

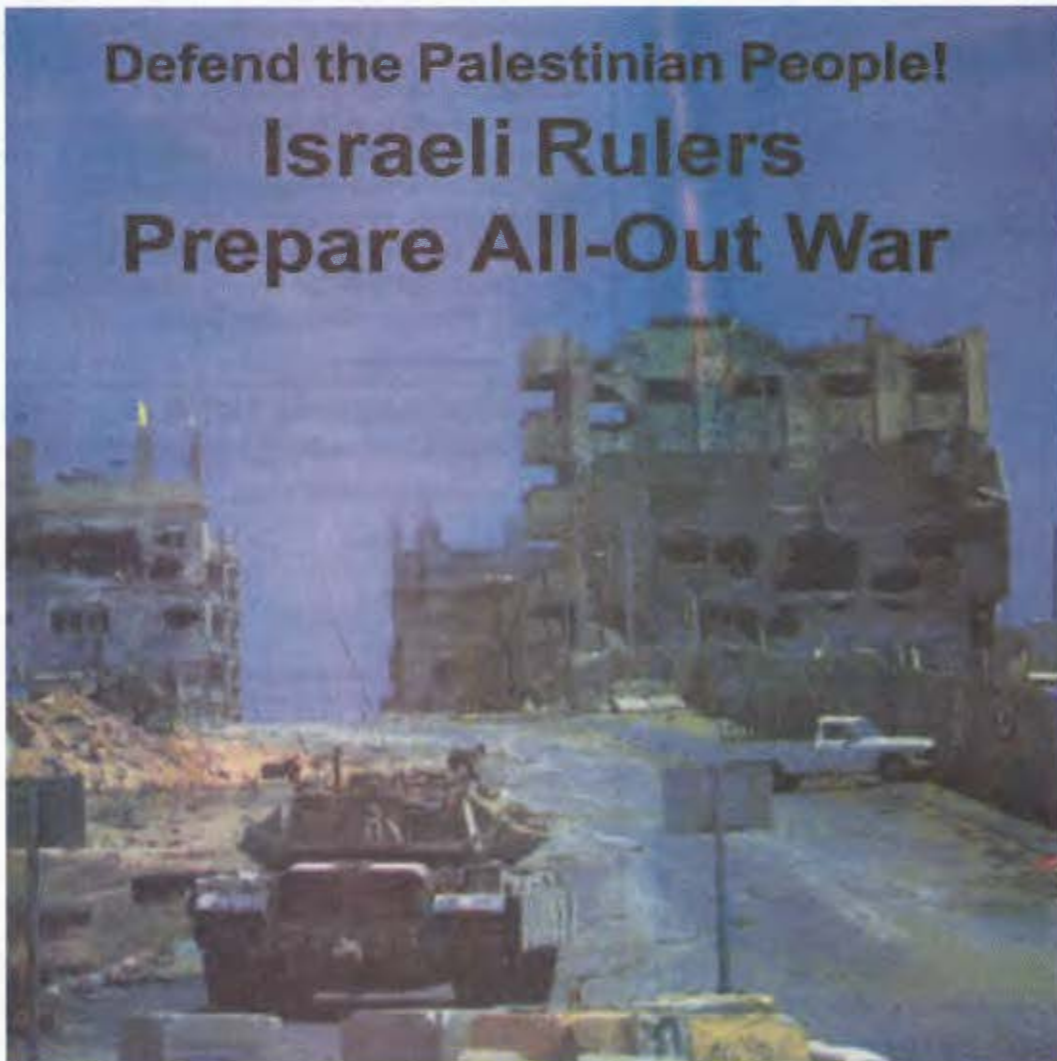
The

Summer 2001

No. 11

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Internationalist



**Defend the Palestinian People!
Israeli Rulers
Prepare All-Out War**

**For an Arab-Hebrew Workers Republic!
For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!**

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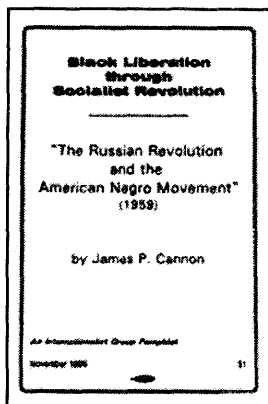
Front page photo: Gaza after Israeli terror bombing, May 2001.

Subscription blank graphic based on a poster by V.A. Rodchenko, *Books* (1925).

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Victory to K-T Clay Workers!

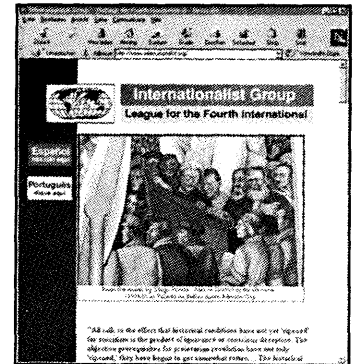
The fight to defend the Charleston Five longshoremen, targeted by a union-busting vendetta in South Carolina (see *The Internationalist* No. 10, June 2001), has called attention to other labor battles in the region. One such struggle is that of workers at the Kentucky-Tennessee Clay industrial minerals plant in Langley, South Carolina, who have been fighting more than 17 months for union representation. At a June 9 Charleston Five defense rally in the state capital, a contingent of black and white K-T Clay workers told *The Internationalist* of a campaign of firings and intimidation, as well as legal persecution of the president and vice president of their union, Local D-598. A recent letter from a brother at K-T noted of the company (recently acquired by the Imerys USA conglomerate), "You would think they are running a plantation." The workers movement must come to the aid of these courageous fighters for labor's cause, as part of a class-struggle drive to unionize the South.

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No. 11



Summer 2001



Defend the Palestinian People!

Israeli Rulers

Prepare All-Out War

Behind all the talk of non-existent cease-fires, the sudden trips by top U.S. officials to the Near East and Israeli calls to “remove” (assassinate) Yasir Arafat lies the fact that the Zionist leaders are systematically gearing up to launch a full-scale attack on Arafat’s Palestinian Authority (PA). The PA was the make-believe government set up in the Occupied Territories by the 1993 Oslo “peace” accord in order to police the Arab masses and put an end to the first *intifada* (uprising), that had lasted from 1988. With the outbreak of the second *intifada* last September, the Israeli rulers of all parties concluded that there was little point in maintaining the charade of Palestinian autonomy. With the Oslo “peace process” dead, many asked, what is to replace it? The answer is: *war*, more specifically an expansionist war to carve up “the Territories,” definitively incorporating large chunks of “Judea and Samaria,” and to dismantle the PA, which has “outlived its usefulness” to the Zionists.

For this move toward realizing Greater Israel they elected war criminal Ariel Sharon, the general whose specialty is “creating facts on the ground.” “King Arik,” as his supporters call him, was certainly not brought in to negotiate anything. The attacks on the Arab population have steadily escalated as the Israeli “Defense” Force locks down every Palestinian city and town, ringing them with barbed wire and tanks. Attacks by fascist settlers have grown increasingly brazen as they set up scores of “advance posts” on hilltops throughout the West Bank. The Zionist “peace bloc” has dwindled to the point of disappearance, and the cries for war from Sharon’s nearly all-party war cabinet have been growing louder. The Israeli press is full of references to a “second war of independence,” among other things to solidify the loyalties of large numbers of Russian immigrants who missed out on the first one in 1948. But for all the Israeli muscle-flexing, the consequences of such a war are unpredictable.

Class-conscious working people around the world must defend the oppressed Palestinian people against the Zionist oppressors, all the more so in an outright war. It is necessary to prepare now to mobilize working-class power against Israel’s imperialist allies. The idea that the NATO chiefs who bombed Belgrade and Baghdad could or would somehow pressure Israeli warmongers into making concessions is a danger-



Palestinian protesters carry off wounded youth, February 2001.

ous illusion. Calls for United Nations or European Union “observers” are worse than useless: they will duly observe Israeli expansion, as UN “blue helmets” and EU police have done in Lebanon and in Hebron. While European “statesmen” and Bushwhackers in Washington may take exception to this or that provocation by Sharon’s gang, they are all complicit in the subjugation of the Palestinians through the phony “peace process” – as well as supplying billions of dollars worth of weaponry used to mutilate and murder unarmed Arab protesters, mainly children. Nor are the Arab rulers – oil sheiks, imperialist-created monarchs and nationalist colonels – any friends of the Palestinians. Long before King Hussein’s 1970 Black September slaughter in Jordan and the 1980s war on refugee camps in Lebanon, already in 1948 the Arab League participated in the carving up of Palestine.

The political bankruptcy of Arab nationalism and liberal/reformist pressure politics has been demonstrated through decades of suffering at the hands of the Zionist butchers. The fight to defend the beleaguered Palestinian population requires internationalist struggle against all the capitalist governments, both the “democratic” imperialists and their semicolonial sa- traps. Centrally, what’s needed is a struggle to shatter Israel from within, by winning Hebrew working people to break from Zionism and join with their Palestinian class brothers and sis-

For an Arab-Hebrew Workers Republic!
For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

ters in a common struggle for proletarian revolution. So long as capitalism remains, the intractable national conflicts between two peoples occupying the same territory, sandwiched into a tiny corner of the Near East with few resources, can only lead to endless slaughter. Communist revolutionaries fight for an Arab-Hebrew workers republic, insisting that a just resolution of the right to self-determination of all the peoples of the region can only come about through a socialist federation of the Near East.

Israeli Provocation Sets Off Explosion of Palestinian Anger

The way the events in Palestine are presented in the Western bourgeois media is insidiously slanted toward the Zionists, even when even-handedly talking of an "Arab-Israeli conflict" as if it's a matter of a neighborhood quarrel when in fact the Israeli army is an occupying force suppressing the Arab population. Arafat is accused of fostering terrorism while the Israeli armed forces are engaged in a systematic program of assassinating Palestinian militants (called "directed killing" in the Zionist double-speak). Palestinian youth are accused of "breaking the cease-fire" for throwing stones and firing a few rounds at the tanks that come crashing into their towns, destroying homes and killing kids.

In reality, the recent chain of events has been set off by Israeli provocations. First, then prime minister Ehud Barak of the thoroughly bourgeois "Labor" Party broke off the Camp David negotiations, demanding that the Palestinians agree to give up all of Jerusalem as the "eternal capital" of Israel and the incorporation into the Zionist state of huge blocs of settlements that would carve up the West Bank to pieces, making a mockery of a Palestinian statelet. Then, blaming Arafat for the breakdown of talks, Barak authorized the provocatively staged "visit" of Sharon, the butcher of the Palestinian refugee camps Sabra and Shatila, to stride across the Islamic holy site of Haram al-Sharif in the company of the entire leadership of the right-wing Likud party and guarded by an army more than 3,000 Israel troops and cops. The result: *Intifada 2*.

Now Sharon and his gang of "hawks" are in office, vowing to undo the entire framework of a "negotiated settlement." Never having supported the Oslo accords in the first place, they want to get rid of any hint of "restraint" on Zionist power. Deliberately assassinating scores of Palestinian leaders, using anti-personnel bombs in populated areas, firing tank shells into apartment buildings, razing Palestinian homes in Jerusalem and sharply expand-

ing the West Bank and Gaza "settlements" (in reality, military outposts populated by fascistic ultra-Zionists), they are gearing up for an all-out assault on the territories. Newspapers publish the order of battle, listing the locations, personnel and armament of the different PA police forces.

The head of Israeli military intelligence, General Amos Malka, and other top officials have made it clear that they are going after Arafat. The chairman of the Palestinian Authority has "completed his historic mission," said Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer (Labor), reports the liberal daily *Ha'aretz* (8 June), and even if Arafat "has not (at least for the time being) been targeted" for "removal" they are preparing the groundwork. In the same issue, the paper's military expert Ze'ev Schiff complains that the "attrition ratio" is going against Israel, having fallen from ten

Palestinian deaths for every Israeli killed at the beginning of the *intifada* to only 4:1 in May. Columnist Doron Rosenblum writes:

"The fact is there is general agreement here that a massive terrorist attack, perpetrated by a lone individual – on the scale of the Dolphi-Disco massacre – constitutes an almost automatic cause for activating the Air Force and moving masses of armored and infantry units for the conquest of territories: in short, of a war that could become a general regional conflagration."

A writer in *Yedioth Ahronoth* (8 June) said that the barrage of threats "is to prepare public opinion, in Israel and around the world, for a large-scale military operation that will topple the Palestinian Authority and lead to Arafat's expulsion."

The right-wingers in Sharon's cabinet are most vociferously calling to "unleash" the military, but they aren't the ones. Reputed Labor Party "dove" Shimon Peres, who in the 1970s oversaw the beginning of the West Bank settlements, approved the

use of American-supplied F-16 fighter jets to bomb PA installations in the wake of the June 1 suicide bombing. Washington heard the war drums and hurriedly dispatched CIA chief George Tenet and U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell to cool things out. But the "cease-fire" lasted "about as long as the secretary of state's return flight to Washington on June 30th," as the London *Economist* (5 July) noted. The very next day Israeli troops shot two leaders of the Islamic group Hamas in an ambush, while a rocket attack by an Israeli helicopter killed two members of Islamic Jihad. In reality, Israeli leaders shot down the cease-fire with this provocation. The response came quickly, in the form of a new car bombing inside Israel.

The issue of the "settlers" in the Occupied Territories is a key question. For decades after Israel conquered the West Bank,



Reuters
Woman in Gaza before wreckage of her home blasted by Israeli tanks.

Gaza and the Golan Heights in the 1967 "Six-Day War," the U.S., UN and virtually every international body formally considered the settlements illegal. but the signature of the Oslo accords by Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization in effect legalized these military outposts, and the number of settlers doubled (going from 100,000 to 200,000 during the seven-year "peace process"). The report by former U.S. Democratic senator George Mitchell called only for a halt to new settlement construction as part of a plan to stop Palestinian protests. Israel, the PA and the Bush administration in Washington have all formally endorsed the Mitchell Report. But Sharon thumbed his nose even at this empty gesture by authorizing 700 new housing units on the West Bank, in addition to the 6,000 already under construction. Rather than these diplomatic sops, it's necessary to demand *all Israeli forces (including troops and "settlers") out of the Occupied Territories.*

The settlers should be driven out by militant action of the oppressed Palestinian population. This could gain considerable support from Hebrew working people in Israel, who widely despise the Uzi-toting religious fanatics and racist terrorists. The bomb attack on the Dolfinarium randomly cut down Israeli youths dancing at the disco club, expressing the outlook of the Islamic fundamentalists for whom any Jew is a military target and an enemy to be expelled from Palestine. Secular Palestinian nationalists have also engaged in indiscriminate bomb attacks, and driven to desperation by the occupation a large percentage of the Arab population approves of "martyrs' actions." Such actions against non-military targets help the Israeli rulers' drive to produce monolithic Zionist "national unity." But those who would win Israeli workers, both Hebrew and Arab, to defend the Palestinian people seek to drive a wedge to split Zionist Israel along its numerous fault lines, putting forward a program of internationalist *class* struggle.

For many Israelis, the settlers represent a future as a perpetual garrison state doomed to be forever at war with its neighbors and subject populations. There was no outpouring of sympathy when Benjamin Kahane, leader of the fascist Kach group and son of Meir Kahane, and his wife were killed by a sniper squad in the West Bank. Good riddance, many rightly felt. Meanwhile, underground Zionist terrorist groups are growing, with tacit support and sometimes direct participation by the state. Almost all the fascistic clots are members of the military reserves, receiving training and weapons from the army and police. Fascistic settler groups have carried out numerous attacks on Palestinians, including in Hebron last month. Watching Zionist toughs throwing stones at the Hassan Bek mosque in the wake of the disco bombing, one of their ilk expressed their Hitlerite mentality, "The terrorists have to be destroyed, just like the Nazis did to the Jews." Such murderous scum should be swept off the streets by teams of anti-Zionist Hebrew and Arab workers and youths.

For Proletarian Internationalism!

With the Israeli military machine revving its engines, just about anything could become the *causus belli*, an incident that becomes the ostensible cause for a war, just as the murder of an Israeli diplomat in London (possibly with Mossad involvement) served as the pretext for Menachem Begin's 1982 invasion of

Lebanon commanded by Sharon. A gruesome fascist attack on Arabs like the 1994 slaughter of 29 Muslim worshippers at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron by Kahane disciple Baruch Goldstein, of the ultra-rightist Kiryat Arba settlement, could set off a chain reaction. But at present, fascistic elements see no need for a new Jewish terrorist underground as in the 1980s because the Israeli army with its assassination squads is carrying out their dirty work. Yet the army is having difficulties. The number of reservists failing to report for duty in the Occupied Territories has reached record numbers. Meanwhile, the *New York Times* (6 June) reports that the *intifada* together with the U.S. recession have sent Israel's economy into a tailspin. Industrial production is at a standstill, hotels are closing, airline bookings have cratered, leading to hundreds of layoffs. Banks reported steep losses and the gross domestic product plummeted by 12 percent in the fourth quarter of 2000.

Israel is not a monolith, contrary to the view of both Zionist and Arab nationalists, but a class society with deep divisions. Many *mizrahim* (Jews of eastern origin) are still beset by low wages and relegated to miserable "development towns"; Russian immigrants (some Jews, many not) are routinely assigned to West Bank settlements, constantly fearing Palestinian attacks; the large secular majority and Orthodox religious communities are often at each others' throats. Moreover, one-fifth of the population of the "Jewish state" is Arab, and tens of thousands of foreign workers have been brought in from

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League for the Fourth International

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“Against the Stream”

The Fight for Trotskyism in Palestine

In Palestine a small Trotskyist nucleus came together in the late 1930s. According to a German-language manuscript written by Jakob Taut, a German Jewish former member of Heinrich Brandler's KPO (Communist Party Opposition—the Right Opposition to Stalinism), several KPOers were won over to Trotskyist political positions after emigrating to Palestine. However, they were relatively isolated from the general population. A second component came from a group of youth organized in the *Chugim Marxistim* (Marxist Circles), the youth section of a wing of Left Poale Zion, which at the time was linked to the centrist London Bureau. These youth had evolved toward Trotskyist positions on their own and did not completely overcome their Zionism until the outbreak of World War II. A third component consisted of elements coming from the left Zionist kibbutz movement, Hashomer Hatzair. Later, in the 1940s, they were joined by Jabra Nicola, an Arab Communist who broke with Stalinism over the Hitler-Stalin pact.

Together they formed the Brit Kommunistim Mahapchanim (Revolutionary Communist League, RCL), which periodically put out a hectographed newspaper, *Kol Hama'amad* (Voice of the Class). For a time this was interrupted due to arrests of key comrades by the British police. According to Taut: “The ‘Brit’ rejected the creation of a Jewish state because it could only be part of this decaying [capitalist] system and would only sharpen the Jewish question. Moreover, such a state could only come about through the expulsion of the original Arab population.” The RCL emphasized:

“By its very nature, Zionist colonization was from the outset necessarily bound up with the interests of imperialism which are directed against the indigenous masses. Zionist colonization could only be carried out in the closest agreement with the interests and help of one or several great powers.”

The Palestinian Trotskyists paid particular attention to the working class, especially the way in which the Zionists segregated the workforce: “The Zionists pushed Arab workers out of their economic sector and drove Arab products off the market in order to create a Jewish-capitalist sector as a forerunner of the Zionist state. The Jewish working class was thereby totally isolated from the Arab population.... The so-called trade union (the Histadrut), which greatly contributed to both, was no real labor movement but rather a giant economic trust serving Zionism, which among other things included a ‘union’ department.” The RCL sought to build a united revolutionary socialist party that would integrate Jewish workers in the anti-imperialist and socialist struggle of the Arab East. “During and after the world war, the League... frequently intervened with leaflets in the struggles in the British military camps, in the railway and oil companies – i.e., it concentrated

on those enterprises where Jews and Arabs together were exploited by British capital.”

An example was during the April 1946 general strike of Arab and Jewish employees of the Palestinian Mandate government which included railway, postal, port and administrative workers. The RCL distributed a leaflet in Arabic and Hebrew among the strikers, pointing out that British imperialism feared that the strikes and demonstrations could have a resounding effect in neighboring countries, such as Egypt, where large-scale anti-British strikes were underway.

The tiny Palestinian Trotskyist group did not have the weight to extend the common struggles of Hebrew and Arab workers. Nevertheless, the RCL courageously opposed the UN-ordered partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab sections. While the Stalinists treacherously helped found the Zionist state, providing the Czech weapons (paid for with American dollars) that were used to terrorize the Arab population, the Trotskyists defended the rights of the Arab refugees and continued to fight for a “United Socialist Arab East.” A resolution of the Palestinian Trotskyists from May 1948, printed below, took a fundamentally correct line of revolutionary defeatism on both sides in the Arab-Israel war, pointing out that the Arab bourgeois states as well as the Zionist state were carving up the living body of the Palestinian Arab people.

The May 1948 RCL resolution has a significant weakness that should be commented on: while rightly calling for “Workers of the two peoples, unite in a common front against imperialism and its agents!” it also demands: “Make this war between Jews and Arabs, which serves the end of imperialism, the common war of both nations against imperialism.” This poses an “anti-imperialist struggle” on a *national* rather than a *class* basis, as if the Hebrew nation as a whole together with the Arab nation including the effendis and kings could join in opposition to the imperialists.

The RCL's principal slogan for a “United Socialist Arab East” posed a proletarian fight to overthrow capitalism, rather than an “anti-imperialist” struggle on a purely “democratic” – i.e., *bourgeois* – basis, reflecting the Trotskyist program of *permanent revolution*. This program is doubly necessary in a situation such as Palestine, where two nations inhabit the same territory, and thus find their democratic rights to self-determination sharply counterposed. There was and is *no* basis for the Hebrew and Palestinian Arab *nations* to join in common anti-imperialist struggle on the basis of capitalist rule. Nor can the Zionist “Jewish state” of Israel be transformed into a democratic state with equal rights for Palestinian Arabs. An equitable realization of the right to national self-determination in this situation of interpenetrated peoples is only conceivable through common revolutionary *class* struggle by the Hebrew and Arab *workers* for inter-

national socialist revolution. Today the League for the Fourth International calls for an Arab-Hebrew workers republic in Israel/Palestine as part of a socialist federation of the Near East. In this region, a historic crossroads of humanity where virtually every existing state has deeply mixed populations, such revolutions must be led by multiethnic revolutionary workers parties built in the fight to reforge a Trotskyist Fourth International.

From Fourth International, May 1948:

The Trotskyist Position in Palestine Against the Stream

The following editorial is translated from the Kol Ham'amad (Voice of the Class), Hebrew organ of the Revolutionary Communist League of Palestine, Section of the Fourth International. It exposes the reactionary role of the United Nations' partition plan, which stifles the rising tide of class struggle in Palestine, blurs class lines and creates an atmosphere of antagonistic "national unity" in both of the national communities in Palestine. As we can see from the editorial, the CP of Palestine has not escaped the nationalist hysteria in both camps, and has split into two national parties.

Only the Palestinian Trotskyists have maintained the Socialist position by calling upon Jewish and Arab workers to break away from the class enemies within their ranks and conduct their independent struggle against imperialism. Despite the present high tide of chauvinism accompanying the new "Hebrew" state set up by Hagana arms on one side, and the invasion of the Arab "Liberation" army on the other, the internationalist working class program put forward by the Trotskyists will alone provide the means of solving the Palestine problem. - Ed. [of Fourth International]

Politicians and diplomats are still trying to find a formula for the disastrous situation into which Palestine has been plunged by the UNO (United Nations) deciding upon partition. Is this a "breach of international peace" or are we dealing with merely "hostile acts"? As far as we are concerned there is no point in this distinction. We are daily witnessing the killing or maiming of men and women, old and young, Jew or Arab. As always, the working masses and the poor suffer most.

Not so very long ago the Arab and Jewish workers were united in strikes against a foreign oppressor. This common struggle has been put to an end. Today the workers are being incited to kill each other. The inciters have succeeded.

"The British want to frustrate partition by means of Arab terrorism," explain the Zionists. As if this communal strife were not the very instrument by which partition is brought about! It was easy for the imperialists to foresee that and well may they be satisfied with the course of events.

What Axe Have Bevin-Churchill to Grind?

Britain was a loser in the last world war. She has lost the bulk of her foreign assets. Her industry is lagging behind. Building up her productive apparatus requires dollars and manpower.

"Keeping order" in Palestine costs England over 35 million Pounds a year, an amount which exceeds the profit she can extort from this country. Partition will release her from her financial

obligations, enable her to employ her soldiers in the productive process while her source of income will remain intact. But this is not all. By partition a wedge is driven between the Arab and Jewish worker. The Zionist state with its provocative lines of demarcation will bring about the blossoming forth of irredentist (revenge) movements on either side, there will be fighting for an "Arab Palestine" and for a "Jewish state within the historic frontiers of Eretz Israel (Israel's Land)." As a result the chauvinistic atmosphere created thus will poison the Arab world in the Middle East and throttle the anti-imperialist fight of the masses, while Zionists and Arab feudalists will vie for imperialist favors.

The price Britain has to pay for the advantages gained by partition is to renounce her ruling monopoly in this country. On the other hand, Wall Street has to come out into the open and contribute its share toward the foul business of safeguarding imperialist positions. This, of course, blackens the "democratic" reputation of the dollar state while at the same time it adds to the prestige of Great Britain. Partition, therefore, is a compromise between the imperialist robbers arising from a changed power constellation.

The Function of the UNO

If the Anglo-American imperialists had forced this "solution" on Palestine of their own, the rotten game would have been patent in the whole Arab East. However, they dodged – the problem was passed on to the UNO. The function of the UNO was to sweeten the bitter dish cooked in the imperialist cuisine, dressing it, in [British foreign secretary Ernest] Bevin's words, with the twaddle of the "conscience of the world that has passed judgement." Exactly. And the diplomats of the lesser countries danced to the tune of the dollar flute, reiterating the "public opinion of the world." And the peculiar casts in this performance enabled Great Britain to appear as the Guardian Angel overflowing with sympathy for either side.

And the Soviet Union? Why did not her representative call the UNO game the swindle it really is? Apparently the present foreign policy of the SU is not concerned with the fighting of the colonial masses. And as the Palestine question is a second-rate affair for the "Big [Powers]," the Soviet diplomats saw fit to dwell upon what Stalin had said about "the Soviet Union being ready to meet America and Britain halfway, economic and social differences notwithstanding."

This is how the UNO has "solved" the Palestinian problem. Yet it is the same unsavory dish that has been set for India, Greece and Indo-China.

What Do Jews Stand to Gain by Partition?

The Zionists were overcome with a sense of triumph when offered the bone by the UNO cooks. "Our work, our righteous cause have won... before the forum of the nations."

The Zionists have been in the habit of asking "justice" from the enemies of the Jewish people ever since Herzl: from the Tsar, the German Kaiser, the British Imperialists, Wall Street. Now they saw their chance. Wall Street is distributing loans and "political independence." Of course, not for nothing. The price has to be paid in blood.

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Oil Rig Catastrophe in Brazil

Petro-Bosses' Privatization Means Workers' Blood!

The 40-story Brazilian oil platform was the world's largest when it went into production last year. But despite the most advanced technology, the bosses' drive to increase profits made the rig a death trap. The P-36 platform was destroyed by three explosions on March 15, with a toll that rose over subsequent days to eleven workers thrown into the ocean's depths or burned to death.

The oil rig belonged to the state-owned Petrobrás (Brazil Oil) company, whose frenetic privatization drive has meant mass layoffs and an all-round assault on workers' health and safety. The platform, located 80 miles from the Brazilian coast and 120 miles northeast of Rio de Janeiro, processed 80,000 barrels a day and was scheduled to produce 180,000 a day by 2003.

As Petrobrás profits have reached unprecedented levels in recent years, so has the number of workers killed and maimed. While images of the P-36 platform sinking into the sea were broadcast around the world, company management scrambled to reassure investors that workers' deaths will not stand in the way of the drive to fully "open" the sector to private capital.

Following the disaster, the FUP oil workers union discovered that on the day of the explosions Petrobrás deleted three days' worth of bulletins from the company's internal "intranet" site. It was also revealed that the company had built a drain-



Marco Antônio Texeira/Agencia O Globo
Petrobrás P-36 oil rig as it was sinking.

age tank for oil and drilling by-products in the column that exploded on March 15.

The deleted company bulletins, obtained by the union and divulged to the Brazilian press, revealed that management knew there was a major flaw in the rig's gas escape system but did nothing about it. Among them was a March 12 message from the P-36 supervisor: "Pressure is building in the platform's vent system. The probable cause is blockage of the flame damper. It will be necessary to stop production in order to replace it, since it is quite close to the flare tower's gas burners" (*Jornal do Brasil*, 23 March). Three days later the rig blew up.

The union bureaucracy, linked to the reformist Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT, the Workers Party of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva), called some protests and a symbolic one-day

oil workers strike. But while providing an escape valve for workers' discontent, it seeks to block the urgently needed class-struggle fight against the Petrobrás criminals and the regime of president Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

The following leaflet is translated from a bulletin of the Comitê de Luta Classista (the Class Struggle Caucus, led by our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil) distributed to a March 22 protest at the Petrobrás headquarters in downtown Rio de Janeiro.



**Organize a strike of all oil workers,
occupy the plants and facilities
to impose workers health and safety committees
with the power to shut down production!
For a 24-hour nation-wide strike to protest the
continuing murder of Petrobrás workers!**

RIO DE JANEIRO, MARCH 20 – The bodies of nine workers have finally sunk to the bottom of the sea, Petrobrás management says. With them went P-36, the world's largest oil platform, which the company values at approximately one billion reais (US\$500 million). The tragedy began in the dark of night on March

15, with explosions that irremediably damaged the platform and claimed the lives of the workers, as well as leaving many wounded.

In the course of only three years, from 1998 to March 2001, some 82 workers have died, most of them employees of subcontractors working in precarious conditions for firms with shady and corrupt links to Petrobrás management, which in its quest for profits has driven production records ever upwards at a break-neck pace. As fatal accidents multiply, so has the daily tension and toll on the workers, who are increasingly exhausted, subjected to grueling, absurd 12-hour days. For the workers' families, grief and mourning are always on the horizon.

Super-exploitation has brought astounding profits to the

O DOCUMENTO

BOLETIM de PRODUÇÃO									
CAMPO DE RONCADOR P. 36									
Resumo da produção de gás (m³)									
Período	Produção	Consumo	Saldo	Produção	Consumo	Saldo	Produção	Consumo	Saldo
01/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
02/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
03/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
04/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
05/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
06/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
07/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
08/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
09/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
10/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
11/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
12/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
13/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
14/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
15/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
16/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
17/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
18/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
19/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
20/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
21/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
22/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
23/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
24/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
25/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
26/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
27/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
28/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
29/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
30/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
31/03/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
01/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
02/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
03/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
04/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
05/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
06/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
07/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
08/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
09/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
10/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
11/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
12/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
13/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
14/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
15/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
16/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
17/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
18/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
19/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
20/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
21/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
22/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
23/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
24/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
25/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
26/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
27/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
28/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
29/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
30/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0
31/04/99	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0

O que diz o relatório

"09) Vent atmosférico. Estamos tendo pressurização no sistema de vent da plataforma. Provável causa é o entupimento do abafador de chamas. Estamos especificando-o para compra. Será necessário parada de produção para substituição do mesmo, visto estar bem próximo dos queimadores de gás na torre de flare"



Petrobrás Bulletin, 23 March: "It will be necessary to stop production...." Right: Campos oil basin fire, 37 workers died.

state firm, which was formed 50 years ago and produces 75 percent of the oil used in Brazil. Last year's profits reached US\$5.2 billion. This was more than the amount racked up by Texaco of the United States, another oil-sector giant which made US\$2.5 billion during the same period. In the process of Petrobrás' privatization, the Brazilian capitalists, led by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, compete with imperialist firms in order to make the company more attractive to rapacious imperialist capital. The imperialists have long had their eye on the huge Brazilian state firm, which in the distant past – under the aegis of an impotent bourgeois nationalism – put forward the motto "The oil belongs to us."

Under Cardoso, Petrobrás has cut the number of workers from 70,000 to 33,000. The death rate has reached an average of three workers killed every 37 days. The company carries out no risk analysis of dangerous jobs, while making ever-deeper cuts in funds devoted to improving working conditions. Yet it recently invested US\$350 million in the quest to change its name from Petrobrás to Petrobrax – that is, changing the s to an x [thus removing the reference to Brazil] to make it more appetizing to the imperialists. This is one of the many faces of Cardoso, the bourgeois "social democrat" known as a leader of the "third way" of post-modern capitalist "competitiveness." In this context, the latest accident in a long series of Petrobrás disasters, including oil spills with a huge environmental impact, has left strong suspicions of sabotage floating in the air. It is one more drop in the ocean of corruption and servility engulfing Cardoso, who faces a growing crisis.

In 1991, when U.S. imperialism, in its drive to control the world's petroleum, took the lead in raining death on the people of Iraq – with missiles, bombs and a starvation embargo that continues to this day – Cardoso backed the imperialists. When the imperialists launched a new attack in 1998, we of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil and the Comitê de Luta Classista called for workers action against this attack and in defense of Iraq.

Since the restoration of capitalism in the former USSR, the imperialists and the bourgeoisie the world over, including Brazil and its partners in the Mercosur regional trade bloc, have been seeking to destroy every conquest of the workers and oppressed. In the context of growing inter-imperialist rivalries, Cardoso has launched IMF starvation plans; carried out "privatizations" – in reality handing over industries and wealth to Brazilian big business and its partners, the imperialist bankers; attacked public

workers; sent the army to smash the oil workers strike, as he did in 1995; unleashed the police, armed fist of the bosses, against the longshoremen in order to destroy their unions and their rights; massacred landless peasants; and carried out mass layoffs in several sectors while heightening racism and every kind of oppression. He does all this in "partnership" with the bourgeoisies of the other Mercosur countries, while preparing to be a docile servant of his imperialist masters' Free Trade Area of the Americas scheme, which will mean even harsher exploitation for the workers of semi-colonial countries such as Brazil.

In order to carry out this dirty work, the aid and direct participation of the reformist leaders of the PT and the CUT labor federation have been indispensable. Subordinating the working people to a class-collaborationist alliance with the bosses, this popular front seeks to suppress any resistance to the capitalist onslaught. Where the PT is in office, it imposes the same anti-working-class attacks as the bosses' parties. The oil workers' tragedy urgently shows the need to break with the popular front and forge a new leadership of the workers movement – a revolutionary, class-struggle leadership.

Organize a Strike of All Petrobrás Workers! Workers Control of Production!

The workers should immediately organize a strike which must also involve subcontractors' employees, demanding that they have equal rights with Petrobrás workers, combating those who play the bosses' game by placing the blame for increasing job hazards and insecurity on these contract workers instead of the bosses, who always foster divisions in the working class. Call on other labor sectors which are currently organizing unified campaigns to join in; extend the call to women workers and workers' wives, who are once again showing their combativity as they participate in demonstrations to demand their companions' rights. The Comitê de Luta Classista calls for electing a strike committee and creating workers committees (without management) to fight the terrible health and working conditions and which will have the power to shut down unsafe work.

