

L.A. Upheaval Shakes North America



SC photo

Toronto, May 4: Multiracial protest voices outrage over Rodney King verdict. Marchers chanted "From L.A. to T.O., racist cops have got to go!" Toronto cops (right) rough up anti-racists.

Alex Urosecvic/Sun

First millions watched in horror the videotape of the Los Angeles cops beating black motorist Rodney King within an inch of his life. Then a no-blacks-allowed jury completely exonerated the four cops (out of 15) who were charged. When thousands surged into the streets in defiant outrage, the racist white rulers in Washington sent in the army, the National Guard and the FBI, occupying L.A. with a force larger than that used in the 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic. As the pent-up anger of the poor, minority and working people

exploded from coast to coast the cops beat, gassed and arrested thousands.

The match that lit up L.A. illuminated the whole system of American capitalism, built on a bedrock of racist oppression. And as the protests spread north to Toronto, they ripped right through the facade of "Canada the good" to expose the raw, racist reality. For years the smug rulers of this country have proclaimed, "It can't happen here." But it did, as demonstrably

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Workers, Minorities: Organize to Sweep Away this Rotten Racist System!

Terrorists Bomb Morgentaler Clinic

On the early morning of May 18 a bomb ripped through Dr. Henry Morgentaler's downtown Toronto abortion clinic, reducing it to rubble. Surveillance videotape showed two people carrying gasoline cans near the rear entrance just before the explosion. Dr. Morgentaler and his staff are now working overtime in another location to keep providing their essential service to women.

Nine years ago this was the first free-standing abortion clinic to open in Canada. Always a special target for the "born again" bigots, last January it was firebombed causing \$5,000 damage and forcing three people to flee for their lives. Now it is the first Canadian clinic to be destroyed by the anti-abortion terrorists, following more than 100 bombing and arson attacks on U.S. clinics in the last 15 years.

On May 20 Dr. Morgentaler told a news conference he suspects anti-abortion activists from the U.S., "who are much more expert at bombing clinics," may have been involved. Last month the right-wing fanatics of Operation Rescue sought to shut down clinics in Buffalo, just across the border in New York state. But OR was stymied when hundreds of women's rights activists outflanked them and kept the clinics open.

Henry Morgentaler is a courageous and compassionate

man who has risked his freedom, his security and even his life in the fight for abortion rights in Canada. A survivor of the Nazi concentration camps, he has been a target of vile anti-Semitic abuse from "pro-life" scum. In the 1970s he spent ten months in prison (suffering a heart attack when thrown into solitary confinement) and later underwent six years of trials, despite three jury acquittals, on charges of performing illegal abortions. In 1988 his heroic 20-year fight resulted in a Supreme Court ruling that Canada's highly restrictive abortion law was unconstitutional.

The day after the bombing 1,000 protesters rallied in front of the remains of the clinic chanting "Pray by day, bomb by night—that's the tactic of the 'right-to-life'." Various reformist and feminist organizations look to Ontario's provincial New Democratic Party government to hold the line against the anti-abortion terrorists. But while claiming to be "pro-choice" the NDP social democrats have been busy slashing health spending, and it was an NDP government in Manitoba which staged police raids on Morgentaler's Winnipeg clinic in 1983. What's needed are mass labor mobilizations and workers defense guards to defend the clinics and stop the anti-abortion fanatics, along with a fight for free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all!

Free the Mohawk Prisoners!

Following the conviction of three Mohawk Warriors who defended their communities from assault by as many as 4,000 heavily armed troops at Oka, Quebec in the summer of 1990, the Canadian state is now bringing another 39 Mohawk fighters and their supporters to trial.

Ronald Cross and Gordon Lazore (whose *noms de guerre* were "Lasagna" and "Noriega") were found guilty in a Quebec superior court of charges including "assault" and "use of a firearm." On February 19 they were sentenced to prison terms of four years four months, and 21 months respectively. They now join Dennis Nicholas, a defendant sentenced last year in the same case (see SC No. 83, Spring 1991).

Federal prosecutors set the tone for the trials by presenting

Cross and Lazore as "mere criminals," and claiming their actions were devoid of "political or ideological connotations." In a grotesque display of cynicism, however, the federal judge prefaced the sentences with a sermon shedding crocodile tears over "the contempt, discrimination and racism" that Native peoples in Canada have been subjected to dating back to the first European settlers, and acknowledging their "deep anger and rage"! We demand immediate freedom for Cross, Lazore and Nicholas, and that all charges against the 39 others be dropped!

The 1990 standoff began when the Mohawk community of Kanesatake physically blocked efforts by the white town council in nearby Oka to bulldoze a historic burial ground to make way for the expansion of a golf course. The heavily outgunned Mohawks, including Vietnam veterans from bands across the U.S. border, managed to successfully rebuff an armed assault by the notorious Sûreté du Québec provincial police, in which one cop was killed in the crossfire. They were then besieged by federal troops in a two-month blockade of food and medical supplies.

Since the Mohawks peacefully evacuated their barricades in September 1990, their communities have been the object of a systematic campaign of vengeance by the Sûreté, with active support and encouragement from racist groups which have stepped up their terrorist activities throughout Quebec amid the rising tide of right-wing nationalism.

There can be no justice in the capitalist courts for Native people, or any of the exploited and oppressed of North America. Only the organized power of the working class, mobilized in the fight for an all-sided social revolution, offers hope for redress to centuries of injustice, from Anchorage to Nova Scotia, from Inuvik to Mexico! ■

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26 Coal Miners Killed in Westray Deathtrap

Industrial Murder In Pictou County, N.S.

On Saturday May 9, at 5:20 in the morning, an explosion jolted the town of Stellarton, Nova Scotia. Deep underground, a volatile mix of methane gas and coal dust had ignited in the nearby non-union Westray mine. A ghastly fireball blew the roof clean off the minehead, caving in huge sections of the ceiling rock as it sucked all the air out of the galleries. Twenty-six miners, working at the coal face a mile down the sloping main shaft, had no warning and no chance. One body was found two days later still gripping the steering wheel of a mine vehicle.

For five days, teams of draegermen (mine-rescue workers) inched forward through water, methane pockets and tons of rock, digging with picks and shovels in conditions so hazardous "even a sneeze could cause a landfall and wearing an electric watch could trigger another explosion" (*Toronto Star*, 16 May). The draegermen recovered 15 bodies, but no survivors, before further efforts were declared too dangerous.

Above ground, as the rescue work proceeded, Westray bosses and their Tory backers in Halifax and Ottawa obscenely wept and eulogized the dead miners as victims of a tragic accident. They displayed the coal industry's Ryan Safety Award, bestowed on Westray the week before—while the miner who had accepted the award on the company's behalf was at that moment buried beneath their feet. Company executives sadly assured grieving families that the dead men knew coal mining was a "hazardous occupation" in which "death was a way of life." "Mother Nature," intoned the mine's chief of operations, "cannot always be predicted or controlled."

"Mother Nature" be damned! *This was cold-blooded capitalist murder, a straight exchange of workers' lives for cash and votes!* The Westray mine was a deathtrap and everybody involved knew it, from the profit-gouging mine bosses who pushed it through to the venal politicians who swung the funding.

Government safety inspectors wrote up the year-old Westray operation three times on serious violations. In 1991 they reported that a whole section of the mine's roof was starting to collapse, that the mine's critical methane-monitoring equipment was not working, that ventilation was inadequate, and that barrels of oil were being illegally stored underground. On April 29 of this year, ten days before the explosion, Westray was ordered to clean up "unacceptably high levels" of highly explosive coal dust.

A spokesman for the United Steelworkers (USWA), which was in the process of organizing the workforce when the blast occurred, reported that "almost every person who signed a card from underground said one of the most important issues was health and safety" (*Globe and Mail*, 12 May). At a press conference called by the USWA, Westray miners told of automatic methane-monitoring equipment being routinely disabled to avoid production shutdowns, and of observing gas levels more than twice the legal limit. Former Westray workers said they had quit rather than go back into a mine where acetylene cutting torches (!) were illegally used underground,



Kerry Doubleday/Canadian Press

Westray mine entrance destroyed by May 9 explosion. Mine bosses, capitalist politicians are guilty of murder!

when a mere spark could set off a methane or coal-dust explosion. On May 28-29, surviving miners voted 83 percent in favor of the union.

Already Westray is pushing hard to reopen the mine, ghoulishly promising widows and children the return of the missing bodies and a small cut of the profits, and not one of the criminals has been charged with their crime of *murder*. Instead, with a whole cabal of profiteers and capitalist politicians—right up to the prime minister—implicated in the disaster, the cover-up has begun. Not until two weeks after the explosion did Nova Scotia premier Donald Cameron even ask the RCMP to secure the site, and then only after miners caught Westray officials shredding enough documents "to fill several buckets of a front-end loader." Now Cameron has announced a series of white-wash probes to ensure the truth gets buried along with the bodies of the miners. But the Westray catastrophe illuminates like an arc light the bloody essence of capitalism, where workers' lives are bought, sold and eliminated in the sacred name of profit.

Blood for Coal: Clifford Frame and the Foord Seam

The Westray mine was the brainchild of Clifford Frame, chairman of Curragh Resources. For years Frame was chief
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Ottawa protest outside Russian embassy. Over a dozen demonstrations worldwide demanded energetic investigation into Martha Phillips' murder.



American Trotskyist Murdered in Moscow

Worldwide Protests Demand Serious Investigation

Protest pickets were held in a dozen cities around the world on April 29 and 30 demanding a serious and energetic investigation of the murder of Martha Phillips, an American Trotskyist murdered in Moscow. Phillips, 43, was the leading spokesman in the Soviet Union of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). She was found brutally strangled and stabbed on the morning of February 9, just hours before a major demonstration against the starvation policies of the Russian regime of Boris Yeltsin. Yet three months later, Moscow authorities show no progress in tracking down those guilty of this abominable crime.

The demonstrations were called in response to an appeal by the Spartacist League/U.S. and the Partisan Defense Committee on behalf of the ICL. Held on the eve of May Day, the international workers holiday, they also denounced the drive to impose capitalism on the Soviet peoples. In Ottawa, 25 protesters outside the Russian embassy chanted, "Yeltsin is a tool of Wall Street rule!" and "Free market misery, we say *nyet* — Power to workers soviets!" Signs in Russian, English and French demanded, "No more stalling! Full investigation of the murder of Martha Phillips!"

Martha Phillips lived and worked in the San Francisco Bay Area for nearly 20 years, where she was actively involved in the antiwar, civil rights and labor movements. In 1983, she ran as Spartacist candidate for Oakland City Council on the program "You Can't Fight Reagan with Democrats—For Mass Strike Action to Bring Down Reagan." She was a founder of the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense, which grew out of her election campaign.

Pickets were also held in New York, Washington, D.C., Sydney, Warsaw, Rome, Milan, Berlin, Hamburg, Paris and

London. The week of protests began with a press conference at the Leon Trotsky Museum in Coyoacán (Mexico City) on April 27, the house where the Bolshevik leader was slain by a Stalinist assassin in 1940. Esteban Volkov, Trotsky's grandson, declared: "We wish to add the name of Martha Phillips to the long list of fallen revolutionary heroes, a list that is headed by the great revolutionary and Marxist Leon Trotsky, who initiated this struggle in 1923 when the whole process began of betrayal and moving away from the October Revolution which today is reaching its final stage, that of the return to capitalism." Volkov added: "We still cannot say clearly the circumstances in which she was murdered, but there are many elements which suggest that it was a political crime of reprisal against the Spartacist group. And the actions of the Russian militia leave a lot to be desired and raise many doubts."

Capping the series of demonstrations, on May 5 ICL spokesmen and a Soviet lawyer representing Martha Phillips' family held a press conference at the House of Journalists in Moscow which was attended by more than 40 representatives from the Soviet and international media. Among the documents distributed to the press was a 21 April letter to the Moscow procurator's office by Yossi Schwartz, a Toronto lawyer retained by Martha Phillips' family. Protesting the handling of the investigation, Schwartz detailed the grievous shortcomings of the investigation. Criticizing the numerous omissions from the autopsy report, the failure to perform essential laboratory tests and the stonewalling of those charged with pursuing the case, he concluded that it was impossible to know "whether it is a case of negligence or a conscious attempt to prevent a thorough investigation leading to the prosecution of the guilty party."

An April 1 article by Oleg Rubnikovich in the Soviet newspa-

per *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* pointed to the opaque and mysterious manner in which the police investigation has been pursued. As late as March 20, Moscow Morgue No. 5 said that "the preliminary diagnosis was sudden heart failure," the article reported. "Meanwhile by 11 February an autopsy showed that the death was violent, and why the spokesman of the morgue tried to deceive the reporter remains unclear."

Now more than two dozen leading papers around the world, ranging from the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Examiner* and the *New York Times* in the U.S. to the *London Independent*, *Le Monde* (Paris), *Frankfurter Rundschau* and the *Japan Times*, have put the spotlight on the Moscow authorities. An article by Seamus Martin in the *Irish Times* (4 May) noted that the case "is currently raising a minor storm here in Moscow."

