



**Stalinism—Gravedigger of the Revolution**

# How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled



Spartacist

## For Socialist Revolution to Sweep Away Yeltsin Counterrevolution!

November 7 marked the 75th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. But the workers state erected by the Bolshevik power, far and away the greatest conquest of the international proletariat and a momentous leap forward for humanity, did not survive its 75th year. The period of open counterrevolution ushered in by Boris Yeltsin's pro-imperialist counter-coup in August 1991 has, in the absence of mass working-class resistance, culminated in the creation of a bourgeois state, however fragile and reversible. The task facing the Soviet proletariat today is socialist revolution to restore proletarian power and reforge the Soviet Union on the foundation of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik internationalism.

The ascendancy of Yeltsin and capitalist-restorationist forces backing him was a pivotal event in determining the fate of the Soviet Union, but it was not conclusive. In our August 1991 article, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!", which was immediately translated into Russian and distributed in over 100,000 copies throughout the Soviet Union, we wrote that workers mobilizations should have cleaned out the counterrevolutionary rabble on Yeltsin's barricades, thus opening the road to proletarian political revolution. As a result of Yeltsin's victory:

"The first workers state in history, sapped and undermined by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic 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, the multinational union is ripping apart as one republic after another proclaims secession.

"But while Yeltsin & Co. now see a clear field to push through a forced-draft reintroduction of capitalism, the outcome is not yet definitively decided.... Opposition from the factories against the ravages of capitalist assault could...prevent the rapid consolidation of counterrevolution."

—*Workers Vanguard* [WV] No 533,  
30 August 1991

In the interim there was no decisive action to stop that consolidation. Politically atomized by nearly 70 years of Stalinist usurpation of political life, paralyzed by the CIA-supported pro-Yeltsin "free trade unions" and the virulent

chauvinist poison of numerous Stalinist remnants, the multinational Soviet working class has been overwhelmed by the counterrevolutionary tide. The Yeltsin regime seized the advantage to tear away at every vestige of the Soviet degenerated workers state and push through the piecemeal consolidation of the counterrevolution. Quantity has now turned into quality.

But the situation cannot long continue as it is. For Yeltsin and other restorationists to nail down a solid capitalist regime, sooner rather than later a bloody reckoning is likely, signaling to the masses that there is a new order. With explosions of struggle by workers driven

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**Special Supplement, November 27**

### From Kennett to Keating, Bury the Union Busters!

See pages 5—8



## Soviet ICL Supporter on Demise of USSR

# "Destruction of Workers' Consciousness Was Key"

We publish below a translation of the remarks at the Second International Conference of the International Communist League by comrade Volodya K, first printed in Workers Vanguard No 564, 27 November 1992.

I think the key reason for the destruction of the Soviet workers state has been the destruction of the consciousness of the proletariat, a process that began with Stalin's liquidation of Leon Trotsky's Left Opposition, which represented the consciousness of the working class. The tragedy is that the breakdown of Stalinist control was exploited not by the working class for its own end, but by the bourgeoisie for its own purposes, purposes for which they actually today have precious little support.

In August 1991 we saw some decisive events. The question was posed: whether the bourgeoisie, or perhaps more accurately, whether parts of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which received a death blow, would go forward to consolidate a bourgeois state, or whether the working class would step in for its own. In that moment the working class could have used the opportunity to take the power, but instead the "red-brown" coalition

formed an obstacle to that; the "red-brown" coalition, which in no way is opposed to counterrevolution, but instead is against the liberalization of Stalinist rule.

In this situation, as Trotsky predicted, no section of the bureaucracy was capable of opposing the restoration of capitalism. Instead, they simply maneuvered to be able to occupy the best place within the restoration of capitalism. It's very important to acknowledge that a bourgeois state has been established in the Soviet Union. But it's also important to realize that this is far from stable, it's very weak. This represents a transitional moment, but a transition to what?

Today there is massive opposition to the post-coups period. The immiseration and the impoverishment of the population evokes the sharpest hatred toward Yeltsin, but there is no left opposition to guide this. The opposition that does exist today only stands for a strong state. They share the idea that communism is an impossible utopia. They are orienting for a strong state, a strong state based on capitalism.

But as the Yeltsin regime is incapable

of introducing stable capitalism, the bourgeoisie is very weak. Weak, because it's without capital backing. The only way that strong capitalism can be established is through nationalism and vicious anti-working-class repression, as we have just seen in connection with the air traffic controllers. The creation of this National Salvation Front that the comrades know about—should that Front come to power, that would represent another decisive blow against the working class.

All these Stalinists who think that it's they who are manipulating the nationalists, the so-called "patriots," in a temporary bloc, a bloc by which they can simply turn the clock back to before perestroika, are deluding themselves. In fact what they are doing is paving the way for the establishment of a corporate and fascist dictatorship. It's a very dangerous illusion to delude oneself into thinking that there are forces now in the territory of the former Soviet Union capable of fighting against this counterrevolution. In fact, all of these coalitions delude themselves with the fact that after the National Salvation Front comes to power, then they can resurrect their own

power. It repeats the bragging of the German CP in 1933, who said, "After Hitler, us." It's a suicidal policy.

What is the real perspective that we see before us? Concretely, we have a task—to coalesce the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party. This means a battle against the capitalists, the existing bourgeois government. This means a socialist revolution. Otherwise, if we fail in this, there will be consolidated a bourgeois corporatist state. The key thing is to explain to the working class that this policy of supporting the "national patriots" as a temporary tactic is suicidal. Once these "national patriots" come to power, the working class will get nothing, will get shit from these people. If we don't succeed in our propaganda in this, then this is what the working class will receive.

Now just a few words about timing. I believe that prior to the unification of Germany, in the Soviet Union there was a possibility for ICL intervention, at the time when the debates and discussions were about the true heroes of the Soviet Union and of the October Revolution, and not today's idiocy about how all is swell in the West. ■

revolution in a deformed workers state (see Joseph Seymour, "On the Collapse of Stalinist Rule in East Europe," and Albert St John, "For Marxist Clarity and a Forward Perspective," *Spartacist* No 45-46, Winter 1990-91). Where the capitalists exercise direct ownership over the means of production, and thus are compelled to violently resist the overthrow of their system in order to defend their own property, the preservation of proletarian power depends principally on *consciousness* and *organization* of the working class.

Trotsky himself emphasized this point in his 1928 article "What Now?":

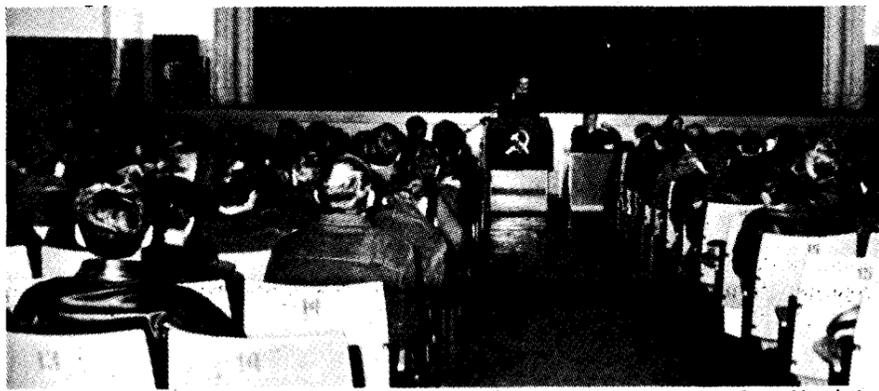
"The socialist character of our state industry... is determined and secured in a decisive measure by the role of the party, the voluntary internal cohesion of the proletarian vanguard, the conscious discipline of the administrators, trade union functionaries, members of the shop nuclei, etc."

—*The Third International After Lenin*

And again, in "The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism" (February 1935), he stated: "In contradistinction to capitalism, socialism is built not automatically but consciously."

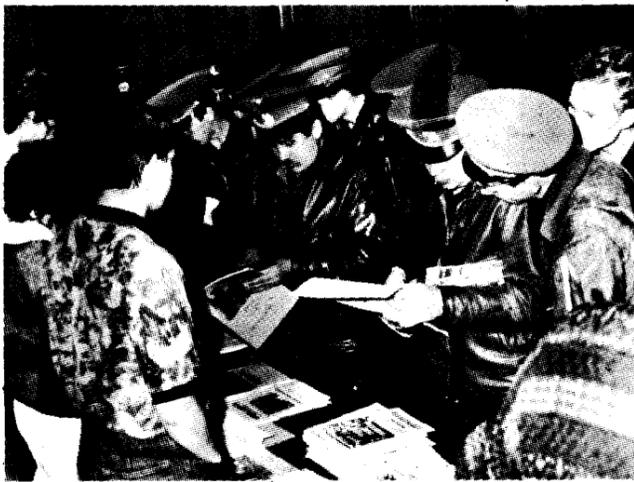
When Trotsky wrote these articles, the memory of the October Revolution was still a part of the direct personal experience of the overwhelming mass of the Soviet proletariat, albeit already considerably warped by Stalinist falsification and revision. In the intervening decades, the nationalist bureaucracy did much to extirpate any real understanding of what came to be iconized as the "Great October Socialist Revolution." In Soviet mass consciousness, World War II, dubbed by the Stalinists the "Great Patriotic War" and suffused with the Russian-nationalist propaganda Stalin churned out during the war, came to supplant the October Revolution as the epochal event in Soviet history. In the end, Stalin and his heirs succeeded in imprinting their nationalist outlook on the Soviet peoples; proletarian internationalism came to be sneered at as an obscure "Trotskyite heresy" of "export of revolution" or, at best, emptied of any content while paid cynical lip service.

With Gorbachev's "new thinking"—ie, his cringing capitulation to each and every imperialist ultimatum—even lip service to the ideals of the Bolshevik Revolution went by the boards. The Soviet soldiers who had been told, and believed, that they were fulfilling their



Spartakist photos

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.



"internationalist duty" in fighting against the reactionary Afghan mujahedin on the USSR's border, were then maligned for perpetrating "Russia's Vietnam" against Afghanistan. Gorbachev's ignominious pullout from Afghanistan and his green light to the imperialist annexation of the DDR served only to further a sense of defeatism and demoralization among the Soviet masses, while the so-called Stalinist "patriots" who denounced Gorbachev's concessions did so only to beat the drums for Great Russian imperial ambitions, explicitly harking back to the time of the tsars.