The CIPA committees (Internal Commissions for the Prevention of Accidents) are made up of representatives of both the workers and the bosses; they are not only impotent but instruments of class collaboration. The struggle for class inde-

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“Anti-Globalization” Confab in Porto Alegre

Popular Frontists’ Fantasy Island

The following article from our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB) analyzes the “World Social Forum” held in January in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, state of Rio Grande do Sul. While giving no political support to this gathering of popular-frontists and proponents of “anti-globalization” nationalism, the LQB carried out vigorous sales of more than 350 copies of publications of the League for the Fourth International in several languages.

The article translated below was originally published in a pamphlet of LQB materials for the 47th congress of Brazil’s National Student Union (UNE). The pamphlet included theses emphasizing the struggle against the popular-frontist politics of the UNE leadership (dominated by the ex-Maoist Partido Comunista do Brasil) and for linking radical students to the power of the proletariat in an internationalist fight for socialist revolution. The LQB presented candidates in four schools in Volta Redonda and the city of Rio de Janeiro, of whom one delegate and four alternates were elected. In the FERP school in Volta Redonda, the LQB slate defeated that of Brazil’s largest “far-left” party, the PSTU (United Socialist Workers Party), part of the pseudo-Trotskyist tendency of followers of the late Nahuel Moreno.

At the beginning of the year, fake-lefts of all kinds, particularly in Latin America, devoted themselves to trumpeting the call for a “World Social Forum” (WSF). Inspired by the demonstrations in Seattle and Washington, the WSF’s Web site touched on every topic under the sun while extolling the virtues of this “new space” for a brand-new kind of politics counterposed to “neoliberalism.” The event was pitched as a counterweight to the World Economic Forum to be held at the same time in Davos, Switzerland, which was receiving a great deal of media attention. According to the organizers, the key was showing the value of “concrete actions by civil society.” Meanwhile the WSF’s “independence” was compromised from the beginning by the fact that it was organized by NGOs (“non-governmental organizations”), the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops, the Brazilian Association of Businessmen for Citizenship, together with the CUT labor federation, the Landless Peasants Movement (MST) and other groups.

In a January 28 radio speech, the CUT’s secretary of international relations, Kjeld Jakobsen, said the WSF sought alternatives which would “make human development and participatory democracy priority factors for governments and citizens,” and that “governments must be accountable to parliaments and citizens.” When the interviewer asked him about Colombian FARC guerrillas being present at the WSF, since the guerrillas take over “by force of arms instead of the democratic process,” Jakobsen squirmed around the question, displaying his vocation for bourgeois “democracy” and stating brusquely that “the FARC was not invited.”

It’s important to remember that the FARC’s policy is to seek a rotten deal with the imperialists and local bourgeoisie—

even with the head of the New York Stock Exchange—and that it made a visit to Europe together with a minister from the Colombian government. Clearly, we must fight “Plan Colombia,” which is a mere pretext for a Yankee imperialist invasion of Colombia under the phony pretext of “the war on drugs.” As for Jakobsen, he is far from advocating the path of revolution instead of the popular-frontist class collaboration put forward by the FARC. Instead, he stands for the parliamentary cretinism and “revolution through voting” preached by the PT (the reformist Workers Party of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva).

The presence of the CUT and MST, together with the international tone given to the conclave, cannot hide the WSF’s multi-class, bourgeois character, devoid of any vestige of a working-class program. The gathering was organized in Porto Alegre in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, since this state has been governed by the PT for the last twelve years, and Governor Olívio Dutra invested 970,000 reais (about US\$400,000) to back the forum.

The WSF organizers clearly wanted to put the spotlight on the PT as one of the largest left parties in the West. The entire Brazilian press has been reporting that the PT registered more advances than any other party in the municipal elections recently held across the country. Hundreds of PT elected officials strutted around the conference grounds, but the greatest hoopla was reserved for the duo of Marta Suplicy and Lula: the former for governing the city of São Paulo—Latin America’s biggest and the fourth largest in the world, with 17 million inhabitants; the latter for being the PT’s most popular figure and leader of the biggest party in opposition to President Fernando Henrique Cardoso—as well as Brazil’s probable next president according to the WSF organizers, who hyped the “revolution through voting which the PT is carrying out.”

This party has led a series of popular-front groupings in Brazil, and wherever it governs its program is not only bourgeois but has the same “neoliberal” content as the Cardoso government to which it is supposedly the “opposition.” In fact, at the forum students and teachers hissed and booed Governor Dutra himself in protest against the repression he unleashed against teachers and landless peasants.

The Forum was marked by protests by punks and anarchists against McDonald’s, and by MST leader Stédile and French farmer José Bové against the U.S. multinational corporation Monsanto, which makes genetically modified products. These protests can scarcely be called “anti-imperialist”: Bové represents French imperialism and gained prominence demonstrating against multinationals from other countries (McDonald’s is a U.S. firm) rather than the French ones (like the “hypermarket” chain, Carrefour), revealing the protectionist nature of his protests, quite in the spirit of the Seattle and Washington demonstrations.

In Stédile’s speech on the MST at the forum, he said not a peep about socialism, much less revolution; his program is for national development and “agrarian reform,” not agrarian revo-

lution. Stédile's protectionism is quite cynical: a video sold by the MST at the forum showed the violence carried out against landless peasants, but at the same time upheld as a success an encampment where the MST has a cooperative in partnership with the Italian multinational Parmalat. Needless to say, we protest the violence against the landless peasants movement and Cardoso's reactionary expulsion of Bové from Brazil; yet we cannot overlook the class content of this type of protest.

Another bloc of organizations signed a document criticizing the WSF and calling for "death to capitalism." Signed by punks, anarchists, Third Worldists, Guevarists and pseudo-Trotskyists like the Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (LBI), the document is nothing but a hodgepodge of centrist snippets which does not go beyond the framework of popular frontism. The document's "anti-capitalist" façade is upheld by groups which give all-out support to the FARC and Zapatistas, whose programs are bourgeois, and defense of cops (Zubatovism or "police socialism") as in the case of the LBI.

The LBI has recently been mouthing phrases against various left groups that use the cops and courts in disputes among themselves, yet this is the practice of the LBI itself, going back to 1996 when it gave political backing to the coup and union gangsterism, supported by the cops and bourgeois courts, against the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union (SFPMVR); up to today this Zubatovist clique runs its own apparatus as puppets of the bourgeois "justice system" and the cops, against the ranks of municipal workers. Ever eager to occupy union apparatuses and make alliances today which it breaks tomorrow so its opponents will think it is growing rapidly – this is the vulgar practice of the bloc's most "radical" tendency, the LBI, so the reader can imagine the sort of thing the other groups signing the document will do. Even a quick scan of the bloc's document makes clear that it has all the characteristics of a mini popular front.

The World Social Forum claimed to be an "alternative" to globalization while believing this to be a fact to which it must adapt itself. It didn't even uphold one its favorite hobby-horses, put forward from time to time by anticommunist pope John Paul II himself: begging imperialism to "forgive the foreign debt" of the semi-colonial countries which the WSF supposedly defends.

The bulk of the forum participants had the same line as one of the broadest political fronts in history, which in Brazil extends from the government coalition to the PT and all its internal tendencies, the (bourgeois) Brazilian Socialist Party, the ex-Stalinists of the Popular Socialist Party, the pseudo-Trotskyists of the PSTU, Causa Operária and POR (followers of Bolivian centrist Guillermo Lora), and other fake-lefts who all gave backing to Yeltsin and the imperialists when counter-revolution was triumphing in the former USSR. For revolutionaries, the correct policy was to defend the deformed and degenerated workers states unconditionally against capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist attacks while fighting for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy which opened the doors to capitalist restoration.

Today the forum participants and fake-lefts – seeing that the capitalists have intensified their attacks on the rights and conquests of the working class and oppressed around the world in the post-Soviet period, and the grinding poverty be-

setting East Europe and the former USSR – change the subject or just keep quiet. The "alternative" promoted by the pro-capitalist reformists and union bureaucrats, who proclaim the WSF to be a great beacon for humanity, is bourgeois "participatory democracy through voting," as opposed to proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the documents hailing the WSF, the left similarly avoids analyzing the fact that the present stage of capitalism is imperialism, leaving no room for bourgeois development and reforms and still less for democratic revolutions. This stage was thoroughly analyzed by Lenin in his famous book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written one year before the 1917 October Revolution – which was not a bourgeois-democratic revolution "through the vote" but a proletarian revolution which set an example to be followed by the exploited and oppressed.

A crisis of overproduction is mounting daily, while in an attempt to protect themselves from the crisis, the imperialist countries have established economic blocs, promoting inter-imperialist rivalries and crushing the poor and semi-colonial countries. It's a matter not of "neo-liberalism" but of a growing organic crisis which can lead to devastating wars like World Wars I and II. In semi-colonial countries like Brazil, characterized by uneven and combined development, Trotsky's theses of permanent revolution show the path for the proletariat and all the oppressed.

We fight for revolution not only in these countries but internationally, from Harlem to Johannesburg. The urgent task is to break from the popular front and the politics of petty-bourgeois nationalism in all its variants, and to forge a fighting Trotskyist propaganda group, nucleus of a revolutionary internationalist workers party. We fight for a workers and peasants government as part of the Socialist United States of Latin America, and for the extension of revolution to our class brothers and sisters "in the belly of the beast" in North America, Europe, Japan and around the world. Forward in building the nucleus of the Trotskyist party as part of the struggle to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■

Brazil Oil Rig Catastrophe...

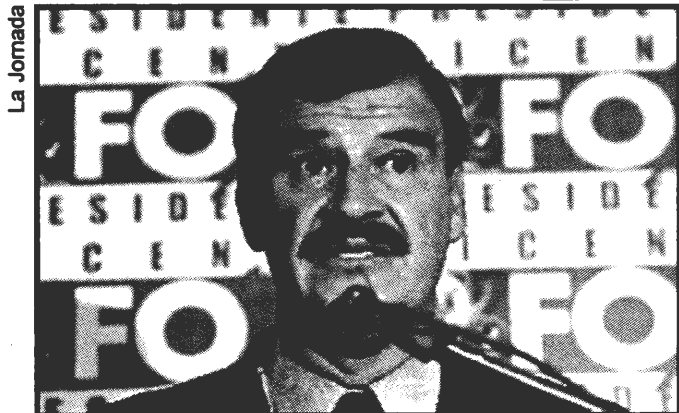
continued from page 9

pendence must be carried out on the shop floor as well, taking a stand against any participation by the bosses. This step is fundamental in the fight for workers control of factories, businesses and workplaces.

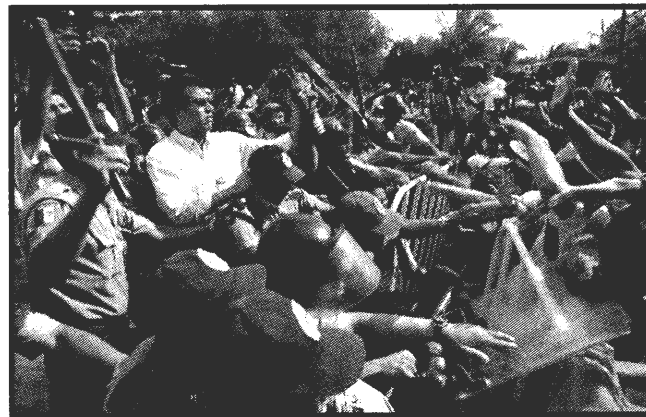
Today, amid the growing capitalist crisis, the conditions facing workers in Brazil and around the world demand hard class struggle. The fight against the program of the IMF, against the governments of "austerity" for the workers and super-profits for the stock-market speculators, will undoubtedly pose the need for a general strike. But this only poses the question: who is master of the house? The answer must be: the working class at the head of the poor peasants and all the oppressed. It is crucial to forge a revolutionary workers party to lead the fight for permanent revolution, fighting for a workers and peasants government to undertake the socialist revolution, which can be completed only by its extension to the economically advanced, imperialist countries. ■

“Zapatour” in Foxlandia, Police Beat Protesters in Cancún, UNAM Students Expelled

Mexico: Fox Drops the Mask



La Jornada



AP

Right-wing Mexican president Vicente Fox entered office promising “democracy.” Right: federal and local cops attack demonstrators in Cancún, February 27.

Translated from a March 2001 Grupo Internacionalista/México leaflet.

MARCH 8 – From the moment he was elected last July 2, Mexican president Vicente Fox has presented himself as the incarnation of “democracy,” promising a “plural and inclusive” government after 71 years of rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). According to this fairy tale, the candidate of the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) would bury the “perfect dictatorship” of the PRI [as Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa termed it] in a “transition without turbulence.” During its first 100 days in office, the new Fox regime has continued tossing around contradictory campaign promises. But on February 27 the mask came off.

As Fox arrived by helicopter to give a speech to the closing meeting of the World Economic Forum, a brutal police operation was being carried out, coordinated by the president’s military staff. The objective: to give a thrashing to those who would demonstrate against this den of imperialist mouthpieces. Public Security units, the Cancún municipal police and the Federal Preventive Police (PFP) encircled several hundred demonstrators on the avenue leading to the forum site. As demonstrators were dispersing, a savage repression began. Armed with riot sticks and electric shields, the police revelled in spilling blood. *Milenio* (28 February) reported laconically: “Cancún stained red.” The reported toll was 49 arrested and dozens injured.

Meanwhile in the capital, the University Tribunal – an inquisitorial organ of the National University (UNAM) admin-

istration – decreed the expulsion of six leaders of the Strike General Council (CGH) from the School of Political and Social Sciences. The hypocritical accusation against the CGH members was “harassing” members of the “university community” – that is, strikebreaking teachers and management personnel who were preparing a provocation against a one-day strike in several schools. The February 6 strike was called to commemorate the first anniversary of the police takeover of UNAM, which broke the ten-month strike at Latin America’s largest university with more than 1,000 arrests. And now these repressors accuse the students of violence!

The police beatings in Cancún and the UNAM expulsions are not isolated incidents. The cops’ clubs and summary trials show the true face of the “peaceful transition to democracy” which Fox brags of. His continuation of the economic policies of the last PRI administrations means more blows against the exploited and oppressed. In order to maintain its rule based on the brutal exploitation of its wage slaves, the bourgeoisie needs a regime that will rule with an iron hand. Fox well knows that Mexican capitalism has to “bullet-proof” itself in order to militarily repress *los de abajo* (the downtrodden). Not coincidentally, a few days after taking office the new president announced that he was substantially increasing the budget of CISEN, the federal intelligence agency that is the successor to the notorious DFS (Federal Security Bureau). Now, after its “feat” against defenseless youth in Cancún, the PFP announced that it was “reactivating” spying at the same time as the head of the CISEN,

**“Autonomy” Under the Military Boot Is a Fraud –
For Agrarian Revolution! Workers to Power!**

a member of the PRI, resigned. The continuity with the repressive organs of the old regime is evident.

Now there is a new media circus around the Zapatista caravan which is approaching Mexico City. The leaders of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) are coming to the capital unarmed to negotiate the implementation of the San Andrés Accords, whose provisions call for autonomy for Mexico's Indian peoples and respecting the traditional practices of the more than 60 indigenous peoples in the country. As the "Zapatour" passed through the states of Oaxaca, Michoacán and Guerrero, thousands came out to greet Subcomandante Marcos and the other Zapatista leaders. This doubtless expressed the hopes placed in the EZLN by many of the 10 million Mexican Indians and many others who are fed up with the poverty which has been their daily bread during decades of PRI rule. But these hopes will be shattered against the hard reality that *it is capitalism itself and not just the government of the day which is the source of their oppression in this semi-colonial country.*

Fox and his team are cynically trying to capitalize on this event. The two big television chains, Televisa and TV Azteca, are sponsoring a petition campaign "for peace" and organized a "peace" concert that brought 100,000 people to the Azteca sports stadium in Mexico City. The man with the boots (Fox) no doubt figures that by shaking the hand of the man with the pipe and ski mask (Marcos) the whole "Chiapas problem" will be solved "in 15 minutes," as Fox vowed during the election campaign. But while those who in the past called in a barely veiled way for the extermination of the rebels are now carrying a "candle for peace," 70,000 troops of the Mexican Army are still stationed in Chiapas. They have surrounded the Zapatista communities, while thousands of soldiers comb the mountain areas of Guerrero as well as Oaxaca, Michoacán in the west and the Huasteca hill region in the east. It's necessary to categorically demand: *Army get out!*

In the face of the uproar set off by the broadcast of the televised beatings in Cancún, now the politicians are trying to hand off the hot potato. The PRI mayor is blaming the presidential military staff, while Fox says he is relieved that the PFP supposedly "wasn't involved." In any case, what this came down to was a blatant defense of capital by the forces of "order." For those attending the imperialist forum, it was intended to exorcise the spectre of social revolt, while for the hotel owners it was intended to open the way for their night shift workers, who couldn't come to work because of the traffic blockade. The cynicism of the repressors knows no limits. They accused demonstrators arrested on the beaches of "immorality," ripping off their shorts to prove it.

In Cancún one can see with exceptional clarity the semi-colonial character of Mexican capitalism. The beaches are literally off limits to the local population, made up mostly of Mayan Indians, and to any Mexican who doesn't have a key to one of the luxury hotels. In this land of Mexican apartheid, the hotel zone for the foreign tourists is physically separated by a lagoon from the area where the workers live, which lacks essential services like drinking water and a sewer system.

In the hypocritical chorus of the bourgeois parties over

the repression in Cancún, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) stands out. While Fox "deplores" the beatings, the bourgeois-nationalist party of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas "energetically condemns" them. But the similarity between what happened in Cancún and the repression carried out by the PRD government of Mexico City against striking UNAM students is stunning. Police clubbings and mass arrests are not by a long shot the exclusive preserve of the PRI – which for three-quarters of a century administered Mexican capitalism in the interests of the national bourgeoisie and its imperialist masters – nor of the new regime of the right-winger Fox.

In the Federal District and the state of Zacatecas, PRD governors have unleashed repression in order to keep "peace and order" for the bosses. Everywhere, their principal function has been to serve as "firemen," diverting social discontent into the sterile channels of bourgeois parliamentarism. Fighting against the subordination of the urban and rural working people to this sector of the bourgeoisie, the Trotskyists of the Grupo Internacionalista have emphasized the need to *break with the Cárdenas popular front and forge a revolutionary workers party.*

This popular front could also be observed in Cancún. Among those who were protesting against the World Economic Forum was the PRD itself. In reality, the point of convergence of the "civil associations" and anarchists who took part in the demonstrations is the reformist utopia of turning back the wheel of history and keeping capitalism within national borders. The protests in Seattle, Washington, and more recently in Prague, Davos (Switzerland) and Porto Alegre (Brazil) denounced the "top agencies of corporate capital," such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. They raise the banner of "fair trade" among the various capitalist countries. Thus the street protests are examples of class collaboration tying the exploited and oppressed to sectors of the capitalist class. To do away with the hunger and poverty which beset most of humanity, what is necessary is to *sweep away imperialism through international socialist revolution.* This perspective is counterposed to the straight-out nationalism of the "anti-globalizers."

The new Fox regime is gearing up to repress dissidents, above all the foreseeable working-class opposition to its privatization plans. For this they need some illustrative examples to show that they won't be stingy in using state power. This can be clearly seen in the case of the students expelled from UNAM. All of them are reputed "ultras," and many spent several months in jail after the PFP operation last year. Complaining of the "mistreatment" of a few scabs (all of them connected to the present director of the Political Science School, Pérez Correa, who was previously a high Interior Ministry official in charge of political intelligence), the university authorities are seeking an intimidation effect. Students and professors in the schools of Sciences, Philosophy and at the university preparatory school at Naucalpan are facing similar sanctions, and their files have been handed over to the University Tribunal. But still the authorities have been unable to root out rebelliousness among the student body. To counter them what's needed are student-worker mobilizations

demanding: *Drop the University Tribunal charges against the students and professors!*

We are currently witnessing an elaborate dance between the EZLN and the new government. In almost identical terms, both Fox and *El Sup* Marcos have said that they are "risking all" their political capital with this march to the capital. Speaking with *El Universal* (26 February), Marcos made it clear that he is seeking a deal which would mean the disappearance of the EZLN "as an armed option." Now the president calls on "the whole nation" to support the "march for peace," while Marcos says it is a "march for dignity." At the same time, the leader of the Zapatistas declared that they are "indisputably part of the forces that defeated the PRI" (interview with Ignacio Ramonet, editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, in *El País*, 25 February). This posture is not new: at the time of Fox's inauguration, Marcos wrote a letter to the new president giving him the benefit of the doubt, saying "You don't have to overcome, yet, anything negative (given that you have not attacked us)."

For seven years, the EZLN has constituted a virtual guerrilla force. Although its manifesto of 1 January 1994 declared its intention to "advance on the capital of the country by defeating the Mexican federal army," it has long ago reduced its expectations to the promulgation of the law drawn up by the legislative Commission of Concord and Pacification (Cocopa). It acts as an armed pressure group, seeking the support of a sector of the bourgeoisie. Traditionally allied with Cárdenas and his PRD, today it is looking for a deal with Fox. And Fox says he is ready: "We are prepared to go forward in carrying

out the conditions proposed by the Zapatistas" (*La Jornada*, 2 March). But if the National Congress in the Palace of San Lázaro passes the San Andrés Accords (embodied in the Cocopa draft law) – however just the demand to respect the elemental rights of the oppressed Indian population – granting "autonomy" under the boot of the military will not resolve the centuries-old oppression of the indigenous peoples.

Marcos speaks poetically of a conflict between "the gods of money and the men of corn." The down-to-earth reality is that liberation of the Indian communities – in which 80 percent live in utter poverty, illiteracy exceeds 50 percent, infant mortality is astronomical and the main cause of death among children is hunger – is not possible without overthrowing the kingdom of capital. Chiapas, despite the grinding poverty of its inhabitants, is one of the richest states in Mexico in terms of its natural resources. It has important oil deposits and produces 40 percent of the hydroelectric energy of the entire country. U.S. president George W. Bush has his sights set on those resources. During his one-day visit to Fox's ranch (during which he announced his criminal bombardment of Iraq, calling it a "routine" action), Bush announced that he wants a bilateral accord to import electricity from Mexico as a response to the present energy crisis in California.

For his part, Fox promised the imperialists meeting in Davos, Switzerland in January that he would soon privatize the electrical power industry. At the same time he is calling to extend the *maquiladora* industry of duty-free plants to the south, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs at starvation wages. With his "Puebla to Panama Plan," he is attempting to revive the long-abandoned project of an interocean transport corridor across the Tehuantepec Isthmus, but this time with superhighways instead of a canal. But for the Indian peoples, these privatization and maquilization plans mean intensified exploitation. The emancipation of the Indians after centuries of oppression, first under Spanish colonial rule and then under the bourgeois republic, is only possible through an agrarian revolution that sweeps away the big estate owners and puts in the hands of the exploited the resources necessary to overcome poverty. This, in turn, requires the seizure of power by the proletariat in a workers revolution that extends beyond the borders to the heart of U.S. imperialism.

The new Fox government represents a change in the methods of social control in order to keep bourgeois rule afloat. The decrepit PRI regime based its reign on its iron control of the labor movement through the straitjacket of corporatist "unions." Faced with the breakdown of these antiquated structures, the bourgeoisie was forced to seek a backup option. The end of the 1980s saw the rise of the Cárdenas popular front, headed by a group of former PRI leaders – a class-collaborationist alliance whose purpose was to divert the widespread discontent among the oppressed and subjugate the working class to a sector of the bourgeoisie. With the passing of the years, however, the bourgeois PRD lost its drawing power and seemed in the eyes of the national and foreign bourgeoisie to be incapable of containing social pressures. The UNAM strike, for example, clearly showed the failure of PRD attempts to end it "from within."

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The resulting backup option was the right-winger Fox, through whom various key sectors of the bourgeoisie are seeking a stricter control over the government. The decayed semi-bonapartist regime gave way to the "brand-name government," including the presence in the cabinet of top executives (duly recruited by headhunting agencies) from the Carso Group (banking), the Vitro Group (glass), Cemex (cement), Bimbo (bakeries), Maseca (tortillas), along with Proctor & Gamble and Union Carbide ("Fox and His Businessmen's Republic," *Proceso*, 10 December 2000). When Fox talks of a "plural and inclusive" government, the former Coca-Cola chief is referring to the inclusion of a top executive of Pepsi-Cola in his administration. At the operational level, the assistant secretaries of the ministries consist of a whole mafia from right-wing Catholic and fascist groups (MURO, El Yunque, Anti-Communist Student Front, Provida, Legionnaires of Columbus) who then joined the PAN (see "The Right Wing That Governs with Fox," *Milenio*, 7 March). Labor Secretary Abascal Carranza, the former president of the Mexican Employers' Association, is the son of the founder of the Sinarquistas, a clerical-fascist movement from the 1930s.

We will soon see that Fox's recipe for social control consists of the classic methods of the bosses' white terror. There has been a drastic increase in "white" (company) unions around the country. A report on the maquiladora zone of Tijuana states that under the PAN government of Northern Baja California, "Today it is estimated that more than 700 of the 890 maquiladora plants in this border city have phantom unions" (*La Jornada/Masiosare*, 25 February). At the same time, the old corporatist "unions" try to hang on, attempting to demonstrate that they haven't lost their capacity to impose company terror against workers fighting for their rights.

An illuminating example is the Duro maquiladora (a supplier for Hallmark Cards) in the town of Río Bravo, Tamaulipas, where workers have waged a bitter fight against the pseudo-union of the CTM (Mexican Labor Confederation), which has

held the sweetheart contract, and now against another corporatist "labor" federation, the CROC. During the ten months of their struggle, more than 150 workers have been fired by the Duro bosses. On the eve of a March 3 vote organized by the federal conciliation and arbitration agency, the two corporatist outfits unleashed a wave of terror in the factory. In broad daylight they unloaded high-calibre weapons at the factory gate and brought them into the plant. On the day of the vote, workers were confined to the work areas under lock and key, and under the watchful eyes of the pistoleros they were required to hand in a ballot for the CROC. The following day, one of the main organizers of the independent union was chased by a pick-up truck that rammed his car, causing head injuries (see "Mexico: Women Workers Battle Gun Thugs," *The Internationalist* No. 10, June 2001).

The Grupo Internacionalista has insisted that in order to fight the starvation policies of both the old and the new regime it is necessary to carry out a *class-struggle* fight against the corporatist "unions" of the PRI and the company "unions" linked to the PAN. At the same time, it is necessary to oust the popular-frontist bureaucrats who subordinate the "independent" unions to the bourgeois PRD. This requires a communist leadership that can mobilize the power of the working class in a proletarian counteroffensive, fighting to forge a revolutionary workers party. As Trotskyists, we fight for a workers and peasants government that will break the imperialist yoke and carry out the democratic tasks which in the imperialist epoch can only be accomplished by the dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the poor peasants. These tasks require from the outset undertaking socialist measures and extending the revolution to the rest of Latin America, as well as the United States and the entire world.

It is necessary to forge the indispensable nucleus of an international, Leninist-Trotskyist party, the task which the Grupo Internacionalista has set itself as a section of the League for the Fourth International. ■

ICL Supports Anti-Union Exclusion Clause in Mexico

A small item in the 11 May issue of *Workers Vanguard* printed a translation of a statement by the Mexican group of the International Communist League (ICL), the Grupo Espartaquista (GEM). Tacked onto the end of the statement was a paragraph reporting that "the [Mexican] Supreme Court has now declared the 'closed shop' law unconstitutional." The statement commented: "A union's right to demand that all workers at a particular shop be union members is an important tool in labor's arsenal against the bosses who seek to divide the working class and weaken their organizations by hiring non-union labor."

Militant unionists support the closed shop in order to strengthen labor against the bosses; for the same reason we support throwing scabs out of the unions and running them out of the plants. But what *WV* dishonestly translates as "closed shop" is not a contract provision to ensure that all workers are union members, much less an anti-scab provision, but the opposite: the legal "exclusion clause" (*cláusula de exclusión*) which for decades has been a centerpiece of the system of corporatist

control of labor, used to prevent the appearance of unions independent of state control, to expel unionists who refused to join the bourgeois Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) which administered Mexican capitalism for more than seven decades, and in particular to fire communists.

The Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International fight for the complete independence of the workers movement from the bourgeoisie and its state. We oppose all regulation of labor union activity by the capitalist government, which is always aimed at suppressing and controlling workers' power. Thus the Mexican Federal Labor Law is regularly used to declare strikes illegal, while the Supreme Court's recent attack on the law reflects the push by sectors of the Mexican capitalists to replace the crumbling corporatist system (including a variety of social welfare provisions) with a cheaper form of control. We oppose both the corporatist labor laws and the recent Supreme Court action. Our position is simple: capitalist state get out of union activity! In contrast the ICL, which used to uphold the

principle of class independence of the unions, now calls for support to corporatist state control of labor through the anti-communist, anti-union exclusion clause.

In the last couple of years, the ICL has suddenly decided that the CTM (Confederation of Mexican Workers) is a bona fide union. Though they still occasionally use the word "corporatist" to describe the CTM and its allied "union" groupings, in their mouths this term has become meaningless. The fact is that the PRI's corporatist federations are not workers' unions any more than are the company unions (*sindicatos blancos*) sponsored by the right-wing PAN (National Action Party); rather, they are apparatuses for bourgeois control of the workers. Not only are members of these pseudo-unions required to affiliate to the PRI, *the CTM has been for more than half a century the "workers sector" of this capitalist party.* It serves to incorporate the workers into a formalized structure of class collaboration in order to prevent the rise of unions independent of the capitalist state.

Today our comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista/México continue the fight for class-struggle unionism that the ICL has abandoned, just as it has abandoned the struggle against the popular front which ties the so-called "independent" unions to the bourgeois-nationalist PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) headed by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

In an article dealing with the struggle of workers at the Duro Bag plant in Río Bravo published in *El Internacionalista/Edición México* No. 1, May 2001 (see "Mexico: Women Workers Battle Gun Thugs," in *The Internationalist* No. 10, June 2001), we criticized the "CTM socialists" of the GEM, saying that "With their line they cannot defend the women workers in this struggle." After all, if there is "no qualitative difference" between the Duro Bag workers union and the CTM/CROC apparatus imposed on the workers by the company and the PRI, then the bitter fight is just a jurisdictional dispute. But it turns out that our criticism was too mild. In seeking to defeat attempts to establish an indepen-

dent union at the plant, the CTM expelled the main leader of the insurgents and had the company fire him under the "exclusion clause" which the GEM now defends. Subsequently more than 150 workers were fired for supporting the independent union. So in this key fight in the struggle to unionize the free-trade zone *maquiladora* plants, the ICL must support the corporatist apparatuses against the workers!

The exclusion clause has been used for decades to squelch any and all efforts to organize militant union struggles. Graciela Bensusan writes in her book on *El derecho laboral* (Siglo XXI, 1985):

"Exclusion clauses, originally intended to strengthen union organization, have served to guarantee for capital a labor force which is ideologically and politically disciplined....

continued on page 42

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For a Workers and Peasants Government!

Algeria: Kabylia in Revolt

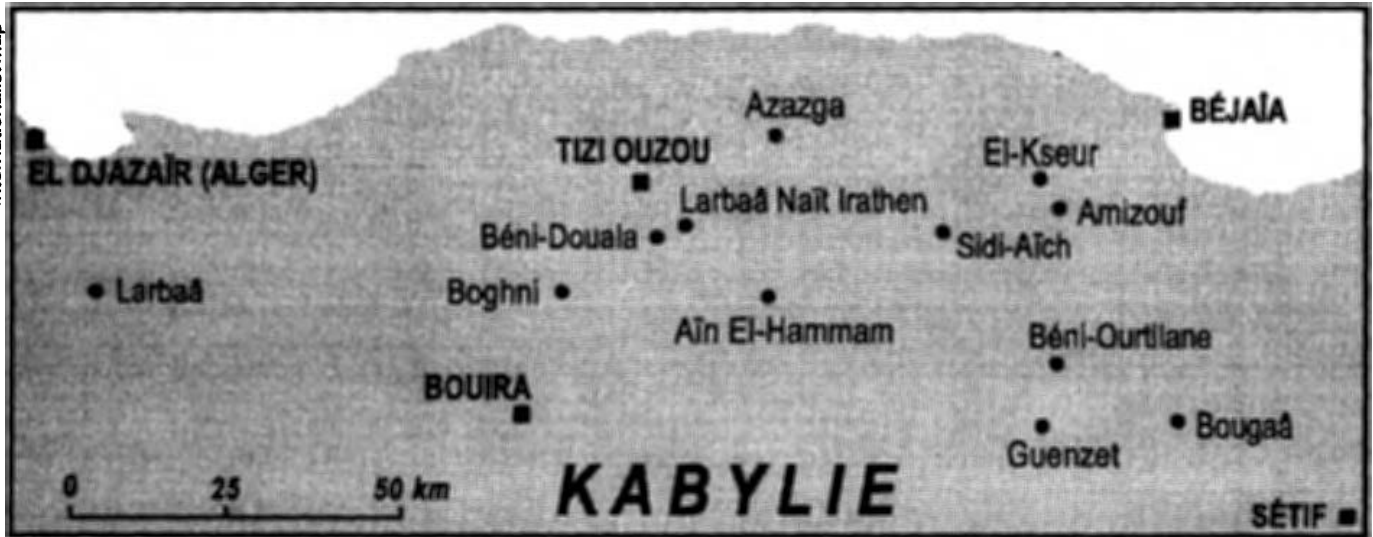


Algerian gendarmes (paramilitary police) firing on demonstrators in Béjaïa, April 29.

**Against the Murderous Regime and Islamic Reaction,
Only One Solution: Proletarian Revolution!**

The following is translated from L'Internationale No. 1 (June 2001). Since this article was written the rebellion has continued unabated, sparking outbreaks of unrest in a number of cities around the North African country. On June 15, up to 2 million people marched in Algiers denouncing the bloody military government. By now, in the Kabyle region to the east of the capital virtually every official building has been sacked. But despite the massive outpouring of opposition sentiment, there is no leadership prepared to wage a revolutionary struggle against the generals and the armed Islamic fundamentalist groups. The bourgeois Berber parties fill the void while the government seeks to wear down the protests, preparing to crack down hard when the time is ripe. Reformist pseudo-socialists appeal for intervention by the European imperialists in the name of human rights. The crisis of proletarian leadership grows increasingly acute by the day.

