directed against the IS's support to the constitutional package, the December 1992 issue of *Socialist Challenge* whines that the IS:

"more or less completely ignores the need for radical democratic/institutional reform (constituent assemblies, equal representation for women and a system of proportional representation) which could create more favourable opportunity for struggle".

This radical democratic/institutional reform of the *Canadian imperialist state* recalls the revisionist perspectives of Bernstein, Kautsky *et al.* that Lenin fought within the Second International. These pseudo-Trotskyist liberals have no intention of leading any revolutionary assaults, nor would they be fit for leadership were they accidentally swept along in any revolutionary upsurge. They can only mislead.

In the "What We Stand For" column printed in their newspaper, Gauche Socialiste/Socialist Challenge (GS/SC) proclaim:

"The capitalist class will employ its police, courts, bureaucracy and army to attack democratic and egalitarian change. Therefore, the capitalist state must be broken up and replaced by democratically elected institutions of the working class and its allies."

So which is it? Do they want to defend the bourgeois state or overthrow it? Leftists within SC/GS no doubt tell themselves that they don't really believe all the so-

cial-democratic drivel that their leaders put out about the constitution, but that it was a smart tactical move to adjust their arguments in accordance with the prevailing social-democratic prejudices of the masses. The road to reformism is paved with such "smart" tactics.

TL Worries About the Future of Canada

In arguing for a NO vote, Socialist Challenge/Gauche Socialiste ended up advocating the *strengthening* of the regulatory powers of an imperialist state. The Trotskyist League, which also called for a NO vote, contended that the Charlottetown Accord was an instrument designed to strengthen, not weaken, the federal Canadian state.

The TL's international leadership has begun to voice concerns about the future of the Canadian state, and in a recent document speculates that: "the country itself may be about to fall apart" (*Spartacist*, No. 47-48, Winter 1992-93). The Robertsonites view this prospect with some alarm and pledge in advance that:

"if defeat for the accord produces the much-predicted disintegrative effects on the federation, we would oppose the break-up of English Canada which at present could only strengthen the power of U.S. imperialism against the working people of North America and the world."

—TL statement, 30 September 1992

So it would seem that the Robertsonites are toying with the national-Trotskyist tradition of Ross Dowson. This is of a piece with their attempt to rewrite their position on the 1988 Free Trade deal between Ottawa and Washington (see below). For our part we do not consider that Canadian workers have a vital interest in holding their "own" imperialist country together. ■

For Working-Class Unity—Not National Unity!

Spoil Your Ballot!

Reprinted below is the BT's October 1992 statement on the referendum which was published in English and French:

"Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached August 28, 1992?"

Pierre Trudeau's 1982 constitution provides a legal framework for the rule of a tiny handful of capitalists through their courts, cops and parliamentary hacks. The 1992 "renewed" constitution has exactly the same function, but it also includes a preamble that nods in the direction of aboriginal self-government and gender equality, and refers to Quebec as a "distinct society." Recognition of these "fundamental values" however, is explicitly subordinated to the maintenance of "peace, order and good government" in the interests of big capital.

Marxists are not indifferent to bourgeois democracy, nor are we opposed to participation in referendums as

such. But this referendum poses no essential democratic issue, nor is there anything else at stake for the workers and the oppressed. Despite the nationalist hype from both camps, the question on October 26 is whether or not to accept a package of minor amendments to the legal mechanisms through which the capitalists rule. Workers in English Canada and Quebec should stand aside from the bickering between the YES and NO camps. On October 26 vote against the bosses' constitutional circus—*spoil your ballot!*

The Canadian state is not a product of a series of gentlemanly handshakes at constitutional conferences. Canada's social contract was sealed with the blood of the conquered: with genocide and wars of extermination against the aboriginal peoples; with the execution of rebellious francophones and aboriginal leaders; with discrimination, terror and repressive legislation aimed at those communities which resisted assimilation into



L'UNION, BT, Mobilisation and Action Socialiste speakers at coalition rally in Montreal, 23 October 1992

1917 PHOTO

the white Anglo-Canadian mold.

The designation of Quebec as a "distinct society" within Canada obscures the fact that it is a nation, and as such, has an unalienable and unconditional right to self-determination. If the Québécois decide to separate and form their own state (something that we do not advocate at present), we will support their right to do so. If the Canadian bourgeoisie attempts to forcibly retain Quebec, it would be the duty of class-conscious workers across English Canada to defend the Québécois with every means at their disposal, including protests, strikes and even military assistance.

The "renewal" of the constitution is chiefly aimed at getting Quebec to sign the basic law of the Canadian state. Quebec's status in Confederation was at the center of the wrangling and horse-trading that went on prior to striking the deal. The Western premiers insisted that Canada is a confederation of equal provinces, while Quebec's Liberal government argued that Canada is a contract between two founding (colonial) peoples.

The Charlottetown accord attempts to integrate these two fundamentally incompatible visions. Parliamentary representation will be apportioned slightly differently (with a guarantee that Quebec will always have at least 25 percent of the seats in the House of Commons). There is also to be some devolution of powers from federal to provincial jurisdiction in areas of immigration, culture, urban affairs, natural resources and vocational training.

