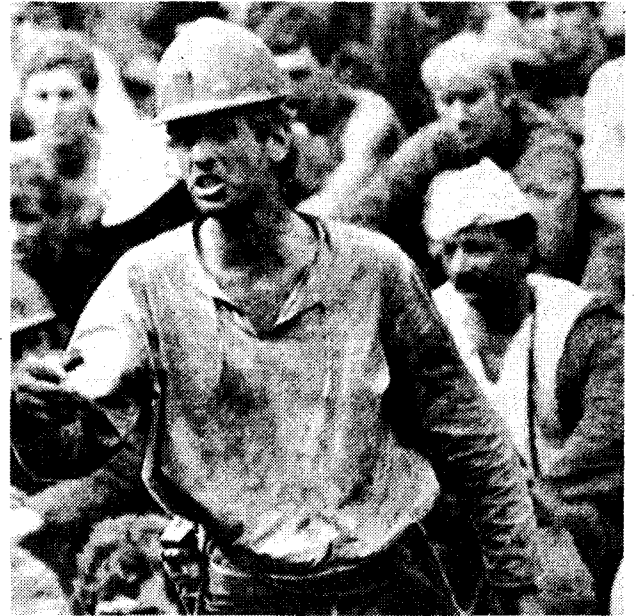


The Crisis of Gorbachev's USSR



Sumovsky/Zoja Pictures



TASS via Reuters

February 4 Moscow demo, organized mainly by social democrats, demanded CPSU Central Committee resign. Striking coal miners last July—Only workers political revolution can save the Soviet Union!

Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!

The plenum of the Soviet Communist Party last February marked the further disintegration of the Stalinist bureaucracy as the USSR is wracked by national strife amid mounting economic chaos. Sixteen thousand Soviet troops and other armed forces have been sent to the Caucasus to suppress the bloody, two-year-long conflict between Azerbaijanis and Armenians. Lithuanian nationalists have proclaimed secession from the Soviet Union (see article page 4). Violent anti-Semitism is on the rise, and Jews in Moscow and Leningrad live in fear of pogroms. State shops are empty while newly legalized private entrepreneurs sell their wares at many times the official prices.

The once seemingly monolithic, indeed totalitarian, struc-

ture of Stalinist rule is collapsing. The multinational Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is threatened with disintegration. Practically every week there is an outburst of nationalist/communist violence, most recently a riot in Tadzhikistan against Armenian refugees. On the periphery of the USSR, in the Baltic republics and Caucasus, party bosses have allied themselves with local nationalists against Moscow.

The Russian core of the Kremlin oligarchy is rent between "liberal reformers," who have rallied behind Gorbachev, and conservative apparatchiks now generally allied with Great Russian nationalism. On the eve of the Communist Party (CPSU) plenum, 100,000 demonstrators gathered outside

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Manifesto and Program of Struggle of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany

The Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD), German section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), presented candidates in the March 18 East German elections for the Volkskammer (parliament). The SpAD was founded in East Berlin on January 21 by the Trotskyist League of Germany and members of the Spartakist Groups in the DDR.

The central slogan of the Trotskyists' election campaign was "No to Capitalist Reunification—For a Germany of Workers Councils!" The election manifesto issued on February 24 urged the working people of East Germany to resist the campaign of destabilization being massively orchestrated by imperialism with the aim of stampeding the DDR toward capitalist reunification.

A SpAD press release (1 March) noted that "the Spartakist Workers Party is the only one raising its voice on behalf of the great number of DDR citizens who, without ifs, ands or buts, say 'No' to capitalist reunification. Other parties also assert that they want to defend the social gains of the DDR, but they either take capitalist reunification for granted as something inevitable, or they propose phony compromises like 'market socialism' which just pave the way for it." Only the genuine communism of Lenin and Trotsky, Luxemburg and Liebknecht, can finish once and for all with the now-discredited Stalinist bureaucratic system which has left the DDR prostrate before the designs of revanchist imperialism. Only a revolutionary-egalitarian regime of workers councils can defend the existing social gains of the DDR and fight to solve the country's problems on an internationalist basis.

We publish below the SpAD's election manifesto, translated from *Arprekorr* (Workers Press Correspondence), 24 February.

We appeal to all who want to fight against the sellout of the German Democratic Republic. Vote Spartakist Workers Party in the Volkskammer elections on March 18th! Give a powerful "No" to capitalist reunification! **Fight along with us for a communist future!**

The existence of the DDR is at stake. Today the question is revolution or counterrevolution. We, the working people,

built the collectivized economy from the rubble of Hitler's Third Reich. Stalinism has wretchedly demonstrated its bankruptcy. But no one has the right to hand over to capital what millions have created! We must defend our social gains and our workers state. We have much to lose and everything to win!

Today our country is the target of an unparalleled imperialist campaign of destabilization. With the SPD as the Trojan horse, *Anschluss* with the BRD [West Germany] is to be forced upon us. Kohl & Co. are bombarding Germany East and West with monstrous panic-mongering. Stalinist bureaucratic rule is disintegrating, but now the DDR economy itself

No to Capitalist Reunification! For a Germany of Workers Councils!

is also supposed to be talked into collapsing. We are all supposed to be intimidated and demoralized as German nationalist reunification frenzy gets whipped up. Hothouse conditions nurture the growth of new fascist bands—the stormtroopers of a Fourth Reich.

Workers and soldiers! Collective farmers! All working people! Look around you! There are many just like you who are ready to fight for our gains: working men and women, foreign workers and women, youth, pensioners. Our future is at stake.

Millions of DDR citizens hate the NATO imperialist crusade against the Soviet Union. A capitalist Greater Germany would be a nightmare for all of us. The behemoth, armed to the teeth by the Daimler-Benz-MBB armorers, would threaten all neighboring peoples and the whole of mankind with a new military adventure against the East.

The capitalist monopolists can hardly wait to transform the factories owned by the people into gold mines for their own profit. And the Social Democrats are busy shoving it down our throats. But we don't want mass unemployment, we don't want women to be sent home to the kitchen, we don't want collective farmers to be reduced to the condition of impoverished migrant workers in the countryside by the return of the Junker capitalists. We also don't want the draconian dismantling of social services, the drastic reduction of the masses' standard of living in the DDR that this would necessarily entail.

Yet, together with Kohl, his SPD lackeys and the worst nationalist filth, [present DDR head of state Hans] Modrow shouted "Deutschland One Fatherland" as soon as Gorbachev gave a green light. The Modrow government, as well as the former SED, the bloc parties, the "Round Table"—all are groveling in the face of the furious howls of intimidation coming from the capitalists and their SPD lieutenants.

The Volkskammer elections on March 18 are supposed to be part of the sellout of the DDR. It is not possible for them to reflect the true will of the working people. *But these*
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SPARTACIST CANADA

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West German Capital Seizes DDR by the Throat

Fourth Reich Wins in East German Elections

The results of the March 18 East German elections, a landslide vote for the right-wing parties promoting speedy capitalist reunification, represent a mortal threat to the DDR working class, women and youth. The West German bankers and bosses want to level every social gain of the DDR—a deformed workers state built up from the rubble of Hitler's Third Reich. They intend to exploit the population as a new low-wage labor pool for Western capital and to seize the DDR as a launching pad for their *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East) to reconquer that one-sixth of the globe ripped away from the capitalist market through the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

It won't be so easy. The gains of the East German workers state—collectivized property and a planned economy including subsidized housing, daycare, education, full employment—can't be wiped out by paper ballots. Many who voted for the fool's gold of capitalist prosperity will resist a Fourth Reich that threatens to shred the fabric of their lives to rags. Many defensive battles loom ahead. What's necessary is to build an authoritative Leninist-egalitarian party to mobilize the power of the DDR working class in the plants and in the streets to defend the gains of their state against a capitalist rollback that means unemployment, gutting of social services, and resurgence of Nazi racism.

The vote reflected massive false consciousness and illusions in the lying promise of wealth offered by Western capitalist parties in slick campaign brochures and staffers paid for in hard currency. It also reflected the deep disorientation and demoralization of a population which brought down the corrupt and bureaucratic Honecker regime in October but was denied the time to question, debate and build a genuine, socialist egalitarian alternative before they were blitzkrieged in a concerted campaign of economic and political destabilization by the West. Especially in the face of Gorbachev's seemingly limitless efforts to appease imperialism (e.g., by withdrawing Soviet troops from Afghanistan, pushing the Cubans out of Angola, etc.) and his introduction of inequalities and market reforms in the Soviet Union, many looked West and not East.

An Unfinished Revolution

The political revolution in East Germany erupted like the shocking force of a volcano presumed dormant. Erich Honecker had presided over one of the most encrusted Stalinist regimes on the globe. Last summer, his rule began to crack under the impact of events in East Europe which revealed that, unlike the suppression of the Hungarian workers revolt in 1956 or the "Prague Spring" in 1968, this time the Soviet Red Army would not be employed to back up local regimes by force. Severe economic dislocation was produced by the outflow of personnel, mainly educated and skilled people, through Hungary into West Germany. The exodus was self-selected. Millions stayed to fight for genuine socialism, reflected in

banners with slogans like "For Communist Ideals! No Privileges!" Mass popular street demonstrations centered in Leipzig swelled week by week and on November 7 the entire East German government resigned. Travel restrictions to the West were lifted with the opening of the Berlin Wall (which also eased the exodus).



Der Spiegel

Anti-Communist German nationalists wave banner of "Germany One Fatherland."

A "Round Table" was incorporated into the government as a semi-advisory body, including not only the rapidly decomposing Stalinist party but also right-wing Christian Democrats, social democrats, dissident groups such as New Forum and the United Left. The hated *Stasi* (secret police) was disbanded. The DDR was in the throes of a thoroughgoing political revolution: the masses rejected the legitimacy of their rulers and the bureaucrats could no longer rule in the old way. The early months of the revolution were marked by a palpable mass euphoria and spirit of inquiry for new ideas and alternatives, but crucially with very little organized participation by the working class.

At the same time, the West German bourgeoisie began mobilizing very heavily on all political and economic fronts to undermine and absorb the DDR. It was a concerted campaign of destabilization, similar to the way the U.S. imperialists turned the economic screws on Chile under Allende. The *Volkammer* (parliament) elections scheduled for May 6 were moved up to March 18. Joint ventures and financial takeovers of state-owned industries began before people could

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Baltic Nationalists Spearhead Counterrevolution in USSR

Moscow Tries to Thwart Lithuanian Secessionists

Disintegrating Stalinism Looking to Buy Time

APRIL 2—Ukrainian fascists, Georgian monarchists, Baltic collaborators of Nazi Germany: these are the anti-Soviet “freedom fighters” long honored in Western capitals. For decades imperialist strategists dreamed of bringing about the breakup of the Soviet Union by inciting and supporting reactionary nationalist movements. Now they believe that day is at hand. So the disappointment was palpable in NATO capitals when Soviet tanks noisily rumbled into Vilnius, Lithuania.

The “liberal” Stalinist regime of Mikhail Gorbachev is giving up East Europe, has accepted the imperialist reunification of Germany and is introducing large elements of capitalist exploitation into the Soviet economy. Thus many expected he would not put up serious resistance when on March 11 the Lithuanian parliament, dominated by the Sajudis nationalist movement, declared its “independence” from the USSR. Under the guise of “national self-determination,” the Lithuanian Sajudis is now the spearhead of imperialist-backed counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. But even the ever-accommodating Gorbachev has not rolled over and played dead in Lithuania.

In recent days, armored convoys and tank columns have conspicuously paraded through the capital of Vilnius. KGB security guards tightened controls around the republic's borders. When Sajudis leaders talked about setting up a “territorial defense,” Gorbachev ordered all Lithuanian citizens to turn in their private firearms. Paratroopers arrested Lithuanian deserters from the Soviet armed forces. Soviet troops guard the offices of the Moscow-loyal Communist Party after a nationalist split attempted to seize them. Western diplomats and journalists have been ordered to leave. In the latest move Soviet troops occupied the State Prosecutor's Office and the printing plant which produces the Sajudis newspaper.

The U.S. rulers were taken aback by Moscow's actions. Bush yammered: “Any attempt to coerce or intimidate or forcibly intervene against the people of Lithuania is bound to backfire” (*New York Times*, 24 March). However, Washington and the other NATO capitals have not supported Lithuanian “independence” for fear of provoking a harder line in Moscow and perhaps undermining Gorbachev, Western imperialism's favorite Kremlin ruler since Tsar Nicholas II. On March 30, Bush sent a personal letter to Gorbachev, saying “we're not trying to make things harder for Lithuania or the Soviet Union.”