30 May – They sowed the wind, and reaped the whirlwind. On April 18 the 20-year-old student Massinissa Guermah was executed in cold blood in a police station at Béni-Douala, near Tizi Ouzou, capital of the Grande Kabylie region of Algeria. His body riddled with 12 bullets, he died two days later. The minister of the interior justified Massinissa's death by portraying him as a thief. Shortly thereafter, at Oued Amizour in the wilaya (prefecture) of Béjaïa, gendarmes detained and beat secondary-school students for chanting anti-government slogans during commemorations of the 1980 "Berber Spring." From then on, Kabylia has been rocked by daily clashes between the forces of "order" and the enraged populace. Despite appeals for calm from Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, his warnings of a foreign plot, his threats to impose "rigorous sanctions" against those who "incite" protests, and despite an escalation of brutal repression, the turmoil continues.



Algeria

Algeria won its independence in 1962, after 132 years as one of France's most important colonies and a bitter eight-year war led by the FLN (National Liberation Front) of Ahmed **Ben Bella**. The Evian Accords signed that year by the new regime and French strongman Charles de Gaulle guaranteed imperialist interests, ensuring a poverty-stricken future of neo-colonialism for the Algerian masses. Three years later, military officers under Houari **Boumediene** deposed Ben Bella, disappointing the hopes of many leftists around the world (among them the followers of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat and the American SWP) who had served as publicists for the "socialist" pretensions the bourgeois nationalists employed in their drive to domesticate the combative Algerian working class.

Boumediene's successor Chadli **Bendjedid**, faced with a sharp fall in oil and gas prices in 1987, decreed drastic austerity measures which set the stage for the popular uprising of 1988 as well as the rise of the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). When the FIS won a majority of seats in parliamentary elections, the Armed Forces seized power in 1992, opening up a bloody civil war between hard-line military *éradicateurs* (eradicators) and Islamic fundamentalist *égorgeurs* (throat-slitters) which has claimed up to 200,000 lives. The civil war has also driven ever greater numbers to flee the country, largely to France where North African workers have long been a key part of the working class.

After the establishment of the Democratic National Union coalition, further parliamentary maneuvering and a split between "moderate" Islamists and the underground Armed Islamic Group (GIA), former prime minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika gained the presidency in April 1999, ruling with the backing of the military, the FLN and "repentant" fundamentalists while following to the letter the dictates of the International Monetary Fund.

Of Algeria's 31 million people, approximately 83 percent are Arabic-speakers while 17 percent belong to the **Berber** linguistic/ethnic group, which is subdivided into Kabyles (inhabiting the northern **Kabylia** regions, Grande Kabylie and Petite Kabylie), Chaouis (concentrated in the eastern Aurès mountains) and others. While at least half the FLN's historic leading cadre were Berbers, post-independence regimes have pursued a policy of "Arabization." Repeated Berber upsurges – shortly after independence, again in the 1980 "Berber Spring," in 1988 and in today's youth-based Kabylia revolt – have protested discrimination and demanded cultural and linguistic rights.

The authorities lit the fuse and the Kabyles' long-simmering frustration finally exploded. Stones against machine guns: the comparison with the Palestinian *Intifada* is inescapable. Schoolchildren and secondary-school students, joined by unemployed, workers and peasants, seek to storm the gendarmes' police stations. At Tizi Rached a youth carries out a "kamikaze" attack, crashing a bus into National Guard headquarters. The highways are blocked by barricades of tree trunks and flaming tires. Demonstrators, both youth and adults, target tax-collection offices, banks and other symbols of the regime's arrogance. More than 10,000 police, gendarmes and soldiers were mobilized against protestors in the Tizi Ouzou *wilaya* alone, using explosive bullets and aiming for the head. Assassinations, veritable summary executions, take place: many victims are shot point-blank, others shot in the back as they attempt to flee. The wounded are savagely beaten. As of April 30 the number of dead had already surpassed 60; by the end of May the toll had risen to more than 80 killed by the police.

Marches of 50,000 to 100,000 people, together with a series of local general strikes have shaken Béjaïa. In dozens of towns and villages in both parts of the Kabyle region (Grande Kabylie and Petite Kabylie), young people confront the gendarmes and police. On Monday, May 21, 500,000 demonstrators marched in Tizi to mourn the victims of repression, the largest protest seen up until then. On Thursday the 24th, tens of thousands of women took to the streets chanting "*pouvoir assassin*" (government murderers) and "*ulac smah*" (no forgiveness). The response of the gendarmerie and riot police came quickly: within two days, four youth shot down. At present, barricades cut off the RN 5 highway at Bouira. In Béjaïa youth chant "If you want war, we're ready." More than a "*protesta*" or riots, this is a genuine revolt against the military regime, the most important since the uprising of October 1988. Nevertheless, despite substantial solidarity marches in Algiers and Paris, the rebellion is largely confined to the Kabyle region. Above all, it has not reached the bastions of Algeria's highly combative working class. And while the young rebels repeatedly boo the bourgeois politicians, the Berber nationalists are continuously maneuvering to recover lost ground.



Michael von Grafenreid

"Ninjas" of the "anti-terrorist" police, the government's death squads.

For ten years, the working people of Algeria have been caught in the crossfire between two armed camps: on one side, the "decision-makers" of the High Council of State with their black-masked "ninja" death squads; on the other, the "throat-slitters" of the GIA (Armed Islamic Group) and other Islamic fundamentalists who have killed tens of thousands of women, journalists, leftist militants, veterans of Algeria's war of independence, ethnic minorities and many non-political peasants. This civil war has cost more than 150,000 lives over the past decade, sometimes reaching 500 a week. Today, the Kabyle revolt could produce an opening to break this infernal cycle and put an end to this hell of death and destruction. *But as in 1988, what is lacking is above all a revolutionary leadership capable of transforming this revolt and leading it towards proletarian revolution, the only way to sweep away all the torturers and assassins.*

A Struggle Against "Misery and the Hogra"

"We are fighting against the *hogra*," chant the demonstrators, using the Algerian expression which sums up the humiliation imposed by this murderous authoritarian regime. And it is not only against the government itself that they have risen up, but against the bourgeois Kabyle politicians who serve as the system's fire-fighters, putting out the flames of revolt. It is significant that the demonstrators have not only turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the various political parties (and the Muslim religious officials, the *imams*), but have sacked their headquarters, including those of the Berberist parties: the RCD (Rally for Culture and Democracy) and the FFS (Front of Socialist Forces, which despite its name is thoroughly bourgeois). The RCD is paying for its participation in the government, while the FFS claims to be in opposition. Demonstrators express a widespread sentiment: "For all these years we've had faith in them, but they have done nothing for the people. They have not fought against misery and the *hogra*." In fact, both these parties help administer the immiseration of the Algerian masses at the municipal and regional levels.

As a report from Kabylia noted: "Last Saturday [April 28],

the FFS organized a huge march [to Béjaïa], put their spokesmen up on the podium and started in with their idiotic appeals for calm and sterile pacifism. The rocks began flying and the demonstrators yelled '*khobatha*' – 'you are traitors and sell-outs'. This was the scene broadcast on television (only foreign TV, of course), showing one of these leaders with his face all bloody. Then, like a devastating hurricane, the demonstrators began smashing up everything they saw around them."

During the first days of the upsurge, many commentators noted the absence of demands for the constitutional recognition of Tamazight, the Berber language. Members of the new generation are not preoccupied with the same issues as their mothers and fathers, who were shaped politically by Berber nationalism. This could be a point of departure posing the need for an *internationalist* program which would be able to mobilize Arabic-speaking workers as well in revolutionary *class struggle*. But this requires a head-on fight against popular frontism – class collaboration *à la Kabyle* – which chains the working people to a Berber bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie eager to rid themselves of the corrupt military rulers *in order to take charge of running the capitalist state themselves*. In successive demonstrations following the first clash, the Berberist symbol and Berber nationalist slogans made their appearance. There is no doubt that for young people as well as the older generation, the Berber Spring of 1980 continues to be a significant reference point, symbolized by the rebellious Kabyle singer Matoub Lounès, victim of a cowardly assassination in 1998 just before Algeria's "Arabization" law was approved.

The rebellion has certainly gone beyond the framework set by the bourgeois nationalists, and could do so again, given the government's determination to take a hard line towards the population. While taking a page from Charles de Gaulle's book with the empty declaration that "I understand you," President Bouteflika has beefed up the regime's repressive arsenal with a new penal code that muzzles the press, establishing severe sanctions against any kind of criticism. Displaying his submission to the IMF, he raised the price of milk 20 percent, while continuing his policy of "civil accord" with the "moderate"

Liberté



Demonstrator wears the Berber symbol (at right) during a student march in Algiers.

Islamists. Thus “repentant” fundamentalist-cutthroats drive around Algiers in their Mercedes while their victims are slaughtered by the various police forces of this military/Islamic conservative government. By intensifying their repressive measures, the regime’s “decision-makers” run the risk that the unrest will spread to the country’s Arabic-speaking regions.

Yet it must be stressed that this explosion of outrage still lacks the scope and social power which could transform it into a fight for power, against *le pouvoir* (the regime) and all its bourgeois rivals. In Algeria, the inescapable alternative is socialism or barbarism. And the alternate forms of barbarism are there for all to see: a horrifying choice between fundamentalist cutthroats and paramilitary death squads. What is most cruelly lacking is a Marxist leadership fighting not for an imaginary bourgeois democracy but openly for socialist revolution, as did the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky in October 1917.

Let there be no illusions. Reports in the bourgeois press have repeatedly highlighted the slogan “*Djeich, chaâb, maâkya Hattab*” (“The people and the army are with [fundamentalist warlord] Hattab”). We can confirm that Islamist slogans have in fact been put forward at demonstrations in Kabylia. What is the explanation for this support, albeit verbal and symbolic, to the chief of the fundamentalist terrorists who have murdered tens of thousands of Kabyle women who did not wear the Islamic *hidjab* (headscarf), “infidel” leftist militants, teachers, trade unionists, journalists and students unwilling to bow down to an Islamic fundamentalist dictatorship? It is clearly due to the refusal by this emir of the *jihâd* (holy war) to give in to the hated military dictatorship. The young Kabyle students who hail this ultra-reactionary figure show a disturbing blindness. Yet this is not as surprising as it might seem: already a decade ago, the rotting FLN

(National Liberation Front) regime laid the basis for the rise of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

If the result of this rebellion is not to be a strengthening of Berber nationalism or mere resignation towards the dictatorship, or even a foothold for Islamic reaction in Kabylia, it is necessary to fight for a *proletarian, communist and internationalist* leadership, without which the revolt will necessarily be led into the labyrinths of bourgeois politics. As Lenin stressed in *What Is To be Done?* Marxists must be *tribunes of the people*. In Algeria this means fighting against any form of linguistic privilege, against every manifestation of the oppression of women and ethnic minorities, for the strict separation of religion and the state. In France it requires mobilizing the working class against the deportation of refugees and “illegal immigrants,” against the racist terror of the police and fascist bands, for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. It is crucial to stress that the Algerian crisis – growing out of the policy of impoverishment imposed by the IMF and the carnage of the war between the brutal military regime and “holy warriors” trained in Afghanistan – is the product of the contradictions of the imperialist “new world order” arising from the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union.

This crisis, whose roots are international, cannot be resolved within a narrow national framework. While beginning on national terrain, the socialist revolution for which is necessary to fight can be carried through only on an international scale. To find a way out of the impasse confronting Algeria and all of North Africa – and indeed the rest of Africa, all the semi-colonial countries, and the imperialist powers themselves – the key is to *forge Leninist parties on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution.* The first step towards doing this is to clearly identify one’s enemies.

The Bankruptcy of Kabyle Nationalism

Movements in solidarity with Kabylia have taken place in the universities at Algiers, Oran and Sétif. In each case Kabylia has been seen as an example. On May 9 students at the university of Tébessa went on strike and blocked the highway between Tébessa and Constantine. In the El Oued *wilaya* transport workers (taxi, bus and urban transport drivers) organized a protest strike after a gendarme attacked a cab driver. With classes beginning again in mid-May, the government hoped – in vain – for a return to calm. A new conflict broke out immediately over the postponement of secondary school baccalaureat final exams. The education minister's announcement that exams would be held at the end of July was unanimously rejected by students, parents and teachers alike.

New clashes broke out with the gendarmerie at Tizi Ouzou and Béjaïa, while new riots swept through even the farthest-flung villages and hamlets. More than 200 village committees were formed throughout Kabylia, with attempts being made to link them together at the *wilaya* level. These committees, which are in charge of negotiating with the police and gendarmerie, have organized demonstrations and distributed food to villagers, taking over from the discredited political parties. They do not, however, represent an alternative to the bourgeois state. While almost unanimously demanding the unconditional withdrawal of the gendarmerie, some of them call for this force to be replaced by the urban police. Yet *the withdrawal of all the repressive forces* is clearly a crucial demand against the threat of a new bloodbath.

A mystique has been created about the real nature of the village and neighborhood committees. They have been portrayed as harking back to the 19th-century struggle of Emir Abdelkader against the French invaders. In reality, these committees bear a considerable resemblance to the traditional vil-

lage assemblies, the *djemaâ*. While they are not the exclusive preserve of village sages (*imaqranen taddart*), and women and young people are admitted, far from being hotbeds of radicalism the committees were set up to take the students under their wing so things would not get completely out of hand. While in some towns (notably Béjaïa) unions representing petty-bourgeois sectors such as teachers play a role in them, the proletariat – a numerical minority, yet concentrated in the region's industrial zones – is absent from these committees. The potential power of this working class has not been mobilized. The various "general strikes" have been a form of "civic work stoppage," in which storekeepers pull down their shutters and public transport comes to a halt. It was only as an exception to the rule that workers at the Eniem electrical appliance factory in Oued Aïssi (Tizi Ouzou) carried out a symbolic two-hour sympathy strike on May 8.

While Bouteflika announced the formation of a phony "commission of inquiry" and the APN (Algeria's "parliament") set up its own as well (fooling no one), the rival parties of Berber particularism mobilized their forces to go to Algiers in an attempt to channel popular outrage into support for their hollow slogans. On May 3 tens of thousands participated in a demonstration called by the FFS in the Algerian capital. One week later the RCD – which quit the government claiming that Bouteflika tricked them – held its own protest, marching under the cover of the Berber Cultural Movement (MCB). The police were unobtrusive; these demonstrations did not trouble the regime at all. The MCB's demonstration got unexpected backing from the Parti des Travailleurs (PT – Workers Party). This group, founded by pseudo-Trotskyists, is best known for its tireless appeals for a "national accord" and the approaches it has made to the Islamic Salvation Front. Today – under the aegis of "national unity" – it makes common cause with Saïd Sadi's RCD, which is linked to the hard-line "eradicator" faction of the army.

For its part, the FFS announced a new mobilization in the capital. The party of Hocine Aït Ahmed is making an appeal for imperialist intervention in the form of an "international commission of inquiry." In March the FFS presented a memo to NATO (!) which makes clear what's behind this call. The document calls for a "peaceful return to a democratic transition, as in Yugoslavia" – that is, the establishment of a government of imperialist vassals bought and sold through an infusion of dollars after the imperialists' military forces lay waste to the country! Perhaps they're dreaming of being called back to bail out President "Boutef" as part of a substitute cabinet which could earn the approval (and Eurocredits) of their confreres in the Socialist International, who are now in office in a dozen countries of the European Union. Thus they repeat the exploits of their Moroccan coun-



The *djemaâ* (village assemblies) were set up in order to hold rebellious students in check.

terparts of the USFP (Socialist Union of Popular Forces) – another bourgeois-nationalist party that calls itself socialist – which today fronts for the monarchy of King Mohammed VI.

The bourgeois Kabyle parties protest the accusation that they are separatist, because they consider themselves the most “modern,” best-prepared candidates for leading Algeria as a whole, whether under the system of state capitalism with socialistic airs of the '60s and '70s, or the “globalization” of today. Messrs. Aït Ahmed et al. dream of returning to the days when Berbers – both Kabyles and Chaouis from the Aurès region – made up more than half the leadership of the FLN independence forces. They view themselves as the best *Algerian* nationalists, pushed to the sidelines by Arab nationalism under the post-independence regimes of Ben Bella and Boumediene, then Chadli Bendjedid and his successors up through Bouteflika today, to the benefit of the “clans” which have monopolized power and deprived them of the spoils. *The young Kabyle insurgents must be on guard against the Berberist parties and movements, which are neither their allies nor an alternative to the murderous regime, but a bour-*

geois semi-opposition which awaits its turn at the trough. The imperialists, for their part – and U.S. imperialism in particular – do not rule out using the good offices of the secular Berber parties for a salvage operation, while seeking above all to come to terms with the Islamic fundamentalists.

We Trotskyists of the League for the Fourth International are resolutely opposed to the forced Arabization imposed by the Algerian government. This reactionary policy is not only a brutal negation of the Berbers' democratic rights but also paves the way for the Islamic fundamentalists. Given that Bouteflika has said that the Tamazight language will “never” be given constitutional recognition, we demand, in Lenin's words, “absolutely no privileges for any one nation or any one language” (“Critical Notes on the National Question,” 1913). We are for equal rights for Arabic, Tamazight and French. But rights are gained not by begging for them but by taking them. Against the poison of nationalism, it is necessary to forge the unity of the entire Algerian working class precisely on the basis of defending the Kabyles and their democratic rights, including the Berbers' right to self-determination.

“Civil Accord” with the Fundamentalists to Back Imperialist Pillage

In June 1997 – as nighttime massacres occurred one after another – the International Monetary Fund carried out a review of the Algerian economy, praising the austerity policy of the government headed at the time by General Liamine Zeroual. Nevertheless, the imperialists demanded an additional effort to guarantee “security and political stability,” which meant favoring “foreign investments and the transfer of technology necessary for developing the private sector” (*Le Monde*, 13 January 1998).

This required that power be shared among the army, the fundamentalists and all the parasites who have feathered their nest over the past decades. Their job was to put together a

consensus which would safeguard the state and its apparatus within an Islamic framework purged of all populist and pseudo anti-imperialist rhetoric, bowing to every *diktat* of the IMF. Each party was to rid itself of its intransigent, uncontrollable fringe. The process took years of negotiations and struggles. The balance sheet of this sordid, half-open civil war aimed at winning the imperialists' favor: 150,000 to 200,000 dead and some 10,000 “disappeared.” As far as the imperialists, and the U.S. in particular, were concerned, dealing with the fundamentalists was just as acceptable as dealing with the generals. After all, the hard core of the *égorgeurs* (throat-slitters) were the “Afghans” – that is, the reactionary CIA-backed fanatics

who had fought the Red Army in Afghanistan. The imperialists were already well acquainted with these elements, even if they have lately had their problems with the likes of Bin Laden and the Taliban.

Moreover, the program of the fundamentalist FIS was well ahead of other bourgeois factions as concerns the “liberalization” of the economy. Businessmen became the main financial backers of the FIS, since the private commercial sector wanted to abolish the government's monopoly of foreign trade. “Some of the FIS ideas, such as support for a more open economy, could benefit the country if actually implemented by an Islamic government,” stated a *Wall*



Survivor of a massacre by the armed fundamentalist bands, October 1997.

Street Journal editorial (14 January 1992). During the same period the U.S. Army commissioned a study by the Rand Corp., a think tank specializing in military research, on the consequences of a possible seizure of power by the fundamentalists. The study by Graham Fuller, titled *Algeria: The Next Fundamentalist State?* (1996) concluded notably, "The FIS is likely to welcome U.S. private-sector investment in Algeria and to undertake close commercial relations with the United States."

In January 1995, under the auspices of the Catholic Sant'Egidio association, eight Algerian parties (from the FLN and FFS to the FIS, and including the PT) held a conclave to work out a "national contract." With this attempt at reconciliation, these parties put themselves forward as prospective "democratic" administrators of austerity in Algeria. Faced with this challenge, then-president Zeroual himself decided to seek a deal with the fundamentalists. Proclaiming that the war had been won (or at least "contained"), he resigned and put forward his hand-picked candidate Bouteflika, the FLN's former diplomatic chief. Two months after Bouteflika's election, the military arm of the FIS (the AIS – Islamic Army of Salvation) announced a unilateral cease-fire, which was followed in its

turn by the government pardoning 2,300 imprisoned fundamentalists during the commemoration of Algerian independence. A law of "national reconciliation" providing amnesty to AIS members and sympathizers was approved by referendum on 16 September 1999.

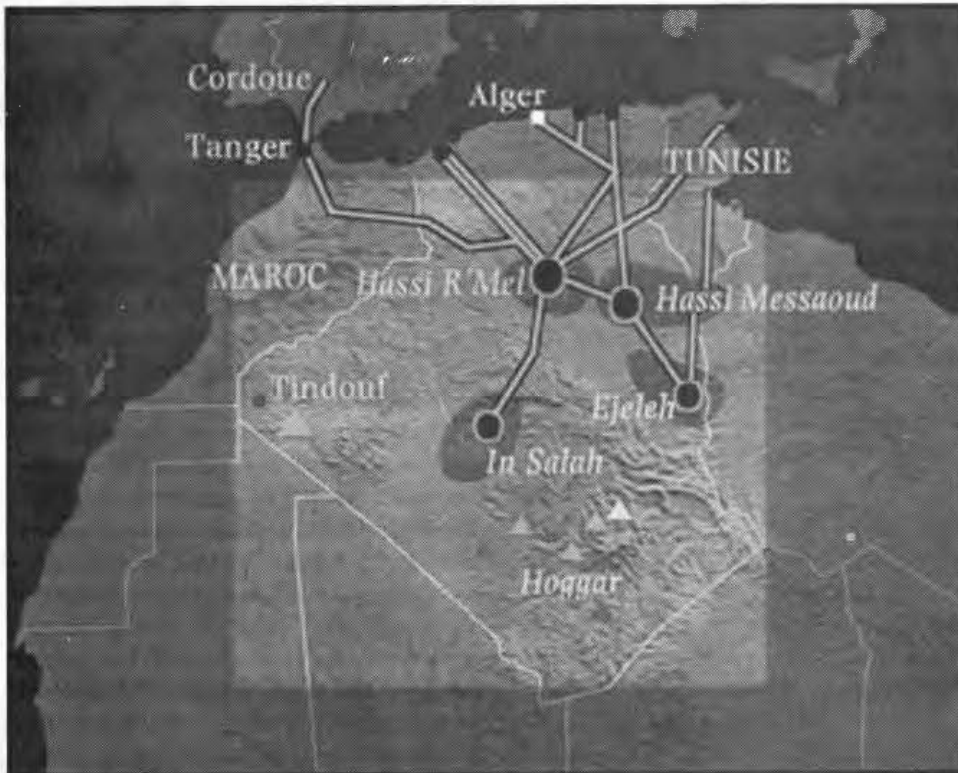
In January 2000 the AIS surrendered. Bouteflika cobbled together a government coalition which included RCD "eradicators" side by side with fundamentalists from the MSP (the former Hamas, one of whose leaders was even made minister of labor). Yet peace was not at hand. Sections of the Armed Islamic Group and of Hassan Hattab's GSPD (Salafist Group for Preaching and Holy War) denounced the "civil accord" and continued to attack civilians, police stations and military patrols. Some reports estimate more than 9,000 deaths in the year 2000, three quarters of them civilians – as many as during the height of the terror in 1994 and '95. Whatever the precise figures, killings and clashes have continued on a daily basis. This "tolerable violence" is, however, largely limited to rural and mountainous regions like Kabylia. Above all, it does not affect the areas the imperialists exploit to the hilt, most crucially the oilfields of Algeria's south.

Socialism or Barbarism: The Pauperization of Algeria

Throughout this period, the Algerian masses were caught in a vise between IMF-decreed "shock treatments" on the one hand and the bloody struggles between bourgeois factions on the other. The government's vaunted economic "reform" meant misery for the working masses. As for the foreign debt, the country was back where it started: at the end of the year 2000

medium and long-term debt stood at 25 billion dollars, compared to the 1990 figure of 26.5 billion. The price for this negligible reduction in the debt was a catastrophic fall in industrial investment. While last year's rise in oil prices brought a certain respite (the hydrocarbon sector generates 97 percent of export earnings), the Algerian economy has been devastated.

Graphic: Arte



Algeria: source of raw materials for the imperialists. The map shows pipelines linking Algerian natural gas fields with Europe.

Real wages have been cut in half in less than a decade. Even middle-class sectors have been hit hard: the average Algerian became poor, and poor Algerians were pushed into "extreme poverty." While in the '80s the country could afford the illusion that it had full employment, during the '90s unemployment reached almost 40 percent of the economically active population (around eight million people, 80 percent of them under the age of 30). Within the framework of the Structural Adjustment Program, from 1994 to 1997 the official unemployment figure went from 1.7 million to 2.4 million people. Twelve million Algerians, that is two out of every five, live in poverty; two million in extreme poverty. Two and half million people are living in shantytowns, while diseases previously considered eradicated (tuberculosis, typhoid, cholera) have returned.

Liberté



Workers at the El Hadjar steel complex at Annaba in May 2000, during their protest for payment of back wages.

A handful of *nouveaux riches* – the “Cargo-Container Mafia” – show off their wealth. Fancy new villas grow like mushrooms while children dig through heaps of trash at town dumps in Oued Smar and El Karma. But this parasitic bourgeoisie, which has literally torched factories in order to guarantee its “import-import” businesses (wholesale black-marketeering), has always existed under “socialism Algerian style.” The attempt to industrialize the country by using oil revenues to buy ready-made “turnkey” factories proved a miserable failure. And during the past decade, privatization has advanced by leaps and bounds. Thus the Algiers airport will be handed over to the U.S. firm Sterling Merchant Finance (which outbid France’s Société Générale and BNP Paribas), while it is anticipated that the SNTF rail network will be sold off at bargain-basement prices. During an Algerian-German forum, a spokesman for Deutschmark imperialism underscored that in the post-Soviet world, foreign investors will be dictating the terms: “It’s not enough to say come, we’re planning some projects” (*Le Matin*, 8 May).

Despite all the theories of a “globalization” of capital, Algeria continues to be an arena for competition between the American and European imperialist powers. Washington is no longer content to let Paris maintain its primacy in the former French colonies. The International Crisis Group, which describes itself as a “multinational” (imperialist) security research center, noted in an October 2000 study: “Many high-ranking officers, who were trained in Europe, are trying to limit the growing American influence and are working for closer links with the Old World, notably in institutions such as the West-

ern European Union....” But the American ambassador boasted, “The United States is in a better position to encourage positive changes” (*El Watan*, 21 June 2000). The point was underlined in May when a delegation arrived from the U.S. Army War College. *Today there is talk of NATO military maneuvers in the region, the first of their kind. We call on the working class, in North Africa, Europe and North America, to mobilize against any imperialist intervention that may occur. NATO out of the Mediterranean! Sweep away imperialism through international socialist revolution!*

The winning of Algerian independence and the defeat of French colonial power was a hard-won victory, but the 1962 Evian Accords sealed the country’s neocolonial status. Despite the socialist and revolutionary pretensions of the first FLN governments, in reality Algeria never broke free of the imperialist yoke. While the USSR still existed, Algeria was able to benefit from this counterweight to the extortionate demands of the capitalist great powers and even to establish substantial industrial complexes under heavy tariff protection, but these industries were unable to withstand international competition. Even before the collapse of the Soviet-bloc Stalinist regimes, the Chadli government was well along in the gutting of domestic industry. Now, subjected to the all-powerful world capitalist market, these industries are on the verge of disappearing – and the Algerian workers are slated to pay the price. Nationalists cherish the impossible dream of reviving a heavily nationalized capitalist economy in order to return to an imaginary golden age. Trotskyists state unambiguously that what’s necessary is to fight for international socialist revolution.

The Working Class In Algeria's Crisis

At the high point of the civil war, the regime proceeded to rigorously apply the Structural Adjustment Program, which meant speeding up the dismantling of the public sector and liquidation of hundreds of enterprises, throwing hundreds of thousands of workers (400,000 according to official figures) out of work. Nevertheless, despite the "state of emergency," the Algerian proletariat showed its combativity in a series of strikes against the anti-worker policies dictated by the IMF austerity plan and imposed by the military regime. It is important to note that the workers of the Rouiba industrial zone were the catalysts for the revolt of October 1988, and that during the June 1991 FIS "strike," the mass of the working class turned a deaf ear to the fundamentalists' appeal. The *égorgeurs* are responsible for the assassination of hundreds of trade-unionists, yet even when the massacres reached their apogee the working class continued to fight.

- In December 1995, construction workers went on strike, demanding payment of back wages. After proceeding with a banned demonstration, they occupied the plaza in front of the UGTA labor federation headquarters. In response, the government discovered a new tax: the "solidarity tax," a deduction from public sector workers' paychecks.

- In early February 1996, hundreds of thousands of workers, including 200,000 from the public sector, went on strike against this measure. For two days these strikes paralyzed the airports, railways, schools and universities, the post office, steel plants and the national oil and gas firm Sonatrach, despite the fact that the UGTA had only wanted a symbolic strike. The parallel with the struggle carried out a few months beforehand by the French working class, against the cutbacks of the Juppé Plan, highlighted the need to break through the walls of "fortress Europe" and forge class unity between the proletariat of the imperialist countries and of North Africa.

- In 1997 the workers of the Skikda *wilaya* (a key area with a heavy concentration of industry) carried out a three-day general strike, a breath of fresh air encouraging the entire working class to fight for its rights, stifled on "security" grounds due to the military/fundamentalist conflict.

- In July of the same year, the workers of the SNVI (National Industrial Vehicle Company) plant in the Rouiba factory zone organized a strike movement against a joint venture between the Transport Ministry and Daewoo.

- In 1998-99 it was the universities' turn, with a historic teachers' strike that lasted 134 days but ended in defeat. This strike, organized by the CNES union (which is independent of the UGTA federation), was the longest in the universities' post-independence history.

- In January 2000, the 6,000 steel workers of Alfasid, part of the El Hadjar steel complex at Annaba, carried out a work stoppage against a plan to cut jobs in preparation for the firm's privatization. On May 15 the workers downed tools against non-payment of their wages, and the protest spread to the coke ovens, blast furnaces and other parts of the steelworks as well as the AMM mechanical works. On the 16th the workers tried to demonstrate in front of company headquarters, but were brutally attacked by the cops of the Rapid Intervention Group, who used tear gas and rubber bullets, wounding 30.



El Watan

Riot cops of the Rapid Intervention Group savagely repress El Hadjar steel workers, 16 May 2000.

The pro-business daily *Liberté* (18 May 2000) fretted over "signs of spreading turmoil," expressing the fear that "what happened last Tuesday at Annaba could occur at SNVI in Rouiba or the ENIEM plant at Sidi Bel Abbès." In fact the entire complex was shut down on May 20, and 120,000 metal workers took to the streets in a day of protest called by their union federation. But UGTA head Sidi Saïd and his lieutenants once again acted as firemen to put out the flames of unrest; the strike ended after two days with the promise to pay the back wages. The leader of the local union was condemned to six months' imprisonment.

- On March 20 of this year, the UGTA called a day of protest against plans to privatize Sonatrach. Large numbers of oil and gas workers participated in the strike, while solidarity work stoppages were held in other sectors such as public employees in the Tizi Ouzou *wilaya*. The UGTA leaders' goal, however, was simply to provide an innocuous "warning" to the government, which continued to turn a deaf ear.

Despite its militancy, the Algerian working class, betrayed on all sides, has been unable to bring its various separate struggles together in a unified offensive, put itself forward as an alternative

to the regime and show a way out for the plebeian masses and particularly the country's desperate youth. Rather than mobilize the working class to carry out an offensive against the IMF-dictated austerity plan, the UGTA, with its corrupt apparatus, has served as an instrument of one government after another, helping them carry out this starvation policy.

During the years when the FLN government apparatus controlled all social organizations – from the mosques to the Algerian Boy Scouts – the UGTA was a corporatist apparatus, a transmission belt for the one-party bourgeois regime. The decomposition and ouster of the FLN brought a loosening of this close relationship. In fact, the union bureaucracy under Saïd initiated the Democratic National Union (RND), which served as the political vehicle for President Bouteflika's predecessor Zeroual. Today, the labor federation's leadership cultivates connections with several bourgeois parties, mainly the RND, FLN and RCD.

The Stalinists of the PADS (Algerian Party for Democracy and Socialism), historically an important part of the UGTA bureaucracy – even when their predecessor party, the Algerian CP, was banned – maintain a significant implantation in several industries. But as has been the case all along, they fight not for the class independence of the proletariat but to chain it to sectors of the Algerian bourgeoisie. During the Alfasid strike, while the workers were fighting for their back wages, in the pages of its newspaper the PADS put itself forward as the best manager of this nationalized firm, demanding that the Ferphos mining monopoly sell iron ore, the key raw material for steel production, to Alfasid.

The reformist left demands that the government use oil revenues to “re-launch national industry.” But nationalized enterprises under the bourgeois state are, as Trotsky explained with regard to Mexico, “a measure of state capitalism in a backward country which in this way seeks to defend itself on the one hand against foreign imperialism and on the other against its own proletariat” (“Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay,” 1940). It is necessary to fight tenaciously against privatizations, not in order to return to the pre-1988 bonapartist system but to prevent the atomization of the industrial prole-

tariat – a struggle which cannot be carried out within the framework of pro-capitalist trade unionism.

The Algerian working class must throw out these corrupt bureaucrats, linked to the bourgeois parties. Against the anti-worker onslaught of IMF minion Bouteflika, the proletariat must mobilize to impose a *sliding scale of wages and hours*, dividing the work among all workers employed and unemployed. No layoffs! The public housing shortage provoked riots last year: to fight unemployment there must be a *program of large-scale public works under workers control*. To fight against wholesale privatization, *workers control of production in the factories and mines* can also be an important weapon for blocking the plans of the bourgeoisie, both “national” and imperialist, as part of the fight for socialist revolution.

In the context of the current revolt in Kabylia, the Algerian working class must mobilize nation-wide and establish organs of its own class power: workers committees and councils. And as the government knows full well, the working masses have access to more than a few weapons. They are, however, under the control of bourgeois formations in the “legitimate self-defense groups” and other militias mobilized to fight the armed fundamentalist bands. It is necessary to prepare the establishment of workers militias for defense against the threat of a bloodbath. Powerful strike actions in key sectors of the economy are urgently needed to counteract repression, up to and including a general strike, which would pose point-blank the fundamental question of power: which class will rule?

Thus the only effective response to the attacks from the capitalist government and its imperialist patrons is to fight for a workers and peasants government, for international socialist revolution. In order to survive, a proletarian regime would need to immediately cancel the imperialist debt. In the face of the inevitable imperialist reprisals, it would have to fight to extend the revolution to the imperialist countries that are Algeria's creditors. Immigrant workers from North Africa are a key part of the European proletariat and can serve as a human bridge linking class struggle on both sides of the Mediterranean. To fight for this, we must forge a revolutionary workers party.

