

Police Attack Leftists, Protect Fascists

Berlin: Militant Protest Spikes Nazi Rally



Cristian V. Polentz photos

February 15: Anti-fascist protesters on train platform confront Nazis cowering in subway car behind police guard.

Emboldened by the German government's attacks on immigrants and mass deportations of refugees, with unemployment at its highest rate since Hitler came to power in 1933, the Nazi "Young National Democrats" announced they would stage a race-hate march for "Jobs for Germans First" through Berlin's Hellersdorf district on February 15. The fascists have repeatedly targeted Hellersdorf to terrorize immigrants and have even murdered an Arab woman with impunity. But not this time. Despite a massive show of police force to protect the brownshirt Nazi scum, some 2,000 anti-fascist fighters—leftists, trade unionists, immigrants, Jewish students and others—boldly faced down a savage police attack and forcefully drove the Nazi rats back into their sewers.

The television news that evening showed what happened in Berlin on February 15: there were no goose-stepping Nazis, no immigrant hostels burned to the ground. Instead, there were scenes of cowering skinheads lying on the floor of a subway car under heavy police protection, as would-be *fuehrers* escaped in police vans from a crowd of anti-fascists who gave chase, shouting "*Nazis raus!*"—Nazis out! Promi-

nent at the head of the determined anti-fascist mobilization was the red banner of the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD, German section of the International Communist League), which proclaimed: "Stop the Nazis Through Workers United-Front Action! Full Citizenship Rights for Immigrant Workers and Their Families!"

As the united-front action which spiked the Nazi provocation came to a close, Spartakist speaker Renate Dahlhaus declared to the hundreds of anti-racist protesters: "Berlin is a labor and left city, a Jewish city, a Turkish city, a Kurdish city. It's our city and we aren't going to let the Nazis march here!" An SpAD press release issued that afternoon reported:

"Under massive protection of the state, the Nazis wanted to crawl out of their rat holes in order to recruit to their program of firebombing, murder and genocide. But it didn't happen here! The determined action of all the anti-fascist fighters on 15 February was a fitting memorial to the martyred Frank Böttcher, a 17-year-old leftist youth who was brutally stabbed to death just days ago by a Nazi gang in Magdeburg."

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It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our comrade, Cesar Armendariz, at the age of 45. On December 28, a tragic car accident left Cesar with fatal head injuries; he died on December 30.

Cesar never took the easy path in life. Born in Dallas, Texas into a Hispanic family and raised in El Paso, he fought his way through the barriers of racial bigotry to become a doctor. Cesar brought a rare humanity and empathy to a profession all too often marked by egotistical career concerns.

These are the qualities that Cesar brought with him in dedicating his life to a struggle against the oppression and degradation bred by capitalism. He joined the Spartacist League/U.S. in 1979. As a doctor, he worked closely with the SL/U.S.'s medical commission, applying meticulous effort to finding the best, most humane treatment available for comrades and their loved ones.

Along with his medical responsibilities, Cesar was a multifaceted communist activist and organizer, carrying out much of his political work in the Washington, D.C. area, where he lived for more than a decade. In the course of organizing for a successful labor/black mobilization which stopped the Klan from rallying in downtown Philadelphia in 1988, Cesar was instrumental in bringing a busload of black Howard University students—dubbed the “Frederick Douglass Brigade”—to the demonstration.

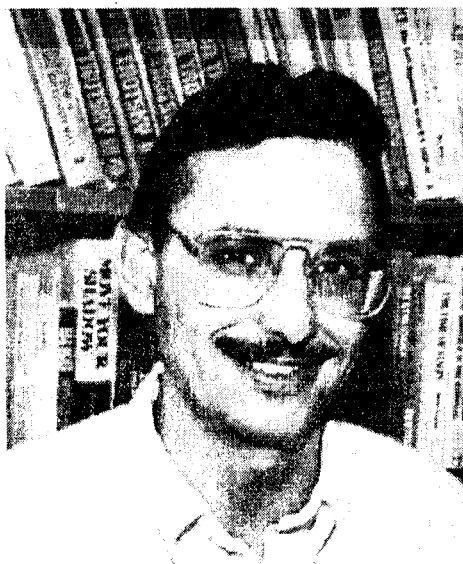
In the spring of 1990, Cesar stepped forward to become the organizer of the Washington, D.C. branch. He

always paid particular attention to youth work—recruiting and training future party cadres. And he was as effective in speaking with workers as he was with youth, from distributing *Workers Vanguard* to shipyard workers in Norfolk, Virginia to bringing to the labor movement the cause of victims of racist repression. In June 1995, Cesar was instrumental in mobilizing trade unionists for a united-front protest in Washington against the impending execution of black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Cesar was deeply committed to building a party that could lead a world socialist revolution. In 1989-90, he went to Berlin as part of the International Communist League's intervention aimed at providing a proletarian revolutionary leadership in the unfolding political revolution in East Germany. Last fall, while on vacation in Texas, he took time to distribute our press in the *maquiladoras*—an important concentration of industrial workers across the border in Mexico. In all aspects of his wide-ranging work in the party, Cesar exhibited a keen understanding of the need for Leninist collectivity, always ready to solicit the opinions of his comrades.

The loss of this remarkable man is a profound tragedy. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Cesar's family, his companion Michale and all those who were so dear to him. Cesar Armendariz was a rare man who touched us with his infinite compassion, his infectious humor, his tender manner and his determination. We will honor his memory in the continuation of the struggle.

Cesar Armendariz



Workers Vanguard

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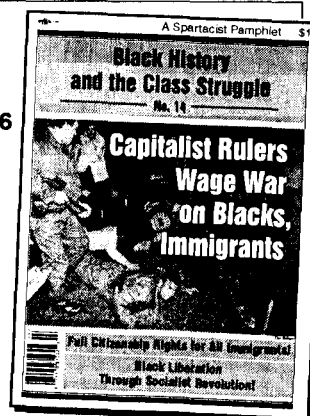
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Avenge Steven Biko Through Workers Revolution!

Neo-Apartheid Regime: Enemy of South African Masses

JOHANNESBURG—Heaping contempt on the memory of those who fought apartheid terror, the South African government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has accepted an application for "amnesty" for the cops who tortured and killed Steven Biko in 1977. At the time of his death at age 30, Steve Biko was the leader of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and the most prominent spokesman for a new generation of anti-apartheid militants. His murder was an outrage which shook the world, making him a symbol of all the many thousands martyred in the fight against the brutal apartheid system of racist segregation and repression. It is no less an outrage today that Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) in government seeks to amnesty Steve Biko's murderers.

Restricted to his cell for weeks, shackled and naked, Biko was beaten to the point of unconsciousness, then dumped in the back of a Land Rover for an eleven-hour drive to a prison hospital in Pretoria, where he died of brain damage. His killers are a group of former security policemen who have now confessed to taking part in the murder of at least ten Eastern Cape anti-apartheid activists, many of whom were drugged, tortured and shot dead, then burned on wooden pyres, with their remains dumped into the Fish River to conceal the bloody crimes. The racist killers today approach the TRC for amnesty in the full knowledge that dozens of their fellow apartheid butchers are "confessing" and getting off unscathed.

The apartheid regime rested heavily on a deliberate policy of naked terror to repress the nonwhite masses in the interests of the capitalist ruling class. When that form of rule became untenable—at bottom, when the black unions emerged, joining their social power to the township revolts and other anti-apartheid struggles—the South African capitalists and their imperialist godfathers turned to the ANC to preserve their system based on the superexploitation of black workers. Accordingly, the ANC regime installed in 1994 seeks "reconciliation" with the racist torturers and those who profited from their hideous crimes.

Mandela's bourgeois-nationalist ANC serves as the black front men and junior partners for the white ruling class in neo-apartheid South Africa. As the ANC presides over capitalist austerity, this has led to an exacerbation of ethnic and tribal tensions among the nonwhite masses. In early February, barely two weeks after the news about Biko's killers emerged, the ANC government unleashed police and troops against protesters in the predominantly coloured ("mixed-race") townships of El Dorado, Westbury and Newclare in southern and western Johannesburg. As cops fired buckshot and live ammunition into the crowd, four people were killed and several others injured. The township revolts erupted over government attempts to collect rents and utility rates, as residents accused the regime of renegeing on a 1994 agreement to cancel



Reuters

February 6 protest in coloured township near Johannesburg in which four were killed.

all past unpaid charges. But the anti-government protest, whose basic demand was entirely justified, was marked by general hostility to blacks among the coloureds involved.