Even so, the spontaneous strikes which erupted in the Soviet coal fields in the summer of 1989 against the ravages of Gorbachev's "market socialism" dramatically demonstrated the potential for militant working-class struggle. As Russian social democrat Boris Kagarlitsky documents in his book *Farewell Perestroika* (1990), the strike committees in many areas became "the actual centre of popular power," organizing food distribution, maintaining order, etc. As we

pointed out at the time, the Kuzbass strikes "have quickly generated organizational forms of proletarian power, including strike committees and workers militias" ("Soviet Workers Flex Their Muscle," *WV* No 482, 21 July 1989).

These developments pointed to the possibility of authentic soviets, which—by drawing in collective farmers, women, pensioners, soldiers and officers—could have served as the basis for a new proletarian political power, ousting the bureaucracy through a political revolution. But when the Gorbachev regime reneged on its promises to the miners, pro-imperialist agitators trained by the "AFL-CIA" moved into the vacuum of leadership and set up the Independent Miners Union, organizing an activist minority of the miners as a battering ram for Yeltsin.

However, a majority of the miners as well as the rest of the Soviet working class remained passive in the three-sided contest between the Yeltsin-led "democrats," Gorbachev and the more conservative wing of the Stalinists. The mass of

workers were wary, if not outright hostile, to the pro-Western advocates of a "market economy." Unlike in Poland during the rise of Solidarność, the forces of capitalist counterrevolution were not able to mobilize the Soviet masses in the name of anti-Communism.

At the same time, the bureaucratic elite (the so-called nomenklatura) was totally discredited by the flagrant corruption and cynicism of the Brezhnev era. Occasional appeals to defend "socialism" made by the more conservative elements of the Gorbachev regime, such as Yegor Ligachev, fell on deaf ears. The Stalinist "patriots," organized for example in the United Front of Toilers (OFT), were able to mobilize only a relatively small number of worker activists.

Atomized and bereft of any anti-capitalist leadership, lacking any coherent and consistent socialist class consciousness, skeptical about the possibility of class struggle in the capitalist countries, the Soviet working class did not rally in resistance against the encroaching capitalist counterrevolution. And, as Trotsky noted in *The Third International After Lenin*: "If an army capitulates to the enemy in a critical situation without a battle, then this capitulation completely takes the place of a 'decisive battle,' in politics as in war."

### The Army and the Bureaucracy

What then happened to the armed forces, the core of the state in the Marxist understanding? In *The State and Revolution* (1917), written against the reformist view that the working class could simply appropriate the bourgeois state for its own purposes, Lenin emphasized: "Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the old state machine, but in this class smashing this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a new machine." Similarly, social counterrevolution requires the smashing of the proletarian state and the creation of a new state machine serving the bourgeoisie. This task was vastly facilitated by the Stalinist political counterrevolution, which effected a qualitative degeneration in the workers state issuing out of the October Revolution.

At the base, the Soviet military was affected by the same pressures and par-

continued on page 9

# ACTU/THC Tops: Labour Lieutenants of Capital

## Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!

10 DECEMBER: The massive strikes and 150,000-strong rally in Victoria on 10 November have spurred strike action across the country to beat back the bosses' offensive. While ACTU and state Trades Hall Council (THC) bureaucrats worked overtime to limit and *disorganise* strike action on the ACTU-called 30 November "day of action," powerful and traditionally militant unions across the country struck. Wharfies and seamen shut down all ports and metal unions struck nationally. Mines from NSW to Queensland to the Pilbara in Western Australia were closed down. In Wollongong 35,000 workers shut down BHP's steelworks, waterfront and coal loader in defiance of NSW Labor leader Bob Carr and Trades and Labour Council (TLC) secretary Michael Easson who condemned strike action.

Large sections of the working class are saying enough is enough! Whilst the Laborite tops are winding down their "campaign" there is widespread anger and bitterness amongst workers across the country. A decade of federal and state Labor government rule has brought widespread capitalist immiseration that has set the scene for the Kennett government attacks. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have disappeared. Officially unemployment now exceeds the eleven percent mark with at least one in three youth jobless. Keating now brags that bosses enjoy a profit share equivalent to the fifties "golden age" after having overseen the transfer of a mammoth \$35 billion per year from wages to enterprise profits, reducing workers' share of national income by some 20 percent!

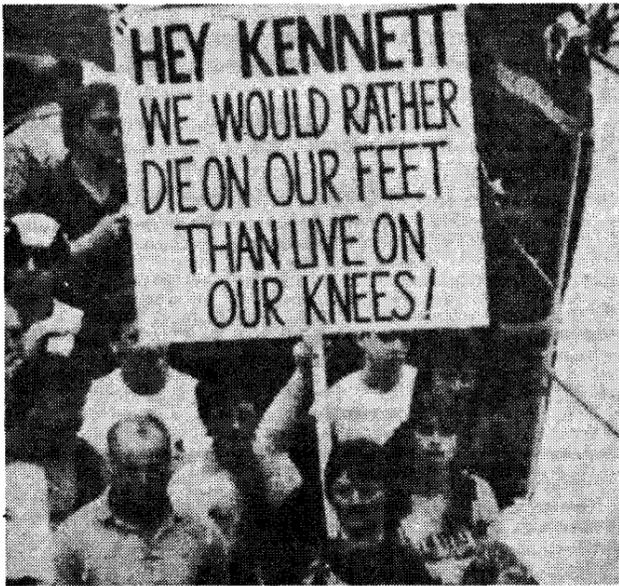
Picking up from where the state Labor government left off the Kennett Tories are engaged in wholesale union busting to destroy award conditions, gut penalty rates and workers compensation, remove holiday loadings and outlaw strikes on top of axing tens of thousands of public service jobs. Everyone knows that this is a test case for attacks threatened around the country. Robe River bosses in the Pilbara recently sacked 32 mineworkers for striking on 30 November. Working people cannot allow these attacks to go unanswered. In 1969 it took concerted mass strike action in Victoria and nationally to win the release of union leader Clarrie O'Shea and spike Arbitration's penal powers. National strike action built and fought to win can bring the union busters to their knees!

As veteran Trotskyist leader James P Cannon said (see box below): "They want to knock the hell out of the unions, so the workers will have no means of defense against the cutting of wages and living standards. That's what is in the cards. No friendly compromises at the bargaining tables, but only mass battles and mass tests of strength."

### Smash Arbitration! For Hard Class Struggle!

The treacherous ALP/ACTU tops are the chief obstacle to a concerted class-

**Melbourne, 30 November: working class anger across the country against government and bosses' union-busting offensive.**



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struggle fightback. They are preying on mass working class anger offering their services to the bosses as enforcers of bankrupt racist Australian capitalist rule. Victorian THC secretary John Halfpenny is counselling workers to bite the bullet and prepare for a "long four-year campaign"—until the next state election! This is just fine for Kennett who confidently predicts that he can last it out while expanding his job slashing plans. Halfpenny engineered the cancellation of the 9 December Victorian public transport and power workers' strikes against threatened mass sackings—for power workers it could mean job losses of up to 35 percent.

Fearing that Australia's "social cohesion and economic recovery" were threatened by industrial conflict, Keating has proposed legislation to undercut the strike wave by holding out the possibility of Victorian workers opting for award coverage under a *strengthened* federal Arbitration system. On cue ACTU assist-

ant secretary Jennie George signalled the cessation of the industrial campaign, claiming that the "choice will be between the Australian Government and a safety net for all working people of award protection and Dr Hewson, deregulation and exploitation" (*Australian*, 3 December). Crap! There is no "safety net"! Power workers, for instance are facing massive job losses and they already have a federal award "safety net"! The working class has never won anything important through the ballot box or the bosses' courts. Unions must rip up the court

ballots and wage hard class struggle. *Bury Arbitration!*

The continuing wave of strikes over the last few weeks has tapped massive working class discontent that threatens to break the bounds imposed by the treacherous union tops. As the special supplement (reprinted opposite) distributed to thousands of workers in Melbourne, Sydney and major regional cities warns: workers are being consciously subordinated to the class enemy in a popular-front campaign to prop up the Keating Labor government and the bosses' Arbitration system. The desperate need for a working-class fightback requires a class-struggle program based on the political independence of the working class from its class enemies. Key to this is a revolutionary internationalist leadership forged in struggle against the pro-capitalist labour-fakers of the ALP.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in 1940 in "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," the unions can no longer be reformist, because the objective conditions leave no room for any serious and lasting reforms. "The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

### ISO/SLL Dance to Postal Bosses' Tune

As noted in our supplement, the treacherous Laborite misleaders are given eager assistance by a swag of fake socialists, all zealous participants in the pro-Keating popular-front lash up. The anti-communist social democrats of the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) recently rendered their services by sabotaging strike action at the Eastern Suburbs Mail Centre in Sydney. The workers, members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU), had voted to strike on 30 November. But after TLC secretary Easson denounced strike action in favour of "prayer action" the CWU bureaucrats refused to call or endorse any strike.

On 27 November postal bosses citing the bureaucrats' position, "directed" staff to work on 30 November. Immediately long-time ISO supporter and union delegate Peter May called a meeting that successfully rammed through a motion of "retreat from the 24-hour strike," proposing workers simply attend the ACTU-endorsed rally instead, ie, Easson and Carr's line! A number of militants spoke out against this cowardly betrayal. A Spartacist League supporter put forward a class-struggle perspective against the bipartisan government attacks pointing out that strike action should be linked to the fight against sackings and closures being carried out by the postal bosses.

When Socialist Labour League (SLL) supporter and CWU delegate Keith James was told of this outrageous treachery he alibied his fellow union delegate May, claiming that the strike wasn't the main question! Not surprising given that the sinister SLL's paper *Workers News* (30 October) denounced the Victorian 10 November strike actions as a "phoney general strike" even as workers across the state were fighting against bureaucratic sabotage for the broadest possible strike action. The ISO and SLL's actions are concrete proof of the syphilitic chain of popular-front treachery that acts to tie workers to the imperialist class enemy. The ISO and SLL line up with the most reactionary CIA-loving union bureaucrats like Easson just as they did in supporting capitalist restorationist movements such as the CIA-funded counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność. In sharp contrast the Spartacist tendency in 1981 proclaimed "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!"