Down with the Family Code! For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The revolutionary struggle of the working class cannot be limited to economic questions. Women are the foremost targets of resurgent Islamic fundamentalism under the so-called political “realignment” carried out by Zeroual and Bouteflika. A spokesman for the supposedly “democratic” Islamic party, the MSP, lashed out against women who dare protest against their oppression, smearing them as “those who traffic in their own bodies.” Fundamentalist *imams* denounce “decadence.” Still more ominously, the *repentis* (“repentant” Islamic throat-slitters) strut through the streets in their *kamis* (a sort of caftan associated with Afghanistan), threatening women who are not wearing the veil or the Islamic headscarf. Meanwhile, police “morality guards” carry out identity checks on the streets of Algiers, Tizi Ouzou and now Oran, openly for the purpose of

intimidating or arresting unmarried couples. This is a new version of the notorious “purification campaign” carried out in 1982 under Chadli Bendjedid.

In March 2000 Bouteflika directly attacked women with the demand that they avoid “provoking the *repentis* with their clothing styles.” This is the regime's response to the thousands of women who have courageously taken to the streets against Islamic reaction, paying for their defiance with a heavy toll of victims. They are told that they should not challenge the Family Code which relegates women to the status of permanent minors. Feminists and the opportunist left have unfortunately succeeded in channeling these women's combativity into support for the military regime. But this government, while claiming to be the last bulwark against the fundamentalist cutthroats, has maintained



Le Main

Kabyle women during Tizi Ouzou march mourning victims of repression, May 24.

the entire edifice of Algerian women's oppression.

It has not simply been a matter of conciliating the fundamentalists in the name of "civil accord." Long before the rise of the FIS, the FLN was already imposing the precepts of the Islamic *sharia* (religious laws). As soon as Algerian independence was won, women who played a fundamental role in the struggle were sent back to the kitchen. Bourgeois Algeria has been incapable of carrying through even the most basic democratic tasks, condemning women to a bitter existence in which the simple act of smoking a cigarette or dressing as they please can mean death. The FLN and its successors reinforced the hold of religion and the authoritarian family structure as crucial pillars of bourgeois rule. Thus most women remained shut in at home, excluded from the labor force and political life. Even today, of the millions of working-age women, only some 610,000 are actually employed (an overall labor force participation rate of 13.2 percent).

Instead of calling for abolition of the Family Code, feminist groups like the Algerian Union of Democratic Women and the Independent Association for the Victory of Women's Rights seek only to paper it over with "amendments," and most of the left goes along with this line. Meanwhile, no one dares challenge the illegality of abortion, which is prohibited by a law dating back to colonial times.

The women question is intimately linked to the current struggles against the murderous government and its accomplice parties. During the May 24 women's march in Tizi Ouzou, demonstrators ran off Khalida Messaoudi, a parliamentary deputy and Bouteflika advisor who recently quit the RCD. When she was recognized, marchers chanted "Khalida out!" This is not a ques-

tion of a single individual. The fundamentalist threat is quite real, as shown by the fate of Afghan women after the 1989 withdrawal of Soviet forces and victory of the Islamic reactionaries. But throughout the past decade this danger has been used to chain women to the regime of the military assassins. Even today the miserable Stalinist PADS, in its March 8 International Women's Day declaration, complains about "the heads of the Algerian army being accused of 'crimes against humanity'!" Yet there is no question that the commanders of the *ninja* death squads, the CNS riot police, gendarmerie and army are guilty of such crimes, among them the murder of Massinissa Guermah and more than 80 youth over the past days!

The fight for women's liberation continues to be a strategic question for revolution, in Algeria as elsewhere. Trotskyists demand *abolition of the Family Code*, full *equality of rights between men and women* and *complete separation between religion and the state*. Homosexuals are also victimized by the bourgeois moral order: *Down with the terror against gays, abolish the laws against homosexuality! We fight for free abortion on demand*, including for minors, and for a free, high-quality medical system available to all. The integration of women into social labor must be facilitated by measures such as the establishment of *free, 24-hour child care centers* and *equal pay for equal work*. This is not simply a question of democratic rights but of attacking the very roots of Islamic reaction. Only the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a planned, collectivized economic system can emancipate women from domestic slavery. This is why we fight for *women's liberation through socialist revolution*.

Trotskyism vs. the Opportunist Left

As Trotsky wrote in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930): "With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses...."

"The revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist Party. This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution...."

"The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfillment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a *permanent* revolution.

"The conquest of power by the proletariat does not complete the revolution, but only opens it. Socialist construction is conceivable only on the foundation of the class struggle, on a national and international scale."

The program of *permanent revolution* was that of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks in October 1917 when they overthrew Kerensky's bourgeois Provisional Government under the banner of "Peace, Land and Bread" and established the dictatorship of the proletariat, which proceeded to carry out socialist tasks while seeking to extend the revolution to the imperialist centers, above all West Europe.

This authentically communist and internationalist program is the polar opposite of the nationalist reformism of Stalinism, whose utopian, anti-Marxist dogma of "socialism in one country" has as its counterpart abandoning the struggle for socialist revolution in the rest of the world and replacing it with the policy of the "popular front" with sections of the bourgeoisie. The Stalinist leftovers assembled in the PADS continue with their popular-frontist strategy of class collaboration and proudly proclaim it. At the beginning of the civil war against the fundamentalists, the Stalinist party's prior incarnation, the PAGS, called for participating in a "National Committee to Save Algeria" which included employers together with the UGTA. Today these incorrigible reformists call for "carrying out alliances with the modernist democratic wing of the bourgeoisie, including the anti-fundamentalist currents within the government" ("Algeria Still Menaced By the Islamo-Fascist Danger and Imperialist Pressures," April 1999). Thus, in the guise of "anti-fascism" (support to the army torturers in the name of fighting fundamentalism), they seek to tie the worker and peasant masses to the very government that is starving them.

While Trotskyism means fighting for a revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, against the current pro-capitalist leaders, the fake-Trotskyists do the exact opposite. They devote themselves to tailism, adapting to the range of nationalist and reformist forces that keep the workers in line, and put forward a series of revisionist conceptions to justify their capitulation. This form of opportunism has a long history in Algeria going back to the war of independence. The current led by Michel Pablo went beyond providing military aid to the Algerian insurgents and gave political support to the FLN. The Pabloists abandoned Trotskyism at the beginning of the Cold War in order to tail the Stalinists; later on they did the same with the Castroites, Maoists, Portuguese army officers...and François Mitterrand, the French imperialist chief and anti-Soviet NATO social democrat. Pablo himself joined the first Ben Bella government as architect and administrator of the self-management plan for large farms, serving as a functionary in a bourgeois government.

Of the groups in Algeria that claim to be Trotskyist, the best-known is Louisa Hanoune's Parti des Travailleurs (PT – Workers Party), which is linked to the French PT and the international pseudo-Trotskyist tendency led by Pierre Lambert. Far from fighting for the permanent revolution, the Algerian PT serves as the handmaiden to the Islamic fundamentalists. In 1991 it supported the semi-insurrectionary strike called by the FIS. In 1995 the PT played a grotesque role in the organization of the Sant'Egidio round table with the FIS. In an interview with Lambert's French paper *Informations ouvrières* (11 June 1997), Hanoune said that on the day after the elections she had "sent a letter to the President of the Republic" begging him to grant her an audience in order to "seek the means for ending the war." The PT's four parliamentary deputies were elected thanks to support from the FIS, which called for "voting for the candidates who are in favor in peace" (*Le Monde*, 11-12 May 1997).

In the Algerian daily *El Watan* (15 February 2001), Hanoune appeals again to "*monsieur le président*" imploring him to facilitate talks between her and Ali Benhadj of the ex-FIS, within the framework of a "dialogue with all the parties without exception" in order to "establish peace." The PT has recently made hypocritical criticisms of "the internationalization of the conflict" proposed by the FFS and marches together with the RCD accomplices of the IMF's pillage of Algeria. (In fact, Hanoune has nothing against a "dialogue" with the IMF, having gone to Washington in February 1994 to have one herself.) While presenting itself above all as a force for conciliation among all the bourgeois parties, the PT's capitulation to Islamic reaction goes further still, as it organizes prayers in its local halls and the wearing of the veil by its women members! Nevertheless, there is a certain consistency to the Lambertistes' counterrevolutionary politics: they supported the "Iranian Revolution" of Khomeini and his mullahs and howled with the imperialist wolves for Soviet troops to get out of Afghanistan.



The cops attack the University of Algiers, May 28. Students must link up with key sectors of the working class to carry out a common struggle under proletarian leadership against the capitalist government.

The second Algerian group that falsely claims to be Trotskyist is the Parti Socialiste des Travailleurs (PST – Socialist Workers Party), linked to the United Secretariat of the late Ernest Mandel and the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire. While the Lambertistes have aligned themselves with the fundamentalists, the fake-Trotskyists of the Mandel-Pablo persuasion have called for a “workers and people’s front,” a classic “left” formulation of popular frontism. Today the PST has found a niche in the UGTA union bureaucracy. The PST’s Soumia Salhi cynically explains why the UGTA’s 10th Congress (which she herself describes as “held behind closed doors by the [labor federation’s] officialdom”) named her to the national executive committee: “Since the government—which deliberately seeks to delegitimize the social partners [sic] in a period of privatizations—is giving it the cold shoulder, the UGTA has not hesitated to flaunt a hook-up with the PST.” In return, the PST’s job is to spread illusions in the bureaucracy: “Seeing its existence threatened by plans to do away with the public sector, the union apparatus instinctively seeks a more leftist path” (*Rouge*, 11 September 2000).

The PST boasts that it was able to “structure” the movement in the city of Béjaïa. On May 7 a mass meeting was called by the “Community-Civil Society Coordinating Committee,” in which the PST plays a role. While 50,000 demonstrators marched through town chanting “*pouvoir assassin*” and “We’re not the criminals, put the government up against the wall!” the demand of this committee is that... the prefect of Béjaïa and the minister of the interior step down. Its maximum slogan is the resignation of the government as a whole (a cabinet reshuffle – so then the same gang gets back together and starts over again!). The PST’s solution to the catastrophic living conditions of the Kabyle

masses? To demand that this same government of murderers carry out a “Marshall Plan” (the name of U.S. imperialism’s plan for economic aid to the European bourgeoisies aimed at “stopping the spread of communism” in the late ’40s).

With a base in the UGTA teachers’ federation and the CNES university professors’ union, the PST poses as a left alternative to the bourgeois Kabyle parties, only in order to bring the masses back under the sway of these same parties. This popular-frontist class collaboration is a faithful expression of the PST’s stagist “workers and people’s front” formula.

As noted in a report from Kabyliya:

“In the absence of a revolutionary leadership capable of guiding the masses in revolt to vic-

tory, the PST plays a shameful role in close collaboration with a group that calls itself ‘Algerian-style Zapatistas.’ This group is very well-known within the Berber Cultural Movement for its Berber-chauvinist positions.... Yesterday, May Day, they held a general assembly at the university [in Béjaïa] with their famous people’s committee (a liaison group for various other committees) on the basis of assuring that this movement will continue in a peaceful fashion. The assembly adopted a declaration and platform whose main points are: that the killers be immediately arrested and tried; withdrawal of armed forces detachments from regions which demand this (!); resignation of the minister of the interior (as if carrying out the aspirations of this people in revolt consisted of the resignation of one insignificant minister); for the success of our fight for freedom and democracy we must occupy the streets with peaceful marches.... On this May Day neither the PST nor the unions nor the PT called for mobilizing the workers, even as a folkloric commemoration of this workers holiday. The PST tried to take control of this revolt by giving it a popular character and sowing illusions in the nature of the regime....”

Students and teachers can play an important role in the extension of the revolt beyond the “ghetto” of Kabyliya, particularly to Algiers, where large demonstrations have been held over the past days. But “people’s” protests which raise purely democratic (bourgeois) demands will at most be a form of pressure on the regime. It is necessary to link up with the Arabic-speaking working masses, who are also beset by unemployment, poverty and the deadly violence of the repressive forces. A fight must be waged against the renewed threat of privatization hanging over the heads of the Alfasid workers

and others in the public sector. Student delegations could meet with the SNTF rail workers – who for more than a month have been waging a struggle against management and their own union leaders – as well as the Rouiba metal workers and the steel workers of Skikda, in order to propose a common struggle against the capitalist government. It is necessary to put the social and economic power of *the proletariat* at the head of a class mobilization defending the Kabyles and all the victims of the bonapartist regime. To do this, what is required above all is an internationalist fight for a *revolutionary workers party*.

Forge Genuine Trotskyist Parties on Both Sides of the Mediterranean!

For the Trotskyoid left in France, opportunists whose horizons are normally limited to the “hexagon” (as the map of France is known), the Kabyle revolt has been the occasion for no more than passive and reformist commentary. *Lutte Ouvrière* (11 May) writes about riots that “may have come to an end,” village committees that “may be the framework and leadership for this movement” or which on the contrary “may become...organs through which the ‘notables’ seek to pacify and channel the protests.” Is it necessary to add that “maybe” is far from being a communist program? (LO combines economist practice with outright chauvinism, demanding the exclusion from French educational institutions of immigrant girls who wear the Islamic headscarf.) For its part, the Mandeliste LCR’s *Rouge* (10 May), hopes “that the movement in Kabylia will be a springboard for renewing the energy of the democratic and social struggle against the Algerian tyrants’ regime.” In the place of a program for socialist revolution these paladins of popular frontism want the tyrants to be toppled through a mythical, *bourgeois* “democratization.”

These pseudo-Trotskyists serve in reality as cheerleaders for the discredited Berber nationalist bourgeois politicians, for the benefit of whom (among others) they put together marches “for democracy” in the streets of Paris. At the same time, they play their usual sordid role as a left cover for their own imperialist government: in chorus with the FFS, they call on their friends in the French Socialist Party, which is presently entrusted with administering the affairs of French imperialism, to work for the establishment of an “International Commission of Inquiry” on Algeria. In 1956 the social democrats were responsible for launching on a large scale France’s bloody colonial war in Algeria. To now ask them to carry out an “inquiry” on Algeria, as does the LCR, is nothing but an attempt to refurbish the tattered reputation of these former colonial overlords and modern-day administrators of imperialism. It means inviting the imperialist power which is covered in Algerian blood to continue intervening, pillaging and strangling this country, “democratically” of course!

The same ersatz communists enthuse over the “anti-globalization” movement. They paint up as “anti-capitalist” this nationalist and even chauvinist melange, which includes capitalist farmers such as France’s José Bové (*Vive le roquefort!*) and “progressive” ideologues for French imperialism against American imperialism (such as Ignacio Ramonet and the staff of *Le Monde diplomatique*, who run the ATTAC group, a central component of the “movement”). A common trait of reformism is to worship

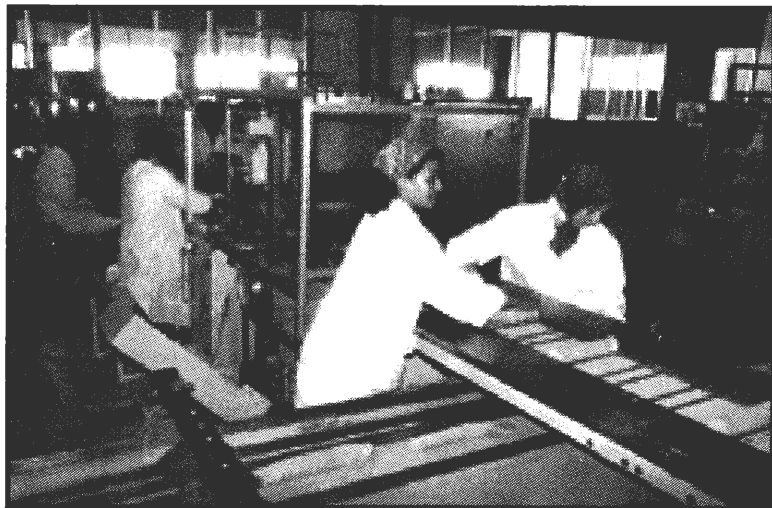
the workers’ present (backward) consciousness. At this moment the state of consciousness of the young Kabyle rebels is summed up in the demand chanted by demonstrators, “Give us work, housing and hope, and there will be peace.” These sentiments of powerlessness and despair make them easy prey for the bourgeois nationalists, who fall to their knees before the “Arabizers” of the central government, and the imperialists, to beg for crumbs.

Who needs a claue of cheerleaders who do nothing but applaud the Kabyle revolt? What needs to be done first and foremost is to build a revolutionary leadership that will tell the truth to the working masses and the young people who are fighting against the government. In 1992 a group of PST cadres formed the Trotskyist Platform Tendency (TPT) to fight against that party’s popular-frontist capitulations. The TPT wrote:

“The conception of the united front put forward in Trotsky’s writings has nothing to do with what the PST calls the ‘Workers and People’s Front’ [FOP, from its initials in French]. As we’ve seen it put into practice (broad democratic fronts, committees of action for the defense of democratic rights, the election program, the candidates put forward, the election propaganda...), it means an ongoing propaganda bloc for the elections and the cherished ‘democracy,’ opening the way for every kind of compromise with the other bloc partners. Even if one insists that this ‘FOP’ does not include the liberal bourgeois organizations, its logic remains that of seeking agreement on the smallest common denominator, of submerging the revolutionary program in a reformist swamp having nothing to do with the struggle for class independence and the proletarian revolution, but on the contrary ultimately puts the working class at the tail of the bourgeoisie.”

Expelled by the PST leadership under Salhi Chawki, fragmented by repression, the TPT was not in a position to lay the foundations for building a Trotskyist nucleus in Algeria. A number of TPT militants joined the International Communist League (ICL), which put forward the “Iskra perspective” of publishing an exile organ aimed at North Africa and the hundreds of thousands of émigrés located mainly in Europe, in order to develop a leadership for future revolutionary parties throughout the region. While in 1998 the ICL hypocritically laid claim publicly to the struggle waged by the TPT, it suddenly jettisoned the “Iskra” perspective, declaring that it had decided to “close” North Africa work. This was a further step in the centrist degeneration of the organization which formerly represented the programmatic continuity of Trotskyism against the fake-Trotskyist capitulators who practice tailism in place of the fight for communist leadership.

Since 1995 the ICL has drawn defeatist conclusions from the destruction of the USSR and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe. According to the revisionist theses of its “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program” (February 1998), there has been a “deep regression of proletarian consciousness.” Thus, the central conclusion of the “Transitional Program” (the Fourth International’s founding document), that “the world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat” has supposedly become passé. For the ICL it is no longer a question of overcoming the crisis of revolutionary leadership, but rather a



Algerian women workers. The Trotskyist Platform Tendency stressed: "The historical development of a communist organization goes hand in hand with a program for work among women...to unleash the enormous revolutionary potential of the woman question; this is why a class-struggle leadership is necessary."

"great leap backwards" in the consciousness of the working masses, supposedly both the cause and the effect of the counterrevolution in the former Soviet bloc. To place the responsibility for defeats on the workers instead of their traitorous leaderships is the trademark of all those who have lost confidence in the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat.

The ICL's defeatist conclusions are not limited to the former Soviet Union. The counterpart in predominantly Muslim countries is the claim, in the same Declaration, that: "The 1979 'Iranian Revolution' opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world..." The ICL even organized an "Islamic commission" during its third international conference. This thesis of Islamic ascendancy is actually a "left" version of the doctrine put forward by the American political scientist Samuel Huntington, whose book *The Clash of Civilizations* (Simon & Schuster, 1996) maintains that after the end of the Cold War, "The rivalry of the superpowers is replaced by the clash of civilizations." For the ICL, religious conflicts have submerged the class struggle in the Muslim world in the post-Soviet period. Even if it does not adopt the conclusions of Huntington – a leading member of the U.S. "military academic complex" and architect of the policy of achieving "accelerated modernization" through carpet-bombing in Vietnam – the ICL's thesis nonetheless reflects the outlook of the imperialist ideologues.

This is a key aspect of the ICL's turn to centrism over the past years. In the Algerian case, in 1998 it published an article filled with the sense that all was lost and that the victory of the Islamic fundamentalists was at hand ("Military Terror, Islamic Reaction, IMF Austerity – Civil War Bleeds Algeria," *Workers Vanguard*, 12 December 1997) just at the moment when the armed Islamic groups had been contained by the army and one of them, the AIS, had even disbanded. Yet convinced that this is "a period of ascendant political Islam," the ICL, having cut itself adrift from Trotskyism, follows the analyses of American specialists

who view Algeria as "the next Islamic state." Of course, the ICL's defeatist perspective could in no way prepare Algerian militants for intervening in struggles (such as the current Kabyle revolt) which urgently pose the need for revolutionary leadership. It's not surprising that having junked the "Iskra" perspective, it justified this by rejecting all work directed toward what it called the "demoralized and fetid exile milieu" (see *The Internationalist* No. 5, April-May 1998).

Above and beyond its various analyses, the ICL has buried the program of the permanent revolution by abandoning, in practice, the struggle to forge Bolshevik parties in a range of semi-colonial countries. Thus the ICL broke fraternal relations with the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB, today the Brazilian section of the League for the Fourth International) at a crucial point in the struggle to expel cops from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union. Former TPT members who were militants of the French section of the ICL and opposed the ICL leadership's abandonment of the "Iskra" perspective and its abstentionist, liquidationist course formed the Permanent Revolution Faction (FRP), only to be expelled one month later.

In a deliberate provocation reeking of chauvinism, the ICL published an article titled "The FRP Has Found Its Land of Asylum: France" (*Le Bolchévik*, Spring 1998).

As the FRP wrote in the 3 February 1998 declaration on its expulsion from the ICL:

"Despite the triumphalist cries of the world bourgeoisie about the so-called 'death of communism,' what is dead is Stalinism, that negation and nationalist perversion of communism – which is international in its essence. Communism lives – it lives in the uninterrupted class struggle of the working class and the oppressed; it lives in the program of Lenin, Trotsky and Cannon [founder of U.S. Trotskyism] which the Spartacist tendency defended and which it has begun to abandon and renounce; it lives in the struggles and the program upheld by the IG, the LQB, and the PRF and in the fusion of our organizations which will prepare the ground for the Trotskyist world party of socialist revolution. Forward to reforge the Fourth International!"

The present turmoil in Kabylia is often compared to the riots of October 1988. And these events do have much in common: a revolt of young people centered more on social questions than on Berber-nationalist demands, fierce repression (more than 600 dead in 1988), but above all the absence of the proletariat as an independent force which could transform this explosion of outrage into a class struggle. In both cases there was no lack of elements for such a transformation. The key is revolutionary leadership. The Algerian working class must join the struggle under its own banner and, standing at the head of the masses of unemployed youth, women, peasants and agricultural laborers, throw out the regime and put an end to the threat of Islamic reaction – through workers revolution. In order to do this, the urgent task is to build Bolshevik-Leninist vanguard parties on both sides of the Mediterranean, in the struggle to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International. ■

French Imperialism's Crimes in Algeria and the Reformist Left

"International Commission of Inquiry" – Cover for "Human Rights" Imperialism

Simultaneous with the outbreak of the Kabyle revolt against the Algerian generals' regime, there was a new uproar over the French army's dirty war (*sale guerre*) against the Algerian struggle for independence almost half a century ago. In his book published May 3, *Services spéciaux, Algérie 1955-1957* (Perrin, 2001), French general Paul Aussaresses boasts of his brutal methods in suppressing the anti-colonial revolt led by the National Liberation Front (FLN). He admits to ordering the summary execution, with no pretense of judicial procedure, of hundreds of Algerian prisoners at a time. Blood drips from every page of these memoirs of an assassin. Aussaresses details his nightly forays into the Muslim quarters of Algiers, arresting scores of suspected FLN supporters, torturing them to obtain confessions and then "dispatching" them before dawn. He shamelessly justifies this barbarism, saying "Paris had decided to liquidate the FLN as quickly as possible." This required "extreme measures," says the butcher of Algiers, for which "no one would ever have the right to judge us."

In recent days France's sordid history of massacring North Africans has surfaced again as *Le Monde* (30 June/1 July) revealed the story of what happened to Moroccan left-wing leader Mehdi Ben Barka, assassinated in Paris in October 1965. The commando which captured him was made up of officials of the Moroccan secret service and former members of the "French Gestapo" working closely with the French counter-espionage agency (SDECE); the killers were none other than the Moroccan interior minister General Oufkir and his deputy who flew in secretly to do the job; and the body was removed from France (with government permission) on another secret flight to Casablanca, where it was dissolved in a vat of chemicals. The first foreigner to know of this disposal of the most prominent North African leftist was a "Colonel Martin" of the CIA, who had supplied the designs for the vat. It was a French-Moroccan-U.S. co-production, only a few months after the ouster of Algeria's bourgeois-populist president Ahmed Ben Bella.

Yet it is to these hypocritical imperialist butchers – who today cloak their wars against Iraq, Serbia and other "rogue states" in the mantle of defending "human rights" – that the Kabyle bourgeois politicians of Aït Ahmed's Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) as well as the French pseudo-Trotskyists of Alain Krivine's Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) look when they call for an "international commission of inquiry" into the murderous actions of the Algerian generals. The FFS took the lead in calling upon its social-democratic colleagues in the Second International, who currently head the capitalist gov-

ernments in most of West Europe, to pass a resolution urging the imperialist cartel known as the European Union (EU) to "condition the continuation of negotiations" over economic association with Algeria on "respect for human rights" (*El Watan*, 2 July). Meanwhile, the "Popular Committee of Béjaïa," which is led by Krivine's colleagues of the Parti Socialiste des Travailleurs (PST – Socialist Workers Party), has sent a delegation to EU headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, to appeal to "testify on the bloody events in Kabylia before the European Parliament" (*Liberté*, 4 July).

This is an outright call for imperialist economic sanctions against Algeria, a semi-colonial country, in the name of "human rights." Similar appeals were made for EU and UN sanctions against Iraq and Yugoslavia before the NATO powers launched wars on those countries. But who are these supposed paragons of democracy and the rights of man? The Socialist Party – now in office in France with its junior partners in the Communist Party (PCF) in a popular front of the "plural left," tied to bourgeois chauvinist allies like Jean-Pierre Chevènement's Citizens Movement – has its hands covered with the blood of France's colonial subjects, from Algeria to Madagascar and Indochina. The French army was under the command of a Socialist-led government when Aussaresses and his thugs were at work, while the Stalinist PCF voted for the "special powers" act that authorized the depredations of the military torturers and executioners.

During the eight-year Algerian war, France slaughtered a million or more "natives." Today the imperialists are the masters of Algeria's neo-colonial satraps who impose at gunpoint the starvation policies ordered by Paris and Washington. Appealing to them in the name of "human rights" will only encourage new NATO aggression and greater oppression for the Algerian masses.

Torture and the Socialists

The systematic use of torture by the French army and police during the Algerian war has been an object of bitter controversy for decades. Last year the issue flared up again following the publication by *Le Monde* (20 June 2000) of the story of a young Kabyle FLN guerrilla, Louise Ighilaghiz, who was subjected to daily torture from September to December 1957. She directly accused generals Jacques Massu, commander of the 10th Paratroop Division, and then colonel Marcel Bigeard. Massu hypocritically expressed "remorse" while Bigeard denied everything. The Communist Party is campaigning for an official condemnation of the use of torture. The PCF wants to clean up the "human rights" image of French imperialism ... and to cover up its own role in supporting the French government's vicious war against

Algerian independence.

However, Socialist Party (PS) premier Lionel Jospin—who, it turns out, was a long-time supporter of Pierre Lambert's pseudo-Trotskyist Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI, now the Parti des Travailleurs) – opposed appointing a special commission to investigate French actions in the war. It's not hard to figure out why. Another social-democratic premier, Guy Mollet, ordered the dirty war in Algeria, while François Mitterrand, later elected as Socialist Party president of France, was first interior minister and then minister of justice in the cabinets of the Fourth Republic which carried out the slaughter. Shortly after the outbreak of the revolt, in November 1954, Mitterrand told the Chamber of Deputies, "I do not agree to negotiations with the enemies of the fatherland. The only negotiation is war!" Mitterrand's signature is on the decree handing police power in Algeria over to the military, and his hand-picked representative directly supervised the reign of terror in Algiers. In his memoirs, Aoussarès notes:

"As for the use of torture, it was tolerated if not recommended. In fact, François Mitterrand, the minister of justice, had an emissary alongside [General] Massu in the person of Judge Jean Bérard, who covered for us and had an exact knowledge of what happened at night. I had the best possible relations with him and I had nothing to hide from him....

"It was rare that prisoners who were interrogated during the night were still alive by early morning. Whether they talked or not, they were generally neutralized....

"The methods I used were always the same: beatings, electricity, water."

– from excerpts published in *Le Matin* (Algiers), 9 May 2001

The Communist Party, and the Algerian Communists, correctly point out that they too were victims of this torture machine. The 1958 book *La question* by Henri Alleg, the former editor of the CP organ *Alger Républicain*, recounting his experience of torture at the hands of the thugs commanded by Massu and Bigeard, caused such a scandal in France that the book was seized on charges of causing demoralization in the French army. Historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet, author of *La torture dans la République*, publicized the death under torture of one of his students, Maurice Audin, a young Communist mathematician who taught at the University of Algiers. The Communists were seen as enemies by the ultra-rightist offic-

8 May 1945: "V-E Day" in Paris



AP

Colonialist Massacre in Algeria: 40,000 Dead



ers who carried out the tortures and the fascistic *colons* (colonists) who joined with the military plotters in organizing the April 1961 Algiers putsch and the Secret Army Organization (OAS) which launched a campaign of white terror throughout Algeria and metropolitan France. Yet the Stalinist PCF was a loyal defender of French imperialism, and didn't come out for independence for Algeria until *after* General de Gaulle finally concluded that he had no choice but to "grant" it.

To call, as the PCF does, on a Socialist Party-led government to name a commission of inquiry into the Algerian war is grotesque. It is asking the authors of the crime to investigate the crime.

The PCF and Torture in Algeria

If today right-wing and left-wing supporters of French imperialism often join in denouncing the crimes of U.S. imperialism, it is because following the loss of its colonial empire a weakened France no longer has the wherewithal to carry out large-scale massacres of Asian and African peoples on its own. Instead, Paris is reduced to playing second or third fiddle to Washington as part of a NATO "coalition" that wantonly bombs Baghdad or Belgrade. But a glance at French colonial history makes clear that the republican rulers who declared France "the land of the rights of man" are just as bloody as their American allies and rivals. A recent "Calendar of the Crimes of France Overseas" (December 2000) published on the Internet by J. Morel¹ lists nearly 100 examples, ranging from the failed suppression of the slave revolt in Saint-Domingue (Haiti) to connivance with the genocidal Hutu bourgeois rulers of Rwanda.

Among the most notorious of these crimes is the massacre of *hundreds* of Algerians who marched in the streets of Paris on 17 October 1961 for the independence of their homeland. We have recounted how the police slaughtered demonstrators in the commissariats and then dumped their bodies in the Seine, while others were thrown into the river alive to drown. The Paris police commander, Maurice Papon, had been instrumental in the deportation of the Jews of Bordeaux to the Nazi death camps in 1942-1945; he was also involved in the assassination of Ben Barka. The 1961 massacre was covered up for years, not least through the complicit failure to protest by the PCF, which closed the doors of the *L'Humanité* building to Algerians seeking refuge there from the police onslaught. Not until eight *French* demonstrators were killed by Papon's cops at the Charonne subway station in February 1962 while protesting bombings by the fascist OAS did the chauvinist PCF mobilize in force (see "France:

Racist State Terror From World War II to Today," *The Internationalist* No. 5, April-May 1998).

In Algeria itself, French colonialist atrocities go back to the initial conquest in 1830 (in which an entire tribe, the Ouffia, was wiped out) and the "pacification" of the country through the scorched-earth campaigns of Marshal Bugeaud in the 1840s. From the time of an early anti-colonial revolt in Dahra in 1845, Algerian rebels frequently sought refuge in caves scattered through the Atlas mountains. The response of the colonial army was invented by General Cavaignac, who subjugated the Sbëah tribe by blowing up the entrances to the caves and then setting fires to suffocate those inside. Cavaignac was soon to gain notoriety for the cruelty of his suppression of the June 1848 insurrection by the Paris proletariat.

During the 20th century, the Algerian fight for independence was met by massacres carried out by the colonial state and reactionary colonists. Aussaresses' memoirs deal with one of the most notorious bloodbaths, in Philippeville (now Skikda). On 21-22 August 1955, FLN leaders launched an uprising in the northern areas of the département of Constantine; units of the National Liberation Army attacked police posts and barracks of the gendarmerie (paramilitary police) while thousands of peasants attacked the city and nearby villages and towns leaving 123 dead, among them 71 Europeans. In the ensuing repression, some 12,000 Algerians were slaughtered as local authorities organized militias of *piets-noirs* (literally "black feet," poor white settlers) which engaged in an orgy of lynching while police put thousands in concentration camps.

The inspector general of the French colonial administration in Constantine at the time was none other than Maurice Papon; the governor general of Algeria was Jacques Soustelle, who became the political spokesman for the fascist colonists; and the minister of the interior was François Mitterrand. The repression they ordered soon led to a ban on the Algerian Communist Party

¹ <http://www-phase.c-strasbourg.fr/~morel/ccfo/crimcol/>

El Watan



FLN leader Larbi Ben M'hidi, tortured and assassinated by French army.



L'Événement de Jeudi
Algerian independence demonstrators rounded up by Paris police on 17 October 1961. Hundreds were killed by cops, many thrown into the Seine to drown. PCF closed its doors to fleeing protesters.

and seizure of the PCF's paper *L'Humanité* for protesting the recall of 60,000 draftees and extension of the state of emergency throughout Algeria. In France, there were antiwar demonstrations and near-riots by hundreds of soldiers and their supporters, who seized barracks and stopped troop trains in Paris, Rouen, Grenoble, Brive and elsewhere. What was needed was to mobilize the French workers in opposition to the colonial, and in fact strikes broke out in defense of the mutinous French soldiers. But the response of the PCF, which had earlier warned Algerian workers in France against "slogans inciting them to forms of action that are adventurist at the least," was to label those who organized to stop the trains "police provocateurs." The Stalinists preferred "delegations, petitions, resolutions."

The French Communist Party refused to call for Algeria's independence. Instead PCF leader Maurice Thorez called for a "French Union, including the Algerian people" (*L'Humanité*, 11 October 1955, quoted in Jacob Moneta, *La politique du Parti communiste français dans la question coloniale, 1920-1963* [Maspero, 1971]). The party's colonial expert, Léon Feix, proclaimed the PCF's support for "the right of self-determination of the colonial peoples – up to and including the possibility of separation from metropolitan France," but then added:

"Does this mean that the application of this right will necessarily lead to separation?"

"Not at all."

"The right to divorce, Lenin taught, does not imply the obligation to divorce."