Remarking on the virtual press blackout which preceded this campaign, Astrit Dakli noted in the Italian *Il Manifesto* (3 May): "The violent death of an American citizen is an event that in other cases has raised a lot of noise in Moscow." Just how unusual this case is was underlined by Howard Witt in the *Chicago Tribune* (10 May): "The circumstances might have been lifted from the pages of a Cold War-era thriller. Phillips was, in fact, the first American murdered in Moscow in recent memory, according to U.S. embassy officials."

In what amounts to the first public response by the Yeltsin regime, the government-controlled ITAR-TASS news agency issued a tortuous justification for the lack of official progress in a 30 April dispatch, which scurrilously sought to put the blame on the victim. The dispatch retailed the Moscow procurator's office claim that "there are no reasons to suggest that the investigation is being conducted in secret." Yet the first brief account of the murder in the Soviet press, in *Vechernaya Moskva* (26 February), said flatly that the investigation was "being conducted in the strictest secrecy."

A 27 April Reuters dispatch from Moscow by Anthony Barker broke ground in the international press. Barker interviewed Moscow case investigator Pavel Marchenko, who "said he could not yet disclose details of his inquiry." It also cited the dismissive response from a U.S. embassy spokesman: "The Moscow police have assured us that they are doing everything that they can."

Many of the articles emphasized the ICL's Trotskyist politics and opposition to Yeltsin counterrevolution. Barker, for example, wrote of Martha Phillips: "Her organization was critical of the former ruling Soviet Communist Party, the present government of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, which is introducing free market reforms, and the anti-Semitic Pamyat nationalist movement."

The *Il Manifesto* article, headlined "Moscow, the Strange Death of Martha Phillips, Trotskyist Militant," pointed out that "This is a case with many anomalies that aren't part of normal crime stories." Reporter Astrit Dakli noted how the doctors who first arrived at the scene of the murder "diagnosed 'sudden death of natural causes' in spite of the evidence of knife wounds and marks of strangulation. The functionaries of the militia did the same thing." She added, "The functionaries respond with annoyance to relevant questions (in other similar cases there was always an extraordinary mobilization, often with very rapid results)."

An article "on the mysterious stabbing in Moscow of a Trotskyist" in the *London Independent on Sunday* (3 May) by Steve Crawshaw reported that an aide to Denver Democratic Congresswoman Pat Schroeder, who intervened in the case on behalf of Phillips' family, complained to him about the State

Department's response: "First we were told that it was natural death—then a knife wound. We still haven't seen an autopsy report, although we've asked for it." Crawshaw elicited a blunt admission from the State Department of "an unwillingness to intervene for the moment." One can hardly imagine the same posture being taken if the victim were a Reaganite businessman rather than a Jewish Trotskyist woman.

Crawshaw, whose own wife was nearly murdered two years ago in an attack on their Moscow apartment by what were presumed to be Pamyat thugs, noted Phillips' Jewish background and the possibility of fascist implication in the murder: "Pamyat has been widely blamed for a growing number of anti-Semitic attacks and killings." Crawshaw explained that the ICL "wanted to see a reconstitution of the old Soviet Union" and "unlike most Trotskyist groups, they were not anti-Soviet." He concluded, "however unusual Phillips' own politics may have been, the apparent lack of enthusiasm to pursue the possible political or anti-Semitic aspects of her murder is striking."

Martha Phillips was not a nameless, faceless victim. The attention by the international press to this suspicious murder has thrown a sharp light on the case. We have served notice on the Moscow authorities that we will not allow the tracks of the murderer to be covered over by bureaucratic indifference or worse. To date, no further progress has been reported in the murder of our comrade. As ICL spokesman Victor Granovsky told the *Moscow Times*: "We can't allow the case to be forgotten. Martha never backed down, she would never let anyone else down, and we can't let her down." *We demand a serious investigation into the murder of Martha Phillips!*

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 551, 15 May

Brouhaha Over "Kremlin Gold"

For decades, anti-Communist witchhunters out to persecute leftist militants regularly screamed about "Kremlin gold." Now, even as they trumpet the "death of Communism," the imperialist media have resurrected this hoary Cold War hobbyhorse. The Toronto *Saturday Star* (14 March) carried a sensationalist front-page "exclusive": "Soviets Secretly Paid Canada's Communists \$2 Million." A London *Independent* (27 March) headline declaimed, "Secret Fund Gave Aid to Foreign 'Workers.'" New York *Newsday* (1 March) railed about "a secret, global operation dating back to the 1950s to subsidize left-wing groups in Europe, North and South America and the Middle East."

Canada's solicitor-general seized on the *Star* "exposé" to order an investigation into the Canadian Communist Party by the RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. In a move reeking of gratuitous vindictiveness, the federal government is now going after the decaying remnants of the Communist Party (CPC) and its former long-time leader, 83-year-old William Kashtan.

Bill Kashtan, who says "I never saw any of this money," thinks he might be the victim of a CIA plot. Well, there certainly are such things. Arthur Scargill, leader of the militant 1984-85 British miners strike, was subjected to a torrent of calumny over financial aid from Soviet trade unions. When this vendetta fell flat, the witchhunters turned around and outrageously accused Scargill of having pocketed Soviet money which should rightly have gone to the union. The bourgeois press eventually admitted that the CIA was up to its ears in the anti-Scargill crusade and the whole affair was a frame-up from the start.

In the U.S., Gus Hall's shriveling Communist Party has become the focus of allegations that it was one of the chief recipients of Soviet financial assistance, to the tune of \$2 million a year. The bourgeois press has even produced crude hand-lettered "receipts" for the money supposedly signed by Hall. Denying the claims, Hall aptly noted that his party's total annual expenditure is "peanuts" compared to what a typical bourgeois candidate spends for a single senatorial race. Even an FBI spokesman dismissed the brouhaha, yawning that Soviet assistance to Western Stalinist parties had long been "common knowledge."

This new anti-Communist vendetta is a by-product of Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary drive in the Soviet Union. Last October, an ever-burgeoning "investigation" into the botched August coup spawned another into charges of "corruption" and funneling billions out of the country, aimed at implicating all associated with the former government, including Gorbachev himself. (Gorbachev, meanwhile, is flying around the U.S. in the private jet of *Forbes* magazine which has emblazoned on it "Capitalist Tool.")

The financing of foreign CPs became a prominent part of this "corruption" scandal, with claims that in the ten years from 1980 some \$200 million was disbursed by the CPSU to 98 organizations around the world. This would amount to an average allocation of \$200,000 per organization per year. By comparison, Washington's "National Endowment for Democracy" pumped nearly \$15 million into East Europe and the Soviet Union in 1990 alone. And that does not include the many millions more in covert funds distributed through the CIA and other U.S. agencies, as well as the largesse meted out by the "AFL-CIA," Canadian Labour Congress, German social democracy and the like to Polish Solidarność and other

counterrevolutionary "free trade unions" around the world.

Yeltsin & Co. want to prove their credentials and reliability to their imperialist patrons, not least by "exposing" the Stalinist bureaucracy's links with Communist parties abroad. Fearing an explosion of working-class anger, the unstable regime of would-be tsar Boris also seeks to paint as "criminals" not only the Stalinist has-beens but anyone who would participate in protest against the ravages of capitalist restoration. As former



Toronto Star pushes sensationalist vendetta against Canadian CP and former leader William Kashtan.

CP official Anatoly Smirnov, who appears to be the chief source for the mishmash of innuendos and vague charges, put it: "As people begin remembering the old party system with fondness, it is necessary to remind them of its crimes."

Yeltsin aims to follow the example of the Fourth Reich of German imperialism. Following its annexation of the German Democratic Republic (DDR) two years ago, the German bourgeoisie launched a vicious witchhunt against all those associated with the former deformed workers state, from government and party officials down to schoolteachers.

Pro-Yeltsin Soviet newspapers have tried to put a vicious twist on the tale, claiming that the money went to finance lavish lifestyles for foreign Communists. *Izvestia* (10 February) snidely remarked that the funds aimed "to ensure a comfortable existence for 'fighters for the idea' abroad." *New Times* (5 November 1991), with more than a hint of xenophobic racism, sneered that "foreign Communists—be they Blacks of advanced age, Frenchmen, Italians or Portuguese—also deserved a life with no problems."

The piggish would-be Soviet yuppies want to pretend that Western Communists like Hall or Kashtan were treated to the lifestyle they themselves aspire to. Even prominent Canadian social democrat (and ex-CPCer) Norman Penner notes that "it's important to remember that the money wasn't going to enrich the leaders, it was just to maintain the party" (*Toronto Star*, 15 March).

There was certainly plenty of corruption within the Soviet bureaucracy, particularly during the high-flying Brezhnev years. But it is the heirs of Brezhnev and his cronies, who fed at the trough of the Soviet workers state, who today point accusing fingers while hoping to cash in on their services for Western imperialism. Smirnov absurdly claims that his "revelations" show that "the idea of world revolution continued to function right up to 1990," while *Moscow News* (8 December 1991)

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Quebec:

60,000 Unionists March Against Government Wage Cuts

Tens of thousands of angry government workers and other unionists demonstrated in Quebec April 12 against the Bourassa government's latest round of public-sector wage cuts. Forty thousand marched down Montreal's Rue St.-Denis to the premier's office in the Hydro-Québec building. Another 15,000 demonstrated simultaneously outside the National Assembly in Quebec City, where 8,000 teachers and health-care workers had also rallied the day before. These were Quebec's largest union protests in nearly a decade.

"Johnson, Bourassa, respect our contracts!" the marchers shouted. Last year Bourassa's treasury minister Daniel Johnson ripped up public-sector union contracts and imposed a universal wage freeze, which leaders of the union Common Front accepted with barely a whimper. Then this spring Johnson rescinded the 3 percent raise projected for July, and this time the labor tops felt compelled to show some opposition. So they called for a show of force on the April 11-12 weekend, then again on May 1 when 12,000 workers marched on Montreal's largest May Day demo in years.

But the union tops made clear they have no intention of mobilizing the all-out strike action that's needed to win. Instead they push a program of open collaboration with the Québécois bosses in the name of *fleur de lys* nationalism. Pouring millions of dollars into the coffers of Quebec's industrial magnates through the union "Solidarity Fund," the labor bureaucrats preach "social peace" in order to wage a joint crusade for national "sovereignty."

Twenty years ago, in April-May 1972, Quebec labor waged the most deep-going general strike in North American history. Beginning in the public sector, strike action spread to the Montreal docks and far beyond after Bourassa jailed the Common Front union leaders. Union power shut down Quebec in a wave of strikes and occupations which reached semi-insurrectionary proportions. But the labor tops—who at the time talked out of the left sides of their mouths and issued sundry manifestos for class struggle and socialism—called off the strikes in the name of a "negotiated settlement."

In the early 1970s, opposition to Anglo-chauvinist bigotry and national oppression helped to fuel Quebec labor's combativity. But in the absence of a revolutionary working-class leadership this was dissipated. And hatred for the Liberal regimes in Quebec City and Ottawa (from where Trudeau imposed the War Measures Act in 1970) was channeled by the union leadership into votes for the bourgeois nationalist Parti Québécois.



Montreal union demonstration, April 12. Nationalist labor bureaucrats keep combative working class chained to Québécois bourgeoisie.

PQ leader René Lévesque made clear what he thought of the labor movement in 1971, saying he'd "rather live in a South American banana republic" than a Quebec dominated by the "ranting and raving of union leaders." Elected to office in 1976 and again in 1981, the péquistes soon launched their own anti-union attacks. Their chief target was none other than the public-sector unions, which provided the PQ's main working-class electoral base. In 1983, more than 150,000 workers hit the bricks against an unprecedented wave of government wage-slashing and union-busting. Fifty thousand demonstrated in front of the National Assembly, where placards read "Lévesque, Pinochet" and "Lévesque fasciste."

Now we have come full circle: with Bourassa's recycled Liberal regime widely despised, the labor tops again offer the fool's gold of nationalism as the "solution." Even rhetorical references to socialism are long gone as they openly ally with the PQ, Bloc Québécois, the sinister St. Jean Baptiste Society (SSJB) and "sovereignist" capitalists like Jean Campeau. And while 20 years ago the bourgeoisie in Quebec was predominantly English-speaking, symbolized by the arrogant ascendancy of Westmount, today this is no longer the case as Campeau, Pierre Péladeau, Bernard Lemaire and the other *hauts bourgeois* of "Québec Inc." increasingly call the shots.

Official unemployment in Montreal stands at 13 percent (up to 60 percent in parts of the east end). More than 600,000 Quebec residents are on welfare and 20 percent live below the official poverty line. Union-busting and wage-slashing are

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Letter on Gauche Socialiste:

Tailing Nationalist Reaction From the Soviet Union to Quebec

We print below excerpts from a letter by a former long-time member of the United Secretariat group in Quebec which is now known as Gauche Socialiste. The author, Marc D., is today a supporter of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyiste in Montreal.

* * *

February 18, 1992

Dear Comrades of the Trotskyist League:

I was active as a member of the "Fourth International" (United Secretariat) from the early 70's to the early 80's. As with numerous others, I lost heart with the onset of a reactionary wave in the early 80's, the defection of the American SWP, etc., and simply left quietly, profoundly demoralized, but with no door-slamming or factional struggles.