Some American ultra-rightists like Jesse Helms have denounced Bush for “selling out” Lithuania to the Russians. A White House official responded:

“Do congressmen who want recognition [of Lithuania] want Gorbachev to continue to withdraw from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland? Do they want to permit German reunification?... Obviously, they do, but I don't know whether they have considered what effect our stance on Lithuania has on those things...”

—*New York Times*, 28 March

In other words, Gorbachev is already giving us all of East Europe on a platter. Why risk all this right now over Lithuania?

Washington's diplomatic stance caused Sajudis leader



Roberto Koch-Contrast/SABA

Gorbachev's appeals to Lithuanian separatists in Vilnius fell on deaf ears.

Vytautas Landsbergis to decry the Western powers for having “sold us out.” With their imperialist godfathers unwilling to provoke a major world confrontation, the Lithuanian nationalists have backed off somewhat. On March 29, Landsbergis & Co. proposed to discuss with Moscow holding a popular referendum on secession. Gorbachev responded that he'd talk only if the Lithuanian parliament annulled the “declaration of independence.”

Whatever the immediate outcome of the Lithuania crisis, the discredited Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy has *no political program* to combat the reactionary nationalisms which now threaten to rip apart the Soviet Union. The Gorbachev regime could only maintain that the Lithuanian “declaration of independence” was “invalid” because it violated the USSR constitution. Gorbachev's entire strategy for dealing with nationalist separatism consists in *buying time*, nothing more. His new draft legislation on the national question proposes a five-year waiting period before a republic can secede, followed by a

popular referendum and approval by the all-Soviet Congress of People's Deputies.

While the Lithuania crisis was unfolding Gorbachev unexpectedly appointed the reactionary Russian nationalist and rabid anti-Semite Valentin Rasputin to his new presidential council. Ominously, this may signal a move to utilize Great Russian chauvinism as a counterweight to nationalist separatism in the Baltic, Caucasus and Ukraine. Such a deeply cynical policy will surely lead to pogroms, communalist bloodletting and the destruction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Six decades of Stalinist bureaucratic oppression and parasitism have caused many national minorities to look upon the Soviet Union as a present-day version of tsarist Russia's "prison house of peoples" as Lenin called it. The Soviet Union can be saved only by sweeping out the Kremlin oligarchy and restoring the proletarian internationalist principles of Lenin and Trotsky. The Soviet federation must be reformed on the basis of genuine workers democracy, including the democratic right of national self-determination, i.e., the right of constituent republics to secede and establish an independent workers state.

Nationalist Delirium in Lithuania

But the move toward secession in Lithuania has nothing to do with democratic aspirations. It is a move toward capitalist counterrevolution backed by witchhunting against Communists, class-conscious workers and national minorities. Three of the Sajudis members elected to the secessionist parliament were known anti-Soviet terrorists in the late 1940-early '50s.

The March 12 declaration was accompanied by resolutions reinstating the 1938 constitution and dropping "Soviet Socialist" from the name of the Lithuanian Republic. Far from being "democratic," the interwar Lithuanian Republic was a right-wing dictatorship under Antanas Smetona, who took power through a coup in 1926 and ruled until Soviet forces ousted him in 1940, when they moved into the Baltic region as a defensive military move against the threatened German invasion.

At the time Trotsky pointed out: "It cannot be doubted that control over the military bases on the Baltic coast represents strategical advantages." But he went on:

"The invasion of the Red Army is seen by the populations not as an act of liberation but as an act of violence, and thereby facilitates the mobilization of world public opinion against the USSR by the imperialist powers. That is why it will bring in the last instance more harm than advantages to the USSR."

—"The World Situation and Perspectives," *Writings [1939-40]*

Significantly, the last time Lithuania declared independence was the day after Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941! The current "declaration of independence" was pushed through in a mood of nationalist hysteria: a Lithuanian journalist sympathetic to the Sajudis reported that "anyone who speaks against it is sure to be branded a traitor." The Lithuanian nationalists have gone out of their way to incite and insult other Soviet peoples: for example, destroying monuments commemorating the Red Army's liberation of Lithuania from Nazi German occupation.

A major reason why, of the three Baltic republics, Lithuania took the first plunge at secession is that 80 percent of the

population consists of ethnic Lithuanians. By contrast, in Latvia and Estonia almost half the population—and a majority of the proletariat—are Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Jews, ethnic Siberians and other Soviet peoples. Yet despite their relative numerical weakness, the Russian-speaking and, more politically significant, the Polish minority have actively protested against the Sajudis secessionists. On Tuesday, a reported 10,000 supporters of the pro-Union CP demonstrated opposite the Lithuanian parliament. Speakers emphasized that secession would bring unemployment, poverty, private property and mass deportations.

Since Poles (who make up 9 percent of the republic) are traditionally fellow Catholics and anti-Russian, one might have expected them to support an independent Lithuania. But they, too, fear being subject to forced "Lithuanianization" and second-class citizenship. Parliamentary deputies from the Polish minority abstained on the Lithuanian declaration of independence. A Polish schoolteacher told the *New York Times* (26 March): "People are losing their native language.... We are not prepared for this." Perhaps she recalled that in 1926, the virulently anti-Polish leader of independent Lithuania, Augustinas Voldemaras, closed Polish schools and jailed Polish schoolteachers.

While the Sajudis often recalls the interwar Lithuanian bourgeois republic, they seldom mention that Vilnius was from 1920 to 1939 known as Wilno and was *part of Poland*. The Lithuanian landowning gentry considered themselves part of the Polish aristocracy. Jozef Pilsudski, the fascist strongman of interwar Poland, and Poland's first president were both natives of Lithuania (Richard Watt, *Bitter Glory—Poland and Its Fate: 1919 to 1939 [1979]*). In an ironic footnote to this history, the neighboring Soviet republic of Byelorussia last week demanded the return of Lithuania's six southern counties, including Vilnius, which had been ceded to Lithuania when it became part of the USSR in 1940.

The harshest denunciations of the Sajudis secessionists have come from the Soviet high command. The Lithuanian port of Klaipeda (formerly Memel) is a major conduit for military supplies to other parts of the USSR. Furthermore, Lithuanian secession would cut off from the rest of the Soviet Union the important Baltic port of Kaliningrad, which is predominantly Russian-speaking and part of the Russian republic. Moscow's strong response in Lithuania may also be a response to the right-wing victory in the March 18 East German elections. With the spectre of a Fourth Reich looming in the West, the Soviet officer corps and other elements of the hierarchy may be less ready to tolerate a NATO beachhead on the Baltic coast.

An even more immediate danger is the encouragement Lithuanian secession would give to other nationalist-separatist movements, and not only in neighboring Latvia and Estonia. The largest Caucasian republic, Georgia, has become a witch's cauldron of reactionary groupings. One of the biggest separatist groups is the Monarchist Party, which proclaims: "Our new state should be built on a strict principle of hierarchy" (*Wall Street Journal*, 28 March). This party is in contact with the current pretender to the Georgian throne now living in Spain. Throughout Georgia statues of Lenin have been pulled down, while monarchists and other reactionary outfits have taken over the offices of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism and of the Young Communist League.

On the scale of the USSR the three Baltic republics are
(continued on page 22)

Sandinista "Third Way" Paved Road for Reaction Nicaragua: Dollar "Democracy" Brings Back Contras

MARCH 5—The chiefs of U.S. imperialism are jubilantly proclaiming that they have won in the polls what their contra mercenaries were unable to win on the battlefield: defeat of the radical-nationalist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. The arrogant imperialists trumpet yet another "victory over Communism," as their bought-and-paid-for contra candidate, MIT graduate Violeta Chamorro, vowed to carry through a "democratic" counterrevolution. Chamorro proclaimed she will immediately return land confiscated by the Sandinistas and distributed to small peasants, or compensate the former big landowners, and will sell off large state enterprises to private capitalists.

In Washington, Democrats vie with Republicans to take credit for Chamorro's upset victory over Sandinista president Daniel Ortega in the February 25 elections. In Ottawa, politicians from all parties congratulate themselves on Canada's "neutral, mediating" role in helping to "stop Communism." But the Sandinistas' own program—which, far from pushing "communism," conciliated domestic and foreign capitalist reaction, demoralized their own plebeian base and deepened the mass hunger and unemployment brought on by years of imperialist aggression and blockade—helped pave the way for the electoral victory of an open U.S. puppet ten years after Sandinista guerrillas swept into Managua in triumph over the butcher dictator Anastasio Somoza. In the words of the French bourgeois revolutionary Louis de Saint-Just (1767-1794), "He who makes a revolution half-way digs his own grave."

So a scant two months after the U.S. rape of Panama, and in the midst of Gorbachev's wholesale capitulations to imperialism from Afghanistan to Berlin, Washington thinks it can buy, bully and invade its way back to being the unchallenged boss policeman of the Western Hemisphere. Drunk with triumphalism, the U.S. imperialists now set their cross hairs on Cuba. Bipartisan Congressional task forces have been set up with the objective of getting rid of Fidel Castro within 12 months. It is the urgent duty of the world working class to *defend Cuba against imperialism!*

Meanwhile, Salvadoran leftist insurgents, whose stunning military offensive recently dealt powerful blows to Washington's death squad junta, find themselves under the gun more than ever with Chamorro's victory in Managua. We say: No negotiated sellout in El Salvador! Military victory to leftist insurgents!

Nicaraguan Toilers Must Resist Chamorro-Contra Takeover

The electoral triumph of the "democratic" counter-revolution now threatens a revenge bloodbath against Sandinista activists and working-class militants. Tens of thousands of workers, peasants, victims of contra terror, and rank-and-file supporters of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) want to resist the bloody reaction posed by 10,000



Reuters

Contra candidate Violeta Chamorro with her imperialist godfather, George Bush.

contras still under arms, and the takeover of their country by Chamorro and her CIA paymasters. What is posed is the organization of workers militias and the securing of arms by the working people to defend themselves.

But the petty-bourgeois Sandinistas, whose stated electoral program differed little from that of Chamorro, and who had never committed themselves to a clear *class* program to consolidate and extend the gains of the popular revolution, have politically disarmed the working masses, demoralized them and delivered them to their enemies. The chimerical program of "political pluralism," a "mixed economy," and a "third way" ("neither capitalist nor communist," as Ortega put it) has come home with a vengeance. As Allende's Socialists found out in Chile: it is dangerous to enrage one's capitalist enemies without breaking their power as a class.

A big question remains: who has the arms? The 65,000-strong Sandinista People's Army was created through the destruction of Somoza's praetorian guard in July 1979. After the elections, Ortega had his picture taken embracing Chamorro as they told each other "I love you." To his enraged and frightened supporters Ortega claimed, "This is not a defeat," and "today we are in better condition to fight" than ever, while his wife blathered that "in reality this is a victory and a challenge" for the Sandinistas (*El Día*, Mexico City, 1 March). But seasoned fighters who whipped the contras in the field know their lives are now on the line, and are far from eager to hand over their Soviet-provided AK-47s. The highly unstable, explosive mix of a Chamorro government and a Sandinista army, with the fate of the contra mercenaries up in the air, and Chamorro's National Opposition Union (UNO) far from united, could easily lead to a new round of civil war.

The FSLN has now acceded to a situation which would give the imperialists more cover than ever to intervene militarily, for example, at the "request" of their "democratically elected" stooges. And whether this would mean the U.S. 82nd Airborne or Canadian troops in United Nations blue, the Nicaraguan toilers had better hold onto their carbines. UN "peacekeepers" will be imperialism's cops, like in the Korean War when 22,000 Canadian soldiers helped the U.S. to crush social revolution in the South.

While the international fake-leftists cheered the Sandinistas' every capitulation to imperialist pressure as a "brilliant" tactical move to trick the enemy, the Spartacists have consistently warned that conciliating reaction paves the road ultimately to a bloody defeat. We pointed out since the FSLN took Managua in July 1979 that the petty-bourgeois utopia of a "third way" was historically unviable. Against the Sandinistas' "social pact" with the bourgeoisie, we stressed that the *defense* of the Nicaraguan Revolution required that it be *completed* through expropriation of the capitalist fifth column. Against Sandinista nationalism, we called for the *extension* of the revolution throughout the region, to Mexico's powerful proletariat and onwards toward the North American "belly of the beast."

With the onset of the contra war in the early '80s, we asked if the Sandinistas would go the way of the Cuban *fidelistas*, consolidating a bureaucratically deformed workers state, or go down to defeat through guarding capitalist property, like the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. The Spanish Popular Front government—consisting of social democrats, Stalinists and a handful of bourgeois liberals—suppressed in the name of "anti-fascist unity" the workers' striving toward political power. It sabotaged workers management of factories, gutted and disarmed the workers militias, and assassinated and terrorized leftist leaders and militants. With its eyes on the good will of the "democratic" capitalist powers, the Republican government shrank from proclaiming independence for Spain's foreign colonies—a genuinely democratic measure which would have deprived Franco of the loyalty of his Moroccan troops. In these ways, the Popular Front demoralized the toiling masses and paved the way for Franco's victory, which crushed the working class along with its reformist leaders.

