

## Strikes Against Layoffs, Austerity



In biggest labor struggle since bourgeois-nationalist ANC government came to power, public sector workers have taken to the streets in series of one-day strikes and mass protests, including on August 24 (left) and July 23.

# South African Workers vs. ANC Capitalist Government

JOHANNESBURG, August 28—The past month has seen the largest and most significant labour struggle in South Africa since the white-supremacist regime was replaced in 1994 by the black bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC). Hundreds of thousands of public-sector workers—mainly teachers, nurses and civil servants—have hit the picket lines and taken to the streets to fight against mass retrenchments (layoffs), austerity and union-busting. On August 24, a one-day nationwide strike, organised by 12 unions representing some 800,000 workers, was called to protest the government's arrogant refusal to even bargain with the unions, instead offering a "unilateral" wage increase of a paltry 6 percent for the majority of workers.

While the ANC has mobilised the Congress of South African Students against the teachers, the strike has won support from students and parents in the black townships, especially in Soweto (near Johannesburg), a traditional centre of black militancy. Such support is all the more important since ANC spokesmen seek to blame "greedy," "overpaid" workers for the lack of money for schools, hospitals and social services. Especially notable is that the current labour struggle has also cut across the country's hard racial divide. White teachers, nurses and civil servants, a relatively privileged stratum with their own separate unions, joined with their black colleagues in last week's protest strike. A white teacher from Pretoria explained: "There is a feeling of desperation among us. That is why we are marching."

The principal unions engaged in the current strikes are part of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU),

### For a Black-Centered Workers Government!

encompassing the main body of the organised black proletariat. The leadership of COSATU is dominated by the South African Communist Party (SACP), which has long been closely allied to the ANC and holds key posts in the capitalist government of newly elected president Thabo Mbeki. Indeed, the minister of public services is SACP member Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, who is today acting as the government's hard cop against the unions led by her party "comrades." Consequently, the COSATU tops, despite a broad base of support extending from black township dwellers to white teachers, have deliberately *limited the effectiveness* of the strikes. The government has not been shut down, which the unions clearly have the power to do, but has only been disrupted by selective strikes and other actions.

At the same time, the pro-capitalist COSATU bureaucracy is under enormous pressure from its ranks to resist the

get-tough policies of the Mbeki government. COSATU general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi told the August 24 labour rally in Pretoria, "If it takes months and months of confrontation, we are prepared." But "months and months of confrontation" means a series of partial and inconclusive actions, aimed solely at pressuring the government to "negotiate" while exhausting and dissipating the workers' militancy. To win, the unions must launch an all-out strike throughout the public sector.

It is not an accident that the biggest labour struggle confronting the ANC regime has taken place right after elections in which Nelson Mandela was replaced as head of state by Thabo Mbeki, his hand-picked successor. For five years, Mandela managed to keep a lid on seething discontent among the black masses, in large measure due to his great moral authority enhanced by almost three decades in South Africa's prisons, most

of them on the notorious Robben Island. Mbeki, a generation younger, personifies the aspiring black bourgeoisie who have hopped on the "gravy train" since 1994 and now drive BMWs, wear Pierre Cardin suits and have moved into posh, formerly all-white suburbs.

In the name of "globalisation" and "efficiency," Mbeki has wasted no time in spearheading a union-busting privatization drive and labour "restructuring." Under the headline, "South African Labour Comes Face to Face with the Hard Reality of World Economy," the *London Financial Times* (29 July) wrote:

"Mr Mbeki appears to be toughening his stance. He is committed to speeding up privatisation and restructuring inefficient state-owned businesses. He is also expected to start cutting South Africa's large civil service wage bill. Both policies will mean job losses, at least in the short run."

Here it should be emphasised that about 40 percent of the black labour force is at present unemployed, and that figure is far higher in townships like Soweto. Consequently, much of the money earned by unionised black workers goes to feed and clothe numerous impoverished relatives in the townships and countryside.

As a capitalist party external to the

*continued on page 10*

### Young Spartacus

For Workers' Strike Action to Defeat Privatization, Defend Education!

**Mexico: Down With Government Repression Against UNAM Student Strike!**

See Page Six



# Court Ruling Spits on Survivors of Attica Massacre

On August 3, a federal appeals panel overturned a 1997 jury verdict awarding \$4 million to Frank "Big Black" Smith, a former inmate and survivor of the 1971 Attica prison massacre. On 13 September 1971, New York governor Nelson Rockefeller unleashed an army of state troopers, prison guards and cops to suppress a four-day prison rebellion, killing 29 inmates and then sadistically torturing many others, including Smith, who was singled out for being one of the leaders of the uprising.

While the gruesome facts of the massacre are undisputed, acknowledged even by official investigations and the judges in the latest ruling, *no one* responsible for the carnage has ever been brought to justice. In fact, in sending Smith's suit back to a lower court, this ruling also overturned the finding of liability against a deputy warden who was the only person ever held legally accountable for the massacre. The \$2.8 billion suit on behalf of 1,281 Attica inmates seeking nominal recompense for the systematic torture they suffered has already dragged

through the courts for 25 years, coming up against a wall of government lies, cover-up and obstruction. Now, in tossing out the 1997 jury verdict, the court declares that Smith has no rights which the racist capitalist "justice" system is bound to respect. Commenting on the ruling, Smith expressed his bitterness over this ongoing judicial torture: "Attica is 28 years of my life. I sleep with it, I eat with it, it's everything to me."

By the summer of 1971, Attica, a "high security" hellhole, was ready to explode. Over 2,200 inmates were subjected to miserable conditions in a penitentiary built for a maximum of 1,600. Inmates were locked in cells 14 to 16 hours per day, permitted one shower per week and one roll of toilet paper and a bar of soap a month. Reading materials were strictly censored. The men were paid slave wages of between 20 cents and one dollar per day. Prison guards routinely beat black and Hispanic inmates, who made up 60 percent of the prison population.

On September 9, inmates seized control of most of the prison and took sev-

Frank Smith, tortured by prison guards after 1971 Attica uprising, was denied \$4 million settlement by federal appeals court.



Aginis/NY Times

eral dozen guards, prison officials and others hostage, holding them in the D Yard section, where order was maintained by an inmate security squad. The declaration issued by the prisoners that night reflected the influence of the social radicalization taking place outside prison walls amid militant black struggle and mass protests against the imperialist war in Vietnam:

"WE are MEN! We are not beasts and do not intend to be beaten or driven as such...."

"We have set forth demands that will bring closer to reality the demise of these prisons institutions that serve no useful purpose to the People of America, but to those who would enslave and exploit the people of America."

Demands included political and religious freedom, an end to censorship of reading matter and mail, and improvements in sanitation, education, recreation and food.

After four days of stand-off, only minutes after the prisoners had rejected an ultimatum from the authorities, a helicopter began dropping immobilizing CS gas above D Yard. More than a thousand state troopers, backed by prison guards and cops mobilized from around the region, blasted into the yard firing their shotguns. After six minutes of cold-blooded slaughter, 29 prisoners and 10 hostages lay dead and 88 more wounded.

As the tear gas rose from the blood-soaked yard, the orgy of torture began. Hundreds of prisoners, still choking and stunned, were ordered to strip, lie face down in the mud and crawl on their bellies. They were forced to run or crawl over broken glass, sodomized, burned and made to run a gauntlet of 30 crazed, baton-wielding guards. The state then brought 62 of the inmates up on a total of 1,289 charges, all but one of which were subsequently dropped.

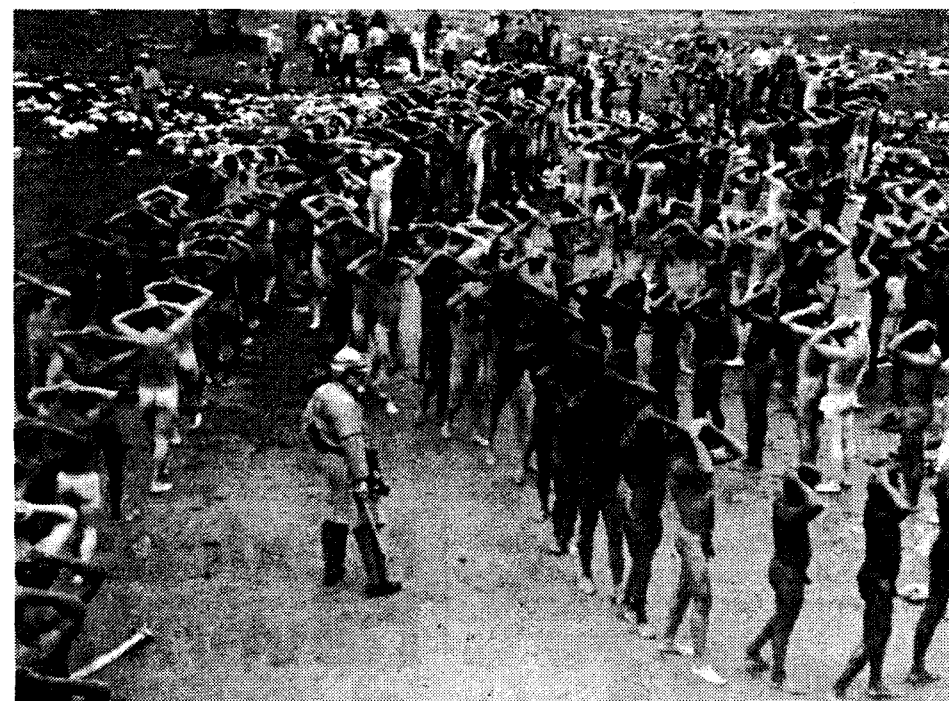
The front page of the first issue of *Workers Vanguard* (October 1971) carried the headline, "Massacre at Attica." Indicting the ruling-class criminals who perpetrated this bloodbath, we wrote:

"Rockefeller cut down the Attica prisoners in the manner of his father and grandfather before him—ruthlessly and to protect the system from which his profits spring...."

"The class responsible for Attica is responsible for My Lai, for Vietnam, for Hiroshima, for all the other massacres over which it had 'no choice'—no choice if American capitalism was to be preserved...."

"The prison system cannot be reformed; it must be abolished.... To abolish the prisons, we must abolish the bourgeois state of which they are part, and the class in whose interests that state is administered."

Today, the prison population has mushroomed to nearly 2 million, more than *five times* the number in 1971, not least as a result of the kind of laws spearheaded by Republican Rockefeller, imposing long mandatory sentences for even the most minimal drug offenses. With Republicans and Democrats alike pushing the racist "war on drugs," Rockefeller's law became a model for the capitalist rulers around the country. The astronomical growth in the prison population, overwhelmingly black and Hispanic, came in direct proportion to the sharp decline in unionized manufacturing jobs in the 1970s and '80s, as the bourgeoisie deemed as "surplus" whole layers of the ghetto and barrio masses. The Spartacist League is committed to forging the revolutionary workers party needed to lead the multiracial proletariat in smashing the racist capitalist apparatus of repression through socialist revolution. Under the rule of the proletariat, capitalist torture and racist oppression will be relics of a hoary past. ■



N.Y. State Special Commission on Attica  
After murderous suppression of rebellion, Attica inmates were forced to strip, crawl over broken glass and run gauntlet of baton-wielding guards.



TROTSKY

## Darwin, Science and Materialism

*Marxists seek to understand the world in order to change it, to overthrow the capitalist profit system through proletarian revolution and usher in an egalitarian socialist society. Our defense of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution against the assault by religious bigots flows not only from our stand for the separation of church and state but from our historical materialist world-view. Writing only two decades after Darwin's work was published, Friedrich Engels*

*explained how the theory of evolution was fundamental to a materialist understanding of nature.*

Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern science that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials increasing daily, and thus has shown that, in the last resort, Nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring circle, but goes through a real historical evolution. In this connection Darwin must be named before all others. He dealt the metaphysical conception of Nature the heaviest blow by his proof that all organic beings, plants, animals, and man himself, are the products of a process of evolution going on through millions of years. But the naturalists who have learned to think dialectically are few and far between, and this conflict of the results of discovery with preconceived modes of thinking explains the endless confusion now reigning in theoretical natural science, the despair of teachers as well as learners, of authors and readers alike.

An exact representation of the universe, of its evolution, of the development of mankind, and of the reflection of this evolution in the minds of men, can therefore only be obtained by the methods of dialectics with its constant regard to the innumerable actions and reactions of life and death, of progressive or retrogressive changes....

A system of natural and historical knowledge, embracing everything, and final for all time, is a contradiction to the fundamental law of dialectic reasoning. This law, indeed, by no means excludes, but, on the contrary, includes the idea that the systematic knowledge of the external universe can make giant strides from age to age.

—Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1892)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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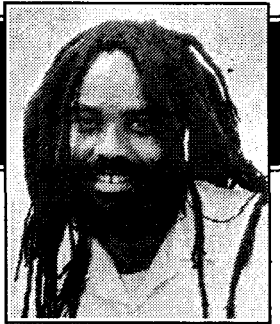
The closing date for news in this issue is August 31.

No. 718

3 September 1999



## From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal



### Another Write-Up...for Rapping!

On Thursday, August 12th, 1999, I finally got through on a call I had been trying to complete all week long: to Amy Goodman, the host of the acclaimed Pacifica news broadcast, "Democracy Now!", aired over WBAI-FM, in New York City, and over the Network, nationally. I was thrilled to get through, and, as her topic was the buzz over the imminent release of 16 Puerto-Rican Independentista political prisoners, it was a perfect opportunity to express solidarity for the brave and committed Puerto-Rican freedom fighters, who have suffered enormously in their long imprisonment at the hands of their cruel American colonizers. After speaking with relatives and loved ones of the Independentistas, Amy calmly announced to her listeners that she had a guest on the line (me) who might offer a few opinions on the controversy. It went something like this:

AG [Amy Goodman]: On the line now from a state correctional institution in Pennsylvania, after considerable difficulty, is our guest, Mumia Abu-Jamal, convicted in the murder of Philadelphia police officer, Daniel Faulkner, in 1981; in a trial that many have condemned as riddled with constitutional, and other errors...Mumia, welcome to Democracy Now;

MAJ: Thank you, Amy, it is my pleasure to be with you all at Democracy Now!

AG: Now, Mumia, I'm sure you've heard about the controversy that we're discussing this morning; the imminent release of some 16 Puerto-Rican political prisoners, under certain conditions...have you heard?

MAJ: Yeah, well, I did see some mention on this on the TV, and these are my thoughts on the issue: Under the constitution, one is allegedly allowed the rights of association. For these brothers and sisters, freedom ain't really freedom is it? First I wanna say: *Libertad para los presos políticos Puertorriqueños!* Yes, "Free all Puerto-Rican Political Prisoners!" Yeah! We're with that! But, under the U.S. government's plan they will be granted a kind of half-freedom; They won't be allowed to associate with each other, so their freedom of association is dead. Also, one of the other conditions that the government is placing upon them is the demand that they 'renounce violence.' Now, Amy—

where have we heard this before? If we look at recent world history we'll see that that was exactly the same thing that the racist government of South Africa demanded of Nelson Mandela and other imprisoned members of the ANC....

At this moment, my phone line went dead, as a guard pulled the wire from the phone jack on the wall, disconnecting me. Another guard appeared at the cell door hollering at the top of his lungs: "This call is terminated!" When I demanded to know why, he replied, "This order came down from the very top!" I immediately called to the Sgt. standing by and looking on, "Sgt! Where did this order come from?"

He shrugged his shoulders, answering, "I dunno. We just got a phone call to cut you off."

The next day, the answer came in the form of a write-up; #A69958, where I am charged with a Class I Misconduct: Unauthorized Use of the Mail or Telephone. In the write-up, the following institutional offenses are stated:

On August 12, 1999, at 0936 hours, Inmate Jamal made a telephone call to a news radio station named Pacifica Radio Network's Democracy Now. Per DC-ADM 009 News Media Relations, it states News Media Requests for inmate interviews by telephone shall be approved at the discretion of the Facility Manager. Inmate Jamal did not request from the Facility Manager permission to be interviewed by the news media. In addition, inmate Jamal placed a news reporter on his IPIN list knowing full well that the person was a reporter. This is verified by the attached documentation. Also, per DC-ADM 6.5.8, all communications between Capital Case inmates and the news media shall be conducted in accordance with DOC AND Institutional policies on visitation and telephone privileges. It should be noted inmate telephone calls are a privilege. As a result of inmate Jamal not requesting permission from the facility manager to be interviewed or speak with the news media, his telephone call was terminated after 11 minutes of speaking with the news media.

This write-up was signed by a Lt. and a Captain of the guards.