From afar I witnessed the shipwreck of that political generation I had embarked on the road to struggle with. Former comrades of the LSA/LSO (League for Socialist Action) degenerated into a neo-Stalinist sect (the Communist League), some like Don Tapscott and Alain Dubuc climbed aboard the bourgeoisie's bandwagon, a remnant of the former GMR (Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire) regrouped as the Gauche Socialiste (GS). The collapse of Stalinism and the Soviet state, the Gulf war, the present economic crisis, the rise of reactionary chauvinism worldwide broke my slumber and told me history is once more on the move, decisive battles are looming, and I decided to break my inertia, renew contact with the Fourth International and lend my support.

When I initiated contact, comrades of the GS didn't ask me whether I still believed in the validity of Lenin's and Trotsky's perspective and wanted to rejoin the Fourth International, but simply whether I still believed in and supported Quebec independence and wanted to join the Mouvement pour l'Indépendance du Québec—MIQ—a nationalist front they promote, a kind of halfway house for left nationalists or nationalists "tout court" (pure and simple). The MIQ's program is basically the lowest common denominator of Quebec nationalism, there are no socialist demands, so any good péquiste or Bloc Québécois supporter may feel free to join and retain his membership in the PQ, the Bloc, etc.

Gauche Socialiste believes the Leninist perspective was excessively sectarian, although they don't say so openly and clearly. They prefer to skirt around the edges, and complain of Lenin's excessive polemical zeal in their publication, while throwing open its pages to all sorts of cranks, charlatans and muddlers.

Do I exaggerate? Let's take the latest (February) issue of their paper *La Gauche*. Here we have a contribution from one Bob Silverman on his trip to Cuba, thrown in with an article in defense of the Cuban revolution. For those unfamiliar with Silverman, he is an ex-Trotskyist, present day confusionist and bicycle freak, and a favorite filler for the bourgeois press when they want to print some humorous fluff on the wacky meanderings of a former leftist. The real story, as printed in the bourgeois press and not in the pages of *La Gauche*, is that Silverman

is travelling to Cuba together with a motley crew of oddballs, including an executive of the imperialist World Bank (no less!), in order to advocate a "bicycle revolution which transcends capitalism and socialism." All this clowning around is done in the name of...the Fourth International. Would James Cannon have wasted valuable space in *The Militant* with this sort of nonsense? May Silverman bring a copy of *La Gauche* with him in order to introduce Castro to the merits of GS's "bicycle revolution."

Gauche Socialiste has kicked off a discussion on the collapse of Stalinism with GS leader Michel Lafitte's ruminations. *La Gauche* admonishes its readers that said debate should be polite and serene, parliamentary decorum if you please, no name-calling or other Bolshevik polemical nastiness. So admonished, we may turn to what he actually says. The Bolshevik revolution, we are informed, went off the track from day one because the Bolsheviks failed to accord sufficient respect to the right of self-determination of national minorities, the Bolsheviks committed grave errors in this respect, etc., and so on.

Lafitte then goes on to inform us that the dissolution of the Soviet state was both inevitable and positive, but that we should harbor no illusions about the anti-socialist, anti-democratic and reactionary nature of the nationalist leaderships who brought such a positive historical achievement to fruition. The masses who follow such reactionary leaders, we are informed, are confused, but Lafitte's support for their confused struggles does not imply support for their reactionary leaders. Lafitte then admonishes sundry "left sectarians" that one cannot oppose an abstract internationalism to all this nationalist confusion.

A truly remarkable piece, may it be read by every member of the "Fourth International"! The only obvious confusion is that of the author, who can't seem to decide whether he stands



AP
Pro-Nazi Ukrainian nationalists today strut in Lvov. "Gauche Socialiste" cheers on counterrevolutionary scum like these.

for revolution or...counterrevolution. The only valid criterion Lafitte submits to all and sundry is—respect for the right of self-determination. What should Trotskyists do, wander about in confusion themselves bemoaning the fact that reactionary nationalist demagogues have hijacked confused masses, or take a principled stand in favor of socialism and internationalism? Lafitte opts for the former, as he does not want to stand in the way of such a positive historical achievement as the dismantling of the Soviet state.

Socialism is mentioned as one of the goals of *La Gauche* after numerous other qualifications, in which Quebec independence tops the list and provides the essential defining criterion. Not merely in the fine print of *La Gauche's* self-definition, but throughout the pages of this publication and in their actual political practice, socialism comes last whereas independence comes first. Socialism, we are told, has lost "credibility" and the goal is thus simply presented as...sovereignty or formal independence. Following *La Gauche's* non-sectarian logic, nowhere do we find any serious, worthy criticism of the Parti Québécois or the Bloc Québécois, in fact in the latest issue of this publication, which saw fit to criticize Lenin's "sectarianism" and the October Revolution, *not one word* of criticism of bourgeois nationalists!

Why should Gauche Socialiste criticize Jacques Parizeau when they can dump their indignation upon...Lenin and Trotsky? A Quebec worker reading *La Gauche* would probably conclude that this is some left péquiste publication offering critical support to Jacques Parizeau, Lucien Bouchard, etc., a sort of modern version of the former left péquiste *Québec Presse*, and he would not be mistaken. We are light years away from the days when Lafitte and comrades of the GMR militantly censured Jacques Parizeau's column from the pages of *Québec Presse*, which led to a round of denunciation of Trotskyism from union bureaucrats and assorted bourgeois politicians. Today they would probably solicit Parizeau's contribution in *La Gauche* to the discussion on how the Bolsheviks denied the democratic right of "self-determination."

Nowhere in Lafitte's analysis of the collapse of Stalinism does he offer the perspective of defending the conquests of the October Revolution. It's long dead and if not, if some spark remains, it deserves to be extinguished. Nothing more can be done, best to call it quits, bury the dead, and start afresh, some other place, some other time, after the left has submitted itself to severe and thorough moral introspection, has morally regenerated itself and has cured itself of all ugly sectarian habits.

The Bolsheviks thus receive a lecture in political morality from one who considers the burying of the October Revolution and the dissolution of the Soviet state to be a positive historical achievement. Lafitte comments in passing on the dissolution of the centralized planned economy as some sort of minor historical footnote—the various oppressed nations are now "free" to be subjected, not to the rule of the Bolsheviks, but to that of the market, and all he can offer them as a political perspective is a rearguard defense against Great Russian chauvinism.

The pieces all start to fall into place as we follow Lafitte from the Ukraine to Quebec. The dissolution of the Soviet state, it seems, is a positive historical achievement, regardless of the nature of the social forces at work, and apparently so is the perspective of the division and separate reconstitution of the Canadian state, irrespective of the social forces pushing for such transformation. While the fate of a state based upon bourgeois property relations, as opposed to a degenerated workers' state,

should not concern Trotskyists, the perspective advocated by *La Gauche* does not call for revolutionary transformation, but rather simple division of powers, and the architect of such division would thus not be GS's friends, but rather Jacques Parizeau.

All other political perspectives are subsumed by this "national struggle," and this while capitalism has entered into one of the severest crises in its history, while businesses are failing in every direction from multinational engineering firms to insurance companies to retailers to manufacturers and primary producers, while masses are thrown into the street without perspective, begging for handouts, living off foodbanks, while the bourgeoisie itself is praying for some miracle, for a return to the good old days long past.

Socialism will apparently once more become credible, in the GS's perspective, when it has somehow miraculously been morally regenerated, and when conditions improve. This



Richard Lautens/Toronto Star

Québécois nationalists march in Montreal. Not the GS contingent, but who could tell?

is somewhat akin to the social democrats' dictum that the International is an instrument of peace, not war. In the interim, GS's political horizon is reduced to Quebec independence, and according to such logic, the international appendage and in particular the comrades of Socialist Challenge in English Canada would become a form of external assurance for the protection of Quebec's right to self-determination.

Do I exaggerate, misinterpret and distort their perspectives? When *La Gauche* was launched a year ago, I recall offering some press clippings taken from the anglo bourgeois press to editor François Moreau which quite properly condemned the PQ for genuflecting before U.S. imperialism, supporting NATO and the Gulf war, seeking a common monetary policy with Canada, keeping the Canadian passport, in short maintaining the status quo and all the institutions of bourgeois rule so that the question posed was—why bother? I had thought that the editor of *La Gauche* might somehow want to incorporate some or all of this into some future critical piece on the PQ. The editor of *La Gauche*, however, was not pleased with such "ammunition" but was furious at the federalist slander of the nationalist movement.

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Gauche Socialiste...

(continued from page 9)

The editor of *La Gauche* thus wishes to protect Jacques Parizeau from hostile criticism—"see how they slander and belittle Quebec independence, etc., etc."—as if the historic goal of Marxism was to establish the nation-state rather than to eradicate it, as if the goal of Trotskyists were to defend the honor and reputation of bourgeois nationalists, rather than revealing their duplicity and deception and breaking the masses from their influence.

In the latest issue of *La Gauche*, editor François Moreau offers some fraternal criticism of "bourgeois liberal" William Johnson, columnist for Southam News, for failing to understand the "Québécois mentality." Note in passing Moreau's erroneous characterization of Johnson as a "bon libéral bourgeois." Moreau would be well advised to actually read the occasional column by Johnson, who is quite simply one of the most venomous reactionary mouthpieces for the Canadian bourgeoisie, termed "Caveman the Columnist" by his colleagues at Southam, one of the "take no prisoners," "Meech is Munich" reactionary dihard, promising "death and destruction" to Iraq, most recently sneering at "nostalgic Socialists who seek to liberate nations, women, and the wretched of the earth." Moreau criticizes our "bon libéral bourgeois" as an anglo WASP, who because of his ethnic background cannot rise to the level of consciousness that francophones, as members of an oppressed nation, can attain.

What we have here, in bits and pieces of wisdom from Lafitte and Moreau, are the contours of a full blown theory. I don't know if the comrades of Gauche Socialiste recall listening to various francophone radio talk show hosts, such as Gilles Proulx, Pierre Pascau or André Arthur during the Oka crisis, but perhaps Moreau would care to comment on the superior level of political consciousness of such stalwarts who egged on the rioters in Châteauguay and the lumpen stone-throwers in Lasalle. It was certainly not a glorious day for the Quebec nation.

Lest we forget, Robert Campeau, Pierre Péladeau, Michel Gaucher, Laurent Beaudouin, Bernard Lemaire, Ghislain Dufour and even Pierre Trudeau are all members of this francophone nation and conceivably chose this "higher consciousness." Péladeau, magnate of Québecor, who made his fortune marketing gratuitous sex and violence to the illiterate and the oppressed, pandering to and promoting their ignorance, shrewd capitalist that he is, plans to steal a march on the proposed free trade deal with Mexico by sounding out investment possibilities and positioning himself in the Mexican market in anticipation of the deal.

Perhaps François Moreau would care to introduce this member of the "oppressed nation" to his comrades of the Mexican PRT and to the Mexican workers Péladeau intends to employ. Perhaps they may all discover, on the plane of higher political consciousness which the "oppressed" share, that they speak a common language. Perhaps the editor of *La Gauche* may rediscover the language of Marxism.

In the Leninist vocabulary, activity such as that described above is termed "imperialism." So here we have an anomaly, an "oppressed" imperialist nation—all the investors described above would fit such a definition—part of a multinational imperialist state, with a relatively powerful national bourgeoisie, which lacks its own state, but has the following attributes—is highly class conscious, highly assertive of its interests, with an

added bonus in that it exercises ideological hegemony over the other classes of its distinct nation, and all identify its aspirations as their own.

We have to see things as they are, call things by their proper names, and not lull ourselves with romantic myths or repeat ritual cliches learned by rote. The outbreak of various reactionary nationalist movements in Eastern Europe pushed my thinking along the opposite track of that followed by the comrades of Gauche Socialiste, and I began to question increasingly what progressive tasks and content remained with Quebec nationalism, and whether the "national struggle" proposed by the



La Gauche hails new nationalist front as "A Step in the Right Direction." "Regroupment of Sovereignist Youth" unites GS with bourgeois PQ and Bloc Québécois, and sinister right-wing St. Jean Baptiste Society. GS criticizes its bloc partners for not being nationalist enough!

Quebec bourgeoisie and collaborationist labor bureaucrats wasn't some complete and utter mystification designed to chain the workers ideologically to their bourgeoisie's interests.

Gauche Socialiste is simply letting itself be carried by the prevailing political consciousness, without asking simple questions such as where to, and for what purpose. For what is at stake presently is not the creation of an independent workers' state, which the GMR once advocated but Gauche Socialiste clearly is not, but the creation of a separate imperialist state, a minor league imperialism, like that of Austria or Belgium, but imperialism nonetheless.

The whole business is a frightful mess and a disgrace. Quebec workers need a radical detox from the fumes of bourgeois nationalism, and need to define their own objectives. No more of this pompous phraseology, from the union bureaucrats to *La Gauche*, worthy of some Caisse Pop géront.