A key part of the deal for the Maritimes and the West was the recomposition of the Senate with an equal number of representatives from each province. Ontario gets the same number of seats as Prince Edward Island even though it has twenty times the population. This is called an "equal" senate. To balance this concession, the new upper house will have fewer powers than the existing patronage trough.

The Senate was created as an unelected chamber of

propertied interests to safeguard the traditional elites against the possibility of democratic "excesses" by the popularly elected lower house. Marxists call for the *abolition* of the Senate—it is of no interest to us whether Ottawa makes the patronage appointments or if they are left up to the provincial governments to decide.

Quebec and the Referendum

The YES side has presented the referendum as a vote on national unity. A NO vote in Quebec, they say, amounts to a vote for separation. But the NO camp in Quebec includes prominent federalists who simply favor a different constitutional model.

All three parliamentary parties in English Canada (NDP, Liberals and Tories) are promoting the "renewed" constitution. In Quebec the Legislative Assembly is divided, with the ruling Liberals pitted against the official opposition, Jacques Parizeau's bourgeois separatist Parti Québécois (PQ). The PQ, claiming to represent "the most dynamic forces of Quebec," is furiously denouncing Premier Robert Bourassa as a usurper, liar, deceiver and deserter. Bourassa's lieutenants counter these attacks with assertions that the PQ separatists are reckless adventurers and "fans of bungee politics....They're not sure of the elastic, but they'll jump anyway" (*Montreal Gazette*, 5 September).

The nationalists are playing to the most backward layers of the masses with their demagogic assertions that aboriginal communities obtained the "self-determination" which was denied to Quebec, and that the Liberals capitulated to an Anglo-Canadian/First Nations bloc.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, the least popular Canadian politician in living memory, is playing the national unity card, and issuing dark warnings that the "enemies of Canada" are "out in full force" to kill the deal. His constitutional minister, Joe Clark, suggested

that, if the NO side wins, Montreal may soon look like Beirut. Meanwhile the reactionary Anglo-chauvinists of the Reform Party and the Confederation of Regions (COR), who are calling for a NO vote, entertain credulous bigots in English Canada with visions of Quebecers rejoicing and dancing in the streets, celebrating their triumph at Charlottetown.

Bourassa is well aware that popular opinion in Quebec is running in a different direction. He is ill at ease defending an unpopular deal and is scrambling to prove that he did not trade Quebec's cow for a handful of beans. But he cannot claim to have gained much in the negotiations. The only thing that sets Quebec apart from the other provinces in the deal (besides a guarantee of a quarter of the parliamentary seats) is the legally meaningless recognition as a "distinct society."

Union Bureaucrats Push Nationalist Poison

The nationalist labor misleaders in English Canada and Quebec are taking opposite sides in the referendum. CLC head Bob White, who lead a Canadian nationalist breakaway from the United Auto Workers a decade ago, has followed the English-Canadian bosses in calling for a YES vote. The FTQ, and Quebec's other two major union federations (the CSN and CEQ), have thrown in their lot with *Souveraineté Québec Inc.*, the separatist business lobby.

Both labor bureaucracies are lining up the workers in opposing camps around issues devoid of any real social content. The working class has no interest in bourgeois squabbles about parliamentary appointments, constitutional preambles or the allocation of administrative responsibilities to different levels of the capitalist state machine.

The three Quebec union federations have recently joined the *Mouvement Québec* coalition, which also includes the rabidly xenophobic *Société Saint Jean-Baptiste* (SSJB). This coalition launched an immigrant-bashing ad campaign in the francophone press, claiming that a combination of a "dropping birthrate" and the "arrival of newcomers" dooms francophones to eventually becoming a minority in Quebec. These attacks are supplemented by attempts to scapegoat immigrant workers for the irrationalities of the capitalist business cycle. All this has created a fertile milieu for the growth of openly fascist fringe groups intent on carrying the reactionary logic of bourgeois nationalism to its logical conclusion. Yet the nationalism of the union tops blinds them to the dangers posed to the labor movement itself (as well as to immigrants and minorities) by the fascist vermin.

GS: Fifth Wheel on Nationalist Wagon

For years the pseudo-Trotskyist *Gauche Socialiste* (GS) has joined the nationalists in demanding: "Nous voulons un pays"—we want a country. The GS imagines that some mystical dynamic automatically connects the struggle for an independent Quebec with socialism. But uncritically supporting the nationalists is becoming increasingly awkward for the GS as SSJB-sponsored ads in the francophone media call for ridding Quebec of non-

francophones. What these more rabid "consistent nationalists" are actually campaigning for, with the union bureaucracy in tow, is an ethnically cleansed throwback à la Nouvelle France.

Last spring the GS joined the "Rassemblement des jeunes souverainistes" (RJSQ), a youth front group for the PQ. The GS only recently left this bourgeois formation—not on principled grounds, but because they were making little headway among the PQ youth. All the GS can offer the nationalists and labor bureaucrats is some socialist camouflage for their class-collaborationist project. But leftist rhetoric is of little use to the union tops in their efforts to tie the labor movement hand and foot and deliver it to the bourgeoisie with hollow promises of a New Jerusalem through Quebec sovereignty.