In order to produce this write-up, ranking staff members had to ignore their own rules; for example DC-ADM 009-1, Nov. 11, 1996, which states:

News media are entitled to the same access to specific inmates as the general public. There shall be no special arrangements made for news media interviews with specific inmates. *All communications between specific inmates and the news media shall be conducted in accordance with the DC-ADM 812 (Inmate Visiting Privileges) and the DC-ADM 818 (Inmate Telephone Calls)....* [d] If an inmate wants to talk with a news media representative over the telephone, it is his responsibility to place a collect call to the reporter under guidelines set forth in DC-ADM 818 - Inmate Telephone Calls.

There are rules—and there are *rules*, it seems especially when the state deals with Mumia Abu-Jamal. Here, the DOC writes me up, using a rule that no longer exists! But since when have rules gotten in the way of corrupt bureaucracies which follow the foul winds of their political masters? Clearly, we are not working with "rules": we are working with the state's exercise of its political power to censor a captive who they, once again, have acted to silence. But, like before, it ain't working. I thank Amy and her fervent politically adept listeners at "Democracy Now!" for that great opportunity to show solidarity. You keep on listening...I'll keep on rapping!

14 August 1999

© 1999 by Mumia Abu-Jamal

**Join the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Contact the Partisan Defense Committee. In New York: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013-0099; phone (212) 406-4252; E-mail: 75057.3201@compuserve.com. In Chicago: PDC, P.O. Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60680-2867; phone (312) 454-4931. In the Bay Area: PDC, P.O. Box 77462, San Francisco, CA 94107-0462; phone (510) 839-0852.**

**Urgently needed contributions for Mumia's legal defense, which are tax-deductible, should be made payable to the Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked "Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense," and sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Avenue, No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001. If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Hwy., Waynesburg, PA 15370.**

## Letter

### On "Community Policing"

Los Angeles  
29 July 1999

Dear Comrades,

I intended to write this when WV No. 715 (11 June) was current. Taking advantage that it is only one issue past, and more important that LAPD cop terror will remain, I'll proceed.

Mainly, I thought that the addition of a sentence or two on "Community Policing" would have given the article "L.A. Cops Gun Down Homeless Woman" a richer quality for those readers we wish to reach. These murderers on bicycles are a direct product of the Christopher Report of the Independent Commission stemming from the Rodney King beating. The idea being to weed out the "bad apples" from the LAPD, and to replace its "philosophy" of a professional crime fighting priority with one of "service to the public." Or...how to mask the nature of the state by proclaiming reformability of its racist guard dogs.

Aside from children living on the streets or someone like Mumia on Death Row, who else in America would be more vulnerable than a person who is black, a woman, homeless, and mentally ill?

That a shopping cart of someone like Mitchell was the premise for state murder is the epitome of the lie—by those like Michael Zinzun of the Coalition Against Police Abuse, the L.A. County AFL-CIO or the ACLU—that reform via a new philosophy or oversight can be had. As the Report of the Independent Commission stated in Chapter 5: "Community policing proponents believe that, as this communication continues, a cooperative

and mutually beneficial relationship will develop between the police and the community that will ensure police accountability to the community...and will promote a better understanding by the community of the realities of police work." Later stating, "Recognizing this promise, the chiefs of police of 10 major metropolitan departments, including New York...issued a position paper endorsing community-based policing on April 16, 1991." Chapter 5 ends with the "demand": "Above all, the LAPD

must understand that it is accountable to all segments of the community." Here, Ramona Ripston (ACLU), the "left" and all progressive peoples have resolved for a better society.

Additionally, shopping carts in L.A. among the whole of the plebeian mass are as common as Rolls Royces are on Rodeo Drive. This hideous event makes it open season on thousands of homeless and hundreds of thousands of working poor who literally depend on shopping carts to function in daily life on the streets of L.A.

One more point. I thought the mention of Willie Williams as the replacement for Darryl Gates as Chief of Police

could have said a couple of more words than that he was "a black man." He was chosen as an "outsider," and as a black. But he was also chosen from one of the most notorious police departments in the country. Williams is from the city, and was from the police department that has imprisoned/bombed MOVE, and put Mumia on Death Row. He was the face of "reform"! The L.A. black nationalist bookstore Esowon had Willie Williams toward the end of his stay in L.A. as Chief of Police be a *guest* at their store for a book-signing!

Comradely,  
Benny Rodriguez

## No Conditions— Free Puerto Rican Nationalist Prisoners Now!

*The following is an August 28 protest letter by the Partisan Defense Committee to Attorney General Janet Reno and President Bill Clinton.*

We demand the immediate, unconditional release of the 16 Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners, including supporters of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) and Los Macheteros, recently offered "clemency" by the Clinton administration. We denounce the outrageous conditions for clemency, including that the prisoners renounce "violence" and refrain from associating with other advocates of independence—a direct attack on the right of political association. We

demand freedom as well for independence fighter José Solís Jordán, convicted in Chicago in March in a transparent frame-up trial.

The FALN and Los Macheteros prisoners have already served at least 20 years of prison sentences that range up to 90 years chiefly on the charge of seditious conspiracy—a "crime" which targets the government's perceived opponents for nothing more than exercising their right to political association and activity. Such thought-crime measures were reinforced last week in the New York City court ruling upholding Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman's seditious conspiracy conviction, based solely on his speeches, over the 1993 World

Trade Center bombing.

That the U.S. government demands that these prisoners renounce "violence" is obscene in its hypocrisy. The U.S. has maintained a grip on its Puerto Rican colony through a century of bloody terror, from the 1937 Ponce massacre of pro-independence protesters to the assassination and imprisonment of countless other fighters for Puerto Rican national rights. The continuing protests against the U.S. Navy bombing, range in Vieques demonstrates the deep resentment of the Puerto Rican masses over their colonial oppression.

Free the Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners now!

# Capitalist Russia in the "New World Order"

We publish below the third and concluding part of this article. Parts One and Two appeared in WV Nos. 716 (9 July) and 717 (6 August).

The capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed the USSR was bound up with and driven forward by the fracturing of the Soviet Union along national lines. The vanguard of anti-Soviet nationalism during the regime of Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev was in the Baltic republics—Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Under the guise of "independence,"

## PART THREE

the fascist-infested Lithuanian Sajudis and the other Baltic nationalists were driving headlong to capitalist counterrevolution in the years before 1991. Nonetheless, the secession of these three small westernmost republics would not in itself have threatened the existence of the Soviet Union.

To understand how the counterrevolution played out in the non-Russian republics of the USSR, it is necessary to have some sense of their history preceding the Bolshevik Revolution. Throughout the Cold War, the tiny Baltic republics in particular were painted by CIA-sponsored rabble as "captive nations" whose centuries-long quest for independence had been snuffed out when they were annexed to the Soviet Union a year before the 1941 German invasion. This is a gross rewriting of history, even leaving aside that the Baltics were finally incorporated into the USSR only after the Red Army drove out the genocidal Nazi occupation forces near the end of World War II.

The Baltic peoples, like the Poles and Finns, had long been subjects of the tsarist empire, which was loyally supported by the local capitalists and landlords. In Estonia and Latvia, the cities were largely Russian, German and Jewish while the countryside was completely dominated by German baronial estates. In Lithuania, which had been part of a powerful kingdom with Poland until the late 18th century, Polish landlords held sway in the countryside while Vilnius was populated by Poles, Jews and Russians. The October Revolution polarized the region along class lines, with the peasant masses of Estonia and Latvia in particular flocking to the red banner of Bolshevism while the capitalists and landlords turned to national "independence," under the aegis of the imperialist powers. Short-lived soviet governments in the Baltics were drowned in blood by German and Polish troops, paving the way for the brutal interwar capitalist regimes which were tiny carbon copies of Baron Mannerheim's Finland and Pilsudski's Poland.

The Central Asian regions of the former tsarist empire, in contrast, were literally catapulted from medieval feudalism into the 20th century in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution. This helps explain why under Gorbachev there was no significant agitation for independence

a largely Russian workforce, and remains to this day decidedly pro-Moscow. Thus, the counterrevolutionary Ukrainian separatist movement which arose during the Gorbachev years had relatively little support in the eastern Ukraine.

As in the case of Russia, the counter-

RUKH while collaborating with them against the central government in Moscow. Immediately after his election as president of the Ukraine in December 1991, Kravchuk joined Russian president Boris Yeltsin in signing the formal death warrant of the USSR.

To understand Kravchuk's rapid transformation from a Soviet Stalinist ideologist-in-chief to the central leader of a Ukrainian capitalist state it is again necessary to bear in mind the Marxist precept that being determines consciousness. Contrary to Western imperialist propaganda, the Soviet Union was not a monolithic state ruled from the Kremlin with an iron hand. The federated structure of the USSR was real and important. The bureaucracies administering the various national republics had a substantial degree of political autonomy and control over local economic resources. Correspondingly, they developed a sense of national identity vis-à-vis Moscow. In the early 1970s, longtime CPU leader Peter Shelest was purged by Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev for "national-autarkic deviationism."

Nonetheless, as long as the privileged social position of the Ukrainian bureaucrats was based on the Russian-centered workers state with its collectivized economy, they professed Soviet "patriotism." However, in 1989-91 a new and more favorable opportunity for them suddenly opened up. The rapid disintegration of the central Soviet government under the Cold War pressures of Western, especially American, imperialism raised the imminent prospect of a Ukrainian capitalist state. At the core of the newly cohered anti-Soviet nationalist wing of the CPU was the "industrial faction" represented by the likes of Leonid Kuchma, head of a rocket factory, and Volodymyr Slednev, director of a metallurgy complex in the Donets Basin. These were the elements of the bureaucracy in the Ukraine best placed to take advantage of the restoration of capitalism. And they expected that with that would come easy access to the money markets of Wall Street, the City of London and Frankfurt.

## Proletarian Internationalism vs. Great Russian Chauvinism

In a sense it is easier to understand why significant elements of the Ukrainian bureaucracy supported the breakup of the USSR than why their Russian counterparts, who rallied behind Yeltsin, did so. The Russian Stalinist "patriots" and their fascist and right-wing nationalist allies denounced Yeltsin as a traitor to the "fatherland" and an agent of American imperialism. The formal dissolution of the USSR also produced a split in the "democratic" movement in Russia as a number of anti-Communist Russian nationalists who had backed Yeltsin against Gorbachev now turned bitterly against him.

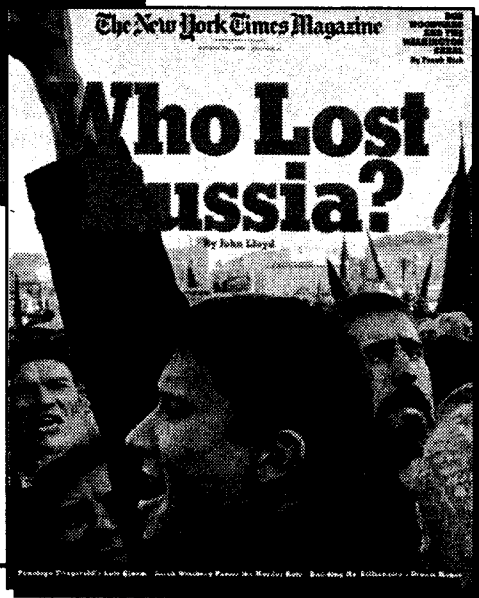
One of these, Mikhail Astafyev, exclaimed: "I will forgive the communists everything if they restore the state which the democrats have destroyed" (quoted in Bruce Clark, *An Empire's New Clothes*). Astafyev and his cothinkers did not, of course, mean by this the nationally federated workers state born of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. They meant a Russian-dominated imperialist state, stretching from the Polish border to the Pacific Ocean, which is how they perceived the USSR. Ironically, Russian Stalinist-derived "patriots" shared with American imperialist ideologues like Henry Kissinger the same false view that the Soviet Union was the successor to



Financial Times

## 1992

**Boris Yeltsin greeted in Washington by President Bush, rejoicing over capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed Soviet Union and immiserated millions of working people.**



## 1999

**As anti-American sentiment deepens in Russian society, New York Times Magazine (15 August) rehashes debate over whether U.S. imperialism should have helped Moscow build up strong capitalist economy.**

in Kazakhstan, half of whose population was Russian or Russian-speaking, or in the other Turkic-speaking Central Asian republics. The Central Asian branches of the *nomenklatura*, the Stalinist bureaucracy, took advantage of the weakness of the central Soviet government to expand their already considerable autonomy, but were willing to remain in a looser federated state as proposed by Gorbachev's abortive new Union treaty in 1991.

Key to the breakup of the USSR were developments in the Ukraine, with its population of 50 million by far the largest and most important national component of the USSR after Russia. The western Ukraine, which had been dominated by Polish landlords before the revolution and was occupied by Pilsudski's Poland in the interwar years, was historically the center of the most reactionary currents of Ukrainian nationalism. The eastern Ukraine, on the other hand, had been industrialized by Russian capitalists in the last years of the tsarist autocracy, with

revolution in the Ukraine was *not* led by longtime anti-Communist activists but by a section of the Ukrainian Stalinist bureaucracy. The key figure here was Leonid Kravchuk, who had been head of the ideology department of the Communist Party of the Ukraine (CPU). In that capacity, Kravchuk had devoted his career to denouncing Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism in the name of Soviet patriotism. As late as the beginning of 1989, he condemned as "anti-constitutional" the program put forward by the right-wing nationalists of the Ukrainian People's Movement for Restructuring (RUKH).

Kravchuk then did a complete political about-face and steered a course toward a "sovereign" capitalist Ukraine. Calling upon Ukrainians to become "masters of their own land, their own fate," he waged a successful faction fight against the more Moscow-loyal elements of the CPU. He simultaneously stole the political clothing of the anti-Communist nationalists of

Spartacist



August 1991: Bush welcomed in Kiev by Ukrainian Stalinist leader Leonid Kravchuk, who pushed through drive for an independent capitalist Ukraine. In 1993, Ukrainian miners launched massive strike against ravages of capitalist restoration.





the tsarist empire with a thin veneer of red coloration.

But the Soviet Union was *not* a Russian imperialist state. It was a genuinely multinational state—whose planned economy had laid the basis for great strides forward by the more backward peoples subjugated under the former tsarist empire—despite the Great Russian chauvinism embraced by the core of the Kremlin bureaucracy. The Soviet economy was based on extensive economic integration and the Soviet armed forces were multinational in composition and not loyal to Russia as such. But with the collapse of the Soviet degenerated workers state, the floodgates of nationalist antagonisms were opened wide.

Trotskyists opposed Great Russian chauvinism and the pro-capitalist secessionist movements in the Baltics and elsewhere. We fought to restore the voluntary federation of Soviet republics envisioned by Lenin, under which all peoples of the USSR would have the right to self-determination except when this was simply a rallying cry for capitalist counter-revolution. The Soviet Union could have been preserved and economically reintegrated only through a workers political revolution based on *proletarian internationalism*, that is, the same basis on which it was originally established. As we wrote in early 1992:

"The remnants of the Stalinist bureaucracy—whether military or civilian—have no intention of opposing the drive toward capitalist counterrevolution, despite occasional foot-dragging. Only the working class under a Leninist-Trotskyist leadership can save the Soviet Union from dismemberment, capitalist exploitation and impoverishment, fratricidal war and imperialist subjugation. It is urgently necessary to build a new Bolshevik party in the Soviet Union, uniting the most class-conscious workers with revolutionary Marxist intellectuals. Only the program of proletarian internationalism, carried out by a communist vanguard with a multinational cadre, can reforge the Soviet Union on the basis of national equality and socialist economic planning."

—“Breakup of Soviet Union Spells Disaster,” *WV* No. 542, 10 January 1992

In the aftermath of capitalist counterrevolution, however, the call to “restore the Soviet Union” advanced by Stalinist-derived but thoroughly bourgeois-nationalist Russian “patriots” became a fig leaf for support to a Great Russian *derzhava*, or “great power” (see “Why Marxists Do Not Raise the Call ‘Restore the Soviet Union,’” *WV* Nos. 638 and 639, 2 February and 16 February 1996). In the context that all the states in the area are capitalist, this call would appear to many people in the non-Russian republics as a barely camouflaged version of the open demands for their national oppression and domination that currently emanate from the Kremlin. Such chauvinist appeals are poison to the fight for socialist revolutions to sweep away all the capitalist states in the former Soviet Union.

### American Imperialism Weakens Yeltsin's Russia

Yeltsin was no less a Russian nationalist and would-be imperialist than his Stalinist “patriot” and fascist opponents in the “red-brown coalition.” In agreeing to the independence of the Ukraine, Kazakhstan and the other Soviet republics, he was engaging in a strategic retreat, to use military terminology. Liberal Russian academic Lilia Shevtsova wrote that Yeltsin “adopted a foreign policy aimed at preserving Russia’s status as a superpower and securing Moscow’s position as an ally, not simply a partner, of the United States” (Gail W. Lapidus, ed., *The New Russia: Troubled Transformation* [1995]). It would be more accurate to say that Yeltsin aimed to achieve Russian domination over the territories and peoples of the former USSR and to restore Russia as a major world power through an alliance with the U.S.