The heroic Nicaraguan working people deserve better than the leadership they have gotten. Today, physical survival demands revolutionary *class struggle* throughout Central America, under the leadership of an internationalist vanguard party, against the contra bourgeoisie and its U.S. puppeteers. This would require forging Leninist-Trotskyist parties fighting to put power in the hands of workers' and peasants' soviet governments throughout the Americas.

War and Economic Devastation

As Daniel Ortega told NBC News (1 March), "The people had to vote with a pistol to their heads." The message from Washington was loud and clear: if you want the contra war and the economic blockade to end, vote UNO. Republicans and Democrats poured hundreds of millions into the dirty contra war, organizing, outfitting and paying the rag-tag remnants of Somoza's psychopathic killers, the National Guard, into a mercenary army of "freedom fighters" who ran from Sandinista troops but specialized in blowing up rural schools and hospitals. Washington didn't oust the FSLN by military force, but it did succeed in bleeding the country white, killing more than 30,000 Nicaraguans—the equivalent of two million people

in U.S. population terms—and inflicting more than \$12 billion in war damage, plus incalculable economic losses caused by its trade embargo.

U.S. Democrats helped set puppet Central American presidents in motion to roll back the Nicaraguan Revolution through a series of "peace" plans and accords, from Condatadora through the Arias Plan. They extracted an escalating series of Sandinista concessions, both to the internal capitalist fifth column, whose mouthpiece was Chamorro's own CIA-funded *La Prensa*, and to Washington and the contra commanders themselves.

The most recent accord brought the spectacle of Ortega, together with the other Central American presidents, fulsomely supporting El Salvador's murderous president Cristiani in condemning the Salvadoran leftist insurgents. This accord with Cristiani helped grease the skids for Bush's invasion of Panama, which in turn helped put the pistol to Nicaragua's head. Ortega promised Washington he'd never arm the Salva-



Mike Goldwater

Nicaraguan workers march on May Day. Toilers must resist Chamorro-contra takeover!

doran guerrillas again, if only they'd take the heat off. Meanwhile, Gorbachev's regime in the Soviet Union recently cut off military supplies and has turned the supply of oil on and off (reminiscent of Stalin's behavior in the Spanish Civil War) to play up to Washington, helping pressure the FSLN to move ever rightward.

War-weariness, the ravages of U.S. aggression, the general economic crisis of Latin America, and the obscene U.S. financing of the "opposition" took a very heavy toll indeed, and make up *part* of the explanation why Chamorro beat Ortega at the polls by a landslide 15 points. But it is impossible to understand the current situation in Nicaragua without looking at how the Sandinistas' *own program* helped pave the way for reaction.

The Sandinista regime was a *petty-bourgeois government* that sought to balance above the conflicting social classes in bonapartist fashion, and has in recent years put the burden of economic devastation more and more on the shoulders of the working people.

Sixty percent of Nicaragua's farmland stayed in private (not state or cooperative) hands, and capitalists continued to own roughly two-thirds of industry. In 1987, the FSLN decreed a brutal economic shock treatment, dubbed "open-heart surgery

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Nicaragua...

(continued from page 7)

without anesthetic," laying off tens of thousands of state employees, ending almost all food subsidies, abolishing free hospital care and distribution of medicines. At the same time, 65 percent of available government funds went to subsidize the private "agro-export sector."

Inflation was reduced from 1988's 25,000 percent to a "mere" 1,800 percent by ruthlessly cutting demand. Overall



Matthew Naythons—Gamma-Liaison

Sandinistas defeated contras on battlefield. What happens now to Sandinista army?

private consumption fell by 70 percent. Workers' buying power plummeted to an incredible *six percent* of what it had been in 1980, according to the pro-Sandinista journal *Envío* (Managua, March 1989). Unemployment hit at least one-quarter of the active urban workforce. The result was widespread hunger. Infant mortality rose shamefully to top even El Salvador's and Guatemala's level. Yet the Sandinistas sought to quell working-class protest, including through outright repression, labeling all strikes "counterrevolutionary."

Post-election interviews of "men in the street" by the bourgeois press have highlighted remarks about "voting with the stomach." With Chamorro holding out the carrot of U.S. dollars while Bush waves the big stick of the embargo, many hungry people thought an UNO victory would mean that "now we'll eat meat." These expectations are socially explosive. As Sandinista union leader Berenicia Sanders declared, "We workers will demand salary readjustments, and if they do not respond, we will paralyze production" (*New York Times*, 4 March). The rule of the U.S. dollar means hunger and repression for the poor, while the rich will use whatever "aid" comes from Washington to make themselves richer. Meanwhile, the U.S. Congress is showing little eagerness to pour dollars into Nicaragua, arguing "other priorities" (East Europe, Panama, the "war on drugs").

Smash North American Imperialism!

Within Nicaragua, the "Communists" and "Socialists" are part of Chamorro's 14-party coalition, together with the contras in a smorgasbord of Christian and other pro-U.S.

outfits. Moscow, while it provided—until recently—AK-47s, tanks, and other invaluable weaponry (but never MIGs and ground-to-air missiles), applauded the "wisdom" of Sandinista concessions and pushed continuously for "more flexibility" as part of its effort to "resolve regional differences" to appease U.S. imperialism. Fidel Castro, after urging Nicaragua *not* to become another Cuba, is today witnessing the bitter fruits of Stalinist "socialism in one country" as Washington vows to move in for the kill in Cuba. The Stalinist viewpoint was put in a nutshell by Cuban vice president Carlos Raphael Rodríguez (once a CP minister in one of Batista's cabinets): Nicaragua "did not succumb to the temptation of a premature socialist revolution" (*Barricada International*, 8 July 1989).

In Canada, sundry leftists have sought to pressure the government in Ottawa to play a "progressive" role in Nicaragua. Two years ago, in endorsing the Arias "peace" plan, the Communist Party's *Canadian Tribune* (21 March 1988) wrote: "The Canadian government should be pressed to tell its friends in the U.S....to permit the peace process to take hold." *Socialist Challenge* (April 1988) similarly asked Ottawa "to call for an end to imperialist intervention." In other words, the Canadian imperialists should...stop being imperialist.

As Marxist internationalists the Trotskyist League seeks to struggle against "our" capitalist rulers. Canada is an active, counterrevolutionary *junior partner* of U.S. imperialism. From the Tories to the Liberals and NDP, the rulers in Ottawa consistently pushed "democratic" schemes for rollback of the Nicaraguan Revolution, including offers to send Canadian troops to act as imperialist "peacekeepers." Now they have officially joined the Organization of American States, aptly dubbed by Che Guevara the "Yankee Ministry of Colonies." And recall how, just last December, Mulroney fulsomely supported Bush's murderous attack on Panama.

The Nicaraguan workers and peasants have fought with enormous heroism, at a terrible cost, to free their country from U.S. overlordship, from the Somoza dictatorship and its National Guard, from the coffee, cattle and cotton barons, from poverty, illiteracy and hunger. Their fight inspired millions around the world and brought thousands of "internationalists," (including many of our own young comrades) to Nicaragua to take a stand against North American imperialism.

While militantly defending Nicaragua against the U.S. assault, including through our "Nicabucks" campaign of material aid in 1985, we took seriously Trotsky's injunction in the *Transitional Program* to "face reality squarely" and "tell the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be." Thus we told the truth about the dangers represented by the Sandinista program, while most other left groups were falling all over themselves to evade or prettify the hard reality and thus bear a share of responsibility for the present crisis in Nicaragua. It is more urgently necessary than ever that honest militants around the world draw the hard lessons of Nicaragua and take their place in the fight to build the world party of socialist revolution. This political rearming is the key to *real* solidarity with the embattled toilers of Nicaragua.

We feel the deepest bitterness that the workers and peasants have endured so much only to have their hopes apparently go down to defeat. To avenge this crime of North American imperialism, which now trumpets its success in bludgeoning and starving the Nicaraguan people into submission, is not the least of the reasons why we are communists.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 497, 9 March

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the Kremlin walls and chanted "Resign! Resign" to the Central Committee. The main organizer of this rally was the Democratic Platform, an openly social-democratic faction in the CPSU. At the same time, some protesters waved pre-Revolution Russian flags.

The main support for Gorbachev's course comes from the Western-oriented intelligentsia who would like a market economy, bourgeois parliamentarism and wholesale appeasement of NATO imperialism. Largely the children of Stalin's apparatchiks, this privileged stratum is now capitulating whole hog to the unrelenting economic and military pressure of world capitalism on the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state. "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em" is the motto of the Gorbachevite intelligentsia.

In his address to the plenum, Gorbachev declared: "We should abandon everything that led to the isolation of socialist countries from the mainstream of world civilization." What "isolates" the Soviet Union from what Gorbachev calls the "mainstream of world civilization," that is, Western imperialism which killed six million Jews, A-bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and slaughtered millions of Vietnamese—is precisely the 1917 October Revolution's overthrow of capitalism and establishment of proletarian class rule.

An extreme but consistent representative of the pro-Western intelligentsia is the economist Vasily Selyunin, who maintains the Soviet Union should model itself on Solidarność-led Poland!! He calls for unrestrained inflation, bankruptcies and plant closures, and selling off the means of production to foreign corporations and native entrepreneurs. The Soviet government "will have to take extremely unpopular economic decisions," according to this prophet of "free market" doom (*Boston Sunday Globe*, 28 January).

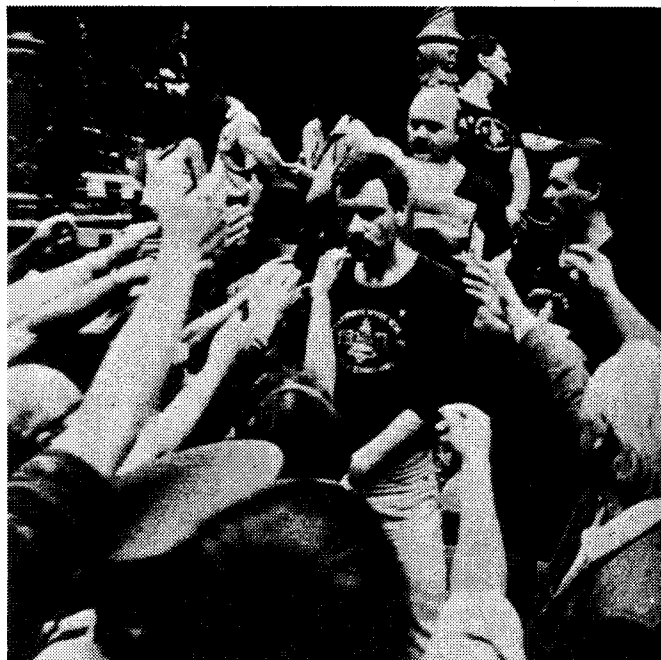
However, Gorbachev already has encountered massive popular opposition to the far more moderate market-oriented measures dubbed perestroika (restructuring). In the face of popular uproar, the Kremlin chief was forced to drop the outright call in the new party program for restoring "private property." By far the most despised class of people in the Soviet Union today are the new petty capitalist operators (called "cooperativists"). Even in Riga, Latvia—a hotbed of anti-Communism and "free enterprise"—the *New York Times* reports people go into a private liquor store only to abuse the owner for charging extortionate prices.

"It is all falling apart—nothing is working," exclaimed one Moscow resident as he faced empty shelves in state shops while television showed carloads of food rotting at the docks and on railway sidings. Gorbachev's "half measures," as they're commonly called, have led to an impasse. Growing numbers believe some kind of market system would be an improvement over the present chaos, while others remember the past favorably. "Stalin would have had a remedy," said the Muscovite quoted above. "He would have shot a few officials, and suddenly people would have gone to work and things would have improved." But the old apparatus of repression has shrunk considerably from the time that Stalin's labor camps held millions of people. And as a political doctrine Stalinism is discredited beyond recall.

Instead the widespread fear of economic insecurity and hardship, of social anarchy and the danger from Western

militarism, is being channeled into resurgent Russian nationalism and anti-Semitism. The fascists of Pamyat (Memory), dismissed but a few years ago as a handful of backward-looking fanatics, have become a feared force in the Russian body politic. And Pamyat has been joined by a slew of other, more "respectable" nationalist outfits—Fatherland, Fidelity, Renewal, Salvation, the United Council of Russia.