### Workers Revolution the Only Solution!

Racist and decaying Australian capitalism means intensified exploitation and oppression of working people and all the oppressed. The position of Aborigines has steadily worsened with increased racist police terror and murder. Labor-inspired racist hysteria against immigrants is used to justify round ups and incarceration of "illegals." Women workers have borne the brunt of capitalist recession—first fired and last hired. And while shackling the working class at home the Labor government has acted as regional cops of U.S. imperialism abroad. They are the ever-willing participants in imperialist military ventures abroad from the Sinai to Namibia to Somalia. In 1991 Australian navy ships (and U.S. spy bases here) aided in the slaughter of over 100,000 Iraqis and Canberra ran point for the reintroduction of imperialist troops into Cambodia that directly threatens the Vietnamese deformed workers state. The Australian ruling class is full of triumphalism over the imperialist lie of the "death of communism." They groove over capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union which has brought mass unemployment, massive poverty, nationalist fratricide and the rise of fascist terror. But with the rise of imperialist rivalries between the U.S. and Japan, the Australian rulers are in the grip of an international capitalist disorder.

Today every major workers struggle becomes a political fight requiring a class struggle leadership. The fight to oust the sellout union bureaucrats must therefore be linked to the building of a revolutionary workers party that can galvanise working class power uniting women, youth and all the oppressed in the fight for workers revolution. For a workers government! ■

## Class-Struggle Leadership is Key



James P Cannon

In January 1953, at the height of McCarthyite social reaction, James P Cannon, veteran communist and the founding leader of American Trotskyism, stressed the decisive role of the revolutionary Marxist party in forging a class-struggle leadership of the working class. His remarks take on a special relevance today as the Australian Laborite union bureaucrats seek to shackle workers struggles to the bosses' Arbitration courts.

These labor "statesmen" will not be fit for leadership in the new situation, any more than the old AFL skates were fit for the leadership of the insurgent movement of the workers in the mass production industries in the sit-down strikes of the thirties. There will be no bargaining tables. No government boards to settle things amicably, recognise the union and give the workers a few more cents. That's not going to be the bosses' program at all. They don't want

to give a few more cents; they don't want to recognize unions. They want to knock the hell out of the unions, so the workers will have no means of defense against the cutting of wages and living standards. That's what is in the cards. No friendly compromises at the bargaining tables, but only mass battles and mass tests of strength.

The workers, under such conditions, must and will turn to militancy and throw up leaders of a new mold, just as the workers in the thirties threw up new trade-union leaders out of the ranks. And it is in just such a situation, when class collaboration is out the window and the class struggle is on the agenda, that the supreme expression of the class struggle, the revolutionary Marxist party, will get a hearing and become the mentor of the militant new staff of leaders arising out of the shops and the factories. —"The Coming Struggle for Power," *America's Road to Socialism* (1953)



## Miners, Transport, Maritime, Power Workers: Strike Together Now!

# From Kennett to Keating, Bury the Union Busters!

With the wave of strikes centred in Victoria and now spreading across the country the opportunity is presented to turn around the one-sided war against the working class and poor that has been waged over the last decade by the capitalist rulers of this country. But these actions are being carefully dispersed, limited and sabotaged by the union bureaucrats. Workers are being consciously subordinated to the class enemy through a popular-front campaign to prop up the Keating government and the Arbitration courts as the "best" mechanism to cut jobs and conditions whilst avoiding the threat of a massive working class response to Hewson/Kennett's "confrontationist" approach. It is crucial to fight for the political independence of the working class from its class enemies and their agents within the workers movement, the Laborite union tops. What is needed is a *revolutionary leadership!*

As our leaflet/supplement (see page 2) warned, Victorian Trades Hall Council secretary John Halfpenny successfully turned 10 November in Melbourne into "an ACTU-endorsed public relations 'day of protest,'" with the 150,000 strong rally having a conscious cross-class character ranging from Halfpenny and his reformist "left" tails such as the International Socialist Organisation, through to assorted church hierarchies and the major bourgeois daily, the *Age*. The rallying call of this popular-frontist lash-up is "Defend the Australian way of life." Meanwhile, NSW Trades & Labour Council secretary Michael Easson urges workers not to strike on the 30 November ACTU "national day of action," but to limit action to "lunchtime rallies, pamphlet drops and prayers for good industrial relations." Easson declared that "a lot of people wanted people on their legs in the street. I wanted them on their knees" (*Australian*, 12 November)! Victorian workers are front line in a class confrontation that affects all working people in Australia. It was the Victorian-centred mass strikes in 1969 over the jailing of union leader Clarrie O'Shea which successfully freed him and led to the shelving of penal powers for over a decade. Instead of Halfpenny, Easson and Co's social-democratic grovelling, what is needed is for the strategic big battalions of the working class to come out in united national strike action to defeat the union busters from Kennett to Keating. *Miners, transport, maritime, power workers: strike together now! Build militant mass pickets and flying pickets to ensure strikes are solid!*

On 10 November some 800,000 of Victoria's two and a half million workers went on strike for the day. Most private industry, business and the city continued to function, as was Halfpenny's intention. The predictable result is that Ken-

### Break from Labor! Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!

**Melbourne, 10 November: Massive rally during day of state-wide strike action against Kennett's Tory government. Sellout union bureaucrats want to channel workers outrage into campaign to re-elect the union-busting Keating government.**



Asp photo

nett is forging ahead confident that union opposition will exhaust itself. He has announced the axing of 6,800 jobs in education, the closing of 52 schools, thousands more jobs to go from hospitals, transport, and the public sector in general. Meanwhile, even as they (mis)lead strikes the union bureaucrats continue to push through their own "re-structuring" agreements with the bosses. The communication and metal union tops are currently ramming through deals that exchange paltry wage increases for long standing union rights and conditions, agreeing to speedups, company rationalisation schemes and job losses.

Workers across Victoria were pushing to join the 10 November strike. Shop floor and delegates' meetings in industries "exempted" from the strike, as in Telecom and the tramways, voted to go out, but were overruled by their union tops. It is necessary to oust these "labour lieutenants of the capitalist class." *Forge a class-struggle leadership!*

The Russian revolutionary LD Trotsky, writing in the 1930s, accurately captured the nature of the bureaucrats' manoeuvring:

"... the leadership of the strike previously, ie, without a struggle, arrives at an agreement with the class enemy as to the course and outcome of the strike. The parliamentarians and the trade unionists perceive at a given moment the need to provide an outlet for the accumulated ire of the masses, or they are simply compelled to jump in step with a movement that has flared over their heads. In such cases they come scurrying through the backstairs to the government and obtain permission to head the general strike, this with the obligation to conclude it as soon as possible, without any damage to the state crockery."

—"The ILP and the Fourth International," 18 September, 1935

### "New World Disorder" Barbarism

The Australian ruling class is full of triumphalism over the imperialist lie of the "Death of Communism." But caught in the grip of the inter-imperialist rivalry between the U.S. and Japan, burdened with debt and being squeezed by its international creditors, it is driven to enormously increase its rate of exploitation of the working class as well as the super-exploitation of its Pacific neocolonies. In Europe attacks on the working class are being met with workers' and anti-fascist struggles including massive contingents of young people from Germany, to Italy to Greece. The power of the Australian working class must be unleashed at home and linked up with workers' struggles internationally. The years when the mining-based Australian economy—which drew fabulous profits from exports to the major imperialist powerhouses of Europe, North America and Japan—could generate sufficient wealth to give the working class a relatively high and comfortable standard of living are long gone. The international economic crisis which has hammered these economies has left the Australian economy a shambles.

It is in this context that a wing of the ruling class exemplified by Peko-Wallsend and Western Mining bosses is attempting to abolish the historically evolved corporatist system of "labour relations" embodied in the Arbitration system and is aiming to slash high tariff protection to industry. On the other hand others want to use Arbitration to slowly chop away the gains of the working class, its organisation and consciousness, as the Hawke/Keating government has done since 1983. A few

months ago Ford, BHP and textile bosses came out in support of the Labor government's decision to maintain high levels of protectionism for manufacturing industries. Now even the pro-Tory Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry is expressing "qualified dissent" at Kennett's industrial relations program (*Financial Review*, 25 November). There is a rotten popular front ranging from major industrial companies, the Keating Labor government, sundry church hierarchies through to the union bureaucracies that is cynically manipulating workers' anger against the Kennett/Hewson Tories into re-electing Keating.

The ACTU's "national day of action" for 30 November is directed solely against Kennett and Hewson, pushed under the flag-waving slogan "Defend the Australian way of life." The Australian way of life! Tell that to unionists who have seen their unions busted over the last decade. Tell that to Aborigines, subject to racist police terror and murder under the Labor governments. Tell that to women forced out of jobs and back into the home, or slaving in low-wage non-unionised jobs then heading back to the stifling family hearth to toil on the "second shift" of household drudgery. Tell that to the unemployed, the students, foreign-born workers, all victims of years of Labor government-run capitalist austerity and official racism. Talk about Australian "democracy" to the Pacific island slaves of Australian imperialism, or to the Bougainvillean people being starved and tortured to death by the Papua New Guinea neocolonial servants of Canberra.

The "day of action" is focused around *continued on page 7*

# All Out! Shut Victoria Down Tight!

We reprint below a leaflet distributed by Spartacist supporters to striking workers in Victoria on 10 November. Nationally, 20,000 copies of the leaflet have been handed out to workers and students.