Capitalist counterrevolution and the concomitant breakup of the USSR precipitated a debate within American ruling circles over policy toward post-Soviet Russia. Should Russia, under the “friendly” government of Boris Yeltsin, be cultivated as an American client state?

Or should Russia be regarded as a potential rival power, currently weakened but still formidable, and treated accordingly?

In a sense, this debate paralleled that between the “hawks” and “doves” of the Cold War era. The most vocal anti-Russian hawks were the same—Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger. In contrast, Richard Nixon, a rabid Cold War anti-Communist, argued in 1992:

“Yeltsin is the most pro-Western leader in Russian history. Under those circumstances then, he deserves our help. Charity, it is said, begins at home and I agree. But aid to Russia, just speaking of Russia specifically, is not charity. We have to realize that if Yeltsin fails the alternative is not going to be somebody better, it’s going to be somebody infinitely worse.”

—quoted in Karen Dawisha, ed., *The International Dimension of Post-Communist Transitions in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (1997)

Nixon fancied himself a hardheaded strategist of American global interests. But his view of post-Soviet Russia was fundamentally false. He saw the Yeltsin regime as analogous to a right-wing, pro-American government in a major Third World country—Suharto’s Indonesia, South Korea under the generals, Iran under the Shah before 1979. But Yeltsin’s Russia was not, even potentially, an American neocolony. It had inherited a powerful, nuclear-armed military apparatus from the USSR. And as the reputedly pro-Western foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev stated in 1994, Russia expected to be treated by Washington as an “equal partner.” The amount of American financial support necessary to secure Yeltsin’s Russia as a politically stable ally would have been massive, many times greater than the money Washington has shelled out over the years to South Korea or Indonesia.

Post-Soviet hawks like Brzezinski and Kissinger recognized that Yeltsin’s Russia was not a Third World dependency but an aspiring “great power.” In Brzezinski’s view, “If not openly imperial, the current objectives of Russian policy are at the very least proto-imperial. That policy may not yet be aiming explicitly at a formal imperial restoration, but it does little to restrain the strong imperial impulse that continues to motivate large segments of the state bureaucracy, especially the military, as well as the public” (*Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1994).

Similarly, Kissinger holds that imperialist expansionism is deeply ingrained in the Russian national psyche: “Even sincere reformers may see in traditional Russian nationalism a unifying force to achieve their objectives. And, in Russia, nationalism has historically been missionary and imperial” (*Diplomacy* [1994]). Like Brzezinski, Kissinger was critical of Clinton (and before him of Bush) for being too soft toward Moscow: “America’s leaders have been reluctant to invoke the traditional diplomatic brakes on Russian policy for fear of provoking Yeltsin’s (and, before that, Gorbachev’s) presumed nationalist opponents.” In effect, Brzezinski/Kissinger argued that it didn’t matter if an extreme Russian nationalist, virulently hostile toward the U.S., took power in Moscow as long as Russia was and was kept weak.

While the Clinton administration did not openly endorse the anti-Russian hawkish line advocated by Brzezinski/Kissinger, it adhered to it in practice. Thus in 1994 Washington announced its intent to extend NATO to Poland and other East European countries formerly part of the Soviet bloc, a move implemented early this year. U.S. officials claimed NATO’s expansion to the borders of the former USSR was important to “safeguard democracy” in Russia. Russian general Leonti Shevtsov responded, “To safeguard the American people, why not let Russia put a few divisions in Mexico, right along the American border?”

While pursuing a policy of military containment, U.S. imperialism made no attempt to buy off the Yeltsin regime, much less a broader layer of Russia’s new capitalists. Consider that every year the U.S. gives Israel \$3 billion in military and economic aid. By contrast, the total

amount of aid given to the Yeltsin government during the first four years of its existence was a mere \$2.6 billion, and half of that was tied to imports of American agricultural products. Since Russia’s population is 147 million, U.S. aid amounted to \$17 *per capita*—the price of two tickets to a Saturday night movie in the U.S.! Or take another comparison. The American capitalist class has been paying Yeltsin & Co. a little over \$500 million a year for services rendered. Last year, Disney CEO Michael Eisner alone received \$575 million in salary, bonuses and stock options.

### “Who Lost Russia?”

The debate over U.S. policy toward capitalist Russia was recently revisited in a *New York Times Magazine* (15 August) cover story headlined “Who Lost Russia?” The article prominently cites Har-



Suau/Time

Yeltsin launched October 1993 army assault on Russian parliament in which hundreds were killed.

vard economist Jeffrey Sachs, architect of the “shock therapy” implemented by Yeltsin prime minister Yegor Gaidar in the early 1990s. Complaining about the paucity of U.S. financial aid to Moscow, Sachs says: “It does make you wonder. Were there people in the Administration who wanted Russia to fail, to be weak?”

When Sachs resigned as an adviser to the Moscow regime in 1994 after Yeltsin sacked “radical reformer” Gaidar, he blamed Washington’s stinginess for the downfall of his Russian protégé, writing a bitter diatribe, “Betrayal: How Clinton Failed Russia” (*New Republic*, 31 January 1994). The very title indicates a fundamental misconception of the American government, the Russian government and relations between the two. Clinton is, to paraphrase Friedrich Engels, head of the executive committee of the *American bourgeoisie*. No one would contend that U.S. president Harry Truman betrayed or failed Japan when in 1945 he dropped A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But, Sachs would doubtless respond, Japan was then an enemy of the U.S. while Yeltsin’s Russia is a strategic ally.

That was, to be sure, the official diplomatic line. The reality is that the American bourgeoisie has regarded Russia as a potential rival power.

Echoing the Yeltsin government, Sachs called for American financial aid to Russia on a scale comparable to that provided to West Europe under the Marshall Plan at the beginning of the Cold War in the late 1940s-early ’50s. In his 1994 article, Sachs noted how Dean Acheson, U.S. secretary of state at the time of the Marshall Plan, argued for the need to support pro-American governments:

“The [Russian] reformers also counted on the backing of large-scale Western aid, which never arrived. From a tactical point of view, the Western goal should have been the one articulated by Acheson, to help ‘the elements now in control...to retain control’.... We failed at each key turn, and have stood by as the reformers have seen their power slip away in the tumult.”

In the late 1940s, the American ruling class feared, and rightly so, the prospect of “red revolution” in West Europe. Hence they undertook the Marshall Plan and other aid programs to prop up the unstable bourgeois regimes in the region. As Truman told a group of American Congressmen in 1947: “We’ll have to provide a program of interim aid relief until the Marshall program gets going, or the governments of France and Italy will fall, Austria too, and for all practical purposes Europe will be Communist” (quoted in Philip Armstrong et al., *Capitalism Since World War II* [1984]). But with the destruction of the Soviet Union, the American ruling class was convinced there is no longer a danger of revolution in Russia—or anywhere else, for that matter.

### Rise of Anti-Western Russian Nationalism

The main political fault lines in post-Soviet Russia emerged early on as two of Yeltsin’s top lieutenants—Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi (a former Soviet air force general) and parliamentary leader Ruslan Khasbulatov—went into opposition to the “shock therapy” being pushed by Washington, especially through the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In October 1993, backed and indeed prodded by the U.S., Yeltsin deployed army units to shell the parliament building—the same “White House” where he had launched the counterrevolution in August 1991—and consummated a bloody presidential coup. In the aftermath, Yeltsin pushed through a new constitution enshrining a strong presidency and a very weak parliament, whose lower house was appropriately called the Duma, after the impotent “advisory” council under the last tsar. We wrote at the time (*WV* No. 590, 17 December 1993):

“A revolutionary workers party in Russia would have fought to independently mobilize the working class and its allies against Yeltsin’s bloody assault on parliament, which was aimed at consolidating his bonapartist rule and eliminating what was seen as an obstacle to the imperialist-dictated ‘free market reforms.’ In fighting not only to bring down Yeltsin’s counter-revolutionary regime but against all the capitalist-restorationist, chauvinist scum, it was necessary to bloc *militarily* with the Rutskoi/Khasbulatov forces defending parliament, but without giving an iota

*continued on page 14*

### Spartacist pamphlet

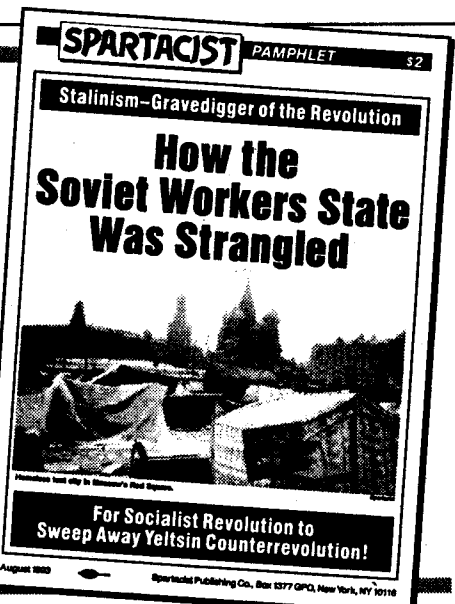
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# Young Spartacus

## Mexico: Down With Government Repression Against UNAM Student Strike!

AUGUST 29—Facing rising threats of a government crackdown, the striking students at Mexico City's National Autonomous University (UNAM) are at a critical point in their struggle. Sparked by a government plan to impose tuition fees that would eliminate even the limited access poor and working-class students currently have to public higher education, the strike at the 270,000-student university has lasted over four months, the longest in UNAM's history. This attack is part of a broader "austerity" plan favored by all wings of the Mexican ruling class, and demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The widespread support the strikers have won among working people, who face a related assault on their livelihoods under the IMF plan to privatize state-owned industries, has been crucial. From the beginning, workers from the STUNAM campus workers union and the Union of Electrical Workers (SME) have been key, joining students on the strike barricades. Yesterday, hundreds of thousands of trade unionists joined in a protest against privatization in Mexico City, overflowing the mammoth Zócalo square.

Government attempts to break the student strike have escalated over the last month. On August 24, hundreds of rightist students, among them many thugs in white bandannas armed with pipes, sticks and shrapnel bombs, attacked over a thousand striking students, who managed to repel them. As we go to press, President Ernesto Zedillo, who has railed against the student strike as "brutal aggression," announced that UNAM must open by September 1. Appealing to right-wing students to break the strike, Zedillo effectively called for more police-sponsored thug attacks on students.

On August 4, Mexico City mayor Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas unleashed riot cops in a vicious attack on students picketing in front of a strikebreaking registration center. More than 100 student strikers were severely beaten and arrested. Defending this brutal repression, Cárdenas said, "The Mexico City police intervened and will do so as many times as necessary." An August 13 march of 50,000, including a contingent of hundreds of STUNAM workers, protested the repression.

Our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM) and the Juventud Espartaquista (JE) youth group responded to the cop attack with a leaflet the next day headlined "Cárdenas' Police Attack the UNAM Strike—Drop All Charges Against Student Strikers! For Strike Action by the Unions Against Privatization and to Defend Public Education!" The leaflet warned against illusions in Cárdenas' "left" bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), a capitalist party no less committed than Zedillo's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the right-wing Party of National Action (PAN) to imposing the IMF's austerity plans, includ-



Strike by UNAM students against government attack on public higher education is now into its fifth month. AP

### For Workers' Strike Action to Defeat Privatization, Defend Education!

ing through bloody state repression. Our comrades concluded with the demands: "Free, quality education for all! For open admissions and no tuition! Stop the union-busting privatization schemes!"

At the same time, the International Communist League elicited statements of solidarity from unions, student organizations and others as part of an international effort to defend the UNAM strikers and the workers supporting them. Particularly noteworthy were statements from the powerful Transport and General Workers' Union and National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in South Africa. The NUM statement headlined, "Education Is a Right and Not a Privilege!" Other statements have come from Australia and France, as well as from the Vancouver local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Pasadena, California branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers, which condemned the attack on the strikers as "state-sanctioned tyranny." The Merseyside Port Shop Stewards of Liverpool, England, themselves pitted for several years in a bitter struggle against union-busting, wrote: "We strongly condemn the, Cárdenas Government in Mexico for the brutal oppression of the UNAM student strikers."

In an August 7 interview on KPFA radio in the San Francisco Bay Area, a representative of the Partisan Defense Committee called for messages of support from local unions to the striking students. On August 19, the Spartacus Youth Clubs at the University of California in Los Angeles and Berkeley held campus speakouts in defense of the UNAM strikers. The SYC speaker at UCLA linked our support for the UNAM

strikers with our opposition to the imperialist "free trade" rape of Mexico under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), declaring:

"As Marxists, we combat the economic nationalism which seeks to pit workers

in the U.S. against their class brothers and sisters north and south of the border.... We fight for common class struggle by U.S. and Mexican workers against the U.S. imperialist beast—represented by both the Democrats and Republicans—and its PRI, PRD and PAN lackeys in Mexico."

As it attacks and threatens the student protesters at UNAM, the Mexican government is massively escalating its bloody repression in Chiapas, which has been under military occupation since the New Years' 1994 Zapatista (EZLN) uprising launched at the time NAFTA was imposed. The indigenous inhabitants have lived in terror, subjected to beatings, "disappearances" and outright massacres. Now, under the pretext of the construction of a new freeway through the Montes Azules region, Zedillo has shipped in over 10,000 new troops. Many students are enraptured with the EZLN, and have organized marches and aid caravans in their support. While defending the Zapatistas from state repression, the GEM has argued against the petty-bourgeois EZLN's program of pressuring the bourgeois state (via the PRD) for concessions through negotiations.

In its hysterical media campaign against the student strikers, the Mexican ruling class has denounced them as crazed leftist "ultras" who follow the orders of the Zapatistas' subcomandante Marcos. Clearly the intent is to set these student militants up for attack, jailing and worse. Many students who were arrested on August 4 fear there may be criminal

### International Solidarity with UNAM Strike

The collage features several letters and notices:

- Merseyside Port Shop Stewards:** A letter from Liverpool, England, dated August 5, 1999, expressing solidarity with the UNAM strikers.
- National Union of Mineworkers:** A letter dated August 11, 1999, stating "Education is a right and not a privilege!"
- Transport and General Workers' Union:** A notice dated August 19, 1999, expressing support for the strikers.
- Chibelin Union of Students:** A notice dated August 19, 1999, expressing support for the strikers.
- NALC:** A notice dated August 6, 1999, expressing support for the strikers.

Trade unions, student groups and others have responded to ICL campaign for international solidarity, including (clockwise from top left) Liverpool dockers, South African miners and transport workers, Australian students and California postal workers.



charges still pending against them. As one student remarked, "In Mexico, you learn that you have a legal charge when the police knock at your door to take you away."

Currently, the government, the media and UNAM rector Barnés are hailing a proposal by a group of eight "emeritus" professors as a way to end the strike and give power back to the administration. This strikebreaking proposal was narrowly voted down at an August 14 meeting of the General Council of the Strike. But this proposal continues to be promoted, including by the STUNAM and SME union misleaders. In this way, the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats show how their outlook is counterposed to that of the many workers who have mobilized to defend the UNAM strike.

Throughout the strike, the GEM/JE has warned against illusions in the cur-



Fernandez/Reforma

**August 4:** Student strikers face bloody attack by riot cops unleashed by Mexico City mayor and PRD leader Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (near right).

García y Gustavo/Imaginatina



bourgeois PRD. The popular front is a specific form of class collaboration, in which the reformist parties of the working class make an alliance with the bourgeoisie in order to impede workers' unrest and the potential for a socialist revolution.

"extramuro" classes must be stopped with workers strike picket lines in all the facilities. A strike means: "Everyone stops! Nobody works!"

This attack shows a fundamental point we Marxists have made from the first day of the strike: cops are not "workers in uniform" but the attack dogs of the bourgeois state. The presence of cops in the university, affiliated to STUNAM, is an immediate danger for the union itself and for the student strike, as well as for any action the STUNAM may be involved in. "Auxilio UNAM" cops out of the university and STUNAM!

No illusions in the PRD, a bosses' party! The attack against the strike has been a calculated move by Cárdenas and the PRD, using the cops in the name of law students who were trying to break the strike by registering for the new semester. Breaking the students' heads is the way in which Cárdenas wants to show the Mexican bourgeoisie, its imperialist masters and the rightist PAN that it is the best candidate to represent the interests of the capitalist class in the coming presidential elections through an alliance between the PRD and the PAN. The current situation shows that to achieve even a basic democratic right such as access to education requires a revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

Pushing utopian plans for building a "university at the service of the people," as the Partido Obrero Socialista and En Lucha do at the university, only serves to sow more illusions in the bourgeoisie.