Nationalism and the Quebec Bourgeoisie

When *Gérald Larose* of the CSN and *Fernand Daoust* of the FTQ held a conference in Montreal last April, they did not invite their "socialist" cheerleaders, but rather the representatives of the sovereigntist wing of the bourgeoisie. The labor tops and the separatist bosses agreed that the grinding poverty and chronic unemployment of east-end Montreal was a product of the federal political structure, not the capitalist economy. They also agreed that, after independence, the Quebec bourgeoisie would build a modern, robust, competitive economy and end unemployment.

The majority of the Quebec bourgeoisie is currently more interested in broadening its autonomy within Confederation than in outright independence. While there is a small committed sovereigntist minority, the dominant sectors of the bourgeoisie see the nationalist movement as a lever to pressure their Anglo counterparts and a tool for securing the allegiance of the masses. Despite their numerical insignificance, however, bourgeois interests provide the nationalist movement with both its leadership and its program. It is *Jean Campeau* (president of *Domtar*, who heads *Souveraineté Québec Inc.*), *Jacques Parizeau* and *Lucien Bouchard*, not Quebec's union leaders, who set the tone and determine strategy and objectives.

Whatever the result of this round of constitutional bickering, the Quebec bourgeoisie understands that ultimately its common class interests must take precedence over particular preferences regarding the form of political rule. *Campeau's* federalist rivals and bourgeois friends in the *Conseil du Patronat*, in consultation with the Quebec government, recently announced that to compete effectively internationally it will be necessary to cut labor costs in most major sectors. Their initial proposal is to slash wages by at least 11 percent. This is the *real* program of the Quebec bourgeoisie—federalist and nationalist alike. This is the danger to Quebec labor—not the fictitious Anglo bogeymen so dear to *Parizeau*, *Bouchard*, *Campeau* and their labor stooges.

The NO Camp

The NO camp stretches from those who think Quebec, aboriginals and women are offered too much, to



YANA PHILOPCHENKO—MEGAPRESS

Quebec nationalists celebrate the defeat of the Charlottetown Accords

those who think they get nothing from the deal. It lumps together people who advocate Quebec sovereignty and native rights with others who would like to see the Canadian army crush any attempts to upset the status quo. National Action Committee feminists, Trudeauite advocates of a strong central state, Anglo-Canadian bigots and Quebec nationalists all huddle together beneath the NO umbrella.

On the left, the pseudo-Trotskyists of Gauche Socialiste/Socialist Challenge, the misnamed Trotskyist League (TL) and Hardial Bains' acolytes in the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) (CPC-ML) are all voting NO. While the GS is looking for a niche on the fringe of the PQ, the TL and CPC(ML) have other motivations. CPC(ML), which claims to be "spearheading" the NO campaign, shares Mulroney's desire to keep their imperialist country intact but differs on how to do so. According to the super-patriotic Bainsites, everyone should vote NO because a YES vote means that "the danger of Canada splitting up will become real."

The TL initially treated the whole referendum business as a non-event. At a Montreal meeting called to discuss the question in early September, the TL intervention focused on the situation in Eastern Europe. Recently, the TL has been showing more interest in the referendum. A September 30 TL statement urges a NO vote because to vote YES is to "shore up the reactionary status quo." But there is no explanation of how the TL sees a NO vote as a break with the status quo. Pierre

Trudeau, author of the 1982 constitution, is explicitly calling on citizens to vote NO to express their preference for the status quo over Mulroney/Bourassa's "renewed" version.

The main reason to vote NO, according to the headline of the TL piece, is because "Charlottetown Accord Aims to Strengthen Bosses' State..." This assertion is repeated several times, but never explained or motivated. Marxists should indeed oppose a constitutional package aimed at creating a "strong state," in order to preserve existing democratic rights. But it is ludicrous to portray the Charlottetown deal as a step toward bonapartism. If anything, the "renewed" constitution would marginally *reduce* the power of the central state. There is no reason for working-class militants to take sides in this intra-bourgeois squabble.

The constitutional question poses a similar problem for the left to that raised by the 1988 Free Trade Agreement. At that time we wrote:

"the free trade debate is a wrangle *within* the capitalist class in which workers have no vested interest..."

"it is class struggle—not a renegotiation of capitalist tariffs—which will determine what happens to working-class living standards in the future."

The TL took the same approach. Today, as they take a side in a similar intra-bourgeois dispute, they have decided to retro-fit their position on free trade. The 30 September TL statement disingenuously claims that: "Four years ago we called for internationalist opposition to the free trade deal." This is simply not true. In the TL's major statement on free trade prior to the 1988 federal election they wrote:

"Not only is the anti-'free trade' campaign reactionary, it's ludicrous. The Canadian economy is *already* completely tied to the U.S....What's needed to rip through this rotten 'free trade' faction fight between profit-bloated bosses is some good old-fashioned class struggle."

—*Spartacist Canada*, February 1988

Why should the TL now deny this position? We can only assume that they think no one will notice if, with a stroke of the pen, they eliminate the contradiction by rewriting their earlier position so that it conforms with their current stance.

IS Votes YES

The International Socialists (IS) have the distinction of being the only left group wretched enough to actually endorse the proposed constitution ("critically" of course). While it is no surprise to find the IS tailing the NDP and the labor bureaucrats, there must be some IS-ers who have qualms about aligning themselves with Mulroney's "say yes to Canada" campaign.