Just as the Gorbachev wing of the Kremlin oligarchy finds its support among Western-oriented intellectuals and technocrats, so the conservative Stalinist apparatchiks, represented at the top by Yegor Ligachev, increasingly base their ideological and popular appeal on Great Russian nationalism, combining populist economic demands—for suppressing petty



Ogonyok

Russian fascists give Nazi salute to Pamyat leader. Soviet workers must crush Pamyat fascists!

capitalist enterprises and freezing prices—with Slavophile bigotry. It is not only Ligachev-type conservatives who are appealing to Great Russian chauvinism. One darling of the "radical" reformers, Boris Yeltsin—one-time Gorbachev lieutenant turned populist demagogue—is also flirting with Pamyat, which he says has "many positive moments!"

Far from mobilizing against Pamyat, pro-Western Russian intellectuals have gone out of their way to appease these fascists. For example, Igor Chubais, a leading spokesman for the Democratic Platform (which prominently displayed a picture of German Social Democrat Willy Brandt at its founding meeting), stated that Pamyat should be able to participate in Soviet political life on an equal footing with all other parties. The Gorbachevite intelligentsia in their own way uphold Russian nationalism and dismiss the internationalist principles of the Bolshevik Revolution as utopian and "dogmatic."

Significantly, both many liberal intellectuals and Pamyat oppose sending Soviet armed forces into Azerbaijan. The former appeal to pacifistic nationalism; the latter openly state that Russian blood should not be spilled for the sake of the peoples of the Caucasus. The pro-Western liberal

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intellectuals are *politically incapable* of combating the rise of nativist Russian fascism.

The children of Stalin's apparatchiks are now uniting with the grandchildren of the tsarist Black Hundreds. Consider the leading nationalist ideologue Valentin Rasputin, one of the "village writers," who denounces Bolshevism in the language of Solzhenitsyn: "The Revolution brought people to the fore who destroyed Russia." And Rasputin (a historically appropriate name) adds ominously, "the Jews here should feel responsible for the sin of having carried out the Revolution" (*New York Times Magazine*, 28 January). Yet this reactionary anti-Communist and Jew-hater now upholds the untrammelled rule of the Kremlin oligarchy in order to preserve Russia one and indivisible:

"It seems to me that the situation in our country is so dangerous now that if we change the party, or even if we permit more than one party, it will only lead to greater danger. We need unification, even if it's based on this party."

As the Soviet economy is ravaged by the effects of perestroika, the Russian nationalists preach the "socialism of fools." That is what German workers leader August Bebel called anti-Semitism over a century ago. And that is its role in Russia today. Mikhail Chlenov, a leader of the Congress of Jewish Organizations in the USSR, observed: "Anti-Semitism is a reaction not to Jews, but to the inner crisis of Russian society." At the top of Soviet society this crisis is ripping apart the Kremlin oligarchy.

Kremlin Bureaucracy Fractures

The Western media is presenting the outcome of the recent CPSU plenum as nothing less than the self-signed death warrant of Soviet Communism. Supposedly this is the import of the decision to drop Article 6 of the present Soviet constitution, which states: "The leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organizations and public organizations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union." In fact, the decision to scrap this clause does nothing more than register the actual fragmentation of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov matter-of-factly stated the obvious, that "it is already late to ask whether we need a multi-party system or not.

In fact, it already exists" (*Washington Post*, 8 February).

The Popular Fronts in the Baltic republics and Caucasus—originally formed on Gorbachev's initiative—have come under the leadership of hardened anti-Communist nationalists. The Stalinist apparatus in these regions (and also Romanian-speaking Moldavia) have gone over to the nationalist camp, publicly defying Moscow to garner cheap popular support. The Russian core of the Kremlin oligarchy has fractured into bitterly hostile factions.

An editorial in *Moscow News*, the flagship organ of the Gorbachevite intelligentsia, stated that "Ligachev stands up for the most unhealthy elements in socialism." Accompanying the editorial was a picture of Ligachev giving a Nazi-like salute. *Moscow News* would never depict George Bush or Helmut Kohl in this way. At the rally organized by the Democratic Platform before the plenum, one poster declared: "Ligachev is the manacles on the hands of Gorbachev, the noose around the neck of democracy."

However, the conservatives were by no means cowed. If anything, they attacked Gorbachev more boldly than ever before. Particularly sharp were the remarks of Moscow's ambassador to Poland, Vladimir Brovikov, who baited the Soviet president for being more popular in NATO capitals than among his own people: "It is for this reason, apparently, that for our leadership it is more pleasant to meet with smiling crowds on the streets of Western capitals than with our own despondent countrymen who might, in keeping with the laws of glasnost, say something unpleasant" (*New York Times*, 8 February).

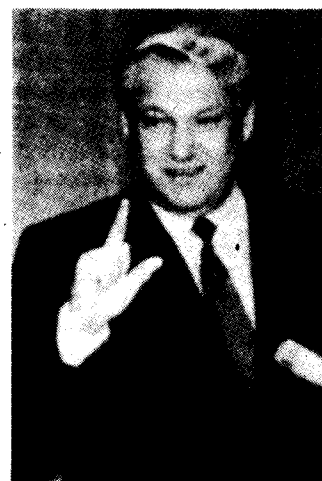
Ligachev himself tapped into the deep fear among the Soviet masses and officialdom about a reunified German imperialism. He won loud applause when he warned: "It would be unbelievably short-sighted and a mistake if we didn't see a Germany with huge economic and military potential looming on the international horizon.... I think it is time to recognize the new danger."

Gorbachev is used to the barbs of Ligachev and his friends. However, there are clear signs that the military high command is unhappy, to say the least, at the breakdown of social discipline, the erosion of Soviet patriotism and the apparently limitless appeasement of the NATO powers. Immediately after the plenum, the armed forces chief of staff, General Mikhail Moiseyev, told the military newspaper *Red Star* that the new party program "belittled" the army and ignored the problems of draft evasion, desertions by ethnic minorities and the slash-

Three faces of Stalinist bureaucracy. Left, "hardliner" Ligachev with architect of perestroika Gorbachev; right, "free market" demagogue Yeltsin.



Independent



Der Spiegel

ing of the professional officer corps because of the troop cuts in East Europe.

For the moment Gorbachev has managed to enhance his authority by balancing between the "radical" reformers and the conservative apparatchiks while exploiting the widespread desire for a stronger, more effective government. But Gorbachev, for all his clever maneuvers, cannot control the elemental forces unleashed by the disintegration of Stalinist rule. Today it is clearer than ever before that Trotsky was right. Either the Soviet working class sweeps away the parasitic bureaucracy through proletarian political revolution, opening the road to socialism on a world scale, or the gains of the 1917 October Revolution will be destroyed by bloody counterrevolution and the USSR dismembered by Western and Japanese imperialism.

Reforge the Leninist Party Destroyed by Stalin

Reading the Western bourgeois press on the recent CPSU plenum, one would think that Lenin personally introduced Article 6, specifying the "leading force" of the Communist Party, into the Soviet constitution. "Undoing Lenin's Legacy," declares *Time*. "Life Without Lenin," according to *Newsweek*. "Abandonment of Lenin," says the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. In reality the famous Article 6 was not introduced into the Soviet constitution until *six decades after the Bolshevik Revolution*, in the era of senile Stalinism. It was done in the later Brezhnev years in 1977.

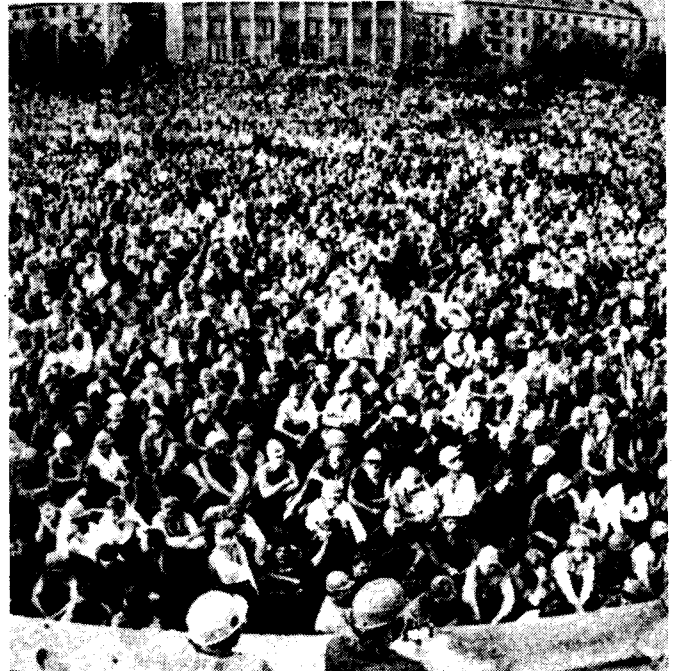
In October 1917 the Bolsheviks won a decisive majority in the All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets, the revolutionary-democratic organization of the masses. At this point the reformist Mensheviks and right wing of the populist Social Revolutionaries (SRs) *walked out of the Soviets* and immediately engaged in counterrevolutionary provocations. During the Civil War of 1918-21, the Mensheviks and SRs made common cause with White (tsarist) generals and the imperialist expeditionary forces. At the same time, revolutionary-minded Mensheviks, SRs and anarchists came over to the Bolshevik camp.

Thus the Bolsheviks emerged victorious in the Civil War as the only party capable of maintaining proletarian state power in Russia. The democratic contention of factions and tendencies within the Bolshevik Party served in a sense as a substitute for a multi-party soviet democracy. However, the Bolshevik leadership in no way considered this state of affairs either normal or desirable. Lenin and Trotsky would have dismissed out of hand the philistine notion that Communist leadership over the toiling masses could be established by bureaucratic *diktat*. The 1924 founding constitution of the USSR simply states that the highest government body is the democratically elected congress of deputies of urban and rural soviets. There is no mention of the Communist Party, "leading force" or otherwise.

The drafting of this constitution brought Lenin—sick and dying—into sharp political conflict with Stalin over the rights of the national republics constituting the Soviet Union. He accused Stalin of Great Russian chauvinism and of taking on the outlook and values of the old tsarist bureaucracy. Involved here was not, of course, merely Stalin's personal traits. Under the pressure of capitalist encirclement reinforcing the country's extreme economic backwardness, elements of the new Soviet officialdom became demoralized and lost their revolutionary drive. These tendencies were enormously inten-

sified by the failure of the ardently expected German Revolution in 1923. Only a few months later Stalin launched the slogan of "socialism in one country" as the ideological watchword of a bureaucratic political counterrevolution.

The main resistance to the bureaucratic degeneration of the Bolshevik Revolution was embodied in the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky, whose defeat ultimately reflected the pressure of world capitalism—military, economic and ideological—on the Soviet Union. In the name of "anti-



Der Spiegel

Soviet coal miners challenged perestroika—"market socialism" breeds more misery.

Trotskyism" Stalin destroyed the Leninist party. In 1933 Trotsky observed: "The present CPSU is not a party but an apparatus of domination in the hands of an uncontrolled bureaucracy." The "unity" of Stalin's party was not based on shared political program and values but on the material self-interest of the privileged bureaucratic caste. In the late '30s Trotsky noted that within the ranks of the Soviet state and party apparatus were *all shades of political outlook* from fascist to bourgeois liberal to genuine communist.

Today Gorbachev and his scribes depict and condemn Stalin as a "dogmatic" Leninist. Yet the 1936 Stalin constitution—primarily authored by Bukharin—was modeled on the most liberal of Western bourgeois-democratic constitutions. So much for Stalin the "dogmatic" Leninist! This "ultra-democratic" constitution did not, of course, prevent Stalin from killing hundreds of thousands of Communist militants—including its principal author—and non-party workers, peasants and intellectuals.

Trotsky called upon the toiling masses in the USSR to liberate themselves from Stalin's totalitarian police state through a proletarian political revolution to restore soviet democracy. The 1938 *Transitional Program* of the Fourth International states: "Democratization of the soviets is impossible without *legalization of soviet parties*. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognize as soviet parties."

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Workers Vanguard

Comrade Vincent

Comrade Vincent, a working-class militant and leading cadre of Spartacism in Sri Lanka, died tragically in a motor accident last week. He had been a member of the revolutionary movement since 1964. Those in the movement who knew him deeply cared for him, and will experience not just a serious setback in their work but the loss of a deeply valued collaborator. His warmth and friendliness helped forge bonds of comradeship between comrades in Asia, Europe, America and Australia. His family has now lost a husband and a father. We extend our condolences and sympathy to his wife and three children.

Three hundred friends, family and former and present comrades attended comrade Vincent's funeral on January 6. The coffin was draped with a red flag.

In this difficult and bloody communalist period in Lanka, the reconstruction and development of the revolutionary party have received a severe blow. We can only hope that class-conscious young militants will come forward to fill the void that the death of comrade Vincent has left, to further the struggle to free this tortured island from its communal and intercommunal bloodbath so that a proletarian beacon for Lanka and all of South Asia may emerge.