The comrades of Socialist Challenge are a braver, bolder sort. Permit me to reveal the mechanics of a cheap political parlour trick, which may have escaped your attention and undoubtedly has escaped that of readers of *Socialist Challenge*. The editor of *Socialist Challenge* is a particularly bold fellow, declaring resolutely on intransigent struggle for...Quebec independence, against the Canadian bourgeoisie and its federal state, against the Quebec bourgeoisie and its rightist, bourgeois sovereignist party, the PQ, against the treacherous trade union bureaucracy, "totally integrated into this bourgeois block" (*Socialist Challenge*, February 1992). He sure talks a mean fight, this editor of *Socialist Challenge*, and you might think he would throw a bit of his fighting spirit in *La Gauche's* direction.

But lo and behold! It's the selfsame François Moreau in two different versions. Just when you thought you had seen it all, you run into a new political animal, a Trotskyist...with a forked tongue! He roars like a lion against the bourgeois nationalists of the Parti Québécois in Edmonton and Toronto, where surprisingly none of these creatures are to be found, but crawls on all fours back home in Quebec, the péquistes' natural habitat.

Nor does the sordid scandal end here. The self-proclaimed Trotskyists of *La Gauche* fail to offer even a mild criticism of such treachery in their own press, but rather invite these selfsame treacherous bureaucrats and labor fakers in for nice cozy chats and interviews in *La Gauche*, and offer up *their own newspaper* as a forum for labor fakers to offer excuses and present alibis for their inaction to their members, to muddle about and spread confusion, to throw sand in the workers' eyes, as Trotsky would say. But it would be rude and sectarian, so polemically Leninist, to be discourteous to their guests and call them by their proper names. Best to do it in English Canada, where no one can hear them.

The crisis of capitalism appears to have escaped the attention of comrade Moreau, all he can see before him is the crisis of...federalism. Stand up, be firm, be courageous, don't lose heart, he lectures an ever increasing army of dejected and demoralized unemployed, this will all pass over in a year or so, this is a temporary phase, the only permanent crisis is the crisis of...federalism. The "real serious business begins" in a year or so, after the capitalists have somehow or other miraculously restored order to their economic house, after Parizeau has carried us through a referendum with the union bureaucrats and Gauche Socialiste hanging onto his coattails.

In the interim, until the "serious business begins," Gauche Socialiste counsels this growing army of poor and unemployed,

through the absence of any serious critique of the labor bureaucracy's abdication of leadership, to keep faith with the selfsame treacherous leadership, who in turn place their faith in...Jacques Parizeau, who kowtows before George Bush, and places his faith in the bourgeoisie's ability to perform miracles, to rise above the present crisis and put its economic affairs back in order.

Splendid advice from the "World Party of Socialist Revolution." We have faith not in the trampled, confused, demoralized, leaderless masses, but in a...capitalist recovery, we are optimistic that...the bourgeoisie will ride out this storm and succeed in propping up a crumbling economy! Brave words, indeed!

What do you make of an organization that still can't determine whether capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union means a defeat for the international workers' movement? They only see the dissolution of Stalinism, nothing more. They only see opportunities for independent working class action...under capitalism...in the long run. In the long run, as one noted bourgeois economist stated, we'll all be dead. What was it Trotsky said about organizations that can't be roused by the thunder of fascism? This is a historic event on a similar scale.

The old generation has worn itself out and capitulated disgracefully to the bourgeoisie's assault on the October Revolution. You passed the test in a decisive historical moment, and the banner passes to you.

I went looking for Trotsky and ended up at the wrong address, at the old address. He doesn't live there anymore. They just kept a few of his belongings.

Warmest greetings,
Marc D.

Quebec Labor...

(continued from page 7)

pervasive. Yet today the union bureaucrats' main activity is...a joint petition campaign with the péquistes, Bloc and SSJB to demand Bourassa call a sovereignty referendum by October! This open alliance with the bosses is *treachery*, leading the workers like lambs to the slaughter. And nationalism fuels poisonous racism against immigrants and Natives, setting working people at each other's throats and strengthening the hand of the capitalists.

Former *Le Devoir* editorial writer Jean-Claude Leclerc captured the situation:

"...while prominent union leaders were lording it at the Bélanger-Campeau commission [one of Bourassa's constitutional panels], thousands of their members were losing their jobs, others were having their contracts broken and all were left to fend for themselves at a crucial moment of the labor movement's history.

"Blaming Quebec's high unemployment on confederation, most labor leaders practice a form of political voodoo: national independence will resolve Quebec's every problem. At the edge of a depression, with Quebec's economic giants going down one after the other, these social preachers rely on notoriously exhausted old parties to look after the workers' and the country's future."

—Montreal *Gazette*, 14 February

But Leclerc's utterly bankrupt "alternative" is to idealize the present federalist system ("the country's future") and support the New Democratic Party as "a credible path to change."

Today, NDP governments in Ontario, B.C. and Saskatchewan are ruling for the Bay Street bosses on the backs of the workers. In Quebec, the NDP is rightly reviled for its arrogant, decades-long refusal to defend Quebec's national rights. In 1972, federal NDP leader David Lewis *supported* the jailing of the Common Front leaders; meanwhile the Anglo-chauvinist leaders of the Canadian Labour Congress called to "oppose those elements...which advocate the destruction of Confederation...as a means of pursuing selfish regional aims."

The forcible subjugation and national oppression of Quebec is a cornerstone of Canadian confederation. Unconditional defense of Quebec's right to self-determination (i.e., to independence) by the labor movement in English Canada is essential for common struggle against the capitalist bosses.

With more than 40 percent of the workforce unionized (the highest rate in North America), and with its powerful traditions of militancy, Quebec labor has been and can again be a motor force for class struggle across the country and throughout North America. But unchaining this power requires ousting the nationalist union tops, along with their sellout counterparts in English Canada, and forging a new leadership pledged to internationalist class struggle.

A revolutionary workers party in this country would fight tooth and nail against English-Canadian chauvinism while simultaneously combating the pernicious hold of nationalism on Québécois workers. The road to the national and social liberation of the Quebec proletariat lies in the united working-class struggle for socialist revolution throughout North America. ■

Strikes Rock Germany...

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had happened, it should have been answered with a general strike.

There was a lot of sentiment among strikers to hold out for at least "six [percent] before the decimal point," but any real struggle to regain and defend workers' jobs, wages and benefits from the inroads of economic devastation in the East and the slashing of social programs, inflation and tax hikes in the West would require the full mobilization of the working class *East and West*. Because what's involved here is not a squabble over a few D-marks, but a sharp *political class confrontation*. The bourgeoisie has announced the end of the "German model" of organized class collaboration. They would like to introduce the economic policies of Reagan and Thatcher, which signals a hot war against the unions.

This confrontation with the German state is not over. Workers everywhere say they're "pissed off" about this shameful sellout, which means a stinging pay cut—*because they knew that for eleven days they had the government where it hurts*. In Braunschweig the strike continued after the settlement was announced. The ÖTV ranks—particularly transit and garbage workers—rejected the contract by a resounding 55 percent, but the bureaucrats are shoving it down their throats. Negotiations are under way for East German public employees and strikes are directly posed, but any struggle is being orchestrated by the union tops to begin after the strike ended in the West.

Right behind the public sector workers were four million metal workers, as well as construction workers and printers; already tens of thousands of metal workers and printers have walked out in "warning strikes." Traditionally, struggles in metal have been restricted to "pilot" regions—a national metal strike could set off an explosion. The *Wall Street Journal* (6 May) worried that "A full-fledged metalworkers' strike would be devastating for Germany's economy." But after the ÖTV strike and contract vote, IG Metall union leader Steinkühler is so worried that the ranks could get out of control that he wants to impose 5.4 percent for this year and 3.3 percent for 1993.

What's necessary is to bring down Kohl through workers' action. Break with social democracy—a "grand coalition" of capital will mean escalating attacks on workers, immigrants, women. What we need is a workers government to expropriate capital!

From "Social Partnership" to Class War

Since the '50s the bosses have kept the workers in line with the help of the SPD-fostered myth of "social partnership." But now, as the bourgeoisie declares open war against the working class, *Die Zeit* notes, "The social consensus is disintegrating." After swallowing the East German deformed workers state, German imperialism has grown more aggressive, seeking its "place in the sun" as did Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany leading up to World War I. And in its *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East), it has taken on new economic burdens that challenge even its tremendous strength.

The Bonn regime has bitten off more than it can chew. In Yugoslavia it bent the rest of the EC to its will by forcing recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, only to see the whole region blow up in internecine civil war. The departure of Genscher after 18 years as foreign minister, the third cabinet resignation

in a month, shows how shaky the Bonn regime is. TV coverage of German tanks in Turkish Kurdistan blowing away women and children on Kurdish New Year cost Kohl's defense minister his job. And while mocking the Americans for having to beg Bonn for money to finance the carpetbombing of the Iraqi population in its Persian Gulf "war," the Fourth Reich is accumulating its own debt "mountain."

Bonn pumped more than 180 billion D-marks into East Germany last year (168 billion in public subsidies, 15 billion in private investment). It has also invested 75 billion D-marks to further counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and another 105 billion in East Europe to turn the former deformed workers states into Deutsche Bank neocolonies. So it has to get the money from somewhere. The Bundesbank, the central banker for Europe, can put the squeeze on the capitalists of Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, etc. by keeping interest rates high. But that is not enough. The bourgeoisie is also seeking to *increase the rate of exploitation of the workers throughout Germany*.

This has been at the heart of the current offensive against the unions on the part of the bourgeoisie and government. Even before *Anschluss* (annexation of the DDR) Bonn began its campaign of slashing benefits with its so-called "health services reform." Last year they launched a concerted campaign over sick pay, with *Der Spiegel* screaming about workers "partying" on sick days (*krankfeiern*). Now, after 40 years, the CDU/FDP (Free Democratic) cabinet is demanding the reintroduction of unpaid sick days, provoking an angry reaction from the unions.

This year the wage confrontations began in steel, a lower-paid sector of IG Metall where negotiations were dragged out to the beginning of 1992. Then came the bank employees, where despite weak union organization rotating work stoppages went on for six weeks. Next up were ÖTV, postal workers and rail. Bonn intended to face down these sectors before a showdown with the Metal Workers, the most powerful union in the capitalist West. And in the middle of the ÖTV strike, tens of thousands of layoffs were announced in West German auto as part of "rationalization" schemes in the name of "international competitiveness."

Yet the steel bosses backed off from a strike at the last minute. In ÖTV, Kohl threw down the gauntlet over 4.8 percent, determined to make the union crawl. But he suffered a defeat even though ÖTV leader Wulf-Mathies sold out the ranks—who were ready to strike for a lot more, and a lot longer than eleven days. Yet with its "warning strikes" and "rolling strikes" the ÖTV leadership played by the rules of the class-collaborationist game. While Kohl got a slap on the ear,

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the unions should have *shut the country down tight*, against both the CDU/CSU/FDP federal government and the SPD-led state governments. That would have thrown a wrench in the bosses' drive against the Metal Workers and the rest of the labor movement.

East and West—Strike Together!

We wrote in May (*Spartakist* No. 95):

"Just casting a glance at the Berlin subway shows that a spark could set off a citywide strike. A common strike of all ÖTV members, in the West and the East, would really shake the country and demonstrate the strength of the working class."

On Monday, May 4, East Berlin transit workers walked out in a spontaneous strike in solidarity with their class brothers in the West, risking their own jobs in the face of mass unemployment. One after another, several barns went out. Altogether 30 out of 38 streetcar lines and a dozen bus lines in East Berlin shut down. The subway did not run at all. For 24 hours East Berlin transit was virtually closed down. At the Lichtenberg depot the gate was shut with a banner that read "Equal Work, Equal Pay!"

The old Stalinist lie that the West German workers would never fight has been burst. As a letter to the editor in the *Berliner Zeitung* said, "Mass strikes produce clarity." Now East Berlin transit workers are particularly bitter about ÖTV bureaucrats who worked overtime to get them back to work, with the threat of punitive firings hanging over their heads. But remember—the only "illegal" strike is one that loses. There were also reports of brief stoppages in Thüringen and Sachsen. The prospect of a nationwide transport strike had the bourgeoisie sweating. Joint strike action East and West is key!

The bosses and the SPD/DGB (trade-union federation) bureaucrats have tried everything to keep the workers in East and West divided, and to play them off against one another. The anti-Communist witchhunt they have been running is designed to ideologically purge the workforce and to demoralize and paralyze it. This was graphically shown in the East Berlin nurses strike last autumn, where a witchhunt at the Charité hospital was instrumental in demobilizing the strike. But now workers are increasingly sick of it, particularly when they start to *fight*. At the Lichtenberg transit depot, the city's firing of bus drivers and other workers as part of the anti-Stasi witchhunt has produced outrage among their coworkers.

Last December the Hennigsdorf steel workers occupied their plant near Berlin for 13 days against plans for a takeover and mass layoffs. On the eve of the negotiations in the West German steel industry, they were ready to strike in solidarity with their fellow workers in the West—even the picket signs were ready. Instead, with the steel bosses the IG Metall tops pulled out all the stops to get the factory occupation off the agenda before the confrontation in West German steel, and sold the workers down the river. In the ÖTV strike, the Tempelhof and Tegel airports in Berlin were shut down, but the bosses agreed with the ÖTV tops to keep open the Schönefeld airport in the East. Joint action with Schönefeld workers cutting off the new imperial capital would have had enormous repercussions. But that's exactly what the union bureaucrats didn't want.