The September issue of *Socialist Worker* defended its YES vote by claiming that Canada's rulers:

"have been forced to give an inch. Our attitude must be that we'll take the inch, and we'll keep fighting until we get the mile.

"As in the Meech Lake Accord, a defeat for this deal would not be a victory for the forces that oppose oppression, but for those that thrive on it."

Does the IS think the Canadian Chamber of Com-

merce and the rest of the monopoly capitalists in the YES camp should be counted among the forces that "oppose oppression"?

Serious people in the IS should take a hard look at the "inch" their leaders are trying to sell them on: some inconsequential tinkering with the federalist political institutions, the entrenching of a regional upper house, and the formalization of provincial status for Quebec. All these "gains" are garnished with a few toothless declarations of intent for the oppressed. Unlike social democrats, Marxists do not aspire to make the bourgeois state "work" by prodding the capitalists to reform an inch at a time, never mind endorsing pseudo-reforms as real gains. Real socialists work for the eradication of oppression by leading the working class along the path to social revolution.

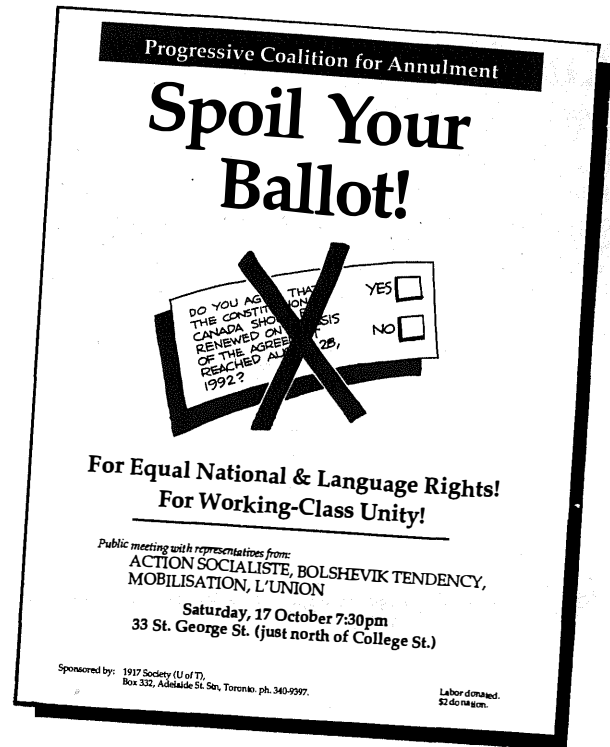
For Working-Class Independence!

Social revolutions are not the product of an automatic process whereby the proletariat somehow miraculously and spontaneously rises to its full stature and acquires consciousness of its historical and class interests. The groundwork must be painstakingly laid through the construction of a Marxist organization that struggles to win authority in the working class. A revolutionary movement can neither be forged through abstractly preaching the virtues of socialism from the sidelines, nor by tailoring the Marxist program to the prevailing political winds of the moment. The working class can only be moved toward recognition of its historic interests through the active intervention of revolutionaries in the questions of the day.

The current constitutional wrangle is not our invention, nor is it our preferred terrain for political intervention. But it will not go away if we simply ignore it. We have to take things as they are, not as we would like them to be, in order to chart the way forward. The upcoming referendum is a dispute within the ruling class in which nothing of vital interest to the working class is at stake. The appropriate response of class-conscious workers in English Canada and Quebec therefore is to reject the bourgeois leaderships on both sides—not to choose between them.

The capitalist interests dominating both camps, and their apologists within the workers movement, are pitching their propaganda in nationalist terms. Yet as Lenin, Trotsky and other Marxists pointed out in the early decades of this century, the national state has become an impediment to economic and cultural development, a historical brake which must be removed in the course of the struggle to overturn the capitalist property forms which gave rise to it.

Today all the imperialist powers are scrambling to find economic arenas beyond the confines of the national state. This has led to the creation of protectionist "free trade" blocs and spheres of influence. The corrupt and cowardly trade-union leaderships in both Quebec and English Canada dream of an end to class conflict through the reactionary utopia of self-contained national economies. In the real world, this translates into



Coalition's Toronto poster

the poison of protectionism as the labor traitors of each nation scramble to cement a sacred union with their own capitalists.

Under Lenin and Trotsky's leadership, the Communist International was a powerful agency for the promotion of revolutionary internationalism. It taught the workers in every capitalist country that their main enemy was their own ruling class. The bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian Revolution, paralleled by the physical eradication of those Bolsheviks who remained true to Leninism (known as Trotskyists), took place under the anti-internationalist banner of "Socialism in One Country." With this theory, the Stalinist oligarchy justified subordinating the interests of the international proletariat to the narrow national requirements of the Kremlin's ruling clique. From promoting solidarity among the world's toilers, the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy turned the international Communist movement into an agency of class collaboration.

As Leninists, we oppose all forms of national oppression and defend the right of all nations to self-determination, but in doing so we begin from the internationalist proposition that workers have no country. As Trotsky wrote in the 1930s, the national state has become a "frightful impediment to the economic and cultural development of humanity." The task of the working-class vanguard is to cut across divisions among the oppressed and exploited—to promote class unity across national lines, not national unity across class lines. This is why we call on workers in English Canada and Quebec not to choose between the original 1982 constitutional package and the "renewed" 1992 version—but rather to vote against the whole capitalist project.