–*Cahiers du communisme* No. 1-2, January-February 1956

What this meant was soon shown in practice following the January 1956 elections which brought in social-democratic premier Guy Mollet. Communist deputies voted for the popular-front Mollet cabinet, and in March 1956 the PCF voted for the special powers act which turned police powers in Algeria over to the military, laying the basis for the generalization of torture.

Sétif, 8 May 1945: "Democratic" Imperialists Celebrate Victory by Slaughtering Algerians

This policy of betrayal of the oppressed Algerian people and the French working masses was a continuation of the French Communist Party's shameful policy during and following World War II, when it demanded and participated in the ruthless repression of Algerian independence fighters. During the second imperialist world war, the "democratic" Allies' Atlantic Charter claimed to stand for independence of the colonies. This had a direct impact in North Africa with the landing of Allied troops in 1942; more than 200,000 Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians signed up to fight against Rommel's Afrika Korps in hopes of winning their own freedom. After talking with an emissary of U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt, "moderate" bourgeois nationalist Ferhat Abbas issued the 1943 "Manifesto of the Algerian People" which called for a "federated Algerian republic" linked to France. On the left, while the Stalinists vociferously supported the war effort, the Trotskyists warned against illusions in the "democratic" imperialists.

In his May 1940 "Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution,"

written only a few months before he was murdered by a Stalinist assassin, Leon Trotsky wrote:

"The entire present war is a war over colonies. They are hunted by some; held by others who refuse to give them up. Neither side has the least intention of liberating them voluntarily.... Only the direct and open revolutionary struggle of the enslaved peoples can clear the road for their emancipation."

Calling for militant support to struggles for national liberation in the colonies and semi-colonies, Trotsky emphasized that so long as imperialism remained, "the independence of a backward state inevitably will be semi-fictitious.... The struggle for the national independence of the colonies is, from the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat, only a transitional stage on the road toward drawing the backward countries into the international socialist revolution."

The end of World War II dramatically confirmed the warnings of the Trotskyist Fourth International. On 8 May 1945, while the European and American masses cheered the defeat of Nazi Germany, the French colonialists in North Africa carried out one of the bloodiest war crimes in history. Over the space of a few days, tens of thousands of Algerians were slaughtered for struggling for independence. An estimated 40,000 to 45,000 were killed by French troops and colonists' militias in the massacre at Sétif (Sitif), Guelma and the region north of Constantine. Hunting parties tracked down and murdered unarmed Algerians, coastal towns were bombarded by battleships, inland towns were bombed by the air force, whole villages were leveled and counties depopulated, thousands were rounded up and interned, hundreds were tried and 99 sentenced to death. And, despicably, the French and Algerian Communist parties called for and participated in this wanton butchery, from their ministers in the government to local PCA officials on the scene.

For months beforehand, leaders of the pro-independence Algerian People's Party (PPA) had planned to demonstrate for independence on the day the armistice was announced. French authorities knew of these plans and prepared to put down an insurrection. PPA leader Messali Hadj was exiled to French Equatorial Africa as a preventive measure. Meanwhile, the Algerian population was starving in the midst of the worst famine in years, made worse by grain hoarding and black marketeering by French landowners. At the same time, hopes for independence were aroused by the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco on 25 April 1945. In May Day demonstrations in Algiers the police intervened brutally against columns led by the PPA, killing nine. The colonial authorities announced that demonstrations were banned and it was illegal to carry the green-and-white Algerian flag.

But the Algerian masses would not be deterred. On May 8, the day German army commander von Keitel surrendered to Soviet marshal Zhukov in Berlin, there were marches throughout the country. At Sétif, a demonstration of 15,000 headed toward a monument to the war dead to lay a wreath. They were carrying the Algerian flag and signs and banners calling for "Democracy for All" "Free Messali! Free Our Imprisoned Leaders!" "Down with Colonialism!" and "For a Sovereign Algerian Constituent

Assembly!" They also carried the slogan "Long Live the Allied Victory!" an expression of fatal illusions in the imperialists' treacherous promises. When they reached the center of the city, the sub-prefect (mayor) ordered the removal of the anti-colonial slogans. When this was refused, the police shot and killed the flag carrier and opened fire on the crowd, killing scores. In spite of the ensuing panic, half the demonstrators managed to reach their destination and lay the wreath. But meanwhile, police were pursuing demonstrators into the Arab quarters, while enraged protesters set upon any Europeans they came across.

In Algiers at the same hour, "moderate" nationalist leader Ferhat Abbas, unaware of what was happening at Sétif, was arrested in the office of the (Socialist) governor-general Chataigneau as he sought to present congratulations on the Allied victory. At Guelma, hundreds of miles away, PPA demonstrators carried more radical slogans, including "Down with Imperialism!" and "Long Live Independent Algeria!" Again on orders of the sub-prefect, the man carrying the Algerian flag was shot first. (Soon after, the demonstrator who carried the Soviet flag was executed.) As *fellahs* (peasants) in the surrounding countryside heard of the massacre, they attacked outlying farms using stones, rocks, bottles and knives. Local authorities armed the European colonists while the air force dropped 100-kilo bombs on Arab villages, wiping out 44 villages by official count and completely leveling Arbaoun and Ain el Kabira. At Kherrata on the Mediterranean coast, a French cruiser opened fire on the town while half-tracks machine-gunned crowds, killing 200 according to the field journal of the Republican Guard division.

But it was not just fascists and militarists who demanded and carried out bloody repression against the Algerians: so did the Communist Party. The chauvinism of the French CP is legendary (from "Every Parisian Should Get a Kraut" in World War II to "Produce French" in the 1980s). It is widely known on the left that the PCF and its Algerian section, the PCA, refused to call for independence until the end of the 1950s. But the extent of their treachery against the Algerian independence fighters in 1945 has been less publicized. A book by Grégoire Madjarian, *La question coloniale et la politique du Parti communiste français, 1944-1947* (Maspero, 1977) documents in detail the Stalinists' bloodstained support for their imperialist masters. The immediate response of the PCF to the 1945 massacre was an article in *L'Humanité* (11 May 1945) titled, "In Sétif, Fascist Attack on Victory Day," which repeated the governor-general's declaration that "Hitler-inspired troublemakers" had carried out "armed aggression against the population." And that was only the beginning.

The next day, a PCF Central Committee meeting declared: "It is necessary to immediately punish, mercilessly and rapidly, the organizers of the revolt and the thugs who led the riots." The Algerian branch of the party took the same line, "There is no Arab revolt but a fascist plot" (as a PCA pamphlet declared). Already on May 10, a delegation of the PCF and PCA visited the governor-general in Algiers to denounce "the provocations of the Hitlerite agents of the Algerian People's Party" and call for "rapid and merciless punishment of the provocateurs" (*Alger Républicain*, 12 May 1945). The PCA's paper *Liberté* (7 June 1945) denounced "the criminal instruments...such as Messali

Hadj, and the camouflaged agents in the nationalist organizations," vituperated against "phony nationalists" and "fascist agents" and praised the arrest of Ferhat Abbas while defending the *pieds-noirs* colonists. One article was headlined, "Help! Cry Out the Small Colonists" (*Liberté*, 7 June 1945).

This call did not just remain on paper. Paris newspapers reported at the time that at Guelma the mayor had managed to "arm all the French, from the Communists to the right" (*Le Monde*, 8 July 1945). In fact, a large majority of the militia organized by the Guelma colonial authorities were members of the PCF-led Resistance group France Combattante, including two officials of the PCA local and the secretary of the local CGT union federation. Madjarian reports in his book: "In what was one of the most murderous reprisal operations in May 1945, the militia massacred between 500 and 700 'Muslims.' Among the most notorious murderers were the trade-union secretary and three PCA members" (*La question coloniale...*). In 1946, the party leadership decided to expel those who had taken part in the militia actions, but what happened in Guelma was the logical result of the PCA's calls for "merciless" repression against the insurgents, and shows to what extent the Stalinists reflected the mentality of the "poor white" *pieds-noirs* colonists.

Moreover, at the very top the PCF ministers in the French government were up to their necks in the Sétif massacre. PCF leader Charles Tillon was aviation minister at the time and attended meetings of the National Defense Committee even as the air force was bombing the Constantine region. Tillon later claimed he was a "hostage" in the government and could do nothing about the slaughter. But not all French leftists were butchers. Some former French partisans from the Stalinist-led FTP, who had just flushed out the last nests of Nazis at La Rochelle, were flown to Algeria to participate in mopping-up operations. However, they refused to participate in the manhunt, and for this mutiny they were locked up on a farm without water. Nothing was ever heard of them again.

Repression Against the French Trotskyists

Following World War II, the Communists directly participated in the popular-front government headed by General de Gaulle, and as such they were even more directly responsible for the repression of the colonial masses. Shortly after the Sétif massacre, in August 1945 French and British forces retook the former French colony of Vietnam. With the aid of the Vietnamese Stalinists led by Ho Chi Minh, the Allied imperialist troops crushed a pro-independence workers uprising in Saigon led by the Vietnamese Trotskyists. The Stalinists wiped out most of the Vietnamese Trotskyists, including their spokesman Ta Thu Thau, while pledging allegiance to the French Union. Yet only a few weeks later, French forces bombarded the northern Vietnamese port of Haiphong, controlled by Ho's nationalist front, the Viet Minh. The CP fraction in the French National Assembly abstained in the vote on the war and the "Communist" ministers went along with the repression against their own Vietnamese "comrades" in the name of "ministerial solidarity" and "concern for the interests of the country," as PCF leader Jacques Duclos explained.

Meanwhile, the Stalinists were spearheading police measures against Trotskyists in France itself. In May 1945, just as

colonial repression was going full throttle in Algeria, members of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI – French section of the Fourth International) were arrested for selling their paper, *La Vérité*, at a factory. The same month, their printing press was raided, several PCI leaders were arrested and the proof sheets of the journal *Quatrième Internationale* seized. The issue (July-August 1945) contained a centerpiece article on the struggle for revolution in the colonies, and a report of thousands of Arabs “exterminated” in Algeria in addition to “thousands of others tortured, imprisoned and judged in summary trials.”

La Vérité, which was the first clandestine newspaper published under the Nazi occupation, continued to be banned under the “democratic” bourgeois government precisely for its opposition to the Popular Front. In refusing to authorize it, the Information Ministry declared that “*La Vérité* was perhaps an organ of resistance to Hitler and Pétain [head of the Vichy regime], but it was not an organ of the Resistance.... It didn’t cease campaigning against General de Gaulle, saying that for the working people, de Gaulle is not an ally nor a friend” (quoted in Yvan Craipeau, *La Libération confisquée* [Savelli/Syros, 1977]). *La Vérité* continued to be distributed clandestinely until February 1946, when an outcry over a new seizure of the paper and attempt by the social-democratic minister to try its editors forced the government to legalize it.

The history of bloody French repression in Algeria underscores that the fight against imperialism must be international in scope, and must be directed not only against reactionary generals but also against the bourgeois “democrats” and reformist pseudo-socialists who have been complicit in – and often ordered – the bloodiest massacres of all. The same forces that slaughter the colonial populations also send their police and army against revolutionaries, militant workers and oppressed minorities “at home.” At the same time, the struggle of the oppressed and working people in the semi-colonies can greatly spur the class struggle in the metropolitan imperialist centers.

Insurgent youth in Kabylia and throughout Algeria today will not find allies in the “socialist” and “communist” ministers of France and other European imperialist countries, who routinely order the mass deportation of North Africans and black Africans and police raids in the impoverished working-class suburbs that are the home of millions of immigrant workers in Europe today. All the bourgeois/reformist talk of “human rights” under capitalism is a fraud – and a cover for imperialist war. Instead, the fight against police-state repression on both sides of the Mediterranean must become part of the struggle for international socialist revolution, led by Trotskyist parties of a reformed Fourth International. ■

Israeli Rulers...

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Romania, Sri Lanka and elsewhere as the supply of Palestinian labor has been cut off by the military lockdown on the Occupied Territories. But it may take external events to crack Zionist domination, including a drawn-out military hemorrhaging as in Lebanon. The Zionists, like the German imperialists in two world wars, like *Blitzkriegs*, lightning strikes that are over in a week

and let the soldiers brag about their exploits for decades afterwards. Long-term attrition as in Lebanon and the two *intifadas* is decidedly less popular in this country.

Palestinian Arabs and Israeli peace groups, most of them led by liberal Zionists, are acutely aware of the impact of international events on Israel. Their focus, however, is on pressuring the imperialists to pressure Israel. It was widely noted that as Israeli tanks were slicing through Gaza in May, with the army chief of staff vowing to stay indefinitely, a word from the Pentagon was sufficient to turn them around in an hour. But the U.S. and European imperialists are closely allied with the Zionists, particularly through the liberal Democratic Israel lobby in Washington and the social-democratic Second International, of which the Israeli “Labor” party is a part. In fact, the Bush regime may have already given the go-ahead for an attack, just as Ronald Reagan and Alexander Haig gave a green light to the Lebanon invasion. Liberal nationalist pressure politics will not save the Palestinians, and could make their situation worse. After months of appealing for European intervention to balance the pro-Israeli Americans, Arafat recently met with Germany’s foreign minister Joseph Fischer of the environmentalist Greens. The former New Left street fighter proceeded to give the PA chief a tongue-lashing.

Various reformists and Palestine solidarity groups are currently pushing a campaign to try Sharon in a European court for war crimes, particularly over the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre. They even got a Belgian court to take up the case. Many have illusions that he could be extradited to stand trial, as a Spanish court attempted with Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. At a recent demonstration in New York City when Sharon attended a fund-raising event at the Hotel Pierre, protesters chanted “Indict Sharon!” Some also chanted “shame on the U.S.” for hosting a war criminal and even called on the New York Police Department to “Arrest Sharon!” Rudy Giuliani’s racist killer cops and the butchers of Vietnam and Korea are not about to arrest or indict Sharon, and calls on them to do so will only serve to legitimize the imperialists’ fraudulent posture as “human rights” defenders as they try their former allies like Serbia’s Milosevic and Panama’s Noriega in order to justify their own wars and invasions.

Trotskyists look instead to the international working class to defend the Palestinian Arab people whose rights and lives have been trampled on by the Zionists’ jackboot. The whole Oslo “peace” fraud was a product of the U.S.-dominated New World Order in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Defeats for imperialism around the world will have a direct impact in the area. A proletarian upheaval against the decrepit Arab regimes anywhere in the Near East would directly threaten both the Zionists and the Arab puppets of imperialism. Even modest examples of joint Arab-Hebrew workers action in support of the besieged Palestinians could have a tremendous effect throughout the region. The key is to build a revolutionary leadership, with multinational Leninist-Trotskyist parties in Israel, the Occupied Territories and throughout the Near East, in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. ■

Trotskyism in Palestine...

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The Jewish state, this gift of Truman's and Bevin's, give the capitalist economy of the Zionists a respite. This economy rests on very flimsy foundations. Its products cannot compete on the world market. Its only hope is the inner market from which the Arab goods are debarred. Thus the problem of Jewish immigration has come to be a problem of live or die. The continuous flow of immigrants who would come with the remnants of their possessions is apt to increase the circulation of goods, will allow the bourgeois producers to dispose of their expensive wares. Mass immigration would also be very useful as a means to force down wages which "weigh so heavily" on the Jewish industry. A state engaged in inevitable military conflicts would mean orders from the "Hebrew Army," a source of "Hebrew" profits not to be underrated at all. A state would mean thousands of snug berths for Zionist veteran functionaries.

CORRECTIONS

A reader from Grand Rapids pointed out that our statement in *The Internationalist* No. 9 (January-February 2001) that 1876 was the last time a candidate was named president who lost the popular vote is incorrect. In 1888, Benjamin Harrison received less votes than Grover Cleveland, but won in the Electoral College.

An article on defense of the Charleston Five in *The Internationalist* No. 10 (June 2001) mistakenly implied that all five of these International Longshoremen's Association members are black and belong to ILA Local 1422, whereas in fact one brother is white and a member of Local 1771.

An article in the same issue on the struggle of Daewoo auto workers stated that South Korea's President Kim Dae-jung was "elected with the support of the KCTU," the dissident Korean Confederation of Trade Unions. A KCTU representative objected that in the December 1997 presidential elections that brought Kim to power, the group supported the "People's Victory" campaign, which ran a long-time leader of the labor federation as an "independent" candidate.

In fact, the KCTU leaders have a long history of politically blocking with Kim Dae-jung, with roots going back to his days as a leading bourgeois dissident under the military regime. After running a pro forma campaign in 1997, People's Victory congratulated the new president "on the change of regime he achieved after 40 years' political hardships and efforts." The KCTU tops' scarcely veiled backing for Kim Dae-jung was instrumental in helping him prepare mass firings, one of the IMF's conditions for a \$55 billion "rescue" package. Calling to "share the pain," they joined the government and employers in a tripartite commission to work out a new layoff law; then, after angry protests from the ranks, KCTU leaders scuttled plans for mass strikes against it. Today the KCTU is part of a popular-front "left" bloc with bourgeois figures criticizing Kim while seeking to pressure him to be more responsive to "the people."

Who Is Going to Foot the Bill?

The workers and the poor. They will have to pay the stiff prices following the ban on Arab goods. They will break down under the yoke of numberless taxes, direct and indirect. They will have to cover the deficit of the Jewish state. They are living in the open, having no roof over their heads, while their institutions have "more important business" to attend to.

The Jewish worker having been separated from his Arab colleague and prevented from fighting a common class struggle will be at the mercy of his class enemies, imperialism and the Zionist bourgeoisie. It will be easy to arouse him against his proletarian ally, the Arab worker, "who is depriving him of jobs and depressing the level of wages" (a method that has not failed in the past!). Not in vain has Weitzmann said that "the Jewish state will stem Communist influence." As a compensation the Jewish worker is bestowed with the privilege of dying a hero's death on the altar of the Hebrew state.

And what promises does the Jewish state hold out? Does it really mean a step forward toward the solution of the Jewish problem?

The partition was not meant to solve Jewish misery nor is it likely to do so. This dwarf of a state which is too small to absorb the Jewish masses cannot even solve the problems of its citizens. The Hebrew state can only infest the Arab East with anti-Semitism and may well turn out — as Trotsky said — a bloody trap for hundreds of thousands of Jews.

Partition Is Grist in the Mill of the Arab Reactionaries

The leaders of the Arab League reacted to the decision on partition with speeches full of threats and enthusiasm. As a matter of fact, a Zionist state is to them a godsend from Allah. Calling up the worker and fellah (peasant) for the "holy war to save Palestine" is supposed to stifle their cries for bread, land and freedom. Another time-honored method of diverting an embittered people against the Jewish and communist danger.

In Palestine the feudal rule has of late begun to lose ground. During the war the Arab working class has grown in numbers and political consciousness. Jewish and Arab workers stood up against the foreign oppressor, against whom they together went on strikes. A strong leftist trade union had come into existence; and the "Workers Association of the Arabs of Palestine" had been well on the way of freeing itself from the influence of the Husseinis. The murder of its leader, Sami Taha, committed by hirelings of the Arab High Committee could not restrain this development. But where the Husseinis failed, the decision of the imperialist agency, the UNO succeeded. The partition decision stifled the class struggle of the Palestine workers. The prospect of being at the hands of the Zionist "conquerors of soil and labor" is arousing fear and anxiety among the Arab workers and fellahs. Nationalist war slogans fall on fertile soil. And feudal murderers see their chance. Thus the policy of partition enables the feudalists to turn back the wheels of history.

A First Summary

The early crop of partition policy: Jews and Arabs are

drowned in a sea of chauvinist enthusiasm. Triumph on the one hand, rage and exasperation on the other. Communists are being murdered. Pogroms among Jews instigated. A tit for tat of murder and provocation. The "strafing expeditions" of the Haganah are oil for the propaganda machine of the Arab patriots in their campaign to enlist the masses for more bloodshed. The military conflict and the smashing to pieces of the workers' movements are a boon to the chauvinist extremists in either camp.

What About the Jewish "Communists"?

The patriotic wave makes sitting on the fence very uncomfortable. The Zionist "Socialist" parties soon "corrected" their anti-imperialist phrases and stubborn "resistance" against "cutting up the country to pieces" and gave way to full and enthusiastic support of the imperialist partition policy. That was a trifling matter, a question of merely changing Zionist tactics.

Yet the Communist Party of Palestine (PCP) might have been expected to take up a different position. Have they not repeatedly warned against the fatal results bound to come with the establishment of a Jewish state? "Partition must needs be disastrous for Jew and Arab alike ... partition is an imperialist scheme intended to give British rule a new lease on life..." (evidence given by the PCP before the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry on Mar. 25, 1946). The secretary of the party loyally stuck to this attitude as late as July 1947 when he said before the UNO commission: "We refuse the partition scheme pointblank, as this scheme is detrimental to the interests of the two peoples." However, after this scheme had been pulled off with the support of the Soviet representatives, *Kol Ha'Am* (the Stalinist central organ) hastened to declare that "democracy and justice have won the day (!)." And overnight there appeared a newly baptized party: the name of Communist Party of Palestine was changed to Communist Party of Eretz Israel (Communist Party of the Hebrew Land). Thus even the last vestige of contact with the Arab population was broken off. The gap that still separated them from Zionism was finally bridged. Instead of being the vanguard of the anti-imperialist struggle of the Arab and Jewish masses, the Palestine Communist Party became the "Communist" tail of the "left" Zionists. Precisely in an hour when Zionism shows to everyone its counter-revolutionary face, its blatant servility to imperialism. Thus the Communist Party itself held up all its former exposure of imperialist and Zionist deceptions to ridicule.

Why have they gone bankrupt?

The policy of the Palestine Communist Party lacks a continuous line. The policy of the PCP reflects both the needs deriving from the class war of the Jewish worker in Palestine and the needs of Soviet foreign policy. The needs of class war, however, require a consistent international policy, the negation of Zionism, of its discrimination between Arab and Jew. On the other hand, the need to adjust the party line to the diplomatic maneuvers of the SU calls for an "elastic" policy, one that lacks backbone. As a result we find the notorious shilly-shallying and zigzagging, which has harnessed the PCP now to the Zionist wagon. The fifth wheel!

And the Arab "Communists"?

The Arab Stalinists, the "National Liberation League," did not fare better than their Jewish counterparts. They were in a pretty fix having to justify the Russian support of the Jewish state. The Arab workers could not be expected to accept this line. Not by a long shot. They knew the meddling of Soviet diplomacy for what it was: breaking up the Palestine workers' unity and a treacherous blow. After the pro-partition declaration of Zarakin, the National Liberation League people found themselves surrounded by scorn and hostility.

The policy of the Soviet Union has undermined the position of the League among the Arab toilers. Thus it opened a door to the reactionary, chauvinist campaign against the "red danger." At present, the National Liberation League stands for peace and it is busy exposing the provocative role played by the British government. But since it had cried out for "national unity" (with the feudal Husseinis, the present war instigators during the past years), its present attitude fails to convince. But the National Liberation League did convince the Arab workers that the driving force behind its policy is not the interest of the Palestine proletariat, but that of the Kremlin.

A War of Defense?

The two camps today mobilize the masses under the mask of "self-defense." "We have been attacked, let us defend ourselves!" – say the the Zionists. "Let us ward off the danger of a Jewish conquest!" – declares the Arab Higher Committee. Where does the truth lie?

War is the continuation of politics by other means. The war led by the Arab feudalists is but the continuation of their reactionary war on the worker and the fellah who are striving to shake off oppression and exploitation. For the feudal effendis "Salvation of Palestine" means safeguarding their revenues at the expense of the fellahin, maintaining their autocratic rule in town and country, smashing the proletarian organizations and international class solidarity.

The war waged by the Zionists is the continuation of their expansionist policy based on discrimination between the two peoples: they defend *kibbush avoda* (ousting of Arab labor), *kibbush adama* (ousting of the fellah), boycott of Arab goods, "Hebrew rule." The military conflict is a direct result of the Zionist conquerors.

This war on neither side can be said to bear a progressive character. The war does not release progressive forces or do away with social and economic obstacles in the path of the development of the two nations. Quite the opposite is true. It is apt to obscure the class antagonism and to open the gate for nationalist excesses. It weakens the proletariat and strengthens imperialism in both camps.

What Is to Be Done?

Each side is "anti-imperialist" to the bone, busy detecting the reactionary – in the opposite camp. And imperialism is always seen – helping the other side. But this kind of exposure is oil on the imperialist fire. For the inveigling policy of imperialism is based upon agents and agencies within both camps.

Therefore, we say to the Palestinian people, in reply to the patriotic warmongers: Make this war between Jews and Arabs, which serves the end of imperialism, the common war of both nations against imperialism!

This is the only solution guaranteeing a real peace. This must be our goal which must be achieved without concessions to the chauvinist mood prevailing at present among the masses.

How can that be done?

"The main enemy is in our own country!" – this was what Karl Liebknecht had to say to the workers when imperialists

and social democrats were inciting them to the slaughter of their fellow workers in other countries. In this spirit we say to the Jewish and Arab workers: the enemy is in your own camp!

Jewish workers! Get rid of the Zionist provocateurs who tell you to sacrifice yourself on the altar of the state!

Arab worker and fellah! Get rid of the chauvinist provocateurs who are getting you into a mess of blood for their own sake and pocket.

Workers of the two peoples, unite in a common front against imperialism and its agents!

The problem worrying all in these days is the problem of

ICP Led by Kurds, Jews, Christians, Armenians, Sunnis, Shi'ites Why Was 1948 Iraq Revolt Defeated?

In Iraq as elsewhere in the Near East, the end of World War II led to an explosion of social struggles. Though the country had been formally independent since 1932, Britain maintained its overlordship through its military bases, the British-installed monarchy and direct military intervention in 1941 to install a pro-British regime. By 1944, a number of trade unions had been founded, most led by the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). In June 1946, Communist-led oil workers in Kirkuk struck against the British-owned Iraq Petroleum Company demanding higher wages and benefits. On July 12, police fired on a mass meeting of strikers, killing ten workers and wounding 50. Bloody repression did not stop the worker unrest, however. In short order, railway and postal workers walked out, and when the government banned 20 leftist newspapers, the printers struck in protest. Though officially banned, the ICP's influence was spreading rapidly. To stop this, the Iraqi government arrested the top leaders of the party, most of whom were sentenced to death.

The Iraqi CP was relatively leftist within the Stalinist framework. Moreover, half of its leadership and much of its membership were of non-Arab origin, including Kurds, Jews, Turkmen and Assyrians. It was estimated that in 1946-47 over a third of the ICP members were Kurds, while the party had a strong presence in the oil fields in the predominantly Kurdish northern region around Kirkuk and Mosul. The ICP had a Kurdish section, but for nationalist reasons it opposed the formation of an independent state of united Kurdistan or a Kurdish Communist Party. Jewish ICPers founded an Anti-Zionist League in 1945, and when the party leadership under Fahd (Abdullah Massud) was jailed in 1947, a young Jewish student, Sason Shlomo Dalal, became secretary general. In the frame-up trials of the Communist leaders, one of the charges against them was "Zionism."

Perhaps because of their more leftist pretensions, the Iraqi Communists had a particularly hard time swallowing the Kremlin's support for partition of Palestine from May 1947 on. An internal directive of the ICP command in December 1947 (following the UN vote on partition) dared to criticize Moscow's policy:

"The attitude that the Soviet Union has taken toward partition has afforded the mercenary newspapers and the hirelings of the imperialists an opportunity to defame not only the Soviet Union but also the Communist movement in the Arab countries....

"It is necessary, therefore, for the Communist party to define its position as regards Palestine in terms of the lines to which it has adhered and which may be summarized as follows:

"a) Zionism is a movement that is racist, religious, reactionary and false to the Jewish masses.

"b) Jewish immigration...does not solve the problems of displaced Jews in Europe but is an organized invasion directed by the Jewish Agency...and its continuation in its present form...threatens the original inhabitants in their livelihood and freedom.

"c) The partition of Palestine is an old imperialist project...which rests on the presupposed impossibility of an understanding between Jews and Arabs....

"d) The form of government for Palestine can rightfully be determined only by the Palestinian people, by the people who live actually in Palestine, and not by the United Nations or any other organization or state or group of states....

"e) Partition is bound to lead to the subordination of the Arab majority to the Zionist minority in the proposed Jewish state.

"f) Partition and the creation of the Jewish state will increase racial and religious enmities and will affect seriously the prospects of peace in the Middle East.

"For all these reasons the Communist party categorically rejects the partition plan...."

—quoted in Hanna Batutu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton University Press, 1978)

But the leftist impulse reflected in this circular was eventually suppressed by the ICP, as party leaders buckled under, toed the Kremlin line and thereby sabotaged the revolutionary struggle.

Backing the founding of Israel was a departure from the Kremlin's longstanding opposition to Zionism going back to

security. Jewish workers ask: "How to protect our lives? Should we not support the 'Haganah'? And the Arab workers and fellahin ask: "Ought we not to join the 'Najada', 'Futuwa' to defend ourselves against the Zionists' attacks?"

A distinction must be made between the practical and political sides of this question. We cannot thwart mobilizations and do not therefore tell workers to refuse to mobilize. But it is our duty to denounce the reactionary character of the chauvinist organizations, even in their own house. The only way to peace between the two peoples of this country is turning the guns against the instigators of murder in both camps.

the founding of the Communist International. But it was of a piece with the reformist Stalinist policy of tailing after bourgeois nationalism in colonial and semi-colonial countries. In 1945-46, Moscow sponsored short-lived Azerbaijani and Kurdish "democratic republics" in western parts of Iran occupied by the Soviet Army. Responding later to criticism of Moscow's support for partition of Palestine, Soviet spokesmen at the UN said they saw support for Israel as a blow against British imperialism and hoped that Israeli leftists would gain strength in the new state. But these alleged hopes were illusory, and the pro-Israel line made a mockery of the Arab CPs' nationalist posture. At the same time, the ICP's Iraqi and Arab nationalism led it to oppose the national aspirations of the Kurds, which had the potential to explode the whole array of imperialist-created bourgeois states in the Near East, among them Iraq.

The 1948 Palestine crisis intersected a genuine mass revolt led by the Iraqi Communist Party against Britain's puppet regime. As London prepared to withdraw from its South Asian colonies and reduce its forces in the Near East, on 15 January 1948 the Iraqi government of Salih Jabr signed the Portsmouth Treaty which purported to hand over British air bases while actually allowing continuing British use. The next day students went on strike in protest; Baghdad was convulsed by daily Communist-led demonstrations as police fired murderously into the crowds. Students were shot down inside the Royal Hospital. Faced with the upheaval, the palace disavowed the treaty, to no avail. On January 23, huge crowds streamed through Baghdad chanting, "Bread to the people!" "Down with the government of Salih Jabr!" "Long live the unity of the workers and the students!" "Long live the Communist Party!" "Long live the Republic!" and "We are for a people's revolution." Four days later, police shot hundreds of protesters trying to cross bridges over the Tigris. Finally, Jabr was forced to resign and flee.

The ICP later proclaimed that "in 1948 it headed the great national uprising of the people which abolished the treaty of Portsmouth and forced Salih Jabr to resign." Yet the Iraqi Communists feared unleashing a revolution. Following the January 23 demonstration the central committee issued a manifesto declaring "there is no danger of 'civil war' or of 'a Communist revolution,' and accused government agents of making "extremist and imbecile shouts." The party *opposed* calling for a republic, as it sought to split the

Instead of the abstract "anti-imperialist" phrases of the social-patriots which cover up their servility to imperialism, we are showing a practical way to fight against the foreign oppressor: unmasking its local agents, undermining their influence; so that the Arab worker and fellah will understand that the military campaign against the Jews helps to bring about partition and helps only the feudalists and imperialists, while it is fought on his back and paid for with his blood; so that the Jewish worker recognizes at last the illusion of Zionism and understands that he will not be free and safe as long as he has not done away with national discrimination, isolationism and

regent from the British and didn't want to call the monarchy into question. The ICP formed a "cooperation committee" against the treaty with several nationalist front groups in order to place the struggle in the framework of bourgeois nationalism. Following Jabr's flight, the CP issued a circular (1 February 1948) declaring that its aim was a "democratic bourgeois revolution" but one "under the leadership of the proletariat," since the national bourgeoisie was "weak politically and economically" and feared "the growing over of the democratic into the socialist revolution." Even this left wobble (loose talk of "leadership of the proletariat") was soon rectified by ICP leader Fahd, writing from prison, who called for a government of Liberals and National Democrats along with other "clean and patriotic elements."

The upshot of *Al-Watbah* (the leap), as the revolt came to be known, was that a British client regime was replaced by an even bloodier one, bringing back General Nuri as-Sa'id who had governed the country almost continuously since 1930. Mass unrest continued as a railway strike in March, supported by Baghdad students, paralyzed communications. When the Zionists proclaimed the state of Israel, an Iraqi battalion was dispatched to Palestine, where it conquered the West Bank town of Jenin in early June and then camped there for months until it was ordered back to Baghdad to put down the Iraqi masses. Instead of unleashing a workers uprising, the Stalinists' nationalist line led it to conciliate a reactionary bonapartist regime which, once the moment of crisis had passed, proceeded to hang Fahd and Dalal and the rest of the ICP leadership – including Jews, Kurds, Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims, as well as Christian Arabs – charged, among other things, with being Zionist agents for their support of Israel.

Stalin's policy of tailing competing nationalisms in the Near East was key in perpetuating imperialist domination in this turbulent region, and as in China two decades earlier it was the Communists who paid with their lives for this counterrevolutionary line. This treachery prepared the way for the Ba'athist nationalist regime, which wantonly slaughtered Communists and Kurds; for the decade-long Iran-Iraq nationalist bloodbath, and for the U.S.-led imperialist assault in the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War. Forging internationalist Trotskyist parties is key to the struggle to smash imperialist rule, defending the right of self-determination of all nations of the region in a struggle for a *socialist federation of the Near East*. ■

imperialist loyalty.

We have to keep up contact between the workers of both peoples at whatever place of work that this can still be done in order to prevent provocative acts and to safeguard the lives of the workers at work and on the roads. Let us forge revolutionary cadres. In this burning hell of chauvinism we have to hold up the banner of international brotherhood.

Against the Stream!

World capitalism being on the downgrade tries to endure by inflating imaginary national conflicts, trampling down the masses and brutalizing them. In the long run that remedy will fail. The masses will have learned their lesson through suffering. They will get to know their enemy: monopolistic capitalism that is hiding behind its local ruling agency. With the class struggle getting more intensive all over the world and in particular in the Arab countries, the end of the fratricidal war in this country is bound to come.

The patriotic wave today sweeps everyone lacking the principles of international communism off his feet. Revolutionary activity at this juncture requires patience, persistence and far-sightedness. It is a way full of danger and difficulties. But it is the only way out of this patriotic mire. Well may we remember the words of Lenin which, spoken in a similar situation, apply also to ours:

“We are not charlatans.... We must base ourselves on the consciousness of the masses. Even if it is necessary to remain in a minority, be it so. We must not be afraid to be in a minority. We will carry on the work of criticism in order to free the masses from deceit.... Our line will prove right... All the oppressed will come to us. They have no other way out.”