Spartacists say: No to the dialogue with the rectory! No to the servile proposal of the "emeritus"! It is necessary to continue the strike until victory is achieved, and that requires allying with the social power of labor. For joint strike actions by workers and students in defense of free education and against privatizations! Free, quality education for all, in the city and the countryside!

What is needed is the building of a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the working class to state power. The greatest obstacle to this is the ideology of bourgeois nationalism, which aims at portraying everyone as simply "Mexicans." In counterposition, we Spartacists advance proletarian internationalism. As a sample, we bring today greetings to the university strike from powerful unions from South Africa to Canada and the U.S., especially the powerful unions of miners and transport workers of South Africa. The proletariat has no fatherland! Our anthem is not the bourgeoisie's national anthem but the proletariat's *Internationale!*

As American Trotskyist James Cannon said: "Our party is a party of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletarian revolution is the only solution to the problem of the working class, and all our work must lead to that goal." Such is the basis of Spartacist politics. Break with the bourgeoisie! No illusions in the bourgeois PRD! Forge an international Leninist-Trotskyist party! For new October Revolutions around the world! ■



Duilio Rodríguez

**STUNAM campus workers have joined in defense of UNAM students. Union contingent on August 24, when rightist students and other thugs launched violent assault on strikers.**

rent misleadership of the student movement and of both the official trade unions tied to the ruling PRI and the "independent" unions, which are no less subordinated to bourgeois nationalism, if often via the more "leftist" coloration of the PRD. The GEM's Trotskyist politics drive some centrist groups crazy. In a shrill and demagogic article in their 3 August *El Internacionalista* supplement, the Internationalist Group (IG) declares that the GEM/JE's exposure of the role of bourgeois nationalism as the chief obstacle to Mexican workers' class consciousness "is nothing else but beautifying the mechanism of white terror with which the semi-bonapartist regime of the PRI-government has propped up its power for more than 70 years!"

The IG claims "it would be enough just to remember the destiny of the hundreds of rail workers, who as a consequence of their strike in 1958 *against* the union bureaucrats were jailed and after a decade in the prisons of the PRI, they were still there when the university students arrested in 1968 arrived there." It is telling that the only examples of violent state repression they list in this article are those perpetrated by the PRI! Indeed, the very day after this article was published, Cárdenas unleashed his riot cops against the student strikers. This reveals the softness toward the PRD which is behind the IG's constant harping on the "Cardenista popular front."

As the GEM noted about the IG in a July 26 leaflet (excerpted in WV No. 717, 6 August), "At the core of their politics is a mythical 'popular front' around the

But there is no mass workers party in Mexico, and the Mexican proletariat has been tied historically to the bourgeoisie by means of bourgeois nationalism, pure and simple.... Thus, by means of its 'popular front,' the IG tries to obscure the class nature of the bourgeois PRD, dressing it in red." And with the PRD desperately seeking an alliance with the rightist PAN, the IG's camouflaging of this bourgeois-nationalist party as a "popular front" looks even more obviously fake.

In the course of this strike, the GEM/JE have become known as the Trotskyists who advance a revolutionary internationalist program to defend public education and defeat the bourgeoisie's attacks on the working class. A GEM spokesman addressed the rally in the Zócalo at the conclusion of the huge August 13 march. As he rose to speak, our comrade was greeted with cries of "Go, Espartaco, go!" We reprint his speech below in full.

\* \* \*

The Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League, greets the thousands of people who gathered today at this Zócalo in defense of free education.

This student strike has gone beyond the boundaries of the university and found sympathy and active support among key sections of the working class, such as SME, STUNAM, SITUAM [campus workers union at Metropolitan University] and others.

The strike is now at a crucial moment. The fight in defense of public education, which is part of a broader struggle against the privatizing schemes directed against the working class, can only go forward if the unions also go on strike. By themselves, students lack any social power. What is needed is that labor flex its muscles through strike actions to stop production and services. That the student strike has lasted so long is due to the support received from university workers, reinforced by brigades of workers from other powerful unions. The rectory's plan to undermine the strike by carrying out

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## Spartacus Youth Club Class Series and Events

### NEW YORK CITY

Meet the Marxists on Campus:

NYU: Wednesday, September 8, 4 p.m.; BMCC: Thursday, September 9, 12:30 p.m.; Columbia University: Friday, September 10, 4 p.m.

SYC Class Series:

Revolutionary Marxism:  
The Fight for a Socialist Future

First class: *Marxism: A Guide to Action*, September 21, NYU, 7:30 p.m.  
For room and information: (212) 267-1025

### VANCOUVER

SYC Class Series:

Marxism and World Revolution  
First class: *Smash the Capitalist State Through Workers Revolution!*

Tuesday, September 14, 6 p.m.  
University of British Columbia  
Room 212, Student Union Building  
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353

### BOSTON

Down With State Repression  
of UNAM Strike

Mexico: Students, Workers Protest  
IMF Austerity Attacks on Education

Saturday, September 11  
Time and place to be announced  
For more information: (617) 666-9453

### TORONTO

- Eyewitness Account -  
Victory to the UNAM Strike!  
Mass Student Strike in Mexico

Thursday, September 16, 7 p.m.  
U of T, International Student Centre,  
Riddell Room, 33 St. George Street

SYC Class Series:

Smash the Capitalist System  
of Racism and War!

First class: *Marxism and the State*,  
Wednesday, 22 September, 7 p.m.  
For room and information: (416) 593-4138

Poverty Is Violence—Socialist Revolution the Answer!

# Why I Joined the Spartacus Youth Club

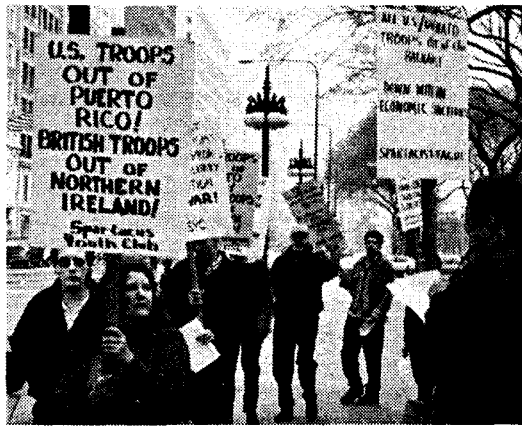
We publish below an August 14 statement by a new member of the New York Spartacus Youth Club.

by Anna Woodman

One year ago I was starting work on a photographic documentary on welfare reform in New York City as my senior thesis project at NYU. I was uninvolved with politics at the time, but I was drawn to the subject because I was beginning to understand that the poverty in the city was a systematic violence. Most of the student body successfully ignores the world outside the Village, and I had always been angry at what I saw as apathy in my fellow students. However, I was just as politically inactive as they, because I had no political grounding and found every attempt at action to be a dead end.

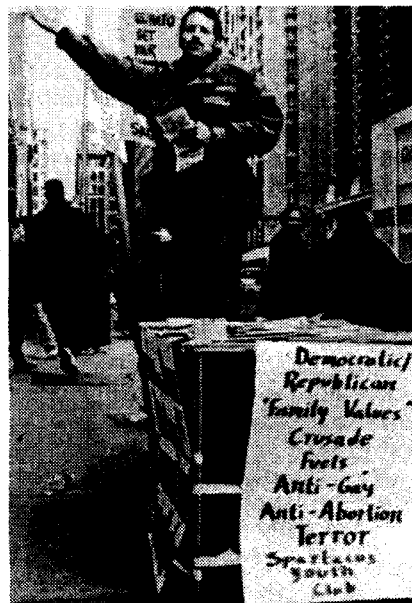
When I was really young and knew I wanted to be a photographer, I thought the most valiant kind of work to do would be to travel to Africa and take pictures of sad and starving children, as a way to invoke the consciences of those with the power to help them. Later I moved on to volunteer work and vegetarianism. I came to realize that the problem with this sort of moralistic, self-congratulatory do-gooderism is that it maintains the status quo rather than making a fight to end the conditions one is confronting. It disappears the actual causes from public discourse.

But I still had no theoretical grounding, so I was confused about what effective



Young Spartacus

**SYCs in action: April protest against British prime minister Blair in Chicago; March speakout at New York University. Join us in the fight to do away with racism, poverty, imperialist war through workers revolution!**



Lara/Washington Square News

ness, even though the clues had been around me all along. My family had always struggled to get by, and no matter how hard my parents worked or how smart they were, contrary to the popular myth of the infinite possibilities under capitalism, they were never going to have financial comfort or security.

It was never clear how my siblings and I were going to be able to afford college. I grew up in Oklahoma, which was the place where those Native Americans who weren't slaughtered were driven, and where in the present day their remaining descendants face extreme oppression (they have the highest poverty rate of any minority group in the nation) while the remnants of their culture are commodi-

the natural make-up of society that I had previously held—that the purpose of the state is to mediate opposing groups in order to keep peace, that the police force exists to protect innocent people from criminals, and that the U.S. is a progressive force in international politics.

To argue that Marxism is an outmoded idea, no longer relevant to today, is to refuse to see our epoch in relation to a historical progression. In the French Revolution, the bourgeoisie overthrew feudalism and came to power. The bourgeoisie is still in power in most places, and class society and production based on the profit of a small, powerful minority at the expense of the rest of the population is still in place. The existence of social classes—the division of society based on the relationship to the means of production—means that the bourgeoisie is never going to work in the interest of the working class. Capitalism played a progressive role in its early stages in laying the groundwork for huge technological progress, but the creation of the industrial proletariat, the exploitation of the working masses and whole sections of the planet by the imperialist superpowers, has made possible and necessary the socialist revolution.

The bourgeoisie and the nation-states that work in their interest will not passively give up control of the wealth of the planet; the entire system of capitalism and the machinery of the state must be overthrown. In a socialist society, the wealth can actually be used in the service of the entirety of the world's population. This is not a utopian goal; it means to this end are concrete and attainable. We look to the 1917 Russian Revolution, which created a true workers state in which political power was in the hands of the working class with the Bolshevik Party providing leadership. Its degeneration into Stalinism was not an inevitable consequence of human nature nor of the "failure of communism," but was a result of specific material circumstances.

Trotskyists seek to make new October Revolutions. We understand that the state is, in Lenin's words, "a special organization of force: it is an organization of violence for the suppression of some class" (*State and Revolution*). The irreconcilable antagonism of the two major classes means that the state serves the will of the class in power. In the revolution, we will transform the centralized organization of modern society into a means of accounting and organization rather than of force, but the first step is the dictatorship of the

proletariat, in which the working class wields state power over the bourgeoisie on the road to a classless society and abolishing all exploitation. In the present construction of society, the police serve the interest of the capitalist class and not the majority of the people, and the U.S. as a major imperialist power seeks to preserve its own power and wealth—lies about wars fought in the interest of human rights are exposed in instances such as Kosovo, where the U.S. rained terror on the Serbian population under the guise of protecting the Kosovars from the dictator Milosevic.

It is important to note that I came to revolutionary consciousness through an intellectual progression, not out of an experience of struggle. My generation was born at the moment of the end of the Vietnam War, so in our lifetimes in this country we have seen very little social struggle. Counterrevolution in the USSR occurred before we were very mature, so we have never witnessed a world superpower that presented itself as an alternative to capitalism. Because we have experienced no precedent from which to doubt the permanence of the system we live under, we have little impetus to look beyond reformist politics or even to believe that true change is possible. Trotsky describes the youth of revolutionary Russia: the experience of the revolution "cut them free at one blow from conservative forms of life, and exposed to them the great secret—the first secret of the dialectic—that there is nothing unchanging on this earth, and that society is made out of plastic materials" (*The Revolution Betrayed*).

This conception of society is something that is very difficult to learn and internalize in the face of a seemingly contradictory experience. Trotsky's description of the position of youth who were born after the revolution, in a time of political repression and little mass struggle, is strikingly similar to the choices we face today: to participate in the government bureaucracy and make a career, to submit silently and retire into professional careers or personal affairs. We can go back and learn the history we never learned in school and take responsibility for what we know, making it our duty to think and be involved, or we can pretend that the stability we have grown up with will last forever and that those facing specific oppression should fight alone for whatever meager gains they can.

I joined the SYC when I was convinced that the Trotskyist program is the most powerful tool in the hands of the working class to make a worldwide socialist revolution; I want to learn to implement that program in immediate struggles and to build the party that provides the necessary leadership to make a victorious revolution and lay the groundwork for a classless society. ■



Shames/Focus

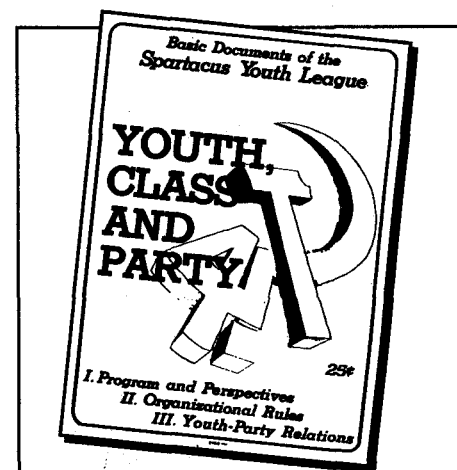
**Homeless family in Los Angeles. Immiseration and racist oppression are endemic to capitalist profit system.**

political struggle was. Political involvement on campus was very limited; for the most part, animal rights activists were rappelling down Main Building, and the rest of us just dyed our hair circus colors or got really extreme piercings as a trendy sort of social protest. So in search of a more concrete approach to reality, I threw myself into research around the national welfare reform law, which had been passed in 1996. I began to meet welfare mothers, interview city bureaucrats and photograph at demonstrations. People were dying and going homeless because of the city reform program, and 52 percent of its children were living in poverty, while the city was saving \$500 million a year in labor expenses by forcing welfare recipients to work for under minimum wage.

What this did was to transform my off-handed angst about the state of the world into an awareness of a real and pressing crisis that was caused by the overall economic and governmental system. The welfare situation heightened my aware-

fied as a tourist industry. Racism, misogyny and anti-gay bigotry were rampant and open, most rabidly within religious groups operating under the guise of "morality." It was almost impossible to get an education in the public schools, where individuality was frowned upon and many of the brightest students turned away out of boredom and anger. This was the "freedom" that we were constantly reminded we enjoyed under capitalism in the U.S.

A little while into my research my boyfriend told me he was a communist and brought me to a Spartacist League class on basic Marxism. I couldn't tell Trotsky from Stalin at the time and had no idea what a social class was either. What struck me about Marxism was that there is a concrete way to learn to analyze the social forces that create the oppression that is so endemic, and that the working class has the power to overthrow capitalism and create a livable society. This gave me the basis from which to question the assumptions about



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## Evolution...

(continued from page 16)

We are all part of the human race, descended from common ancestors; race is a social and not a biological concept.

Both leading presidential contenders for the 2000 elections, Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Al Gore, now support the teaching of creationism in the public schools. But the bourgeoisie as a whole is not ready to give up on evolution yet. The primary religion of America's ruling class is profits: advances in science increase the profits of the capitalists and, importantly, increase the effectiveness of the imperialist army. A *New York Times* (13 August) editorial declared that "Deep sadness is the most sensible response to this week's decision by the Kansas Board of Education to downgrade the teaching of evolution in the state's public schools." The governor of Kansas, Republican Bill Graves, denounced the decision as "a terrible, tragic, embarrassing solution to a problem that didn't exist."

### "Death of Communism" Fuels Religious Reaction

The drive to eliminate evolution from schools, and promote religious superstition in general, is not just the doing of fundamentalist Christian preachers who see Mephistopheles lurking behind every science book. While the bourgeoisie may mourn a potential loss in American science capacity as harmful to their interests, the rise of the religious right as a political force in American society is the natural outcome of the policy the *whole* bourgeoisie has followed particularly



In historic 1925 Tennessee trial, Clarence Darrow (right) defended John Scopes for defying state law against teaching evolution. Tennessee ban was not overturned until 1968, as social struggles for black equality and against Vietnam War swept U.S.

crats. These reactionary attacks on the rights of youth, and especially women, to express their sexuality serve as a powerful lever for social control.

With the Yeltsin-led capitalist counter-revolution in the USSR in 1991-92, both capitalist parties, intoxicated with "death of communism" pipe dreams, moved to enthusiastically slash welfare and public assistance programs, while blaming poverty on the bad morals and lack of "family values" of the poor. Accompanying this was a pronounced shift in liberal opinion, reflected strongly in changed attitudes toward the intrusion of religion into public life. Noted evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould, who initially led the charge against the introduction of "creationism" into educational curricula, now argues in a piece in *Time* (23 August): "Science and religion should be equal, mutually respecting partners, each the master of its own domain, and with each domain vital to human life in a different way." Gould,

er of black and minority youth. Busing programs have been abolished—the bourgeoisie no longer feels the need to make even a pretense of integrating the schools. Inner-city schools are little more than holding pens, complete with armed guards and metal detectors. Prisons are one of the fastest-growing industries in America, since it's easier to jail youth who have no future than to give them one. Heavily promoted by the religious right, school voucher schemes, which will strip away what little resources the public schools have in order to fund private schools, are gaining ground around the country. Education is a right, not a privilege! The SL and the SYC call for: Free quality education for all! Nationalize the private universities—For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all!