On October 26—Spoil Your Ballot!

Kurdistan...

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ticularly with Britain, France and the U.S. The result has been an unbroken string of crushing defeats for Kurdish self-determination. The Kurdish bourgeois nationalist movement has proved too feeble to struggle independently for its goals.

Kurdish Social Structure— Imposed Underdevelopment

As a result of the division of Kurdistan, each component of the fledgling bourgeoisie was only able to develop through cooperation with the rulers of the states in which Kurds lived. The Kurdish areas are kept in a state of permanent underdevelopment by each of the oppressor states, and primitive agriculture predominates. Modern industry and infrastructure have been developed on a minor scale only where it has been useful for the exploitation of raw materials. In Turkish Kurdistan, for example, only enterprises established by Turks get state aid. Nonetheless, few investments are made in this area because the region is considered too unstable. It is difficult for large Kurdish landowners to invest capital in Kurdistan, and the indigenous bourgeoisie has undergone only the most rudimentary development. Migration from the land to the cities and towns is a widespread phenomenon in all four countries. In Turkey Kurds make up 20 percent of the population, yet only five percent of the proletariat is Kurdish. The Kurdish proletariat exists basically in non-Kurdish areas. One expert on Kurdish society, Martin van Bruinessen, noted: "There is a Kurdish proletariat and also Kurdish industrial capital but both exist outside Kurdistan (*Agha, Scheich und Staat*).

The old social-economic structures in Kurdistan, the remnants of feudalism, are deliberately preserved. Landlords, sheiks and clan chiefs represent the unimpeachable economic, political and religious authority in society. Kurdish women are trebly oppressed: as women, as Kurds and as workers or peasants. The propertied classes and castes in Northern Kurdistan (Turkey) live from the crumbs of the Turkish bourgeoisie, in exchange for denying their own nationality and participating in the oppression of the other components of the Kurdish nation. The sheiks and clan leaders in South East Kurdistan (Iraq and Iran) are not forced to renounce their nationality, but, to obtain their quota of crumbs, they must prove themselves to be "reliable" Kurds by collaborating with their rulers against the "subversive" Kurds.

Bourgeois Parties of the Kurdish Resistance

Ismail Besicki, who has been repeatedly persecuted by successive Turkish regimes for his important studies on the Kurdish question, describes the Kurdish bourgeoisie as "literally rotten and collapsed." The weakness of the Kurdish bourgeoisie is revealed by their acceptance of the partition of their nation. None of the

bourgeois Kurdish leaders demands anything more than autonomy within the various oppressor states.

The Iraq-based Democratic Party of Kurdistan (KDP), for example, has always accepted the inviolability of the borders drawn up by the imperialists. Under the flag of "autonomy," the KDP's founder, the mullah, Mustafa Barzani, collaborated alternately with Baghdad and Tehran, while always keeping in touch with Washington.

One of the low points of Barzani's treacherous career was his cooperation with the Shah to crush a Kurdish uprising in Iran in 1966-68. From 1972-75 he presided over Parastin—a security service established with help from the infamous Iranian SAVAK, the CIA and the Israeli Mossad—which aided in the suppression of Kurdish resistance in Iran. In 1975, when the Shah signed a treaty with Iraq, Tehran abruptly ceased cooperation with Barzani; a mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of Kurds began and the 50,000 fighters of Barzani's peshmerga were dispersed. Barzani's successors, his sons Idris and Massud, have pursued identical policies of collaboration and fratricidal strife: during the Iran-Iraq war, they once more sided with Tehran and led Kurds into battle against Kurds.

An important grouping in Iraq-Kurdistan is the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), founded in 1975 by Jalal Talabani. Talabani split from the KDP in 1964, blaming Barzani for leading the fight for Kurdish independence "with tribal methods" and for "maintaining the alliance with imperialism" (*Kurdistan und die Kurden*, Vol. 1). This well-founded accusation didn't hinder Talabani from forming similar alliances. During the Iran-Iraq war, Talabani first tried to cut a deal with Saddam Hussein in 1983, and then sided with Khomeini (and Barzani) against Baghdad and the Iranian KDP (whose leader, Abdulrahman Ghassemloo, had aligned himself with Saddam Hussein).

The bourgeois Kurdish parties in Iraq have been quite anxious to retain an autonomous Kurdish area with the blessing of the imperialists. During the 1991 imperialist war against Iraq, Barzani and Talabani both appealed directly to the imperialist powers. Shortly after Iraq moved into Kuwait, Talabani initiated discussions with some American senators in Washington. Barzani signaled his readiness for joint action with the United Nations, the fig-leaf for imperialist aggression (cited in B. Nirumand, *Die Kurdische Tragödie*). When the U.S. rulers made it clear that they took a dim view of the "Lebanonization" of Iraq, Talabani asked the Turkish president Özal to try to persuade George Bush to overthrow Hussein.

During the subsequent uprising of the Iraqi Kurds against Hussein's murderous repression, which included the infamous gas attacks, the bourgeois Kurdish resistance combined their operations with the British and U.S. secret services. When the revolt was suppressed, the imperialists stepped in and declared the Kurdish territory in Iraq to be a "security zone" that was off limits to Hussein's troops. This is now being enforced by U.S. and other warplanes based in Turkey.