Mexico Exclusion Clause...

continued from page 16

Many union by-laws establish the obligation of the members of the organization to join the official party [the PRI] and that their failure to do so can be considered sufficient reason for the expulsion from the union and so for the loss of their jobs as well.”

In fact, in the key struggle that consolidated the corporatist nature of the CTM, the imposition of a leader, Jesús Díaz de León (know as “*el charro*,” the cowboy), by the right-wing PRI government of Miguel Alemán on the combative railroad workers in 1948-49, the former union leaders including the dissident Stalinist Valentín Campa were arrested and then expelled from the rail union under the exclusion clause, leading to their firing by the railroads. *This was all part of the red purge in Mexican unions directly linked to the McCarthyite witchhunt in the U.S. labor movement.* Díaz de León held a special union convention which passed a resolution requiring the members “to fight tirelessly in all areas against communist tendencies, preventing them from gaining force and constituting a national threat....”

This is an anti-communist purge, not a closed union shop! In fact over the last six decades, the exclusion clause has almost never been used to prevent the bosses from “hiring non-union labor,” as *WV* pretends, and it has repeatedly been used to fire reds and labor militants. A key case was the bitter strike at the Spicer auto parts plant in Saltillo. In 1968, plant managers fired 23 dissident workers at the request of the FAO (Federation of Workers Groups), a local corporatist outfit. By 1975, discontent was rife and almost all of the 800 workers voted to join an independent union. The company called in the Miners and Metal Workers Union (STMMRM), another *charro* union, and fired a hundred workers under the exclusion clause. With STMMRM *pistoleros* patrolling the plant and government troops and tanks controlling the streets, the Spicer workers’ strike was finally broken.

Rail workers, metal workers, maquiladora workers – in each case, the legal exclusion clause was used to smash independent union organizing efforts and enforce the straitjacket of corporatist control. This clause has historically been used to fire *hundreds* of workers charged with being communists (the STMMRM statutes require members to join the PRI, and those who do not can be expelled and fired). *This red-hunting, union-busting weapon in the bosses’ arsenal of corporatist control of Mexican labor is what the ICL now supports!*

Some may think that the ICL’s new position is based on ignorance and mindlessly assuming that conditions in Mexico are the same as those in the United States. Trotsky long ago analyzed the nature of the bonapartism *sui generis* (of a unique kind) characterizing the Mexican regime, which faced a restive working class just over the border from the world’s richest imperialist country. Yet the GEM and the Spartacist League have insistently and vociferously argued their new line. Whether they are wedded to it remains to be seen, as they have repeatedly flip-flopped on a host of issues in the last several years. But the ICL has lately embraced a number of right-wing positions – refusing to call for Puerto Rican independence, for example, while buying into the “free Tibet” milieu by calling for a year for an “independent Soviet Tibet”; or denying that the European fascists are fascists, from Haider in Austria to Fini in Italy. While the ICL adds its own idiosyncratic stamp, this pattern is typical for an organization deepening its plunge into centrism.

It is also fundamentally opposed to Trotskyism. As far back as 1947, on the eve of the original *charrazo* in the rail workers union, the Mexican section of the Fourth International opposed the “exclusion clause” along with the PRI regime’s labor courts and other forms of state control of labor. And it is directly counterposed to the program formerly defended by the Spartacist tendency itself against the whole panoply of Mexican fake leftists who made their peace with the PRI regime. The difference is that the ICL wants to cozy up to a corpse. But in the end, it’s all words to them. They do no work in CTM unions; if they did they would promptly be excluded by the exclusion clause they support. And while claiming the CTM is a legitimate union, the GEM has never been foolhardy enough to try to sell at one of the CTM’s cop- and pistolero-infested “concentrations.” ■

ICL Still Caught Between Shachtman and Trotsky

As the Spartacist League (SL) and International Communist League (ICL) slide deeper into pseudo-Trotskyist centrism, their polemics have taken on a distinctly schizophrenic cast, particularly those directed against the Internationalist Group (IG) and the League for the Fourth International (LFI). The latest example is an article titled, "IG: Still Looking for a Few Good Stalinist Bureaucrats," in *Workers Vanguard* No. 746 (17 November 2000), which vituperates against the IG/LFI in a ham-handed attempt to cover up the ICL's latest line change.

This time it concerns a fundamental question for those who claim to uphold the political program of Leon Trotsky, co-leader together with Lenin of the Russian October Revolution of 1917. For the last five years, the SL/ICL has argued that the heirs of Stalin led the counterrevolution that put the bourgeoisie in power and destroyed the bureaucratically deformed/degenerated workers states, from East Germany to the Soviet Union, and are leading the counterrevolution in China today. Now the ICL says it ain't necessarily so.

In our article, "Where Is China Going? Workers Political Revolution vs. Capitalist Counterrevolution" (*The Internationalist* No. 6, November-December 1998), we went after the ICL for

The latest: The winds of bourgeois ideology continue to blow the ICL into strange ports. Its most recent revisionist outburst: an ominous warning against advocates of a "new Chinese imperialism" and "the ideology of aspiring Chinese imperialism" (*Workers Vanguard*, 11 May). What Chinese imperialism? China before the revolution was a semi-colony, and the restoration of capitalism would again make it prey to the imperialist powers. Just who is it that talks of Chinese "imperialism"? The advocates of "free Tibet" and the like (recall the ICL's year-long infatuation with an "independent Soviet Tibet"). *WV's* parenthetical addition these views are "utopian" can't hide the fact that the ICL is echoing themes from the U.S. build-up for war against the Chinese deformed workers state... *More in our next issue.*

China: For Workers Political Revolution to Defeat Capitalist Counterrevolution!



Workers and students fraternize with People's Liberation Army troops sent to Beijing to impose martial law, 21 May 1989.

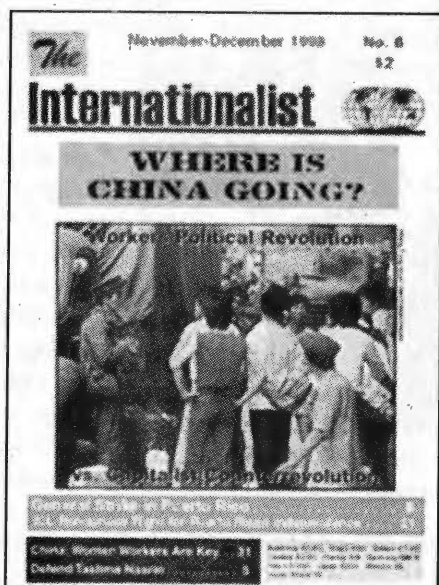
their line *negating* Trotsky's analysis of the "dual character" of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Usurping political power in the Soviet Union upon Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin and his cohorts replaced the Bolshevik watchword of world socialist revolution with their nationalist doctrine of "socialism in one country." Trotsky pointed out that this conservative petty-bourgeois layer sits atop and derives its privileged position from the workers state as it simultaneously transmits the pressures of imperialism. Crushing work-

ers democracy and undermining the economic foundations of proletarian rule while seeking an impossible "peaceful coexistence" with world capitalism, the Stalinists prepare the way for and open the door to capitalist restoration. But actual counterrevolution requires the leadership of stronger and more cohesive forces than the brittle bureaucratic caste. Thus we wrote:

"The leading force for bourgeois counterrevolution in China today is the *bourgeoisie* and powerful capitalist-restorationist forces inside and around the bureaucracy who are allied with it. Likewise, it was the German bourgeoisie of the Fourth Reich and its social-democratic running dogs who led the drive for capitalist reunification that obliterated the DDR in 1990; it was Lech Walesa and his Polish nationalist Solidarność, embraced by the Pope of counterrevolution and financed by the CIA (and the Vatican bank), which carried out the restoration of capitalism in Poland; it was Washington's man Yeltsin, in constant contact with U.S. president Bush, at the head of elements that had split from the Stalinist bureaucracy, who seized power in August 1991 and proceeded to destroy the Soviet Union....

"While the bureaucracy with its counterrevolutionary policies is a contradictory, parasitic layer living off the workers state, the force that has the cohesion of clear class interests necessary to actually lead a counterrevolution is the bourgeoisie."

In its previous installment (“IG on China: Looking for a Few Good Stalinist Bureaucrats,” *WV* No. 715, 11 June 1999) the ICL responded by reiterating its line: “we warn the main force leading the drive for capitalist restoration today is the Stalinist regime itself.” A major article on China in the same issue stated: “In the end, it was the Stalinists who led the counterrevolution” in the USSR and throughout East Europe. So according to the ICL, the Stalinists overthrew the regimes they presided over; this means, in effect, that the bureaucracy was acting as an exploiting class. This throws overboard the Trotskyist understanding of the nature of the bureaucracy. Trotsky made the analogy between a bureaucratically led trade union and the bureaucratized Soviet Union; both are organizational embodiments of working-class power that Marxists defend against the bourgeoisie in spite of (and often against) the



sellout tops. A class-conscious worker will understand the difference between the union misleaders, the *labor traitors* who sabotage the workers' struggle in the interests of the bosses, and the bosses themselves, who are the *class enemy*.

This is not idle logic-chopping but a matter of crucial importance to the world proletariat. Restoration of capitalism in the Soviet bloc has meant devastation for the working people – mass unemployment, pervasive poverty, drastically shortened lifespans. Workers in the remaining deformed workers states fear for their livelihoods and their lives, but don't know how to defend them. Yet the ICL's dizzying zig-zags demonstrate that their talk about defending the deformed workers states and organizing for political revolution there is nothing but literary posturing.

Suddenly Last Summer...

In “Looking...,” *WV* complained that “The IG is fond of screaming how we have changed our line on every question under the sun.” Indeed, we pointed out that never during the ICL's intervention in East Germany and the Soviet Union during 1989-92 did it claim the *Stalinists* were leading the counterrevolution. The ICL has been unable to refute this easily

verifiable fact. Yet suddenly last summer ICLers refused to defend their own anti-Trotskyist line. In an article we posted on the Internet last August (“Stalinists Led the Counterrevolution? ICL Between Shachtman and Trotsky,” reprinted in *The Internationalist* No. 9, January-February 2001), we alerted our readers, “Stay Tuned – New ICL Line Change Coming.” And now we have it. In “Still Looking...,” buried under heaps of lies, inventions and distortions, of dead dogs and red herrings, we read that in the end the Stalinists do and don't, will and won't lead the counterrevolution.

WV starts off, “In China today, insofar as it is pushing market-oriented ‘reforms,’ conciliation of imperialism and repression of workers' struggles, the bureaucracy is leading the drive for capitalist restoration....” Yet a sentence later it is singing a different tune:

“At the same time, there is a crucial difference between the act of counterrevolution itself and the lead-up to it. In that sense, the Beijing regime is not committed to capitalist restoration and sectors of it might balk at the consequences, particularly in fear of the kind of devastation wreaked on the industrial and military power of the former Soviet Union and, in some cases, because of genuine concern for the current and future plight of the workers and peasants.”

From “Looking...” to “Still Looking...,” the ICL has executed a sharp about-face on this central theme of its frenzied attacks on the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International.

Strange, is it not, that for the last four years this “*crucial difference*” escaped the ICL, which now discovers that at the moment of truth “the Beijing regime is not committed to capitalist restoration and sectors of it might balk at the consequences”! Stranger yet that the ICL should pretend that the IG is “looking for a few good Stalinist bureaucrats” when *WV* itself declares that elements of the Chinese Stalinists might draw back from counterrevolution “because of genuine concern for the current and future plight of the workers and peasants”! Some paladins of counterrevolution, who at the last minute get cold feet and butterflies in the stomach!! One is tempted to remark that *insofar as* the ICL is talking out of both sides of its mouth, *in that sense* its weasel words add up to a crock of centrist confusionism.

Get Out Your Hip Boots and a Shovel

From the outset, as *WV* declared that the founding cadres of the Internationalist Group had “fled” the ICL when in fact they were bureaucratically *expelled*, its attacks on the IG and LFI have been smear jobs rather than polemics. By now, like everything else in the “new *WV*,” they have been reduced to a shop-worn formula: start off by repeating a string of lies, no matter how obvious; throw in some sophomoric insults (“IGlets,” “Potemkin village idiots”); invent positions supposedly held by the IG/LFI in order to knock down some straw men; and end with sinister insinuations (the IG allegedly seeks to “spike” the ICL's work and “would also be ready to serve as braintrusts for some pretty unsavory types”).

To borrow an expression from James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, in dealing with the ICL's dirty smears it's necessary to get out hip boots and a shovel

to remove the filth they pile up. As we have pointed out before, the signature quality of a "new *WV*" polemic is the use of lies that anyone who has read the press of the LFI can easily see for themselves are 100 percent false. *WV* clearly figures it

can circulate its fabrications far more widely than we can get out the truth. So in the interests of Marxist hygiene, we list below a few of the more blatant inventions in the latest ICL diatribe against the IG/LFI:

<p align="center"><u>What the ICL Claims</u></p>	<p align="center"><u>What the IG Wrote</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie No. 1: In "Still Looking..." <i>WV</i> claims, "Pounding the 'delete' key, the IG obliterates the understanding expressed in the Transitional Program that 'the chief political task in the USSR still remains the <i>overthrow of this same Thermidorian bureaucracy</i>'" (emphasis in original). • A page later, the same <i>WV</i> article repeats: "<i>the IG denies the very purpose of political revolution: to overthrow the Stalinist 'treacherous misleaders' who undermine defense of the collectivized economy against the class enemy and would devour the workers state</i>" (emphasis in original). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In our August 2000 article ("Stay Tuned – New ICL Line Coming"), we wrote: "From the Soviet Union under Stalin to China under Mao's heirs today, the indispensable instrument to lead workers political revolution to oust the traitorous Stalinist bureaucracies is a Trotskyist party." • In "Where Is China Going?" (<i>The Internationalist</i> No. 6, November-December 1998) we wrote: "What's needed above all is to <i>forge a Trotskyist party</i> that can lead the working class, supported by the poor peasants together with all those who seek a socialist future, to oust the bureaucracy and take the reins of power into its own hands, through <i>proletarian political revolution</i> to stop the looming <i>capitalist counterrevolution</i>." • From the same article: "In fighting against the threat of counterrevolution, the Chinese working class must carry out a political revolution to oust the Stalinist caste which is sabotaging the gains of the Revolution." • Again in the conclusion of "Where Is China Going?" we reiterated: "The League for the Fourth International calls to build an authentic Trotskyist party in China which alone can provide the program and organization to lead the working class in a proletarian political revolution, defeating the counterrevolution by sweeping out the corrupt, parasitic bureaucracy and opening the road to socialist revolution in the capitalist countries."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie No. 2: In "Still Looking..." the SL/ICL claims that "the IG implies that the danger of counterrevolution comes solely from outside the bureaucracy and that the Chinese workers should <i>not</i> direct their blows at the 'treacherous misleaders'." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In "Stay Tuned..." we quoted from our article "Where Is China Going?" which noted: "the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy has gone further than the government of any other deformed workers state in fostering market reforms that fuel capitalist forces. As a result of this, those growing capitalist forces in China are now consolidating their power and influence to an extent never before seen inside a deformed workers state." • That article has an entire section titled, "Stalinist Class-Collaborators Pave the Way for Counterrevolution," which analyzes how "In China the bureaucracy's policies are producing an incessant and massive growth of bourgeois forces." • The concluding section of that article states: "As the fate of the Chinese deformed workers state hangs in the balance, the fundamental enemy is the bourgeoisie – but the principal obstacle to defeating it is the bureaucracy." • Another article in <i>Internationalist</i> No. 6, "China: Women Workers Key Revolutionary Force," states: "Yet precisely because they bear the brunt of the counterrevolutionary assault, women can become steeled revolutionary fighters in the struggle to oust the sellout Stalinists who are wrecking the collectivized economy."

What the ICL Claims	What the IG Wrote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie No. 3: In "Still Looking..." the SL/ICL alleges, "the IG maintains that the Stalinist regimes are committed to the defense of proletarian property forms – a notion clearly refuted by events themselves in 1989-92." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our very first bulletin analyzing the course of the ICL after the June 1996 SL expulsions, <i>From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle</i> (July 1996), stated emphatically: "The fact that the bureaucracy was not irrevocably committed to defense of the workers state and its economy, from which it obtained its privileges, that large sectors of it would go over to the capitalists, was foreseen by Trotsky and corresponds to his analysis of this parasitic caste." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our article "Where Is China Going" notes: "Today even the remaining Stalinists don't believe in their program of 'socialism in one country,' except for handfuls of political zombies – walking dead men – in the West. Those with state power are desperately trying to ensure their own survival through maneuvering and ever-greater concessions to capitalism." • The same article says of the USSR: "The bureaucracy, as Trotsky had written, prepared the way for counter-revolution with its policies of international class collaboration; it opened the door to the restoration of capitalism by its domestic economic policies fostering the growth of bourgeois forces; and it sold out the degenerated/deformed workers states, handing over power to the new bourgeois masters."

Clearly, *WV* is banking on their readership being a captive audience who have not read *The Internationalist*. But even the few truncated quotes they give of what we actually write should give an attentive reader pause. Thus after first claiming of the IG, "Positing that the Stalinist bureaucracy – or a section of it – is inherently wedded to socialized property" (which, as the above quotes demonstrate, the IG does *not* posit), they quote from "Where Is China Going?": "*Our strategy for political revolution is based on mobilizing the working class for communism. At the same time, we seek where possible to split sections of the bureaucracy.*" So? Stalinophobes like the Shachtmanites or adherents of Tony Cliff's "theory" of a "state-capitalist" USSR who oppose this on principle would cringe at that statement. But the SL? To attack the IG over this statement, the ICL is forced to falsify its own history.

At every hot point of the anti-Soviet Cold War, from Vietnam to Afghanistan and Poland, the international Spartacist tendency (iSt, forerunner of the ICL) defended the degenerated/deformed workers states against imperialism. Against the Maoists who called the Soviet Union "capitalist" and renegades like the "Bolshevik Tendency" who echoed the Shachtmanite concept of a "Stalinist state," the iSt underlined the contradictory character of the Stalinist caste as a parasitic growth on the workers state. Fighting in 1989-90 for political revolution in the DDR and against capitalist reunification with imperialist West Germany, the ICL initiated a united-front demonstration with the Stalinist SED (Socialist Unity Party) against fascist desecration of the Soviet war memorial at Treptow. So we have repeatedly asked, what was the ICL doing on the speakers tribune at Treptow next to the SED tops on 3 January 1990 if the latter were *leading* the counterrevolution, as the ICL now claims?

WV's lame response in "Still Looking..." underscores its predicament: "We were engaged in a united-front action with the SED in defense of the DDR workers state, in the course of that waging *political combat* against the SED misleaders, aiming to split the SED's proletarian base and win it to the Trotskyist party." Precisely. And the ICL could not have carried out such an action if the SED was in fact *leading* the counterrevolution, because there would be no basis for a united-front action in defense of the workers state. Would the German Communists (KPD) have made a united front with the Social Democrats (SPD) in January 1919, when SPD butchers Friedrich Ebert and Gustav Noske were indeed leading the counterrevolution and ordered the murder of KPD leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht? Obviously not, they were fighting on the barricades the military forces unleashed by the SPD. Would the Spartacist tendency have carried out a united-front action with Polish Solidarnosc in 1981 when Walesa & Co. were leading a counterrevolutionary anti-Soviet mobilization? No, the iSt called to "*Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!*" and declared that it would support a military crackdown by the Kremlin Stalinists against the front men for Reagan and Wojtyla. *WV*'s responses demonstrate the absurdity of their new line.

In "Stay Tuned..." we wrote that if the Soviet Army was leading the counterrevolution in the DDR, why didn't the ICL call for withdrawal of Soviet troops? Again, *WV*'s response gives the lie to the ICL's own claim: "It was Gorbachev who called the shots in East Germany. Soviet troops were not mobilized to suppress a workers rising, but were essentially restricted to barracks." So Gorbachev supposedly *led* a counterrevolution by restricting Soviet troops to barracks?! To our challenge that if the SED *led* the counterrevolution, how come



Leon Trotsky in Mexico.

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the entire East German Politburo ended up in the jails of the Fourth Reich, *WV* presents an even lamer response: "How could Chilean Socialist president Salvador Allende end up dead in 1973 during General Augusto Pinochet's military coup after having appointed Pinochet and preaching reliance on the 'constitutional' military?" Yet by their own account, Allende *prepared the way* for the bloody counterrevolutionary coup which was *led* by Pinochet and his CIA handlers.

For the latter-day ICL, befogged by centrism, the Russian question has become, in Churchill's famous phrase on the outbreak of World War II, "a riddle wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma."

Shades of Shachtman: The ICL's Telltale Line

From 1996 on, the ICL has argued against the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International that the Stalinists led and are leading the counterrevolution here, there and everywhere in the bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states. The USSR, DDR, China, Cuba, you name it. Now it seems, according to their latest revision, that during foreplay the Stalinists can "lead" the counterrevolution, but it's another matter when it comes to consummating capitalist restoration. Yet still they insist, "The Kremlin abetted by the East German Stalinists led the counterrevolution in the DDR," a phrase inserted into the ICL's revised "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (1997) specifically to attack the IG. In the DDR but not in China? *WV*'s contortions are a cynical subterfuge to cover up their umpteenth line change as the ICL zigzags away from Trotskyism.

The claim that the Stalinists "lead" or "led" the counterrevolution is a telltale line typical of those who abandon Trotskyism in favor of bourgeois Stalinophobia. After fleeing the Fourth International on the eve of World War II, Max Shachtman proclaimed in December 1940 a "Stalinist counter-

revolution" in the form of "the seizure of power by a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy" (*The Bureaucratic Revolution: The Rise of the Stalinist State*). Shachtman's purpose was to justify his refusal to defend the USSR against German imperialist attack. More recently, various pseudo-Trotskyists claimed that the Stalinist "gang of eight" that staged a half-hearted coup in Moscow August 1991 were leading the counterrevolution, in order to justify their own support to the man who in fact led the counterrevolutionary seizure of power, Boris Yeltsin.

Such revisionist arguments directly contradict Trotskyism. Trotsky repeatedly stressed the "dual position," "dual function," "dual role" and "dual character" of the Stalinist bureaucracy:

"Stalin serves the bureaucracy and thus the world bourgeoisie; but he cannot serve the bureaucracy without defending that social foundation which the bureaucracy exploits in its own interests. To that extent does

Stalin defend nationalized property from imperialist attacks and from the too impatient and avaricious layers of the bureaucracy itself. However, he carries through this defense with methods that prepare the general destruction of Soviet society. It is exactly because of this that the Stalinist clique must be overthrown. But it is the revolutionary proletariat who must overthrow it....

"The struggle for domination, considered on a historical scale, is not between the proletariat and the bureaucracy, but between the proletariat and the world bourgeoisie. The bureaucracy is only the transmitting mechanism in this struggle."

—L.D. Trotsky, "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State" (November 1937)

In claiming that the Stalinists *led* the counterrevolution, the ICL in effect declared that the bureaucracy had lost its dual nature, that it ceased to be a contradictory layer. If today the SL/ICL leadership takes a quarter-step backwards when their revision becomes too blatant, opining that some bureaucratic sectors may "balk at the consequences" of counterrevolution (in China but not in the DDR or USSR?!), *they nonetheless oppose seeking to split the bureaucracy in the course of a workers political revolution.*

When we get past their endless, shameless slanders about the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International, the core of the ICL's latest "polemic" against the IG consists of two points. The first is to quote from a 1953 document by the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) arguing that revolutionaries should not look for a break in the bureaucracy. Second, while Trotsky argued in 1938 that a minority fraction of the Stalinist bureaucracy could come over to the insurrectionary workers in a political revolution, the ICL now claims that Trotsky's view is no longer valid, and indeed has not been since at least World War II. Again this is a nega-

tion of what the ICL wrote during its intervention in East Germany and the Soviet Union in 1989-92, and it directly contradicts Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism.

The 1953 SWP document quoted by *WV*, "Against Pabloist Revisionism," states:

"The proposition that no significant segment of the bureaucracy will align itself with the masses against its own material interests does not mean that the bureaucracy would not manifest deep cleavages under the impact of an uprising.... But the function of a revolutionary policy is to organize, mobilize and help lead the masses in their struggles, not to look for and even less to bank upon any real break in the bureaucracy."

We've pointed out before the new ICL leadership's curious practice of falsely accusing the IG of doing exactly what the ICL itself does. Since *WV* falsely claims that the IG is "pounding the 'delete' key" in reproducing quotations, let's take a look at that ellipsis in the middle of this quote. They omitted from the SWP statement the sentence, "Such disorganization, disintegration and demoralization was observable in East Germany." Later on in the same document, the SWP wrote of the East German Stalinist apparatus in the 1953 workers revolt:

"It is clear that the SED bureaucracy became panic-stricken and differences set in on how best to handle the situation and that the movement found sympathy and support among certain elements in its lower ranks. This happens in every revolutionary uprising and it would be wrong to deny or ignore such developments."

Yet the policy the ICL has been pushing is precisely that *potential splits in the bureaucracy should be ignored*. In fact, ICL spokesman Al Nelson first came up with this anti-Trotskyist line in order to argue that any attempt to win potentially revolutionary cadres from the Kommunistische Plattform of the German PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism, the social-democratic successor to the SED) was deviant as they supposedly "led" the counterrevolution.

Against Pablo and his supporters, authentic Trotskyists do not bank on splits in the bureaucracy: as we stated in the passage *WV* quoted, our strategy is to mobilize the working class for political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy before the bourgeoisie destroys the workers state that the Stalinists have sabotaged. In this framework, we seek where possible to win sections of the bureaucracy to the side of the workers insurrection, and to recruit revolutionary-minded elements from this contradictory petty-bourgeois layer to the

Trotsky on the Stalinist Bureaucracy

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

—"The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (October 1933)

Trotskyist party. The League for the Fourth International stands with the SWP against Pablo in 1951-53 and continues today the struggle against Pabloism that the Spartacist tendency itself waged over three decades. In the past, the ICL noted certain weaknesses of the SWP's fight against Pabloism, including some wrong formulations that were later seized upon by Stalinophobic outfits. But no longer.

The article "Genesis of Pabloism" in *Spartacist* No. 21 (Fall 1972) referred to the SWP's "one-sided orthodoxy" during the late 1940s and early '50s, which led it to initially deny that deformed workers states had been formed by the Stalinists in East Europe. *Spartacist* criticized SWPer Joseph Hansen's 1953 defense of the formula that Stalinism is "counterrevolutionary through and through," writing that this was "a characterization which fits only the CIA!" Yet as we have noted about the ICL's recent portrayal of Stalinism as "leading" the destruction of the proletarian property forms on which it was an excrescence, "In reality, this is the line that Stalinism is 'counterrevolutionary through and through'" (*From a Drift Toward Abstentionism...*). In fact, the ICL's propaganda in recent years has reflected this Stalinophobic conception not only in its attacks against the IG/LFI. You don't have to take our word for it — look at what they have written about themselves.

Last summer, the SL ran a lengthy two-part article on "Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism" in the Near East in the 1950s, whose purpose, as the reader discovers deep into the second installment (*WV* No. 741, 8 September 2000), was to take the editors to task for agreeing with a letter from a supporter who wrote objecting to an earlier article about the Iraqi Communist Party. The reader wrote, "There's no way this party could have mobilized 'its working-class base to take power in its own name'." A motion by the SL Central Committee says this "denies any contradiction between the proletarian base and Stalinist leadership. Thus any possibility for the intervention of a Trotskyist party to exploit this contradiction is eliminated and by extension any possibility of proletarian socialist revolution." This "political departure," continues *WV*, logically "leads to the view that Stalinism is 'counterrevolutionary through and through,' i.e., that the Stalinist bureaucracy and Stalinist parties are purely and simply reactionary."

Just where did this "departure" come from? It's not hard to figure out: this line is parallel to what the ICL has been propagating concerning the role of the Stalinists in East Europe and the Soviet Union. *WV* No. 741 tried to portray its self-criticism over Iraq as a healthy correction, but as its schizophrenic line on China in *WV* No. 746 shows, it's actually a cover-up. The discovery that the Beijing Stalinist regime is "not committed to capitalist restoration" is a *second* "correction" of the same "departure" as over Iraq, yet the ICL dares not admit it. And still they insist the Stalinists *led* the counterrevolution in the DDR and USSR. What you have here is the coexistence of two lines: a basic Stalinophobic thrust, with some later modifications covered up with vituperation against the LFI that leave the door open to any manner of opportunist high-jinks. All in all, *WV*'s "corrections" make a mockery of its previous polemics against the LFI.

ICL Decrees: No More “Reiss Factions”

We noted above that the ICL’s claim that the Stalinists led the counterrevolution amounts to a declaration that the bureaucracy is no longer a contradictory layer. As a corollary of this revision, the ICL asserts that a “Reiss faction” of the bureaucracy can no longer arise, that is, a grouping that could be won to workers political revolution and the banner of the Fourth International. This was put forward in a document by Joseph Seymour, “On Trotsky’s Concept of a ‘Reiss Faction’ in the Soviet Bureaucracy” which was reprinted in *Spartacist* (No. 55, Autumn 1999) and is quoted at length in “Looking...” and “Still Looking...”



Ignace Reiss

Seymour wrote this document in December 1995 at the end of a fight inside the ICL over the work of its German section, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), directed at winning elements from the Kommunistische Plattform (KPF) of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the social-democratic party left over from the Stalinist SED.

Spartacist huffs and puffs about the “false view of Jan

Norden, then editor of *Workers Vanguard*, that in our fight for proletarian political revolution in East Germany (DDR) in 1989-90, the ICL was searching for a Trotskyist wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy.” Seymour’s document and several previous issues of *WV* falsely claim that this was raised “in Norden’s speech at Humboldt University last January,” which didn’t even mention a “Reiss faction.” Now that it’s trying to clean up its act, *WV* partially quotes from a November 1995 internal document by Norden where he points out that in an earlier document about the KPF he “raised the ‘Reiss faction’ – a reference to Trotsky’s point that the bureaucracy, due to its dual nature, will split under the impact of a political revolution – in order to make the point, in particular regarding the Communist Platform, that *there was no such section of the bureaucracy in the DDR.*”

But for the ICL today, even raising the issue is deemed Stalinophilic. According to Seymour, there *could not be* any “Reiss faction” of the bureaucracy in the post-WWII period because Stalin had succeeded in exterminating any potential left opposition in the bureaucracy in the Moscow Purges. The ICL’s

claim that Trotsky’s analysis of the bureaucracy splitting is no longer valid *and hasn’t been valid for half a century* contradicts innumerable polemics against Stalinophobic pseudo-Trotskyists published in the Spartacist press in the 1970s, ’80s and early ’90s which repeatedly invoked the possibility of a Reiss faction. And Seymour can’t claim originality: the *identical* argument was raised by such revisionists as David North and the BT.

Ignace Reiss (Poretsky) was a long-time member of Soviet military intelligence who broke with Stalin in 1937 and heroically declared himself a supporter of the Fourth International. Shortly afterward he was murdered by Stalinist assassins. Trotsky saw Reiss as a representative of a potential revolutionary section within the bureaucracy, as opposed to openly pro-capitalist elements symbolized by one Fyodor Butenko, a Soviet diplomat who defected to fascist Italy. In the words of the 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International, “all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko).”

Trotsky was emphasizing here the heterogeneous nature of the bureaucracy as a petty-bourgeois caste perched upon the collectivized property forms of a workers state, an unstable layer that would polarize or disintegrate under the impact of capitalist counterrevolution: “If tomorrow the bourgeois-fascist grouping, the ‘faction of Butenko,’ so to speak, should attempt the conquest of power, the ‘faction of Reiss’ inevitably would align itself on the opposite side of the barricades.” Thus Trotsky’s conception of a “Reiss faction” had nothing in common with the idea put forward by Isaac Deutscher that the Stalinist bureaucracy would reform itself, an illusion propagated by the followers and political heirs of Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel.

So why no more “Reiss factions” today, according to the ICL? Seymour begins by setting up his straw man, defining a “Reiss faction” in the narrowest possible terms: “As the term ‘faction’ clearly denotes, Trotsky was here projecting the emergence of a left opposition within the bureaucracy *in advance of a political revolution or the collapse of Stalinist bonapartism in society at large*” (emphasis in original). Yet as Trotsky’s reference to “the ‘faction of Butenko,’ so to speak” makes clear, he was *not* referring to pre-existing organized groupings. And concerning Reiss, the Transitional Program explicitly states: “The revolutionary elements within the bureaucracy, only a small minority, reflect, passively it is true, the socialist interests of the proletariat.” One would hardly describe a formal Trotskyist left opposition as *passively reflecting* the revolutionary interests of the working class.

Trotsky considered Reiss’ adherence to the Fourth International as *symptomatic of suppressed tendencies* within the bureaucracy inside the USSR, not as evidence of a cohered Bolshevik-Leninist opposition. Trotsky’s article on the murder of Reiss (“A Tragic Lesson,” September 1937) was particularly concerned with why Reiss waited so long before declaring for

the Fourth International: "the monstrous Moscow trials were required, and not only the first, but also the second, to bring Reiss to the actual breaking point. We may assume with certainty that in the ranks of the bureaucracy there are quite a few who feel as Reiss did. They have contempt for their milieu. They hate Stalin. And, at the same time, they endlessly toil on and on." Trotsky here portrays someone reacting under the hammer blows of events and choosing a side.

Moreover, rather than posing a Trotskyist opposition group within the bureaucracy existing "in advance of a political revolution," as Seymour claims, *Trotsky repeatedly linked the crystallization of a "Reiss faction" with the polarization brought about by a crisis posing the stark alternatives of political revolution or social counterrevolution.* In addition to his reference cited above about different "factions" of the bureaucracy lining up on opposite sides of the barricades, Trotsky writes elsewhere:

"Of course, in the ranks of the bureaucracy there are sincere and revolutionary elements of the Reiss type. But they are not numerous.... We may be sure that the more decisive the discontent of the toilers becomes the deeper will the differentiation within the bureaucracy penetrate. But in order to achieve this we must theoretically comprehend, politically mobilize and organize the hatred of the masses against the ruling caste."

– "It Is Necessary to Drive the Bureaucracy and Aristocracy Out of the Soviets" (July 1938)

This was a constant theme for Trotsky. Five years earlier, he wrote:

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

– "The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (October 1933)

This is clearly a very different perspective than the ICL's view of the bureaucracy *leading* the counterrevolution.