### Materialism vs. Religious Obscurantism

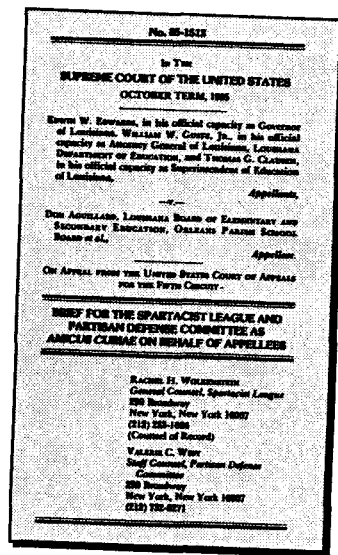
The bourgeoisie has not always supported the intrusion of religious dogma into the school curriculum. When the capitalists needed an educated working class to fill skilled jobs, they needed good public schools to train the people who would later work for them. Although the 1950s were rife with religious superstition, after the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik satellite and followed this with the first manned space flight, the frantic American bourgeoisie pushed for a massive increase in public science education in order to keep U.S. technological capacity from falling behind.

Today, the capitalists are not disposed to provide anything but the most rudimentary educational skills to most of the population. Not only do they not want to cut into profits in order to pay to educate working-class and minority youth for whom they can't provide jobs, it's easier for them to rule over an ignorant population in the grip of religious backwardness. Bourgeois criticism of the Kansas decision focuses concern on the difficulties top students may face in winning acceptance to Ivy League schools. The children of the ruling class, for the most part, do not attend public schools; evolution is unlikely to be deleted from the Exeter curriculum, or that of the Ivy League schools, anytime soon.

While adamantly fighting for the separation of church and state, Marxists

defend the right of individuals to religious belief as a private matter. But Marxism as an outlook is hostile not only to organized religion but to religious and social backwardness in general. In particular, organized religion—whether Christianity or any other—serves to enslave women and fuel anti-gay bigotry by propping up the family, the chief institution for the oppression of women. A revolutionary vanguard party must be the tribune of the people and fight for all the exploited and oppressed.

Marxists are materialists; we understand that the laws of nature are determined by the motion of matter, not by ideas in men's heads, much less by a mythical supernatural being. We defend evolution not least because we seek to break workers and youth from all forms of religious obscurantism, spiritualism and idealism and win them to a scientific materialist understanding. In the words of Karl Marx, religion is "the *opium* of the people," seeking to solace the dispossessed and downtrodden with the lie that



1986 amicus brief by SL and PDC opposed teaching of "creation science" in Louisiana public schools. Available for \$4. Order from: SPC, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

at least things will be better in an imagined afterlife and thus to reconcile them to the poverty and oppression of class society. Against the stultifying narcotic of religion, we advance an understanding of how the physical and social world works in order to arm the proletariat with the knowledge that it can intervene to change society and create the best possible conditions of life for all humanity. Only socialist revolution internationally, placing the proletariat in power and laying the basis for the elimination of class society as a whole, can usher in a world of material abundance and creative development for all.

The fact that historic achievements in scientific knowledge are today being pushed aside in the schools by religious gobbledygook is a sign of the advanced stage of decay which capitalism has reached. The fight for free, quality, integrated education for all, for the defense and furtherance of science, for the separation of church and state, can only be fulfilled through socialist revolution. ■



Maple/Woodfin Camp

Religious bigots in Kansas City besiege abortion clinic, 1986.

since the end of the Vietnam War and the subsequent Carter administration of the late 1970s.

The Vietnam War was a disaster for the U.S. ruling class. Not only was U.S. imperialism defeated by the heroic workers and peasants of Vietnam, but the bourgeoisie found that they could no longer mobilize the population behind their war aims. The bourgeoisie needed a way to recover from the "Vietnam syndrome" and made a shift to the right, resorting to, in the words of writer Gore Vidal, "the tried-and-true hot buttons: save our children, our fetuses, our ladies' rooms from the goddess enemy." The push for increasing religiosity did not come from right-wing Republicans, but rather began under Democrat Jimmy Carter, as a way to "morally rearm" the population so that the ruling class could carry out its program of an anti-Soviet war drive abroad and increased austerity and racist repression at home.

Under Carter's presidency, references to being "born again," sin and Satan entered the political mainstream. In 1977, both Democrats and Republicans joined in passing the Hyde Amendment, which abolished federal funding for abortions just four years after abortion was legalized, essentially eliminating this right for poor and working-class women. This was followed by laws raising the "age of consent," hysteria about teen pregnancy and drives to enforce abstinence—again supported by both Republicans and Demo-

who once openly acknowledged the influence of Marx and Engels on his thought, was sufficiently shaken by the "death of communism" propaganda to proclaim that the destruction of the Soviet Union proved that "Marx's economics has failed spectacularly" (see "Stephen Jay Gould and the Mismeasure of Marx," *WV* No. 563, 13 November 1992).

Reporting on the retreat in the scientific community in the face of religious obscurantism, an article in *Scientific American* (September 1999) writes: "Now, at the turn of the millennium, comes a movement bent on reconciling science and religion." There are now numerous academic conferences dedicated to this theme and American institutions of "higher" education offer over a thousand courses on "science and faith." The annual symposium of the Society of Neuroscience was treated to a paper on the "God module," a spot in the brain supposedly responsible for religious feelings. What next, psychosurgery as a cure for atheism?! Today's liberals frequently find themselves occupying the same terrain that "creationist" zealots were on in 1985, supporting religious education in public schools alongside science.

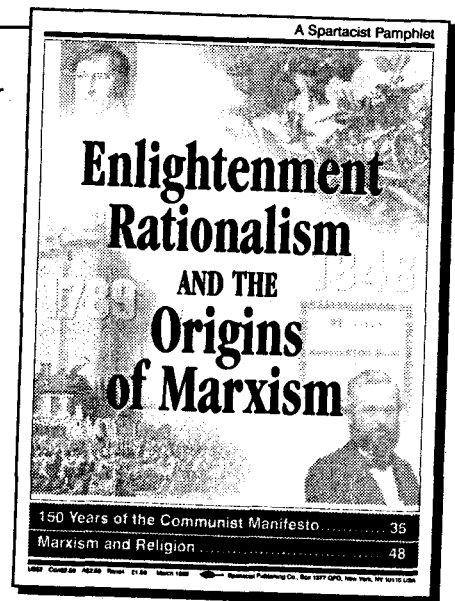
The elimination of evolution from the curriculum is part of a general assault on public education, itself part of a broader assault on the living standards of the working class. The destruction of affirmative action programs denies higher education to even a token lay-

This pamphlet reprints presentations given by SL Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism. Also included are "150 Years of the Communist Manifesto" and "Marxism and Religion."

In the retrograde climate of post-Soviet reaction, the struggle to reassert the validity of the program and purpose of revolutionary Marxism is crucial for our fight for new October Revolutions.

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# South Africa...

(continued from page 1)

workers movement, the ANC would not shrink from seeking to smash the trade unions if this were necessary to defend its class interests. Only a year after the ANC came to power, Mandela unleashed the cops against a 1995 municipal workers strike while his government demagogically denounced nurses for going on strike around the same time. While Mbeki has made no secret of his hostility to the fundamental needs and aspirations of the workers, the left face of the ANC regime is provided by the reformist SACP. To retain its posts in the Mbeki government, the SACP leadership is under increasing pressure to demonstrate its loyalty to the masters of the Jo'burg stock exchange and their senior partners in Wall Street and the City of London by supporting the government's assault on the organised working class. The ANC has threatened on more than one occasion to dump the SACP if it did not toe the line in pushing through capitalist austerity measures.

The inner contradictions of the SACP—a bourgeois workers party, as Lenin described such reformist parties based on the working class but committed to a thoroughly bourgeois programme—could not be clearer and more acute. A recent article in the SACP journal *Umsebenzi* (August/September 1999) acknowledged: "Leading Party comrades find themselves (in their capacity as ministers and trade union leaders) on both sides of the public



Thabo Mbeki meets with U.S. vice president Al Gore before ANC leader's election as South African president. As Mbeki government moves to intensify austerity, gold miners demonstrate in Pretoria in July against closures and layoffs.



Reuters photos

ment, where there would be an important role and full democratic rights for coloureds (mixed-race), Indians and other Asians, and those whites who accept a government centrally based on the black working people.

## ANC's Neo-Apartheid Regime

Ten years ago, few people in South Africa would have envisioned or even thought possible that Communist Party ministers would be breaking strikes by black unions. How has this situation come about?

During the 1980s, the explosion of mass black struggle, centred on the combative trade-union movement and extend-

of whom saw themselves as revolutionaries, to the aspiring bourgeois nationalists of the ANC.

By the early 1990s, decisive sections of the white ruling class and their senior partners in Washington and London had moved to *co-opt* the leaders of the tripartite alliance in an attempt to restore social order and weaken the power of the black union movement. Thus in 1994, Mandela's ANC came to power in a "power sharing" agreement with the white-supremacist National Party, while the legal structure of apartheid (e.g., the pass laws, Group Areas Act) was dismantled. However, the economic basis of the old apartheid system—the superexploitation of black labour by the white capitalists—remained. The "new" South Africa can thus be defined as neo-apartheid.

What is the reality today five years after the proclaimed end of apartheid? Under rigid apartheid based upon the totalitarian suppression of the black proletariat, the capitalists ensured that there was virtually no social spending for the overwhelmingly black majority. It's no different now—hospitals without staff or emergency rooms, clinics with no medicine, schools without electricity or water. In the townships, like Soweto, Lamontville and Gugulethu, schools still have no libraries or laboratories. In the cities and especially in the rural areas, there is no adequate housing, health care, public transportation for the black masses. Black babies die moments after birth in state hospitals which are on the brink of total breakdown. More than a fifth of the South African black working class—including 23 percent of all pregnant women—carry HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

In the rural areas, the black poor—especially women—are facing savage attacks, and even greater misery and oppression. Rural black labourers are routinely murdered and assaulted, while the white racist perpetrators get off in the courts. A few months ago, a Mpumalanga farm worker's *entire body* was spray-painted with toxic paint by a white farmer who accused him of trespassing.

The situation of the strategic core of

the black industrial proletariat is no better and in some ways worse than under the old apartheid system. The industrial murder last month of 18 miners in a methane gas explosion in a Carletonville mine shaft clearly reveals the utter cheapness of black life for the rapacious mine bosses. In fact, three more miners were killed the very day of the funeral for the Carletonville victims.

More than 82,000 miners face retrenchment in an industry where the labour force has already been slashed by 350,000 since 1987. Historic East Rand Proprietary Mine started the avalanche of retrenchments, liquidating in late August and leaving 7,000 jobless, more than 55 percent of whom hail from Mozambique and others from Lesotho. The Randlords like Anglo American can mine gold profitably only by paying slave wages. With the market price of gold dropping beneath U.S. \$250 an ounce, well below the cost of extracting it from the mines, about a third of South Africa's 16 mines claim they cannot stay in business.

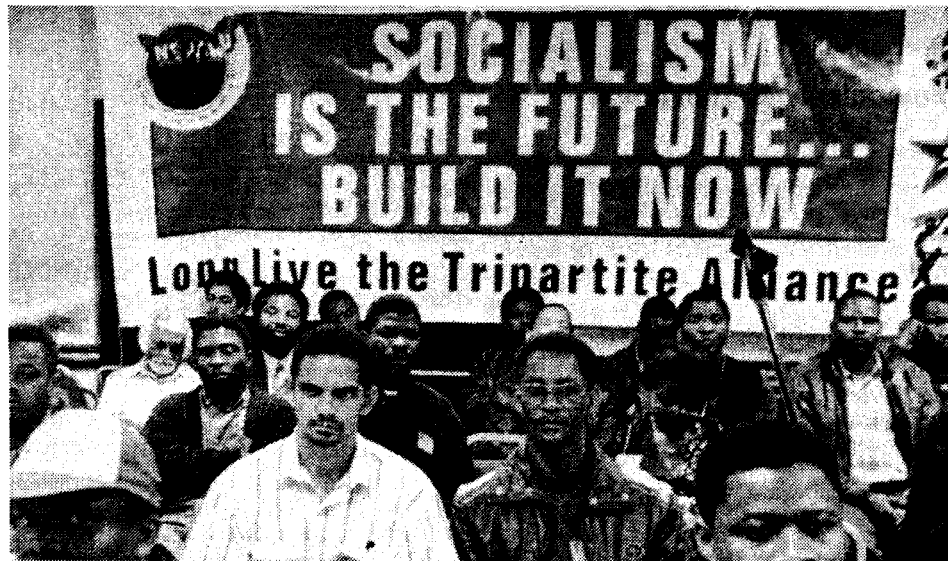
The Mbeki government's war on labour is matched by its ruthless drive to deprive the masses of the most minimal facilities, with thousands in the townships increasingly having basic services like electricity cut off for non-payment. At the same time, the South African government is currently planning the largest arms purchases in the country's history, as this regional imperialist power prepares for a greater role as gendarme in the wars in Southern Africa, especially in Congo and Angola.

## Left Apologists for Bourgeois-Nationalist ANC

Given the continuing immiseration of the black masses, how does one explain the ANC's re-election a few months ago with an even larger majority than in 1994? First, the popular-front policy of the SACP ensured that there was no electoral alternative of a mass character opposing the capitalist ANC from the left. Furthermore, almost all of the small "far left" groups likewise supported the ANC while fatuously calling on it to carry out a socialist programme in the interests of the black working people.

Consequently, the main opposition to the ANC in the elections was from the right, from the predominantly white Democratic Party headed by capitalist magnate Tony Leon. ANC spokesmen were thus able to appeal, as in the past, to the deepgoing racial/national solidarity of the oppressed black majority. They evoked memories of the hated apartheid police state with its dogs attacking peaceful demonstrators and black activists routinely tortured and killed. They presented the ANC as the only obstacle to the restoration of white-supremacist rule.

To the left of the ANC/SACP are a number of groups which falsely claim the "revolutionary Marxist" tradition. Most of these supported the ANC while denying or obfuscating that it is a *bourgeois* party. Instead, they maintain that the ANC can be pressured into carrying out the demands of the workers and oppressed. Typical in this regard is the Keep Left group (formerly Socialist



Shopsteward

1995 COSATU conference. Program of SACP-dominated union bureaucracy, which chains black workers to capitalist ANC in name of "national democratic revolution," is counterposed to struggle for socialism.

sector wage negotiations. Rather than seeing this as a cause for embarrassment or hesitation, the SACP, along with its alliance partners, sees in this reality a challenge."

Worker militants who support the SACP must understand that their leaders are not just pursuing a mistaken policy which can be reversed in the interests of the black toilers. Fraser-Moleketi's austerity measures and union-busting are a culmination of the party's basic programme of *class collaboration* as encapsulated in the slogan of "national democratic revolution" supposedly led by "progressive" bourgeois nationalists like Mandela and Mbeki. Indeed, for many years the SACP itself was part of the core leadership of the nationalist ANC when it was in opposition. And today the SACP encompasses everything from leading elements of the capitalist state apparatus and outright bourgeois nationalists to labour bureaucrats to militant workers at the base looking for a revolutionary perspective.

Class-conscious workers must fight to build a revolutionary workers party—a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party—which will break the black proletariat from bourgeois nationalism and split the working-class base away from the reformist SACP. Proletarian revolution is the only road to national and social liberation in South Africa. Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, fights for the establishment of a black-centred workers govern-

ing to the township youth, shook the apartheid police state to its foundations. At the same time, the ANC was able to enhance its political authority as recognised leader of the national liberation struggle against white-supremacist rule. This was consolidated in the late '80s with the establishment of the "tripartite alliance" of the ANC, SACP and the newly formed COSATU union federation. We characterised this as a *nationalist popular front*. The SACP tied a new generation of young worker militants, many



Star

Neo-apartheid means rural masses continue to live in abject poverty five years after end of white-supremacist rule.



Workers Organisation) affiliated with the British-centred left social-democratic tendency headed by Tony Cliff, which argued: "Only one thing stands in the way of Mbeki's ability to live up to the expectations which have been created—the minority who controls the economy for profit" (*Keep Left*, July 1999). Similarly, a leaflet distributed by the Socialist Forum group during the latest public-sector strike asserted:

"Our understanding was that the ANC was elected by working people and the rural poor to better our lives. That the rich and the bosses, those who benefited from apartheid cheap labour policies would be taxed to make sure that there was the money needed to uplift our services and those that provide them."