— International Executive Committee,
International Communist League
8 January 1990

Soviet Union...

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In developing this program, Trotsky projected that Leninist-led workers, while fighting off the imperialists, would rip the Kremlin bureaucracy to shreds. He never thought that the bureaucrats would just disintegrate from above, thus depriving the proletariat of an important training period and independent organs of power (e.g., factory committees, trade unions, workers militias). Yet this is what has now happened in the Soviet Union and also East Europe. Amid all the political ferment in the USSR, the proletariat has not yet come forward as a political force in its own class interests.

However, the massive coal miners strikes in Siberia and the Ukraine last summer were clearly provoked by and directed against the economic ravages of perestroika (see "Soviet Workers Challenge Perestroika," *Workers Vanguard* No. 483, 4 August 1989). After these strikes, an independent federation of workers organizations was formed in the Kuzbass region of Siberia with the miners at their core. At its founding conference the Kuzbass federation criticized the political monopoly of the CPSU and considered adopting the position: "We will welcome another party, loyal to socialism but defending the interests of the workers" (*Independent* [London], 17 November 1989). Activists in this workers federation now talk about extending it throughout the Soviet Union, including an organization of veterans of the Afghan war.

The most combative section of the Soviet proletariat—the coal miners—have demonstrated a commitment to socialist values and Soviet patriotism. Siberian miners in the Kuzbass drove off Pamyat agitators who tried to intervene in their strike. The independent miners organization of the Donbass

in the eastern Ukraine rejected an invitation to join the Ukrainian nationalist movement RUKH precisely because of its nationalist program. Boris Kagarlitsky, a New Leftist intellectual in the Gorbachevite milieu, who was an eyewitness to the miners strikes in Siberia, reported:

"It's also very important that the working-class movement somehow is counterbalancing the nationalist tendencies in the society because the working-class movement was and is internationalist. In Karaganda, which is in Kazakhstan, I've seen Kazakhs, Russians, Germans, Tatars, Caucasians, everybody together in the same strike movement without any national problems among them."

—Against the Current, January/February 1990

Kagarlitsky's empirical observation of the Karaganda miners conforms to a fundamental historical truth: the proletariat is the only class in society which can overcome national conflicts and antagonisms. As the 1924 founding constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics states:

"It is only in the camp of the Soviets; it is only under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat that has grouped around itself the majority of the people, that it has been possible to eliminate the oppression of nationalities, to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence and to establish the basis of a fraternal collaboration of peoples."

The Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky gained the confidence of the peoples of the Soviet Union because it was a party based on a *revolutionary international perspective* embodied in both its program and the values of its cadre. To defend the Soviet Union today it is urgently necessary to reforge a Bolshevik party to lead the working people against the decomposing Stalinist bureaucracy and all forms of fratricidal nationalism.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 496, 23 February

James P. Cannon, Founder of American Trotskyism

February 11, 1990 marked the centenary of the birth of James Patrick Cannon, a founder of American Communism and later a leader of the Trotskyist Left Opposition and the Fourth International. At the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928, Cannon and Canadian delegate Maurice Spector obtained Trotsky's documents against the disastrous course of the Stalin-Bukharin regime. When Cannon, Spector and their comrades sought to fight for Leninist politics in the Stalinized U.S. and Canadian parties, they were summarily expelled.

We reprint below excerpts from the "Platform of the Communist Opposition," written by Cannon in February 1929, underlining the central importance of the "Russian Question" for revolutionaries worldwide. The Trotskyists' warning six decades ago against the dangers of capitalist restoration fostered by the Stalinist bureaucracy are acutely relevant today.

Just as the revolutionary communist movement all over the world was molded and hardened in estimating the significance of the events of 1914-17, marked by the collapse of the Second International and the rise of the Bolshevik revolution, so world Bolshevism, its maintenance and growth, is conditioned upon the estimation of the course of events in the Soviet Union and the Communist International in the period of the last four or five years. All other questions are subordinated to this and flow from it.

The collapse of the Russian revolution as the dictatorship of the proletariat would signify the retardation for decades of the revolutionary movement in Europe and America and the uprisings of the colonial peoples, whose main point of support today is the victory of the Russian October. A collapse would be followed by an unequalled reign of reaction throughout the world and would entail a restoration of world imperialist rule without precedent in the last two or three decades. Our primary concern is therefore with the fate of the Russian revolution, which directly affects the fate of all the Communist parties. The defense of the Russian revolution against external attacks and internal dangers is therefore the first and foremost task of all communists and every conscious worker....

The origin of the present crisis in the Soviet Union lies in the contradiction between the existence of a Soviet regime in a country with a predominantly peasant economy, and the pressure of the capitalist encirclement. This crisis has been sharpened and aggravated by the false policies of the leadership. These policies are rooted, further, in the overestimation by the present leadership of the duration and depth of the temporary stabilization of capitalism, which began after the defeat of the German and Bulgarian proletariat in 1923....

Upon this essentially erroneous estimate was based the theory of the possibility of the complete construction of a

socialist society in one country (Russia), a theory entirely alien to the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and directly contrary to every principle of revolutionary internationalism. Integrally combined with this reactionary "theory" is the idea that a self-sufficing national economy can be maintained if only

the danger of imperialist military intervention is warded off. That this inevitably leads to opportunism before the world bourgeoisie (particularly before the United States, which is the basic counter-revolutionary force in the world today) is shown in the signing of the Kellogg Pact by the Soviet Union and the notorious Litvinov proposals. That it leads to the abandonment of all that Lenin taught on the revolutionary struggle against war and the role of the labor bureaucracy is shown in the capitulation of the Russian trade unions in the Anglo-Russian Committee. That it leads to the subordination of the Communist Party to the national bourgeoisie and the abandonment of Leninism on the national and colonial questions is shown by the catastrophic course followed by the Comintern in the Chinese revolution....

All these lines of policy are consciously or unconsciously based on the need of preventing military intervention against the Soviet Union so that an isolated socialist construction can be completed there. The net result of this opportunist conception and course is the increasing danger of imperialist war against the Soviet Union, for revisionism here as everywhere brings neither revolution nor reform.

The growing war danger comes at a time when the crisis in Russia is reaching a sharp point. The departure from the proletarian revolutionary path, coincident with the beginning of the fight to cut the Leninist Opposition led by L.D. Trotsky from the party, has reached a stage where the enemy classes have grown to an alarming extent and exert a tremendous pressure upon the party and state apparatus. From Bukharin's "Peasants, enrich yourselves" and the theory that the kulak would grow into socialism, it has been a short step to the present situation where the exploiting elements in the village (the kulaks) have stepped forth into the arena with confidence, boldness, and arrogance to demand increased concessions and political rights. From the brutal campaign to suppress party democracy in the fight against the Leninist Opposition it has been a short step to the consolidation of a bureaucratic apparatus through which the new bourgeoisie exerts its ever-increasing pressure....

The Leninist Opposition, on the contrary, has been fighting tooth and nail against this imminent danger to the revolution. It has unfurled the banner of Leninism and stood by it in the face of an unprecedented campaign of slander and persecution. ■



Pathfinder Press

1890-1974

Manifesto...

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elections have become a distorted plebiscite on the future existence of the DDR. The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany is fighting in this election campaign against capitalist counter-revolution and for a **proletarian political revolution** against Stalinism that goes all the way.

Because: The factories belong to those who create the social wealth in the DDR—they should decide what to do with them. Today the working people of the DDR must tear political power away from the venal bureaucrats and take it into their own hands! The heirs of Stalin and Ulbricht must not hand over our workers state to the Frankfurt bankers! Not a parliament, but only the mobilization of the working people in their own interests will enforce their will! That is why the Spartakist Workers Party is putting forward not an empty electoral program but a **program of struggle**.

Many "opposition" parties, and even PDS, say they want to fight when the capitalists come. But in practice most of them capitulate to the sellout. In the Volkskammer elections every citizen must demand of these parties an answer to one question: Do you clearly and consistently say **No** to capitalist reunification? Examine them closely!

The Spartakists give a consistent answer to this question. Stalin gave the planned economy a bad name. We are the only ones to fight for a planned economy not ruled by the arbitrary dictates of a bureaucracy but on the basis of a broad and deep-going workers democracy. The workers must take into their own hands control of the factories and institutions by building soviets [workers councils] in which all currents of the working class are represented, and free and open debates take place on all problems facing them. Thus soviets directly represent the interests of all working people, with delegates being recallable at any time. This form of government is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois parliamentarism can ever be. Thousands upon thousands in the DDR have stuck to the ideals of social justice—workers, collective farmers, soldiers, even many in the bureaucracy. These goals were not wrong: it was Stalinism that betrayed your goals and deformed your communist ideals! The doctrine of "socialism in one country," that lying invention of Stalin and Bukharin, was the first great betrayal of the October Revolution itself and led to horrible excesses.

The Stalinist bankrupts are falling on their knees one after the other because they are programmatically devoid of any alternative. Now many of them are trying to save their own skins: they are offering not only their services to capital, but our entire country, our factories, our lives. We must not give up the gains of the Russian Revolution despite the fact that the Stalinists are capitulating and now disintegrating.

The Spartakists' program of struggle shows a way into the future because it is based on the historic interests of the working people. It is the program of Lenin and Trotsky: we are the party of the Russian Revolution. Is communism dead, as the bourgeoisie so loudly trumpets? No, but the Bolshevik Party was destroyed by Stalin and his henchmen. We accuse criminals like Ulbricht of murdering hundreds and thousands of Communists. Today it is necessary to construct a new Leninist-egalitarian party. For communist ideals—No privileges! Since the 1848 Revolution, which grew out of the industrial revolu-

tion, the working class was forced to go beyond bourgeois liberalism and nationalism. A world market was established which is controlled and viciously manipulated by the imperialists. For this reason the workers' struggles must be internationalist.

In the DDR, the new Leninist party must fight for full citizenship rights for foreign workers and unite German and immigrant workers in its ranks. The unity of the working class must be forged in struggle, but this unity will not be complete as long as our foreign coworkers and their families are singled out, discriminated against and disadvantaged. We must not rest



Spartakist Photo

SpAD candidate Toralf Endruweit bullhorning in Berlin Alexanderplatz.

in this fight until the revolutionary German soviet power puts *all* workers on an equal basis and grants them full citizenship rights, just as the young Soviet state did.

For the victory of communism in all Germany a Leninist party must today be fighting together with our class brothers and sisters in the West. The capitalists want to squeeze even more out of the workers in the BRD in order to pay for the Greater Germany *Anschluss*. However, major workers' struggles are now on the agenda in the BRD. Our fellow workers there also know what a Fourth Reich of fascism and imperialist war would mean. Today a resolute struggle by workers in the DDR can be the spark for BRD workers to beat back the attacks of the bosses and open the way to real class struggle, for power: *social revolution* in the West.

The "Fourth Reich" is casting its shadow before it: desecration of Jewish cemeteries and Soviet monuments. There is no place for that in the workers state! On January 3rd, 250,000 anti-fascists stood in Treptow against fascism and for the Red Army. Our party is proud to have initiated that united-front mobilization. We again repeat: the heavy battalions of the working class must sweep away the fascists with workers united-front actions!

It was the Red Army that smashed the Nazi regime. They carried the gains of the Red October on their bayonets as far as the Elbe. Since 1945 it has been Soviet soldiers who have

stood guard on the Elbe against Western imperialism. Our citizens have long lived with this border, the front line of the Cold War. The fact that internationalism has always been alive in our country is due not least to this. FDJers [members of the SED's former youth group] went to Nicaragua; children of SWAPO fighters were treated in our hospitals; tens of millions of marks flowed into solidarity funds. That is why we were and are deeply outraged over the misuse of these funds.

Seventy years ago, at the founding conference of the KPD, Karl Liebknecht greeted the new Russian Soviet Republic and declared his solidarity with the Russian proletariat under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. It is just as true today: the fate of the Russian Revolution is inextricably linked to that of the German Revolution. And that also means the future of Poland as well as that of all Europe. Now the revanchists are already looking beyond the Oder-Neisse line. A capitalist Greater Germany would unleash dark forces that are even now practicing their demagogy in beer halls. And it would be a springboard for the imperialist coalition to mobilize against the Soviet Union.

A revolutionary link-up of German with Soviet workers and soldiers would not only be a bulwark against the plans of the NATO revanchists, but also a powerful basis for an international planned economy.

The working people of the DDR—and that includes office workers, collective farmers, artisans, academics and artists—have all the abilities to run a highly developed economy and produce to world market standards. But incompetent, nationalist bureaucracies and imperialist hegemonic practices hindered full development of the productive forces—not just in our country.

