

Blair, Jospin: Enforcers of Capitalist Extortion

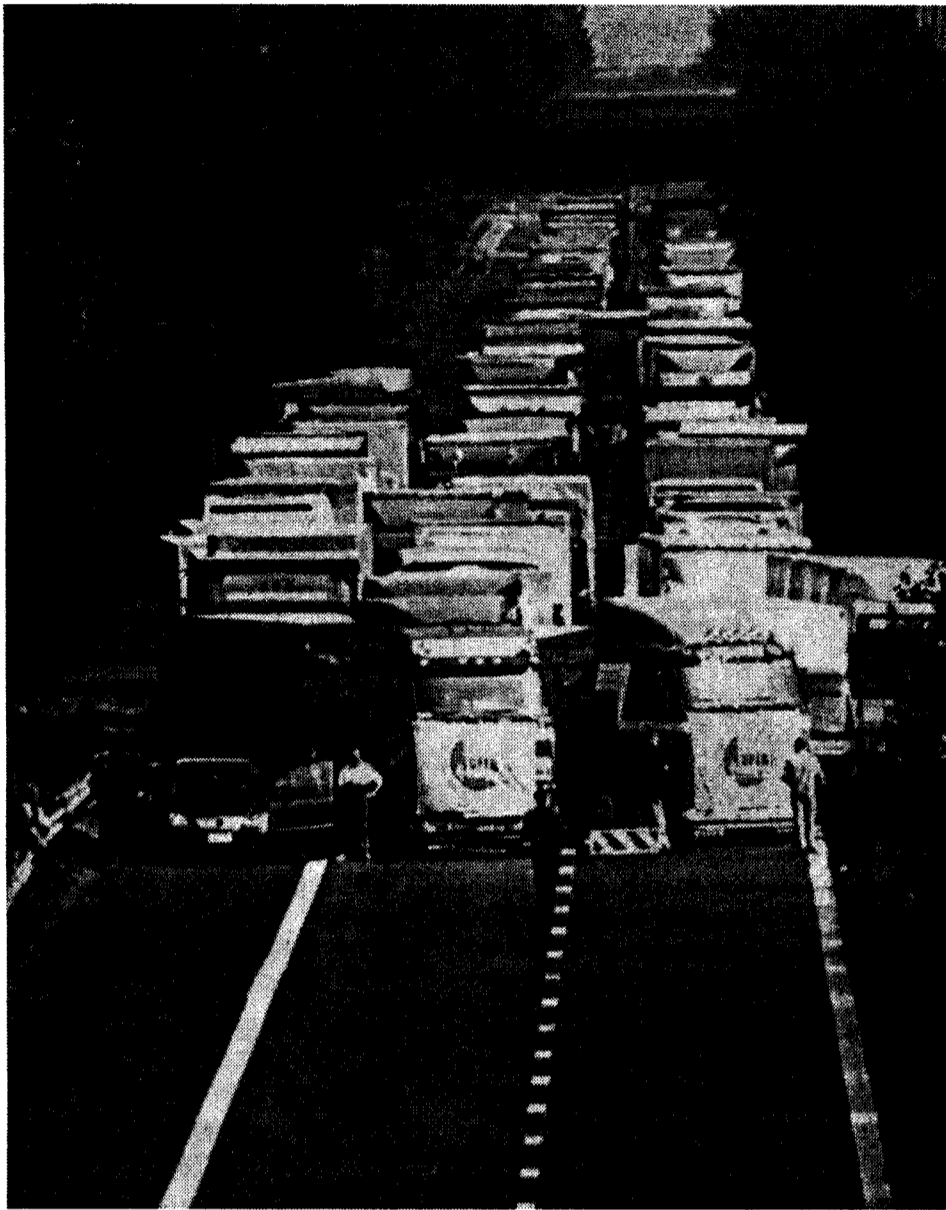
Fuel Protests Rock Europe

The following article was written for Workers Vanguard by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain.

LONDON, September 17—A blockade of oil refineries and depots by protesters brought Britain to the brink of total shut-down in a matter of days and gave vent to the seething anger felt by millions of people against Tony Blair's Labour government. The protests were called off as Blair moved army fuel tankers into position to break the blockade. Crucially aiding Blair in this was the Labourite Trades Union Congress (TUC) bureaucracy which, meeting at its annual conference at the height of the protests, moved a resolution denouncing the blockades as "a crude attempt to hold the country to ransom." The protesters have given the government 60 days to meet their demand for lower fuel prices and, while the petrol tankers have started rolling again, Labour's crisis is far from over. The effects of the blockade will be felt for weeks, while the hatred toward the arrogant Blair government remains.

Protests in Britain followed closely on similar blockades by French truckers and farmers; protests have since erupted throughout Europe and continue to spread from Ireland to Germany and Poland. These actions are hugely popular expressions of opposition to the social-democratic administrations of Blair, France's Jospin and Germany's Schröder which, as capitalist governments, seek to jack up the bosses' bloated profits through devastating attacks on the livelihoods of the working people, dismantling welfare programmes and grinding down the poor. Exorbitant taxes on items such as petrol and diesel fuel are regressive taxes which hit poor and working people hardest. In "rip-off Britain," fuel prices are higher than anywhere else in Europe. Taxes and duties make up 76 per cent of the price of unleaded petrol, which costs around 80 pence a litre [\$4.37 a gallon]. In the past 18 months alone, the cost of petrol has risen by 18 pence a litre. The cost of public transport is astronomical, as is the cost of running a car. In an industrial society, cars are not a luxury but are essential for vast numbers of workers to get to work.

The blockades were initiated and led by farmers organisations and road haulage companies—small and medium-sized capitalist companies, often employers in their own right—who are driven by the need to compete with their rivals in other countries, particularly within the European Union. The protests also enjoyed tacit support from the giant oil corporations, at least at first. While the forces leading this revolt were for the most part petty-bourgeois, the issue at



stake—cheaper fuel prices—is clearly in the interests of the working class, as was reflected in the overwhelming support for the protests among the population as a whole.

The attitude of Marxists to such petty-bourgeois mobilizations is based upon the target of the protests and the nature of the demands raised: do they further the interests of the proletariat? In this case, the protests were clearly aimed at the Blair government and indeed the demand is one supportable from a proletarian standpoint. Because of their position in society between the two classes with social power—the capitalists and the working class—groups like the farmers and hauliers will swing widely in their orientation, sometimes militantly protesting alongside the workers and sometimes becoming the recruiting grounds for the fascists.

A revolutionary leadership of the workers movement must seek to take the lead of protests such as these in order to

direct them clearly against the real culprit: capitalism and the Labour government which administers it. The fuel crisis is the most acute social crisis Britain has seen since the great miners strike of 1984-85. It has starkly illustrated the venal nature not only of Labour but particularly of the trade-union bureaucracy, which acted as Blair's partners in crime and played a decisive role in saving the government's hide.

A tanker drivers strike would transform the protests into a mighty class struggle against the Labour government. It could appeal to rail and all transport workers to strike the railways and the privatised public transport system which is equally hated. Such a mobilisation by the union membership requires implacable opposition to the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy. While the oil blockade used militant tactics, and gentleman farmers were heard to repeat the fashionable phrase "direct action works,"



Truckers block road at German-Belgian border, September 13. Protests against high fuel prices have paralyzed Britain and other European countries.

the fundamental question is one of political programme and leadership. Forging a revolutionary proletarian party as the necessary instrument to lead the working class in struggle, committed to nothing less than victorious workers revolution against the whole rotting capitalist system, is the urgent task posed. It is such a party that we in the Spartacist League/Britain seek to build.

Tony Blair, having been chased around Yorkshire by angry protesters, summoned oil bosses and police chiefs to Downing Street, reportedly demanded they get tough with the protesters and declared on national television that within 24 hours the oil tankers would be back on the roads. In order for Blair's boast to become a reality, unionised tanker drivers had to drive the tankers out and break the blockade which they had supported until then. Enter the trade-union bureaucrats, whose slavish loyalty to "their" anti-working-class Labour government and the bourgeois order it upholds knows no bounds. Initially, many drivers refused to move oil except for emergency supplies. But the bureaucracy of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) scandalously instructed their members to bring the oil out. A TGWU press release issued 12 September, the same day as Blair's ultimatum, said: "The Union which represents tanker drivers urged its members to continue working as long as it was safe to do so," adding "We urge the protesters to remove the blockades and allow our members to resume deliveries." TGWU general secretary Bill Morris egged on the cops, saying "If they are breaking the law, the protesters should be arrested" (*Guardian*, 13 September).

According to a report in the *Sunday Telegraph* (17 September): "While Mr Blair pondered sending in the troops, [finance minister] Mr [Gordon] Brown

continued on page 11



**Victory to
L.A. Transit
Strike!...2**

Just Out from Prometheus Research Library

**"Marxist Politics or
Unprincipled Combinationism?"...4**

Victory to L.A. Transit Strike!

LOS ANGELES, September 18—For the past three days, a solid strike by 4,300 bus drivers and train operators has shut down the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). The heavily black and Latino strikers are members of the United Transportation Union (UTU). The union has refused to give in to the MTA's demand to switch 400 drivers to a four-day workweek, forcing them to be on the job for 13 hours a day at ten hours' pay. This would mean a pay cut of at least 15 percent for many drivers, and the increased hours, stress and fatigue are a recipe for killing both workers and riders.

While L.A. still relies heavily on cars, with the transit system expanding the potential power of the transit workers has increased. On its first weekday today, the strike has shut down service for 450,000 riders. Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) mechanics and Transportation Communications International Union

clerks, who are also without a contract, are walking the UTU picket lines carrying handmade signs in solidarity with the strike. Teamsters members are refusing to drive the extra buses set up by the suburban Metrolink light-rail system to shuttle passengers from Union Station to other parts of the city, stymying the bosses' strikebreaking scheme.

All the MTA unions are targeted by a union-busting plan long pushed by Republican mayor Richard Riordan, MTA chief Julian Burke and Democrats on the MTA board like Zev Yaroslavsky to create "regional transportation zones" under so-called "local control." Their model is the Foothill Transit zone, spun off in 1987, which contracts out to private bus companies with low pay and few benefits. This was the core issue in an eight-day ATU strike six years ago, but the union tops caved in to MTA demands to allow privatization of bus lines through

L.A. transit strikers have won wide support from working people and minorities.



contracting out and the creation of a divisive "two-tier" wage system. In 1997, the UTU leadership likewise agreed to the imposition of a "two-tier" scheme under which hundreds of part-time drivers have been hired for as little as \$8 an hour, undercutting one of the few decent union jobs available to blacks and Latinos in the city.

The city's rulers have tried to pit the largely poor and minority MTA ridership against the strikers. The *Los Angeles Times* (18 September) cynically reported that "particularly hard hit were immigrants and the poor." Black Democrat Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, an L.A. County supervisor and MTA board chairman, demanded that the strikers "stop holding our city's poor and middle-class residents hostage." But like the janitors strike by the heavily immigrant SEIU Local 1877 last spring, the transit strike is widely popular. The low-wage Latino, immigrant and black workers, students and the elderly who rely on the MTA face grinding poverty and racist oppression and look to the integrated transit unions as an organized, powerful force against the city establishment which has historically kept L.A. an "open shop" town. A *Los Angeles Times* (16 September) headline acknowledged, "Bus Riders Share a Bond With Drivers." One nursing student said, "I don't know much about the strike, but I know people are overworked in Amer-

ica. If I was a driver, I would be on strike."

The fabulous profits being raked in by the capitalists in the much-touted "new economy" are the result of enormous speedup and forced overtime and wage-slashing through "multi-tier" pay scales and increasing use of low-paid part-timers. These issues have repeatedly fueled strikes in the last few years, from the UPS Teamsters in 1997 to GM Flint in '98 and Verizon phone workers this summer. "A backlash is building against the new economy's voracious appetite for Americans' time," reports a *New York Times* (17 September) article headlined "Overtime Rises, Making Fatigue a Labor Issue." The article notes: "From 1886, when a potent eight-hour movement exploded in street violence in the Chicago Haymarket, it took 52 years for American society to agree on a 40-hour workweek with the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938. But now, the strains that the booming economy is putting on workers, especially women, are reopening the debate."