Thilo Rückeis

East Berlin, May 4: Transport workers join West German public sector strike in wildcat strike demanding "Equal Work, Equal Pay."

The DGB even tried to hold its May Day demonstrations under the pay-for-*Anschluss* slogan "Sharing Binds." Following Kohl, the bureaucrats' idea of "solidarity" is telling the workers in the West to tighten their belts for the Frankfurt moneybags, after destroying the East German economy. Thus the arrogant union bureaucrats foster disgusting anti-"Ossie" sentiment (while as part of the witchhunt mainly "Wessies" staff their offices in the East). But the bureaucrats' appeal to Fourth Reich nationalism was hastily withdrawn in the face of outraged protest from the member unions and replaced in a number of cities, including Augsburg (the central DGB rally), Essen and Berlin, with "Solidarity Is an Obligation."

Now the banks and trusts are raking in profits like never before. For them the government has announced drastic cuts in taxes on interest and capital gains; for the workers there are draconian austerity measures. Bonn dismembered the East German health care system and is slashing it in the West, and now it wants to finance reunification out of unemployment and retraining benefits. While the SPD/DGB is verbally protesting this measure, it too is an effect of a counterrevolution in East Germany which *they* spearheaded, giving the capitalists free rein to liquidate historic gains of the East German working people. The German bourgeoisie and its helpers want revenge for its defeat by the Red Army in 1945, and want to root out any memory of the workers state in the East.

In late 1989 and early 1990, as the Stalinist Honecker regime started to crumble and masses of East German working people in the streets were demanding *real* socialism, the SpAD's predecessors, the Trotzistische Liga and Spartakist-Gruppen, intervened to fight for *proletarian political revolution from East Berlin to Moscow*, and for a *social revolution in the West*—for a red Germany of workers councils. When the working class failed to move in the absence of a revolutionary party strong enough to lead it, German imperialism mobilized its power to ram through counterrevolution by reunification. The Spartakists alone intransigently opposed capitalist reunification. Meanwhile the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism, successor to the former Stalinist ruling party of the DDR) and the rest of the so-called left were on their knees begging for reunification "one

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Spartakist



Bolesch/Fotoarchiv

Spartakist Workers Party called for workers mobilization against Nazi provocation in Halle (right), 9 November 1991, anniversary of 1938 *Kristallnacht* pogrom. Spartakist banner calls: "Workers/Immigrants: Stop the Nazis!"

Strikes Rock Germany...

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(DDR-mark) to one (West German D-mark)," and the SPD were Kohl's bloodhounds as Bonn moved in for the kill.

In the aftermath, we Spartakists called for workers' resistance against the destruction wrought by the Fourth Reich while the SPD-led factory councils were strangling workers' struggles and "co-determining" East German plant closures. From the beginning the SpAD has fought against the vicious SPD-led anti-Communist witchhunt, exposing it as a tool of the rulers to paralyze and split the workers, and demanded "Hands off Markus Wolf [chief of DDR intelligence], Erich Honecker [DDR head of state] and Erich Mielke [DDR state security minister]!" Throughout we have fought for joint class struggle by workers East and West.

Full Citizenship Rights for Immigrants

A campaign to weaken the working class by splitting it along lines of nationality is being run by a racist popular front against immigrants that extends from the CDU to the SPD, the Greens and the PDS. First they are going after the most vulnerable—those who have arrived most recently and are seeking asylum. Bonn consistently *encourages* the Nazi/skinhead terrorists by its racist policies and economic devastation. As the elections in the states of Schleswig-Holstein and Baden-Württemberg show, so far the biggest winners in the government's racist manhunt are the fascists. Tens of thousands voted fascist there—disproportionately *former SPD* voters, spurred by the racist policies of CDU/CSU and SPD. The CDU and SPD in turn use the fascist electoral successes to escalate their own attacks on immigrants.

Immediately after the ÖTV settlement, SPD candidate for chancellor Engholm announced agreement with the CDU/CSU on policies to torpedo the right of asylum and deport additional thousands of immigrants to misery and death. The defense of *all* immigrants is key to unlocking the power of the organized workers movement. As we wrote in our last issue: "The workers movement must be mobilized to fight for full citizenship rights for immigrants and those seeking asylum." An attack on one

is an attack on all. Class unity is vital to workers' struggle. Among our disenfranchised foreign-born brothers and sisters are many of the best fighters for the workers' cause.

Mobilize Worker/Immigrant Power to Stop Nazi Terror

On May 9 the fascist "Nationalen" threatened to rally with Hitler fan David Irving in the Soviet garrison town of Berlin-Karlshorst—in front of the museum commemorating the Red Army's liberation of Europe from the fascist nightmare on that day in 1945. The SpAD intervened in May Day demonstrations, in the public service strikes and in key metal plants calling for a worker/immigrant mobilization, finding strong sentiment in the ranks to stop this ominous provocation. The PDS and Greens/Bündnis 90 instead appealed together with the SPD and Heinz Galinski (head of the Berlin Jewish Community) for the Berlin Senate to ban the fascist rally, and launched a vicious violence-baiting campaign against the anti-fascists. Under the impact of the ÖTV strike and pressure from the ranks, and after the ban was confirmed, the DGB along with the SPD joined the call for a counterdemonstration at the last minute.

It was indeed a good thing that the Nazis didn't march in Karlshorst on May 9, but it was *not* a good thing that a massive presence of riot police held the residents of Karlshorst hostage all day long. It is a deadly illusion to rely on the Fourth Reich to "ban" the fascists. That same night 60 skinheads attacked a leftist pub in Magdeburg with baseball bats, clubs and iron bars, sending eight people to the hospital, one of whom, the young worker Torsten Lamprecht, died. *Murder* was the fascists' answer to the anti-working-class, "no violence" popular front.

In Magdeburg on May 9, police in front of the pub stood idly by during the attack, despite neighbors' demands that they intervene. In Berlin-Marzahn on April 24, a young Vietnamese, Nguyen Van Tu, was stabbed to death in broad daylight by skinheads, while the SPD-led Marzahn district council runs a "youth club" for Nazi/skinheads. The government turns its fascist-ridden cops loose against anti-fascist demonstrators. On May Day in Berlin thousands of cops and Federal Border Guards were mobilized first to protect the Nazi/skinhead FAP and then to tear apart the immigrant Kreuzberg district.

Obscenely, the so-called cop "union" had an official booth at the DGB rally earlier that day, and their representatives were not pleased with our placard demanding "Cops Out of the DGB!" But the cops as well as the Bundeswehr are the armed fist of the bosses' state.

Stopping fascist terror is a necessary extension of working-class struggle—strike pickets are the embryo of the workers militia. The Spartakists say: Mobilize the workers to stop the Nazis!

Kohl: The Would-Be Kaiser Sits on a Shaky Throne

Given Kohl's shaky regime, his one-liner, "I am not Willy Brandt," is the joke of the year. The Treuhandanstalt (state agency charged with dismantling the DDR economy) has changed leaderships three times (not always of its own accord), and its "scorched earth" policy was stopped by the bourgeoisie itself. They need East Germany as a low-wage, class-peace paradise and a pivot for the drive to the East.

In a world where escalating interimperialist rivalries revive great power lineups reminiscent of the years before World War I, reunited German imperialism is again probing everywhere to see how far they can go. They again want to be the masters in the Balkans and are arming the Turkish army to the teeth. At a Leipzig commanders' conference where Kohl and the new war minister, CDU hawk Volker Rühle, were present, Bundeswehr general inspector Klaus Naumann said training of German soldiers would now be "hard, challenging and similar to battle conditions" for action outside Germany. And now they are sending troops to Cambodia, where the imperialists are preparing new killing fields.

The appetites of the Fourth Reich's rulers lie now, as before, beyond its eastern borders. By bankrolling Yeltsin's counterrevolution to destroy the Soviet degenerated workers state, they expect to grab for themselves the choicest pieces of the Soviet and East European feast. But for the "New World Order" they now need a new foreign policy—which, given the price tag, is not going to be easy to orchestrate, either to the East or West. The fruits of SPD/Genscher *Ostpolitik* (Germany's "Eastern policy" first implemented by Willy Brandt) are growing economic difficulties at home and bloody civil war abroad. With his unerring nose for changing political winds, the Machiavelli Genscher jumped ship on the eve of the public employees strike.

For decades Bonn's motto has been "a European Germany," in Thomas Mann's famous phrase, as the Federal Republic sought its place as a junior partner in the U.S.-led anti-Soviet imperialist alliance. In a declaration of our international tendency published in June 1982 (*Spartakist* No. 44) when Reagan flew to Europe to bring his NATO allies into line, we noted:

"West Germany, of late Washington's most loyal NATO ally, is today the most détente-minded. But behind the 'peace-loving' image of Brandt/Schmidt's *Ostpolitik* stands the appetite to reverse the outcome of World War II and recreate a unified capitalist Germany as the dominant European power."

Today the rulers in Bonn want a "German Europe," for now not with panzers but through the D-mark, but they are still too weak to impose it. Despite protest from the Common Market countries the Germans dictate interest rates in Europe and they even occasionally try to tell the U.S. imperialists where to get off. Kohl & Co. rail about how the workers in Germany spend less time working and more time on vacation than anywhere

else in the world. "Sir" Ralf Dahrendorf threatens in the "liberal" *Die Zeit* (15 May): "Germany's public service cannot remain as it has been, nor can Germany's social services.... The necessary restructuring will be very, very painful." But the



Spartakist

Counterrevolution targeted women workers. East Berlin protesters rallied in March 1990 against childcare cuts.

German working class is still a lion blocking their way and has showed it will fight hard against this onslaught.

While Kohl & Co. dither, it is SPD chief Bernd Engholm who makes the "sweat and tears" speech on behalf of the German bourgeoisie. The SPD is aiming for the chancellor's office with offers of round table discussions, hints at "grand coalitions" and threats against immigrants and the workers.

Break with the Social Democracy!

On May Day, IG Metall chief Steinkühler questioned "whether the social provocateurs will succeed in drastically weakening the trade unions after the rival system has fallen away." Significantly, he is compelled to raise the "Russian question," although in his own way. Since it was the Soviet Union that crushed Hitler fascism, a victory that led to the planned economies of the Eastern European deformed workers states, West European capital felt compelled to tout the "welfare state." After World War II in the zones occupied by the imperialist victors, capitalism was re-established as a bulwark against Soviet "Bolshevism"—with the inestimable help of the SPD politicians and trade-union bureaucrats. Ludwig Erhard proclaimed the capitalist "social market economy," built on the crushing of mass proletarian struggles.

In the prerevolutionary situation which arose after the war the working class, in the Western occupation zones as well as the East, engaged in mass struggles to prevent the restoration of capitalist rule, demanding socialization of basic industry. But the U.S.-financed Social Democrats were determined to dissipate proletarian resistance and break the considerable Communist influence resurgent in the unions, particularly in the plant councils. The Communists were purged, militant anti-capitalist resistance was broken, and the councils themselves were turned

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Strikes Rock Germany...

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into class-collaborationist straitjackets—enforcing the reactionary plant council (*Betriebsrat*) law, passed in 1952. With the DGB's support for the Cold War Marshall Plan, workers were firmly tied politically to the state, and the state to anti-Soviet NATO.

While there was much talk of "co-determination" of workers and capitalists (an impossibility in any case), these schemes merely meant a framework to ensure the complicity of the union tops in managing exploitation and purging reds. Increased productivity was accompanied by persistently high unemployment. Millions of immigrant "guest workers" were brought into heavy industry but denied all citizenship rights. The Bundeswehr was built *under the Social Democrats* into the strongest European army in NATO. The SPD was the architect of *Ostpolitik*—designed to economically undermine the Soviet Union and the East European workers states. As German imperialism grew strong enough to again vie for great-power status, resurgent German nationalism—clothed in the "left" garb adopted by the "peace" movement of the '80s—was spearheaded by the SPD.

This was the Social Democrats' "*Modell Deutschland*" (German model). And thus the SPD naturally acted as the Trojan horse of the counterrevolution in the DDR, giving it a mighty shove so that the "competing system fell away" there. Subsequently, with their anti-Communist witchhunt, with their stranglehold on the unions and as the spearhead of the all-party manhunt against the "flood of asylum-seekers," they have sought to split, paralyze and strangle every instance of workers' resistance. This has divided workers East and West, men and women, immigrant and German. The "left," including the PDS, *all* help fan the flames of the anti-Communist witchhunt and the racist drive against immigrants, and now they seek to convince the workers that an Engholm government would be better than Kohl. This is a dangerous illusion.

The SPD blames everything in the ex-DDR on "40 years of Communism." Today East German workers are being hit in the face with the results of 40 years of social-democratic class collaboration in the Federal Republic. SPD bosses, for example, run or have run Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen, Lufthansa, Hoesch—not to mention the Deutsche Bank and the Treuhand. Steinkühler and his comrades are themselves experienced labor cops in the unions. Under the Cold War flag of "social partnership" the SPD tops have for decades managed the mass layoffs in the West and have directly attacked wages—from the Saar and Ruhr to the North Sea coast. And they were literally on the other side of the class line in the ÖTV strike in the SPD-governed states.