The government's violent response to the coloured revolt—in marked contrast to the conciliatory attitude extended to earlier tax-rate protests by whites in yuppie suburbs like Johannesburg's Sandton—was also intended as an unmistakable message to the residents of black townships who might consider protesting over rates and social services. The latest events underscore yet again that the only road to justice and equality for South Africa's masses lies in a proletarian revolution to sweep away neo-apartheid capitalism, replacing it with a black-centred workers government.

Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement

Biko's death in detention after days of interrogation and repeated assaults held up a magnifying glass to the bloody system of apartheid. His personal courage and outspoken leadership earned him a mass following and scores of activists adopted the outlook of the Black Consciousness Movement. Biko founded the BCM in 1970, at a time when older nationalist groups like the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) had been banned and driven into exile by the massive crack-down which followed the 1960 Sharpeville massacre.

Biko became the leading exponent of BCM, which proposed black self-reliance through self-help community projects

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SC photos

TL contingents marched in January 11 defense demonstrations in Toronto (at left) and Vancouver.

Victory to Iranian Oil Workers!

On February 16, riot police in Tehran attacked a demonstration by several thousand Iranian oil workers, who were protesting outside the Ministry of Labour as part of their ongoing fight for union recognition. Many workers were injured and hundreds arrested in this vicious police assault.

We print below a statement by the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) in support of the Iranian oil workers' struggle. It was issued on January 10 and distributed at international solidarity demonstrations held in cities around the world the following day.

* * *

Workers at four major oil refineries in Iran have launched strike action which could become a pivotal conflict for the entire Iranian working class. Demanding recognition of their union and the right to collective bargaining, workers in Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan and Tabriz staged a two-day walkout on December 18-19. Now they are poised to resume an all-out strike later this month. Working people throughout the world must support the courageous actions by a key sector of the Iranian proletariat, which together with women, the Kurds and other national minorities has suffered nearly two decades of bloody repression under the theocratic Islamic Republic.

Solidarity demonstrations with the oil workers have been called by, among others, supporters of the Worker-Communist Party of Iran, who brought these strikes to our attention. Sections of the International Communist League are joining protests in several cities in North America and Europe, as well as Japan and Australia. In addition to calling for victory to the oil workers, we will be protesting the Iranian regime's threatened deportation of more than a million foreign workers, chiefly refugees from Afghanistan who face utter destitution and death if forced to return to their country of origin.

Unlike most "left" organizations internationally, the ICL

has forthrightly opposed the reactionary Islamic movements which have produced living hell for the oppressed and working people in Iran, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the region. When the armed forces of the former Soviet Union intervened against the CIA-backed insurgency of tribalist cutthroats in Afghanistan back in 1979, we said "Hail Red Army!—Extend social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!" When the sellout Stalinist bureaucrats in Moscow withdrew the army a decade later, we denounced this betrayal and warned of its devastating consequences, especially for Afghan women.

Similarly in Iran, we were unique on the left in opposing the rise to power of the Islamic fundamentalist movement. Back in 1978, amid the massive social turmoil directed against the hated shah, 37,000 Iranian oil workers staged a powerful sitdown strike which was initially independent of the reactionary forces around Ayatollah Khomeini. But the Iranian left subordinated the workers' struggles to the fundamentalists, helping to usher in an unparalleled disaster when Khomeini took power and unleashed his reign of savage terror. At the time, the ICL (then the international Spartacist tendency) said: "Down with the shah, Down with the mullahs!—For workers revolution in Iran!" Today, we continue our fight to build Leninist-Trotskyist revolutionary parties to lead workers revolution in Iran and throughout the world. We say:

- Victory to the oil workers! For international labor solidarity!
- Stop the deportations of Afghan refugees in Iran! For full citizenship rights for foreign workers!
- Defend Iranian women—Away with the veil! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!
- Stop terror against the Kurdish people—For a socialist republic of united Kurdistan!
- Down with the blood-drenched Islamic Republic—For workers revolution in Iran! ■

As Ontario Tories Escalate War on the Poor...

Toronto "Megacity" Uproar = Popular-Front Diversion

In January, the Ontario provincial Tory government announced its decision to fuse Metro Toronto's five-cities-and-a-borough into a "megacity" with a single municipal council. This amalgamation plan means that a bunch of wealthy mayors and featherbedding councilors will lose their sinecures. So they've gone into revolt. On February 15, thousands marched in a "Parade for Democracy" through the streets of Toronto. Riding in a horse-drawn cart at the front was an actor dressed up as William Lyon Mackenzie, the city's first mayor and leader of the Rebellion of 1837. Beside him stood Mayor Barbara Hall, the current overseer of capitalist cutbacks, layoffs and austerity. Behind them, trade unionists and NDP social democrats tramped alongside Liberals and even dissident Tories, while the banner of the International Socialists (I.S.) waved over the heads of "Taxpayers for Local Democracy."

This "Rebellion of '97" was organized by former Toronto mayor John Sewell and his "Citizens for Local Democracy." Sewell's campaign to "defend our cities" against "tyrannical" provincial inroads has momentarily united union bureaucrats and even self-styled revolutionary socialists with the welfare-gouging capitalist mayors, Ontario Liberal leader Dalton McGinty and at least one dissident Tory MPP. But the fight to "save our neighborhoods" is far from being even a deformed expression of opposition to Tory attacks on social services and the poor. Indeed, the current megacity uproar is a *diversion* from any effective resistance to the capitalist austerity administered by both the Tories and the local governments.

Sewell's "movement" is a degeneration product of last year's union-based Days of Action. Mostly organized by the Ontario Federation of Labour bureaucracy, those one-day city-wide strikes were designed to dissipate worker anger at the Tory onslaught through repeated ineffective protests, while the union tops herded the disaffected back into the swamp of NDP parliamentarism. That has largely been achieved, for now. CUPE's Sid Ryan remarked contentedly that "We've now got a new leader in the NDP. We're working very closely and very effectively with the party."

The labor tops' idea of a "struggle" is marking an X for the NDP in the 1999 provincial elections. In pursuit of their goal of a new NDP government to administer capitalism in Ontario, they want to dissolve union-based action into a broad "anti-Tory" movement. Accordingly, they have lined up behind Sewell and the job-slashing municipal councils, ratepayers groups and other *deeply anti-union* forces who are pushing the anti-amalgamation campaign.

The Metro Toronto Labour Council executive issued a statement asserting: "The key question and the one which will unite all citizens, is the need to protect democracy." Following the labor tops' lead, sundry social-democratic "leftists" have climbed aboard the anti-megacity dog cart. While *Socialist Worker* (11 January) pleaded to "oppose removing municipal government one step further away from democratic control,"



Globe and Mail

Anti-"megacity" protesters in Toronto, February 20.

an I.S. supporter rose in a public meeting at Ryerson University to declare: "The megacity idea is an assault on democracy."

Bourgeois democracy boils down to the right to choose your next set of overseers for capitalism. But the elementary democratic right to elect local government representatives is not even at issue here, since the megacity will have an elected council. Of course, Marxists oppose the imposition of Tory-appointed trustees to oversee the transition from six cities to one. But how the capitalist class chooses to structure municipalities is, in general, of no consequence to working people and the oppressed. Thus we are indifferent to the outcome of the March 3 referendums against amalgamation organized by all six Metro mayors and councils.

Megaweek Mayhem Targets Workers and the Poor

The anti-amalgamation movement is a chemically pure *popular front*, if only on a cozy, neighborhood scale. It is an alliance between "liberal" (and not-so-liberal) ruling-class forces and the organizations of workers and the oppressed, tying the latter directly to the interests of bourgeois politicians. And while the capitalist mayors and their labor/left tails push their "local democracy" diversion, the Tories are *escalating* their war against the poor. A flurry of new legislation in January, dubbed "Megaweek," targets heavily unionized, heavily immigrant urban regions like Metro Toronto and Hamilton for even deeper cuts in jobs and services.

City governments are now to be responsible for half of welfare funding, as well as the full cost of social housing, public transit, long-term geriatric care and more. Mike Harris' deficit-slashing gangsters have already taken an ax to these

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Bill Sanford/Canada Wide



Reuters

Mass protests against austerity in Ontario (left) and France. "Days of Action" and other protests have shown potential power of working class, but union bureaucrats, social democrats tie oppressed to capitalist system.

The Fight for a Socialist Future

The following article is based on a presentation by Spartacist Canada editor John Masters at a January 25 Toronto Trotskyist League forum.