While the capitalists refuse to hire new workers at union wages and full benefits, the sharp drop in real wages in the last 20 years has forced many older workers to grab all the overtime they can get. What is necessary is a fight for a *sliding scale of wages and hours*—an automatic increase in wages to keep up with increases in the

continued on page 11

Bourgeois "Democracy": Mask for Dictatorship of Capital



TROTSKY

From the day the Bolshevik-led proletariat in Russia seized power in the October Revolution of 1917, social democrats inveighed against the proletarian dictatorship in the name of "democracy." Polemicizing against Social Democrats Karl Kautsky and Philipp Scheidemann, a leading member of the German imperialist government, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin exposed the hypocrisy of capitalist democracy as a cover



LENIN

for brutal exploitation and oppression. In smashing the rule of the capitalists and landlords in Russia and establishing the rule of workers councils (soviets), proletarian democracy, the October Revolution served as a beacon to the working masses internationally.

The Scheidemanns and Kautskys speak about "pure democracy" and "democracy" in general for the purpose of deceiving the people and concealing from them the *bourgeois* character of *present-day* democracy. Let the bourgeoisie continue to keep the entire apparatus of state power in their hands, let a handful of exploiters continue to use the former, bourgeois, state machine! Elections held in such circumstances are lauded by the bourgeoisie, for very good reasons, as being "free," "equal," "democratic" and "universal." These words are designed to conceal the truth, to conceal the fact that the means of production and political power remain in the hands of the exploiters, and that therefore real freedom and real equality for the exploited, that is, for the vast majority of the population, are out of the question. It is profitable and indispensable for the bourgeoisie to conceal from the people the *bourgeois* character of modern democracy, to picture it as democracy in general or "pure democracy," and the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, repeating this, *in practice* abandon the standpoint of the proletariat and side with the bourgeoisie....

This is tantamount to trampling on the basic truths of Marxism which has taught the workers: you must take advantage of bourgeois democracy which, compared with feudalism, represents a great historical advance, but not for one minute must you forget the bourgeois character of this "democracy," its historically conditional and limited character. Never share the "superstitious belief" in the "state" and never forget that the state even in the most democratic republic, and not only in a monarchy, is simply a machine for the suppression of one class by another....

The dictatorship of the proletariat alone can emancipate humanity from the oppression of capital, from the lies, falsehood and hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy—democracy *for the rich*—and establish democracy *for the poor*, that is, make the blessings of democracy *really* accessible to the workers and poor peasants, whereas now (even in the most democratic—*bourgeois*—republic) the blessings of democracy are, *in fact*, inaccessible to the vast majority of working people.

—V.I. Lenin, "Democracy and Dictatorship" (December 1918)

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22 September 2000

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For Workers Political Revolution to Oust Stalinist Bureaucracy!

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Saturday, September 30, 7:30 p.m.

Trinity-St. Paul's Centre
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Beware the Fraud of "Human Rights" Imperialism

Saturday, September 30, 3 p.m.

Britannia Community Centre, Room L4
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For more information: (604) 687-0353

VANCOUVER

Young Spartacus

Why I Broke from the YSA and Joined the SYC

We print below a letter to Young Spartacus by Lital S., a Spartacus Youth Club member in Los Angeles.

When I began attending UCLA in the fall of 1998, my orientation session included only one black student out of three hundred. Such was the initial result of the repeal of affirmative action, one of the last remaining gains of the Civil Rights Movement. Having attended an urban Los Angeles high school which mainly consisted of blacks and Latinos, I was disgusted that so many of those faces I had seen growing up were absent at higher education institutions such as UCLA. I began to attend protests organized by the Affirmative Action Coalition (AAC) which was my initiation into "family of the left" politics at UCLA. The AAC was composed of various student groups whose aims were centered on pressuring the \$300,000-a-year chancellor to stop purging UCLA of minority students. One such protest consisted of about 300 students who took over Murphy Hall and demanded that the chancellor meet with us. The chancellor spewed platitudes about fostering diversity in the UC system through funding groups such as the African Student Union, while refusing to sign a written statement acknowledging the effects of dismantling affirmative action. Most of us left in tears, feeling closer to each other, yet not really discussing why our politics were ineffective, why pressuring the chancellor was bankrupt. We should have been defending affirmative action but also fighting for open admissions, free tuition and for the campuses to be run by those who work and study there!

After these failed pressure protests, I began to become active in the fight to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal on campus. This fight took the shape of the Student Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, organized by Students for Socialist Action (now called Youth for Socialist Action). The coalition comprised members from various student groups as well as independents such as myself. Everyone in the coalition agreed that Mumia was innocent and that was the extent of political agreement. In all, it proved to be more a gathering of social leftists who enjoyed artwork for Mumia but who shied away from a serious understanding of what Mumia represented and how to fight black oppression in the United States. Our main focus was to educate students on Mumia's case through forums, video showings of *A Case for Reasonable Doubt*, and organizing carpools for the April 24th [1999] "Millions for Mumia" protest in San Francisco. Our forums were well attended, and we organized about 30 students to go up to the Bay Area with us for the protest. The flyers, pins, and banners all demanded that Mumia receive a "New Trial Now!"

While I had very few illusions in the capitalist courts, I believed that calling for a new trial was the only "realistic" demand. When leafletting, I would appeal to people that Mumia received an unfair trial and so wherever one stood on the

political spectrum they could logically understand the need for a new trial. But calling for a new trial does not exist as a politically neutral demand. The demand stifles any real challenge to the state apparatus, which imprisoned Mumia in the first place, by placing faith in the capitalist courts as though we can pressure them to be fair. Within a few weeks after we returned back to UCLA, the coalition pretty much disintegrated. Those who remained were Youth for Socialist Action (YSA) members and a few others such as myself who were not done with Mumia's cause just because the protest was over. The breakdown of the coalition was a further reiteration in my mind of the void liberalism leaves. Because the mobilization was not organized around a greater understanding of the racist nature of this capitalist state, it was easy for liberals involved to flee his case and move on to other momentary interests.

After going through two cycles of student activism I was thoroughly disillusioned with pressure politics. I was beginning to understand that many of these student organizers were not interested in fundamentally changing society because that would mean renouncing their opportunities to have successful professional careers. It was at that time that I began to look seriously at Marxism and to understand that it is not students who possess the social power to change society, but

the working class. I began to work with Youth for Socialist Action because I had friendly relations with many of their members and because they posed as an alternative. But what I observed at YSA meetings and forums, which I attended regularly, was that the YSA was not interested in educating its members about revolutionary Marxism and how to apply it to the world today. The organizers of the YSA did not want to challenge popular sentiments on campus for fear that they would isolate themselves, so they capitulated to them instead. Such capitulation took the form that I had witnessed with the Mumia coalition, where instead of educating people on winning Mumia's freedom, they choose to push the call for a new trial. It was not a coincidence that the new trial slogan was not only posed by the Mumia coalition but also by Socialist Action, even though YSA claimed that the two organizations were separate. My experience with the YSA soon proved that I had not escaped the bankruptcy of reformism but had rather plunged myself into its most disturbing form, liberals with socialist pretensions.

There are a few members of the YSA who want to call themselves revolutionaries, something that is hard to do when the YSA's 10-point program does not call for a revolution once. They like to call themselves Trotskyists when no one is looking, yet at meetings or forums

Trotsky's name is rarely mentioned. The YSA has no need to politically oppose any anti-Marxist petty-bourgeois ideology (e.g., environmentalism, feminism) because they have already incorporated it into their own program!

Another example is black nationalism, which Socialist Action staunchly supports. In a December 1995 article giving acclaim to Louis Farrakhan's pro-capitalist Million Man March, Socialist Action justified its support to black nationalism by claiming that "the right to choose the road to freedom belongs to the oppressed nationality and to no one else. Class unity cannot be imposed on Black workers." Socialist Action does not have a program for black liberation so they adapt to the nationalists whose program is not only utopian but also reactionary and divisive. Being both Jewish and a woman, black nationalism as represented today by the likes of Farrakhan for obvious reasons did not sit well with me. I understood that black oppression is the foundation of U.S. capitalism and that black liberation is completely tied to the struggle for socialism. It is not difficult to observe that racial oppression is endemic to capitalism, that those who live in the ghettos of Los Angeles are predominantly black and Latino.

It must further be noted that the history of black struggle in the U.S. has

continued on page 7

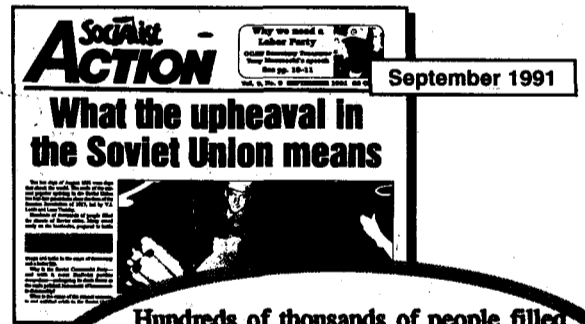


Der Spiegel

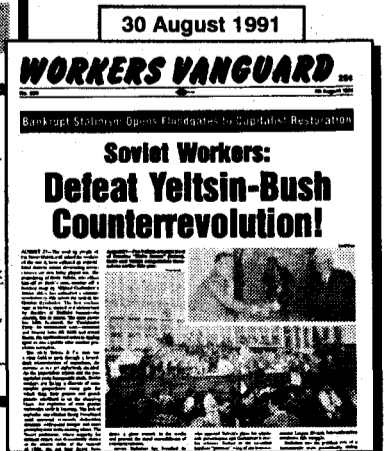
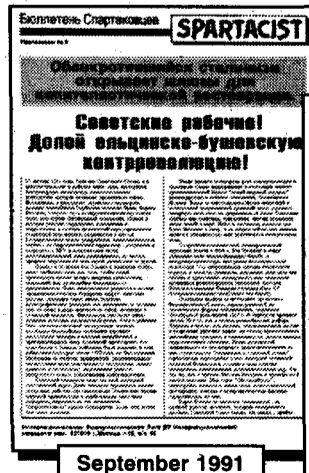
While supposedly "Trotskyist" Socialist Action hailed "democratic" capitalist counterrevolution in Soviet Union, joining reactionaries and clericalists/monarchists (above, Orthodox priest on Yeltsin's barricades) in pushing for destruction of workers state, Trotskyist ICL fought against capitalist restoration. Our placard and banner (below) at 7 November 1991 anti-Yeltsin Revolution Day demonstration in Moscow calls to "Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky"; ICL statement "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" was mass distributed in the USSR.



Spartacist



Hundreds of thousands of people filled the streets of Soviet cities. Many stood ready on the barricades, prepared to battle troops and tanks in the cause of democracy and a better life.



“Marxist Politics or Unprincipled Combinationism?”

Just Out from Prometheus Research Library

The Prometheus Research Library, archival and research facility of the Spartacist League/U.S., has just published the fifth in its *Prometheus Research Series* of historical bulletins reprinting key documents of the Marxist movement. *PRS* No. 5 reprints a document by Max Shachtman titled “Marxist Politics or Unprincipled Combinationism?” which was originally published in February 1936 in the *Internal Bulletin* of the Workers Party of the United States (WPUS), the American Trotskyist organization at the time. Shachtman’s document, written when he was a close collaborator of Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon, is an excellent presentation of Leninist methods of internal party struggle, illuminated through the political disputes which were then roiling the American Trotskyist movement. *PRS* No. 5 also includes an introduction by the PRL and a previously unavailable August 1935 report by Cannon on the internal situation in the WPUS as well as an objection to this report written by Albert Glotzer.

The 1930s were a time of tumultuous social struggles and political turmoil in the U.S. and internationally, posing opportunities for the building of a revolutionary workers party. The WPUS was formed in December 1934 through a fusion of the Trotskyist Communist League of America (CLA) and a leftward-moving centrist organization led by A. J. Muste called the American Workers Party (AWP). When Shachtman wrote his document, the Trotskyists were about to enter into the Socialist Party (SP) in order to win over its growing left wing. Shachtman’s document deals with the internal political battle within the CLA against those who obstructed fusion with the AWP and then went on within the WPUS to obstruct or oppose entry into the SP.