Having decreed that a Reiss faction means essentially a Trotskyist cell in the bureaucracy, Seymour then declares *ex cathedra*: "In this sense the potential for a Reiss faction was specific to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. It is *not* a trans-historic concept applicable to all Stalinist bureaucracies in all times and places. There are no Chinese Ignace Reisses in Beijing today or Cuban Ignace Reisses in Havana." And again: "A Reiss faction in the specific sense that Trotsky conceived it was no longer possible in the bureaucracies of the post-World War II Sino-Soviet states." Leaving aside that Trotsky *nowhere* decreed that a Reiss faction was a cohered Fourth Internationalist opposition organized prior to a political revolution, if a Reiss faction is "no longer possible" post-WWII, why not?

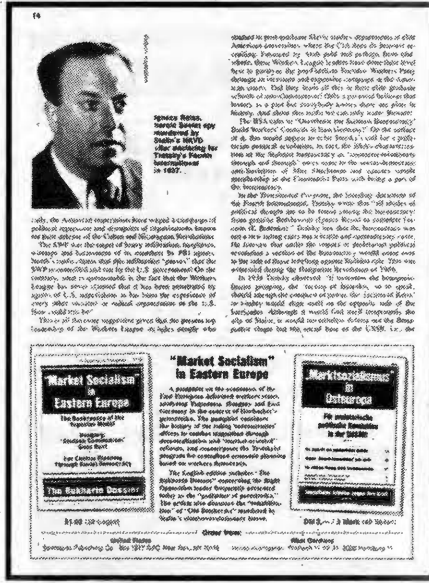
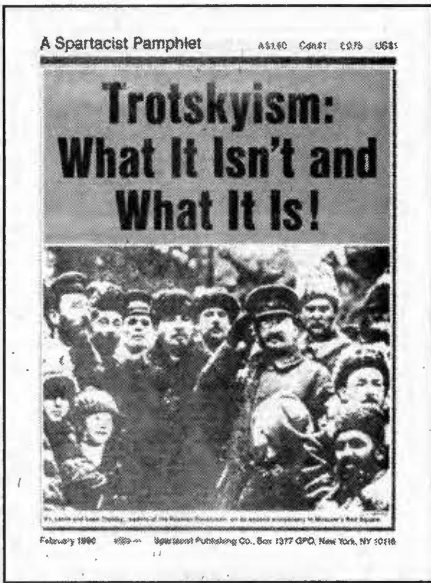
The possibility of a Reiss faction, *dixit* Seymour, "derived neither from the sociological nature of the Soviet bureaucracy nor the particularities of Stalinist ideology but rather from certain historically conditioned features of the Soviet bureaucracy in the 1930s." To wit: some senior cadres of the CPSU had been Bolshe-

viks before 1917, others joined during the Civil War, many had been part of the Trotskyist, Zinovievite and smaller left oppositions in the 1920s, etc. Moreover, "A major aim of Stalin's Great Purges was to eliminate that potential by physically exterminating former left oppositionists and other critically minded Soviet officials and intellectuals. And he succeeded in doing so." Yet this leaves out a key fact: *Trotsky's analysis of a "faction of Reiss" did not predate the purges.* Indeed, in the Transitional Program he forecast the existence of such a layer *after* the purges, in the context of a crisis of the Stalinist regime.

Seymour goes on to ask, "But could a 'Reiss faction' in a looser sense – a left opposition of a roughly centrist character – have developed in the postwar Stalinist regimes?" Again, his answer is no: "I believe this was possible only in the *first generation* of the bureaucracy when many of its members were originally leftist militants in reactionary capitalist states." Now this is a curious argument indeed, since in East Germany the *first generation* of the bureaucracy was still running things, including party chief Honecker, security chief Mielke and others who had been jailed by the Nazis. Seymour even mentions that "the experience of the redoubtable DDR intelligence chief Markus Wolf was somewhat comparable" to that of Reiss. Moreover, the "first generation" is still around in Cuba, Vietnam and China today. So that doesn't exactly get him anywhere.

Seymour intones the Marxist axiom that being *determines* consciousness. Yet where Trotsky explained the potential for a "Reiss faction" in terms of (a) the contradictory nature of the bureaucracy and (b) a crisis of the Stalinist regime, the ICL's theoretician portrays a clot of aging pensioners animated by vestigial remnants of consciousness acquired before the rise of the bureaucracy. *This "generational" analysis has more in common with Mormon genealogy than with Marxism.* It resorts to rank empiricism – deducing that since no "Reiss faction" has appeared in recent decades, therefore there can be none – to declare Trotsky's analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy outdated. In a similar fashion, the ICL now renounces the key thesis of the Transitional Program – that "the world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of leadership of the proletariat" – declaring in its new Declaration of Principles that this "predates the present deep regression in proletarian consciousness."

Since according to the ICL, a "Reiss faction" of the bureaucracy has been impossible at least since World War II, why do they suddenly discover this now? "During Cold War II it was necessary for us to emphasize the contradictory nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy against the pseudo-Trotskyist advocates of the 'bourgeois-democratic' revolution in the Soviet sphere. But that contradiction must be understood *dialectically*, not statically," writes Seymour. The theme for today, he says, is that "The *historical tendency* of all Stalinist bureaucracies is to bring about capitalist restoration by one means or another." In addition to implicitly saying the ICL earlier "bent the stick" in one direction and is now bending it in another, this is inaccurate. Rather, the role of the Stalinist bureaucracies is to *prepare* the way for capitalist counterrevolution in which the *bourgeoisie* takes power, displacing the parasitic bureaucracy which disinte-



"That was then..."?

grates as the workers states it fed off and betrayed are destroyed. The new ICL "theory" is no dialectical understanding of the contradictions of Stalinism but an attempt to negate them. It is a crude falsification to "update" Trotskyism in the spirit of the bourgeoisie's "death of communism."

Revisionist Minds Think Alike

"That was then, this is now" is the ICL's new message. They're not the only ones pushing that line. In "Where Is China Going?" we pointed out how the ICL's line that Stalinism is leading the counterrevolution in China echoed, almost word for word, the position of the British Workers Power group (which has since declared China capitalist). Here Seymour's arguments on a "Reiss faction" uncannily parallel those used by David North's "International Committee" to condemn the ICL. An article in North's *International Workers Bulletin* of 7 October 1996 on the expulsions from the SL (reprinted in the ICL's *Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League Bulletin* No. 10, January 1997) reviles our slogan "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan" and singles out a paragraph in *Spartacist* No. 43-44 (Summer 1989), stating:

"In the USSR the appearance of capitalist-restorationist forces can lead to an open clash between them and the proletariat, which will inevitably split the bureaucracy into its polar components. Soviet politics thrown into turmoil by glasnost demonstrate anew Trotsky's observation that 'all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko).'"

This restatement of basic Trotskyism brought yelps from the Northites, who wrote, referring to the Stalinist purges of the '30s:

"This act of political genocide effectively stamped out the last remnants of revolutionary Marxism within the state and ruling party of the USSR. To base oneself on the supposed existence of a revolutionary faction within the bureaucracy in 1989 was to ignore nearly six decades of history and the river of blood separating Stalinism from Bolshevism."

Ignace Reiss, leader of the SED, was murdered by the East German government in 1957.

...the American revolution... political repression and...
...the SED was the...
...the SED was the...
...the SED was the...

Market Socialism in Eastern Europe
Market Socialism in Eastern Europe
Markitizmizm in Eastern Europe

Precisely Seymour's argument. Ironically, even as the Northites penned their 1996 article, the ICL had internally already abandoned the long-standing position that North & Co. were polemicizing against!

In early 1990, at the height of the ICL's intervention in East Germany, it put out a pamphlet, *Trotskyism - What It Isn't and What It Is!* in German and English, later translated into Russian, that devoted two pages to attacking the Northites precisely over this issue. North & Co.'s claim that Stalinism today is "counterrevolutionary through and through" directly contradicted Trotsky's references to a "faction of Reiss," the ICL pointed out. The Northites' revision of Trotsky's analysis of the bureaucracy was their way of junking the Trotskyist position of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union and justifying support to every reactionary anti-Soviet force on the planet, from Afghan *mujahedin* to Polish Solidarnosc.

Another treacherous pseudo-Trotskyist outfit that attacked the ICL over the issue of a "Reiss faction was the misnamed International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT). The IBT article, "Robertsonites in Wonderland" (1917 No. 10, Third Quarter 1991), complained of the Spartacist intervention in the DDR in 1989-90, "The ICL attempts to justify its policy of currying favor of the Stalinists by citing Trotsky's analysis of the bureaucracy." Tops on the IBT's list of examples of supposedly "currying favor with the Stalinists" was... "The SpAD's Debacle at Treptow"! Not coincidentally, the German Northites of the BSA (Socialist Workers League) also joined in slandering the quarter-million-strong demonstration initiated by the Spartakists against the Nazi defacing of the Soviet war memorial. While the bourgeois press was denouncing "The SED's Nazi Trick," the BSA's *Neue Arbeiterpresse* (19 January) chimed in:

"Today the campaign 'against the fascist danger in the DDR' serves to save and restabilize the Stalinist state apparatus, army, secret services, judicial system, etc."

In denying the possibility of a "Reiss faction," the ICL has adopted the outlook of the very anti-Trotskyists it fought tooth and nail in 1989-90. This is the sordid company they now keep. And so, as is now the case on one issue after another, the ICL must attack its own former self, the revolutionary Marxist positions it used to defend.

Get Real - The ICL in the DDR

In his November 1995 ICL internal document, Norden wrote, "We didn't simply ignore the SED, the party of the East German Stalinist bureaucracy and throw all its members into one bag. We directed propaganda to the SED conferences, seeking to engage interested elements in debate and discussion." Reporting on an issue of *Spartakist/Arbeiterpressekorrespondenz* (No. 7, 15 December 1989) directed at an SED conference, *Workers Vanguard* commented at the time:

SPARTAKIST
 ARBEITERPRESSEKORRESPONDENZ
 Nr. 7
 10. DEZ. 1989

NATO-Drohung gegen die DDR

An den SED-Parteitag: Weder Stalin noch Kautsky! Für eine bolschewistische Partei im Sinne von Lenin und Trotzki!

Kommt zur Diskussionsveranstaltung

SPARTAKIST TROTSKYISTEN
 1989
 14. Dezember, 14 Uhr
 Treffort: Die Bundesrats-Konferenzhalle
 U-Bahn: Hermannstraße, Westhafen
 Treffort: 10-11, 17-18 Uhr
 U-Bahn: 14-15 Uhr
 Treffort: 10-11, 17-18 Uhr
 U-Bahn: 14-15 Uhr

ARBEITERPRESSEKORRESPONDENZ
SPARTAKIST
 Nr. 8
 Montag, 14. Dezember 1989
 8. Jahrgang

Spartakist-Gruppe Berlin gegründet!

Trotzistische Linen Deutschlands: Grüße an den Außerordentlichen Parteitag der SED

Reaktion

Grüße an den Außerordentlichen Parteitag der SED

Grüße an unsere Genossen, die sowjetischen Soldaten und Offiziere!

Internationalistische Grüße an unsere Genossen, die sowjetischen Soldaten und Offiziere!

Интернационалистический привет нашим товарищам: советским солдатам и офицерам!

Grüße an unsere Genossen, die sowjetischen Soldaten und Offiziere!

Интернационалистический привет нашим товарищам: советским солдатам и офицерам!

Grüße an unsere Genossen, die sowjetischen Soldaten und Offiziere!

Интернационалистический привет нашим товарищам: советским солдатам и офицерам!

Issues of *Spartakist/Arbeiterpressekorrespondenz*, daily bulletin put out by the ICL in East Germany at height of struggle for political revolution, against capitalist reunification. This was first time Trotskyist propaganda was put out in deformed workers state on a mass scale, with thousands of copies sold of each issue. *Arprekorr* No. 7 (left) included article "To the SED Congress: Neither Stalin nor Kautsky! For a Bolshevik Party Like That of Lenin and Trotsky!" No. 8 (center) included "Greetings to the Special Congress of the SED." *Arprekorr* addressed "Internationalist Greetings to Our Soviet Soldier and Officer Comrades" (right).

"Many thousands of SED party members, not excluding sections of the leadership, and also not excluding many of those who have recently quit the party in protest, genuinely seek to root out Stalinism and defend the collectivized basis of the DDR against capitalist reabsorption."
 -*WV* No. 492, 29 December 1989

The next issue of *Arprekorr* (No. 8, 18 December 1989) printed "Greetings to the Extraordinary Party Congress of the SED," saying "No doubt there are in the ranks of the SED many serious and honest workers who hate Stalinism but want to find the way to genuine communism." A program in brief, "What Do the Spartakists Want," printed in each issue of *Arprekorr*, stated:

"We stand with those members and recent ex-members of the Stalinist SED, as well as numerous others seeking to build a socialist world, who vow that the heirs of Hitler must not expropriate that which, by the workers' toil, has arisen out of the ruins."

Recall that the SED was the political vehicle of the governing bureaucracy. Does the ICL now renounce this work, since it claims the SED bureaucracy "led the counterrevolution"?

Publishing a daily news sheet, organizing in factories, initiating demonstrations including the massive 3 January 1990 Treptow mobilization, running candidates of the Spartakist Workers Party in the DDR elections, the ICL sought to build a Trotskyist party from workers (German and immigrant), students and also elements breaking from the Stalinist SED. Through this work, the SpAD won several former officers of the East German army (the NVA). One could consider them a miniature "Reiss faction." They were not numerous, and they were from the bottom rungs of the bureaucracy. But Trotsky himself emphasized that a revolutionary faction would be very small com-

pared to pro-capitalist elements of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Here we see the reality behind the ICL's "no more Reiss faction" line. The issue arose in the SL when Nelson attacked Norden for authoring the SpAD campaign to win recruits out of the Kommunistische Plattform (KPF) of the PDS. In fact, the group of NVA officers and soldiers won to the SpAD were all members of the KPF. Today, Seymour with his generational analysis writes off any possibility of revolutionary recruitment among younger elements, declaring that "the second, not to speak of the third, generation of the Stalinist bureaucracies were and are made up of people who inherited or were co-opted as youth into positions of social privilege and political influence." Yet here were young officers on the front line of Soviet bloc forces confronting NATO in the Cold War who thought they were defending socialism. When they saw the Stalinists selling out the DDR before their eyes, they became open to Trotskyism.

Significantly, the SpAD has since lost all its NVA recruits. It also won the odd East German gilded youth "coopted ... into positions of social privilege and political influence." That is who stuck, and who today regurgitate ICL elucubrations about the impossibility of a "Reiss faction."

Another example of the potential for a "Reiss faction" in the Stalinist bureaucracy is an incident related by Norden in his Humboldt University speech, titled "Who Defended the DDR? Who Fought Against Capitalist Reunification? The Spartakists on the Collapse of Stalinist Rule in East Europe." (This is significant because the ICL now pretends this speech belittled the Spartakist work in the DDR.) The first issue of *Arprekorr* was headlined "No Sellout of the DDR! Workers and Soldiers Coun-

cils Now!" An NVA soldier visiting Berlin from the north told in an interview how he had gotten hold of a copy of the paper and together with his comrades formed a soldiers council. Norden related:

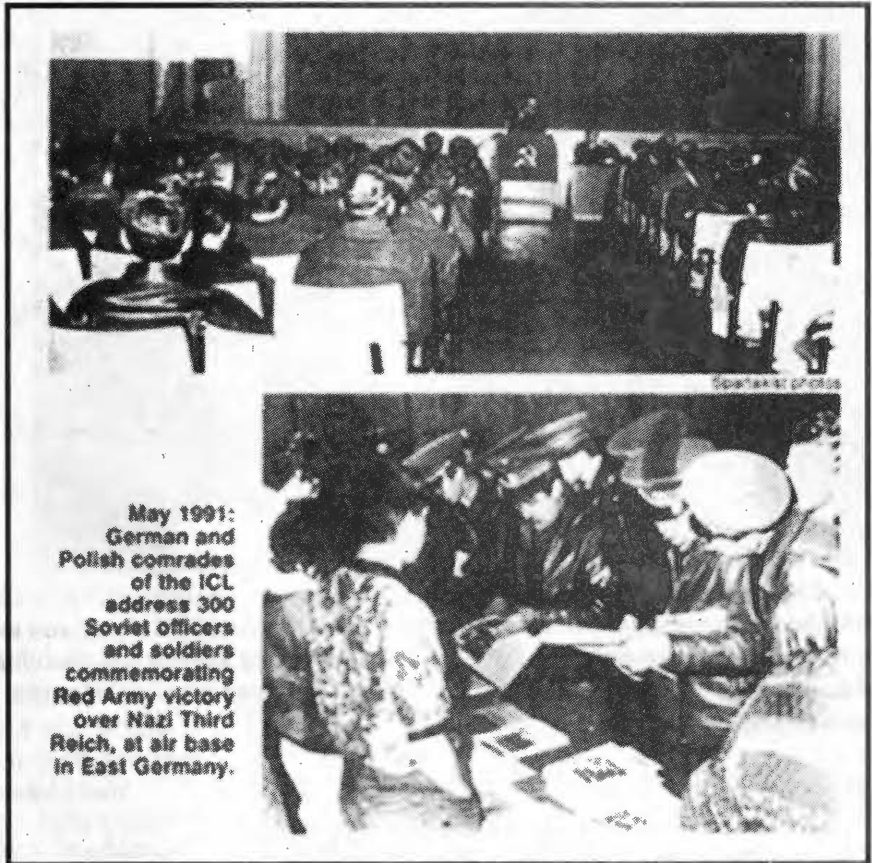
"It turns out that when this soldier returned to the barracks, he was sitting in the canteen with the TLD [Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands, the ICL section before it fused with East German Spartakist-Gruppen to form the SpAD] material that he had brought with him, when his political officer went past and saw the word Trotsky or Trotskyist. The soldier thought, 'Oh shit, now I'm really in for it.' But no, the officer proposed to him an exchange. He had secreted away Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* and offered to lend it to the soldier in exchange for these pamphlets and leaflets. Soldiers councils were also built in a couple other units there on the Polish border, and we also later won comrades from the same units to the SpAD."

Here we had what was likely a member of the "second generation" of Stalinist bureaucrats, the NVA *Politoffizier*, trading Trotsky's book for Trotskyist pamphlets from a soldier who together with his comrades of the "third generation" then formed soldiers councils, out of which several officers and soldiers were recruited to the SpAD!

This incident introduces a reality factor in contrast to the ICL's anti-Marxist, genealogical analysis supposedly proving the impossibility of the "Reiss faction." It's no accident, moreover, that these officers were recruited not to the Stalinophobia of the IBT and Northites but to the authentic Trotskyism then upheld by the ICL. At the Humboldt speech, IBTers declared that there was a "blood line" between the officers of the East German army and East German workers. An SpAD member who was a former NVA tank commander got up and powerfully refuted the IBT Stalinophobes.

The SpAD's experience in the DDR is not unique. A remarkably similar story is related in the issue of *Revolutionary History* (Vol. 7, No. 3) published last year on Trotskyism in Cuba. A report by an American SWPer from the *Internal Bulletin* of the International Secretariat of March 1963 deals with his discussions with the Cuban Trotskyists, followers of the current led by J. Posadas:

"Incidentally, Molina [one of the Cuban Posadistas] told me of an incident that happened just recently where a comrade met a *compañero* with whom he had fought in the hills who is now a captain in the G2 [Cuban military intelligence]. The G2 man did not know the other fellow was a Trotskyist, and he held up a copy of *The Revolution Betrayed* which he was reading and advised the comrade to read this guy Trotsky, as he was pretty good. At



May 1991:
German and
Polish comrades
of the ICL
address 300
Soviet officers
and soldiers
commemorating
Red Army victory
over Nazi Third
Reich, at air base
in East Germany.

this, the comrade said he *was* a Trotskyist, and then the G2 man clasped him warmly and asked him if he could get him some more books by the same author."

Are these incidents unique? Not at all. The ICL found a remarkable receptivity to Trotskyist views not only among East German military personnel but also among officers of the Soviet Army. It sold hundreds, perhaps several thousand copies of its Russian language publications in and around Soviet army bases in East Germany. The ICL twice addressed large gatherings of Soviet officers, including a May 1991 meeting of "300 Soviet officers and soldiers commemorating Red Army victory over Nazi Third Reich, at air base in East Germany," as a picture caption noted in the *Spartacist* pamphlet "How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled." A photo showed rows of Soviet military men, mostly officers, listening to an ICL speaker at a podium with the flag of the Fourth International. Another shot showed uniformed air force men looking at Spartacist literature (including the Spartacist bulletin talking of a Reiss faction and featuring the picture of Ignace Reiss).

What was the ICL doing there – particularly if these were the very forces the ICL now says were the spearhead of counterrevolution! – if it had no thought of recruiting a "Reiss faction" from among these military members of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy? Alternatively, since it is rampantly revising a host of questions, will the ICL now claim that military officers are not part of the bureaucratic apparatus? If so, let's hear it. More likely they will prefer silence on this question, as on so many others.



Colonel Pál Maléter (left) joined Hungarian workers uprising in 1956. Colonel Sándor Kopácsi (right), head of Budapest police, was won over by revolutionary council. Maléter was later executed after Kremlin suppressed uprising. ICL now says militants like Maléter “might well have been won to the Trotskyist program” in course of political struggle, but denies possibility of a “Reiss faction.” Photos: *Paris Match* (left), Sándor Kopácsi, *Au nom de la classe ouvrière* (right).

The ICL and Hungary 1956

These comments about the ICL’s actual work in Germany, in which comrades who were expelled in 1996 and are now part of the League for the Fourth International played a leading role, point to what lies behind the ICL’s line change(s) on the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The current ICL position that there was not, is not and cannot be a “Reiss faction” of the bureaucracy from 1945 on, and that the Stalinist bureaucracy led the counter-revolution, is a line for budding Stalinophobes...or dead-end abstentionists who are prepared to raise such social-democratic arguments in order to stop any work directed at the Stalinist milieu. The tortuous 1995-96 discussion in the ICL about its German work showed deep social-democratic inroads in the SpAD, in particular among the older West German cadres teleguided by Al Nelson feeding them Shachtmanoid lines.

More broadly, *the ICL’s line is that of pseudo-Trotskyists who have no intention of actually fighting for proletarian political revolution in China or any of the other remaining deformed workers states.* The ICL’s analysis is the handmaiden of organizational considerations, notably its concern to polish its self-image, and social reality be damned. Anyone who seriously attempts to break the Stalinist stranglehold and fight for authentic communism would pay great attention to any possibility of individuals or groupings breaking from the bureaucracy to come over to the revolutionaries. Moreover, those who claim that the Stalinists “led” the counterrevolution and that there can be no revolutionary “Reiss faction” recruited out of the bureaucracy are actually capitulating to and alibiing the imperialist bourgeoisie. In fact, in those cases where a political revolution has taken hold the Stalinist apparatus invariably shatters, often with sections fraternizing with or going over to the insurgent workers.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 is a key case in point. Today the ICL admits that the 1989 workers’ revolt in China had echoes even in the higher echelons of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) officer corps, at the same time as it denies that elements can be won out of sections of the bureaucracy to a Leninist-Trotskyist opposition. Yet in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, groups of military cadres and officials joined the workers on the barricades fighting for what they understood to be communism. In “Where Is China Going?” we noted how PLA units initially refused to attack the 1989 Tienanmen protests, indicating the possibility of a split in the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy. We added: “This occurred in Hungary in 1956, where the head of the army (Pál Maléter) and the head of the Budapest police (Sándor Kopácsi) went over to the insurgents.” In “Still Looking...,” *WV* allows that these “were heroic individuals who had fought as Communist partisans against Nazi occupation forces in World War II and were personally opposed to capitalist restoration,” but declares this irrelevant as they remained “within the framework of Stalinist nationalism and ‘peaceful coexistence’ with the imperialist order.”

This was in a situation where the developing Hungarian political revolution was defeated by the armed force of the Moscow Stalinists. We cited the examples of Maléter and Kopácsi to indicate the *potential* for a split in the bureaucracy *when faced with a workers insurrection.* They were not just “individuals” who were “personally” opposed to counterrevolution: the bulk of the Hungarian Army officers went over to the insurgent workers. True, in the absence of a Trotskyist party, they did not break from the ideological framework of Stalinism. That is not an argument for denying any possibility of sectors that could be won to the revolutionary cause in the heat of a working-class upheaval; instead it underlines the

urgency of organizing the nucleus of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard. As part of organizing the proletariat for a political revolution to oust the disintegrating Stalinist caste which is preparing the way for counterrevolution, winning socialist-minded elements from the bureaucracy could help advance this struggle, particularly from a tactical/military standpoint.

Shane Mage, later a leader of the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP which was the forerunner of the Spartacist League, wrote a 1957 article on "'Truth' and Hungary – A Reply to Herbert Aptheker" (the theoretical hack of the American CP), quoting an interview with Maléter:

"The National Guard, the revolutionary committees and the workers councils are solidly in the hands of freedom fighters who are fighting on two fronts: against the Stalinists and against the reactionaries."

—reprinted in the Young Socialist pamphlet, *The Hungarian Revolution* (1959)

In another interview, Maléter declared, "if there are people who are thinking about going backward, then we will see," and he put his hand on his revolver holster." So what about Maléter and Kopácsi? At the end of five tabloid pages of "Still Looking..." in which it is explained that there can be no "Reiss faction" of the Stalinist bureaucracy, *WV* opines: "In the course of such political struggle, elements like Maléter might well have been won to the Trotskyist program"! With that statement, the whole elaborate construct built up by Seymour and regurgitated by *WV* about the impossibility of a "Reiss faction" in the post-WWII world collapses like a house of cards. If it might well have happened in Hungary '56 (though according to Seymour it was theoretically impossible since '45), why can't it happen elsewhere tomorrow? The ICL's arguments are revealed as the smokescreen of centrist *fakers*, armchair theoreticians who have no intention of organizing a proletarian political revolution.

ICL Ricochets Rightwards

We have pointed out that following counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe the ICL lost its moorings. Beginning with a drift toward abstentionism and a Kautskyite centrist policy of "passive radicalism," it began to flail about wildly on a number of issues.

- Desperately seeking to make a case that we denied permanent revolution in Mexico, it came up with the argument that in Mexico the struggle must be directed against "elements of the Spanish colonial feudal heritage" and even "feudal peonage in the countryside." For a year the ICL insisted on the survival of feudal remnants in Mexico in polemics against the IG, which we demolished by pointing out that "Latin American feudalism" was a recurrent theme of the U.S. bourgeois press and a hoary remnant of Stalinism used to justify its reformist "two-stage" revolution. Then the ICL precipitously abandoned this claim when called to order by Jim Robertson (who had first defended the "Mexican feudalism" line).

- In 1997, *Workers Vanguard* raised the call for an independent "Soviet Tibet" just as the imperialist "Free Tibet" chorus was reaching a crescendo, and then a year later re-

nounced this piece of revisionism.

- After almost ten years of denouncing the "Cárdenas popular front" in Mexico, on the eve of Cárdenas' June 1997 election to the Mexico City government it suddenly declared that no such popular front exists or could exist in a semi-colonial country without a mass workers party.

- After decades of calling for independence for the U.S. Caribbean colony, in early 1998 it declared that it does "not currently *advocate* independence for Puerto Rico." After we raked them over the coals for this capitulation to "their own" bourgeoisie, the Spartacist League now says (in its latest "Programmatic Statement") that it would passively and quietly "favor independence for Puerto Rico" while not retracting its refusal to *advocate* political freedom from Yankee colonialism.

- After long labeling Jörg Haider and his Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) fascist, at the point they came into office last year as part of a coalition with the conservative People's Party the ICL suddenly decided that this admirer of the SS and Hitler's "employment policies," the son of Nazis and instigator of anti-"foreigner" campaigns that unleashed terror bombing of immigrant workers hostels by Haider supporters, was not a fascist after all. The ICL's explanation that the FPÖ is just an "electoral machine" reflects the electoral cretinism of the social-democratic left, which uses the same arguments in denying Haider is a fascist.

- Now, after several years of insisting against the IG/LFI that the Stalinist bureaucracy led the counterrevolution in the DDR and USSR and is leading the counterrevolution in China today, revising Trotsky's understanding of the dual character of the bureaucracy, they render their revisionism "more precise" by saying that sections of the Stalinists may pull back at the crucial moment. Yet simultaneously the ICL insists that there can be no more "Reiss faction" of the bureaucracy.

- Generalizing its defeatist political line, the ICL declared that the central programmatic conclusion of the founding document of Trotsky's Fourth International was outdated. Where the Transitional Program declared that the world situation is "chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of leadership of the proletariat," the ICL decreed that this "predates the present deep regression of proletarian consciousness." Not the misleaders but the working masses are the key problem, in its view. This negates the very reason for being of the Fourth International.

This is the record of a centrist current that has cut its programmatic anchor to Trotskyism and is tossed about in the seas of the class struggle. While its initial motivation may be factional, its gyrations reflect the pressure of the imperialist bourgeoisie and social democracy. The fight to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International must include a thorough and rigorous refutation of this revisionism in order to prepare a vanguard capable of leading the hard struggles ahead. Those who have abandoned this fight in all but name may continue to concoct ever-new theories for their own self-justification, but in doing so they prove themselves worthless to the proletariat, for which the crisis of revolutionary leadership remains the central issue to be resolved as it faces the stark alternatives of socialism or capitalist barbarism. ■

Seymour contra Seymour

Remarkably, less than a year before his December 1995 treatise declaring that a "Reiss faction" of the Stalinist bureaucracy has been impossible since the end of World War II, the semi-official theoretician of the International Communist League, Joseph Seymour, wrote another piece with a very different analysis and opposite conclusions. In his document, "On Stalinism and Social Democracy in Cold War Germany and the Fourth Reich" (31 March 1995), Seymour writes:

"As Trotsky pointed out, the Soviet bureaucracy contained all currents of political opinion, from fascist to Bolshevik. These contradictory and even antagonistic elements found their expression in the different aspects of official and even more so unofficial Soviet ideology and political culture. The post World War II expansion of Stalinism produced a world movement of qualitatively diverse social and political components – the bureaucracies of degenerated/deformed workers states at different socio-economic levels (the Soviet Union, China, the DDR), mass reformist workers parties (France, Italy, Chile), peasant-based nationalist-populist parties (South Vietnam) and left-wing propaganda groups (Britain, the United States, Argentina). The 'ideological' schisms which ripped apart the 'world Communist movement' beginning in the late 1950s (Maoism, Third World guerrillism, later Eurocommunism) expressed the conflicting interests of these diverse elements."

The same document also observes that "the counterrevolutions in the Soviet Union and the DDR had *different immediate causes and effects*" (emphasis in original). While key sectors of the Soviet bureaucracy supported the restoration of capitalism and many became capitalists themselves, "the DDR bureaucrats were not striving to become capitalists and could not have done so in any case given the strong pre-existing West German imperialist bourgeoisie. When the Gorbachev government, reflecting the rapid disintegration of the Soviet bureaucracy, agreed to the capitalist reunification of Germany, the DDR bureaucracy simply capitulated and has since adapted to the Fourth Reich by transmuting into a regional social-democratic party," the PDS, which "continues to be the target of *anti-Communist witchhunting and demagogy* by the German bourgeoisie, its SPD agents and its state" (emphasis in original).

No Stalinism "leading the counterrevolution" here! This document, Seymour's swan song as a Trotskyist theorist, "pre-dated" his discovery of which way the wind was blowing in the ICL's internal discussion over Germany. After a judicious interval he weighed in with his disquisition belatedly writing the "Reiss faction" out of post-WWII history. Where Karl Kautsky wrote that "paper is patient" (which Stalin translated as "paper will take whatever is written on it"), Seymour just "pounds the delete key."

How the ICL's Line on Stalinism Was Strangled

The scene: an Internationalist Group literature table at a Palestine conference at Columbia University on March 31. A representative of the Spartacist League (SL), responding to our polemic printed above, vociferously declaimed that Boris Yeltsin was "basically a representative of the Stalinist bureaucracy" when he headed the August 1991 Moscow "counter-coup" that led to capitalist counterrevolution in the former USSR. The SLer – a *Workers Vanguard* editorial board member – was attempting to defend the International Communist League's claim that the Stalinist bureaucracy as such supposedly "led" counterrevolution in the former Soviet bloc.

The comrade manning our table walked over to the Spartacist League lit table and bought a copy of the August 1993 pamphlet *How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled*. He showed the SL representative a passage on page 5 referring to "Yeltsin, the former bureaucratic hack turned capitalist-restorationist." No response. In fact, the entire 64-page pamphlet of ICL articles and statements published in 1992 is a devastating polemic against the revisionist line subsequently adopted by

the ICL. Indeed, it is full of polemics directed against the fake-Trotskyist tendencies which (like the ICL today) claimed that the Stalinist bureaucracy was leading the counterrevolution *in order to justify their program of support to Yeltsin*.

The first item reprinted in the pamphlet is the statement "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" (30

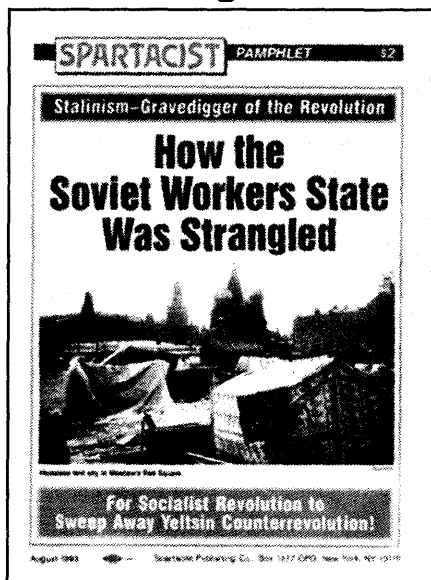
August 1991), distributed in thousands of copies by supporters of the ICL then active in the former USSR. This powerful call states in its first paragraph:

"The first workers state in history, sapped and undermined by decades of Stalinist misrule, lies in tatters. The state power has been fractured, the Communist Party – its bureaucratic core – shattered and banned from the KGB and armed forces...."

Far from portraying a Stalinist bureaucracy leading a social counterrevolution against the state it had presided over, the article explains how Gorbachev's *perestroika* fueled the forces of capitalist restoration and brought an accelerating *fragmentation* of this parasitic caste.