Class Struggle and Revolutionary Leadership in the Post-Soviet World

Three months ago, most of you were probably out in the streets demonstrating on the Toronto Days of Action. You may have helped man the pickets that shut the TTC or other industries in the October 25 protest strike, or rallied outside your workplace or school. Then you probably joined the quarter million other protesters—trade unionists, youth, women, immigrants and other minorities—on the march to Queen's Park, the largest political protest in Canadian history.

The Days of Action demonstrated to many workers and young activists the potential power of organized labor. When flying pickets started shutting transit yards all over Metro at three in the morning, openly defying a strikebreaking injunction, the cops were overextended and powerless to stop them. Not a subway, bus or streetcar ran all day—the bosses' sacred laws be damned. A couple of weeks earlier, 200 strikers stormed and seized the GM plant in Oshawa, stopping the company's attempt to move out key equipment, which would have severely undermined their strike. Again, it was "illegal," and it worked, as GM was unable to break the strike.

These are excellent examples of what Karl Marx had in mind when he wrote of the unique social power of the working class (or proletariat) under capitalism. By its very nature, this class has its hands on the instruments that make society run: the factories, transport and communication systems. That gives it a social weight which other sectors of the oppressed—the unemployed, youth, immigrants and desperate refugees—

simply do not have. Given the right circumstances, and above all the right leadership, this power can be mobilized not only to stop one or another attack by the capitalist rulers, but to overthrow their entire system, which is based on the exploitation of the many by a handful of rich exploiters.

But that is not the kind of struggle that is happening today. Think back again to the Days of Action. Remember what the organizers, the platform speakers and indeed most of the left had to say. A chorus of union officials, community activists, even self-proclaimed revolutionary socialists hailed the start of a "movement" which would supposedly turn back the vicious austerity offensive of Mike Harris' Tory government and bring it down. I recall that the biggest cheers were for singer Billy Bragg when he announced he was reclaiming Bob Dylan from the Bank of Montreal, and told us that the times really were a-changin', right here in Ontario.

Three months later, what has changed? The Tory ax is still coming down. Health care and education are being shredded beyond recognition. Jobs keep going, wages keep shrinking, the poorest and most vulnerable are targeted with ever more vicious cuts in welfare, UI and other social programs. The latest Tory ploy, offloading welfare to local municipalities, will mean yet more savage attacks in the poor and heavily immigrant inner cities, while white suburbanites get their 30 percent tax cut. And it's not just the Tories, of course. The Liberals in Ottawa have slashed just as deeply as Mike Harris, as have other provincial regimes across the country.

Yet the "movement" that would supposedly stop this onslaught has evaporated. The union bureaucrats and other organizers of the Days of Action never meant these as a fundamental challenge to the Tories or the capitalist system they so brutally uphold. The labor bureaucracy is a social layer which tries to mediate the struggle between the working class and the capitalist rulers. Their aim was to blow off some steam,

while working behind the scenes to revive their “political arm,” the discredited New Democratic Party. But in giving a taste of the potential power of the working class, the union tops were playing a dangerous game. The obvious question was: why couldn’t such mobilizations be used to rally the millions of oppressed in this society in an all-out assault against the entire system of racism, poverty and oppression?

Now the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats want to stuff the genie of class struggle back in the bottle. They’re ditching the “Days of Action,” and we are being presented with a new “movement,” against the so-called “megacity” (see article, page 5). The potential power of the working class is being squandered, as the capitalists’ attacks continue unabated.

The Necessity of Revolutionary Leadership

The theme of tonight’s talk is class struggle and revolutionary leadership in the post-Soviet world. What has been going on in Ontario is far from unique. Everywhere you look, from North America and Europe to parts of Latin America and Asia, you see the same basic thing. The capitalist ruling classes and their governments are taking the hammer to working people and the oppressed, destroying decades of working-class gains and desperately needed social programs. The workers are trying to fight back, waging raw and often huge defensive battles to hold their present positions and gains from previous decades. But their misleaders—the union bureaucrats and the social-democratic politicians—cannot see beyond the bounds of capitalism, and seek *at best* to render it more “just” and “humane.” Thus they undermine and betray these struggles, channeling the widespread discontent into the dead end of bourgeois electoralism.

They tell the workers that the answer is to elect “left” governments. Yet in B.C. and Saskatchewan, it’s the NDP which is shutting the hospitals and attacking Native people. Here in Ontario, it was Bob Rae’s NDP regime which tore up union contracts, eliminated medicare for foreign students and jailed postal union leaders.

In Italy today, it is the “left” government of the Olive Tree alliance, supported by the union bureaucracy and the so-called “communists” of Rifondazione Comunista, which is leading the austerity charge on behalf of the Banca Italia bosses. And in South Korea, where hundreds of thousands of workers recently waged the largest strike in that country’s history, it is the former “dissident” Kim Young Sam who is waging war on the unions from his presidential offices. Many leaders of the outlawed Korean union confederation do appear to be personally courageous. But even they seek nothing more than negotiations with the regime, and an alliance with a supposedly “progressive” wing of the South Korean ruling class.

So this forum is centrally about what we Trotskyists call the “crisis of working-class leadership.” Put otherwise, it is about the *party question*: the need to construct a revolutionary party as the instrument which can break the grip of the pro-capitalist labor misleaders. That means a party like the Russian Bolsheviks, who under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky led the October Revolution of 1917, the first time in history that the working class took power and held it.

Why a revolutionary vanguard party? History has shown that such a party is essential to make the working class *conscious* of the necessity of overthrowing capitalism. In the absence of such a leadership, over the years countless opportunities to do away with capitalism and its miseries have gone down to defeat, and often bloody disaster. Germany in the

1920s, Spain in the 1930s, Italy and Greece after World War II, France and Italy again in 1968 and ’69, Chile and Portugal the following decade: these are only a few examples of what Marxists call “revolutionary situations,” situations where the never-ending struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie reached fever pitch. The workers rose up, seeking an end to exploitation. But their misleaders chained them to the existing order—and the capitalists emerged triumphant.

There’s a good example in the popular Italian movie *1900*. It shows the workers of Italy insurrecting, arms in hand, after the defeat of Mussolini late in World War II. In the pivotal scene, the workers’ misleaders, who want to limit the struggle to the boundaries of “democratic” capitalism, tell them to surrender their weapons to the occupying American army. There’s a long, drawn-out pause. Then the workers reluctantly obey, piling their weapons in the back of a truck. There was no alternative leadership, and the potential revolution was lost.

The *successful* Russian Revolution showed what is needed. Not a broad “movement” with a loose membership, but a combat organization based on the most conscious elements of the working class and oppressed. If that means starting small, better to do that with your principles and aims clear, rather than build on sand. The Russian Marxists began with a group of something like five people, exiled in Switzerland.

Lenin emphasized that such a party must not be a narrow, trade-unionist organization. It must take up the cause of *all* those oppressed by capitalism: women, immigrants, Native people, gays and lesbians. In this country, for example, it’s vital to defend the national rights of the oppressed Québécois people. Chauvinism against Quebec ties the workers in English Canada to their class enemy. Look at how the NDP has been outdoing even the government in Ottawa in anti-Quebec vitriol, especially in the West. At the same time, this chauvinism drives the Quebec working class into the arms of the bourgeois nationalists, who seek above all to exploit their “own” workers. The national divide has deeply poisoned the prospects for class struggle in this country. As revolutionary internationalists, we advocate independence for Quebec, seeking to get this question off the agenda and lay a basis to bring the class struggle to the fore in both nations.

The Russian Revolution and Stalinism

Building this kind of leadership and rooting it among the workers and oppressed is no easy or straightforward task. This is especially the case today amid the “death of communism” miasma of the late 20th century. So I want to spend some time talking about the current political period—a reactionary period shaped by the counterrevolutionary collapse of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was a gigantic victory for mankind. It spurred revolutionary struggles worldwide, as millions flocked to the banner of the new Communist International. Today, in sharp contrast, we are in a period shaped by a profound historic defeat, with all the negative consequences that entails for workers’ consciousness and struggles.

The Soviet Union was what we call a *degenerated workers state*. The product of a genuine workers revolution, it underwent political degeneration beginning in 1923-24, when a nationalist bureaucracy headed by Josef Stalin rose to power in the face of widespread poverty and imperialist encirclement. The Stalinists destroyed workers democracy and established a

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Socialist Future...

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totalitarian police state, driving out the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky which sought to continue the revolutionary policies of the early Communist International.

Not long after consolidating power, the Stalinists began to openly betray revolutionary opportunities abroad, in the name of so-called "peaceful coexistence" with capitalism. When the French workers rose up in a general strike in 1936, the message from local Stalinist leader Thorez was that they "must know how to end a strike." Instead of revolutionary class struggle, the Stalinists sought a "popular front" with supposedly "progressive" capitalists. This strategy produced defeat after defeat.