\* \* \*

Kennett's Victorian Liberal government has proclaimed war on the state's workers and poor. Tens of thousands of public service jobs are to be axed along with savage cuts to public transport, education, health and social services. Egged on by the Murdoch empire's media hyenas, Kennett's legislation aims at destroying existing award conditions, gutting penalty rate entitlements, removing holiday loadings, gutting workers compensation and outlawing strikes in "vital" industries. This is a political onslaught which must be fought by the trade unions and their allies. Already a groundswell of working class outrage has forced the Victorian Trades Hall Council (THC) to announce state-wide general strike action on 10 November. It is going to take hard class struggle that stops Kennett and Keating in their tracks, and it has to be organised across (federal and state award) industries throughout the state and spread nationally. *For a general strike that closes the state down tight! No to THC/ACTU sellout deals! Throw out the labour traitors! For a class struggle leadership! For a working class offensive that rolls back Kennett/Keating's union busting capitalist austerity and job slashing!*

A general strike, even a defensive one of limited duration, poses the question of *which class shall rule*. From the beginning THC secretary John Halfpenny has pleaded to be given the chance to call off the strike, if only Kennett will "negotiate." Desperate to undercut the real potential of an all-out state wide action Halfpenny is out to transform the day into an ACTU-endorsed public relations "day of protest," the first step in a "campaign."

Halfpenny's job as an agent of the bosses within the unions is precisely to put the reins on working-class militancy as the bureaucrats did in the NSW general strike last year. The real campaign Halfpenny and the Laborite union leaders are interested in is next year's federal election campaign to re-elect the rightly hated Keating Labor government. But both Keating and Kennett are waging a *bi-partisan* war on the working class and poor. It is desperately necessary to forge a *revolutionary leadership* of the working class to fight for a *workers government* that can provide jobs and a decent living wage and life for working people through smashing the profit system root and branch.

Full of triumphalism over the "Death of Communism" this degenerate ruling class now proclaims the "Death of unionism!" But already, faced with a storm of working-class anger, they are getting nervous. Halfpenny has tried to

exempt "emergency" industries from the strike, including public transport, power workers and health workers—precisely those at the top of Kennett's hit list, and with some of the most power. The biggest obstacle, not just to smashing this attack, but to a fight against the decaying *capitalist system* is the treacherous Labor misleaders.

In 1969 it was the tramworkers' refusal to buckle down under the Arbitration Court which sparked the successful 1969 Victorian-centred general strike which freed jailed union leader Clarrie O'Shea and resulted in the shelving of penal powers for over a decade. Now Halfpenny calls to defend the "independent umpire," the Arbitration

that no-one dares cross are needed to make sure that everything is shut down tight! Elected strike committees are needed to run the strike, taking it out of the hands of the union bureaucrats and ensuring that the scab-herding machinations of the CIA-loving grouper bureaucrats of the ironworkers and shop assistants unions amount to zero.

Immigrant workers form a strong force in the public transport unions, metal plants and manufacturing industries. They have been the victims of the most savage cuts in conditions and vicious job slashing over the years of Labor government "restructuring." Solid union-wide action could in turn be the spearhead of desperately needed battle to *organise the*

is increasing its brutal exploitation of its Pacific neo-colonies, with the Keating government braintrusting and arming the Papua New Guinea government's savage war against the Bougainvillean separatists.

Workers in this country and across the globe are increasingly combative, from the German public workers strike earlier this year, the massive strike wave in Greece to the biggest workers mobilisations in Italy since the "hot autumn" of 1969. Defying the clerical-nationalist Solidarność "free market" regime, Polish workers are resisting their systematic subordination to the IMF. A strike wave during recent months embraced coal and copper miners and workers who chanted "Down with Walesa!"

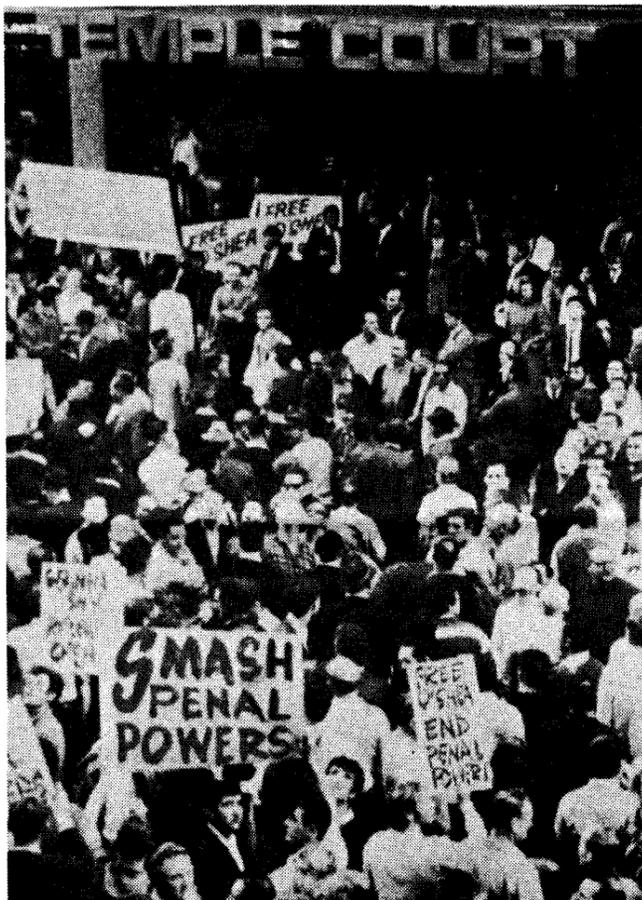
To sabotage workers international solidarity the Laborite bureaucrats push racist protectionist schemes, lining them up with their "own" bosses. This undermines the necessary class unity of the multiracial Australian working class, setting them up against their class brothers and sisters in Asia and around the world. Most recently the Waterside Workers Federation bureaucrats, who have consistently "negotiated" away hard won union conditions, joined the union-busting squattocracy of the National Federation of Farmers in reactionary threats to blockade French goods over the breakdown of the recent GATT talks. Alongside the Laborites' protectionist poison comes their racist scapegoating of immigrants at home. Keating (spurred on by the ACTU tops) has massively increased round-ups of "illegals" and their incarceration in concentration camp detention centres. *Down with racist protectionist poison! Unions must fight for full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers!*

The Spartacist League (section of the International Communist League) is fighting to forge a Leninist/Trotskyist party. In contrast, ostensibly socialist groups such as the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) cover Halfpenny's left flank with tactical advice on the "campaign" to defeat Kennett and federal Tory leader Hewson, that is to reelect the despicable Keating government. Meanwhile the sinister bandits of the Socialist Labour League having written off unions as "bankrupt organisations" denounce the planned strike itself as a "phoney general strike"—an open invitation to scab.

All of these organisations have supported the counterrevolution now raging throughout the former deformed workers states of eastern Europe, bringing devastation to the working people. So what can they possibly have to say to workers in Australia? In contrast, from Berlin to Warsaw to Moscow the International Communist League has fought the capitalist-restorationist drive all along the line.

Reformism is a dead end. What's necessary is to forge a Leninist/Trotskyist party in the course of sharp class struggle, splitting the working class from the pro-capitalist tops of the Labor Party. For revolutionary class struggle on the road to a racially-integrated workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! ■

## 1969: Anti-Strike Laws KO'd!



Quality Press

**Melbourne, 1969: Mass workers action won the release of jailed tramways union leader Clarrie O'Shea and secured a historic victory against bosses' Arbitration Court.**

Court, against Kennett. In contrast, what is needed is working-class *independence* from the capitalist state. *Bury Arbitration!* Nothing important was ever won by the working class through the ballot box or the bosses' courts. Screw the anti-labour laws! The only "illegal" strike is one that loses!

Kennett has threatened to use his new legislation against the strike, throwing strikers and picketers in jail. Greiner tried outlawing last year's NSW general strike too, but a massive turnout from across the state spiked him. There must be such a massive turnout of maritime, transport and power workers that Kennett's cops don't dare show their faces on the streets. Militant *mass* picket lines

*unorganised*—predominantly the tens of thousands of mainly women immigrants in non-unionised sweatshops across the country. Students who have fought education cutbacks, youth facing a bleak future of unemployment, oppressed minorities have to be drawn into a common fight.

Recession-ridden Australian capitalism is today transforming an increasing number of workers into chronically unemployed paupers. What's needed is a fight for a sliding scale of wages and hours to fight unemployment! Make the bosses pay through spreading the available work around! Fight for massive wage increases to make up for the years of Accord wage slashing! Such a struggle is key to uniting and organising the unemployed in a working class fightback.

The aftermath of Cold War has brought a capitalist disorder with preparations for inter-imperialist war, a rising world wide tide of racism and fascism and renewed attacks on unions. The Australian ruling class, with an economy slipping deeper into recession, is caught in the vice of growing inter-imperialist rivalries between the U.S. and Japan. Their solution is to savagely increase attacks on working people whilst enforcing strong state reaction against working people, students, women and the deeply oppressed Aboriginal population. Meanwhile racist Australian imperialism

## Australasian SPARTACIST

For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

Marxist journal of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).  
EDITORIAL BOARD: Neil Flanagan, Andrew Giannakis (editor), Peter McLeod, Phillipa Newman, Margaret Rodda  
CIRCULATION: Kathie Tresca  
PRODUCTION: Phillipa Newman

Printed by trade union labour. Registered at GPO, Sydney for posting as a publication—Category B. Subscription \$3 for 4 issues; overseas airmail \$5 for 4 issues. Address all correspondence to: Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co. GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001. Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.  
Printed by Spotpress Pty Ltd, 105 Victoria Rd, Marrickville.

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## Keating...

(continued from page 5)

defence of the "independent umpire" of the Arbitration court. The Arbitration system is a corporatist structure which has evolved over decades. The courts of the capitalist state regulate the unions in every sphere, from wages and conditions to the conduct of strikes to the election of union officials and the disbursement of union funds. Under the federal Labor governments of Hawke and now Keating, the Arbitration Court-sanctioned Accord has imposed give-backs and job slashing which have eroded workers' livelihoods and organisations. This has paved the way for today's Tory government attacks. Victorian Labor ex-Premier Kirner now reveals that her government wanted to carry out wide ranging attacks similar to Kennett's and Halfpenny agrees that there must be cuts. The labour fakers have turned Karl Marx's famous observation that "the working class has nothing to lose but its chains" on its head—they want the workers in Arbitration chains. Nothing important was ever won by the working class through the ballot box or the bosses' courts. The unions need to defy the bosses rules, rip up the court orders and wage hard class struggle. The only "illegal" strike is one that loses! The whole system of Arbitration needs to be smashed! Down with racist protectionism!