The bureaucracy that these "labor lieutenants of capital" have at their disposal is truly legion. This includes 30,000 union members of plant councils whose salaries are directly paid by the bosses. Among them are many serious unionists, including immigrants. But if they are to defend the workers' interests they must break out of the *Betriebsrat* trap with its "oath of secrecy" and other airtight obligations to act in the bosses' interest. The plant council makes them complicit *every* time a worker is fired and *every* time a strike is sold out.

The SPD-controlled council members sit around the table at every *Betriebsrat* meeting "in the same boat" with the bosses. And yet various fake-leftists such as the national-Stalinist DKP and pseudo-Trotskyists, followers of Ernest Mandel, in the VSP



May 21: Thousands protested "Republikaner" fascist provocation in Berlin. Spartakists (above) called for workers mobilization to stop the Nazis.

have long enjoyed the bureaucratic privileges that rubbing shoulders with the bosses in the *Betriebsräte* brings. We Spartakists fight for the complete independence of the workers movement from the bourgeoisie and its state. Our tendency in Germany was forged with the Trotskyist understanding that since 1914 the SPD has been a *bourgeois workers* party, the transmission belt for German nationalism into the workers movement; the SPD must be split in order to win its proletarian base on the road to socialist revolution.

Workers Need Revolutionary Leadership! For Proletarian Internationalism!

The ÖTV ranks threw Wulf-Mathies' stinking contract on the garbage heap but see no alternative to the treacherous ÖTV/DGB tops. Whereas workers massively joined the union at the beginning of the strike, now many are quitting. But despite their pro-capitalist leadership, the unions are today the workers' sole defensive organs. If we want to win, instead of throwing out your union card, throw out the bureaucrats who turn the unions into organs for disciplining the workers on behalf of the imperialist state, and thus risk their destruction. The SPD/DGB tops know very well that a *real* solid class struggle in East and West would sweep away not only the Kohl gang but them as well. To conduct a fight to push through and secure their own interests, the workers need a program that serves *their* class interests, not those of the bosses. We need a revolutionary leadership and party that is prepared to mobilize the working class to take on the bosses and their state in a struggle leading to the fight for power.

The bourgeoisie talks big about the "death of Communism," but the struggles of the working class the world over give the lie to these pipe dreams of a "New World Order." In Seoul, 20,000 South Korean workers struggling against superexploitation and police terror expressed their solidarity with the German strikes. In Warsaw, 15,000 came out on May Day against the capitalist regime of Solidarność leader Walesa. When Los Angeles exploded in rage over an atrocious racist provocation and desperate poverty, the American rulers answered with cop terror and troop occupation. In Berlin, May Day marchers in Kreuzberg carried signs and banners expressing solidarity with

Los Angeles.

In the Los Angeles upheaval in the U.S. and the ÖTV strike here, we have seen watershed events in two of the three leading world imperialist powers—and the third, Japan, isn't doing so well either, as the continued decline of the Nikkei stock index shows. Capitalism has in store for humanity only grinding misery, racist terror and imperialist war. The only way to root out this rotting, exploitative system is through socialist revolution.

Against the poisonous nationalism spewed by Bonn and their social-democratic flunkies it is necessary to counterpose a program of proletarian internationalism. We fight like Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht for the *revolutionary unity of the German, Polish and Soviet workers*. A resolute struggle uniting German and immigrant workers in the entire Fourth Reich would be a beacon to our class brothers and sisters to the Urals and beyond—to defend the Soviet workers state and regain political power in the face of Yeltsin's counterrevolution, with its capitalist "shock treatment" misery and murderous nationalist civil war.

Germany and its West European allies want to create a "Fortress Europe" to keep out refugees escaping the economic and social havoc they have wreaked worldwide. Hardly a day goes by without an incident of vicious anti-Semitism and racist/fascist terror. *Anschluss* turned the clock back 50 years for East German women, destroying the social institutions which provided comprehensive free medical and childcare, and driving women back to "*Kinder, Küche, Kirche*" (children, kitchen, church). Whereas over 90 percent of women worked in the DDR, two-thirds of the jobless in East Germany are now women. As the Protestant and Catholic churches drive

to re-Christianize the East, *all* governmental parties are nearing agreement on a *grossdeutsch* (Greater Germany) anti-abortion law putting women and doctors at the mercy of blackmailing clerical "counselors."

To undo this all-sided social devastation, the working class must be mobilized to fight for all the oppressed. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants—Stop Nazi terror through worker/immigrant mobilizations! Preachers, cops and judges out of the bedroom and doctor's office: Abolish Paragraphs 218/219! Down with the church tax! For separation of church and state! In the face of the destruction being carried out by the bourgeoisie, we must fight for a massive program of public works to rebuild the plants and social institutions, to build millions of quality affordable homes, to clean the filth out of the environment. We must fight for equal pay for equal work—women and men, immigrants and Germans, East and West. The DGB tops go on talking about winning a 35-hour week in 1994, but the bosses are on a drive to *increase* the workweek. The fight for massive social reconstruction, dividing up the work among all hands with a significantly shorter workweek and no loss in pay, means a revolutionary struggle.

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

"Kremlin Gold" ...

(continued from page 6)

headlined its piece: "How the USSR 'Exported' Revolution."

Yet the Kremlin dumped the Bolshevik program of world revolution as far back as 1924, when Stalin proclaimed his nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country" and embarked on the conciliationist road which led to Gorbachev's "perestroika" and culminated in Yeltsin's Russian-nationalist counterrevolution. Trotsky warned that Stalin's program would eviscerate the Communist parties, transforming them from revolutionary instruments into "left" pressure groups on the imperialist bourgeoisies. In practice, the Western Stalinist parties long ago became little more than garden-variety reformists, distinguished mainly by a nostalgic connection to the Soviet Union.

When revolutionary internationalism prevailed under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, the Soviet Union made no secret of its obligation to aid battalions of the world proletarian movement which needed assistance. One of the first acts of the Bolshevik government was a December 1917 resolution to "allocate two million rubles for the needs of the revolutionary internationalist movement" on the understanding "that the struggle against war and imperialism can be brought to a successful conclusion only if waged on an international scale." And during the Civil War and the subsequent famine, Soviet Russia openly appealed for financial aid from the world proletariat.

The leaders of the Western CPs long ago ceased to be fighters for the cause of international communism, and thus they are embarrassed by charges of "Kremlin gold." We Trotskyists continue the fight for the Leninist program of international

socialist revolution, and for the reforging of a democratic-centralist Fourth International. While sundry left groups in the U.S. invoke the 1940 Voorhis Act, which inhibits international political affiliation, as a convenient excuse for anti-internationalism, we have always insisted that this anti-Communist legislation is a "paper tiger." The Spartacist League/U.S. is proudly a section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Down with the anti-Communist vendetta!

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 552, 29 May

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Industrial Murder...

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aide to Stephen Roman, czar of Denison Mines and paymaster to a mob of Tory and Liberal politicians. Roman was a fanatical anti-Communist and anti-Semite, an emigré billionaire who idolized the World War II Slovak fascist leader Monsignor Tiso.

Roman ran his operations like a forced-labor camp. Denison's flagship uranium operations at Elliot Lake, Ontario, took a gruesome toll. "Stephen Roman's mine," wrote journalist



Canadian Press

Infamous 1958 Springhill, Nova Scotia disaster killed 75 coal miners.

Paul McKay, "was designed to maximize profit, not safety, and the bottom line was definitive":

"In [1957] alone, twenty-eight men were killed on the job and hundreds more were maimed or seriously injured. The next year, twenty-seven more died at the mine sites, and in 1959, out of 951 serious accidents at Elliot Lake mines reported by the Ontario Department of Mines, 10 were fatal.

"Despite...windfall profits, the company repeatedly ignored warnings about silica dust and radiation levels, and spent only a pittance on worker health and safety. With only minimal ventilation, the underground passageways were choked with clouds of black, sooty silica dust and deadly invisible radon gas."

—Paul McKay, *The Roman Empire*, pp. 64-65

Clifford Frame learned the business at the master's knee.

In 1984 Frame was fired when, rushing to get the Quintette coal mine in B.C. into operation, he dug the main pit in the wrong spot on the basis of slipshod core sampling, an "error" that ultimately cost Denison \$241 million. Frame resurfaced as Curragh boss in 1988 and floated his scheme to refit the Westray mine—an existing, abandoned coal pit—in order to exploit the "Foord seam."

Unstable and riddled with "traps" of compressed methane gas, the Foord has been a graveyard for Nova Scotia miners for over a century. More than 275 colliers have died in "accidents" there, many in explosions in the notorious Allan shaft (dubbed the "most dangerous mine in the world" by one mine supply company in the 1930's), which is located just 500 feet from the

Westray.

This deadly legacy below ground did not deter the profit-gouging Curragh bosses, gazing down from their air-conditioned Bay Street suites. The Foord seam, extending 18 kilometers under Pictou County, and ten meters thick in places, is the biggest lode of bituminous coal in the world. Its coal is top quality, low in sulphur (minimizing acid rain emissions from power stations) and highly efficient in energy output. According to Giacomo Capobianco, president of the Coal Association of Canada, Esso Resources was thinking of buying the mine, but wanted a year to study "technical problems, economics and safety" (*Toronto Star*, 16 May). Frame and Curragh intervened with an up-front offer of immediate hard cash, and Westray was theirs.

Blood for Votes: Clifford Frame and Donald Cameron

Now Frame needed bucks and big-name influence in order to begin operations. So he called up Nova Scotia's then-industry minister, Donald Cameron. Stellarton and Westray are in Cameron's riding, and in 1988 Cameron was running for reelection in a region where unemployment stood near 20 percent. Frame and Cameron cut a deal which was announced just hours before the polls opened.

Cameron won his seat handily.

Next, Cameron made a call to a former federal MP for the area and long-time associate of Stephen Roman—Brian Mulrooney. As a result of Mulrooney's intervention, reportedly overruling opposition within his Cabinet and safety warnings from federal bureaucrats, Frame and Cameron got their non-union coal mine (at a cost of 275 union jobs in Cape Breton). All this lobbying and influence peddling produced \$97 million in government loans and guarantees for Curragh Resources (for a \$140 million project), as well as a 15-year government contract to supply the province's publicly owned power-generating stations.

After Cameron succeeded John Buchanan as Nova Scotia's Tory premier in 1990, Westray continued to get whatever it wanted, including a series of "exemptions" from mine safety standards. The provincial department of mines permitted dangerous tunneling procedures. These were supposed to be discontinued when the shaft struck coal, but the department apparently never bothered to monitor compliance. The province also waived the requirement for an on-site, certified mine inspector. Then Westray was allowed to bring in hardrock miners unfamiliar with coal-pit operations in place of qualified (unionized) collierymen, and these men were then put to work underground on unfamiliar equipment before their training was completed. Curragh's "state of the art" mine was not even fitted with standard airtight shelters where miners could take refuge in case of an explosion or cave-in. And, inevitably, the explosion came.

We Need a Workers Revolution!

The tragedy at Westray has chiseled the brutal reality of capitalist production-for-profit into stark relief. Workers are considered raw material to be used up, their lives worth less than the equipment they operate. So now the Nova Scotia "labor" department has authorized Westray to send workers back into the mine—too dangerous for skilled draegermen—in order to "protect property that is endangered as a result of the accident" (*Toronto Star*, 23 May)! The surviving miners have been told to return to the crumbling pit or find another job.

In this tapped-out capitalist system, made more decrepit by the deep recession, there is precious little margin for health and safety. The technology exists to vent methane gas out of the coal face but, as one industry executive put it plainly, "There are techniques you can use, but they're so darn expensive...if you take all the precautions necessary they just end up being uneconomical" (*Toronto Star*, 16 May). So Curragh Resources installed "high tech" monitoring equipment at Westray, and then turned it off to keep production going. Is there an industrial worker in the country who hasn't seen the like?

Between 1985 and 1989, over 4,000 working people were killed in "industrial accidents" across Canada. In the mines alone, from Cape Breton to Northern Ontario to the B.C. Interior, 299 died on the job between 1988 and 1991. Especially in industries such as underground mining, inherently high-risk when controlled by the capitalist bandits epitomized by Clifford Frame, trade union organization provides the sole bulkhead between workers and disaster. The minimum condition for any kind of safety is to organize all the mines. Down with labor/management "safety committees," pushed by the NDP sellouts and the union bureaucrats, which subordinate safety to the bosses' interests! Effective, independent union safety committees must be established, with the power to shut down unsafe worksites on the spot. Safety is a strike issue!

Organized labor has the social power to play hardball with the vicious bastards who own Canadian industry. Miners in particular have been in the forefront of the class struggle in this

country for over a century, facing down both the mine bosses and the forces of the capitalist state. Back in 1922, when the miners of Cape Breton, organized as District 26 of the United Mine Workers of America, waged an all-out strike against massive wage cuts, the government dispatched more than 2,000 soldiers and "special police" against them, while a squadron of Royal Navy warships with marines menacingly patrolled Glace Bay harbor.