This factional battle pitted a Leninist core around Cannon and Shachtman against an ultraleft grouping led by Hugo Oehler and a rightist clique grouped around Martin Abern, Jack Weber and Glotzer. The document was written after Oehler and his supporters were expelled in late 1935 for repeated, flagrant violations of

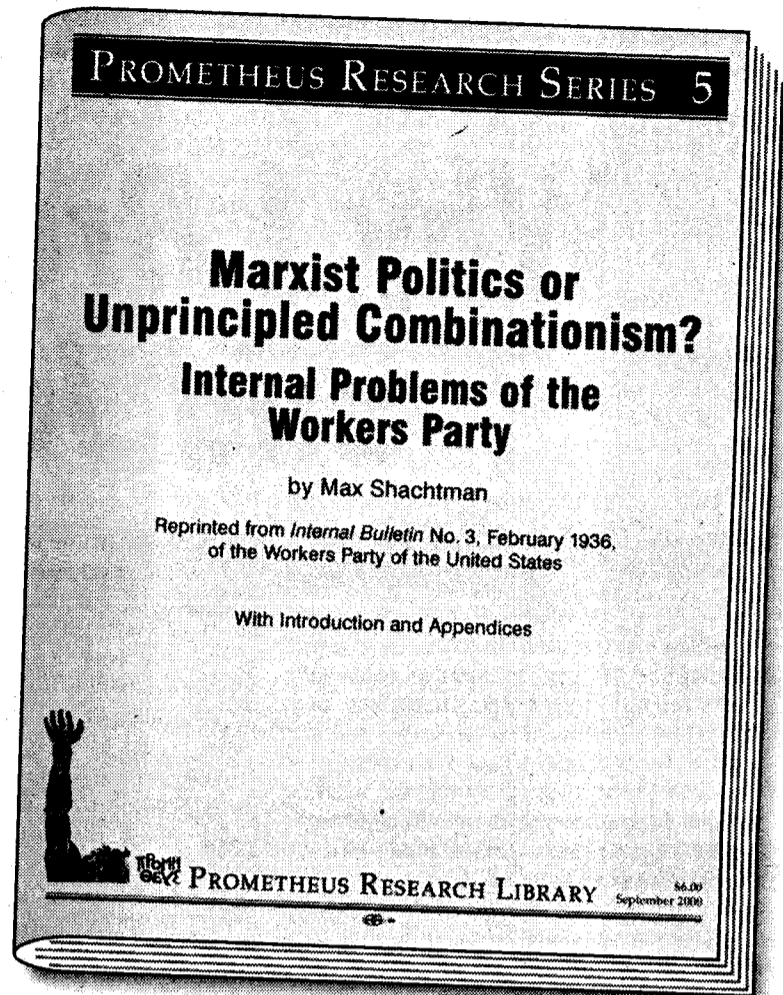
CLA apart. With no principled and programmatic issues in dispute, Trotsky intervened in the spring of 1933 to put a stop to the polarization. Shachtman subsequently went over to collaboration with Cannon in pursuing the opportunities posed by the AWP and the growing SP left wing. But, as Shachtman admits toward the end of his document, the core of his former faction, still animated by personal animosity to Cannon, continued to exist. The Abern clique was the Shachtmanites...without Shachtman.

While providing one of the only detailed accounts by a participant of the internal factional struggles in the later CLA and the WPUS, Shachtman’s document transcends the confines of the particular controversies that occurred over 60 years ago. It is a manual of internal party struggle, as cogent and instructive today as when it was written. Shachtman’s goal, as he noted in introducing his document, was to train the members of the Workers Party, particularly the many young members who had recently been recruited:

“The youth must be trained in the spirit of revolutionary Marxism, of principled politics. Through its bloodstream must run a powerful resistance to the poison of clique politics, of subjectivism, of personal combinationism, of intrigue, of gossip. It must learn to cut through all superficialities and reach down to the essence of every problem. It must learn to think politically, to be guided exclusively by political considerations, to argue out problems with themselves and with others on the basis of principles and to act always from motives of principle.”

Cannon’s Tradition, Not Shachtman’s

This document does not represent the political positions or methodology attributable to the later political current that bears Shachtman’s name. Shachtmanism is correctly characterized by his renegacy—his flight from Trotskyism in 1939-40 when on the eve of World War II, under the influence of the petty-bourgeois anti-



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nature of the Soviet state. But he still united with Burnham. Shachtman thus repudiated the organizational principles he outlines in “Marxist Politics or Unprincipled Combinationism?” He reunited as well with his former factional partners in the Abern clique, who claimed to defend the USSR, opposing only Cannon’s “organizational methods.”

The struggle against this petty-bourgeois opposition—the last faction fight waged by Trotsky before his assassination in 1940—is documented in Trotsky’s *In Defense of Marxism* and Cannon’s *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*. In his October 1939 “Speech on the Russian Question,” reprinted in the latter book, Cannon declared:

“The Russian question is no literary exercise to be taken up or cast aside according to the mood of the moment. The Russian question has been and remains the question of the revolution. The Russian Bolsheviks on November 7, 1917, once and for all, took the question of the workers’ revolution out of the realm of abstraction and gave it flesh and blood reality.”

In May 1940, Shachtman-Burnham-Abern split from the Trotskyist movement to form the Workers Party, which Burnham abandoned almost immediately to become an open bourgeois anti-Communist. Shachtman’s Workers Party—not to be confused with the earlier WPUS—soon joined Burnham in proclaiming the Soviet Union a new form of class society. But they still claimed to be Trotskyist and even to support the Fourth International until 1948. Under the impact of the renewed anti-Communist hysteria of the Cold War, the Shachtmanites moved rapidly to the right, ultimately liquidating into the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation in 1958. Backing the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and the vicious, losing imperialist war against the Vietnamese social revolution, Shachtman ended his days in the right wing of the Democratic Party.

Notwithstanding Shachtman’s later evolution, this document is a major contribution to the arsenal of those seeking to build an international vanguard party in the Leninist tradition. As the PRL’s Introduction to *PRS* No. 5 states:

“Unlike the Stalinists, we do not disappear people from history and we do not denigrate the contributions made by renegades when they were still guided by Marxism and were active proponents of the workers’ struggle against capitalism. Rather, we follow the example of Lenin, who continued to urge his followers to study the early works of Plekhanov despite his social-patriotism during World War I and his opposition to the October Revolution. In earlier years, it was Plekhanov who not only translated Marx’s works into Russian but actively recruited a new generation to Marxism; one of those was Lenin. Shachtman’s document was written during the period when he collaborated closely with Cannon and Trotsky, and it belongs in our tradition.”

It is not Shachtman the Trotskyist leader, but Shachtman the renegade who is today embraced by a host of fake leftists who likewise repudiated Soviet-defensism and capitulated to their “own” bourgeoisie during the Cold War II offensive which culminated in the destruc-



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Left to right: Martin Abern, James Cannon, Max Shachtman. Shachtman’s document exposed and combatted Abern’s unprincipled combinationism against “Cannon regime” as obstacle to forging revolutionary workers party.

party discipline. Shachtman aimed most of his fire at the poisonous personalism which had led the Abern-Weber-Glotzer group to obstruct the necessary fight against Oehler, noting that the basis of this group was “that of an unprincipled personal combination, of a clique that refuses to live down ancient and completely outlived personal and factional animosities.”

Shachtman had intimate personal knowledge of the origins and methods of the Abern-Weber clique. In the early CLA, Shachtman had been the leader of a group of young cadre that included Abern, Glotzer and Maurice Spector. This group had counterposed itself to the older, more experienced worker militants around Cannon in a vicious internal struggle which threatened to tear the

Communist hysteria which greeted the August 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact, he abandoned the program of unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. In this, Shachtman took his lead from the bourgeois pedant and New York University professor James Burnham, a former leader of the AWP who was won to revolutionary Trotskyism in the course of the fight in the WPUS. By 1939, Burnham denied the Trotskyist understanding that the Soviet Union remained a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, i.e., one based on proletarian (collectivized) property forms despite the political counterrevolution in 1924 which usurped political power from the working class. Shachtman claimed to be agnostic on the class

tion of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. Thus "Marxist Politics or Unprincipled Combinationism?" does not appear at all in the lengthy tome of reprints of Shachtmanite articles produced in Britain by Labourite social-patriot Sean Matgamna, *The Fate of the Russian Revolution: Lost Texts of Critical Marxism, Volume 1* (see "The Bankruptcy of 'New Class' Theories—Tony Cliff and Max Shachtman: Pro-Imperialist Accomplices of Counterrevolution," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999). Nor does Shachtman's document get even a passing mention in Peter Drucker's 1994 biography, *Max Shachtman and His Left*.

The Early American Trotskyist Movement

The American Trotskyist movement was born in October 1928, when Cannon, Shachtman and Abern were expelled from the Workers (Communist) Party (CP) for Trotskyism. As a delegate to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International (CI) earlier that year, Cannon had received a partial copy of Leon Trotsky's "Critique of the Draft Program of the Communist International," later published in *The Third International After Lenin*. Thoroughly convinced by Trotsky's trenchant exposure of the Comintern's abandonment of a revolutionary perspective, Cannon returned home to organize for the Trotskyist opposition. The CLA, which became the U.S. section of the International Left Opposition (ILO), was founded in May 1929 by Cannon and some 100 of his former factional supporters in the CP, most of whom had been expelled simply for questioning the propriety of his expulsion.

The ILO considered itself an expelled faction of the Comintern—fighting to return the CI to the program and practice that had animated it during its first four years of existence—until 1933. That year, Hitler's Nazis came to power in Germany without organized resistance by the powerful working class. The Social Democracy had been a prop of the German capitalist order since World War I. But the German Communist Party—which commanded the allegiance of millions of workers—also allowed Hitler to triumph, and no opposition was raised within the Comintern to this disastrous course. At that point, Trotsky called for new communist parties and a new, Fourth International. The ILO reconstituted itself as the International Communist League (ICL).

Under the blows of the Great Depression and Hitler's rise to power, a number of reformist and centrist currents were impelled to the left. The ICL sought to effect a regroupment of revolutionary forces, and the CLA's negotiations with the AWP were part of this regroupment effort. A former pacifist and preacher, Muste had been active in the labor movement since 1919, and his Conference for Progressive Labor Action, which became the AWP, had been the most visible force for "progressive," but generally pro-capitalist, trade-union activism. But at their convention in late 1933, Muste's supporters declared the necessity of building a new revolutionary party, insisting:

"The revolutionary struggle of the masses against the capitalist system which more and more depresses their standard of living, takes various forms.... The primary form is the economic struggles of the worker and farmer. The struggle is, however, inspired, coordinated, carried to its goal of taking power, by the revolutionary political party."

In 1934, the AWP led the Toledo Auto-Lite strike and the CLA led militant strikes for union recognition by the Minneapolis Teamsters. These two major union victories, along with the CP-led San Francisco general strike, laid the basis for the working-class upsurge that built the CIO later that decade. Unity negotiations between the AWP and CLA were propelled by these victories.

The AWP had been moving to the left, but it remained an extremely heterogeneous organization. As Cannon described it in his *History of American Trotskyism*, "The membership of the AWP included everything from prole-



Basil Blackwell, Inc.

Red Army commander Leon Trotsky addresses Soviet troops in 1920.

tarian revolutionists to reactionary scoundrels and fakers." Besides contending with Oehler's ultraleft opposition within the CLA, the CLA leadership had to politically isolate or at least neutralize the right wing of the AWP. As Cannon explained, "Our political task was to prevent the Stalinists from swallowing up this movement, and to remove a centrist obstacle from our path by effecting a unity with the proletarian activists and the serious people, isolating the frauds and fakers, and discarding the unassimilable elements."

In Europe, left currents were emerging from within the reformist social-democratic parties. France was in the throes of social crisis, with a combative proletariat on one side and a growing fascist movement on the other, and workers and youth began flocking into the social-democratic SFIO. In June 1934, Trotsky proposed that the French ICL section, the Ligue Communiste, enter the SFIO in order to split away its left-wing currents and win them to Bolshevism. Trotsky's call for what became known as the "French turn" met internal opposition from various sectarian elements, most of whom ended up abandoning the ICL. It is not unusual for a revolutionary party, in a period of sharp political turn, to generate internal conservative oppositions to new tasks. In the U.S., Oehler opposed the application of this Leninist tactic of splits and fusions, arguing that it represented a liquidation of the vanguard party. Trotsky responded to such arguments: "The League is not yet a party. It is an embryo, and an embryo needs covering and nourishment in order to develop."