Stalinism profoundly eroded the consciousness of the working class, in the Soviet Union and throughout the world. It perverted the liberating goals of Marxism in the service of nationalism, class collaboration and Siberian labor camps. However, it took until the early 1990s for the crimes of Stalinism to fully play out, as the bureaucracy underwent its terminal collapse in the Soviet Union and East Europe, with decisive sectors opting for the road of capitalist restoration. Beginning in 1989, capitalist counterrevolutions engulfed the region. Far from opposing this, in many cases decisive sections of the Stalinist bureaucracy transformed themselves into nationalist pro-capitalist hucksters and helped to *lead* it. Look at Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, or even Boris Yeltsin, a former top Communist Party bureaucrat in Moscow.

We Trotskyists opposed the restoration of capitalism down the line. We fought for defense of the remaining gains of the deformed and degenerated workers states, and for workers political revolution against the bureaucratic misrulers who had brought them to ruin. Where we could, notably in East Germany in the winter of 1989-90, we threw all our forces into this struggle. Our intervention in the pre-revolutionary situation in East Germany shows vividly how even a small revolutionary organization can have a gigantic impact on events. At the beginning our German section was a small propaganda group based in West Berlin without connections to the East German working class or intelligentsia. But we had a powerful revolutionary program. Within weeks, soldiers in the East German army, for example, were taking our propaganda very seriously, and when we called for soldiers committees they tried to form them.

In January 1990 we initiated a demonstration against the fascist desecration of a Soviet war memorial at East Berlin's Treptow Park. A quarter million working people came out in defense of the Soviet monument at our initiative, which was of course overtaken by the much larger Stalinist SED-PDS, then the East German ruling party. But our party speakers made the first Trotskyist speech ever at a mass rally in a deformed workers state since Trotsky's Left Opposition was crushed.

The appeal of our program, the mass response to defend the East German workers state exemplified in the Treptow action, deeply frightened the imperialist bourgeoisie *and* the treacherous Stalinist bureaucrats. The Stalinists made a deal with the government of West Germany to move up the date for *Anschluss* (annexation) by more than a month. The recognition that we were the revolutionary leadership, the potential alternative, was not lost on the class enemy or the decrepit Stalinists who, in surrendering, played a decisive role in lead-

ing the counterrevolution.

I was in Berlin at the time, and helped to man our literature table in Treptow Park. East German workers and soldiers were crowding round by the hundreds, desperate to get our revolutionary propaganda. The next morning, the radio carried a report of the East German "round table" government denouncing the Trotskyists. Although shaped by a disproportion of forces, there was a contest between our Trotskyist program of workers political revolution and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution. We lost—but we fought, in sharp contrast to those who accepted or helped engineer the counterrevolution, or stood passively back and said all was hopeless from the get-go.

Imperialist Rivalries Spur Austerity Onslaught

The counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, East Germany and the rest of East Europe has had devastating consequences for the working people. In many cases, particularly in the ex-USSR, they have been reduced to abject poverty amid murderous national and ethnic hatreds. And the collapse of the Soviet Union has ushered in a period of heightened austerity attacks in the rest of the world, growing out of intensified rivalries among the imperialist big powers.

For much of the post-World War II period, the imperialist rulers subordinated many of these rivalries in the name of a common front against the Soviet Union. They also permitted certain reforms, the social services we know as the "welfare state," recognizing that this was necessary to ward off the threat of new workers revolutions. But now, with the Soviet Union gone and the spectre of communism supposedly dead and buried, the capitalist bandits have fallen out in renewed squabbles over markets and profits. Declaring the "end of the welfare state," they are sharply increasing the exploitation of the working class, while grinding the poor into the ground.

Broadly, we see today in the world three competing imperialist power blocs, each with its own internal tensions. These are the American sphere of influence centered on NAFTA and Washington's Latin American neocolonies; a German-centered Europe; and Japan, which seeks to exercise hegemony in Asia. As the history of the 20th century has shown, inter-imperialist rivalries lead to trade wars which lead, in the end, to shooting wars. And now the imperialist madmen have nuclear weapons, enough to destroy the world many times over.

So the prospect we face is, in the phrase of the revolutionary leader Rosa Luxemburg, *socialism or barbarism*. But the present leaders of the working class are utterly incapable of meeting the task at hand. To the contrary: they tie the workers to the interests of their "own" national capitalists, from whom they seek only a "fair share" of the profits.

When the union tops say they oppose NAFTA, for example, they are not calling to mobilize against the grinding poverty this means for the workers and poor of Mexico, forced to scrape by on a couple of bucks a day in the sweatshops of the *maquiladoras*. No, they are calling to "defend Canadian industry," i.e., defend the profits of Canadian bosses against their competitors abroad. This serves to line up the workers against working people abroad. Reactionary to the core, this also helps to fuel anti-immigrant racism at home, as well as chauvinism against the Québécois.

The fight against chauvinism and racism and defense of the oppressed is inextricably tied to the success of the class struggle, at the most basic level. Look at "workfare," the Tories' scheme to force welfare recipients to work for free at jobs

often currently done by unionized labor. Defense of welfare recipients and all the unemployed, many of whom are immigrants and other minorities, is essential even for the economic self-interest of the working class. Yet where are the union bureaucrats' campaigns for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay, jobs for all at union wages, welfare at a living wage—all demands which challenge the capitalists' "right" to profit?

Or here's a broader example. Remember the chant on the Days of Action, "Hey Mike, Hey Harris, We'll Shut You Down Like Paris." As an expression of international solidarity, that was a good thing. However, the powerful wave of French workers strikes a bit over a year ago was derailed and sold out by the union bureaucracy, just like in Ontario. One of the main reasons for this was that the strikes were not extended to the strategic private sector, where the workforce is heavily immigrant. Why not? The fact is that the French labor tops adamantly refused to take up the defense of immigrants, from North Africa and elsewhere, against the vicious racist dragnet known as "Vigipirate."

There are a number of ostensibly socialist groups out there who claim that the answer to the global capitalist offensive is more worker militancy. But by itself this is *not* the answer. Without the fight for revolutionary *political* leadership, in particular taking up the cause of the specially oppressed, even the most militant struggle will inevitably be channeled into support for the capitalist status quo.

Let's look at Italy, which I touched on earlier. Two years ago, the union leaders there called a number of "days of action," much like the recent Ontario protests. Most Italian leftists simply cheered them on while asking for a bit more militancy, like a two-day or an "unlimited" strike. Their political goal was only to replace the right-wing government of Silvio Berlusconi with a "left" regime centered on the social-democratic PDS and Rifondazione Comunista, both wings of the former Italian Communist Party. In the end, the Italian capitalists let Berlusconi be swept away. Now Italy has its "left" government...which is carrying out the same austerity policies as Berlusconi, with the support of the union leaders and the Rifondazione "communists." And now the *fascists* are on the rise, presenting themselves as the "extraparliamentary" opposition and staging mass protests against so-called "red austerity."

In Ontario, various groups have been calling on the Ontario Federation of Labour bureaucracy to call a general strike to bring down the Harris government. A general strike by its very nature poses the question of *power*: which class shall rule in society, the capitalists or the workers? But all that these groups—the International Socialists, Socialist Action and the like—have in mind is a pressure tactic aimed at forcing new elections and a new NDP government. There's a comic-opera aspect to this, best captured by the International Socialists group, which is ever attuned to the "movement" of the moment. For about a year, at every demonstration you could find their supporters pushing petitions for a province-wide general strike. Now these same I.S.ers have a new petition—asking Harris to stop the megacity. Quite a comedown.



Spartakist
Spartakists initiated 250,000-strong protest against fascist desecration of Red Army memorial in East Berlin's Treptow Park, January 1990.

But there's also a serious aspect, concerning the state of the left in this post-Soviet period of reaction. The vast majority of would-be socialists have moved sharply to the right. Look at Latin America, where yesterday's socialist-talking guerrillas like the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the Salvadoran FMLN now openly embrace capitalist "democracy," even as life gets worse and worse for workers and the poor. Or look at the mass labor-reformist parties like the British Labour Party and the NDP here in Canada. The Labour Party now explicitly rejects even the window-dressing of socialist verbiage as it bids to govern British capitalism. And the NDP provincial regimes are enforcing capitalist austerity here at home.