“Proletarians of the World, Unite!” For us that is not just a slogan, but an action program for a rationally planned international division of labor, controlled by workers organized in soviets. This program of proletarian internationalism is the banner of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

The Spartakists' Program of Struggle

- *For strikes and factory occupations—Stop the capitalist takeover of our factories! We need workers defense organizations to defend these combative actions! Against the imperialist destabilization campaign: build workers and soldiers soviets to defend our collectivized economy!*

- *Fight the D-mark Anschluss! For the right to a job for all! Defend our low-cost housing! Don't be taken in by the capitalist swindle of a “social market economy” or the lie of a “socialist market economy”! Market competition between independent, self-financing factories necessarily—and to an increasing extent—means inequality, factory closures and unemployment, monopolistic distortions and abuse.*

- *For a centralized planned economy under the rule of workers councils, the instruments of proletarian political power! That means political power belongs in the hands of freely elected councils of workers, soldiers and their allies! BRD-style “factory councils” are instruments to chain a powerful workers movement to the interests of capital. The highest soviet body should determine the overall direction of industrial production, the construction plans for housing, schools, hospitals and other installations of the social infrastructure. Con-*

sumer goods and services should be adjusted according to the changing conditions of demand and supply of the market within the framework of centralized planning. Factory committees should oversee production. Cooperatives should control the quality and prices of consumer goods.

- *For proletarian internationalism!* We need collaboration on an equal footing between the DDR and the USSR!

- *For workers united-front actions to stop the fascists! Down with racism, anti-Semitism, hostility toward homosexuals and hatred of foreigners!*

- *No anti-Communist witchhunt against current or former SED members!* Functionaries who are charged with crimes should be judged by people's tribunals.

- *Full citizenship rights for all foreign working people and their families!*

- *Complete equality for women!* Women must be able to fully participate in political and social life. The precondition for this is the socialization of housework; comprehensive 24-hour care for our children; defense of the right to abortion; maintenance of socially justified subsidies.

- *Preserve a humane future for youth!* Defend the right to unlimited, free education for all.

- *Benefits for pensioners!*

- *For environmental protection based on planning!* The market economy cannot prevent ecological catastrophe—on the contrary. Factory committees are the most suited to guard against accidents and environmental damage. For humanity to survive on the planet, we need international cooperation and planning!

- *Only through workers revolution can peace be secured!* NATO is a weapons-laden alliance for war against the Soviet Union. The BRD accepts a “neutral” DDR just like Hitler accepted a “neutral Rhineland.” Gorbachev's dream of “peaceful coexistence” with a Fourth Reich is as illusory and dangerous as Stalin's pact with Hitler. Imagine if Hitler had had atomic bombs! Defense of the Soviet Union begins on the Elbe!

- *For proletarian political revolution!* For a real socialism and a consistent break with the Stalinist-bureaucratic system! Citizens of the German Democratic Republic: There is much in the DDR you can be proud of. Don't throw the good out with the bad! ■

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Trotskyism: What It Isn't and What It Is!



February 1990 Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1277 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Fourth Reich...

(continued from page 3)

cast a vote in this distorted plebiscite on reunification.

Our comrades in the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands [SpAD]) fought as the only clear, unambiguous opposition to a capitalist reunification of Germany. Our fight was not an electoralist one. Our candidates in Berlin, Halle, Leipzig and Rostock (who received 2,396 votes in those districts, 0.07 percent) ran in these elections to advance a program of struggle that must be taken up by proletarian fighters throughout the DDR today. The choices are starkly posed: fight for a Germany of workers councils to replace the corrupt, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, or be eaten alive by the imperialists who intend terrible immiseration and exploitation of the workers of East Germany and beyond.

Decades of Stalinist Betrayal

Why was the working class so passive in the dramatic events of these months? Contrary to the arguments of the capitalist press, the SED (the Stalinist party) was not the preserve of an elite few, but a mass party embracing much of the working class. Workers experienced a deep sense of betrayal at the revelations of their leaders' corruption and mismanagement. They were rightfully upset about the special retreats reserved for party bosses, their fleets of private cars and their swimming pools. Yet these privileges pale in comparison with the grotesque extremes of wealth and poverty that condition life in the "free world." In New York, the finance capital of U.S. imperialism, the wealthy few inhabit a glitzy Trump Tower while the homeless huddle for warmth on the heating grates outside. The revulsion expressed by the working people of East Germany at the bureaucrats' privileges is testimony to a belief in egalitarianism that runs deep in their social consciousness.

The DDR is a *deformed* workers state, where despite a planned economy and collectivized property, the workers have been politically denied direct and democratic control of their society through the rule of their own elected factory

councils. A bureaucratic caste lorded over them and made a mockery of communism. Fifty years of Stalinism atomized the working class and left little collective experience of independent political struggle. After Stalin's death in 1953 a series of political revolutions swept through Eastern Europe; the 17 June 1953 uprising in the DDR was the first mass workers revolt against Stalinism. The workers' move toward political power in the DDR and in Hungary and Poland in 1956 was brutally crushed by the Stalinist regimes.

Since the DDR political revolution began last fall, workers have been increasingly confronted with the contradiction between their nominal and their actual position in society. Nominally, they are the ruling power; it's supposed to be a workers state and they believe that the factories belong to them. But everyday experience led them to believe, correctly, that the bureaucracy was doing something behind their backs, making deals against them. They knew who was trying to buy their factories, but who the hell was trying to sell them and on whose authority?

Treptow: The Turning Point

In early January the fascists committed a gross anti-Soviet provocation and racist desecration of the Soviet war memorial at Treptow Park where 5,000 Soviet soldiers who died liberating Berlin are buried. We Trotskyists initiated a call for a mass, proletarian-centered united-front protest to stop the Nazis. So out of touch with the working class and so fearful of them, the Stalinists initially opposed our call because they didn't think workers would respond. As our leaflet was distributed in factories throughout Berlin the Stalinists then endorsed and moved to take over the demonstration. But in the new political climate, with party hacks falling all over each other to disavow "Stalinism," the mobilization retained its united-front character, featuring anti-fascist speakers from West and East Berlin including Trotskyists.

A quarter of a million people came out on January 3 to show their outrage and determination to stop the Nazis and to express their solidarity with the Soviet soldiers in the DDR—to the horror of the West German rulers and Social Democrats who paint the 370,000 Soviet troops as a foreign army of "occupation." We Trotskyists spoke under our own banners and debated the future course of the DDR while the Stalinists, some booing for all they were worth, learned that they couldn't orchestrate all publicly expressed opinion anymore. The Social Democrats, who we warned were the "Trojan horse of capitalist counterrevolution," and the West German bourgeoisie literally saw red and hounded the SED for associating with the Trotskyists. Tearing a page from Goebbels' notebooks on the "Big Lie," they screamed that the SED itself had defaced the Treptow monument as a pretext for re-establishing the *Stasi*. Recoiling before the capitalist campaign of threats and intimidation, the disintegrating SED capitulated to the bourgeoisie and its social-democratic handmaidens.

Renamed the "Party of Democratic Socialism" (PDS) the ex-SED accepted and promoted the prospect of "unity" with the capitalist exploiters. As the PDS vacated the political field, the West German bankers and the Social Democrats rushed in to fill it—with an avalanche of D-marks and ax handles. Bombarding DDR citizens with lies that the economy was on the verge of collapse, they sabotaged the economy and then tried to turn panic into votes by promising financial salvation in capitalist restoration. The Monday demonstrations in

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Spartakist Photos

Spartakists in action (clockwise from top left): campaigning at plant gate; Spartakist-initiated demo at Volkskammer against privatization law; speaking at mass Treptow anti-Nazi protest; and at East Berlin International Women's Day.

Leipzig became reunification rallies fringed by skinheads and fascists. Anti-fascist youths waving DDR flags in opposition to reunification were savagely beaten by social democrats at a rally in Neubrandenburg. This was the climate in which people were to "freely" express their will in the elections.

"The World's Biggest Takeover"

In an unusually candid article, the *New York Times* (15 March) described the stampede for unification before the elections:

"West German companies have announced so many deals recently that some people have dubbed German reunification 'the world's biggest takeover.'

"Privately, some executives say another reason for the rush to announce deals is that investments and prospects of prosperity should translate into fewer votes for the Communists' descendants.

"Volkswagen's chairman said about his huge joint venture in East Germany, 'We see this as a European car project, with Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia just around the corner'."

There's a word for this—*Anschluss*. Hitler did it to Austria in 1938. When Hitler figured that Austrian workers and even the Austrian clerical fascists were not going to vote for annexation by Germany, the German army arrived before the plebi-

scite was held. And today it isn't just East Germany that's targeted. The Poles, who suffered terribly under Hitler, worry that a Fourth Reich's tanks will soon rumble across their western border, the Oder-Neisse. Indeed, Helmut Kohl is the first to call himself "Reichs chancellor" since Adolf Hitler. The headquarters of his Christian Democrats in Bonn is adorned with a map of Germany expanded to its 1937 borders! Uniquely among the regimes in East Europe, the anti-socialist and openly counterrevolutionary Solidarność government is now eager to have the Red Army stick around, given the alternatives!

The political, economic and social consequences of *Anschluss* would be devastating. Already the economy is being deliberately sabotaged so that the West can buy up plants at cheaper prices. At the Bergmann-Borsig plant in East Berlin, workers began to arrive at the factory with decks of cards and sleeping bags because there was no work due to a sudden lack of parts. In Erfurt, six day-care centers were closed which means women cannot go to work. They've even cut children's school lunches. Housing costs will soar and workers may be lucky to have a roof over their heads at all! A "reprivatization" law (a fancy word for theft of the people's property) passed by the Volkskammer would enable former capitalist owners to seize their property back. The Spartakist Workers

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Fourth Reich...

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Party organized a largely ignored demonstration at the Volkshammer to protest the reprivatization law as it was being debated. Toralf Endruweit, a young SpAD member and candidate in the elections, addressed the protesters:

"We are here to say we will not allow our property to be stolen from us. We are here to say we will not allow our social gains to be destroyed. Who elected the ladies and gentlemen of the Volkshammer to give away our enterprises, our collective farms? Not us! Who do they speak for? Not us! These are the same bureaucrats who in the service of Stalinism expropriated our political power. Now they serve the capitalists who want to expropriate our social wealth....

"Our property must be under our control, the control of workers and soldiers councils, democratically elected to serve the working people.... We have to stand against the SPD handmaidens of capitalism. We have to fight the demoralizing influence of the PDS. A big 'no' vote to the parties of 'Deutschland One Fatherland' on March 18 will slow down the imperialist campaign of destabilization and panic-mongering. A vote for the SpAD is a vote for a clear and resounding no to capitalist reunification."

Meanwhile, the PDS and its fake-left colleagues in the Volkshammer acted out a fantasy popular front—their idea was to pass new laws to preserve all the decent and wonderful social programs of the DDR in a reunified capitalist state. Fat chance. A capitalist reunification means being swallowed by a revanchist ruling class that wants to mercilessly exploit the DDR's highly skilled working class, and to turn those workers into an underclass that can be wielded as a club against workers in the West. At the same time, labor struggle is inhibited because the East German workers have not even seen their new masters yet. And the new masters have not yet decided which factories they're going to tear down and which they will retain and where they will rebuild.

Struggle has already broken out when and where workers learned what was in store for them. At a construction site in East Berlin, workers learned of a planned joint venture that would reduce the workforce of 6,500 at their Kombinat to just a few hundred. The news spread like wildfire and a small rebellion ensued. They decided to strike unless the Kombinat

directors canceled the contract. A resolution was adopted and delivered to the *Generaldirektor*: "We were appalled that our Kombinat director had even considered such an idiotic contract. For years our Kombinat director was just a servant of the state too, and now he's treating the Kombinat as though it were his own property." The deal fell through.

At the EAW electrical plant in Berlin there have been warning strikes by workers against threatened layoffs which target first and foremost the foreign workers, like the many Vietnamese who must work or be deported. The Spartakist Workers Party has made a special effort to reach the Vietnamese, Polish, Soviet and Cuban workers in the DDR, issuing greetings in their languages. Perhaps the most popular activity among the new members of the SpAD was to distribute solidarity greetings in Russian to Soviet soldiers and officers in an effort to bring Trotskyist politics and the program for political revolution to these troops in the DDR—370,000 of whom stand as the front line of defense against NATO.

We fight to unify the working class throughout Eastern Europe—both East and West German, native and immigrant, including Vietnamese, Turkish and other "guest" workers, in Eastern Europe and the USSR—around a program of class struggle and revolutionary internationalism because the fate of all these proletarians is intertwined. Throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union now the question is posed, "which class shall rule?" A capitalist Greater Germany would unleash dark forces that even now are practicing their demagoguery in the beer halls. It would be a springboard for the imperialists to mobilize against the Soviet Union. A revolutionary linkup of German with Soviet workers and soldiers would not only be a bulwark against the plans of the NATO revanchists but also a powerful basis for an internationally planned economy. A healthy planned economy requires *workers democracy*—passionate debate among the parties in workers councils over all the urgent political and economic problems of the day.