The formative years of the International Left Opposition had been devoted to steeling the cadre of a propaganda group on the basis of Bolshevik principles. Now it was necessary, as Shachtman explained in his document, to seize on the outbreak of class struggle to present these "formerly elaborated principles to the masses in the form of agitational, day-to-day slogans" and to go from there to building a party "which can discharge the responsibilities incumbent upon an organization claiming to defend the daily as well as the historical interests of the proletariat, which can actually set masses into motion—in other words, a party of action."

Even before the fusion with the AWP, the CLA leadership had been probing the emerging left wing in the American Socialist Party. The CLA's factional groupings had agreed to dissolve with the fusion, but in the WPUS the Oehlerites continued their agitation against the "French turn," labeling it as the ICL's "capitulation" to social democracy. Entry into the SP was not a feasible tactic for the Trotskyists so long as the right wing continued to control the SP organization in New York. However, Cannon and Shachtman insisted that the WPUS had to pay attention to developments there. They geared up for an all-out political fight to stop the Oehlerites from paralyzing the party's activities.

Meanwhile, the Abern-Weber clique began filling Muste's ears with slanders about Cannon's "organizational methods," causing Muste to waver in the fight against Oehler. (Muste would eventually oppose the SP entry, leaving the Trotskyist movement to return to pacifist activism.) A worker who had come from the AWP described his first experience of factional struggle and the impact of Cannon's intervention at a June 1935 WPUS plenum:

"This Bolshevik method of a free, democratic, organized factional struggle to settle serious differences over program and policy was brand new to us...."

"Jim's speeches gave us our first lesson in the ABCs of principled Marxist politics as he fairly but mercilessly dissected the political position of each group in our bloc. We noticed at once that Jim didn't stoop to petty debater's points or misrepresent an opponent's position. He stated each position fully and fairly and answered them squarely in such a way as to obtain the maximum educational value for the membership...."

"For the first time it became apparent to us that each member of our bloc had different principles and motives for joining the bloc. Jim put the right name on it—an unprincipled bloc."

—Essay by Ted Grant in *James P. Cannon As We Knew Him* (1976)

The Oehlerites' position was rejected at a subsequent plenum in October. A few months later, the SP's right wing split away, making a Trotskyist entry an immediate possibility. "Marxist Politics or Unprincipled Combinationism?" was written on the eve of a March 1936 WPUS convention where the Cannon-Shachtman faction finally obtained a decisive mandate in favor of the "French turn" as applied to the American SP. After an entry lasting less than two years, the Trotskyists had doubled in size, having acquired the majority of the SP youth and valuable accretions of trade unionists in the maritime industry. In his *History of American Trotskyism*, Cannon noted how the entry had dealt a death blow to the SP: "Since then the SP has progressively disintegrated until it has virtually lost any semblance of influence in any party of the labor movement."

The Socialist Workers Party was formed in January 1938, and was the Trotskyist party in the U.S. until the early 1960s, when it departed from the Leninist program with its uncritical embrace of Castro in Cuba and black nationalism in the U.S. This centrist degeneration culminated in full-blown reformism in 1965, when the SWP began pushing for a class-collaborationist "anti-war" strategy in the protests against the Vietnam War. The Revolutionary Tendency, precursor to the Spartacist League, arose in the SWP in opposition to the party's centrist degeneration and was bureaucratically expelled by the SWP leadership in 1963.

Tamiment Conference Organizers Promote "Death of Trotskyism"

For Marxists, historical evaluation is not a religious act designed to uphold the essential purity of our forebears. Rather it is an act of critical materialist investigation designed to aid us in the achievement of our goal: the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat around the world, the first step on the road to a classless, *continued on page 6*



1934: Trotskyist CLA press reported Toledo Auto-Lite strike led by A.J. Muste's AWP (left), Minneapolis Teamsters strike led by CLA. Labor victories helped lay basis for fusion of CLA and AWP later that year.

no credit



Minnesota Historical Society



(continued from page 5)

communist society. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the defining event of the 20th century, is our essential reference point. Trotskyism was forged in the struggle to defend the gains of the October Revolution—both material and ideological—against the Stalinist usurpers who ultimately destroyed the world's first workers state. Writing of his struggle to forge the Fourth International, Trotsky noted:

"For the sake of clarity I would put it this way. Had I not been present in 1917 in Petersburg, the October Revolution would still have taken place—on the condition that Lenin was present and in command...."

"Thus I cannot speak of the 'indispensability' of my work, even about the period from 1917 to 1921. But now my work is 'indispensable' in the full sense of the word. There is no arrogance in this claim at all. The collapse of the two Internationals has posed a problem which none of the leaders of these Internationals is at all equipped to solve. The vicissitudes of my personal fate have confronted me with this problem and armed me with important experience in dealing with it. There is now no one except me to carry out the mission of arming a new generation with the revolutionary method over the heads of the leaders of the Second and Third International."

—Trotsky's *Diary in Exile* (1935)

A myriad of deserters from the Trotskyist movement—starting with Trotsky's great biographer, Isaac Deutscher—have sought to label the fight in exile to build an international organization based on the program and principles which animated the Russian Revolution as a quixotic and hopeless venture unworthy of a man of Trotsky's intellectual stature. It is precisely the rejection of Trotsky's fight to forge an instrument for the

of the Cannon and Shachtman "traditions."

All three are supporters of the United Secretariat (USec) which was led, until his death in 1995, by Ernest Mandel. Now Mandel's heirs, having capitulated to and increasingly embraced social-democratic anti-Communism during the anti-Soviet war drive of the 1980s, plan to drop all mention of the Fourth International—or indeed the fight for proletarian revolution—from their statutes at their upcoming world congress. While Wald, Le Blanc and Drucker all claim to have discovered "new" reasons to junk the old Trotskyism, the politics they argue are, in fact, at least a century old: either a warmed-over version of the Second International's "party of the whole class" or even harking back to the eclectic political bloc that was the First International.

Another central speaker will be Pierre Broué, whose mammoth biography of Trotsky was tailored for the neo-Bukharinite intelligentsia which promoted pro-capitalist "market reforms" in Gorbachev's USSR in the 1980s (see "Pierre Broué's *Trotsky*—Tailored for Perestroika," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 45-46, Winter 1990-91). Broué's *Cahiers Leon Trotsky* has lately made a campaign out of defending the opposition led by Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow which split from the SWP in 1946. Goldman and Morrow argued for unity between the SWP and Shachtman's Workers Party. They insisted that Cannon was wrong to project that revolutionary possibilities would open up in Europe at the end of WWII, arguing instead that the Trotskyists should emphasize democratic demands.

Proletarian revolution was in the air as WWII ended, not so much in France where the Resistance movement had poisoned the air with anti-German nationalism, but



RTsKHIDNI

James P. Cannon with Red Army soldiers during Communist International's Sixth Congress, Moscow 1928. Cannon was won to Left Opposition after reading Trotsky's suppressed criticism of draft program of Stalinized CI.

such "Trotskyists" is the direct result of their rejection of the Trotskyist purpose. Comparing the value and reliability of Cannon's recollections of the early American Communist Party to those of other founding members who had broken from Marxism, historian Theodore Draper observed in his 1961 preface to Cannon's *First Ten Years of American Communism*: "For a long time, I wondered why Jim Cannon's memory of events in the Nineteen-Twenties was so superior to that of all the others.... Unlike other communist leaders of his generation, Jim Cannon wanted to remember. This portion of his life still lives for him because he has not killed it within himself."

The publishing program and archival collections of the Prometheus Research Library exist because we in the International Communist League seek to be the active subject of Trotskyist history, not passive commentators. The majority of participants in the Tamiment conference are at best indifferent to our fight to forge an instrument for the proletarian seizure of power. Nonetheless, our documentary collections are open to revisionist "Trotskyist historians," too. It was Stalinism that brought into the workers movement the pernicious idea that you couldn't share the time of day, let alone an old document, with a political opponent.

A representative of the PRL will be speaking at the conference. We believe the assiduous attempt to discover and document historical truth is in the interests of the proletarian revolution, and hence of all humanity. We will be speaking in the tradition of Cannon and in the spirit of the Shachtman who collaborated with him in the WPUS, the Shachtman who wrote in concluding his document:

"We have before us a truly breath-taking job: the building of a powerful Bolshevik party in the citadel of world reaction. But this party will never be built—or if it is built, it will never stand up in a crisis—unless it has as its spinal column a steel cadre: hard, tough, firm, flexible, tempered. The two are inseparable: a cadre without a party is a skeleton without flesh or muscle; a party without a cadre is a mass of gelatine that anybody's finger can go through. And how else will the Bolshevik cadre be tempered unless, on every occasion, it has hammered into it more and more of the wisdom we have tried to learn from the great teachers: a deep respect for principle and a hatred for cliquism and intrigue, an equally deep regard for objective judgement of problems and a suspicious intolerance of subjective and personal considerations, a political approach to all political problems and a political solution for them. Now more than ever before are these indispensable, for the revolutionists function today amid a veritable sea of corruption and decay of the old movements, the poisonous fumes of which cannot but be felt in our own ranks unless we constantly counteract them." ■



Trotskyists fought against capitalist counterrevolution in USSR and East Europe. Spartakist banner at January 1990 East Berlin demonstration: "For a Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist Europe!"

proletarian seizure of power which unites the "historian" organizers of the three-day conference, "Explorations in the History of U.S. Trotskyism," beginning September 29 at New York University's Tamiment Library. Flyers for the conference whine that Trotskyism has often been seen "as sectarian and as idealizing the early Bolshevik tradition."

Already in 1995 conference organizer Alan Wald proclaimed the "end" of American Trotskyism in the pages of *Against the Current*, a thesis he elaborated in *Trotskyism in the United States* (Humanities Press [1996]), co-authored with Paul Le Blanc, who is also co-organizer of the conference. Le Blanc similarly insists that "an attempt to build a revolutionary socialist-party equivalent to the organizations of the early U.S. Trotskyists will, in today's realities in the late 20th century United States, tend to result in the creation of yet one more political sect" (*Bulletin In Defense Of Marxism*, May-June 1997). Featured speaker Peter Drucker infused his utterly superficial biography of Shachtman with similar views, arguing for the melding

in Italy and Greece. But the capitalists, under the cover of Allied imperialist occupation and with the crucial assistance of the Stalinists, succeeded in restabilizing the tottering bourgeois order. (See the Introduction to *PRS* No. 2, "Documents on the 'Proletarian Military Policy'," for more extensive treatment of this issue.) For Goldman and Morrow, this was empirical confirmation of their anti-revolutionary perspectives. In jumping to their defense, Broué reveals nothing so much as his propensity to reduce historical research to the worship of the accomplished fact.

Broué complains that Cannon attacked Goldman and Morrow as "used up and demoralized militants." But this was manifestly the case. Morrow became an open anti-communist soon after leaving the SWP while Goldman, after a brief sojourn in Shachtman's WP, rejoined the Socialist Party. And their supporter, Jan Van Heijenoort—a former secretary of Trotsky's who is a special favorite of Broué's—later collaborated with the FBI in order to remain in the U.S.

The superficial quality of the historical research of

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Why I Joined the SYC...

(continued from page 3)

been towards integration, black nationalism gaining sway only during extreme moments of defeat. Full social, economic, and political integration of blacks under capitalism is not possible. The only solution is the fight for revolutionary integrationism through socialist revolution. By giving political support to black nationalism, Socialist Action denies that the black proletariat composes not only a strategic component, but also the most class-conscious and advanced section of the working class. Thus there is an inherent contradiction between members of the YSA calling themselves Marxist and at the same time thinking blacks somehow fit outside the equation, having a path separate from the rest of the working class. SA's support for black nationalism represents not only a lack of faith in the black working class being able to fight for socialist revolution, but the entire working class as well.