### Beware Halfpenny's Fake-Left Toadies!

Various pseudo-socialist groups have enlisted as foot soldiers in a popular-frontist campaign to re-elect the Keating government. Tiny fake-left grouplets like Paul White's Workers Revolution Group (WRG) clutch at the International Socialist Organisation (ISO), who clutch at Halfpenny and other "left" bureaucrats, who clutch at ACTU secretary Keltly, who clutches at Keating, head of the Australian imperialist government. For all the varied hues of this syphilitic chain, they all act to tie workers to the imperialist class enemy. The price of admission to this club, as with social democracy everywhere, has been hysterical anti-Sovietism.

For the last decade the Spartacist League (SL) has stood uniquely on a program of class opposition to the racist, union busting anti-Soviet Hawke and Keating governments. Anti-Soviet groups such as the ISO, Socialist Labour League (SLL) and the WRG joined Hawke in proclaiming "solidarity with Solidarność," the Polish clerical-nationalist outfit that is today doling out capitalist misery to the Polish masses. The SL forthrightly stated: "Stop Solidarność counterrevolution!" In August of last year the fake left supported Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary barricades

in the Soviet Union. We called for mobilising Soviet workers to clean out the counterrevolutionary rabble, thus opening the road to proletarian political revolution.

On the other hand the pathetic remnants of Stalinism in Australia washed their hands of the Soviet Union as soon as Yeltsin's counterrevolution was successful. The "left" union bureaucrats who split from the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA) during the Hawke years such as Tom McDonald and Stan Sharkey of the Building Workers Industrial Union and Pat Geraghty of the Seamen's Union pimped for Gorbachev whose perestroika was the antechamber to outright capitalist restoration. The SPA itself could do little more than hope for a revival of bankrupt Stalinism. Of late they have taken to supporting the "red-brown coalition" in the ex-Soviet Union—the alliance of leftover Stalinists with Russian nationalists, monarchists and outright fascists. The SPA waxes lyrical that "The flag of Peter the Great emblazoned with its blue cross, snapped in the wind beside the red flag of the Soviet Union" (*Guardian*, 1 April). It has been the Trotskyists of the International Communist League who have fought capitalist counterrevolution from Berlin to Warsaw to Moscow and against the ravages and immiseration of capitalist restoration now facing working people.

Union bureaucrats like McDonald and Sharkey were instrumental in putting together and enforcing Hawke and Keating's Accord. This included spearheading the Labor government's smashing of the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) in 1986. Today Tom McDonald is on the board of the rad-lib New Left Party's *Broadside* newspaper. *Broadside* (11-17 November) worries that Kennett's moves actually "threatens a wages breakout." The 18-24 November issue frets that "industrial havoc" will destabilise the current national "wages" (ie, give-back) campaign. Meanwhile the SPA sees that the "immediate task" is "to see that Hewson does not get elected" (*Guardian*, 28 October).

The ISO, which "rejoices" over the "death of communism," also eager to join Keating's election campaign, says, "Defeating Kennett in Victoria is the basis for defeating Hewson." The ISO specialises in piddling "militant" advice to Halfpenny's "ongoing campaign." Just as they hailed Yeltsin's victory in the Soviet Union, they hail every Laborite betrayal as a "victory," from the sell-out of APPM workers in Tasmania to the British TUC's capitulation to government plans to decimate the mining industry. The WRG of Paul White differentiates itself from their fellow anti-Soviets in the ISO with endless calls for an "indefinite general strike"—to be initiated by "pressuring" the THC! Behind their "militant" verbiage, they do not so much as mention the Keating Labor government, or for that matter the bosses' Arbitration

ets to shut down the mines—not just in Fiji but at all of Western Mining's operations across Australia.

Our fraternal defence organisation, the PDC/Australia, has protested the arrests and collected money for and donated to the striking miners. They have fought to bring the miners' struggle to the attention of the international working class—most importantly powerful sectors of labour in Australia (miners, metal workers, seamen, dockworkers and electrical trades) where workers have been struggling against the union-busting, anti-working-class Hawke/Keating Labor governments. Free the Vatukoula Six! Victory to the Fijian strikers!

Donations to support the striking Vatukoula miners can be deposited at Westpac branches in Australia under the following account: Fiji Mineworkers Union, Westpac bank, Tavua Branch, account number 380 46000. ■



Spartacist photo

August, 1991: Australian fake-left cheered Yeltsin's counterrevolution. SL called for Soviet workers to clean out the counterrevolutionary rabble, thus opening the road to proletarian political revolution.

courts, the two key questions on which the union bureaucracy is running its popular-frontist campaign.

The sinister SLL postures as Trotskyists. For years the SLL have sold their services to any and every anti-working class force that was willing to pay, from Arab bourgeois regimes to Vietnamese fascists. They have distinguished themselves by rabid anti-Sovietism and craven loyalty to the ALP, lobbying ACTU conferences and demanding a non-existent "left wing" of the ALP "expel the right" and fight for a "Labor government with socialist policies." Now all this has disappeared as they decree the unions "bankrupt" and "mechanisms for the intensification of exploitation." In 1986 they crossed BLF picket lines as the union was being smashed. On the eve of the 1984-85 British miners' strike they set up union leader Arthur Scargill, denouncing his correct statement that Polish Solidarność was "anti-socialist"—a campaign picked up by the gutter Tory press and the Thatcher government. Their major international campaign is to support the U.S. capitalist state's frame-up of leftist union organiser Mark Curtis. They denounced the 10 November strike as a "total fraud"—an open invitation to scab. The SLL's relationship to the class line is that of a man in a revolving door.

### ALP—Party of Racism, Depression and War

Earlier this year ACTU secretary Keltly warned Keating that he couldn't possibly win the next election with 11 per cent unemployment. Now Keating's "approval rating" has shot up and he figures he can maybe win the next election as the "lesser evil" to Hewson's Tories. The ALP is the party of racism, depression and war—from two world imperialist wars to innumerable smaller reactionary wars from Korea to Vietnam to Iraq; from the 1930s depression to every other attack on the working class this century. It was the Chifley Labor government which used the army to break the 1949 miners strike. In 1986 the Hawke and

Cain Labor governments smashed the BLF. Hawke used the air force to smash the pilots' strike in 1989. The ALP's role is to tie the working people to this racist capitalist system.

Down with the rigged two-up game in which heads or tails, Labor or Liberal, the working people lose! The urgent task of the hour is to forge an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist party based on the working class to act as a tribune of the people and lead a revolutionary struggle for workers power, a *workers state*. The 1917 October Revolution showed the way out of capitalist chaos. What "failed" in the Soviet Union was not communism, but the Stalinist bureaucratic antithesis of proletarian internationalism and the mismanagement of the planned economy. Today we are seeing the true face of the capitalist restoration in the former deformed/degenerated workers states of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: unemployment, massive impoverishment, nationalist fratricide and the rise of fascist terror.

A couple of five-year economic plans as part of a collectivised, planned economy, in concert with our proletarian brothers and sisters in the other countries of this region, could easily provide jobs and a future for all. For a socialist federation of Southeast Asia! The Spartacist League/Australia is a section of the International Communist League. We stand for the communism of Lenin and Trotsky. As Trotsky wrote in the founding document of the Fourth International: "The present crisis in human culture is the crisis in the proletarian leadership. The advanced workers, united in the Fourth International, show their class the way out of the crisis. They offer a program based on international experience in the struggle of the proletariat and of all the oppressed of the world for liberation. They offer a spotless banner" ("The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," September 1938). *Reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution!* ■

## Fiji...

(continued from page 8)

(who led the 1987 coup which drove the Fijian Labor Party from power, only to be elected in May with Labor's support) has sought to co-opt the union tops to ram through a sweetheart deal. Faced with the miners' overwhelming support for the union, the Fijian government claimed the scabs had to be included and the union tops, at the government's direction, brought in 650 of the strike-breaking scum. Now the government has ordered Emperor Mining to recognise the union and settle—leaving the strikers out on the street while the scabs work the mines. Only the company's outright refusal to recognise any union—even one including union-busting scabs—has forestalled this outright betrayal of the courageous Fijian miners—for now. What's needed is to mobilise the labour movement and build mass, militant pick-

Australasian

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## Rome's Jewish Community Routs Fascists

# Italy: Thousands March Against Racist Terror

Two hundred thousand people—overwhelmingly youth—in 31 cities across Italy took to the streets November 9 to mark the anniversary of the Nazis' 1938 *Kristallnacht* pogrom and to protest the rising tide of racist terror in the country. Capitalist reunification of Germany and the collapse of Stalinism throughout East Europe and the former Soviet Union have plunged Italy into deep economic and political turmoil. "Polarised" is an understatement; the country is bursting at the seams.

Emboldened by startling electoral support for the fascistic Lombard League headed by Umberto Bossi, fascists have escalated racist violence against Jews and immigrants all over the country. The police have turned a blind eye. In Rome last June, as angry Jewish demonstrators confronted a fascist mob, one cop yelled, "They didn't make enough soap out of the Jews."

Meanwhile, without any leadership—indeed, *against* their existing reformist leaderships—the industrial working class and high school youth have been in full-scale revolt for nearly two months now, shutting down city after city in general strikes against the government's savage austerity program dictated by the Maastricht treaty (ie, German bankers). On October 10, Torino was shut down by workers and students who filled the streets and marched on the town hall chanting, "Here we are with our red banners! Go fuck yourself Umberto Bossi!"

After 50,000 fascists marched unimpeded through the streets of Rome last month, the ancient Jewish ghetto and African quarter were plastered with racist graffiti and yellow Stars of David. In response, rejecting "responsible"



Jewish students among the 30,000 union workers and youth who protested anti-Semitism in Rome, November 9.

appeals to "ignore the Nazis," several hundred Jewish youth and concentration camp survivors, armed with iron bars and chains, carried out a successful lightning raid on the headquarters of the fascist "Movimento Politico Occidentale" (Western Political Movement) on November 5. One fascist wound up in the hospital and one cop emerged from the fray with a black eye.