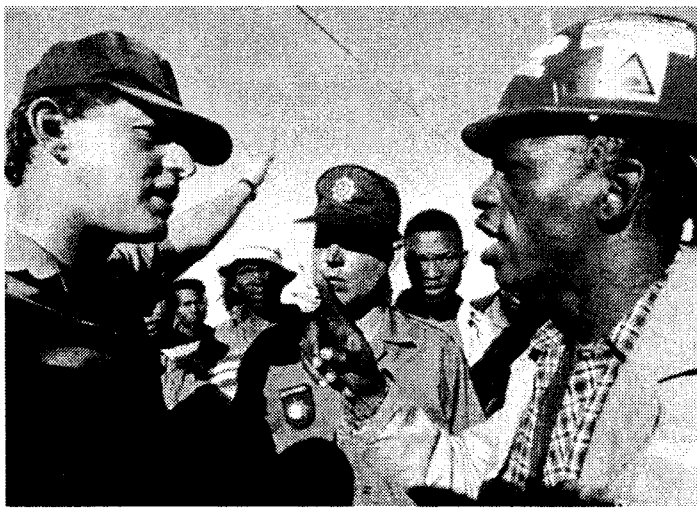
The ANC is not some kind of class-neutral party standing midway between the white capitalists and black toilers which can be pushed or pulled to one side or the other. Basically, it is the party of an aspiring black bourgeoisie, whose aspirations have increasingly been realised in the "new" South Africa. Large numbers of ANC and other black political activists have been recruited into the executive suites of Anglo American and the other big white-owned corporations or have set up their own businesses, usually with the financial backing of white capitalists. Cyril Ramaphosa, former head of the National Union of Mine-workers and subsequently ANC parliamentary leader, for example, is now deputy chairman of New Africa Investments. Mbeki & Co. are just as committed to and materially interested in maximising the exploitation of black labour in South Africa as Tony Leon, the CEOs of Anglo American and the other Randlords. Insofar as there are differences between the ANC leadership and the white bourgeoisie—and there are differences—they involve the division of the profits (who gets how much) extracted from the workers who man the country's factories, mines and farms.

Reflecting growing pressure from the base, one SACP shop steward in the Metalworkers union reportedly distributed a statement recently promising workers that the first stage of the "national democratic revolution" would soon be over and then socialism would come. But the bankruptcy of the Menshevik/Stalinist "two-stage" scheme, which ties the proletariat to the oxcart of bourgeois nationalism, is underscored not least by the current position of the ANC as an integral part of the exploiting class. As Leon Trotsky first laid out in 1905 in elaborating his theory of permanent revolution for tsarist Russia, in the epoch of imperialist decay the bourgeoisies of the dependent countries are incapable of carrying out the historic tasks associated with the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in 17th- and 18th-century Europe. National and social liberation for the toiling masses in South Africa can only be achieved through the proletarian seizure of state power.

### Fissures in the Tripartite Alliance

While at first the results of the recent elections appeared to strengthen the ANC's political authority, the actual effects have been just the opposite. Mbeki & Co. quickly moved to implement the programme of economic austerity demanded by international finance capital. This was answered by a massive upsurge of labour struggle and a heightening of social and political instability. The London *Independent* (25 August) pointed to the "deepening tensions within the decades-old alliance between the African National Congress (ANC), Cosatu and the South African Communist Party."

These tensions could clearly be seen at a special COSATU congress held in mid-August to appoint a replacement for former COSATU chief Sam Shilowa, who was elected premier of Gauteng province earlier this year. The congress was convened only as a result of pressure from the base. The government was represented at the congress by Defence Minister Patrick "Terror" Lekota, whose



John Woodruff

**Columbus steel strikers in Middelburg face down cops, who attacked picketers and arrested nearly 200 in July, while COSATU leadership welcomes POPCRU police "union" in August 24 labor protest. Cops have no place in labor movement!**

mission was to verbally terrorise the delegates. He lashed out at "highly placed comrades criticising or agitating against the movement," accusing them of placing "weapons in the hands of our opponents" and creating an "atmosphere for agent provocateurs." Some of the 2,200 delegates booed his speech, especially when he went on to push privatization, arguing that the government had to look for money somewhere and hinting that the alternative was to raise the Value Added Tax, which labour fought against in the early 1990s as a regressive tax. Lakota's line was strongly seconded by SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande, who en-

party—its principles, programme and organisational character—needed to fight for the workers' interests against the powerful forces of the world capitalist system.

During the early 1990s, there was considerable talk in the labour movement and left about forming a workers party as an alternative to the tripartite alliance. At the time, we emphasised the difference between a reformist party, like the British Labour Party or Brazilian Workers Party, and a revolutionary workers party like the Bolshevik Party which Lenin built in tsarist Russia. The workers in South Africa and elsewhere can achieve



Peter Mogaki

**As ANC government cuts off electricity to townships for non-payment of rates, angry residents near Johannesburg march in protest.**

dorsed the government's economic policies and directed his fire at "the ultra-left" for policies and actions which threatened to break up the governmental alliance.

While the COSATU leaders bent over backwards to be conciliatory in response to Lekota and Nzimande, the class conflict between the ANC government and the unions could not be completely suppressed. A Mineworkers delegate pointed to COSATU's aim of politicising the members in support of government policies and said, "COSATU cannot politicise members who have empty stomachs." In his concluding remarks, newly elected COSATU president Willie Madisha, formerly a leader of the embattled teachers union, stated, "We will not smooth over cracks in the alliance" and spoke of "genuine fears" that "the tendency by the government to flout agreements and disregard the concerns of labour might become a major obstacle in the way of social transformation."

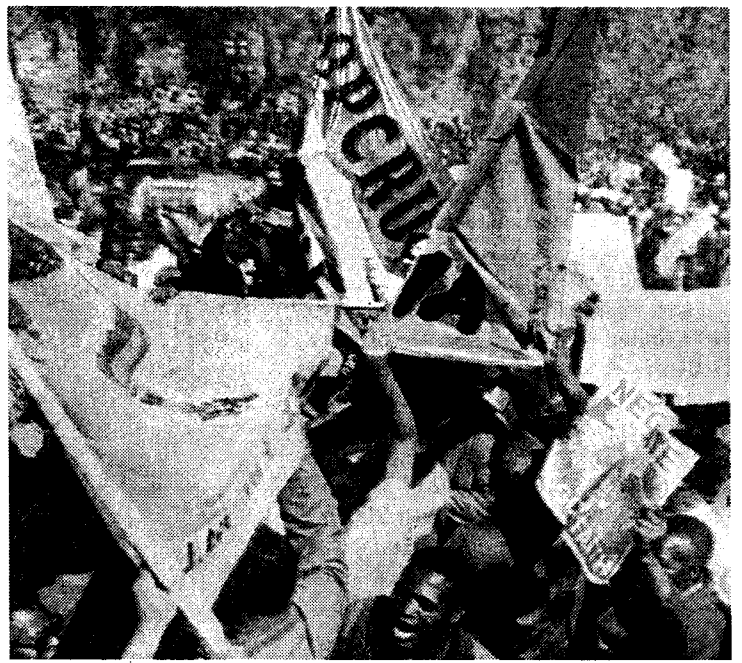
Going beyond Madisha's mild criticisms, many militants are now calling for COSATU to pull out of the Mbeki government. Some argue for the launching of a mass workers party. COSATU *should* break its ties with the tripartite alliance. And to the extent that workers are feeling the necessity of breaking with the ANC and creating their own independent party, that is the beginning of wisdom. But only the beginning. These workers must understand the kind of

a substantial and permanent improvement in their living conditions only by overthrowing the capitalist order and replacing it with a planned, collectivised economy.

Especially in a country like South Africa, this, in turn, requires that the working class, led by its vanguard party, place itself at the head of all oppressed sections of society. What is needed in South Africa is a revolutionary workers party which does not simply defend the particular interests of the working class, especially its unionised sector, but fights to eradicate *all forms* of national and social oppression—the mass homelessness in the black townships, the hideous conditions of the millions of Africans still trapped on the "tribal homelands," the degradation of women and such practices as the selling of women through *lobola* (bride price), the plight of immigrants from neighbouring African states now facing expulsion.

### The Iron Fist of the "New" South African State

Seizing on the vulnerability felt by large sections of the population in the face of rising crime, including astronomical levels of rape, Mbeki's regime is rapidly strengthening the police and army. Mbeki's real aim in this is to intimidate and crush workers and the oppressed. Just after the elections, the government launched a new national



Star

police agency called the "Scorpions," modelled on and trained by the American FBI.

For months, the ANC regime has carried out a military occupation of the coloured townships in the Western Cape. Titled "Operation Good Hope," this repressive action was launched after the "Planet Hollywood" bombing allegedly linked to People Against Gangsterism and Drugs—an "anti-drug" vigilante group—with the ostensible aim of combatting "urban terrorism." The intensification of police repression is seen in the fact that this summer more than 30,000 people were arrested in one month alone in the Vaal Triangle region. Meanwhile, there has been a growing clamour for restoration of the death penalty.

The latest "anti-crime" push to institute gun control laws means that the cops and criminals will be the only ones with arms while, as in the days of apartheid, the black population is disarmed. We defend the democratic right to bear arms and oppose all gun control laws, which are designed to ensure the state's monopoly on the means of violence and keep the oppressed down.

Meanwhile, vigilante murders are on the increase. In the past month, a white vigilante group known as Die Vuis (The Fist), composed of "former" members of the military and police, has sprung up in Cape Town. Its emergence coincided with the arrival in Gauteng of the previously rural-based Mapogo a Mathamaga, a 35,000-strong vigilante army led by black businessmen with ties to hardline white racists. Their recent opening of offices in Pretoria and Alexandra is an ominous development. Their targets are the victims of neo-apartheid capitalism—the working class and all of the oppressed. Ethnically integrated workers defence guards are vital to defend against vigilante terror, by mobilising the urban and rural poor behind the power of labour to sweep away the vigilante scum.

Despite all of these developments,  
*continued on page 12*

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# South Africa...

(continued from page 11)

illusions in the "democratic" character of the "new" South African state is nearly universal on the left. This is expressed most clearly in the belief that the police, especially black police, are an integral part of the workers movement. Thus the Socialist Forum leaflet cited above called for "a united front of public sector workers that is built across union lines in the hospitals, schools and police stations and every government office." Recently, cops attacked picketing workers in the Columbus steel strike in Middelburg, seriously injuring two and jailing almost 200. Yet large contingents of cops organised by the Police and Prison Civil Rights Union are routinely allowed to participate in labour rallies. Cops, whether black or white, are the bosses' thugs. We say: Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions!

## For Proletarian Internationalism!

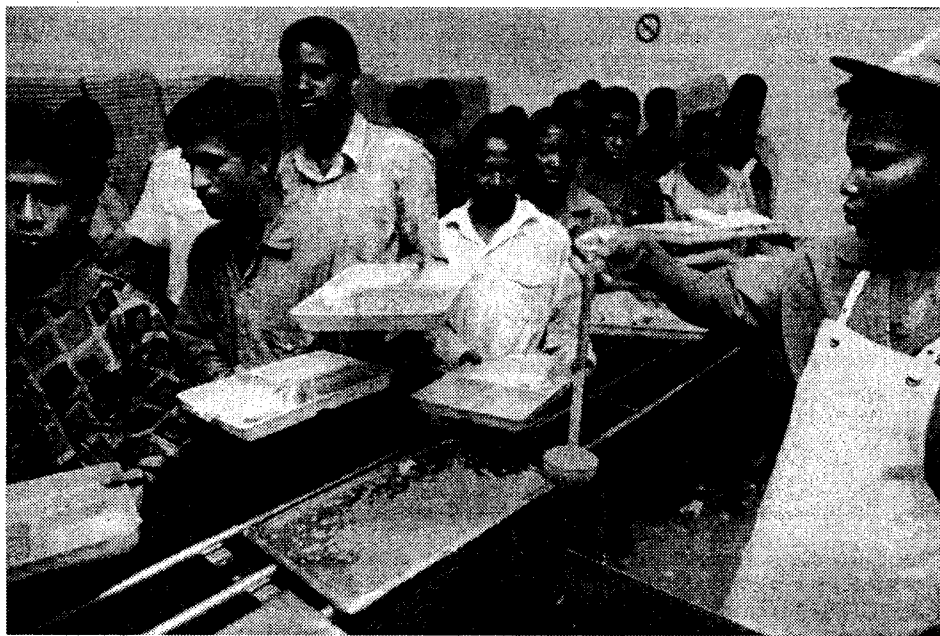
Mandela's immense moral authority was able to hold in check the country's explosive national and social contradictions. However, if the ANC leaders, abetted by the SACP, cannot contain the workers movement through political demagoguery, they are prepared to use other weapons. The invasion and occupation of the small statelet of Lesotho by the South African army last year not only demonstrated the ANC government's role as regional gendarme for the Randlords. The army's mission to "restore order" in Lesotho was also a test run for a similar mission directed at the militant labour movement in South Africa itself.

The "new" South Africa is *not* a stable bourgeois democracy. The privileged white minority continues to enjoy "First World" living standards while the mass of black toilers remains hideously impoverished. The inequality of income and wealth is more extreme in South Africa than in any other country in the world, including the Third World. In 1995, we wrote in a polemical letter to the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action, led by Neville Alexander, which held that the ANC-led government was a stable bourgeois democracy:

"When the current, fragile neo-apartheid order breaks down—and it will break down—if the workers movement does not seize state power, various sectors of the desperate nonwhite population will compete with each other over available scarce resources. Thus the black working class and plebeian masses *cannot simply defend* the gains and positions of organizational strength achieved during the struggles of the 1980s.

"A revolutionary workers party must be built to lead the working class in the struggle for state power, drawing in the rest of the oppressed black African, 'coloured' (mixed-race) and Indian masses, along with anti-racist whites, with the program and perspective elaborated by Trotsky as the *permanent revolution*."

—reprinted in *The Fight for a Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left* (April 1997)



Oscar G

**Detention camp for "illegal" immigrants. Neo-apartheid regime whips up chauvinist hysteria against immigrants as scapegoats for mass unemployment.**

The concept of permanent revolution holds that the national bourgeoisie in backward countries—even ones which are regional imperialist powers in their own right, like South Africa—is so weak and tied to world imperialism that it cannot play the progressive role that the bourgeoisies of West Europe and North America did in the era of their ascendance. Social and economic modernisation and an end to national oppression in countries like South Africa can be achieved only under the leadership of the working class, through proletarian revolution and its extension to the imperialist centres of West Europe, North America and Japan.

In South Africa, *class exploitation is integrally bound up with national oppression*. Despite a sizable coloured proletariat, especially in the Western Cape, and an urban Indian working class in Natal, the overwhelming majority of workers in the white-owned factories, mines and farms are black Africans. Black Africans make up 80 percent of the country's overall population, more if one takes into account the recent wave of immigration from neighbouring African states.

Our recognition that proletarian revolution in South Africa is also the supreme act of *national liberation* in no way entails support to nationalism as an ideology or to the project of "nation-building." Quite the contrary! To break the chains of the ANC's neo-apartheid order and achieve genuine national and social liberation, the working class must transcend the ideology of nationalism, the false belief that the black African people—brutally oppressed by the white rulers of South Africa—all have a common interest which stands higher than class divisions.

While historically and centrally black African nationalism has been directed at the white ruling elite, developments since 1994 have added another element to the country's explosive national mix: a large influx of immigrants from Mozambique and other neighbouring black states. The ANC-led government has increasingly blamed "foreigners" for ris-

ing unemployment caused by the mine closures and layoffs. Speaking at Vista University in May, Mandela told students to "buck up" and improve their grades or else "foreigners from Zimbabwe, Malawi and other African countries will take the top jobs." Such anti-immigrant demagoguery has had bloody consequences. For example, in January a lynch mob "necklaced"—burned alive—four Mozambicans in Tembisa township near Johannesburg. The workers movement must combat such murderous anti-immigrant chauvinism. We say: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

The pro-ANC labour bureaucracy has joined in pushing chauvinist poison. The National Union of Mineworkers in Rustenburg called for a moratorium on hiring Mozambicans during wage negotiations. Meanwhile, the SACTWU clothing and textile workers union has organised rallies protesting Chinese imports. At the COSATU congress, the bureaucrats raised a furor because some of the caps made for congress delegates had been produced in China. Such anti-Chinese diatribes are not only protectionist but anti-Communist, dovetailing with imperialist threats against the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. It is the duty of South African workers and workers everywhere to stand for unconditional military defence of China against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. The Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy which is driving the country headlong toward capitalist restoration must be ousted by the Chinese proletariat through political revolution.