After coming to such realizations about their line on black nationalism, I began to understand why at YSA meetings I was surrounded by so many petty-bourgeois students who felt safe because their liberal politics were not being challenged. Many of these students believed that a socialist society was inevitable and somehow developing "gradually" out of capitalism. SA calls themselves Leninists, which one would think would make them realize that the capitalist state is in place to keep the working class oppressed and that only a socialist revolution can smash the state and lay the basis for socialism. One only needs to read *State and Revolution* to understand why "revolution alone can 'abolish' the bourgeois state." To say that socialism will develop gradually is another way of saying, "I am a reformist."

It is important to note that the first point on the YSA's 10-point program states that socialism is "the idea of a society that puts human needs before profits." And they say that unlike "the Stalinists (sic) countries like China and the former USSR which were neither democratic or (sic) socialist, we fight for a (sic) society that is truly democratic...." Without mentioning the word revolution, how are people to build such a society? Further, is it so simple to say that the former USSR and China were neither "democratic nor socialist," without mentioning that the USSR was, and China continues to be, a

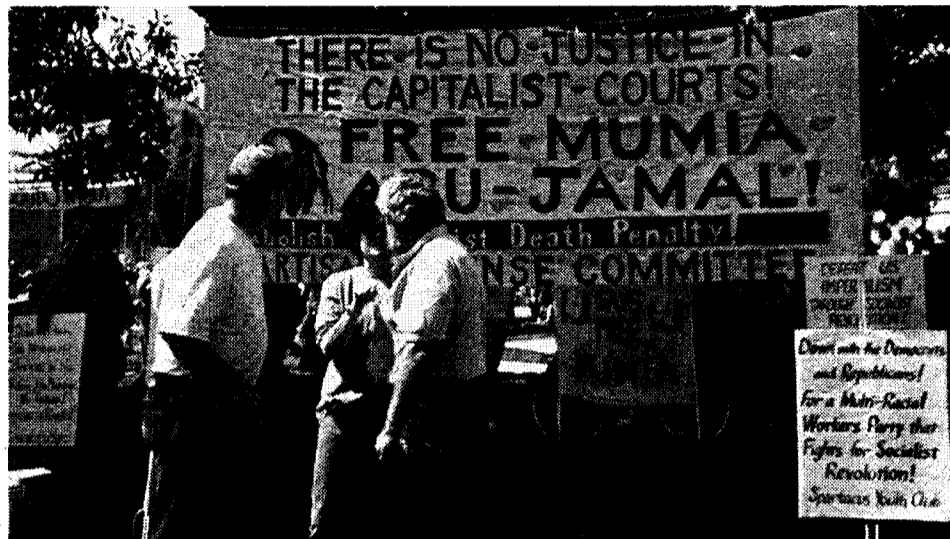
workers state? The Russian Revolution in October 1917 was the first successful workers revolution that took Marxism out of the realm of theory and into practice. It laid the basis for a planned economy, with immense gains for the working class which remained after Stalin's usurpation of political power in 1923-24. What occurred in 1991-92 was a social counter-revolution led by Yeltsin which resulted in the current economic misery Russians are faced with today. China remains a deformed workers state with a planned economy that is under constant threat of imperialist intervention and internal counterrevolution. When SA disassociates themselves from workers states they do so because they do not want to defend states that are unpopular due to U.S. bourgeois propaganda about these states. Not militarily defending such states means supporting counterrevolution as SA did in Poland with Solidarność, in the USSR by hailing Yeltsin, and continuing today by calling for "class-struggle methods" against trade with China. What needs to be fought for is workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish workers democracy. When a group like SA calls itself Trotskyist yet does not call for unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states of Vietnam, China and North Korea in their 10-point program, it is lying. As Leon Trotsky wrote in *In Defense of Marxism*, "The workers' state must be taken as it has emerged from the merciless laboratory of history and not as it is imagined by a 'socialist' professor, reflectively exploring his nose with his finger. It is the duty of revolutionists to defend every conquest of the working class even though it may be distorted by the pressure of hostile forces. Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones." Furthermore, if you are not actively defending the gains of the past, you are supporting defeats of the working class in the future. Such was the realization I had to make, that my problems with the YSA were not just a difference of opinion or "ideas" but the difference between revolution and counterrevolution.

It is important to note that Socialist Action attempts to pose as a defender of one deformed workers state, Cuba. The YSA's 10-point program states that they "stand in solidarity with the people of Cuba and their ongoing revolution." But it is not too difficult to support a workers state whose hero, Che Guevara, has today become an immense commodity on college campuses and when popular

bands like Rage Against the Machine display the brave martyr on t-shirts. SA's fake defense of Cuba boils down to cheerleading for the Stalinist bureaucracy. Castro, like all Stalinists, upholds the dogma of socialism in one country, meaning pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, as exemplified when Castro advised the Nicaraguan Sandinistas not to expropriate the capitalists. SA refuses to call Castro a Stalinist because if they did, their basis for "defense" would be gone.

One must wonder how Socialist Action can claim solidarity with Cuba when they supported counterrevolution in the Soviet

class program and mobilize behind the social power of the multiracial working class. When I turned away from the YSA I did so with the hopes of finding a program that was truly revolutionary, that did not capitulate to liberal consciousness. When I first read James Cannon's writings in *Notebook of an Agitator* on the Sacco and Vanzetti case I noticed a disturbing similarity to where we are today with Mumia Abu-Jamal. Sacco and Vanzetti were Italian anarchists who in Massachusetts in 1920 were falsely convicted of robbing and killing the paymaster and guard of a shoe company. Their sentence, which was based on their polit-



WV Photos

San Francisco, 24 April 1999: Spartacist League exposes nature of the capitalist courts and raises call to free Mumia, while reformists push lie that the way to free Mumia is through a new trial.



Union which meant the drastic cutoff of trade and crucial economic and military aid to Cuba. Without this aid the Cuban Revolution is increasingly endangered. SA's position on the collapse of the Soviet Union is clear in the September 1991 issue of *Socialist Action* which declared: "Many stood ready on the barricades, prepared to battle troops and tanks in the cause of democracy and a better life." Whose barricades? Yeltsin's. A better life for whom? For the world's imperialists but not for the 75 percent of the Russian population which now lives below or barely above subsistence level and definitely not for Cubans who are suffering as a result of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. While SA defends Cuba in words, real defense requires opposing U.S. imperialism which SA did not do in 1991. SA instead chose to support U.S.-backed Yeltsin's barricades in the name of bourgeois "democracy" which means counterrevolution. A revolutionary Trotskyist organization would have unconditionally militarily defended the Soviet Union by distributing a class-based program to Russian workers to defeat the Yeltsin-Bush counterrevolution. The only group that did this was the Spartacist League.

I considered myself a socialist not because I thought it was a good "idea" but because I wanted to concretely fight against capitalist oppression. Capitalism will not gradually fade away, a socialist society will not all of a sudden appear; students who want to fight exploitation need to arm themselves with a working-

ical views, was death by electrocution. In 1927, the movement for freedom for Sacco and Vanzetti was shifted by "capitalistic and 'liberal' elements" towards an emphasis on life imprisonment, in other words, a living death. At the time Cannon wrote, "In all this there is nothing new for those who understand the class struggle and have no illusions about the possibility of 'justice' and 'fair play' from the courts and other institutions of the class enemy." The slogan then became "Put no faith in capitalist justice." Mumia, who was falsely convicted of killing a police officer, was also railroaded to death row for his political views. The movement today for Mumia's freedom is cast in terms of a new trial, which is being pushed by every fake-socialist group, and the slogan that is necessary to counter such reformism is "There is no justice in the capitalist courts." The Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Clubs are the ones raising this slogan, they are the ones fighting to abolish the racist death penalty, fighting for free, quality, integrated public education for all, and for unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states.

I wanted to be part of a group that fights to break people's illusions in capitalism, which understands that class consciousness is not spontaneous, but must be continuously elevated by a vanguard party. I broke association from the YSA and joined the Spartacus Youth Club when I realized that I wanted to help build a revolutionary, multiracial workers party that fights for socialist revolution, that fights for new October Revolutions! ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BERKELEY

Introduction to Marxism
Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Next Class: September 26
U.C. Berkeley, 79 Dwinelle Hall
For information and readings:
(510) 839-0851

LOS ANGELES

Meet the Marxists at UCLA
Monday, October 2, 7 p.m.
3517 Ackerman, UCLA
For information: (213) 380-8239

VANCOUVER

Class Series: The Fight for Revolutionary Marxism
Alternate Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.
October 4: **The State and Revolution**
SUB, Room 212A, University of BC
For information and readings:
(604) 687-0353

Visit the ICL Web Site!
www.icl-fi.org

BOSTON

Fight for Communism
Saturday, September 23, 1 p.m.
The Greenhouse,
Harvard Science Center
For information and readings:
(617) 666-9453

NEW YORK

Revolutionary Marxism
Alternate Thursdays, 7 p.m.
September 28: **The Fight for Socialist Revolution**, Hamilton Hall,
Room 302, Columbia University
For information and readings:
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TORONTO

Class Series: The Fight for Revolutionary Marxism
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October 4: **Marxism and the State**
International Student Centre
U of T, 33 St. George Street
For information and readings:
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ICL Statement...

(continued from page 12)

the lives of billions of working people in China, across Asia and around the world hang in the balance. We fight for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese workers state against renewed imperialist military machinations and economic encroachments. The gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution are threatened by the Chinese Stalinists' market economic "reforms," but these attacks have also engendered significant proletarian revolt. A Trotskyist party is necessary to lead the proletariat to victory through a workers political revolution to preserve and extend the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

The devastating and worldwide consequences of capitalist counterrevolution also destroy the anti-Marxist theories of "state capitalism" espoused by the late Tony Cliff's International Socialist Tendency and the crackpot and ever-shifting "theorists" of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI, a/k/a Workers Power) and other renegades from Marxism (see "The Bankruptcy of 'New Class' Theories," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999). According to the Cliffites, the triumph of counterrevolution in the former USSR was merely "a step sideways" from one form of capitalism to another. Their rabid Cold War anti-Sovietism was expressed at the time: "Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991).

Today, the proletariat has been hurled back, worldwide, and the U.S. imperialists, unhindered by Soviet military might, now ride roughshod over the planet, sometimes using the United Nations as a fig leaf, wrapping global military interventions in the cloak of "humanitarianism." Rival imperialisms, especially Germany and Japan, no longer constrained by Cold War anti-Soviet unity, are pursuing apace their own appetites for control of world markets and concomitantly projecting their military power. These conflicting national interests led to the breakup of the WTO talks in Seattle last year. These inter-imperialist rivalries outline future wars; with nuclear weapons, this threatens to extinguish life on the planet.

Thus the task of wresting power from the capitalist exploiters is more urgent now than ever. Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. Today the basic premises of authentic Marxism must be motivated against the false and prevalent misidentification of the collapse of Stalinism with a failure of communism. Stalinist rule was not communism but its grotesque perversion. The Stalinist bureaucracy, a parasitic caste resting atop the

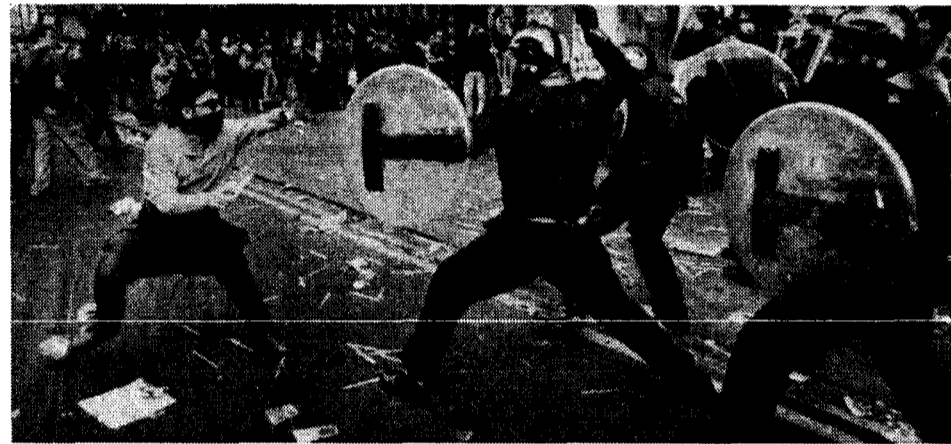


Gliese/Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Seattle WTO protests last fall were politically dominated by AFL-CIO bureaucracy's chauvinism and anti-Communist China-bashing, with signs reading: "People First Not China First." While fake lefts hailed "spirit of Seattle," Spartacists denounced circus of pro-imperialist protectionism.

workers state much like a labor bureaucracy sits atop a trade union, arose in the Soviet workers state under conditions of economic backwardness and isolation due to the failure to extend the revolution to any of the advanced capitalist countries. The Stalinists claimed they were going to build "socialism in one country," an impossibility, as Leon Trotsky (and before him Marx and Engels) explained since socialism is necessarily international in scope. "Socialism in one country" was a justification for selling out revolutions internationally to appease world imperialism. As Trotsky brilliantly explained in *The Revolution Betrayed*

jective revolutionists who solidarize with the proletariat and genuinely seek the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. In the latter case, anarchism's appeal is a healthy rejection of the parliamentary reformism of the social democrats, the ex-Stalinists and the fake leftists who prop up and maintain the capitalist order. In fact, for opposing the reformist falsifiers of Marxism, Lenin himself was denounced as an anarchist. When the Bolshevik leader arrived in Russia in April 1917 and called for a workers revolution to bring down the capitalist Provisional Government, the Mensheviks denounced Lenin as "a candidate for...the throne of Bakunin!"