The fascist flag was ripped down off the wall and carried back to the Jewish quarter as a war trophy. Death camp survivors, their children and grandchildren stayed in the streets until dawn celebrating their victory over the fascists. An Auschwitz survivor was triumphant-

ly hoisted in the air and carried through the neighborhood atop the captured fascist flag. As one youth who participated in the action said, "It was the most beautiful moment of my life. If he has to die, let's hope not for a hundred years, at least he'll go knowing that something has changed" (*Corriere della Sera*, 7 November).

This dramatic and militant self-defense action electrified anti-racist fighters all over Italy. On November 9, some 25,000 high school students bobbed up and down through the streets of Milano yelling "Jump if you're not a fascist!" and showered the headquarters of Bossi's Lombard League with ball bearings

and coins. Sixty thousand anti-fascists poured through the streets of Rome.

Young leftists in Palestinian *keffiyeh* scarves linked arms with Jewish youth in *yarmulkes* and slapped the number 174517 on their jackets—the number the Nazis tattooed on Primo Levi in Auschwitz. In tribute to this remarkable man, a noted Italian author, concentration camp survivor and anti-fascist fighter, young leftists chanted, "Primo Levi taught us! We won't forget the Holocaust!" and "It is not a crime to kill a fascist!" Leaders of the Italian student movement are demanding that Primo Levi's books be assigned reading in the public schools.

Our comrades from the Lega Trotskista d'Italia participated in the demonstrations in Rome and Milano, carrying placards reading, "Proletarian Revolution Will Avenge the Holocaust!" "Full Citizenship Rights for Immigrant Workers!" and "Smash Anti-Semitic, Anti-Immigrant Terror!" Youth eagerly snapped up copies of *Spartaco*, newspaper of the LTd'I, and picked up our chants.

There is militant proletarian opposition to fascism and capitalist rollbacks in Italy today—with *no leadership*. Jews and immigrants have been left to face the fascists alone, as the reformist parties and trade-union tops have done everything possible to keep their working-class base away from confrontation with the fascists. It is urgently necessary to construct a genuine Bolshevik party to serve as a *tribune of the people* and direct these struggles to victory.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No 563, 13 November 1992

## Free Jailed Fijian Miners!

The following article is reprinted from *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*, No 18, Fall/Winter 1992-93, journal of the *Partisan Defense Committee/U.S.* The *Partisan Defense Committee* is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the *Spartacist League*.

For the past 19 months Fijian miners have waged a heroic struggle against the Emperor Gold Mining Company. In the longest strike in Fijian history, miners at Emperor's Vatukoula gold mine are fighting for better wages, safety conditions, living standards and company re-

cognition of their union. They've been met with a series of eviction threats, attacks on their picket lines and constant harassment by the company and cops.

These attacks culminated in a police assault on February 4, when 30 riot squad police using tear gas attempted to evict strikers from company housing. This provocation was met by a courageous defence. But six miners, Viliame Rokoraiba, Vereniko Batikalou, Josua Vunisa, Eferemo Caketi, Usaia Seniu and Etuwate Matawalu, denied legal and union representation, were brutally beaten into forced confessions. They now languish in jail convicted and sentenced for up to two-and-a-half years on charges of assault, obstruction and damaging a police vehicle. One more miner, charged with murder over the death of

a bailiff killed during the police assault, was jailed for four months before charges were dropped.

In the Australian neo-colony of Fiji, the Vatukoula gold mine is run with apartheid-like brutality. The mainly ethnic Fijian miners earn a pitiful \$1.30 per hour under unsafe work conditions. Along with their families the miners live in a company-owned shantytown without electricity, adequate water or the most basic facilities. As in South Africa, where black miners earn a fraction of white workers' wages, dark-skinned Fijians are treated like dirt. In its Australia home base Western Mining, a major shareholder of the Vatukoula mine, tramples over the rights of Aborigines and wages war on Australian miners' wages and hard-won working conditions.

Like other former British colonies Fiji is a powderkeg of communal-racial division, mainly between indigenous Fijians (Melanesians) and Indians originally imported by the British as indentured labour for the sugar plantations. The Vatukoula miners' struggle has coincided with strikes by predominantly Fijian-Indian sugar workers and women textile workers across Fiji, despite vicious anti-union laws. These struggles need to be linked. Unity of the working class, cutting across the institutionalised anti-Indian chauvinism of the Fijian-dominated government which came to power through the rigged electoral system established by the 1987 CIA-supported coup, is crucial to defeating the government's vicious austerity that targets all the oppressed throughout the Fijian islands.

Having failed to crush the strike through state terror and repression, and fearing a loss of foreign investment, the government of prime minister Rabuka

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# Workers State Strangled...

(continued from page 3)

alysis as the rest of society. The upper strata of the military command, on the other hand, were a component of the Soviet bureaucracy. Trotsky explained that the bureaucracy was a brittle, contradictory caste whose role was that of an intermediary between the workers state and hostile imperialist encirclement. 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). Reiss was a leading cadre of the Soviet intelligence service who declared for the Fourth International and was murdered by Stalin in 1937; Butenko was a Soviet diplomat who defected to Mussolini's fascist Italy.

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. As Trotsky wrote:

"When the proletariat springs into action, the Stalinist apparatus will remain suspended in midair. Should it still attempt to resist, it will then be necessary to apply against it not the measures of civil war, but rather the measures of a police character.... "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"

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. 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.

The utter incapacity of the bureaucracy to play any independent role was forcefully demonstrated in the events of August 1991. Behind the seeming incompetence of the "Emergency Committee" (made up of Gorbachev's chief lieutenants)—its failure to arrest Yeltsin or even to cut off his direct line to Washington—lay the fact that these stodgy bureaucrats had no alternative to the



SPARTACIST  
ICL banner outside January 1992 Soviet officers conference in Moscow: "No to Capitalist Restoration! Yes to Gains of October!"

program of restoration and their refusal to in any way antagonize the imperialist powers. Had the workers sprung into action, mobilizing to clear out the despised profit-gouging "cooperativists," speculators and ruble millionaires who manned Yeltsin's barricades, this would have indeed directly posed a civil war between the proletariat and the active forces of counterrevolution, and marked the beginning of a *proletarian political revolution*. Fearing proletarian mobilization far more than counterrevolution, not a single element of the so-called "hardline" Stalinist "patriot" opposition to Gorbachev/Yeltsin tried to organize resistance to the Yeltsinite forces, hiding instead behind the impotent proclamations of the coup committee.

Having seized the reins of power, the Yeltsin regime immediately moved to reorganize the top echelons of the military, putting in a layer of younger officers who were marked either by subservience to Yeltsin (eg, Shaposhnikov) or by strident Russian nationalism, while seeking to buy off broader layers of the officer corps with salary increases. At the same time, there was a self-purge, as numbers of pro-socialist officers left the army in disgust over the anti-Communist ban. In any case, as Trotsky remarked in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937): "a bourgeois restoration would probably have to clean out fewer people [from the state apparatus] than a revolutionary party."

The juridical dissolution of the USSR in December 1991 left the all-Union armed forces—nominally under the command of the stillborn "Commonwealth of Independent States"—suspended in midair, a "sixteenth republic," as some dubbed it. An officers conference in the Kremlin the following month registered overwhelming sentiment for maintaining the military as a multinational institution. But, as we warned at the time, "to preserve the multinational Soviet state and army requires salvaging the socialized property upon which it was created." Had the working class moved, sections of the military would undoubtedly have gone over to its side. Instead the centrifugal forces set into play by Yeltsin's counter-coup and formalized by the December

1991 decree moved to tear the military apart and eliminate what remained of the workers state. Nationalism, as in the chauvinist drum-beating over Moldova, has been a driving force in cohering an armed force loyal to the new capitalist order.

The use of Russian OMON forces to break up an anti-Yeltsin protest in February marked the emergence of a repressive apparatus loyal to the new regime. With the Ukraine and other republics creating separate armies and demanding loyalty oaths from Soviet troops stationed on their territory, in May Yeltsin decreed the formation of a distinct Russian Army, appointing the relatively young general Grachev, a strident Russian nationalist who proclaimed his allegiance to Yeltsin during the coup, as the new Russian defense minister. An article in the CIA's "Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty" *RFE/RL Research Report* (21 August) observed:

"In many important respects, the appointment of General of the Army Pavel Grachev to the post of Russian defense minister on 18 May 1992 marked the beginning of the post-Soviet period in the security sphere, much as the creation of the CIS in December 1991 had marked the end of the Soviet period in the political sphere."

Navy Day, on July 26, was marked by the hoisting of the old tsarist naval emblem, the St Andrew's Cross, throughout the fleets, while Navy chief Admiral Chernavin proclaimed: "The Russian fleet must retrieve its flag, not because Soviet sailors were ashamed of the old flag but because it no longer corresponds to the spirit of the Russian navy" (*Independent* [London], 27 July). The flying of the tsarist banner over the Kronstadt naval garrison, a bastion of Bolshevism in the October Revolution, and atop the cruiser *Aurora*, whose fusillade against the Winter Palace signaled the victory of the Petrograd proletarian insurrection, aptly if grotesquely symbolized the dismantling of the Soviet workers state by the triumphant forces of counterrevolution.

Yeltsin and his counterparts in the other republics now have the beginnings of bourgeois armies. But the loyalty of these armed forces to capitalism has yet to be tested in blood. Noting that "the entire military could fragment along political or ethnic lines," one observer noted that "Russian leaders will be extremely wary of using the army to maintain domestic order" (Mark Kramer, "The Armies of the Post-Soviet States," *Current History*, October 1992).

## Who Is Guilty for the Catastrophe?

There was no lack of "Trotskyists" who took their stand on Yeltsin's barricades (in some cases, literally) and/or moved with shameless haste to declare the Soviet Union dead and buried. Thus they finally disencumbered themselves of the albatross of (ever more formal and empty) defense of the Soviet Union, which the bourgeoisie has hated and sought to destroy since the October Revolution.

In his 1933 article, Trotsky warned of the "tragic possibility" that the Soviet

workers state "will fall under the joint blows of its internal and external enemies":

"But in the event of this worst possible variant, a tremendous significance for the subsequent course of the revolutionary struggle will be borne by the question: *where* are those guilty for the catastrophe? Not the slightest taint of guilt must fall upon the revolutionary internationalists. In the hour of mortal danger, they must remain on the last barricade."