Unleashing labor's power requires breaking the grip of the do-nothing trade union bureaucrats who always surrender before the battle's even fought, preaching reliance on the parliamentary posturing of the pro-capitalist NDP. While these fakers rub shoulders with the bosses, working people are thrown on the slag heap and left to bury their dead. A determined and militant leadership of the trade union movement must be forged in fierce combat against the social-democratic sellouts who keep the proletariat on its knees before the rapacious capitalist exploiters. Most critically, we need a fighting party of our own, a revolutionary workers party to lead the hard battles for genuine workers power.

Looking out over the shattered Westray minehead, retired Stellarton collier James Turnbull murmured, "I can never forgive them for this." The working people will neither forgive nor forget. It is going to take a North American socialist revolution (and a couple of ambitious five-year plans) to turn things around, and to settle accounts with the likes of Clifford Frame and his bourgeois parliamentary accomplices. ■

L.A. Upheaval...

(continued from page 1)

integrated crowds shattered that myth along with the windows of trendy shops.

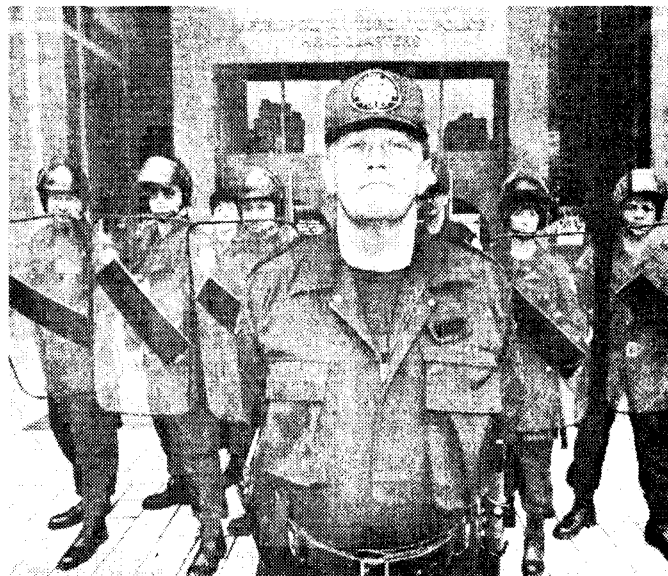
The eruption which began in L.A. comes after more than two decades in which the working class and minority youth of North America have been ground down while the rulers revel in their wealth and flaunt their racism. On both sides of the border, the cop acquittal and L.A. upheaval became a lightning rod for the anger of a broad range of people who rightly feel exploited, degraded and deprived. The explosions of rage over the Rodney King verdict, in the words of a black businessman, "have been as much about class as about race."

In their own way the black and Latino youth of South Central L.A. understood they were up against the entire rotten, racist system, as did thousands more protesters throughout the continent. Yet the impoverished residents of the ghettos and the sealed-off housing projects lack the class consciousness and social power to move from protest to the struggle for state power. To bring down this racist system requires the leadership of a fighting, multiracial workers movement that truly champions the cause of the oppressed.

Toronto: Outrage Over Racist Cop Terror

Only three days after the Rodney King verdict, 22-year-old Jamaican immigrant Raymond Lawrence was shot to death by an undercover cop in Toronto's west end. Lawrence is the eighth Toronto-area black to be gunned down by police in less than four years. In response a multiracial protest of nearly 3,000—two-thirds black, and many whites, Asians and Near Eastern protesters as well—took to the streets on May 4 in what was probably the largest ever anti-racist demonstration in Toronto.

Chanting "From L.A. to T.O., racist cops have got to go!"



John Mahler/Toronto Star

Metro Police "Public Order Unit." Racist Toronto cops have gunned down eight black men and women in last four years.

protesters denounced the unrelenting pattern of racist cop terror. From the U.S. consulate through the streets to City Hall and back up to yuppie Bay and Bloor, defiant protesters brought traffic to a standstill throughout rush hour and into the evening. The protest continued until a phalanx of cops and mounted cossacks repeatedly charged into the march on Bay Street.

At the rally outside the U.S. consulate, a spokesman for the Trotskyist League addressed protesters, receiving strong applause. "We cannot rely on the capitalist courts, we cannot rely

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L.A. Upeaval...

(continued from page 19)

on the capitalist government," he said. "The only thing we can rely on is struggle by the multiracial working class to smash this capitalist state and replace it with a working-class state."

The march was sparked when half a dozen "white power" fascists showed up across the street. Demonstrators rushed forward to clobber them, getting in a few good licks before the cops led the Nazis into a nearby bank. Later, windows were broken and a few stores looted as black, white and Asian youths marched back through the downtown shopping district.

Predictably, the bourgeois press launched an orgy of scaremongering over "mob violence" and "rioting teenagers." The cops turned the popular downtown Yonge Street strip into an occupation zone. Since May 4 it has been infested by gangs of club-wielding thugs-in-blue on the lookout for "potential rioters." Dozens of people have been arrested in police "crowd control operations," on top of the 30 anti-racist protesters arrested May 4. A black community paper reported the arrest of one group of young people who had simply gone to see a movie; they were thrown in jail and held without bail "as they have been considered a threat to security" (*Dawn*, 11 May). Free the victims of the racist roundups—Drop the charges!

Ontario's NDP premier Bob Rae joined the chorus denouncing anti-racist demonstrators for "hooliganism" and came to the defense of Toronto police chief William McCormack and his armed thugs against charges of racism. NDPers on Toronto City Council tried to get the Black Action Defence Committee to cancel a second anti-racist rally called for May 7. When the BADC refused, Rae had the nerve to show up and lecture about "tolerance" and "giving peace a chance," for which he was loudly jeered by sections of the 2,000-plus crowd. The very next day the NDP announced they would let stand the acquittal of two cops who killed black teenager Wade Lawson in 1988.

Meanwhile, black NDP MP Howard McCurdy commented on the Raymond Lawrence murder by offering tips to the racist killers on better ways to take down their dark-skinned prey:


Spread the word on how to fight racist cop terror through building a fighting, multi-racial workers party. Order your bundle of the *Workers Vanguard* special supplement.

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Outrage Over Racist Acquittal of Cops in Rodney King Case

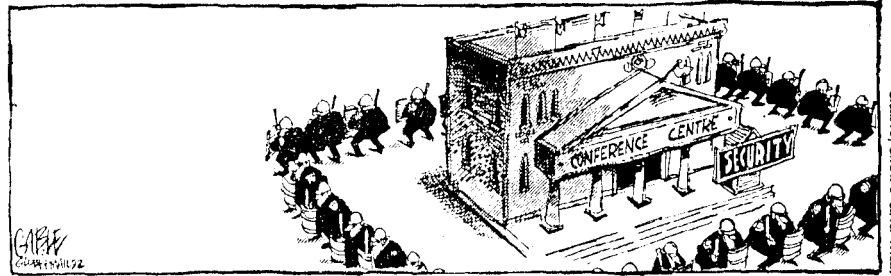
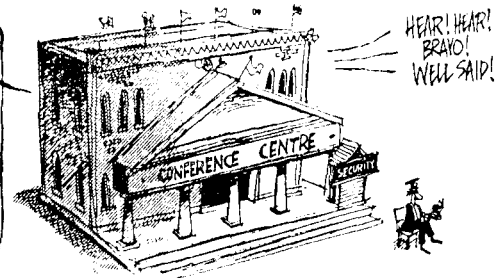


There is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!
L.A. Racist Cops Walk



Cops, Troops, Migrate Out of the Ghettos and Barrios!

LIVING, AS WE DO, IN A SYSTEM OF GROWING ECONOMIC DISPARITY AND BURGEONING VIOLENCE WE CAN NO LONGER SIT BY IDLY! WE MUST TAKE ACTION !!



"Most people would say, 'shoot him in the leg, shoot him in the arm'—it's not necessary to kill someone" (*Share*, 14 May)!

From cheering for "our troops" in last year's "Desert Slaughter" of 150,000 Iraqi men, women and children, to whipping up racist protectionism against Japanese, Mexican and American workers, the social democrats of the NDP are adamant defenders of racist Canadian capitalism. In February they railroaded three postal unionists to jail for defending picket lines during last year's postal strike. It's typical that Rae & Co. have now called on Stephen Lewis (Brian Mulroney's virulently anti-Communist, Cold War ambassador to the UN in the 1980s) to head yet another "study group" on "race relations." Maybe Lewis will invite his beloved CIA-backed cutthroats and tribalist mullahs from Afghanistan to come and train Toronto cops in community relations and handling of firearms.

Following the May 4 Toronto demonstration Bay Street's mouthpiece the *Globe and Mail* (7 May) published a venomous incitement against black youth from "crime-breeding public housing projects." "As for ordinary citizens," meaning the *Globe's* well-heeled buddies, "how many in Toronto can say that ...they will not feel a shiver of apprehension the next time they encounter a group of black teenagers on a darkened street?"

That "shiver" translates into the itchy trigger finger of the cops, and not just in Toronto. In Montreal, Anthony Griffin, Marcelus François and other black and Latino men have been murdered by the police. In Winnipeg they killed Native leader J.J. Harper. In Vancouver, they were caught on amateur video savagely beating a Chinese immigrant, in a northern repeat of the Rodney King atrocity. Each and every time the cops have been acquitted of all charges, if they were even charged at all. Now the B.C. NDP government has refused to charge the cops who were videotaped brutalizing Zhang Feng Hua; they say the sadistic uniformed thugs used "reasonable force."

The North American rulers unleash the cops to commit such racist atrocities, and then protect them from the ensuing demands for justice, because the police are the guard dogs to "serve and protect" their capitalist masters. The basic role of the police here and in every capitalist state is to defend the interests of property against the working class, the "wage slaves," as Karl Marx put it. Police attacks on picket lines and scabherding, abetted by the cowardice and treachery of the sellout labor bureaucracy, have been key to defeating strike after strike over the past decade—PATCO, Greyhound, Hor-

mel, Eastern in the U.S.; B.C. Tel, Gainers, postal in Canada. Recall the leaders of the U.S. air controllers union being hauled to prison in chains, like black slaves in the Old South. The cops and courts can't be "reformed," "sensitized" or "controlled by the community"—the whole racist system has to be swept away.

Racism "Made in Canada"

Canada's contemptible junior-league capitalists, assisted by their NDP lackeys, have long sought to sell the lie that unlike big, bad America, north of the 49th parallel there is nothing but tolerance, a "cultural mosaic" of respect, generosity and true brotherhood. But the history of Canada is the history of genocide against Native peoples, of the execution of Louis Riel. It's the history of immigration bans against Chinese and East Indians, of the internment of 22,000 Japanese Canadians. It's the history of sending Jews fleeing Nazi Germany back to death in the 1930s and then giving safe haven to thousands of Hitler's mass murderers after World War II.

It's also the history of slavery, not abolished in Canada until 1834. The first official execution conducted in the newly founded "loyalist" province of Upper Canada was the hanging of Joseph Cutten, a black slave, in 1792.

The fact that many blacks in Canada could trace their roots in the country back to the 18th century has never been a protection from the racist rulers. In places like Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and Chatham, Ontario, the descendants of slaves, both from Canada and the U.S., tried to eke out a living, a tiny minority in an overwhelmingly white country. For generation after generation and from coast to coast, blacks and other dark-skinned minorities were explicitly barred from a vast range of jobs and accommodation, not to mention clubs, theaters, stores and places of entertainment. This is not ancient history. "All through the 1940s," recounts black Torontonian Wilson Brooks, "you had to be prepared for the 'showdown.' You kept thinking: 'Can I go in there?'" Edsworth Searles recalled, "I still remember signs in the Beaches [an East Toronto neighborhood] that read: 'No Dogs, No Jews and No N-----s Allowed'" (*Toronto Star*, 9 April).

By the 1960s, while various sections of the ruling class sought to "keep Canada white," economic dictates impelled a breakdown of the color bar. Immigration from Asia and the Caribbean began on a large scale as the need for workers, primarily in low-pay service industries, grew. The major cities began to

change, first slowly, then dramatically. Today Montreal and Toronto have black communities numbering 150,000 and 300,000 respectively. Half the school-age children in Vancouver come from Pacific Rim countries. A recent UN study termed Toronto the most "ethnically diverse" city in the world.

But hard work has hardly brought acceptance from Canada's white rulers—especially for blacks. As one youth worker in



Chinn/SF Examiner

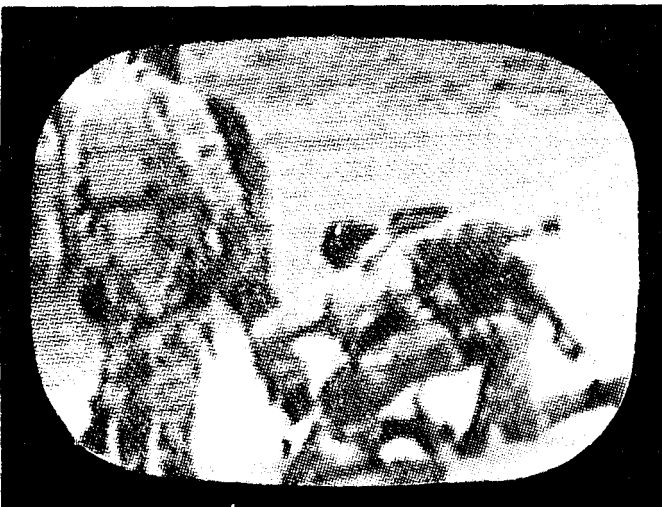
As outrage swept the West Coast after the Rodney King verdict, cops seize a San Francisco protester.