Neville Elder

London, May Day: Labour government of Tony Blair unleashed riot police on protesters who defaced symbols of British imperialism, arresting nearly 100. Drop the charges now!

(1936), the contradictions of Soviet society could not endure forever: "Will the bureaucrat devour the workers' state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat?" That contradiction was resolved bitterly in the negative.

Marxism vs. Anarchism and "Globalization"

People who call themselves "anarchist" run the gamut from right-wing petty-bourgeois thugs who hate the working class and attack communists to sub-

(Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution, 1917: A Personal Record* [1984]). (Bakunin was the anarchist leader in the First International.) As Lenin put it in *State and Revolution*: "The opportunists of modern Social-Democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of a parliamentary, democratic state as the limit which cannot be overstepped; they broke their foreheads praying before this idol, denouncing as Anarchism every attempt to *destroy* these forms."

It is not surprising that there is something of a revival of anarchist beliefs, fertilized by the all-sided bourgeois triumphalism that "communism is dead." The Russian Revolution redefined the left internationally and its final undoing is having a similar impact in reverse. When the new workers state was in fact a beacon of liberation, and at the height of the international revolutionary upheavals spurred by the Russian Revolution, the best of the anarchist and syndicalist militants (e.g., James P. Cannon, Victor Serge, Alfred Rosmer) became dedicated and disciplined fighters for the communism of Lenin and Trotsky. Before his later break from Marxism, the anarchist Serge reviled the social democrats who led the workers to the imperialist carnage of World War One and he traveled to Soviet Russia to support the new workers state. In the course of struggles against counterrevolutionary revanchists (which some anarchists criminally supported), Serge joined the Bolshevik Party and wrote to his French anarchist friends motivating communism against anarchism:

"What is the Communist Party in a time of revolution? It is the revolutionary elite, powerfully organized, disciplined, obeying a consistent direction, marching to-

WV Photo



wards a single clearly defined goal along the paths traced for it by a scientific doctrine. Being such a force, the party is the product of the necessity, that is the laws of history itself. That revolutionary elite which in a time of violence remains unorganized, undisciplined, without consistent direction and open to variable or contradictory impulses, is heading for suicide. No view at odds with this conclusion is possible."

—*La Vie ouvrière*, 21 March 1922; reprinted in *The Serge-Trotsky Papers*, Cotterill, ed. (1994)

The diffuse popularity of "anarchism" among youth today is itself a reflection of the retrogression in political consciousness in the new political period which began with the colossal defeat of capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR and East Europe. At bottom, anarchism is a form of radical democratic idealism which appeals to the alleged innate goodness of even the most rapacious imperialists to serve humanity. The League of the Just (which changed its name to the Communist League around the time Karl Marx joined it in 1847) had as its main slogan, "All men are brothers." Observing that there were some men whose brother he was not and had no desire to be, Marx convinced his comrades to change the slogan to "Workers of all countries, unite!"

Historically, anarchism has proven to be a class-collaborationist obstacle to the liberation of the oppressed. Uniting with the counterrevolutionary White armies, some anarchists hailed the Kronstadt uprising against the Russian Revolution, and Kronstadt remains an anti-communist touchstone for anarchists today. During the Spanish Civil War, anarchists became ministers in the popular-front government which disarmed and repressed the armed workers' struggle against capitalism, opening the road to decades of Franco's dictatorship.

Today the fundamental differences between revolutionary Marxism and anarchist liberal idealism can also be seen in the "globalization" protests. The notion that large capitalist corporations have today transcended the nation-state system and now rule the world through institutions like the IMF and WTO is false to the core. "Globalization" is a present-day version of the notion of "ultra-imperialism" put forward by the German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky, who argued that capitalists in different countries can resolve their conflicts of interests through peaceful (even democratic) means. As we pointed out in our pamphlet *Imperialism, the "Global Economy" and Labor Reformism*: "So-called multinational or transnational firms do *not* operate above or independently of the nation-state system. Rather they are vitally dependent on their own bourgeois national states to *protect* their investments abroad from popular opposition and rival capitalist states. Hence, imperialist states must maintain strong military forces and a corresponding domestic industrial base."

Many organizations supporting the Prague mobilization call for "democratic control" over the IMF or World Bank in order to better the conditions for people in the "Global South" (Asia, Africa and Latin America). The German PDS (Party

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of Democratic Socialism) argues that the work of the IMF and World Bank must become more transparent and for a genuinely international United Nations. We've called these appeals for action on behalf of the workers and the oppressed by their direct imperialist overlords and oppressors "human rights imperialism." Not only absurd, these appeals to imperialism to somehow become responsible and humane are reactionary because they foster deadly illusions that the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in its "democratic" trappings can somehow be the agent for social change in the interests of the workers and the oppressed. This lie binds the exploited to their exploiters and charts a dead-end road for social struggle.

The notion that a "global" United Nations could act in the interests of humanity is a lie which masks the fundamental economic mechanisms of capitalist imperialism. Imperialism is not a policy based on "bad ideas" but is integral to the workings of a system based on private property, the extraction of profit and the necessity for capitalism to conquer new markets. As Lenin explained regarding the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations: "It became plain that the League of Nations was non-existent, that the alliance of the capitalist powers is sheer fraud, and that in actual fact it is an alliance of robbers, each trying to snatch something from the others.... Private property is robbery, and a state based on private property is a state of robbers, who are fighting for a share of the spoils" ("Speech to Chairmen of the Executive Committees," 15 October 1920).

The UN's first intervention (1950-53) was a "police action" against the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states, slaughtering up to four million Koreans. A decade later, the murderous military intervention in the ex-Belgian Congo was led under UN auspices and included the killing of left-nationalist Patrice Lumumba.

At the left end of the anarchist spectrum appears an article on the anarchist "A-Infos Web site" which stands out among builders of the Prague demonstration for its sharp opposition to begging the class enemy to act morally and "cancel the Third World debt." They call to smash the IMF and World Bank and propose: "Direct demands will be placed not on the appeasers and Co., but on workers organizations and their reformist leaderships to scrap the IMF-World Bank and to cancel the trillion-dollar debt—NOW!" But the world won't be transformed through slogans raised at one big demo or even one big strike, and the reformist leaderships they call on support capitalist imperialism. How then do we get from capitalism to socialism? That's the question to which anarchism has no response.

Marxist theory and the model of Lenin's Bolsheviks leading the working class to state power in the October 1917 Russian Revolution is the only revolutionary solution. The workers cannot take hold of the machinery of the capitalist state and "reform" it in the interests of the oppressed. They must fight for power, smashing the capitalist state and creating a workers state—a dictatorship of the proletariat—which will put down the counterrevolutionary resistance by the former capitalist rulers. Lenin's Bolsheviks canceled the debt amassed by the tsar and the Russian bourgeoisie by taking power and refusing to pay it. This was part of the Bolsheviks' revolutionary internationalist perspective—against appeasement of imperialism, they

fought to extend the Russian October to world socialist revolution. They understood that socialism could not be built in one country.

Against the reactionary aspects of the idealism preached by traditional anarchists like Proudhon and echoed today by petty-bourgeois "Greens" that workers should not aspire to wealth but live a spartan communal existence, we Marxists fight for the elimination of scarcity, for a society where workers enjoy the fruits of their labor which today are expropriated by the capitalists. Telling workers to "tighten their belts" is in fact the program of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank through starvation "austerity" policies inflicted on the masses of the "Third World." In the name of "defending the environment," the Green parties now in the governing coalitions in Germany and France are even more aggressive in imposing capitalist "austerity" than the social democrats. In the face of recent mass protests against extortionate fuel prices, the French Greens opposed the concession by the Socialist prime minister to reduce the tax on fuel by 15 percent.

In contrast to the anarchist/green impulse to hold back technological advancement and drive down levels of consumption, we Marxists side with Big Bill Haywood, a leader of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World, a/k/a the "Wobblies"). When reproached by a comrade for smoking a good cigar, he replied: "Nothing is too good for the proletariat!" Marxists recognize that the history of human progress has been a struggle to



Roma (Gypsy) children in Slovakia. Capitalist counterrevolution has unleashed pogromist terror against oppressed minorities and immigrants.

master the forces of nature. The development of agriculture and domestication of animals was a successful incursion into the "natural ecology" of the planet which created a social surplus, opening a way forward from the brief and brutal struggle for daily survival in early human society. To extend to the impoverished masses of the "Third World" all the things Western petty-bourgeois leftists take for granted—electricity, schools, clean drinking water on tap, medicine, public transport, computers—will require a huge leap in industrial and technological capacity. That leap requires a victorious international revolution led by a conscious revolutionary vanguard to render the working class conscious of its mission and to break it from the grip of capitalism's reformist and pseudo-revolutionary lackeys.

It is precisely the loyal service of bourgeois-nationalist "Greens" to the ruling class that leads them to ignore the greatest ecological disasters on the planet. Thus Joschka Fischer, the "Green" foreign minister for the Fourth Reich, vociferously backed bombing Serbia. The Balkans are now riddled with depleted uranium shells; the poisoned water and destruction of modern industrial and social infrastructure mean the true death toll of the Balkans War will be tallied for years to come. With "Greens" like this, who needs Dr. Strangelove, I. G. Farben and Dow Chemical Company?

Likewise, the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq has destroyed one of the most advanced societies in the region. Ten

years ago, the child mortality rate in Iraq was among the world's lowest and today it is the highest; a population whose overwhelming majority was literate and had access to medical care now is literally being starved to death by the ongoing United Nations blockade. So-called "leftists" who opposed the devastating air war against Iraq counterposed UN sanctions as a "humanitarian" alternative. The ICL opposed sanctions as an act of war which has killed more people than the bombs. The support of the fake left for the bloody crimes of "human rights imperialism" is the only explanation for the thundering silence on these questions in any official propaganda for "anti-globalization" protests in Seattle, Washington, D.C. and Prague. The French LCR openly called for an imperialist military intervention in Kosovo under OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] or UN control (*Rouge*, 1 April 1999). The LRCI (Workers Power) openly campaigned for the defeat of Serbian forces by the KLA tools of NATO imperialism, shared a platform in London with enthusiasts for NATO bombing and cheered the withdrawal of Serbian troops, idiotically proclaiming "in the aftermath of NATO's victory in Kosova, a pre-revolutionary situation is maturing" ("The Fight to Overthrow Milosevic in Serbia," 11 August 1999 LRCI statement).

In contrast, the ICL fought everywhere for military defense of Serbia against U.S./UN/NATO imperialism without giving a milligram of political support to the Serbian chauvinist Milosevic, just as earlier in the Gulf War we fought to mobilize



V. Deni and M. Chremnykh
Soviet cartoon after Bolshevik Revolution shows Lenin sweeping away kings, priests, capitalists.