In West Europe, the large Communist Parties have become pro-capitalist social democrats, while in much of East Europe and the former Soviet Union they happily coexist with fascists in vile nationalist "red-brown" coalitions. Meanwhile, various fake-Trotskyist centrist formations—organizations which are "revolutionary in words, reformist in deeds"—openly embrace the social democrats and bourgeois nationalists.

A perfect example is the decomposing United Secretariat of the late Ernest Mandel, represented in English Canada by the Socialist Challenge and Socialist Action groups. At the beginning of the decade, Mandel and his followers joined with the social democrats in campaigns for anti-Communist forces like Boris Yeltsin who sought the destruction of the Soviet Union. Now, Mandel's followers want to dissolve their organizations altogether into the social democracy. Their self-described aim is to "overcome" the historic split in the labor movement between reform and revolution. But the working class was able to take power in Russia in 1917 only and precisely because Lenin's revolutionary Bolsheviks split with the Mensheviks, and fought their reformist politics all down the line. Reformism means leaving the capitalist class of exploiters in power; revolution means overthrowing and replacing them with the rule of the workers and oppressed.

Fighting "Against the Stream"

Our organization, the International Communist League, is by no means immune to the pressures of the reactionary
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Socialist Future...

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political climate. A revolutionary party is not built simply through the process of engaging and, where we can, leading the masses in struggle. While always fighting to extend its influence and support, it must also seek to maintain programmatic integrity through ceaseless vigilance and internal struggle. The pressure of alien class influences emanating from capitalist society constantly bears down on those who would lead a fight for revolution. Inevitably, some cadre get worn out and demoralized. And challenges to the program, emanating from within the party as well as externally, must be fought politically. Marx's collaborator Frederick Engels recognized this as far back as 1888, when he wrote: "It seems that every workers party, in a great country, can only develop itself by internal struggle, and this is based on the laws of dialectical development in general."

In Italy, the former editor of our newspaper tried to claim that agitation for a general strike would be a magic talisman against class collaboration. Our Italian section fought and defeated this "left" cover for the "combative" popular front, bringing to the fore the necessity for working-class political independence from the bourgeoisie. He quit, and has since joined "Proposta," a right-centrist group inside Rifondazione which helps to buttress the popular-front government.

In this country we had a factional struggle a couple of years ago with one Yossi Rad, who wanted to support the vile, fascist-infested "red-brown" coalition in Russia, along with other anti-working-class ex-Stalinist forces. We fought him down the line, and pointed out that his call to support the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress in the South African elections showed that what was really going on was a capitulation to the capitalist status quo. Political support of any kind to a bourgeois party is contrary to the ABCs of Marxism and a betrayal of the proletariat. Rad quit, and promptly abandoned most of the positions he had fought for internally. Notably, he retrospectively called for a "bloc" with Boris Yeltsin in Russia in 1991. Today his little newsheet *Workers Voice* calls to support and build the NDP.

Most recently, we have had a lengthy struggle with Jan Norden, longtime editor of *Workers Vanguard*, paper of our American section. Refusing to accept the reality of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe, Norden began to prettify ex-Stalinist forces, notably the former East German ruling party, the PDS, as prospects for "revolutionary regroupment." He denigrated our powerful intervention in the pivotal events of 1989-90, dismissing this as a

B.C. New Democrats...

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views," B.C. Fed president Ken Georgetti underlined that he will lead no labor struggle here: "We don't have to go to the streets, unlike [Tory-ruled] Ontario, to have our views heard" (*Province*, 26 November 1996).

Through Georgetti & Co., the B.C. NDP maintains a death grip on social struggle. In Ontario four years ago, when Bob Rae's NDP government imposed its union-busting Social Contract, a "dissident" wing of the Ontario Federation of Labour centered on CUPE and the CAW temporarily broke ties with the party in response to anger at the base. The



no credit

Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, leaders of Russian Revolution and founders of Communist International.

litany of failed "tactics." Internationally, Norden's impressionism led him to seek political accommodations toward other bankrupt Stalinists, like the Castro regime in Cuba, which is today sidling up to the foreign capitalists and even the pope as Cuba barrels down a path toward capitalist counterrevolution. More generally, Norden's outlook was an expectation that various non-proletarian forces could somehow under certain circumstances play a social or political role that is precluded by their class composition, history and program.

In every one of these cases, the differences were fought out internally, and documented in numerous internal bulletins, many of which are available publicly. These fights strengthened our party by clarifying the burning issues of this period for our membership. Such political struggle is essential for forging a genuine party of socialist revolution.

We of the Trotskyist League and our comrades throughout the ICL fight for *new October Revolutions*. To youth becoming radical activists today, that may seem like a rather esoteric, or even hopelessly utopian perspective. But there's really no alternative, no shortcut, no magic bullet. Our starting point for addressing the struggles of working people and the oppressed is the understanding that poverty, destitution, racism and war are *endemic* to capitalism, and that only socialist revolution can provide a future for mankind.

Young activists who want to put an end to the oppression they see everywhere around them should join us in the struggle. You have a world to win. ■

CAW/CUPE brass organized numerous large protests against Rae to make sure that anger was vented safely (while NDP attacks proceeded unhindered). But in B.C. the NDP's deprivations have sparked exactly *one* B.C. Government and Service Employees Union protest in Victoria, and two small Vancouver protests of social workers fed up with sending starving people on to the streets.

Indeed, the labor bureaucrats are *actively assisting* "their" government's attacks on working people and the poor. When Finance Minister Andrew Petter announced public-sector layoffs last fall, BCGEU president John Shields claimed this was "the ultimate in the right-wing neo-conservative agenda." But this was so much hot air. Shields had already called for

job cuts through a hiring freeze, early retirement and attrition, stating, "the scope of the financial crisis is such that there is no way to restructure and streamline government without seeing some layoffs" (*Vancouver Sun*, 13 September 1996). And the executive of the Vancouver CUPE local representing the province's largest public library system recently proposed cuts that *exceed* management demands!

The NDP's attacks, like those of the federal Liberals and capitalist governments around the world, flow from the iron logic of a decaying economic system based on private profit. Defeating this onslaught requires an *anti-capitalist* leadership which understands that the interests of the working class are counterposed to those of the owners of industry and commerce. For labor to fight in its own interests and those of all the oppressed requires a fight against the entire capitalist system.

NDP Pushes "Hot Buttons" of Social Reaction

In B.C., the ruling class is aggressively bigoted. Governing on their behalf Clark, like Harcourt before him, openly fuels anti-Québécois chauvinism with a hard "take no prisoners" attitude, even denouncing Ottawa's off-again, on-again "distinct society" sop. But if Anglo chauvinism, anti-Asian racism and abuse of Native people remain pillars of capitalist rule, B.C. itself has changed. Thanks to a massive influx of immigrants, largely from Asia, the province is no longer overwhelmingly white. More than half of Vancouver's fast-growing population speaks a first language other than English; nearly a third of school children speak Chinese.

The increasing integration of the working class underscores the necessity to combat the poison of racism. Yet the NDP and union misleaders fan the flames of racist reaction. The previous Harcourt government's residency requirement for welfare payments explicitly targeted refugees who managed to make it to B.C., even as "Premier Mike" scapegoated welfare recipients. The UFAWU fishermen's union has responded to dwindling salmon stocks and federal mismanagement by waging a vicious racist campaign against Native fishing rights. And the New Democrats sent the army and RCMP against Native protesters at Gustafsen Lake, and are now running the protesters through a massive frame-up trial.

Responding to intensified interimperialist competition with nationalist protectionism, the NDP's number one priority is investments and profits for Canadian big business. This is supplemented by the chauvinist "national unionism" of the labor bureaucrats, who pit "their" members against "foreigners." Their appeals to "save Canadian jobs" blame "off-shore" and, by extension, immigrant workers for the decay of Canadian capitalism. It is a short step from complaining that Asian and other workers are "stealing jobs" to demonizing "them" as the enemy. Such was the patriotic "rationale" for the racist internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II. Trade wars ultimately lead to shooting wars: in lining up the workers behind the national interests of their own capitalist rulers today, the labor bureaucrats help pave the way to World War III tomorrow.