The present industrial wealth of South Africa has in good part been created over the decades through the superexploitation of black workers drawn from outside its borders, especially in the gold and diamond mines. The industrial and mineral wealth available to a black-centred workers government in South Africa will not

be limited to south of the Limpopo River, but must be used to enable the impoverished masses of all Africa to escape famine and destitution.

Mandela, Mbeki & Co. explain away their drive to hold down wages and privatize state-owned enterprises as well as the failure to carry out the promised reforms by pointing to the pressures of the world capitalist market, low-wage competition from East Asia, the harsh demands of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, etc. In defending the government's anti-labour austerity policies at the recent COSATU congress, SACP leader Blade Nzimande argued that "we do not make history under circumstances of our own choosing." By this Nzimande meant that the South African workers movement and oppressed nonwhite masses had to accept and operate within the framework set by the global domination of capitalist imperialism.

However, the South African working class can *change* the course of world history. We fully recognise that a socialist revolution in South Africa would confront formidable enemies. Emboldened and strengthened by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the competing imperialist powers, chiefly the U.S., are determined to obliterate any obstacles to their domination. Yet a socialist revolution in South Africa, centred on the black proletariat, would immediately find strategically powerful allies. The post-Soviet "New World Order" is anything but stable. A militant young proletariat has emerged in countries such as South Korea and Indonesia, while the powerful working class of West European countries like Italy and France have engaged in sharp struggles which could threaten the control of the reformist labor bureaucrats and go toward a struggle for power.

Millions of union members, students and others around the world actively solidarised with the struggle against white supremacy in the apartheid state. Racial minorities and immigrants facing persecution identified strongly with the black South African masses. A South African workers revolution would have an immediate radicalising effect on the oppressed black masses of Brazil, for example, as well as on American black workers, who have historically tended to be a vanguard of militant class struggle and social activism in the U.S. Thus even within the strongest imperialist bastions, revolutionary South Africa will find a powerful echo.

Precisely because a nationally isolated proletarian revolution in South Africa could not survive, there can be no nationally limited revolutionary workers party in South Africa. The struggle for world socialist revolution, wherever the first breakthrough occurs, is inseparable from the struggle to build an international communist vanguard through reforging a Trotskyist Fourth International. ■

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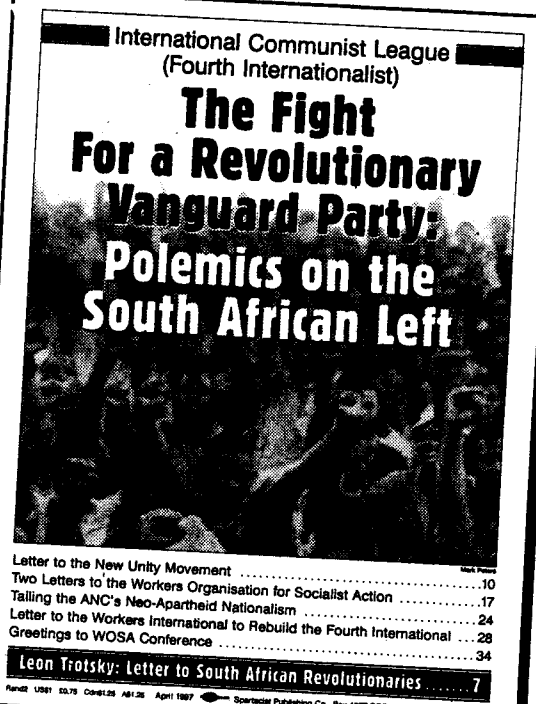
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# Fascist Murder...

(continued from page 16)

country to defend fascist rallies and set up counterdemonstrators for arrest and victimization. As the LBSL statement points out, when the KKK/Nazis who inspire and frequently nurture lone racist killers like Buford and Smith crawl out from the sewers to try to organize on the streets for racist terror, what's needed to stop their race-hate rallies is the mobilization of labor/black power, with the trade unions marching at the head of all the fascists' intended victims, to sweep the racist scum off the streets.

## Mobilize Labor and Blacks to Crush Genocidal Fascists!

For two days a known fascist named Benjamin Smith cruised the streets of metropolitan Chicago, downstate Illinois and Indiana, calmly shooting down blacks, Jews and Asians. As the cops were complacently denying the racist character of the Chicago-area attacks, including the one that killed the former coach of the Northwestern basketball team, Ricky Byrdson, Smith managed to drive his light blue Taurus across the state to Springfield, Decatur and Urbana, shooting and wounding three more people on the way. Smith killed a Korean American student in Bloomington, Indiana before finally shooting himself during a police chase.

Smith's Fourth of July rampage came as America's racist rulers were celebrating their victory over Serbia. In step with such imperialist adventures abroad, the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties have waged a racist war at home against working people and minorities. From the police execution of Amadou Diallo in the Bronx to the recent shootings of black motorists by Chicago cops, the bosses' state has essentially declared "open season" on blacks and other op-

pressed groups in the United States. This reactionary social climate has emboldened right-wing terrorists from Jasper, Texas—where a black man was dragged to his death behind a pickup truck—to Wyoming, where gay student Matthew Shepard was lynched. Also in the fascists' cross hairs have been abortion providers and the women they serve.

Smith was not just some lunatic gone berserk but an active member of the World Church of the Creator, a fascist group headed by one Matthew Hale, who says its goal is to drive Jews and non-whites "off the planet." This group has left a trail of violent attacks showing how serious they are about doing just that. At Indiana University and in Wilmette, Illinois, where he was arrested this spring after distributing World Church literature, Smith attempted to shield his race-terror organizing under the cover of "free speech." But Smith's murderous rampage—like the lynch-mob terror perpetrated for decades by the Klan and Nazis—showed that fascists are organized not to circulate ideas but to carry out *genocidal action*.

Civil libertarians who defend "free speech" for fascists promote the dangerous illusion that it's possible to "debate" with lynch mobs. But equally dangerous is the notion, put forward by liberals and pro-Democratic Party "leftists" like the so-called Communist Party, that the government should outlaw the Ku Klux Klan, Nazis and other race-terror groups or, as the reformist International Socialist Organization demands, deny them permits to march. Such state intervention to suppress "extremist" groups inevitably falls hardest on working people and minorities fighting *against* racist terror. In the aftermath of these racist killings, a hue and cry has been raised for stricter gun control laws. We are against gun control, which would give a monopoly of force to the bosses' state, and for the right of armed self-defense. The government, the primary agency of racist capitalist rule, will always coddle the fascists, who stand as a paramilitary reserve against labor/black struggle.



Washington, D.C., 1982: 5,000-strong labor/black mobilization initiated by Spartacist League stopped Klan provocation.

The threat of fascism will exist until the working class eliminates the profit system and erects its own state through socialist revolution. The Labor Black Struggle League, and the socialist Spartacist League which initiated and is fraternally allied to the LBSL, are fighting to build the revolutionary workers party that is needed to lead that revolution. The elimination of racial oppression, which is built into the very foundation of the American capitalist system, requires the program of *revolutionary integrationism*: the full integration of blacks into all areas of life, in an egalitarian socialist society.

The organized labor movement has the power, leading all those targeted by fascist terror, to stop hate-terror mobilizations and drive the racist vermin back into their sewers. When Matthew Hale emerged as a Klan organizer at Bradley University in Peoria in 1990, the Spartacus Youth Club fought for students to ally themselves with the union power concentrated in the area's factories, which could provide the backbone for mass labor/black mobilizations against the fascist scum (see "Anti-Klan Protest in Peoria," WV No. 497, 9 March 1990).

The Trotskyist Spartacist League and LBSL fought to implement this program in January 1994, when the KKK staged a race-hate provocation against Martin Luther King Day at the State Capitol in Springfield. Some 500 people—blacks, trade unionists, gays, leftists, students—turned out for a united-front mobilization in an arctic snowstorm determined to stop the Klan. This labor/black mobilization in particular tapped into the fighting spirit of workers in Peoria and Decatur facing union-busting attacks from the bosses at Caterpillar, Firestone and Staley. The Labor Black Struggle League spokesman at the rally said: "Out of militant, integrated working-class actions like today's against the racist, bomb-throwing KKK, we will assist in building this integrated Trotskyist leadership. A revolutionary American workers party will keep its feet on these racist killers' necks, their faces in the mud, the racist KKK fascist menace nipped in the bud!" We stand for mobilizing the masses of minority and working people for militant integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America. Join the Labor Black Struggle League! ■



## Join the Labor Black Leagues!

The first Labor Black Leagues were formed as a result of the Spartacist League-initiated, 5,000-strong labor/black mobilization that stopped the Ku Klux Klan from marching in Washington, D.C. in November 1982. We stand for mobilizing the masses of minority and working people in militant integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America. Initiated by and fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, a multiracial revolutionary Marxist organization, the Labor Black Leagues are part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed against the bosses and for socialism.



### If You Stand For—

- 1** Full rights for black people and for everyone else in jobs, housing and schools! Defeat the racist assault on affirmative action! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Open up the universities to all—for open admissions, free tuition and a full living stipend for all students. Free, quality, integrated public education for all!
- 2** A fighting labor movement—picket lines mean don't cross! Defeat police scabberding and strikebreaking through mass pickets and union defense guards! For sit-down strikes against mass layoffs! Fight union-busting, keep the capitalist courts out of the unions! Organize the unorganized, unionize the South! Jobs for all—for a shorter work-week at no loss in pay with full cost-of-living escalator clause! Cops and prison guards out of the unions!
- 3** Fight for women's rights! Defend abortion clinics! Free abortion on demand; free, quality 24-hour child-

- care! Equal pay for equal work! For free, quality health care for all!
- 4** Full citizenship rights for all immigrants; everyone who made it into this country has the right to stay and live decently! Stop deportations! No to racist "English only" laws! Down with anti-Hispanic, anti-Semitic, anti-Arab and anti-Asian bigotry!
- 5** Down with anti-gay laws! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Government out of the bedroom!
- 6** Mass labor/black/Hispanic mobilizations drawing on the power of the unions against the racist terrorists. Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!
- 7** Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all victims of racist capitalist repression! No faith in the capitalist courts! No to gun control! Defend victims of cop terror and racist police frame-up! For class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense; support the work of the Partisan Defense Committee!

- 8** Unconditional opposition to every attempt to abolish welfare! Down with slave-labor, union-busting "workfare" schemes! Fight any and every attempt of the government to take away or cut back even more social programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, public health and aid to education and housing! For a massive program of public works—high-quality integrated housing, schools, libraries, hospitals for the working people and the poor!
- 9** Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! For international working-class solidarity! Support revolutionary struggles of working people abroad! Defend Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Korea against capitalist restoration and imperialist attack! For labor action against U.S. imperialist war moves and military adventures! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean!
- 10** Down with the Democrats and Republicans! For a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of

all the oppressed! Finish the Civil War! Those who labor must rule! For a workers government to take industry away from its racist, incompetent and corrupt owners! Rebuild America on a socialist planned economy!

### — Join the Labor Black Leagues!

Membership pledge is \$3/year unemployed; \$10/year employed. For more information, write:

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# Russia...

(continued from page 5)

of political support to Yeltsin's bourgeois opponents."

While Yeltsin's power was thus greatly enhanced, the combination of economic immiseration and political violence produced a popular backlash against Tsar Boris. The main immediate beneficiary was Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, whose fascist party received almost a quarter of the vote in the December 1993 Duma elections. The Stalinist-derived "patriots" of the Communist and Agrarian parties also made a good showing, polling over 20 percent of the vote. The big loser was Gaidar, whose Russia's Choice party was chosen by only 15 percent of the electorate. Yeltsin then dropped Gaidar and embraced the more conservative prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, a former top-level *apparatchik* in the last Soviet government.

While the large and unexpected vote for Zhirinovskiy captured headlines the world over, his appeal turned out to be relatively ephemeral. In the next Duma elections two years later, Zhirinovskiy's vote was halved while the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) gained over a third of the seats, thereby becoming the "official" opposition to the Yeltsin regime. In presidential elections the following year, KPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov was Yeltsin's main challenger, ending up with 40 percent of the vote in the second round.

What is the nature and appeal of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation? In a number of East European countries (e.g., Poland, Hungary, Lithuania), elements of the deposed Stalinist bureaucracies reorganized themselves into electo-



Economist

**Great Russian chauvinist KPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov, at left.**

rally successful social-democratic parties with ties to both the trade unions and a section of the new capitalist operators. The KPRF, however, represents a quite different political species. In its social base, ideology and program, it is a bourgeois-nationalist party using populist demagoguery, more akin to fascism than to social democracy, i.e., labor-based reformism.

The KPRF's lack of support among the working class is admitted and lamented by its own spokesmen like Valentin Kuptsov, who stated in 1996: "So far the basic mass of trade unionists and, consequently, their leaders have not viewed our party as a reliable partner" (quoted in Joan Barth Urban and Valerii D. Solovei, *Russia's Communists at the Crossroads* [1997]). The core of the KPRF consisted of factory directors and regional administrators. Apart from old-age pensioners, popular support for the KPRF is concentrated in the countryside. Significantly, Zyuganov himself is the son and grandson of village school teachers in central Russia. The constituency of this grotesquely misnamed Communist Party thus comes from the most traditional-minded and culturally backward sections of contemporary Russian society. This is expressed in the KPRF's glorification of the Russian Orthodox church combined with pronounced anti-Semitism.



AP

During the 1996 presidential campaign, much of the Western bourgeois media and political establishment portrayed Zyuganov as someone who would return Russia to "Soviet-era Communism." The reality was entirely different. For all the rhetoric about the "socialist" nature of Russian national culture, KPRF spokesmen insisted that they were not at all hostile to Russia's new capitalist exploiters. The party electoral platform stated that "the task of communists is not to liquidate property-holders" and went on to denounce "the old leveling of incomes" in the former Soviet Union. In his 1994 tract *Derzhava*, Zyuganov defines his party's task as combining the "red" ideal of social justice with the "white" ideal of a nationally conceived state." Insisting that such a state would include "unconditionally all the territories in which a compact Russian or Russian-speaking population lives," Zyuganov calls for a "Greater Russia" which would extend to the boundaries of the former USSR.

As the Kremlin bureaucracy collapsed and the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1989-92, the great bulk of the Western left supported the "democratic" counter-revolutionary forces around Boris Yeltsin in the name of "anti-Stalinism." In the aftermath, however, many of these same groups turned around and supported Zyuganov's KPRF, contending that these erstwhile Stalinist "patriots" were now defending Russia's working people against the predations of Western imperialism. Typical in this regard was the British Workers Power group, which advocated a "critical vote" to Zyuganov as "an instrument of pressure for workers immediate needs and demands" (*Workers Power*, June 1996). And the small British Socialist Action group praised the KPRF's "progressive patriotic demands, such as opposing NATO expansion and rejecting IMF interference in economic policy" (*Socialist Action*, April/May 1996).

Against such views we wrote at the time (WV No. 649, 2 August 1996):

"Far from being some sort of ersatz 'anti-imperialism,' the KPRF's chauvinist program reflects the real interest of the new Russian bourgeoisie, which understands that to build a capitalist state strong enough to play a world role requires that it dominate and exploit the industrial and agricultural resources of the Ukraine, the oil fields of the Caucasus, the mineral wealth of Kazakhstan and the cotton fields of Central Asia. And that is the common program of Yeltsin, Lebed, Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy."

Two years later, leading members of the KPRF became ministers in Yeltsin's government.

A major declared goal of U.S. policy toward Russia has been to strengthen the "democratic" (i.e., pro-Western) forces. But the actual effect of American policies has been just the opposite. All of the main contenders for Yeltsin's throne have adopted a more nationalistic and anti-Western posture—the Stalinist-derived Zyuganov, the fascist demagogue Zhirinovskiy, former Soviet general and would-be bonaparte Aleksandr Lebed and Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov. And the Yeltsin regime, for all its Byzantine cliquism and merry-go-round of ministerial posts, has itself tended toward more strident denunciations of the NATO powers, especially the U.S.

novskiy, former Soviet general and would-be bonaparte Aleksandr Lebed and Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov. And the Yeltsin regime, for all its Byzantine cliquism and merry-go-round of ministerial posts, has itself tended toward more strident denunciations of the NATO powers, especially the U.S.

## Russia, the NATO Powers and the Balkan Wars

Russia's great-power aspirations have clearly expressed themselves in Moscow's interventions and maneuvers in the wars precipitated by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The Balkans have been an arena of both close collaboration and potentially dangerous conflict between capitalist Russia and the Western imperialist states.