Party] campaigned for and declared itself "over the moon" for the election of Tony Blair, who was the biggest NATO hawk in Europe. While posturing to the left in the Balkans War against the craven "poor little Kosovo" crowd, the SWP gave their game away in their fulsome support to "New" Labour's Tony Benn, whose opposition to the war was steeped in "Little England" chauvinist anti-Americanism. To argue that the war should be run directly by Europe's imperialist pigs rather than Americans is hardly an anti-war movement!

At the right end of this nationalist spectrum are the fascists. Last year, German Nazis marched against the Balkans War with slogans like "No German blood for foreign interests!" The nationalist anti-Americanism which the European anti-"globalization" movement deeply imbibes shades over to outright fascism. Czech fascist organizations plan to stage a provocation for their genocidal program in Prague on September 23.

In the crucible of the first major war in Europe in 50 years, the fake "Trotskyists" proved themselves to be decomposition products of the "death of communism." Today they jockey for position to wrest control of the "anti-globalization movement." Only a fool could trust that groups which helped bring the present European capitalist governments to power can now fight these governments, their banks and institutions in the interests of the oppressed. Far from a Marxist alternative to anarchism, the pseudo-Trotskyists are active opponents of revolutionary Marxism embodied in the program and practices of the ICL.

The Material Basis for Opportunism and National Chauvinism

Bourgeois ideology—e.g., nationalism, patriotism, racism and religion—penetrates the working class centrally through the agency of the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class," the parasitic

continued on page 10

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ICL Statement...

(continued from page 9)

trade-union bureaucracies based on a privileged upper stratum of the working class. If not replaced by revolutionary leadership, these reformists render the working class all but defenseless against capitalist attacks and allow the organizations of the proletariat to be destroyed or rendered impotent by tying the unions increasingly to the capitalist state. In his 1916 work, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin explained:

"The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or a given nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this urge. And so there is created a bond between imperialism and opportunism... The most dangerous of all in this respect are those (like the Menshevik, Martov) who do not wish to understand that the fight against imperialism is a sham and humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism."

The national chauvinism and craven capitulation of the organizers of a movement against "globalization" are abundantly evident. Thus trade-union organizers of the Seattle protest against the WTO united with far-right anti-communist forces denouncing "slave



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ICL called for military defense of Serbia against U.S./NATO imperialism during 1999 Balkans War.

AFL-CIA's "leadership" as a model for the European workers to emulate (see *Proposta* No. 27, January 2000)!

Before Prague, the British SWP labored mightily to promote a Labourite trade-union demonstration in defense of saving British jobs at the Rover car plant. This demonstration was a sea of Union Jacks and virulent anti-German chauvinism pitting British workers against Germans and tying the former to the British ruling class. Slogans like "Britain won two world wars, let's win the third" give a flavor of the poison. After Rover, the

In France, José Bové leads masses in protest against McDonald's and the incursions of American fast food on the French palate. Our interest is organizing the horribly underpaid workforces in these fast-food chains, whatever their national ownership or "cuisine." Moreover, if cultural or culinary preferences are synonymous with "imperialism," then by the dim lights of Bové we better worry about the Italians, because people love pizza and it is now marketed everywhere from the Aleutian Islands to the Amazon. Or was it "imperialism" when a particular German device, namely the printing press, conquered the world and made mass literacy possible?!

More seriously, the national chauvinism and opportunism of the labor tops and fake left poison class consciousness and solidarity among workers by fomenting religious, national and ethnic divisions. In recent years this has reached a fever pitch in an anti-immigrant frenzy. This threatens the unity and integrity of the proletariat as a class to resist attacks by the capitalists and their state. As noted in the ICL Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

"Modern capitalism, i.e., imperialism, reaching into all areas of the planet, in the course of the class struggle and as economic need demands, brings into the proletariat at its bottom new sources of cheaper labor, principally immigrants from poorer and less-developed regions of the world—workers with few rights who are deemed more disposable in times of economic contraction. Thus capitalism in ongoing fashion creates different strata among the workers, while simultaneously amalgamating the workers of different lands."

In the Schengen agreement, European powers closed their borders to immigrants, many of whom fled the counter-revolutionary destruction of East Europe. The racist anti-immigrant policies of today's ruling social democrats echo "the boat is full" demagoguery of the Nazis and indeed fuel fascist terror. Meanwhile, the social-democratic popular-front governments across Europe (coalition govern-

ments involving reformist workers parties and bourgeois parties) dangerously lull the workers with parliamentary illusions that the social democrats, whose own policies pave the road for the fascists, will "ban" the fascists. Such bans historically serve only to refurbish the image of the very bourgeoisie which resorts to fascism when its rule is threatened. Historically such bans against "extremists" have been used against the left, not the right. In Germany in the immediate postwar period, a small neo-Nazi party was banned in 1952 to cosmetically touch up the "democratic" credentials of the heirs of the Third Reich rebuilding capitalist Germany under American imperialist auspices. The real purpose was to "justify" a constitutional ban of the German Communist Party in 1956. We demand: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No reliance on the bourgeois state! For labor/minority mobilizations to stop the fascists!

The Party Is the Instrument for Socialist Revolution

The Leninist party is the instrument for bringing revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat, for organizing proletarian struggles and guiding them to victorious consolidation in a socialist revolution. A revolutionary party must fight every instance of social injustice and all manifestations of oppression. Central to our task is combatting every instance of women's oppression and "all the old crap" which has come back with religious obscurantism, attacks on abortion rights and anti-gay bigotry. Welding the audacity of the youth to the social power of the proletariat is crucial to the fight for a new socialist society.

Our aim is a revolutionary leadership whose cadre must be tested and trained in the class struggle. The road forward is for the presently small forces adhering to the program of Lenin and Trotsky to forge parties with the experience, revolutionary will and authority among the masses to lead successful proletarian revolutions. Nothing less than a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International will suffice for the task of leading the workers and oppressed to the victory of world socialism. We have no illusions that this will be an easy road, and we recognize that the possession of the technology of nuclear holocaust by an irrational and genocidal ruling class foreshortens the possibilities: there is not a lot of time.

We are guided by the program and practices of authentic communism. As Trotsky wrote in "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" (1938):

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

Join the International Communist League! ■



Reuters

South Korean workers protest against austerity measures dictated by U.S.-dominated IMF. Only international workers revolution can put an end to imperialist exploitation and oppression.

labor" in the Chinese and Vietnamese deformed workers states. Chinese steel was dumped in the harbor and signs proclaimed, "People First Not China First." Illustrating why Trotsky described the American labor bureaucracy as Wall Street's ideal tool for imperialist domination of Latin America, American trade-union tops campaigned to ban Mexican truck drivers from work in the U.S. Not for nothing, the AFL-CIO is popularly known throughout Latin America as the "AFL-CIA." Incredibly, the Italian Rifondazione Comunista and the pseudo-Trotskyist *Proposta* grouping uphold the

SWP buried itself in campaigning for Ken Livingstone for mayor of London, a Labourite politician who was a vociferous proponent of imperialist terror against Serbia and unbridled police force at home. When anarchist protesters irreverently defaced the symbols of British imperialism in a May Day protest in London, the SWP stayed away (bar a token presence) for fear of embarrassing their candidate for London mayor, "Red" Ken Livingstone. Livingstone endorsed police repression of the May Day protesters, several of whom still languish in jail or face prosecution.

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Fuel Protests...

(continued from page 1)

was attempting a different plan to break the dispute—by using the trade unions.” It goes on: “At the TUC in Glasgow the day before, he had met Bill Morris, the leader of the Transport Union, whose members include many tanker drivers. He convinced him of the need to end the crisis.” [Deputy Prime Minister] John Prescott warned Blair that sending in troops would backfire and would wreck “delicate negotiations taking place that night between trades union leaders and tanker drivers.” Thus, the trade-union bureaucracy was pivotal to the Labour government in defusing the crisis.

Break with Labour!

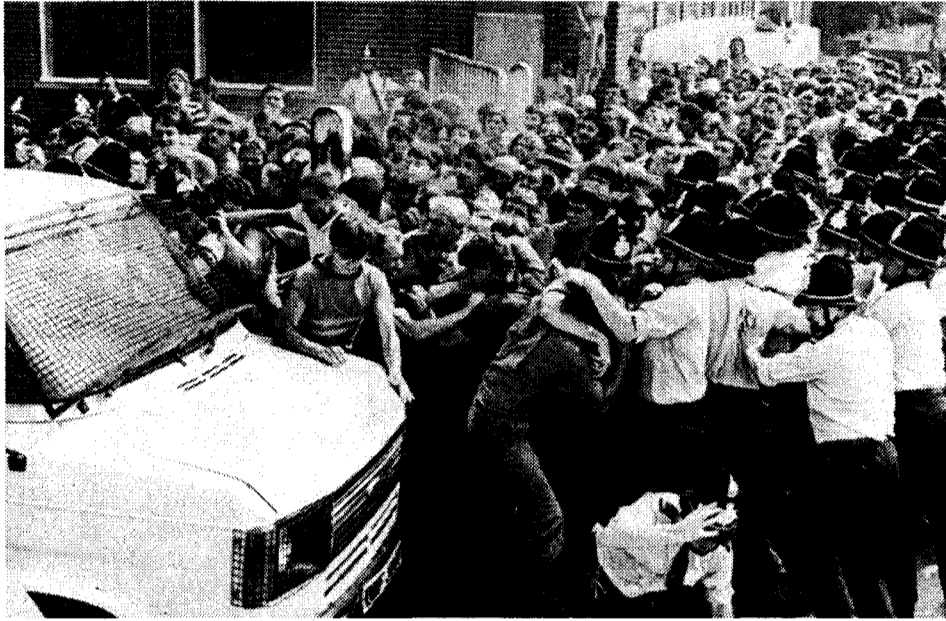
The depth of the crisis triggered by the oil protests provoked the government into a response which illuminates the workings of the capitalist state and the sinister forces that are arrayed against the working class and its allies in times of social crisis. The police presence at refineries was reinforced, use of troops was prepared and in Essex, tankers leaving a depot had a cop riding shotgun.

Behind the veneer of parliamentary democracy lurks the reality of the repressive British state. The capitalist state, as Lenin explained, consists of special bodies of armed men—the cops and the army—who are committed to the defence of private property. The capitalist state cannot be reformed; the power of the capitalist class must be broken and replaced by a workers state. The Privy Council, presided over by the Queen, met to accord “exceptional powers” to the government to assume control of fuel distribution, including the use of military facilities, for the purposes of breaking the oil blockade. This “private” council of the Queen is composed of current and past ministers and includes Labour “left” Tony Benn. We say: Abolish the monarchy!

The farmers and small haulage firms leading this protest openly espouse national chauvinism, reflecting their economic interests. This was expressed ad nauseam by Brynle Williams, a prominent spokesman for the farmers’ blockade in Cheshire, who said: “We don’t like the idea of Irish drivers coming over here with their cheap diesel then working two or three days and bringing over their cheap meat, robbing us of a living” (*Guardian*, 12 September). The interest of the working class in contrast lies squarely with the workers of other countries. As protests engulfed France, Britain and Belgium, there was a burning need for proletarian international solidarity in sharp opposition to the anti-French chauvinism promoted also by Blair & Co. The proletarian internationalism seen during the 1984-85 miners strike, when workers from France and other countries raised money for their British comrades and

French miners sang the “Internationale” with British miners, is an example of the kind of international class solidarity which is needed. We fight to mobilise workers in opposition to every manifestation of national chauvinism and racism and for full citizenship rights for immigrants.

ICL sections in Britain and France gave no support whatsoever to Blair’s Labour and Jospin’s Socialist-led popular front. This is in stark contrast to fake “socialists” in both countries who helped elect the Blair and Jospin governments and are beholden to them. Jospin’s bourgeois Green coalition partners, in acting as the most hardline opponents of lower petrol taxes, underlined the anti-working-class character of Green environmentalism. Today, a class-struggle



Picketing strikers battle scabs and cops during 1984-85 British miners strike.

fight would galvanise opposition to these anti-working-class, racist governments. The Labour Party is a bourgeois workers party—revolutionaries seek to *split* the working-class base from the pro-capitalist tops and win it to the need for a revolutionary programme and party. From the strikebreaking Labour governments of the 1970s to knifing the heroic miners strike, the Labour Party and the TUC tops are the strategic obstacle to the fight for working-class rule.