The ugly logic of social-democratic nationalism was shown graphically in early January. Workers around the world had their eyes on South Korea, where tens of thousands of unionists waged a general strike against brutal anti-union laws. International labor solidarity was urgently needed. Yet even as the regime unleashed a wave of repression and Jean Chrétien and his trade mission were clinking glasses with

South Korean dictator Kim Young Sam, "Team Canada" member Glen Clark cynically expressed his confidence that the "crisis" would be resolved "using democratic means." Clark said, "we're representing British Columbia workers here pursuing trade.... We don't come here to give lectures to Koreans about their domestic affairs" (*Vancouver Sun*, 14 January). In perfect sync, the B.C. Fed tops approved Clark's "representation" of "their" interests.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Unlike the Liberals and other parties of capital, the NDP is a *bourgeois workers party*. It has organic links to the unions, but its program and leadership are thoroughly pro-capitalist. We Trotskyists understand that the NDP's stranglehold on the labor movement constitutes an enormous obstacle to forging the class consciousness necessary to anti-capitalist struggle. It is a strategic task for revolutionaries to split the NDP, breaking the working-class base from the pro-capitalist tops, in the struggle for a new, revolutionary leadership.

However, the vast majority of self-proclaimed socialists actively foster illusions in the New Democrats. Across the board, they called to re-elect the capitalist Clark government, and cheered once it was safely back in office. The stone-cold reformists of the Communist Party called this a "welcome setback for the corporate agenda, in British Columbia and across Canada" (*People's Voice*, June 1996). The Socialist Challenge group worried that while "the NDP victory will be welcomed and carefully studied, especially by labour, it does not necessarily translate into wider gains for the NDP in other parts of Canada" (*Socialist Challenge*, September 1996).

The International Socialists (I.S.) urged workers to "Vote NDP." "But don't trust Clark," they added, criticizing various NDP policies. However, these pale-pink leftists seek only to pressure the NDP to adopt different "priorities" within the context of capitalist rule. Like their British parent group, the Socialist Workers Party, the I.S. is unflinchingly loyal to the big-time social democrats, election after election. British Labour Party leader Tony Blair has joined the Tories' union-bashing and racist law-and-order drive, but that hasn't stopped the I.S.' British sires from backing Labour to the hilt in the coming election.

All of these "radicals" function as shills for the NDP and the labor brass, and thus as minor props of the capitalist system. In contrast, communists fight to break the oppressed from the blind alley of social democracy. Against the NDP's racist scapegoating of immigrants, we demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees*. Opposition to Anglo chauvinism and advocacy of *independence for Quebec* is critical in order to redirect social struggle against the capitalist ruling class. Against the Clark government's proposed "shorter workweek" for less pay, a real struggle against unemployment means fighting for jobs for all through a *sliding scale of hours and wages*. A fighting workers movement would combat the attacks on education and health care by demanding *open admissions with free tuition, free quality health care for all* including free abortion on demand and *free 24-hour child care*.

But realizing these demands requires the mobilization of the multiracial working class at the head of all the oppressed in an assault on the entire system of racist capitalism. The Trotskyist League fights to build an internationalist revolutionary workers party which can put an end to capitalist poverty and oppression through *socialist revolution*. ■

Berlin...

(continued from page 1)

On one week's notice, several organizations swung into action with calls for demonstrations against the fascists. A call to mobilize at the same time and place where the Nazis intended to start their rally was issued by the Trade Unionists Against Racism and Fascism, Anti-Fascist Action and other "antifa" groups. Meanwhile, the Social Democrats (SPD), the ex-Stalinist social-democratic Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) and others appealed to the state to "ban" its Nazi dogs of war, and called for a demonstration some distance away from the site of the intended Nazi assembly. The SpAD and the Spartakist Youth called on all opponents of Nazi terror to join the former demonstration, at the same time and place where the Nazis intended to mobilize.

The rapidly shifting events and challenges in the course of building this protest were a test in action of the competing political programs of the anarchists, the SPD, the PDS and the authentic communists represented by the SpAD. A February 11 SpAD leaflet emphasized: "Only a united-front action based on the social power of the workers and which defends and draws in all the oppressed and exploited can stop the Nazi terror, which ultimately is aimed at the organizations of the workers movement itself."

The SpAD leaflet excoriated the union bureaucrats who have bought into the bosses' anti-immigrant frenzy—like IG Metall chief Zwickel, who scandalously echoed the Nazis' battle cry with a demand for "foreigner quotas." It's an outrage that such a racist demand is voiced by the head of IG Metall, which organizes more immigrant workers than any other union in Germany. Meanwhile the police terror against immigrants is increasingly aimed at these very unions, including bloody baton attacks on union rallies.

A Test of Program in Action

As opposition to the Nazi mobilization mounted throughout Berlin, the government and its mouthpieces in the bourgeois press worked overtime to lull and demobilize the Nazis' intended victims. The bourgeois press ran lying stories that the Nazis' threatened provocation was canceled, and Berlin interior minister Schönbohm announced on February 13 that the Nazis would instead rally at an undisclosed indoor site under police protection.

The SpAD played a critical role in countering the government's cover-up for the Nazis. Our comrades blanketed Humboldt University and some of the heavily integrated factories in Berlin with a second leaflet calling to "Stop the Nazis!" and warning: "Don't be fooled by any tricks.... Full steam ahead. A joint demonstration of thousands of working people and all potential victims of the Nazis must *guarantee* that there is no place for Nazis in Berlin."

The political battle continued on the morning of February 15, as our comrades fought to pull together the diverse forces at the site into the largest possible united mobilization to counter the massive cop presence and to put the Nazis on the run. This required political combat with the do-nothing PDS/SPD "stay away" crowd and some chaotic anti-communist, anarchoid types. The SpAD built a substantial contingent and sent out effective "agit-prop" teams to the other, PDS-led demonstration to agitate and appeal for *organized united-front action* to stop the Nazis.

Bullhorning to the 700 assembled at the PDS "peaceful,



Spartakist

February 15: Spartakist banner reads, "Stop the Nazis Through Workers United-Front Action! Full Citizenship Rights for Immigrant Workers and Their Families!"

legal" gabfest, our comrades warned against any confidence in the bourgeois state and urged: "Enough has been said here, now it is necessary to act—that means to *stop the Nazis*. That's why we are now leaving, to unite with those at Kaulsdorf train station who want to stop the Nazis." Our speech hit the crowd like a tidal wave. Scandalously, "Trade Unionists Against Racism" denounced us as "splitters" and declared they would "spontaneously" decide where to go. As we replied that we had no time to wait for their "spontaneity," some 300 of the demonstrators—including a contingent of Jusos (SPD youth) led by the Cliffite group Linksruck, which is buried inside the SPD—surged forward to link up with the other anti-Nazi forces, chanting "Smash the fascists!"

Meanwhile at Kaulsdorf, the AA/BO (Anti-Fascist Action/National Organization) called from their sound truck to *dissolve the demonstration*, dangerously urging protesters to proceed individually to where the Nazis had been sighted at Wuhletal station. The SpAD contingent immediately turned toward Wuhletal and chanted, "Stand together to stop the fascists!" A number of *Autonom* (anarchoid) youth, Turkish and Kurdish student youth and others joined us and marched off as a disciplined, determined, anti-fascist bloc...while the AA/BO leadership stayed behind!

As the anti-fascists—with SpAD banners in the lead and anarchists and Jusos behind us—neared the Wuhletal train station, they met a cordon of police vans and a phalanx of cops with water cannon. Some clever and courageous anti-fascist youth had spotted the train car the police had reserved for the Nazis on the elevated platform and were already giving the fascists a good drubbing. Taking the relatively few cops at the subway entrance by surprise, our comrades stormed up the stairs. Our chants of "*Nazis raus!*" echoed loudly through the station. Meanwhile, in consonance with their wishy-washy politics, the Jusos hesitated and left a space for the cops to close in behind us.

A pitched battle ensued, as the cops went directly for the anti-fascist protesters' heads. One young woman comrade of the Berlin Spartakist Youth was smashed in the face by a cop and sent to the hospital with a broken nose requiring surgery.

We were told that other protesters had been brutally beaten in police vans. Over 100 leftists were arrested. We demand: *Drop the charges against all anti-Nazi protesters!*

At the same time, cops were picking skinheads up off the platform and moving them into special subway cars and waiting police vans to speed them to safety. Andreas Storr, the self-appointed fascist *führer*, was seen scurrying for police protection. When reports came in that antifa motorcycle scouts had spotted more Nazis at a nearby train station, Kaulsdorf Nord, the SpAD formed up the remaining anti-fascist forces, still several hundred strong, and marched there at top speed. Finding no Nazis there, the protesters joined with the SpAD in a victory rally.

A report in *Neues Deutschland* (17 February), which is sympathetic to the PDS, falsely credits the PDS with a key role in stopping the Nazis, while acknowledging that Spartakists and *Autonoms* tried to drive the fascists off the train platform. The very next day, in an interview with the Berlin daily *Tagesspiegel*, local PDS mayor Uwe Klett distanced himself from the "brawl" on the train platform and called it "questionable" whether those who led the breakaway from the PDS rally in order to stop the fascists "could be considered leftists," a standard Stalinist slander of Trotskyists now used in the service of the Fourth Reich.