For Workers Political Revolution Against Stalinism!

Last year the smug sages of the American ruling class proclaimed "the end of history." They claimed an eternal triumph for "democracy" and the "death of Communism." Workers beware: World War I broke out when capitalism also appeared to be at the apex of its powers and bourgeois

Give to the "3-L's" Fund

Our readers and supporters have responded generously to our appeal for funds to assist the forging of a new communist-egalitarian party in Germany, a party in the spirit of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. More contributions are needed to carry forward this vital work.

The electoral victory of Kohl's Fourth Reich is a severe defeat; but ballots alone will not decide the fate of the DDR workers state. Defensive battles will arise, as in Poland where workers have begun a struggle for survival against the counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc government. The key to proletarian victory will be genuine communist leadership, and our comrades of the Spartakist Workers

Party fight uniquely as the conscious Leninist vanguard.

Earmark your donation "3-L's Fund" and make payable/send to: Trotskyist League of Canada, Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X8.

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parliamentarism an "eternal" regime. As the deformed workers states appear ripe for plundering, the competition among the major imperialist powers for the spoils vastly increases the danger of new wars. What we are witnessing is not the "death of Communism" but the death agony and unraveling of the Stalinist bureaucracies throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Since 1924, when Stalin led a bureaucratic political counterrevolution in the USSR codified in his "theory" of "socialism in one country," Stalinism has been the antithesis of Leninism and the fight for revolutionary struggle of the working class on an international basis against its exploiters.

More than 50 years ago, Trotsky analyzed the deep social and economic contradictions of Stalinism and predicted its

breakup. Prior to the Second World War, Trotsky remarked that the objective conditions for socialist revolution were not only ripe, they were overripe, but what was lacking was a genuine and authoritative revolutionary leadership at the head of the proletariat. That excruciating contradiction is even more true today. Once again this century, Germany is at the center of the struggle for revolution or counterrevolution. The International Communist League and the Spartakist Workers Party will continue our work in Germany—in the West and in the East, and points further east. Our task is to build a party rooted in the working class to fight for state power. For the communism of Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht! Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky!

—Reprinted from *Women and Revolution No. 37, Spring 1990*

"English Only" Bigotry...

(continued from page 24)

World. The low blacks, the low hispanics. They're going to take over the province" (*Globe and Mail*, 10 March).

The labor movement and all defenders of democratic rights must combat today's dangerous rise of chauvinism and racist xenophobia. This holds true as well in Quebec, where a renewed rise of nationalism also incorporates vile racist and anti-immigrant hostility toward non-French speaking "outsiders." Québécois nationalists push their own program of French unilingualism in an independent state; some have obscenely welcomed the English-only laws in the rest of Canada as a means toward the two peoples working out their "separate identities."

Opposition to privileges for any language, to the very idea of an "official language," and defense of complete equality in language rights: these are crucial to unify the working people of this country—English-speaking, French-speaking, immigrant—in struggle against the capitalist rulers. In combating the present bigoted, chauvinist uproar we demand: Full and equal language rights for all!

Anglophone Bigots in White Heat

In recent weeks, local councils in Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay and dozens of other Ontario municipalities have passed resolutions declaring their jurisdictions officially and solely English-speaking. In the Sault, this was directed particularly against francophone parents who sought the elementary right to publicly funded French-language instruction for their children.

A spokesman for APEC, initiator of the anti-French motions, ranted: "They [French speakers] are a minority. Why should they have equality?" Railing against the Meech Lake accord's rather mild (indeed banal) acknowledgement that French-speaking Quebec is a "distinct society," APEC grotesquely claims that "English-speaking Canadians have been relegated to second-class citizens."

This is the very opposite of the truth. Two centuries ago, Quebec was forcibly incorporated into British North America, and later into the independent Canadian confederation. As recently as 1970, it suffered the jackboot of military occupation under the War Measures Act.

From its very origins, the Canadian state has suppressed both Quebec's national rights and the language rights of Frenchspeakers everywhere. The 1885 hanging of Louis Riel,

leader of the Métis rebellion, exemplified the ugly intersection of racism, anglophone chauvinism and Protestant bigotry which lies at the bedrock of the Canadian state. Non-white, French speaking, Catholic, Riel was legally lynched in Regina by the federal Tory government at the behest of Ontario's powerful Orange Order.

As late as the 1970s, Québécois were systematically forbidden to speak their own language on the job (i.e., they had to "speak white" to the anglophone foreman). Even today, Quebec's English-speaking minority enjoys rights—including their own schools, colleges, universities and hospitals—unheard of for French-speaking minorities elsewhere. In the rest of Canada, French speakers have been subjected to chauvinist abuse and forcible assimilation, as in Manitoba where French-language schooling was denied to the once very large francophone community.

To the hysterical "English only" crowd, the just demand for language rights raised by French speakers outside Quebec is nothing short of a plot. APEC's guiding light Jock Andrew raves that Quebec is an "impregnable bastion, breeding pen and marshalling yard for the colonization of the rest of Canada." Alliance Ontario shrills: "If they get our children, in 10 years they will have our country." The idea that English is "threatened" is simply absurd—it is the *lingua franca* not only of North America but also, and increasingly, of global commerce and culture. Already, 30 percent of Franco-Ontarians no longer use French at home. And immigrants certainly don't need to be hit over the head to understand that they need to learn English in order to survive, let alone get ahead.

The goal of the "English only" crusade is to "homogenize" Canada, against Frenchspeakers and against non-white immigrants. As immigrants are accused of "stealing Canadian jobs," as Asian and Hispanic refugees are beaten and killed in the streets by marauding gangs of Nazi skinheads, isolated French-speaking communities in English Canada are rightly fearful in the face of mounting anglophone bigotry. Historically around the world, attempts to deny minority language rights have led straight to pogroms: the Armenians forced to speak Turkish, Tamils targeted by "Sinhala only" laws in Sri Lanka.

Quebec: Nationalism and Self-Determination

In Quebec, the rise of English chauvinism has fueled an unprecedented surge in support for independence and for Quebec's own laws promoting French unilingualism. Recent polls show that over two-thirds of the Quebec population now

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“English Only” Bigotry...

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support some form of sovereignty. (In the 1980 referendum, only 40 percent voted for the ruling Parti Québécois’ “sovereignty-association” proposal.)

This burst of national feeling has been channeled directly into the hands of the Québécois bourgeoisie. While supporting Meech Lake and the increased political power which would devolve upon them if it passed, decisive Quebec business interests are now broaching the separatist option. High-powered Wall Street/Bay Street firms like the giant Merrill Lynch brokerage house and the Bank of Montreal note with satisfaction that “Quebec’s independence movement is no longer being led by students and labor leaders, but by ‘business, the middle class and capitalists’” (*Globe and Mail*, 13 March). A confidential Merrill Lynch report tells potential investors that Quebec’s separation would be a “non-event” economically. Even the Liberal Bourassa government now openly toys with *indépendantisme*.

The Trotskyist League has always defended Quebec’s *unconditional right to self-determination*, i.e., the right to form a separate state. We defend this right as part of our fight against chauvinism in English Canada, with the goal of removing barriers to common class struggle against the bourgeois rulers. At the same time, we have warned that Quebec’s parvenu capitalists wield the program of bourgeois nationalism only in order to become more fully “*maîtres chez eux*” (masters in their own house) *against* the powerful Québécois working class. Two decades ago, opposition to English-Canadian chauvinism in Quebec helped fuel the rise of the most militant proletariat north of Mexico. Quebec labor’s combativity led to the semi-insurrectionary general strike of 1972. But the “socialist”-talking union bureaucrats, cheered on by most of the left, led the workers into a nationalist trap, channeling labor militancy into votes for the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois.

When the PQ came to power in 1976, we warned they would use the *fleur de lys* to dupe the workers while cutting their throats—and that is exactly what happened. So vicious were the PQ’s anti-labor attacks that the Liberal Bourassa, reviled

after 1972 as the most hated man in Quebec, was voted back into office. Now the union tops promote the revived PQ under Jacques Parizeau and cheer the new rise of nationalism—this time of an openly rightist, chauvinist character. Racist anti-immigrant banners have been prominent on nationalist demonstrations, while right-wing organizations like the St. Jean Baptiste Society are able to mobilize thousands. The labor tops are today setting a new, and very dangerous, trap for the Quebec working class.

While combating attacks on French language rights in the rest of Canada, we have also opposed legislation aiming to enforce French unilingualism in Quebec. When the Parti Québécois introduced its Bill 101 thirteen years ago, we wrote:

“The PQ bill contains certain obvious democratic reforms, such as the unconditional right to use the French language at work....

“However the basic thrust of the new legislation is chauvinist—a nationalist reaction to anti-French discrimination. It seeks to defend the Québécois ‘national identity’ through discrimination against minority languages and cultures—particularly English.”

—*Spartacist Canada* No. 16, May 1977

English in Quebec is not merely the language of the Westmount English aristocracy; it is also spoken by hundreds of thousands of working people. Indeed, laws enforcing French unilingualism have fallen most heavily on the large immigrant communities of Montreal, who either speak English already (like most blacks from the Caribbean), or understandably wish to learn it as the language of economic opportunity in North America.

Moreover, unilingualism in Quebec has been worse than useless for French speakers elsewhere. Far from opposing today’s anglophone blitzkrieg, Quebec bourgeois politicians have cynically parlayed it to their own advantage; the French speakers of English Canada are, after all, not “*de chez nous*” (homegrown). Thus when Alberta francophones challenged Bill 60, that province’s own declaration of English unilingualism, the Quebec government went to court...to support Alberta’s English-only legislation! The Quebec nationalists’ attitude is all too reminiscent of the Israeli Zionists’ disdain for Jews of the “diaspora,” where every anti-Semitic outrage is of positive value, to be translated into heightened support



Ottawa Citizen



Canadian Dimension

Rail strikers protest back-to-work order, Ottawa, 1987 (left). Quebec workers denounce union busting, 1989. United struggle of English-Canadian and Québécois workers can smash the bosses’ attacks.

for the leaders of the "true nation."

Smash the "English Rights" Offensive! For Revolutionary Leadership!

Reactionary crusades bent on erasing French language rights are as old as the country itself. But their current mass appeal reflects, in a hideously distorted way, the profound economic fear felt in broad sectors of the Canadian population, and centrally the working class. It is significant that English-only resolutions are today being passed not only in rural backwaters of Orange central Ontario, but also in Northern Ontario working-class centers. Thunder Bay is the key grain port at the head of the Great Lakes. Sault Ste. Marie is dominated by the mills of Algoma Steel; its Steelworkers local is 5,300 strong, its population 45 percent of Italian Catholic descent.

The basic resource industries at the heart of the Northern Ontario economy have been driven into the ground by profit-bloated bosses like Inco, which over the last 15 years has slashed tens of thousands of jobs from Sudbury's nickel-mining workforce. In the wake of the U.S./Canada free-trade deal, dozens of plants in the Ontario industrial heartland have also been closed or moved south of the border. With them have gone thousands of higher-paying union jobs. And Sault Ste. Marie is a regional center for many government agencies. When the bigots rage against French-language proficiency requirements for civil service jobs, they play upon a very real fear of permanent unemployment among working people.

What's needed is some hard *class struggle* to turn back the bosses' attacks. The labor movement must take a firm stand against the English-only chauvinism. Without this there can be no successful defense of the working class and oppressed. Yet instead of opposing the capitalists, the labor misleaders and NDP join with them in protectionist campaigns against bogus "foreign enemies"—by which they mean Asian, Mexican and American workers. Let's be quite clear: such flag-waving Maple Leaf nationalism directly fuels racism and English-Canadian chauvinism.

And social democrats, like former NDP B.C. premier Dave Barrett, *openly* fan the flames of "English only" reaction. Barrett launched his recent campaign for the federal NDP leadership with a series of vituperative denunciations of Quebec (and with claims that B.C. is just as much a "distinct society"! The New Democrats have always vigorously opposed Quebec's right to self-determination. In 1972 federal party leader David Lewis solidarized with the jailing of Quebec union leaders and opposed the militant province-wide general strike. Following the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976, the first prominent politician to raise the spectre of armed intervention against a separatist government was Allan Blakeney, then NDP premier of Saskatchewan.

In helping promote anti-French chauvinism among English-Canadian workers, the NDP and labor tops also contribute to the rise of bourgeois nationalism in Quebec. The poison of nationalism aids in the further exploitation and oppression of *all* the working people by the capitalist rulers. Militant Quebec labor in particular could play a leading role in the struggle for working-class power throughout North America. But to tap this latent strength and beat back the bosses' multi-sided attacks, labor needs to forge a new leadership—a revolutionary workers party which champions the rights of all oppressed and unites the working people in the

fight for socialist revolution.