As revolutionary internationalists, we recognize that the Kurds in Iraq are entitled to regional autonomy if

they wish. But we are unconditionally opposed to any kind of imperialist intervention against Iraq, including that undertaken beneath the hypocritical banner of "protecting" the Kurds. Moreover, as the present difficulties of the Iraqi Kurds demonstrate, "autonomy" is not a viable option. Baghdad responded to the creation of a "security zone," established by imperialist diktat, by imposing a blockade in September 1991 which has left the Iraqi Kurds dependent on the U.S. and the European Community for basic supplies.

The political corruption of the bourgeois Kurdish parties in Iraq is revealed by their anxiety to retain an "autonomous" Kurdish area in Iraq at any cost. To this end, Barzani and Talabani have recently combined militarily with the Turkish army in a struggle against guerrillas of the competing Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) based in Turkey.

The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK)

The PKK is the best known and largest leftist organization in Turkish Kurdistan today. One reason for its accelerated growth in recent years has been its uncompromising refusal to collaborate with the Turkish regime. Because of this, thousands of PKK fighters have been mercilessly hunted down and murdered under both the Turkish military regime and its civilian successors.

Ankara's terror against the Kurdish population has created mass support for the PKK. The Turkish regime has pressured the leaders of the tribes and clans to take up arms against the PKK in alliance with the Turkish army. Ankara's tools range from outright bribes to threats to destroy whole villages. If the clan heads agree to collaborate in suppressing the PKK, the entire village is considered a party to the deal because the chief's word is law. In the past, the PKK has responded to this "system of village guardians" by themselves butchering whole villages. Today the PKK officially dissociates itself from such acts of indiscriminate terror.

In the 1980s the PKK also discredited itself by the practice of liquidating its internal and external critics (including former members). These criminal practices, derived from the PKK's Stalinist ideology, made it easy for European police agencies, in cooperation with the Turkish secret police, to persecute PKK supporters and to treat the entire Kurdish resistance in exile as criminals. In Germany, in particular, dozens of Kurds have been arrested on the flimsiest pretexts and are facing trial as possible "PKK terrorists."

As Trotskyists we reject the Stalinist practices of the PKK, and we oppose any anti-working class actions that its members may have carried out. Nevertheless, the workers' movement in Germany must defend the accused in the so-called "PKK Trial" [a sinister conspiracy trial now underway in Germany] in order to stop the criminalization of the Kurdish resistance in Germany. Such a defense is not only an elementary obligation of international solidarity, it is also a concrete protest against the close cooperation of Germany and Turkey in the suppression of the Kurds.

The PKK is a petty-bourgeois guerrilla movement with a program that reflects the retarded development



RAMAZAN ÖZTÜRK

Kurdish villagers in Gormeg, Turkey: victims of Turkish air raids

of capitalism in Kurdistan. The PKK's description of their goal as a "peoples' revolution," is taken straight from the vocabulary of Stalinist class collaborationism. In an interview published in 1992, Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK's undisputed leader, defined his group's objectives as follows:

"What we stand for, we call radical democracy...This means that we are not defined by classic principles. We are not a communist movement. We are neither a nationalist nor an Islamic religious movement. These currents are criticized by us. One thing is clear. We are no narrow minded nationalists. We stand against any form of nationalism. We will not be taken in by bureaucratic socialism in any case and we are also against the idea of economic competition."

—*Ez Kurdim İch bin Kurdin*, Schumann/Goeb/
Ulutuncok

The cross-class character of this "people's revolution" becomes clear in Ocalan's explanation of the PKK's occasional reference to socialism: "When we refer to scientific socialism we mean a socialism that stands above the interests of the state, the nation, and the classes." This conception of socialism reflects the fact that, despite its name, the PKK is a petty-bourgeois nationalist formation, programmatically incapable of forging the necessary alliances with the Persian, Arab and Turkish workers' movements.

According to the *New York Times* (24 November 1992), PKK fighters from Turkey "moved into the area [northern Iraq] after Western forces established a Kurdish enclave" following the 1991 imperialist war against Iraq. The same article reports that in November 1992 the PKK units in the area had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of an unholy alliance between the bourgeois KDP and PUK peshmergas and the Turkish army. Kurdish and Turkish militants, as well as the entire international workers' movement, have a duty to defend the PKK

against the Turkish generals and their Kurdish quislings. According to the *NYT* article:

"Leaders of the Iraqi Kurds now hope that their military role against the Turkish Kurds will win them favor in Ankara, whose support may prove important in allowing them to maintain their own regional autonomy."

Imperialism, Permanent Revolution & Kurdistan

Again and again the PUK, KDP and other bourgeois-nationalist formations in Kurdistan have ensnared themselves in the spider web of imperialist interests. In this they act as fitting representatives of the weak, stunted Kurdish bourgeoisie. Their manifest incapacity to consistently represent bourgeois-democratic interests vindicates a central thesis of Leon Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution:

"With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses....

"But the alliance of these two classes [the proletariat and the peasantry] can be realized in no other way than through an irreconcilable struggle against the influence of the national-liberal bourgeoisie."

—Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*

The tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution can only be accomplished by the workers, supported by the peasant masses. However, as was definitively proven by the October 1917 revolution in Russia, the proletariat cannot limit its struggle to the fight for bourgeois democratic rights. Only by going beyond such limited aims in a struggle for socialist goals (i.e., for a workers' and peasants' government and the expropriation of the ruling classes) can these rights be secured.

Every oppressed nation in the Near East which aspires to independence poses a profound threat to the brittle bonapartist regimes of the region. All four capitalist states that sit on top of the Kurds have, at different points, used the Kurds as diplomatic or military pawns in their rivalries with each other. The imperialist powers also use the Kurdish question for their own purposes, but in the imperialists' game, the Husseins, Khomeinies, Assads and Özals are themselves only chess pieces. If they overstep their narrowly circumscribed spheres of influence, they are soon brought up short by their masters (as Hussein discovered after he annexed Kuwait).

Despite the imperialist lip service to "human rights" for the Kurds, the question is of interest to the great powers only in so far as it can be used to advance their own interests in the Near East. The U.S., for example, would like to overthrow the Hussein regime, but is not interested in carving a Kurdish territory out of northern Iraq because this could destabilize the entire region.

German imperialism is playing a growing role in the Middle East, and is historically well placed by virtue of its (legal and illegal) transactions with Iraq, Iran and especially Turkey. The weeping and wailing of the Ger-

man rulers about Turkey's use of German tanks in Kurdistan is completely hypocritical, as the 14 July 1992 issue of Berlin's *Tagesspiegel* makes clear:

"It is not only economic reasons that stand in the way of denouncing the continued violations of human rights but above all political considerations that dictate the extreme urgency for a revival of German-Turkish relations....The view that Turkey will in the future hold the rank of a key power that can contribute essentially to stability in Eastern Europe, in the Balkans, in the Near East and in Middle Asia is one that is not limited to Edzard Reuter, Chairman of Daimler Benz AG alone."

The German imperialists' criticisms of Turkey's oppression of "its" Kurds are usually intended merely as a form of diplomatic pressure on Ankara for concessions over other issues. Occasionally these criticisms do signal "real concern" over the wisdom of a particular policy. For example, Herr Fellermaier, chair of the Social Democratic Party leadership's group for coordinating Turkish policy, worried that: "Because of the brutality of these [Turkish] troops who have no regard for any human rights...the locals would really be pushed into the arms of the radical separatist Kurdish Workers Party" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 August 1992).

For the Right of Self-Determination for the Kurds!

The PKK has established a reputation for its unconditional support of an Independent Kurdistan. The appropriateness of raising such a demand as part of an internationalist program for the working class in the Near East is a question that must be posed in the context of the Bolshevik experience on the national question.

The right of self-determination is simply a recognition of the equal right of all nations to establish their own states. The working class of an oppressor nation can only free itself by opposing every attempt by its own bourgeoisie to oppress other nationalities. In those states which presently occupy parts of Kurdistan, class-conscious workers must militantly fight against the national oppression of the Kurds, and forthrightly defend their right to self-determination. Only through opposing the chauvinism of their own bourgeoisie, can the Turkish, Persian and Arab workers and peasants advance their class interests.

Upholding the right to self-determination for the Kurds does not imply support to the PUK and KDP's schemes to achieve "autonomy" under the auspices of one or another imperialist or regional regime. The autonomy they advocate could be little more than a miserable (and probably short-lived) compromise with the oppressor regimes. While it would no doubt provide privileges for the various Kurdish politicians in charge of administering the arrangement, for the masses it would be little more than a veiled form of chauvinist oppression by the ruling nation. It would not fulfill the democratic aspirations of the brutally oppressed Kurds for equal political and cultural rights. In practical terms the call for "autonomy" by the various bourgeois parties is a cover for collaboration with the oppressor capitalist states.

Advocacy of the *right* of national self-determination does not necessarily imply advocacy of its *implementation* at any given point. As Lenin remarked: "our unreserved recognition of the struggle for freedom of self-determination does not in any way commit us to supporting every demand for national self-determination" (Lenin, "The National Question in Our Programme," 1903).

In the present circumstances an independent Kurdish state would find itself in very great difficulty. The situation would be even worse if such a state were limited to a fragment of Kurdish territory—for example Turkish Kurdistan. Not only would such a mini-state be entirely landlocked and surrounded by its historic oppressors, but it would be a society characterized by backward, pre-capitalist social structures. Because of its underdevelopment, an independent Kurdistan would find itself at the mercy of the regional as well as imperialist powers.

Kurdistan is not a classical case of a colonial revolution, as for example, China and Vietnam were earlier this century. In both these cases, the proletariat was small, but with sufficient economic and political power to lead the peasantry in a successful assault on both the imperialist masters and their indigenous bourgeois allies. One of the peculiarities of the Kurdish national question is that it is intertwined with the social question in the states with Kurdish minorities and, through them, in all the states of the Near East. The fight for the freedom of the Kurds requires a common struggle with the Turkish, Persian and Arab working masses. Any serious threat to capitalist rule in Turkey, for example, must inevitably pose the question of the Kurds. The Kurdish struggle for national liberation, on the other hand, could easily spark a wave of upheavals that would shatter the brittle regimes of the region.