This craven repudiation is in line with the PDS's actual role, which was to *demobilize* the anti-Nazi forces. After shamefully standing on the sidelines of the battle, the PDS then joined in *against* the anti-fascists. Acting in concert with the cops, PDS mayor Klett bellowed over a sound system that the attacks against the Nazis on the platform must stop. And while the PDS tries to paint itself as in the vanguard of the fight against fascism, its support to German nationalism has in the past led it into sordid embraces of right-wing chauvinist forces, including a 1993 meeting between a prominent PDS spokesman and a leader of the Nazi "Nationale Offensive."

The PDS and SPD promote suicidal illusions in bourgeois democracy, looking to the capitalist state to ban the fascists in order to "clean up" the Fourth Reich's image in the eyes of the world. But, as Spartakist spokesman Toralf Endruweit said to a roar of applause at the anti-fascist protest: "We aren't here to show the clean face of Germany, because there isn't any. We aren't here for a 'well-fortified or watchful democracy,' because this bourgeois democracy protects the fascists

and beats up on immigrants and leftists. We're here to stop the fascists!"

Only Socialist Revolution Can Eradicate the Fascist Threat!

In Germany as elsewhere in Europe, the government's hounding of immigrants is used to whip up nationalism—and the fascists are the most consistent nationalists. The assault on immigrants is the spearhead of a mobilization by the capitalist class against the entire workers movement. Meanwhile, across Europe the workers have responded with class struggle to defend their living standards. The interests of labor and minorities must advance together or they will fall back together.

To combat the fascist threat requires not just militant street actions, although they certainly have their place, but a program for revolutionary struggle. The fascists are recruiting precisely because they are the only force which appears to offer a "radical" social program. With their chauvinist call for "jobs for Germans first," they hope to seize on widespread despair in the face of escalating unemployment to push their genocidal program against immigrants and workers of Turkish and Kurdish descent. The anarchists offer no program for fighting capitalism, while the bankrupt reformist misleaders—tailed by the centrists—seek to divert working-class anger against skyrocketing unemployment into the same anti-immigrant chauvinism pushed by the fascists.

We Trotskyists fight for a program of proletarian revolution to sweep away the capitalist system and its fascist dogs of war. The only way to eradicate unemployment, to provide decent housing, education and social services for all, to eliminate the danger of new imperialist wars and new Holocausts, lies through the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the creation of an egalitarian socialist society internationally. For a Socialist United States of Europe!

This requires an uncompromising fight against the poisonous racism which divides the working class. Indifference to racial oppression flows directly from a program of *class collaboration* with your own bourgeoisie. We Trotskyists of the International Communist League fight for a new, revolutionary leadership—a proletarian internationalist Leninist party—to unite the working class in opposition to its class enemy and to fight for new October socialist revolutions worldwide.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard No. 662, 21 February*

South Africa...

(continued from page 3)

and racial pride. His movement was strongly influenced by eclectic nationalist writings, from Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) in the U.S. to Frantz Fanon and Julius Nyerere in Africa. Biko saw black pride as a counterbalance to white racism and encouraged the unity of all those discriminated against on the grounds of colour or race, including the coloured and Indian sectors of the population.

When a new generation of activists embraced Biko as their young leader in the aftermath of the June 1976 Soweto uprising, the racist police turned their sights on him. Repeated bannings and limited circulation of his writings left Biko's views open to broad interpretation by various nationalists from PAC to the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO). His political career cut short by assassination, like Malcolm X, Biko in death became an icon easily claimed by divergent

political viewpoints.

Defending the BCM leaders against apartheid repression, we pointed to the fundamental weakness in their ideology: the absence of any recognition of the centrality of the black working class in the struggle against white supremacy. One year after the Soweto protests, as the jackboot of apartheid repression again came down on Soweto youth, we wrote: "The failure to strongly mobilize black workers underscores...its lack of a program to link the struggle for democratic rights with the mobilization of the social power of the black proletariat around its class interests" ("Soweto Bleeds," *Workers Vanguard No. 164, 1 July 1977*).

That Steve Biko's killers can walk the streets with impunity while anti-apartheid fighters remain imprisoned to this day is a grotesque illustration of what passes for justice in the "new" South Africa. Biko's family has courageously opposed his racist killers' bid for amnesty. Thousands of

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South Africa...

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outraged demonstrators should have taken to the streets. But most left and "radical" groups, including the nationalists in PAC and AZAPO which claim Biko's legacy, have refused to organise protests against the TRC sham. This passivity is a reflection of their tailing after Mandela's nationalist popular-front government, which is based on the "tripartite alliance" of the ANC, the reformist South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

For a Black-Centred Workers Government!

The Mandela government's claim to be constructing a "nonracial" society is a hoax. The rigid structures of racial segregation—the Group Areas Act, the language restrictions, the pass laws—are gone, but the brutal exploitation of black and also coloured workers by the white industrialists, mine owners and wealthy farmers continues as before. The courts, cops and military that enforced apartheid rule remain intact, even if some ANC faces appear in high places.

The bourgeois-nationalist ANC government cannot possibly meet the aspirations of the masses for jobs, homes, decent living standards, medical care and education. In the absence of a conscious struggle for workers revolution, the different sections of the oppressed are being pitted against each other in a dog-eat-dog struggle for crumbs. The government is consciously playing blacks against coloureds and Indians, South Africans against immigrant workers, in order to divert attention from the real enemy: neo-apartheid capitalism, under which the overwhelming majority of the population is kept in desperate poverty, and the blacks remain on the bottom.

An example of how the legitimate grievances of one sector of the oppressed can be channeled, in the absence of a class-struggle axis, into hostility toward other sectors was seen in the recent coloured township revolt. The primary organiser was Basil Douglas, a local councillor and member of the murderous Inkatha Freedom Party, which is based on the reactionary Zulu tribalism of Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who was sponsored for years by the Nationalist apartheid regime. The coloured protesters blamed black squatters and neighbouring black Sowetans as the source of their woes.

Meanwhile, some black Sowetans denounced the coloureds as having "had it good" under apartheid. This was an echo of the demagoguery being pushed by the regional ANC government. Tokyo Sexwale, the ANC premier of Gauteng province, in 1994 denounced the coloureds' request to wipe out unpaid back rent, saying he wanted to "vomit" when "others try to use" blacks' "legitimate grievances" (*Cape Times*, 19 September 1994).

At the same time, the ANC government is orchestrating and manipulating a xenophobic backlash targeting immigrant workers from neighbouring African states—a key sector of South Africa's proletariat, especially in the gold mines. This escalating drive is being spearheaded by leading ANC women politicians who direct the country's first privately run deportation camp, called Lindela, in Randfontein. An article aptly headlined "Deporting for Cash" (*Weekly Mail & Guardian*, 13 February) details how the camp was set up by top ANC women including deputy parliamentary speaker Baleka Kgositsile, deputy minister of home affairs Lindi Sisulu and Adelaide Tambo. One of the ANC members involved maintained that the deportation camp was a "way of contributing to the normalisation of South Africa.... As much as we are not against foreigners coming into South Africa, we must assist our government in curbing the influx."

The ANC touts this as an example of "black people in general and African women in particular seeking a stake in the economy of our country"! Their understanding of fighting the oppression of women and blacks is to elevate a few privileged elements of the aspiring black bourgeoisie to grind the black South African and immigrant working masses. Many of the refugees come from countries like Mozambique, which were devastated by the military and economic warfare of the white-supremacist regime in Pretoria because they provided bases for the ANC guerrillas. We demand full citizenship rights for immigrant workers! In counterposition to the nationalism of the ANC, we fight for a socialist federation of southern Africa.

A recent report by the COSATU trade-union federation sharply criticised the "neo-liberal" austerity policies of the Mandela government with which it is allied, noting that "the economy in the new South Africa continues largely to represent what it was in 1993, except there is some jobless growth, and a few black faces and companies participating in it." The increasing disaffection of COSATU from the ANC government is significant, because this mass labour organisation contains not only the bulk of the organised black workers but also coloured and Indian, and even some white, workers. Thus, it poses the potential for working-class struggle transcending and cutting across national-ethnic divisions.