Toronto's heavily black Jane-Finch area pointed out: "Whether it's 6 in the morning or 12 at night, the bus shelters here are full with people going to work—to clean hospitals, to empty bed-pans and to keep this city running, but they get no credit." And today most of the children of these black immigrant workers can only get McJobs, or no jobs at all. Even the schools, supposedly the road to advancement, are often little more than prison camps. As one student at Toronto's 70 percent black Westview Collegiate said: "Anything that happens at school, they call the cops. They don't do that at any other school. It must be a black thing." So is the "war on drugs," that all-purpose license for the cops to terrorize black and other immigrant communities.

Canada's older generation of black immigrants carried with them ties to the Caribbean islands of their birth. But their children have come more and more to identify with the experience of black *American* youth—who today are being left to rot and die in the hellish ghettos by a racist ruling class which considers them a surplus population to be disposed of, to whom anything can be done. Listening to the same rap music, wearing the same Malcolm X baseball caps, young blacks in Canada also are increasingly fed up with the traditional, older leadership within the black community who manifestly haven't stopped one racist outrage from following another.

This anger also extends toward "radical" organizations like Toronto's Black Action Defence Committee (BADC), a favorite target of the racist media and police. Formed in 1988 in response to the killing of Lester Donaldson, the BADC has offered a mix of occasionally militant rhetoric and demonstrations with mild liberal programs and recommendations for "community control" of the killer cops. In reality, as black *Financial Post* senior editor Cecil Foster noted (11 May), "these radicals have done great service by providing the mechanism

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BCTV

Brutal Vancouver cop assault on Zhang Feng Hua caught on videotape. B.C. NDP government let the cops walk.

Demo Stops Fascists in Salmon Arm, B.C.

On April 30 over 200 anti-fascist protesters prevented a tiny bunch of Nazi-lovers from meeting in the small Okanagan town of Salmon Arm, B.C. The demonstrators, mainly high school and college students, blocked the entrance to the local community center where the notorious white-supremacist and anti-Semite Ron Gostick intended to speak. One of the Nazi-lovers drove his car into the crowd, sending a young woman to the hospital. Both the cops *and* the fascists are now threatening to lay charges against the demonstrators! Hands off the anti-fascists!

The largely lily-white Okanagan region has long been a bastion of bible-thumping Socredism where the towns are

controlled by the Chamber of Commerce and the hospitals by woman-hating anti-abortion fanatics. The area is home to the likes of the Pressler family of Salmon Arm, sponsors of the meeting. Well-known Hitlerite emigrés—whose “Council on Public Affairs” is one of a network of fascist outfits linked from Washington state to Alberta and beyond—their Pharmasave store has been boycotted and picketed by decent residents of Salmon Arm.

It's good to know that even in the Okanagan there are those who are horrified that apologists for genocide are active in their town, and are prepared to take action to do something about it.

L.A. Upheaval...

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for a riled-up community to harmlessly let off steam.”

Such “steam control” has produced exactly nothing for black youth who are now “up against the wall” of police terror and economic misery. The BADC's efforts to keep youth “in line” during the May 4 demonstration were met with unconcealed hostility. To the BADC chant “No justice, no peace,” many youth responded, “No justice, war!” Into this situation has stepped the Nation of Islam led by the sinister demagogue Louis Farrakhan, who pushes vile anti-Asian and anti-Semitic hatred while promoting the fraud of “black entrepreneurship,” a program at best to enrich a tiny handful of blacks at the expense of the vast majority. These aspiring black capitalist profiteers, with their program to divide working people according to race, are the *enemies* of the black dispossessed.

Right-wing ideologues and black nationalists presuppose that all white North Americans share some fundamental, common interest. But poor black and Latino youths in South Central L.A., older white Caterpillar workers in Peoria, Illinois, auto workers in Oshawa, Ontario and Ste.-Thérèse, Quebec, are victims of the same basic economic forces—an exploitative economic system, whose destructive effects are compounded

by the decay of North American capitalism as its rulers become ever more violence-crazed and rapacious. Millions of children—black, Latino, Asian, white; Québécois, English-speaking, immigrant—are living in desperate poverty as factory after factory, mine after mine is shut down. Millions more teeter on the edge, only a paycheck away from homelessness and destitution. The likes of Gucci-clad Brian Mulroney are despised from coast to coast and people everywhere are looking for a way to fight back. It is necessary to *polarize this society on the basis of class struggle*.

For a Multiracial Revolutionary Workers Party!

It is truly “open season on black kids,” as Wilson Head, founding chairman of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, put it. But the answer lies not in spontaneous rebellion nor in seizing the articles of consumption but in expropriating the means of production—the big industries and banks owned by a handful of big capitalist exploiters. And that takes a leap in consciousness and organization to do away with the capitalist order.

The power of Canada's increasingly integrated labor movement must be brought to bear, acting as champions of all the oppressed. As the Partisan Defense Committee underlined in a widely distributed statement, that “requires a break with the pro-capitalist social democrats and sharp political struggle against the pro-NDP union misleaders.” For mass organized labor/minority defense against racist terror!

This system can't be patched up, it must be overthrown. An integrated *revolutionary workers party* is needed to lead this fight. The revealed widespread hatred for racist cop brutality, the desire for amity among the diverse peoples of North America, the demand to eliminate poverty—all this must be directed toward a program of socialist revolution.

This generation has grown up without seeing mass social struggle, so many don't see where the power will come from to accomplish this. There *is* a basis for multiracial, multinational unity on this continent, but it can never be on the basis of “reforming” the racist status quo. Not empty appeals for “brotherhood” but the fight to smash capitalist exploitation and oppression can bring together the working people of all races and nationalities. Decisive in the outcome will be the construction of a multiracial communist vanguard such as Lenin and the Bolsheviks built in tsarist Russia's “prison house of peoples” which led the working class in a successful insurrection against the capitalist order. ■

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Nazi Provocation in Vancouver

I.S. Says Rely on the Cops

VANCOUVER—On March 21 a gang of half a dozen Nazi skinheads waving swastika flags invaded a downtown “Rally Against Racism” held to commemorate the 1960 Sharpeville massacre in South Africa. Trotskyist League supporters sought to mobilize demonstrators to defend themselves against these fascist thugs. But the rally organizers—the International Socialists (I.S.), liberals and social democrats gathered together in a misnamed “Coalition United to Fight Oppression”—let the Nazis parade with impunity! They told the crowd of 200 to *rely on the racist cops* and do nothing. “There are undercover police agents in the crowd,” announced an I.S. spokesman, “They are going to handle this.”

For the first time in over a decade, the fascists were able to strut openly in downtown Vancouver. Shock and outrage at this provocation rippled through the city, especially among the Nazis’ intended victims: unionists, minorities, leftists. Trying to cover their tracks, the I.S. simply lied in their *Socialist Worker* (April 1992), claiming “the crowd took up anti-racist and anti-fascist chants...forcing the Nazis to retreat. This mass united response effectively demoralized the Nazis, who stayed well out of the way for the rest of the rally.” Nobody who was there, nobody who saw the TV coverage, believes a word of this. Confronted with a fascist provocation at the liberal gabfest they organized, the I.S. let the Nazis march. This is *criminal*—these stormtroopers are organizing for *genocide!*

The unraveling of the deformed workers states in East Europe has spurred the growth of the fascists, who want to “celebrate” the “death of Communism” with pogromist terror, murder and genocide. In the imperialist countries the fascists are also on the rise, feeding on the economic deterioration and the “official” racism of the “triumphant” bourgeoisie. Insofar as the Cold War “socialists” of the I.S. and their co-thinkers have any influence at all, they bear responsibility for this too—because they have cheered on the forces that led and lead to capitalist counterrevolution.

Driven by fanatical hatred of the Soviet Union, the I.S. lusted for the blood of Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan, saluting the CIA-backed 7th-century Muslim fanatics who skinned schoolteachers alive for teaching girls to read. They spent a decade hailing the anti-Semitic, anti-woman, clerical-nationalist Polish Solidarność, beloved of the CIA and the Vatican. Last summer they hailed Wall Street tool Boris Yeltsin’s pro-capitalist coup as “magnificent.”

The I.S.’s anti-Communism is a direct product of capitulation to “democratic” imperialism. They take their cue from their bigger social-democratic brothers like the NDP and the British Labour Party. And their so-called “anti-fascism” is cut from the same cloth. What happened in Vancouver is by no means the first time this outfit has betrayed and sabotaged anti-fascist struggle. Their British parent group, known as the SWP, did it on a larger scale on September 24, 1978 when the British fascists of the National Front marched in London’s heavily immigrant East End. At the very same time the SWP-led Anti Nazi League led many thousands of people *in the opposite direction*, to a “Rock Against Racism” carnival miles away!

Angered by the Nazi provocation in Vancouver and disgusted



Angles

International Socialists criminally allowed swastika-waving thugs to intimidate 21 March anti-racist rally.

at the I.S.’s call to rely on the cops, 40 people came out to a Trotskyist League video showing the following week featuring the labor/minority mobilization against the Ku Klux Klan in Philadelphia in 1988. Postal, phone, brewery and municipal workers were proud to serve as marshals, ensuring the meeting was safe and orderly. The unionists and minorities who attended saw how a strategy centered on the power of labor can stop the fascists cold, in Philly and elsewhere.

Vancouver is a union town with an army of longshoremen, hospital and transit workers, woodworkers and many more, including tens of thousands of East Indian and other Asian workers, who would be eager to spike the Nazis’ deadly provocations. Mobilizing that power is linked to the fight to break the working class from the NDP social democrats, who currently rule B.C. for the bosses. We need an integrated, revolutionary workers party—one which understands that it is the bosses’ state which nurtures the fascists, holding them in reserve as an “iron fist” to be wielded against labor and minorities in times of severe social crisis. The Trotskyist League is dedicated to building just such an internationalist party that struggles everywhere against capitalism and for working-class rule. ■

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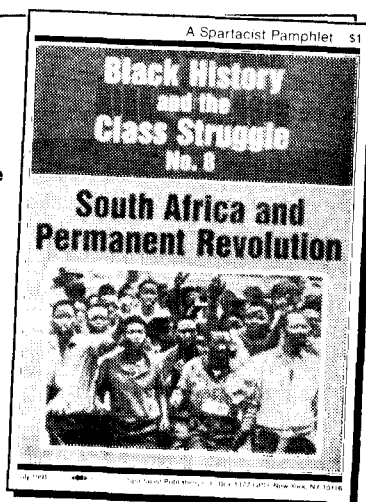
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Strikes Rock Kohl's Germany

The following article is translated from a special Spartakist supplement (25 May), published by the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

**Break with Social Democracy—
Not a “Grand Coalition” of Capital,
But a Workers Government to
Expropriate Capital!**

**Bring Down Kohl with
Workers' Action!**

MAY 22—The strike in West German public service and transport was the biggest labor struggle here since World War II and the first strike by the government workers union (ÖTV) since 1974—when they brought down the government of Willy Brandt. This wasn't about a lousy 5.4 percent. It was a provocative test of strength on the part of the German bourgeoisie with major international repercussions.

Together with the Social Democrats (SPD), they first bulldozed the East German collectivized economy and have thrown six million unemployed on the street nationally. And now there is a de facto Christian Democratic (CDU)/SPD coalition that wants West German workers to pay for the devastation caused by capitalist counterrevolution in the DDR (East Germany) and East Europe.

German imperialism is emboldened by what they see as capitalist victory over “communism” with the collapse of Stalinism, and at the same time it is under severe economic pressure as it seeks to digest the spoils. But CDU chancellor Helmut Kohl's gang and the SPD labor traitors miscalculated with the most powerful working class in Europe. They precipitated an overwhelmingly popular strike against themselves and the consequences of capitalist reunification. Moreover, the



Der Spiegel
Postal workers picket in Hamburg during public service strike. Two years after capitalist reunification, German rulers face massive working-class unrest.

strike began to spread to the East, showing the tremendous potential for united class struggle.

In spite of the government's anti-union propaganda, with the Berlin gutter press *BZ* writing about “the first rats sighted on the Kurfürstendamm,” the strike had wide support; discontent among the population turned against the regime. According to the latest polls, Kohl is the most unpopular politician in Germany next to (Free Democratic economics minister) Möllemann, and a popular joke about the “tax lie” (Kohl's election promise that there would be no tax increases to pay for reunification) refers to the new “sucker-bait surtax” (*Volksverarschungsabgabe*). With this kind of anger, it was a good time to strike, and strike hard. During the strike Bonn was playing with the idea of sending in the Bundeswehr (army) to pick up garbage. If that

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**Defend the Immigrants and the Right of Asylum!
Down with the Anti-Communist Witchhunt!**