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

The Kurdish bourgeoisie is so weak that it does not even pretend to be leading a struggle for Kurdish freedom. This task falls to the Kurdish working class, at the head of the peasants and other oppressed layers. Those militants who are committed to winning equal national rights for Kurds must embrace a strategy of common struggle with the working class of the nations that oppress them. In Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq the struggle against the oppression of the Kurds is closely connected with the overthrow of the bourgeois dictatorships. It is extremely unlikely that the dismembered Kurdish nation can be reunited on any road other than that of the struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East. The eventual character of relations between the Kurdish nation and the other nations of the region under the rule of the working class cannot be specified in advance. This is something that the Kurds will decide for themselves. But the opportunity to make this choice will require a wave of victorious proletarian revolutions.

The PKK's advocacy of an independent Kurdistan, without taking into account the problems posed by the social and political realities faced by the Kurds, and



Turkish army uses tanks against Kurds

HHA—SPA

without any socialist content, is a dead end. As Leninists, we of course support the right of national self-determination. We are not opposed in principle to raising this as a demand. But pushing for an independent capitalist Kurdistan, against the wishes of the feeble Kurdish bourgeoisie, and with the bulk of the Kurdish people indifferent, makes no sense at all. Moreover, such a perspective could turn Kurdish revolutionaries away from the necessity to participate in, and, if possible, initiate struggles of the workers and peasants against the existing oppressor states. The most practical way to drive forward the struggle for Kurdish national freedom is by driving forward common class struggles to overthrow the oppressor despots of the region.

The struggles that are taking place today in the Near East prove that this revolutionary internationalist perspective is profoundly realistic. When the question of Turkish participation in the imperialist aggression against Iraq was floated by Ankara in 1991, spontaneous protest demonstrations broke out in Turkish Kurdistan, which soon spread to the Turkish working class. The slogans of these demonstrations were picked up in early January 1992 by Turkish and Kurdish metal workers and miners, who struck together for higher wages. In order to cling to power during the national general strike that followed, Turkish president Özal had to rely on the support of the trade-union bureaucracy while granting a series of wage hikes.

To turn such struggles into a successful fight against the rulers, it is necessary to create revolutionary organizations, rooted in the working class, armed with a correct programmatic orientation. Essential elements of a revolutionary program for Kurdistan must include: the right of Kurdish self-determination; the overthrow of the capitalist regimes headed by Özal, Rafsanjani, Hussein and Assad; the creation of workers' and peasants' governments, committed to severing the connection to the imperialist world order through the expropriation of capitalist property, and, finally, for a socialist federation of the Near East, within which the Kurds can decide on their own future. ■

For a Socialist Federation of the Middle East!

Kurdistan and the National Question



JASEM/SAFIR/REA-SABA

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The division of the world under imperialism has subjected many peoples to massacres, oppression and forced population transfers. Few nations have suffered more from the effects of big power diplomacy than the Kurds, a Near Eastern nation of well over 20 million people. In 1923, Kurdistan was torn into four parts by the Treaty of Lausanne, which the victorious allies used to carve up the Ottoman Empire after World War I.

The vast majority of Kurds live in a territory divided among Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. These regimes, themselves dependent on imperialism, have frequently turned Kurdistan into a battleground among themselves. In these conflicts, most recently the bloody Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, Kurds have often been set against Kurds. When the capitalist strongmen of the region are not at each others' throats, they cooperate in persecuting and oppressing their Kurdish minorities.

In the 19th century, Kurdish principalities revolted against the increasingly onerous demands of the Ottoman Empire. In the early years of the 20th century, a layer of Kurdish intellectuals launched a movement for a separate Kurdish state. This national movement developed in tandem with the Young Turk movement in Turkey. After the outbreak of World War I, which pitted the Ottoman Empire against Czarist Russia, the leaders of the Young Turks (including Mustafa Kemal—later

known as Kemal Atatürk) launched a campaign against the Christian Armenians, who were accused of siding with the Russians. This nationalist campaign was animated by pro-Islamic propaganda aimed at the Turkish and Kurdish masses. The result was the first state-sponsored genocide of the 20th century. At least a million Armenians (as well as other Christians, for example, the Assyrians) were killed in the course of the government's campaign to expel them from Turkey. Kurdish nationalists today prefer to ignore or deny the fact that Kurds also played a role in the Turkish state's genocidal persecution of the Armenians.

In 1920 Atatürk promised a common "state of Turks and Kurds" to win the support of the Kurdish clans in resisting the harsh terms of the Treaty of Sèvres [the equivalent of the Versailles Treaty imposed on Germany the year before] and to drive the Greeks out of Asia Minor. Several years later Atatürk rewarded his Kurdish allies (who were by then officially designated merely as "mountain Turks") with merciless persecution. The teaching of Kurdish in schools was outlawed and it was even forbidden to mention the *existence* of Kurds or other national minorities within Turkey. Under Atatürk, a series of Kurdish uprisings were brutally suppressed, and hundreds of thousands of Kurds were deported into central and western Turkey.

To date, every Kurdish revolt has hinged on the collaboration of the corrupt Kurdish nationalist leaders with their own rulers, or the imperialist powers, par-

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