If the class principle does not prevail, the scrambling for crumbs off the table of the bourgeoisie can only intensify. Only the forging of a Leninist party that acts as a tribune of the people, defending all sectors of the oppressed as part of the struggle for proletarian state power, can cut through these rising ethnic hatreds born of the horrendous poverty produced by capitalist superexploitation and the divide-and-rule policies of the apartheid masters. Under a black-centred workers government, there will be an important role and full democratic rights for coloureds, Indians and other Asians, and those whites who accept a government centrally based on the black working people.

To avenge the murder of Steve Biko and bring to justice the victims of countless other anti-apartheid fighters requires a government where revolutionary workers tribunals, including the families of Steve Biko and other murdered fighters, will prosecute and sentence the racist criminals. We Spartacists fight to forge a Trotskyist vanguard party, based on the perspective of permanent revolution, which will champion the interests of all the oppressed, and fight for socialist revolution and its necessary international extension to the industrial centres of the capitalist world.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 662, 21 February

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“Megacity” Uproar...

(continued from page 5)

vital services. Public transit subsidies have been rolled back or frozen; welfare benefits were slashed by over 20 percent in 1995, leaving *more than one-third* of all children in Metro struggling below the poverty line. Last June, at the behest of profit-gouging private operators, the Tories abolished provincial standards of nursing care in homes for senior citizens. Scores of nurses and attendants were immediately fired. Now, rather than being bathed, many residents of these nightmare institutions are literally hosed down in shower stalls.

“Downloading” socially necessary services onto local property-tax bases is necessarily reactionary, undermining uniform standards in favor of wealthy enclaves and at the expense of poorer working-class and immigrant areas. Already, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario is negotiating for local control over the amount to be paid to welfare recipients—i.e., the right to drive the poor out of town by arbitrarily slashing benefits even further.

At the same time, “downloading” prepares the way for reactionary, racist tax revolts like California’s Proposition 13, which devastated the state’s education system along with the black inner cities. Much of the support for the anti-megacity campaign comes from downtown middle-class taxpayers who *endorse* the Tory attacks on the poor, and are “rebellious” against being forced to pay for the services on which poor people depend. Even the Tories’ core of white, suburban middle-class supporters have been howling in outrage over “Actual Value Assessment,” introduced as part of the Megaweek offensive. This will see residential and business taxes rise as much as 40 percent in Metro Toronto. While wealthy residents of Forest Hill and Rosedale can certainly flee to the “905 area code” outer suburbs, working-class and immigrant homeowners and renters living downtown are simply screwed.

In “exchange” for dumping social programs on the cities, the Tories have “taken responsibility” for the education

system. After breaking a Kingston teachers strike—with the support of the NDP—Education Minister John Snobelen is now talking about outlawing teachers strikes entirely. Further, local elected school boards are to be abolished or amalgamated, while so-called “parental advisory boards” are to be made mandatory in every school. This “reform”—in the guise of giving “control” of schools back to “the people”—is an open invitation to bigotry and superstition, designed to enforce ignorance and servility among a whole generation for whom capitalism has no use. Already a gang of Christian fundamentalists called “Parents Against Corrupt Teaching” has succeeded in getting a novel removed from Grade 12 classrooms in Halton region. *Foxfire*, by noted American writer and educator Joyce Carol Oates, has been denounced as “obscene” by the sinister rural idiots of PACT because it deals with teen “girl gangs,” sex and drugs. Endorsing PACT’s “concerns surrounding this issue,” Snobelen ominously suggested: “As we examine the roles of [parental advisory boards], we might want to see if perhaps that’s a role they could take on in the future” (*Globe and Mail*, 5 February).

International Socialists Embrace the Popular Front

In the wake of the Tory Megaweek pronouncements, the all-purpose opportunists of the International Socialists leapt into Sewell’s “local democracy” diversion with both feet. Trying to give a “progressive” spin to this campaign, *Socialist Worker* now pleads to “Stop megacity, Stop the cuts” (8 February). But throughout, the I.S. has actively built a “movement” which embraces anti-union hucksters like North York mayor Mel Lastman.

The I.S.’ main slogan on February 15 was: “Stop the War on the Poor! Kick the Tories Out!” Kick out the Tories and replace them with...who? The I.S. has already pledged to vote NDP in 1999. But the mayors and city councilors of all political stripes, including NDPer Barbara Hall in Toronto, have been hatchetmen for the Conservatives from the start. And before them, the local capitalist administrators wielded the budget ax for Bob Rae’s NDP government, whose union-busting Social Contract paved the way for Harris.

The Tories are now abolishing union “successor rights,” and will move to tear up contracts and liquidate entire union locals in the wake of amalgamation, privatization or other “restructuring.” But looking to the New Democrats and the sellout union bureaucrats to lead a fight against such attacks is a fool’s game. In Toronto, CUPE Local 79 alone has *already* lost 1,200 members to “municipal downsizing” without even token resistance from the labor tops. And the New Democrats openly administer these cuts. Testifying at public hearings into the megacity plan, Toronto NDP councilor Kyle Rae pointed to this wholesale destruction of union jobs as proof that amalgamation was unnecessary to reduce city payrolls.

The vicious program of capitalist austerity and social reaction can be defeated only through struggle based on the social power of the organized working class, at the head of all those exploited and brutalized by profit-driven capitalism. Such struggle cannot go forward in alliance—“temporary” or otherwise—with the class enemy. The *precondition* for successful resistance is the complete independence of the working class from the capitalist ruling class and its state. That means a clean break from popular-front schemes and other forms of class collaboration, and a political battle to break working people and their allies from the pro-capitalist NDP in the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party, tribune of all the oppressed. ■

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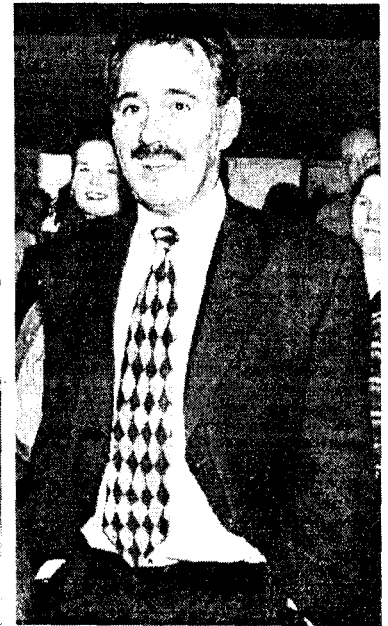
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B.C. New Democrats Bleed the Poor



NDP premier Glen Clark (right) slashes health care, welfare, jobs with support of B.C. Fed union bureaucrats.

Greg Osadchuk/Province

Chuck Stoody/Canapress

For Class Struggle! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

VANCOUVER—Last spring, playing on widespread fear of what a “deficit-slashing” provincial Liberal government would mean for working people, the B.C. Federation of Labour bureaucrats marshalled workers to re-elect the NDP government of Glen Clark. Many workers believed that returning the New Democrats would be a way of avoiding the massive attacks on jobs and social programs inflicted elsewhere, notably in Tory-run Ontario and Alberta. But with victory in the bag, the NDP began hacking \$750 million from the provincial budget. And now the stories of human misery wrought by the NDP’s attacks come daily.

Health care is in severe crisis as hundreds of hospital beds lie empty and thousands of workers are laid off. Seriously ill people must wait months for life-saving procedures. Even if understaffed ambulance crews reach the sick or injured in time, they are shuttled from one emergency room to another. And cruelty is partnered with bigotry, as the government, backed by the courts, goes after the disability pensions of gay men dying of AIDS.

Meanwhile, the NDP’s three-month residency requirement for welfare leaves people to starve until they “qualify.” Thou-

sands of homeless, hungry people are forced to beg on the streets or rely on charity to survive.

In education the picture is no better. While Clark bragged about a tuition freeze, foreign students are being hit with a 310 percent fee increase! In Vancouver, where more than half the school-age population do not speak English at home, ESL programs are being slashed. Teachers’ contracts are on the verge of being ripped up in order to force them to work longer hours, and adults trying to finish high school will soon be paying fees.

Cynically claiming they are “protecting” services, the New Democrats warn darkly how much worse things are in Ontario. But this is a smoke and mirrors game. Even in the early 1990s, when the B.C. economy was buffered somewhat by Pacific Rim trade and investment from Hong Kong, there was a steady stream of cuts to health and education under the Mike Harcourt NDP government. Now, as the real estate boom sours and the resource-based provincial economy spirals down, Clark and his gang are proving as ruthless as the Liberals or Tories.

Labor Bureaucracy, NDP: Joined at the Hip

The NDP-loyal union tops have allowed Clark to strike with utter impunity. Claiming that the NDP “will listen to our
(continued on page 10)