—"The Class Nature of the Soviet State"

And that is what the International Communist League has done. To the extent our limited forces permit, we have fought to provide a revolutionary pole to win the Soviet working class to a program to reverse and defeat the counterrevolution. Our comrade Martha Phillips, murdered in Moscow last February, made the ultimate sacrifice in fighting for that cause.

Five years ago, when the first openly counterrevolutionary force—the anti-Semitic nativist fascists of Pamyat—reared its head in Moscow and Leningrad, we called for proletarian-centered mass mobilizations to crush these latter-day Black Hundreds in the egg. When, in August 1990, Gorbachev endorsed a plan for full-fledged capitalist restoration drawn up by Yeltsin, our first Russian-language leaflet raised the call "Soviet Workers: Smash Yeltsin/Gorbachev 500-Day Plan!" (*WV* No 510, 21 September 1990). That November, at the Revolution Day commemoration in Leningrad, the banner of the Fourth International was openly unfurled for the first time in the Soviet Union.

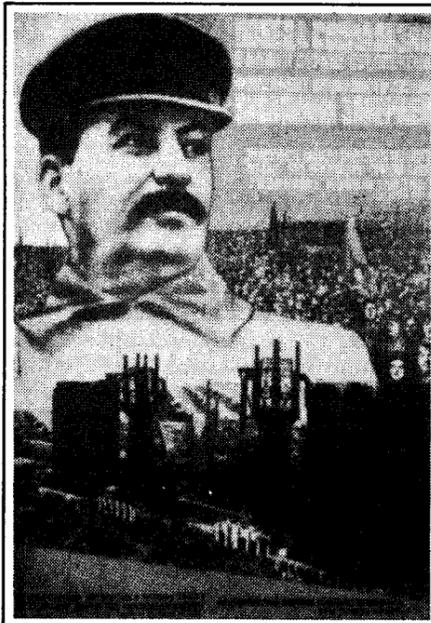
Despite our meager resources and limited Russian-language capacity, we sought to intervene directly in the turbulent situation which opened up after Gorbachev took over. Following the dramatic coal miners strikes in the summer of 1989, we sought to get our Trotskyist propaganda into the hands of these combative workers, whose struggle had electrified the Soviet working class and shaken the Stalinist bureaucracy. ICL representatives intervened in a miners conference in Donetsk in October 1990, where they succeeded in temporarily spiking a CIA-orchestrated effort to enlist Soviet workers in a red-baiting witchhunt against British miners leader Arthur Scargill.

During the 1989-90 upheaval in the DDR, as part of the ICL's struggle to effect a *proletarian* political revolution in East Germany, we issued Russian-language propaganda addressed to and widely disseminated among Soviet troops stationed there, and later spoke to assemblies of Soviet officers and soldiers. In 1991, on the anniversary of the Red Army's victory over Nazi Germany, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany and the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski held a joint forum for several hundred Soviet military personnel at an air base outside Berlin (*WV* No 526, 10 May 1991). Then, a month before Yeltsin's counter-coup, ICL representative Martha Phillips addressed the Moscow Workers Conference, calling for the formation of genuine soviets to stop capitalist counterrevolution, for opposition to all forms of chauvinist reaction, and for international socialist revolution.

Our August 1991 call, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!", was the first statement widely distributed throughout the Soviet Union in opposition to Yeltsin's restorationist drive. We advanced a program for independent working-class struggle against capitalist restoration and for genuine soviets as organs of a new proletarian political power:

"*Independent workers committees* must be formed in factories, mines, railroad yards and other enterprises to prevent layoffs and privatization by taking over the plants and controlling production.... *Committees of soldiers and officers* must be formed to oppose the purges and prevent the army from being used to attack the workers' interests.... *Workers militias* must be formed...to defend against and crush the lynch mobs and pogromists.... In this hour of dire need more than ever, the key to successful defense of

continued on page 10



Charlo/Gamma

Stalinist myths: Poster proclaims that "Victory of Socialism in Our Country Is Guaranteed." Leonid Brezhnev and Henry Kissinger celebrate "détente."

# Workers State Strangled...

(continued from page 9)

the Soviet proletariat is the forging of a new, authentically communist vanguard party of the working class. Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky!"

We sharply opposed resurgent anti-Semitism and Great Russian chauvinism and warned that women have the most to lose under capitalist restoration.

Following Yeltsin's unleashing of the OMON and Moscow militia (police) against protesters in February 1992, we issued an urgent statement: "White Tsar' Boris Wants a New Bloody Sunday." With the threat of widespread hunger posed by draconian price increases on food and other necessities, we raised a fighting program:

"Through their own independent committees, composed of delegates elected by the enterprises, the working people must take control of food supplies and oversee distribution. What is needed once again is to form authentic soviets, not talk shops like the fake soviets and impotent parliaments of today, but organs for struggle composed of deputies elected by and recallable to the workplace and barracks. Formed into powerful soviets—internationalist, egalitarian, revolutionary—the working people will be able to sweep away the shaky regimes of the capitalist-restorationists with a flick of the finger. *No new tsars—away with Yeltsin—for a republic of the working people!*"

These demands retain their full force today, though the consolidation of a bourgeois state poses the struggle not for political revolution but for *socialist* revolution to sweep away the nascent capitalist class.

Who is guilty for the catastrophe? First and foremost it is the Stalinists who bear responsibility. Beginning with the political counterrevolution led by Stalin in 1923-24, the state apparatus was, as Trotsky wrote, "transformed from a weapon of the working class into a weapon of bureaucratic violence against the working class, and more and more a weapon for the sabotage of the country's economy" (Transitional Program). By the later Brezhnev years, bureaucratic mismanagement of the planned, centralized economy had resulted in a sharp decline in Soviet economic growth, while rampant corruption fueled the appetites of the pampered children of the bureaucracy to live like Western capitalists. Given its mortal dread of workers democracy which would abolish their privileged positions, the only option the bureaucracy saw for intensive economic growth was to experiment with a neo-Bukharinite program of market-oriented "reforms"—Gorbachev's *perestroika*.

While the August 1991 "Emergency Committee" offered nothing but "perestroika without glasnost," today Stalinist leftovers like Viktor Anpilov's RKR, Kryuchkov's RPK, Prigarin's SK and Nina Andreyeva's VKPB et al, who today posture as an opposition to Yeltsin, offer nothing but a "red" cover for capitalist counterrevolution. They have made no attempt to mobilize *class struggle*, not only because their chauvinist politics make them incapable of appealing to the still multinational proletariat, but be-



**Red Army's International Battalion honours German Spartakists Luxemburg and Liebknecht after their murder, January 1919. Proletarian Internationalism was the cornerstone of the Soviet Union under Lenin and Trotsky.**

cause they are *opposed* to any struggle which would disrupt capitalist class "peace." This was explicitly stated in the March 1992 "Declaration on the Founding of the United Opposition," signed by all the Stalinist leftovers as well as Medvedev and Denisov's SPT—formalizing the repulsive "red-brown" coalition with Great Russian chauvinists, monarchists and outright fascists—which called for "salvation of the Fatherland...on the basis of civil peace and national trust." Thus all these groups *opposed* the recent air traffic controllers strike.

With their call for privatization through the "work collectives," the Stalinist has-beens seek to be the "left" flank of the counterrevolution's corporatist wing, whose most powerful representative is the Volsky-Rutskoi Civic Union bloc. Aligned with them is the former official trade-union bureaucracy, now calling itself the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR). Where Yeltsin's prime minister Gaidar grovels to the West for infusions of capital and promotes a fantastical scheme for privatization through distribution of shareholding vouchers to the entire population, the Volsky/Rutskoi faction hopes to maintain a strong military-industrial sector by placing ownership directly in the hands of the former managers.

In the name of building the *derzhava*, the tsarist watchword for a Russian strong state, the RKR & Co have willingly submerged themselves in every reactionary lash-up, from the fascistic Russian National Sobor of the anti-Communist, anti-Semite Sterligov (who is now pushing restoration of the tsarist throne) to the newly founded "left-right" National Salvation Front. Indeed, every grouping which issued out of the former CPSU—from the RKR to the SPT—accepts the "inevitability" of the "market economy" (restoration of capitalism). They're simply squabbling over the terms—who gets to feed at the trough (see "Stalinist Has-Beens: Left Wing of Nationalist Counterrevolution," *WV* No 561, 16 October). Meanwhile, the ex-

PLICITLY social-democratic Labor Party (PT) of Boris Kagarlitsky is in bed with a section of the FNPR bureaucracy, and participates in the All-Russian Tiling Assembly, which is heavily populated by Volsky's people and whose chairman Konstantinov is vice president of the Sobor.

Every one of the numerous Stalinist and social-democratic outfits has fallen into step behind the corporatist option, appealing for privatization through the "work collectives" (ie, factory managers). With their backs against the wall, many workers may look to their factory managers taking ownership of industry as a last-ditch defense against unemployment and immiseration.

Soviet workers should entertain no illusions that their livelihoods will be secure under a corporatist regime. Capitalism, whether under Volsky/Rutskoi or Yeltsin/Gaidar or some variant in between, necessarily means the whip of brutal exploitation and widespread unemployment.

## "State Capitalism": Anti-Communist Myth

If the destruction of the Soviet Union has placed a final epitaph on the sordid history of Stalinism, it has also demolished the numerous false "theories" behind which various renegades from Trotskyism sought to mask their refusal to defend the gains of the October Revolution. The "theory" that the Soviet Union was a "state capitalist" society stands the Marxist analysis of capitalism on its head. It posits a truly bizarre form of "capitalism"—one in which capitalist competition and the law of value are external to the system, one marked not by cyclical crises of overproduction but by distortions and bottlenecks due to administrative fiat, one characterized not by chronic mass unemployment but by labor shortages. The purpose of the terminological sleight of hand, whether from the pen of Tony Cliff or his predecessors, was to deny any basis for defense of the Soviet Union.