An article against "Cheerleaders for Yeltsin's Counterrevolution" (27 Septem-

Must Reading for Marxists



ber 1991) denounced "Traitors, Not Trotskyists," noting:

"Insofar as these cheerleaders for counterrevolution in the Soviet Union attempt to provide any kind of 'theoretical' fig leaf, it is that the Stalinist bureaucracy is the chief, indeed the only, instrument for counterrevolution. The view, summed up in the phrase 'Stalinism is counterrevolutionary through and through,' has historically been used to justify de facto abandonment of the Trotskyist position of defense of the Soviet Union. Today it is being used to justify *support to the counterrevolution*. Thus, trying to buttress its outlandish claim that the victory of the Yeltsinites was a defeat for imperialism, *Socialist Action* (September 1991) claims that with the botched coup by the 'gang of eight': 'It will be extremely difficult now for the bureaucracy and its allies to organize a new, effective, instrument to carry through the restoration of capitalism.' 'In the first place, as Trotsky pointed out time and again, the bureaucracy was not a homogeneous class but a brittle, contradictory layer resting atop proletarian property forms, from which it derived its privileged position, and potentially including both restorationist and revolutionary elements. In the absence of a proletarian challenge and under sharp pressure from imperialism, it was the restorationist wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy which blossomed under Gorbachev. The coup plotters were themselves committed to introducing a capitalist market economy, though more gradually and under centralized control. *But the bureaucracy has now utterly collapsed. And, in any case, Yeltsin had already broken from it to become the spokesman for the incipient bourgeoisie* – the 'yuppskies,' black marketeers and a political spectrum ranging from would-be Western 'democrats' to the fascists of Pamyat." [Our emphasis]

So, ICL, who is it today that says the bureaucracy led and is leading the counterrevolution?

The core of the pamphlet is the article "How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled," originally published in *Workers Vanguard* (27 November 1992) and subsequently translated in the press of all ICL sections as a fundamental statement on this question of world-historic importance. It summed up the results of a wide-ranging discussion the ICL published in eight volumes of its *International Internal Bulletin* during 1991-92 under the title "Documents and Discussion on the Collapse of Stalinism."

Arguing from the standpoint of the revolutionary Marxism the International Communist League still upheld at that time, the article includes a lengthy section on "The Army and the Bureaucracy." Stressing again that "Trotsky explained that the bureaucracy was a brittle, contradictory caste," it states: "This contradictory position generated within the bureaucracy a range of contradictory political impulses: 'all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko)' (Transitional Program)." It goes on observe:

"The dual character of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the conflicting political appetites it harbored, remained *even after the bloody purges of the 1930s exterminated any remnant of the Bolshevik 'Old Guard.'* But while resting on and deriving its privileges from proletarian property forms, the

Stalinist bureaucracy was not irrevocably committed to their defense. It could play no independent role in society. Under the impact of any sharp frontal assault, either from the revolutionary proletariat or the counterrevolution, *the bureaucracy would shatter.*" [Our emphasis.]

That is exactly the point that the ICL today desperately seeks to deny, insisting that no "Reiss faction" of the bureaucracy has been possible since World War II, because any potential for this was supposedly wiped out in the Moscow purges!

But keep reading. The article notes that in the case of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, "the bulk of the bureaucratic stratum went over to the side of the insurgent pro-socialist proletariat," whereas "in contrast, more recently in the Soviet Union, the steady pressure of conciliation to imperialism and internal market forces pushed ever-greater sections of the bureaucracy into the camp of capitalist restoration, for whom Yeltsin early on became the chief spokesman." It then notes: "The utter incapacity of the bureaucracy to play any independent role was forcefully demonstrated in the events of August 1991."

Another item, "Camp Followers of Counterrevolution" (*WV*, 9 April 1993), denounced Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat and other fake-Trotskyists such as the followers of Nahuel Moreno, who claimed the bureaucracy itself remained in place and "is directing the transition" to capitalism. The polemic stressed:

"The idea that the Stalinist bureaucracy remains intact in the wake of – and indeed presides over – capitalist counterrevolution is of a piece with the view that Stalinism is 'counterrevolutionary through and through'.... Trotsky, in contrast, characterized the bureaucracy as a brittle, *contradictory* caste, parasitically resting on the proletarian property forms of the degenerated workers state.

"But the bureaucracy as a caste has now been shattered. Yeltsin himself demonstratively broke from the Communist Party – the bureaucracy's 'apparatus of domination,' as Trotsky called it – well before becoming Russian president. He offered himself up for the new layer of yuppie speculators and Western-oriented entrepreneurs."

The pamphlet ends with the historical article "Stalin Drowned the Communist Party of Lenin and Trotsky in Blood," translated from a spring 1993 Russian-language bulletin. Emphasizing once again the contradictory nature of the bureaucracy, illustrating this – once again – with the case of *Ignace Reiss* and the passage from the Transitional Program that today's ICL epigones junk in their ongoing effort to cast off the remnants of their Trotskyist past.

How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled is must reading for all those (including any in the ranks of the ICL) who seek to draw the crucial political lessons of the real Trotskyist struggle against counterrevolution in the degenerated and deformed workers states. If the ICL was honest, it would renounce this pamphlet in its entirety. The League for the Fourth International stands on this crucial document and is making it available to readers. To order your copy, send a check or money order for US\$2 to: Mundial Publications, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York NY 10008, USA.

Mobilize Workers Power to Smash KKK Terror!

On January 20, a race-hate provocation was threatened by the "American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan" in Gary, Indiana. The Internationalist Group sent the statement reprinted below (left) backing the anti-KKK demonstration called by the Partisan Defense Committee, linked to the Spartacist League. Faced with the mayor's "even-handed" ban of both the KKK and anti-Klan rallies, the fascist Kluxers cancelled their January 20 hate-fest. The PDC rightly continued with the anti-KKK protest. A second IG statement (right)

demanded dropping of the charge of "parading without a permit" against Kevin Quirk, a PDC representative.

The Klan did not stop its provocations, and went on to hold a terror rally in Gary on March 10, where cops arrested a Progressive Labor counter-demonstrator (events which have not been reported in the SL's *Workers Vanguard*). The mayor then granted the KKK a permit for yet another rally on May 19, which the Klan later put on hold. Forge a revolutionary leadership to mobilize workers' power to smash KKK terror!

Internationalist Group Greetings to Anti-KKK Mobilization in Gary, Indiana

The fight to smash the Klan and Nazis must be a fight to mobilize labor and blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed against the racist terror which has been a fundamental part of American capitalism since the days of slavery. The racist night riders want to celebrate the murder of Martin Luther King together with the inauguration of George W. Bush. After targeting the Chicago suburb of Skokie, home to many Jewish survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, now they vow to stage their racist provocation in the heavily black industrial city of Gary. With the Number One legal lyncher in the country now occupying the White House, the hooded lynchers want to flaunt their fascist terror in the streets. But the powerful, multiracial working class can stop them in their tracks, *and it must.*

Just as the Klan and Nazis greeted Ronald Reagan, today they are emboldened by the smirking executioner who staffs his cabinet with open apologists for the Confederate slaveowners and rabid enemies of the most basic rights of women. In the face of this, the misleaders of labor and blacks seek to tighten the chains of subjugation to the bosses' Democratic Party. This is the capitalist party that bombed Yugoslavia in the name of "human rights"; the party whose so-called "prosperity" has meant obscene billions for Wall Street while throwing millions of mothers and children off welfare and into ever deepening poverty; the party whose racist "war on drugs" jailed millions of blacks and Latinos and took away their right to vote. The working class must break with the Democrats and all the capitalist parties, and forge its own revolutionary workers party.

Such a party would mobilize the power of the working class, here and internationally, to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and put an end to the death penalty and the racist terror meted out every day by capitalism's enforcers in blue uniforms and black robes. It would fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Against the labor bureaucracy which pushes protectionist poison that sets U.S. workers against their class brothers and sisters in other countries, such a party would seek to unite the workers of the world against the common class enemy. This proletarian party would lead a class-struggle fight for black freedom, mobilizing the workers in defense of all the oppressed. It would sweep away the forces of racist reaction through *international workers revolution*. That is the party we need to *crush the Klan* forever.

—Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International
18 January 2001

Drop Charge Against Anti-KKK Protester Kevin Quirk!

The Internationalist Group demands the immediate dropping of the charge of "parading without a permit" against Kevin Quirk. A member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 241, Quirk was hit with this charge for his role in the demonstration against the Ku Klux Klan held on January 20 in Gary, Indiana. We also demand the dropping of all charges against anyone arrested in protests against the continuing campaign of racist KKK terror, in Gary and throughout the region.

An injury to one is an injury to all! The attack on Brother Quirk is an attack on the labor movement and all opponents of the hooded fascists. In the face of the call for a labor/black mobilization against the Klan provocation, Gary mayor Scott King banned all rallies, denying a permit to the Partisan Defense Committee, which initiated the January 20 anti-Klan protest. This attempt at intimidation is of a piece with the Democratic city administration's refusal last year to allow SEIU Local 73 to hold a rally on their union contract.

Despite the phony "even-handed" ban issued by the mayor in January, the Klan held a race-hate rally on March 10 at Gary's Gilroy Stadium where they were protected by an army of riot cops. A supporter of the Progressive Labor Party was arrested there for carrying a bullhorn. And while prosecuting Kevin Quirk for "parading without a permit," the city administration has granted a permit to the KKK to hold a terror rally on May 19 at City Hall. In Indianapolis, Klan members clad in black jumpsuits and carrying the Confederate flag of slavery held a "white power" march on the Near Eastside, where these racists have sought to terrorize black families (*Indianapolis Star*, May 3). Meanwhile there have been cross-burnings directed against black families in Gary and in nearby Valparaiso.

This pattern of racist Klan provocations underscores that the powerful, multiracial labor movement must take the lead in sweeping away these racist terrorists. As the Internationalist Group noted in our greetings to the January 20 anti-KKK protest: "The fight to smash the Klan and Nazis must be a fight to mobilize the power of the working class, of labor and blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed against the racist terror which has been a fundamental part of American capitalism since the days of slavery." Drop charges against Kevin Quirk and all anti-Klan protesters!

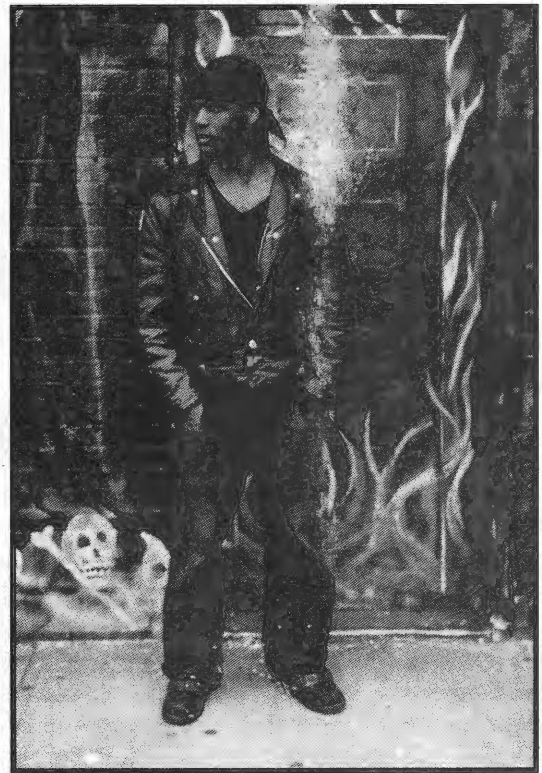
—Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International
15 May 2001

41 Shots... Remembering Amadou Diallo



On the night of 4 February 1999, Amadou Diallo, an African immigrant from Guinea, was standing in his doorway on Wheeler Avenue in the Bronx when four plainclothes cops pulled up. The white cops, part of the NYPD's "Street Crimes Unit," proceeded to shoot at the unarmed black man 41 times. This assassination of Amadou by the notorious police death squad sparked outrage across the country. Angry crowds kept repeating "41 bullets, 41 bullets." The "trial" of the killer cops was moved from the Bronx to Albany; a year later, the hand-picked court white-washed the murderers. Black Democrats petitioned the federal government to intervene; in February 2001 the U.S. "Justice" Department refused to press civil rights charges against the cops.

This past April, artist Hulbert Waldroup (above right), un-



Internationalist photos

veiled a 35-foot mural at the corner of Westchester and Wheeler Avenue, on the block where Amadou Diallo lived and was killed. Waldroup's work powerfully invoked the imagery brought to mind by the heinous police crime that has been seared into the memory of millions. In response, the NYPD paid a visit to the shop owner who had authorized the mural, and a few days later, the section showing the hooded killers was whitewashed. But the mural was quickly restored by the artist, as onlookers donated funds to help pay for the paint.

Amadou Diallo and all the victims of racist cop terror will be remembered in the struggle for socialist revolution to sweep away this racist capitalist system.

Assassination of Lumumba...

continued from page 64

the events leading up to it – squares thoroughly with Ludo de Witte's account of the crime, which meticulously lays out the role of Brussels, London and Washington based on newly available, largely Belgian sources.

Together, the film and the book provide a lot of ammunition for the struggle against capitalist imperialism, whose domination of Africa has meant horrendous misery for its inhabitants, from the slave trade through colonial genocide and white-supremacist apartheid to the neocolonial regimes which today rule the continent in the interests of Washington and Wall Street. To buttress the capitalist state, with its armed bodies of men, the bourgeoisie also uses an arsenal of lies to cover its past crimes and prepare new ones. They conquer, torture and murder on a mass scale and call it freedom and democracy, while labeling their victims terrorists and rogues. The Pentagon, NATO and the UN bomb Yugoslavia and Iraq into pre-

industrial misery, then starve the population through brutal sanctions – in the name of "human rights"! Most recently, the big-time war criminals propose to try the tin-pot dictators (their former allies) before a "war crimes" tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands! And the capitalist "masters of the world" will go on oppressing the many millions until they are overthrown through international socialist revolution.

King Léopold's Holocaust and Belgian Colonial Slavery

The history of the Western imperialist rape of Congo is also a history of bloody lies. In 1885, with the blessing of the United States, King Léopold II of Belgium established the "Congo Free State" ("L'État Indépendant du Congo"), which was neither free or independent nor a state but a personal fiefdom. While posing as the liberator of the enslaved, Léopold II brought slavery and savagery to Congo on an unheard-of scale, in order to accumulate a vast ivory and rubber fortune. In less than two decades of totalitarian autocracy, his majesty's henchmen murdered more



Eisenhower ordered the assassination of Lumumba; Kennedy was fully informed.

than *ten million* Congolese. Though Léopold II died in 1909, the tragedy of the Congolese was far from over. For most of the 20th century, the Belgian colonialists, first alone and then in reluctant alliance with British and American imperialism, looted the country of its great oil and mineral wealth. The fortunes stolen by this pirate confederacy amount to far more than Léopold ever dreamed of.

Yet like Léopold, the American imperialists too pose as humanitarians. Most recently, Adam Hochschild, posing as a champion of “human rights,” published an ostentatious denunciation of the Belgian monarch’s Congo crimes – *King Léopold’s Ghost* (1998) – which makes no mention of the leading role U.S. imperialism plays in the continuing neocolonial exploitation of Africa. Yet the chains of slavery clamped on the Congolese by a Belgian king in the long-ago have been held in place for nearly a hundred years after him by the Western imperialist powers, which call themselves “democracies.” Hochschild is also silent about how his family fortune was stolen from many thousands of superexploited African wage slaves, or how his family’s company, American Metal Climax, supplied the U.S. imperialist war machine with huge quantities of Congo uranium taken from the same mines that produced the material for the U.S. A-bombs that incinerated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (For more on Hochschild, see “‘Human Rights Imperialism’ and the Congo Holocaust,” *The Internationalist* No. 9, January-February 2001.)

In the aftermath of the second imperialist world war (1939-45), the European colonial powers, their home economies in shambles, sought desperately to refill their treasuries with African loot. Yet the African masses, sensing the weakness of their colonial masters, rose in revolt against them, from the Mahgreb (northwest Africa) to South Africa. The colonialists, fearing the loss of their plantations, ranches, mills, oil wells and their fabulously rich mines, sought to drown these revolts in blood. But to finance their war on African independence, the Europeans were forced to draw heavily on U.S. aid, soon leading to the penetration of their once-exclusive domains by American capital. The British and American imperialists began to work out a neocolonial strategy of domination, under which former colonies were granted nominal independence under lo-

cal nationalist elites groomed by the Western powers. The purpose was to insure Western ownership of African riches against the threats of anti-Western nationalist movements, and above all the spectre of communism.

Against the pressure to “open” Congo to Anglo-American involvement, however, the rapacious Belgian ruling class, led by Léopold II’s great nephew King Baudouin, tried to go it alone for as long as it could. In the early post-war period, the Belgians even attempted (fruitlessly) to forbid the CIA to operate in Congo, as they reaped superprofits from large-majority control of their giant Congo companies, particularly Union Minière, which controlled the vast mineral wealth of Katanga, and the Société Internationale Forestière et Minière (Forminière) which ran the diamond

mines of Kasai. In addition to the diamonds (Congo was for years the world’s second largest producer after South Africa), copper (8 percent of world output) and uranium ore, there was cobalt (60 percent of world output), zinc, iron ore, coal, tin, radium, germanium, cadmium, manganese, gold and silver.

For a long time, the tight little Belgian ruling class ruled out the neocolonial option: without the wealth of the Congo, where would their profits come from? From the early 20th century until the late 1950s, the colony was ruled by diktat from Brussels. After the Second World War, Baudouin called the shots, with the support of the Belgian parliament (including the so-called “socialist” opposition). The Force Publique, the army of African slaves commanded by white officers that had been founded by Léopold II, remained the ultimate enforcer of Belgian rule. No one in Congo – neither the 15 million Africans nor the 100,000 Europeans – could vote. No African could finish high school, attend college, practice a profession or hold political office.

Only in 1957, with the colonial world igniting around them and clandestine Congolese nationalist groupings beginning to form, did the Belgians make a hesitant half-turn toward neocolonialism. They permitted limited municipal elections. The Belgian Sûreté (secret police) closely monitored the developing legal political parties such as Joseph Kasavubu’s Bakongo tribal party, ABAKO. The Sûreté was more or less satisfied with what they observed. The ethnically based parties were unlikely to unify and open to bribery. Among the Belgian spies reporting on these developments were Congolese Force Publique veterans, including the future dictator, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu.

In 1958 the expectations of the Congolese masses rose: De Gaulle offered independence to the French colony of Congo Brazzaville, just across the Congo River from Léopoldville, while Ghana, the former British colony of the Gold Coast, held the first “All-African Peoples’ Conference” at Accra. Some Congolese, including Patrice Lumumba, a former trade-union leader and postal clerk from Stanleyville in the east, attended as delegates. In late 1958 Lumumba founded the Congolese National Movement (MNC), the first nationwide Congolese party and the most significant anti-colonialist force. The MNC aimed at uniting all Congolese across tribal boundaries, breaking with Belgium and forg-

ing an independent nation-state. When Lumumba returned from Ghana, where he had met the Pan-Africanist prime minister Kwame Nkrumah, he began speaking emphatically for immediate and total independence from Belgium. (By this time Mobutu had been spying on Lumumba in the MNC for several months.)

In early 1959, following Lumumba's first speech after returning from Accra, the Belgians got edgy. They canceled an ABAKO rally, which triggered a march of 30,000 in Leopoldville. The Force Publique opened fire, killing scores and wounding over 100. As the year went on, Congolese resistance widened; the more the colonial authorities responded with beatings and shootings, the more demonstrations broke out. ABAKO was banned and its leadership arrested, including Kasavubu. In October, Belgian-commanded troops killed 30 Congolese in Stanleyville and imprisoned Lumumba for inciting to riot. The demonstrations were largely made up of unemployed workers, but their presence on the streets of Leopoldville and Stanleyville could easily inspire the miners, rail and factory workers to join them. With an eye on France's increasingly bloody – and costly – war against the Algerian independence movement and fearing a revolutionary maelstrom, Belgian rulers reluctantly began considering granting nominal independence for the Congo. A corrupt regime of the tiny Congolese elite was also the course preferred by the British and the Americans, who by now had large stakes in Congo mines.

The Belgians invited Congolese leaders to a "round table" in Brussels in January 1960, where they announced a process that, they said, would lead to independence in five years. MNC representatives refused to participate unless Lumumba was present, and they were supported by the other delegates. Reluctantly, the Belgians released the MNC leader from prison in Katanga province, where he was being regularly beaten, and brought him to Brussels. Lumumba led the negotiations, securing the first nationwide elections, to be held on May 30, with independence to be announced the following month. The election results shocked the Belgians – Lumumba's MNC, in alliance with a few smaller nationalist parties, gained a majority in both proposed legislative houses.

In the ensuing negotiations, Congolese participants stymied Belgian machinations and agreed that Lumumba would as prime minister organize the government; ABAKO's Kasavubu would become ceremonial head of state. At the independence day ceremony in Leopoldville, Baudouin gave a grotesquely paternalistic speech, in which he praised above all his mass-murdering great-uncle, Léopold II. Kasavubu followed with an obsequious tribute to Baudouin. Lumumba made a stirring speech recounting the brutality of the Belgians, condemning their racist regime, and saluting the freedom struggle of the Congolese masses:

"We have known sarcasm and insults, endured blows morning, noon and night, because we were *nègres* (niggers)... We have seen our lands despoiled under the terms of what was supposedly the law of the land but which only recognized the right of the strongest. We have seen that this law was quite different for a white than a black: accommodating for the former, cruel and inhuman for the latter.... And, finally, who can forget the volleys of gunfire in which so

many of our brothers perished, the cells where the authorities threw those who would not submit to a rule where justice meant oppression and exploitation."

–quoted from Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba*

Since the speeches were broadcast on the radio, thousands of Congolese, hearing Lumumba for the first time, were roused to support his new government, and spread his word across the entire country, the size of the United States east of the Mississippi. The Belgians, on the other hand, in consultation with their American allies, were already plotting Lumumba's overthrow.

Imperialists Unite in Assassination Plot

Lumumba's assassination has for many years been the subject of intense speculation. On the U.S. side, much was revealed by the 1975 Senate hearings on "Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities" (the "Church Committee") which concluded that CIA chief Alan Dulles had ordered Lumumba's assassination as an "urgent and prime objective," and that it was a "reasonable inference" that Eisenhower himself had given the order to kill the Congolese leader. In fact, Eisenhower's official note-taker told the Church Committee that Eisenhower had given the order at an August 1960 National Security Council meeting, after which "there was a stunned silence for about 15 seconds and the meeting continued." However, this interview was not released until last summer, 25 years later (see *Independent* [London], 14 August 2000). John F. Kennedy was also in on the act: his envoy Averill Harriman (of the Brown Brothers Harriman commercial bank) went to Congo that fall, and was fully briefed on U.S. machinations.

It was revealed how Sidney Gottlieb (aka "Joseph Scheider"), one of the CIA's germ-warfare "scientists" from Fort Detrick, Maryland, was sent to the Congo with a box of deadly viruses to carry out Lumumba's assassination – the viruses having been gruesomely designed by Gottlieb to appear in an autopsy as an African disease; how CIA Leopoldville station chief Larry Devlin ("Victor Hedgman") investigated the possibility of shooting Lumumba with a high-powered rifle in his home; how the CIA sent in senior officer Justin O'Donnell, and he and Devlin brought in two professional killers ("QJ/WIN" and "WI/ROGUE"), who, unbeknownst to each other, worked night and day to find a way to kill Lumumba (see Sean Kelly, *America's Tyrant: The CIA and Mobutu of Zaire*, American University Press, 1993). Other revelations indicate that QJ/WIN was Mozes Maschkivitzan, a member of super-secret CIA kill squad ZR/RIFLE which was sent to Congo.

Frank C. Carlucci III – then a foreign service officer in Léopoldville, who in subsequent years became Democrat James Carter's deputy CIA chief, Republican Ronald Reagan's secretary of defense and the mentor of present U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell (the man who covered up the My Lai massacre) – was also heavily involved in the plotting against Lumumba. Peck's movie has a powerfully understated scene in which a meeting of the Kasavubu government voted to torture Lumumba to death; when Carlucci is asked his opinion, he piously intones that his government does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries! All the imperialists got in on

the act. At a September 1960 meeting between President Eisenhower and top British officials, the British foreign secretary "stressed that now is the time to get rid of Lumumba" (quoted in De Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba*).

While the interests of American corporations played a role, the U.S. response was straightforward Cold War anti-Communism. In a document turned over to the Church Committee, CIA chief Allen Dulles warned of a "communist takeover of the Congo with disastrous consequences...for the interests of the free world." He simultaneously authorized a crash program fund of \$100,000 to replace the Lumumba government with a "pro-Western group" (quoted in William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* [Common Courage Press, 1995]). The *Washington Post* (28 August 1960) reported: "Western diplomats see...the part controlled by volatile Premier Patrice Lumumba sliding slowly but surely into the Communist bloc." *Whoever pulled the trigger, Washington's determination to get rid of Lumumba was key to his assassination.*

De Witte argues (citing extensive Belgian sources) and Peck's film portrays that while multiple CIA assassins were in place, the murder was finally accomplished in an operation coordinated by the Belgian government, the CIA, Mobutu and Katangan chief Moïse Tshombé, Dag Hammarskjöld and the UN. Mobutu delivered Lumumba into the hands of the high command of the Belgian Gendarmerie at Camp Hardy in Thysville, Katanga. Lumumba and his colleagues, cabinet minister Maurice Mpolo and deputy senate president Joseph Okito, were brutally beaten and methodically tortured for weeks. Then, in a plan ordered by the Brussels government of Gaston Eyskens and arranged by Colonel Frédéric Vandevalle – head of the Katanga Gendarmerie – they were executed by a firing squad of nine military police personnel and commanded by Police Commissioner Frans Verscheure and Captain Julien Gat.

The bodies were hastily buried, and the Belgians announced that Lumumba and his associates had escaped and were on the run. The following night the Belgian kill squad returned to the execution site, exhumed the corpses, and drove them toward Kasenga, on the border with Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). There they reinterred the bodies. Two days later, on 21 January 1961 (the day after Kennedy's inauguration), according to de Witte's research "two Europeans in uniform and a few black assistants" returned to this second grave with an empty oil barrel, a hacksaw, and bottles of sulphuric acid, which Verscheure reports was supplied by Union Minière. In a lurid scene portrayed in Peck's movie, these soldiers, drunk on whiskey, hacked up, smashed and burned the bodies, dissolved the flesh in acid, and scattered the pieces of bone and teeth on their return trip. Ever after the Belgians, the UN and the U.S. government maintained that Lumumba and his elected nationalist government fell victim to tribal rivalries.

From the moment of his election, the imperialists were determined to stop Lumumba. Despite their minimal petty-bourgeois nationalist program, Lumumba and the MNC had clearly awakened the aspirations of Congolese workers. Congo had no native bourgeoisie, and the petty bourgeoisie, owing to

generations of Belgian racism, was minuscule. The country's immeasurable wealth was entirely siphoned off by European and U.S. conglomerates. To achieve genuine independence would require a workers revolution led by a genuinely communist party, based on the Congolese working class (which numbered several hundred thousands) and intimately linked to the mining proletariat in the Northern Rhodesian copper fields and the Witwatersrand gold and coal miners. Such a party could also win the support of the millions of semi-employed urban and rural Congolese masses. The imperialists coveted Congo for its mineral wealth and geostrategic position at the fulcrum of Africa; for the same reason, a Congolese workers uprising could have set Africa aflame with revolution.

From Mobutu to Kabila: Washington Rules

During the ten-week life (30 June-6 September 1960) of Lumumba's government, strikes broke out across Congo, as workers allied themselves with the MNC and sought relief from their condition of virtual slavery. Within days of Lumumba's assumption of office, the all-black army revolted against its all-white officer corps. Lumumba supported the revolt, dismissed many of the Belgians and allowed the soldiers to appoint their own officers. Fatefully, however, with Lumumba's backing, Belgium's secret asset, Joseph Mobutu, became the chief of staff of the new Congolese National Army, and Mobutu made sure that key positions were filled with his supporters.

The hard core of the Belgian officer corps retreated to the Katangan capital of Elisabethville. The Belgians set up a secessionist state in Katanga, with their puppet Tshombé at its head. Eyskens and Baudouin sent more Belgian troops to Katanga, which disarmed local Congolese army units. Belgian troops were also still in Léopoldville, threatening to move against the government. When Lumumba and Kasavubu attempted to visit Katanga on 12 July 1960, they were denied the right to land. Belgian troops simultaneously occupied the Léopoldville airport. Lumumba and Kasavubu received word that their cabinet had requested U.S. troops. The two Congolese leaders hurriedly countermanded this request, but then asked the UN for military intervention, "to protect national territory against acts of aggression by Belgian metropolitan troops."

Despite the presence of the Soviet bloc and Chinese deformed workers states, and no matter how many supposedly "non-aligned" Third World countries are members of the UN General Assembly, the United Nations has always been an instrument of the great imperialist powers. (Lenin called its predecessor, the League of Nations, a "den of imperialist thieves.") This fact was underscored by the UN role in Congo, coming only a few years after Washington used the UN imprimatur to carry out its counterrevolutionary war against Korea, in which they slaughtered millions of Koreans. Yet Lumumba had fatal illusions, not only in the UN's purpose, but in American imperialism itself. He traveled to New York and Washington in late July to make arrangements with General Secretary Hammarskjöld and U.S. government officials.



Congolese independence leader Patrice Lumumba had illusions in UN secretary general Dag Hammarskjöld, who sought his ouster.

The UN troops were sent to Congo where, predictably, they safeguarded Belgian interests and disarmed Lumumba supporters. With nowhere else to turn, Lumumba requested aid from the Soviet Union. Moscow did ship equipment, but not nearly enough to make a difference; the 15 civilian aircraft it sent were of little use, since the UN soon seized fuel supplies and refused them to the Lumumba government. Despite Dulles' Cold War fantasies, the Stalinists as always were interested in accommodation with imperialism rather than class war. Meanwhile, the Belgian and U.S. imperialists unleashed a virulent anti-Lumumba propaganda campaign. The Congo prime minister was depicted as a wild-eyed radical amassing a fortune selling Congolese women to Russia. Hammarskjöld's American assistant, Andrew Cordier – whom Lumumba supporter Thomas Kanza said was acting as the de facto head of state of the Congo – called Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana “the Mussolini of Africa, while Lumumba is its little Hitler.” Hammarskjöld claimed Lumumba was preparing to annihilate all whites.

The purpose of these depraved utterances was to prepare the way for drowning the Congo in blood. In August 1960, the Belgian conglomerate Forminière set up another secessionist government, in South Kasai, to protect its diamond mines. Despite the massive forces arrayed against the Lumumba government, Lumumba-loyal army units fought the Belgians and their mercenary armies across the country with good success. The imperialists knew that their best chance of regaining control of their wealth-producing colony was to kill Lumumba and as many of his supporters as they could. Their man Mobutu pulled the ANC back in Kasai. U.S. and UN officials got Kasavubu to dismiss Lumumba (which he had no legal authority to do). The coup was announced on 5 September; Lumumba was put under house arrest by Mobutu's thugs and UN troops, acting in concert. He was allowed to speak in parliament a week later, but Mobutu then launched a coup of his own, which Kasavubu, to save his own skin, fully backed.

The assassination of Patrice Lumumba, a centerpiece of the anti-Soviet Cold War, was also good business. For declaring Katanga “independent,” Moïse Tshombé was immediately

paid 1.25 billion Belgian francs. That is nothing compared to what Mobutu got. Here was the neocolonial satrap the West wanted: Mobutu played a key role in the assassination of Lumumba; he headed up the ensuing struggle against the Lumumbaist nationalists, killing thousands; he would eventually kill Tshombé and probably Kasavubu too. He took over the government in 1965, and for more than 30 years protected the imperialists' mines (in exchange for being allowed to skim off billions for himself). Most crucially he provided Congolese territory to aid the U.S. imperialists as a staging ground for their bloody Cold War operations throughout the continent.

Mobutu's *tombreur* (deposer), Laurent Kabila, fought as a Lumumba supporter against the incipient Mobutu regime in the 1960s, later degenerating into a local warlord in the east, trafficking in ivory. Plucked out of oblivion by the Tutsi ruler of Rwanda, Paul Kagamé, a former Ugandan officer trained by the U.S. Army at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the one-time Maoist Kabila was put in power with the approval of Washington (see “From Mobutu to Kabila: Congo – Neo-Colonialism Made in U.S.A.,” *The Internationalist* No. 3, September-October 1997). When he failed to meet the standards of his imperialist overlords, Kabila, too, was assassinated under mysterious circumstances earlier this year, only to be replaced by his pliant son, Joseph.

From the genocide engineered by Belgium's King Léopold II to the succession of murderous regimes sponsored by Washington, this land in the heart of Africa has been the prize in the imperialist race to carve up the continent. Patrice Lumumba so terrified the capitals of the West because he stood at the head of insurgent masses seeking to throw off the yoke of colonial slavery. Though Lumumba was not the fire-breathing communist revolutionary the CIA made him out to be, the imperialist Cold Warriors rightly feared the plebeian upsurge he headed. Today, various Third World nationalists and Stalinist leftovers proclaim themselves Lumumba's heirs. This is no service to the impoverished Congolese masses, for the coming proletarian revolutionary upsurge must above all draw the lessons of Lumumba's defeat.

It is through realizing the Trotskyist program of *permanent revolution* – achieving democratic revolutionary tasks through the seizure of power by the proletariat, led by its international communist party, and proceeding to socialist tasks in close alliance with the workers in the imperialist centers – that the African workers will finally throw off the chains of colonial and semi-colonial slavery. African Bolshevik-internationalists will honor Patrice Lumumba as a courageous fighter for the oppressed who despite the limitations of his petty-bourgeois politics was feared and hated by the colonialist-imperialist oppressors and paid with his life.

Review by R. Titta

41 Shots... Remembering Amadou Diallo



A mural commemorating Amadou Diallo, murdered by the NYPD, now covers the wall near where he was shot down by 41 police bullets in the Bronx, New York City, in February 1999. From the cops in KKK hoods to the Statue of Liberty with a death mask and a gun in her hand, the mural shows Diallo as a symbol of the racist repression and exploitation that blacks, Latinos and immigrants face in capitalist America. See page 59. Internationalist photo

The Assassination of Patrice Lumumba



Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba (right) and other Congo leaders after arrest in Stanleyville (Kisangani) in December 1960.

How the Belgians, Their Henchman Mobutu, the CIA, and the United Nations Murdered Patrice Lumumba and Thousands of his Supporters, and "Saved" Congo for Imperialist Exploitation.

Discussed in this article:

Lumumba, a film by Raoul Peck (Zeitgeist Films, 2000)

The Assassination of Lumumba, Ludo de Witte; translated from Flemish (Verso, 2001).

The brief political life and brutal death of Congolese independence leader Patrice Lumumba is the subject of a powerful new film, *Lumumba*, by the Haitian director Raoul Peck and starring renowned Paris stage actor Eriq Ebouaney in the title role. Coincident with the film's appearance in American theaters is the publication of Ludo de Witte's, *The Assassination of Lumumba* (Verso, 2001), the English translation of his book which appeared in Belgium in 1999. The film gives viewers a riveting two-hour introduction to the tumultuous events around the 1960 independence of the former Belgian Congo and Lumumba's life, from his early pro-independence speeches in the late 1950s until his assassination on the night of 17 January 1961. Ebouaney powerfully evokes Lumumba's dignity and courage in the face of the mounting dangers to his government and his life. Raoul Peck's on-screen depiction of the assassi-

continued on page 59