Early this century, tsarist Russia was termed a "prison house of peoples." Lenin's Bolshevik Party was able to unite in struggle its *multi-national, multi-lingual* proletariat and lead them to victory in the October 1917 socialist revolution. They were able to do this because their program was internationalist to the core. Lenin's remarks in a 1913 article, "Critical Remarks on the National Question," are thoroughly applicable to our tasks in Canada today:

"The national programme of working-class democracy is; absolutely no privileges for any one nation or any one language....

"Working-class democracy contraposes to the nationalist wrangling of the various bourgeois parties over questions of language, etc., the demand for the unconditional unity and complete amalgamation of workers of *all* nationalities in *all* working-class organizations...in contradistinction to any kind of bourgeois nationalism. Only this type of unity and amalgamation can uphold democracy and defend the interests of the workers against capital—which is already international and is becoming more so—and promote the development of mankind towards a new way of life that is alien to all privileges and all exploitation." ■

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE FORUMS

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Friday, April 6, 7:30 p.m.

Britannia Community Centre, Rm. L3
1661 Napier (off Commercial)

Speakers:

Glenn Mason

Member, TWU Local 1

Miriam McDonald

Spartacist Canada

Editorial Board

For more information call: (604) 255-0636

Toronto

Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!

The Crisis of Gorbachev's USSR

Saturday May 12, 7:30 p.m.

International Student Centre

33 St. George St. (north of College)

For more information call: (416) 593-4138

Anti-Asian Racism at UBC

VANCOUVER—The wave of anti-French bigotry across Canada has intersected and tapped the deep anti-Asian racism that has always been a hallmark of British Columbia. So in February the University of British Columbia's Food Services Department launched its own vicious "English only" campaign aimed at cafeteria workers, many of them of Chinese origin: "Staff Notice. This is a reminder that while on duty, all employees must speak ONLY ENGLISH.... Infractions will result in disciplinary action."

In the face of this outrageous racist provocation campus unions, faculty and students should have shut down the university in protest!

UBC's credo was perfectly captured by its former Chancellor (now dead), B.C. Supreme Court judge and chairman of MacMillan Bloedel J.V. Clyne. A notorious racist and spokesman for the anti-Asian "Immigration Association of Canada," Clyne once declared: "I'd not want to see us cease to be a white country.... You go out to the east end [of Vancouver] and you think you're in China."

While cafeteria workers are threatened for speaking their own language, the campus is covered with racist, misogynist

and anti-gay graffiti. A Nazi swastika flag was prominently displayed for days in a dormitory window. In March the Engineering Undergraduate Society published a rag with racist caricatures of Native Indians and anti-woman, anti-gay filth.

And it's not just UBC. Last year, high school kids in North Vancouver posted a picture of Hitler in a classroom as part of a "history course." This year the only Jewish child in the class found a note on her desk: "Hail Hitler/Kill the Jews/Yours truly/The Nazis." Her mother's parents survived Hitler's Holocaust. Her father's grandfather died in Canada's concentration camps for Japanese Canadians during World War II. Meanwhile Jewish synagogues are targeted by arsonists and neo-Nazi skinheads attack gay men on Vancouver streets.

"English only" racism is particularly vicious in this city where 20 percent of the population, more than 250,000 people, are Asian, and where nearly half the school-age population have a first language other than English. The increasingly integrated B.C. labor movement must take the lead in combating all forms of racial oppression—and that requires a sharp fight against the chauvinist union and NDP misleaders. ■

Lithuania...

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Lilliputian. And the loss of the Caucasian republics would likewise not fundamentally affect Soviet power. The Ukraine, however, is an entirely different order of magnitude. The second-largest republic, it has enormous military, industrial and agricultural importance. In the latest republican parliamentary elections, the Ukrainian nationalist movement RUKH won about a third of the seats and totally dominates the city council in Lvov, the main city in the western Ukraine. RUKH parliamentary deputy Genrikh Altunyan proclaims: "We are thinking what Moscow considers unthinkable. Today Lithuania. Tomorrow the Caucasus. The day after tomorrow, the Ukraine."

Only Communism Can Defeat Nationalism

The rise of anti-Communist nationalism in the Baltic, Caucasus and Ukraine has been paralleled by the rise of Great Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitic demagoguery in Moscow, Leningrad and elsewhere in the Russian republic. In late March the fascist thugs of Pamyat and four like-minded outfits got together to launch the People's Russian Orthodox Movement. Its principal organizer, Evgeny Pashkin, rails that the Jews are behind the bloody strife between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and are conspiring to "make Russia defenseless."

In the absence of a genuinely communist opposition to the Gorbachev regime, the popular economic discontent spawned by the market-oriented "reforms" (perestroika) is being channeled into Russian nationalism and anti-Semitism. While the Russian nationalists want a strong hand in the Kremlin to suppress political dissent and the contentious national minorities, many pro-Western intellectuals want a strong hand to impose their anti-working class economic program. The prominent "free marketeer" Nikolai Shmelyov

argues: "We need the authority of presidential power to take unpopular decisions. Without them, there will be no way out of the crisis" (*Wall Street Journal*, 14 March). There is thus a certain convergence between Westernizing intellectuals, Russian nationalists and old-line Stalinists in the direction of *bonapartism*—the desire for a strong leader standing above political factions and able to override public opinion.

Now is a time of grave crisis for the Soviet Union. As the bureaucracy fragments, the large layer of urban intelligentsia despise and dismiss the working class, while the restless proletariat is beginning to fight over economic grievances. With hostile nationalities driving for secession and capitalist restoration, fascistic Pamyat plays on the frustrations and fears of the discontented Russian-speaking population. What is urgently needed is a vanguard party like Lenin's Bolsheviks, who brought together revolutionary-minded intellectuals with the advanced worker militants.

Today a Leninist-Trotskyist party is needed to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, restore the rule of workers soviets and introduce a planned, egalitarian economy with the full and active participation of the masses. Only a workers vanguard party based on an internationalist program can combat the dangers which threaten to dismember the USSR and reforge a genuine Soviet Union of Socialist Republics.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 499, 6 April

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State Denies Appeal of U.S. Death Row Political Prisoner

Mumia Abu-Jamal Must Not Die!

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has pushed black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal a step closer to the electric chair. On January 26 the court denied Jamal's petition to re-argue his appeal—the second time in less than a year that court turned down his legal challenge to the racist witchhunt which condemned him to die. No legal barrier today stands between Jamal and the governor's signing a death warrant.

Jamal, framed up on charges of killing a Philadelphia policeman in 1981, was a well-known journalist at the time of his arrest, president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists, and prominent supporter of the MOVE organization. His regular column from death row appears in numerous American newspapers.

Jamal wrote last March, "Don't tell me about the 'valley of the shadow of death.' I live there." As a former Black Panther Party spokesman and outspoken MOVE supporter, Jamal has been in the cross hairs of Philadelphia's racist killer cops for over 20 years. At the sentencing hearing in 1982 the prosecutor got the death penalty by arguing that Jamal's membership in the Black Panther Party showed he was a committed cop-killer. The prosecutor cited a 12-year-old interview in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in which Jamal used the Panther slogan, "All power to the people!" The prosecutor told the jury that a death sentence would never be carried out, that Jamal would have "appeal after appeal after appeal."

His trial, before a jury of one black and eleven white jurors, was riddled with constitutional violations. Jamal wrote in a column from Huntingdon's death row, "I've often studied America's long history of legal lynchings of Africans.... Perhaps I'm naive, maybe I'm just stupid—but I really thought the law would be followed in my case, and the conviction reversed."

Jamal expressed his determination to prove his innocence: "I continue to fight against the unjust sentence and conviction. Perhaps we can shrug off and shred some of the dangerous myths laid on our minds like a second skin—such as the 'right' to a fair and impartial jury of our peers; the 'right' to represent oneself; the 'right' to a fair trial even. They're *not* rights—they're privileges of the powerful and rich. For the powerless and poor, they are chimera that vanish once one reaches out to claim them as something real or substantial."

Last October more than 200 people rallied in Philadelphia to demand: "Abolish the Death Penalty! Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!" On February 24, the Partisan Defense Committee sponsored another rally in Atlanta, Georgia, bringing together unionists, students and death penalty abolitionists. Their voices, too, were added to the fight to save Mumia.

Internationally letters, petitions and articles have arrived from France, Belgium, Germany, England, Poland and elsewhere. In Canada, hundreds have signed petitions demanding "Mumia Must Not Die!" In January, NDP International Human Rights Critic and Windsor MP Howard McCurdy wrote to the Pennsylvania governor, urging him "to afford real recognition of the memory and legacy of Rev. Dr.



Former Black Panther, MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal must not fall victim to racist death penalty!

Martin Luther King Jr. by commuting the death sentence imposed upon Mr. Mumia Abu-Jamal and to allow his retrial on his conviction for the murder of a Philadelphia policeman in 1982 given the concerns which have been raised regarding the possibly political nature of his conviction."

Sixty years ago, militant international protest saved the lives of the Scottsboro Boys in the American South. More recently, it saved the lives of the Sharpeville 6 in South Africa. Today, it must be mobilized to put a stop to the racist, barbaric death penalty. That's what's needed to save the life of this courageous fighter for black people and all the poor and oppressed.

Join the Campaign!

Save Jamal's life! Organize protest! Bring the force of labor, minorities, death penalty abolitionists, human rights organizations into the struggle to save his life. Pass motions in your unions, campus, church and community organizations. Publicize his case in your union or organization's newsletter.

- Contact the PDC for speakers, tapes of Jamal speaking, petitions, posters, bundles of the campaign issue of *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*.

- Send letters of protest to Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

- We need your help! Pass the hat! Send money to "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal," c/o Partisan Defense Committee, Box 314, Station B, Toronto, Ont. M5T 2W1.

SPARTACIST CANADA

Equal Language Rights for All!

Down with “English Only” Bigotry!

A storm of ugly “English only” chauvinism is sweeping across the country. More than 50 Ontario cities and towns have passed anti-bilingualism resolutions and banned municipal services in French. Alberta has declared English its sole official language. On a Canadian Forces Base in Valcartier, Quebec, a brawl erupted after English-speaking soldiers screamed chauvinist slurs at a Québécois entertainer. The fascists too have been active: on March 14 in the Montreal suburb of Laval, a skinhead burned a Quebec flag leading to a pitched battle between hundreds of French- and English-speaking high school students.

A host of right-wing populist movements has sprung up seeking to ram English down the throats of the nearly one million French speakers outside Quebec. Behind them have gathered a multitude of other dark forces: anti-immigrant racism, fundamentalist Protestant bigotry, anti-Semitism. In Alberta, the anti-French Reform Party also targets Asians, denouncing a proposal to allow Sikh RCMP officers to wear turbans. This proposal became a touchstone for anti-immigrant hatred, as petitions garnered tens of thousands of signatures and obscene racist calendars and lapel pins found a mass market.

The Reform Party, the far-right Christian Heritage Party, the anti-abortion “REAL Women,” Ontario’s Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada (APEC) and others have joined together in a sinister outfit called the Northern Foundation, which sets its sights on French speakers, immigrants, homosexuals, women’s rights activists and more. Outright fascists—the most deadly enemies of labor and the oppressed—can also be found in this reactionary cabal. Toronto’s *NOW* magazine (1-7 March) revealed that a tract by APEC leader Ron Leitch is published by Citizens for Foreign Aid Reform. C-FAR is the creature of one Paul Fromm, skinhead organizer and former leader of the white-supremacist Western Guard. Hate-merchant Ron Gostick, leader of the neo-Nazi Canadian League of Rights and distributor of literature denying the Nazis’ Holocaust against the Jews, was the keynote speaker at a recent APEC conference. APEC’s brochure praised his organization as “dedicated to the preservation of freedom and justice in Canada”!

“What we have here is an open road to racism,” remarked Daniel St-Jean, executive director of the Centre Francophone in Sault Ste. Marie. In February, the Sault city council adopted an English-only law; now French speakers who have lived there all their lives are told to “speak white.” Toronto

councillor Thomas Clifford, enraged by the use of French at a recent city council meeting, spat: “I wouldn’t want you to speak Italian in front of me, or Greek in front of me, or some other language. I think that’s offensive” (*Globe and Mail*, 21 February). A visitor to an Edmonton Reform Party meeting was welcomed with the words: “You’re a fine white person. You know, we are letting in too many people from the Third
(continued on page 19)



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Canadian capitalism is rooted in national oppression, chauvinism. Army occupied Quebec in 1970; bigots target French speakers (right).



Maclean's