TUC general secretary John Monks outrageously compared the fuel protests to the CIA-backed truck drivers mobilisations against the Allende regime in Chile in 1973. Those mobilisations were part of an imperialist “destabilisation” campaign against the popular-front Allende government which culminated in the bloody military coup by General Pinochet and were fundamentally aimed at crushing the Chilean working class in the midst of a prerevolutionary situation. To draw an analogy with popular mobilisations against a Labour-administered capitalist government in Britain today is a measure of the utter fealty of the labour bureauc-

racy to this government. Blair actually more resembles Pinochet’s fan Margaret Thatcher during the yearlong miners strike and the later poll tax upheaval than Allende.

The reformist left demonstrated their loyalty to Labourism in the course of the protests. The Communist Party’s *Morning Star* (13 September) opposed the protests and urged Blair: “The government should take all lawful steps necessary—without the use of police violence—to ensure free movement of oil and petrol.” The Socialist Workers Party supported the protests, headlining “Bitterness Explodes in Blair’s Face,” while neglecting to mention that they were “over the moon” when Labour was elected in 1997. And despite some whining about the evils wrought by the Blair government, the

SWP is committed in advance to returning it for another term, as SWP honcho Chris Harman has made clear: “Most socialists will be supporting socialist candidates where possible in the next general election, but will still be voting Labour when there is no socialist standing” (*Socialist Review*, September 2000). Meanwhile they conceal the role of the trade-union bureaucracy behind a front-page headline asking: “Why Won’t Trade Union Leaders Act?” (*Socialist Worker*, 16 September). But the union bureaucracy *did* act—predictably, to get the oil flowing again. In addition to Morris’ scabherding, Bill Speirs, general secretary of the Scottish TUC, denounced the protests as a “bosses’ blockade.” This was also the line of the union bureaucracy in France to justify scabbing and to save the Jospin government in its hour of crisis.

Labour Rules for British Imperialism

Oil is not just another commodity; it is the source of more than 40 per cent of the world’s energy. Access to oil is thus of vital strategic importance for modern

capitalist states. Ever since the 1920s, control over the Persian Gulf oil fields has given British and American imperialism an enormous strategic advantage over rivals Germany and Japan. London, in alliance with Washington, massacred tens of thousands of Iraqis during the Gulf War in 1991 to secure U.S. and British control of the region’s oil supplies. One and a half million people, including half a million children, have been killed through a starvation embargo. The imperialists continue the slaughter with almost daily bombing raids and sanctions, which prevent Iraqi oil from reaching the world market. If you want cheaper oil, break the blockade of Iraq! We say: Down with the starvation sanctions!

Shaken by the impact and depth of support for the fuel blockades, the Blair government is gearing up for a major confrontation. The *Financial Times* (16 September), mouthpiece for the City [financial district], editorialised: “Ministers should dig out the files from 1981 when Margaret Thatcher gave in to the miners. She was not prepared; coal stocks were low. But after the 1983 landslide, she was ready and a year later the miners were vanquished.” The Spartacist League fought to extend that strike to rail and the docks and to shut down the country. But although the miners fought militantly and heroically against the forces of the capitalist state, they were betrayed by the treachery of the Labour leaders and the union bureaucracy, while miners leader Arthur Scargill remained tied to the Labour Party. We seek to instill the lessons of that strike into workers’ consciousness so that the working class can go forward to victories.

The action of the petrol tanker drivers almost brought the country to a halt. With petrol pumps running dry, supermarket shelves emptied, banks ran low on cash and rail operators warned that workers would not be able to get to work. This explodes the myth of a “new economy” according to which “global” capitalism operates in virtual reality and goods are moved around the country by the click of a mouse. The capitalist economy is dependent on the labour of the proletariat and on fuel which is delivered by tanker drivers.

The working class is the only force which has the power, the social cohesion and the direct interest in defeating the attacks of the government. This must be linked to a struggle to overthrow the entire system of class exploitation, national oppression, racism and war, a system Labour upholds with a vengeance. Large numbers of workers who face plant closures, privatisation and racist attacks are itching to engage in some militant class struggle of their own. We seek to build a party committed to leading the proletariat in socialist revolution to expropriate the capitalist class, including the oil companies, and to construct a planned socialist economy. ■

L.A. Transit...

(continued from page 2)

cost of living combined with a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to spread the available work around. Such demands point to a struggle against the entire capitalist profit system. As revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in the Transitional Program (1938): “If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. ‘Realizability’ or ‘unrealizability’ is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery.”

But the labor bureaucrats are loyal to the capitalist system, expressed politically through their support to the Democratic Party. Striking workers told *WV* that the best time to strike would have

been in the buildup to the Democratic National Convention in L.A. in July. But when Democratic governor Gray Davis ordered a 60-day “cooling off” period so that nothing would interfere with Al Gore’s nomination, the transit union tops bowed to the strikebreaking edict. UTU International president Charles Little bragged that his was the first major union to endorse Gore.

Instead of fighting the MTA’s anti-union privatization plans, the union tops look to pressure Davis to enact a bill supposedly guaranteeing that union wages and benefits continue (for four years) in any new zones. The union bureaucracy preaches reliance on the capitalist state, which is an agency for the *suppression* of workers and minorities. That includes the courts which impose strikebreaking injunctions and the cops who bust strikers’ heads to enforce those injunctions. L.A. blacks, Latinos and Asians remember the murderous cop occupation in 1992 that crushed the multiracial upheaval in protest against the acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney

King. When a carload of cops drove by a picket line this morning honking in supposed “solidarity,” one striker yelled out, “We know what side they’re on!” Meanwhile transit supervisors who are crossing picket lines to scab on the strike are organized by the AFSCME tops, who also recruit prison guards to the union. These enemies of labor have no place in the workers organizations. Cops, supervisors out of the unions!

While the L.A. County Federation of Labor has called on all unions to honor UTU picket lines, unionized rail workers at Metrolink remain on the job, and 17 other municipal bus lines in the metro area, many of them unionized, have increased service to undercut the strike. Strikers outside the bus plaza adjoining Union Station chanted, “Union! Union! Union!” and “Scabs go home!” One picketer asked, “When are we going to shut down Metrolink?” Mass pickets should ring the transit complex around Union Station. All L.A. transit unions must be mobilized to shut down the entire transit network. This points

directly to the need to organize the non-union bus lines and for *one industrial union* of all transit workers. Down with multi-tier wage scales—Equal pay for equal work!

To defeat the MTA and the city rulers who stand behind them, the transit unions can only rely on their own strength, mobilizing support from the entire labor movement and tapping into the evident popularity of the strike among the black, Latino and Asian masses. The unions must actively fight for demands that speak to the felt needs of all the exploited and the ghetto and barrio masses. L.A. transit unions should call for massive spending to build *free, quality mass transit*. But labor cannot successfully fight for its interests and those of all the oppressed if it is beholden to the capitalist class enemy and its Democratic Party. We fight to forge a workers party to lead the struggle for a workers government that will expropriate the capitalist class and create an egalitarian socialist society in which labor reaps the benefit of the wealth it creates. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

ICL Statement for Prague Protest Against IMF, World Bank

Smash Imperialist Exploitation Through World Socialist Revolution!

We publish below a 16 September statement by the International Communist League directed at the planned protests against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Prague, capital of the Czech Republic, this month. These are the latest in a series of anti-“globalization” protests which have become a major focus of left-wing activism internationally: the protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle late last year, against the IMF/World Bank in Washington, D.C. this past spring and against the World Economic Forum in Melbourne, Australia earlier this month. As with the earlier protests, the Melbourne demonstrators were met with vicious police terror and mass arrests. We demand the immediate release of all those arrested and the dropping of all charges.

The radicalized youth attracted to these protests want to overcome the hideous impoverishment of the masses in the “global South” which is justified and enforced in the name of “free market” capitalism. However, the organizers of the anti-“globalization” campaign seek to channel these concerns and the striving for social justice into national-chauvinist appeals to their own imperialist bourgeoisie.

The main demand of the Seattle protest was that the Clinton White House pressure the WTO into adopting and enforcing a code of international labor and environmental standards. Moreover, that protest was politically dominated by the AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy, which staged an orgy of anti-Communist China-bashing and flag-waving trade protectionism. The demonstrations in Washington a few months later were focused on liberal appeals to the directors of the World Bank to cancel the debt of “Third World” countries.

The organizers of these mobilizations

Unemployed and homeless line up at soup kitchen in Berlin. Capitalist counterrevolution has brought misery to working people of East Europe and former Soviet Union, increased imperialist exploitation internationally.

P. Glaser



angrily denounce the IMF, WTO and World Bank for being undemocratic and under the control of large “transnational” corporations. At the same time, they appeal to the “democratic” governments of North America and West Europe. In reality, the American capitalist state is the primary political instrument of the Wall Street banks, General Motors, Boeing et al.; the German capitalist state is likewise that of the Frankfurt banks, Daimler-Benz and Siemens; etc. International economic institutions like the IMF and WTO are politically dominated by the major imperialist states while increasingly becoming an arena of conflict between them.

In fundamental opposition to the pseudo-leftist purveyors of “human rights imperialism,” the International Communist League stands for the liberation of the workers, peasants and other toilers from exploitation, poverty and social degradation through proletarian revolutions both in the imperialist centers and against the imperialists’ henchmen in the dependent neocolonial countries, thereby lay-

ing the basis for an international planned socialist economy.

* * *

“Turn Prague into Seattle”? Were it not for the capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed East Europe and the former Soviet Union a decade ago, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund would not be meeting in Prague! The “velvet revolution” ripped Czechoslovakia apart and now the working people, women and national and ethnic minorities suffer the raw exploitation, impoverishment and depredations of the capitalist market. As for the illusions of “freedom,” today police forces specially trained by the American FBI and backed up by NATO threaten labor and leftist demonstrations with a brutal enforcement of “law and order” for the imperialist bankers.

For all the talk about concern for the toiling masses, the official call for a “global day of action” in Prague says nothing about the capitalist shock treatment which has led to a plunge in life expectancy and returned starvation to Russia, rolled back women’s right to abortion across East Europe, and given rise to a murderous brown plague of fascist terror directed especially against immigrants and Roma (gypsies). Last year’s Balkans War wreaked worse devastation on Serbia than Hitler’s Nazis. The resulting economic, social and ecological disaster in the Balkans also does not merit mention in the official manifesto for Prague. Why is this? Because ostensible leftists organizing this year’s “anti-globalization” protest are mainly the very same people who supported the imperialist war against Serbia in the name of “humanitarian” concern for the Kosovar Albanians. They are also the same “leftists” who joined with their own capitalist rulers in fighting for the destruction of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states and who supported the election of the bloody cabal of fake “socialist,” ex-“communist,” and

“Labour” leaders presently ruling capitalist Europe.

We comrades of the International Communist League are proud to fight for the authentic communism of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks. Our perspective is proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist. We recognize that the fundamental conflict in society is the struggle by labor against capital. Because of its central role in production, the proletariat has the social power to bring down the capitalist exploiters and their whole system of class exploitation, racial, sexual and national oppression and imperialist war. The proletariat has the power and the class interest to create a society—initially a workers state—based on collectivized property and a rational, planned international economy, leading to a classless, communist society and the withering away of the state. To achieve this goal requires the construction of an international Leninist-Trotskyist egalitarian party. We struggle to become the party fit to lead international socialist revolutions.

Integral to our fight is holding on to proletarian conquests already wrested from the capitalist class. That is why we Trotskyists fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe against imperialist attack and capitalist restoration. With every resource at our disposal we fought in 1989-90 in the DDR [East Germany] to lead a workers political revolution, maintaining the collectivized property forms and replacing the Stalinist misleaders with the rule of workers councils. This could have been the beacon for resistance against capitalist restoration across East Europe and for proletarian socialist revolution in the West. The ICL again fought to rouse the Soviet workers to preserve and extend the gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution which had been grossly betrayed by decades of Stalinist misrule but not overthrown until 1991-92. Today the fate of the Chinese deformed workers state and

continued on page 8



Der Spiegel

“Human rights” imperialism in Somalia, 1993: demonstrators gunned down in the streets by UN “peacekeepers.”