The terminal crisis of Yugoslavia came in early 1991, when the newly reunified German imperialist state pressured its European allies into recognizing the independence of Croatia and Slovenia. The U.S. then threw its weight behind an independent Bosnia. With the breakup of the multinational Yugoslav deformed workers state, the large Serbian minorities in Croatia and Bosnia confronted hostile nationalist regimes under the fascistic Franjo Tudjman in Zagreb and Muslim nationalist Alija Izetbegovic in Sarajevo. Serb fears of being driven from their homes, combined with chauvinist sentiment for a Greater Serbia promoted by the Belgrade regime of Slobodan Milosevic, ignited a new series of Balkan wars.

With the Serbs initially gaining the upper hand in the three-cornered civil war, the West European imperialists favored a de facto partition of Bosnia between a Greater Croatia and a Greater Serbia, which would obviously benefit Germany's new client state in Zagreb. For their part, Britain and France were less hostile to Serbia, which had been their ally against Germany in both World Wars I and II. Moreover, France in particular saw the Bosnian imbroglio as an opportunity to pursue a European foreign policy



WV Photo

**NATO bombs destroyed passenger train in April in U.S.-led war of imperialist domination against Serbia. Spartacist League fought for revolutionary proletarian opposition to U.S./NATO imperialists.**

independently of the Americans not only at the diplomatic but also at the military level. Hence London and Paris, generally backed by Bonn, put forward a number of "peace plans" (e.g., Vance-Owen, Owen-Stoltenberg) which would have been policed by a European military force *outside* the structure of the American-dominated NATO alliance.

But the U.S. had no intention of allowing this to happen. As two left-wing intellectuals, James Petras and Steve Vieux, pointed out:

"The success or failure of European projection of power in Bosnia had implications far beyond the immediate conflict. From the beginning, the US understood what was at stake in a successful European-based military operation: the loss of leverage and the enhancement of European strategic decision-making."

—"Bosnia and the Revival of US Hegemony," *New Left Review*, July/August 1996

Washington encouraged the Izetbegovic regime to reject the various European-sponsored "peace plans" by promising to support better terms and the means to achieve them. The period of 1992-94 was thus one of military stalemate in Bosnia and diplomatic stalemate in the Western imperialist camp.

It was these conditions which enabled and encouraged Russia's move to reassert itself as a major European "power" in the Balkans. Donning the mantle of traditional Slavophile nationalism, Yeltsin's Russia postured as the great-power protector of "our little Serb brothers." However, Russia "defended" the Serbs within the terms set by Western imperialism, basically acting as "soft cop" in extracting concessions from the Serbs on behalf of the NATO powers.

This is not to say that Washington and Moscow had similar interests and policies in the Balkans and that their expressed differences were mere diplomatic play-acting. U.S. imperialism was bent on reasserting its role as "cops of the world" by smashing the Serbs. Russia's pretensions to be an independent power rested on blocking, through diplomatic maneuvers, decisive U.S./NATO military action against the Serbs. Thus when in the



**Russian contingent in U.S./NATO-led imperialist occupation force in Kosovo.**



spring of 1994 NATO bombed Serbian forces around Goradze, Russian deputy prime minister Sergei Shakhrai called it "a slap in the face of Russia's prestige." The Americans were determined to demonstrate that not only Russia but also its own NATO partners had no "prestige"—i.e., no real power—in the Balkans.

Beginning in late 1994, Washington moved to alter the balance of forces on the ground by building up the Croatian military with the Bosnian Muslims acting as their auxiliaries. The following summer, Croatian forces drove out hundreds of thousands of Serbs in the biggest single "ethnic cleansing" operation in the Balkans to date, and NATO launched massive air attacks on the Serb forces. Clinton then offered to lift economic sanctions against Serbia if Milosevic abandoned support to the Bosnian Serbs. This deal laid the basis for the Dayton Accords, which established a U.S./NATO protectorate in Bosnia. The Russians were pieced off with token participation in the "peacekeeping" force in the American sector and under the command of an American general. While opposing all sides in the fratricidal bloodletting among Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims, Marxists called for military defense of the Serbs against U.S./NATO attack. Down with the imperialist embargo against Serbia! Down with the imperialist occupation of Bosnia and Kosovo—All U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans!

The Bosnia takeover set the stage for the U.S./NATO air war against Serbia last spring under the pretext of defending the Albanian Kosovars. And Russia's role as "soft cop" for Western imperialism has been even more transparent in Kosovo than it was in Bosnia. At the same time, the U.S./NATO devastation of Serbia clearly showed up the current impotence of Russia even in one of its historic spheres of influence. In doing so, the war has enormously intensified anti-Western nationalism in Russia not only among the military and other ruling circles but in Russian society at large. The *New York Times* (16 June) reports: "Ordinary Muscovites frequently express the conviction that NATO and the West have Russia in their gunsights, and that the Yugoslavia war was merely a test run for a larger conflict."

At present, Russian nationalist ambitions to become a major world power might seem nothing more than a self-aggrandizing illusion. The country is an economic basket case amid anarchic political conditions. In fact, the London *Economist's* annual survey, *The World in 1999*, predicted: "1999 will be the year



Laski/Gamma

**Capitalist Russia is hell for workers, women, national minorities. With poverty deepening and workers unpaid for months, striking miners protest in Red Square, 1998.**

of Russia's disintegration." Yeltsin is increasingly erratic and his central government is unstable and widely discredited, as seen in the fact that he has now appointed his fifth prime minister in 17 months. Real political power, such as it is, has in large measure devolved to regional political bosses. Notable in this regard is the new political lash-up, "Fatherland—All Russia," bringing together Moscow mayor Luzhkov, a number of regional governors and former prime minister Yevgeny Primakov in opposition to Yeltsin and the KPRF.

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to assume that the present conditions in Russia will continue indefinitely. As shown by the furor in American governmental and financial circles in response to allegations that billions of dollars of Russian capital outflow were laundered through the Bank of New York, the U.S. imperialists are not about to start investing heavily in Russia. But it is entirely possible that changes in the world political situation during the next period would result in substantial financial support to and economic investment in Russia by other Western powers, such as Germany. In 1994, Zhirinovskiy told a West European journalist: "One day, greater Germany, a new Russia, and India will form a new entente. Then there will be no problems for the world any more.... Russia and Germany can control Europe." In his own crazed and fantastical way, Zhirinovskiy was expressing a rational calculation of Russia's would-be imperialist rulers: that deepening rivalry between the United States and Germany will escalate to a point where the latter would move to build up Russia as a strategic ally, ena-

bling Russia to re-emerge as a major world power.

### For a New October Revolution!

Popular hostility toward and fear of the NATO powers in Russia—certainly justified in its own terms—are today being exploited by the advocates of *derzhava* nationalism. Antipathy toward American or, more generally, Western imperialism is not at all equivalent to opposition to imperialism *as such*. Lenin described imperialism as "the highest stage of capitalism." Russia is a capitalist state with its own imperial aspirations and potential.

This is today being demonstrated as Russian troops are sent to crush Islamic separatists in the Caucasian region of Dagestan, as it was earlier in the brutal colonial war waged by Moscow in 1994-96 against the secessionist regime in neighboring Chechnya. In a statement headlined "Smash Yeltsin's Invasion of Chechnya!" (WV No. 614, 13 January 1995) at the outbreak of that war, the International Communist League declared:

"The principles of proletarian socialism are fundamentally antagonistic to bourgeois nationalism in all forms. Thus we oppose not only the imperial-minded Great Russian chauvinism of Yeltsin & Co. but the Chechen nationalism of strongman Dudayev and the Islamic fundamentalism that he seeks to promote.... We are for class opposition to Russian aggression in Chechnya, for organized working-class action against it. The defense of Chechnya's people is in the interest of the multinational working class of Russia!"

Proletarian internationalism, as opposed to anti-Western Russian nationalism,

means opposition to Moscow's domination over the non-Russian peoples of the Caucasus and also Central Asia. Within Russia itself, the Great Russian chauvinism purveyed by all from Yeltsin and Luzhkov to Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy means intense anti-Semitism and vile racist terror against the darker-skinned and predominantly Islamic minorities from the Caucasus and Central Asia. An internationalist Bolshevik party would seek to mobilize the multinational proletariat to combat every manifestation of social reaction and racist and nationalist oppression. No less than the IMF-style neoliberalism earlier promoted by the pro-Western "democrats," *derzhava* nationalism serves to legitimize the exploitation of the working people of Russia and the other former Soviet republics by a new class of capitalist parasites.

Capitalist counterrevolution has wrought enormous devastation on the former homeland of the October Revolution of 1917. The once massive industrial proletariat has been decimated and in good part pauperized. Even hundreds of thousands of highly trained scientists and engineers have been reduced to scrounging for a living as best they can.

It is the proletariat—and only the proletariat—which has both the social power and vital interest to destroy the capitalist system of exploitation through a new October Revolution. This demands the construction of a revolutionary vanguard party based on the principles of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. As we wrote shortly after the Yeltsin regime had consolidated a capitalist state, albeit weak and highly unstable:

"To free itself of its would-be exploiters and oppressors, the working class must assert itself as a 'tribune of the people,' opposing every manifestation of anti-Semitism and anti-woman and anti-homosexual bigotry, rising to the defense of all those—including African and Asian students, and the Central Asian peoples in Russia—who are increasingly exposed to violent racist terror. What is required above all is a revolutionary leadership capable of overcoming the divisions inspired by chauvinism and nationalism, clearing away the decades of false consciousness fostered by Stalinism, and linking the struggles in the ex-USSR to that of the world proletariat."

—*How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled* (August 1993)

Only as part of the struggle to reforge an authentic world party of socialist revolution—the Trotskyist Fourth International—can the workers of Russia and the other former Soviet republics cohere the leadership they need to sweep away the manifold horrors wrought by capitalist counterrevolution. ■

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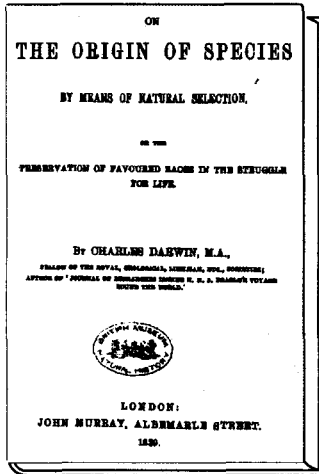
# Evolution Banned in Kansas Schools

On August 11, the Kansas Board of Education voted to delete any mention of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and the Big Bang theory of the origins of the universe from the state-mandated curriculum. While the decision does not explicitly outlaw the teaching of either, it will essentially strip this scientific knowledge from the curriculum, while opening the

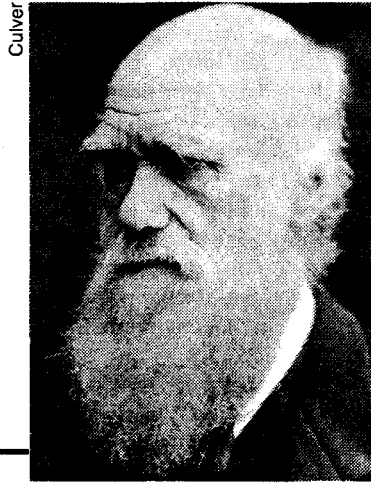
### Young Spartacus

door to the teaching of "creationism," a religious dogma based on a literal interpretation of the book of Genesis. The Board of Education decision is being met with opposition from many teachers, especially in the urban Topeka area. Courageous teachers who continue to teach evolution will be opened up to attacks by the religious bigots.

Evolution is fundamental to modern science. As noted by Steve Angel, a chemistry professor and president of the Auburn-Washburn school board in Topeka, "If you take away evolution because it's a theory, you can't teach science. All science is theory." The religious fanatics ignorantly seize on the fact that evolution is described as a theory to argue that it is unproven speculation, as though evolution were no different than their belief in angels. Counting up "begats" in the book of Genesis does not a scientific theory make. Creationism is inherently incompatible with a scientific mindset. Evolution is a theory only in the sense that Einstein's theory of relativity is; both



Charles Darwin's groundbreaking exposition of the theory of evolution, *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859.



are sets of principles which explain certain phenomena and have been tested and proven to be true through research and experiment. Both relativity and evolution are facts. There is no debate among scientists whether or not evolution occurred; there is disagreement only on the exact mechanisms of evolution.

The Spartacist League and the Spartacus Youth Clubs defend the theory of evolution and fight against the assault on the separation of church and state. In 1986, the SL and the Partisan Defense Committee filed an *amicus curiae* brief on behalf of the Louisiana Board of Education in its opposition to the State of Louisiana's "Balanced-Treatment Act" mandating the

teaching of "creation-science" whenever scientific evolution is taught (see "In Defense of Science," WV No. 410, 29 August 1986). Taking a stand on the side of science and against religious obscurantism, we wrote:

"Before this Court is a challenge to a fundamental principle of the American republic and one of the most basic gains of the American Revolution of 1776—separation of church and state. The battlefield on which this is being fought is the public schools. The weapon being used is the religious dogma of biblical creation against scientific theorizing about evolution. The potential casualty is not only the separation of church and state, but the education of masses of children in the science and culture of the world.

"The gains of the American bourgeois democratic revolution of 1776 and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, codifying the defeat of slavery during the Civil War, were progressive developments in the history of mankind. They are part of the outcome of a long and complicated, and in the case of the Civil War, bloody struggle during which feudal fetters on political freedom, economic freedom, religious freedom and scientific freedoms were broken or transcended. "During the Age of Enlightenment the basis was laid for the eradication of medieval superstition by scientific knowledge—for defeat over the forces of obscurantism. The current battle poses the defense of the gains of the American Revolution, Civil War—and the Enlightenment."

(We note, with satisfaction, that Louisiana's efforts were held to be unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court.)

Not coincidentally, the strongest opponents of teaching evolution are the strongest proponents of racist reaction and anti-Semitic bigotry. Hardcore Genesis literalists push racist crap about non-whites being the descendants of the Biblical Ham and therefore being cursed by god, giving a justification for racist terror to the Klan and Nazis. As the SL/PDC brief noted,

"Evolution, the science of man's 'descent with modification,' is the particular object of the fundamentalist religious attack. The reasons for this lie in the fact that evolutionary theory deprives man of a mythical 'special' status in nature, and exposes the lack of scientific basis for the various religions and other justifications for belief in racial inferiority."

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## Chicago, L.A.

# Fascist Trail of Murder

In the latest of a series of heinous fascist murders this summer, Aryan Nations Nazi Buford Furrow Jr. let loose with an automatic weapon in a Jewish community center in a Los Angeles suburb on August 10, wounding five people, including three children. An hour later, he walked up to Filipino letter carrier Joseph Santos Ito and fired nine shots at him, several in the back as Ito lay dying. Several hundred postal workers in their uniforms attended Ito's funeral to honor their slain co-worker. The month before, Benjamin Smith of the white-supremacist "World Church of the Creator" went on a killing rampage in Illinois and Indiana, while two men with links to the same outfit were charged with the murder of a gay couple in Northern California and implicated in arson attacks against Sacramento synagogues. We reprint below a statement by the Chicago Labor Black Struggle

League issued shortly after the Midwest killings.

The Clinton administration immediately responded to the L.A. shootings with calls to vastly strengthen gun control laws and to implement "hate crimes" legislation. Meanwhile, an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (12 August) by Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League—which has repeatedly tried to sabotage anti-Klan labor/black mobilizations initiated by the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee—called for strengthening the powers of the FBI and other police agencies to infiltrate and repress "hate groups," among which the Zionist ADL also includes communists and black militants.

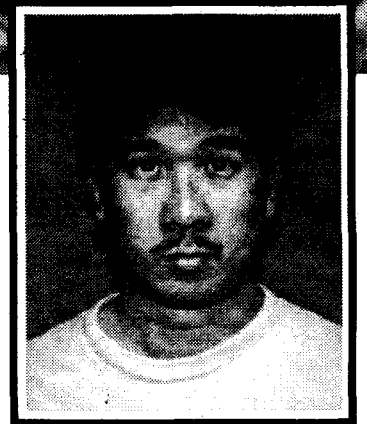
Gun control and other measures which strengthen the powers of the capitalist state are aimed not against the fascist killers but against the working people and



Reuters  
Joseph Ito, murdered by Aryan Nations Nazi in L.A. Hundreds of fellow postal workers attended his funeral.

minorities who are in the gunsights of the KKK and Nazis. The role of the cops in protecting the fascists was particularly clear in Washington, D.C. on August 7 as over 3,000 local and federal police were deployed to protect a planned march by the Nazi "Knights of Freedom/American Nationalist Party" and to suppress the few hundred counterdemonstrators who turned out. When the four Nazis who showed up turned tail, the D.C. police chief responded by threatening a lawsuit against the fascists for not carrying out their racist provocation!

Two weeks later in Cleveland, Ohio, black Democratic mayor Michael White



turned much of downtown into an occupied area so that the Ku Klux Klan could rally in that city for the first time since the 1920s. Anti-racist protesters were herded into police holding pens, a technique now regularly employed by cops around the

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