While claiming to occupy a "third

camp" ("neither Washington nor Moscow"), today the "state capitalists" join the imperialists in rejoicing over the "death of Communism." In August 1991, the Cliffites cheered that "Communism Has Collapsed" and hailed the Yeltsinite ascendancy as "The Beginning, Not the End" (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991). The identification with imperialist anti-Communism is evident, but the "state capitalist" logic is absurd. Here we have supposedly just witnessed the remarkable spectacle of an entire "capitalist class" which simply committed suicide rather than seeking to defend its property. And the millions upon millions of working people in East Europe and the ex-USSR who are now being dragged down by immiseration, unemployment and fratricide aren't about to buy the notion that they are just going from one brand of capitalism to another, much less hail it.

"Third campists" of the second mobilization, like the political bandits of David North's "International Committee" and others, argue that Stalinism is "counter-revolutionary through and through." This flatly denies Trotsky's understanding of the "dual position" of the bureaucracy. More to the point, like Cliff's theory, the purpose is to wash their hands of defense of the Soviet Union. North claimed that from the beginning Gorbachev was bent on "the political, economic and social liquidation of all that remains of the conquests of the October Revolution" (*Perestroika Versus Socialism* [1989]). North then rushed to proclaim that it is "impossible to define...any of the republics" of the ex-USSR "as workers states" the moment Yeltsin decreed its juridical dissolution ("The End of the USSR," *Bulletin*, 10 January 1992).

The various theories defining the Stalinist bureaucracy as a "new class" or "counterrevolutionary through and through" unite in appealing to knee-jerk moralism. In contrast, Trotsky's dialectical and materialist analysis of the Soviet degenerated workers state, elaborated in *The Revolution Betrayed* and other writings, has stood the test of time and provides a program for action for the proletariat. Basing ourselves on this Marxist understanding, we pointed to the contradictory character of the initial Gorbachev reforms: "Gorbachev's *perestroika* not only goes against the immediate material interests of most workers but also affronts their deep reservoir of collective feeling. At the same time, the regime's call for *glasnost* permits a degree of organized dissent against official policies" (Spartacist League/U.S. conference document, "Toward Revolutionary Conjunction," June 1987).

For the first couple of years, Gorbachev's neo-Bukharinite reforms had some effect in reviving the Soviet economy. Harvard economist Marshall Goldman, in his book *What Went Wrong with Perestroika* (1991), notes of Gorbachev's 1985-86 program of "intensification" and "acceleration" that "initially these reforms seemed to be working" and "industrial growth seemed to rebound." He even achieved the largest grain harvest in Soviet history (240 million tons in 1990). But the subsequent introduction of enterprise self-management on New Year's 1988 proved to be the decisive step finally leading to collapse. The abandonment of planning in a planned economy led to a breakdown in economic administration and widespread shortages and looting. The result, Goldman writes, was "the undermining of the planning system and the collapse of the economy." As *perestroika* reforms failed, in August 1990, Gorbachev openly declared his support to capitalist restoration by endorsing the "500-Day Plan," only to back away from it later in his constant zigzagging.

Gorbachev's evolution from "market socialism" reforms to a program of outright capitalist restoration proved yet again the impossibility of "reforming" the Stalinist regime, a conception advanced by the likes of Ernest Mandel in his book *Beyond Perestroika* (1989).



**Our comrade Martha Phillips fought to defend the October Revolution. Protesting against closing of the Lenin Museum (right) and addressing delegates at July 1991 Moscow Workers Conference (far right).**

Spartacist photos



Spartakists initiated January 1990 demonstration of 250,000 in Treptow Park, East Berlin protesting Nazi desecration of Red Army monument. Spartakist Workers Party poster in March 1990 East German elections: "No to Capitalist Reunification!"



Whatever their quibbling differences, support for Yeltsin counterrevolution brought together all of these revisionists, from Cliff to North to Mandel—as well as the Militant group in Britain (formerly led by Ted Grant), associated with Sergei Beits' Rabochiya Demokratiya (Workers Democracy) in Russia. The bottom line for all of these outfits has been capitulation to social-democratic anti-Sovietism, just as a decade ago they were all united in their cheering for counterrevolutionary Solidarność in Poland and their denunciations of the Red Army intervention into Afghanistan.

In contrast, the Spartacist tendency proclaimed "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and declared "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!" in Poland. In response to Gorbachev's 1989 pullout from Afghanistan in order to appease Washington, we warned it is far better to fight imperialism there than within the borders of the Soviet Union. But the Gorbachev regime didn't want to fight imperialism anywhere. "The decision to leave Afghanistan was the first and most difficult step," remarked Gorbachev's foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze recently, "Everything else flowed from that." A year after the Afghanistan withdrawal, Gorbachev gave the green light to capitalist reunification of Germany.

The ICL was unique in its unambiguous and forthright opposition to imperialist annexation of the DDR: the power of the Trotskyist program to show the way out of the collapse of Stalinism found a massive expression in the 250,000-strong anti-fascist, pro-Soviet demonstration on 3 January 1990 at Berlin's Treptow Park, which was initiated by the German Spartakists. The Stalinists, for their part, thought they could have counterrevolution in one country. But the sellout of the DDR directly prepared the destruction of the Soviet Union.

**Reforge the Fourth International!**

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing sharpening of inter-imperialist rivalries have made the world a far more dangerous place. The "New World Disorder"—proclaimed during the U.S.-led imperialist slaughter in the Persian Gulf, to which Gorbachev gave his approval—has the hallmarks of the old

world order which led to the slaughterhouse of World War I, but this time posing the threat of a nuclear conflagration. Imperialist unity, maintained for decades by the "Communist menace," has broken down as the contending powers fall upon each other, and vie to carve up the former Soviet bloc into neocolonies.

At the same time, there is opening up a new period of intensified class struggle. The semicolonial peoples of the world, now that the imperialist powers do not feel constrained by a Soviet counterweight, are being subjected to outright starvation. In the imperialist West, growing trade war and exploitation have already led to major class battles in Germany, Italy and Greece. The multiracial upheaval in Los Angeles following the verdict freeing the racist cops in the Rodney King beating testifies to the social instability in the United States. In East Europe and the ex-USSR, the working class will soon recover from the numbing experience of counter-revolution and begin to fight against the ravages of capitalist exploitation. Poland already has been swept by one major strike after another over the past year.

The workers of Russia, the Ukraine and the other former Soviet republics still have time to regroup and strike back before anything approaching a viable system of capitalist exploitation is congealed. Hatred and bitterness toward Yeltsin and his ilk are seething. Unlike in the ex-DDR, where masses of working people bought the lie that D-mark Anschluss (annexation) would bring prosperity, in the former USSR there are few such positive illusions. There is, however, a widespread view that there is no alternative to the "market," for which the bankrupt Stalinists bear the main responsibility.

The road to recreating a full-fledged capitalism is not as smooth as the Nevsky Prospekt. To free itself of its would-be exploiters and oppressors, the working class must also assert itself as a "tribune of the people," opposing every manifestation of anti-Semitism and anti-woman and anti-homosexual bigotry, rising to the defense of all those—including African and Asian students, and the Central Asian peoples in Russia—who are increasingly exposed to violent

racist terror. What is required above all is a revolutionary leadership capable of overcoming the divisions inspired by chauvinism and nationalism, clearing away the decades of false consciousness fostered by Stalinism, and linking the struggles in the ex-USSR to that of the world proletariat.

While social democrats squeal that "Soviet Communism" discredited socialism in the eyes of the masses, an even greater crime of Stalinism was the way it warped the consciousness of pro-socialist workers, filling their heads with anti-Marxist illusions such as "building socialism in one country," the "popular front" and the utopia of "peaceful co-existence" with imperialism. "Socialism in one country" meant not only the suppression of revolutionary struggle abroad, but the isolation of the Soviet working class from any connection with the international class struggle. For more than 60 years, Soviet workers were submerged in a cocoon walling them off from political developments around the world. In the course of fighting to reverse the counterrevolution which has plunged it into poverty and misery, the Soviet working class will necessarily have to reappropriate the revolutionary heritage which has been taken from it.

The proletariat which made the October Revolution learned from Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks that it was part of an international struggle. It understood that its only prospect for survival lay in the extension of the revolution to more advanced industrial powers, chiefly Germany. The opportunities were manifold, but the revolutionary parties outside Soviet Russia were too weak and politically immature to pursue them. The German Spartakist uprising of 1918-19 and the 1919 Hungarian Commune went down to bloody defeat. The possibility of the Red Army marching to the aid of the German workers in 1920 by unleashing proletarian revolution in Pilsudski's Poland was foiled. Finally, with the defeat of the German October in 1923, the Soviet proletariat succumbed to the demoralizing prospect of a lengthy

period of isolation, which allowed the bureaucratic layer headed by Stalin to usurp political power. Thus was the revolution betrayed.

But this betrayal did not go unchallenged. The Left Opposition of Leon Trotsky continued the struggle for the authentic program of Leninism. In its struggle to defend and extend Soviet power, the Left Opposition urged a policy of planned industrialization to revive the enervated proletariat and enable the isolated workers state to hold out against imperialist encirclement. The Trotskyists fought uncompromisingly against the nascent bureaucracy's Great Russian chauvinism. They fought against the treacherous policies emanating from "socialism in one country," in the first instance the subversion of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 and the Anglo-Russian trade-union bloc which led to the knifing of the 1926 British General Strike. This led to the subordination of the German working class to Hitler's jackboot, to the outright suppression of the Spanish revolution in the late 1930s. By selling out revolutionary opportunities at the end of World II, particularly in Italy, France and Greece, Stalinism enabled capitalism to survive, and thus prepared the way for its own ultimate demise.

With the utter liquidation of the Communist International as an instrument for world revolution, Trotsky organized the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. Today the International Communist League fights for the rebirth of the Fourth International, whose cadre were decimated by Stalinist and Hitlerite terror and which finally succumbed in the early 1950s to an internal revisionist challenge which denied the need for an independent revolutionary leadership. Only as part of the struggle to reforge an authentic world party of socialist revolution can the workers of the former Soviet Union cohere the leadership they need to sweep away the grotesque horrors they now confront.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No 564, 27 November 1992

**Germany...**

(continued from page 12)

Terror," *Workers Vanguard* No 563, 13 November). These youth must be won to fight for the independent mobilization of the working class, including the key component of immigrant workers, who are increasingly the target of the fascist attacks. This is the program of the SpAD.

In fact, the unions are feeling intense pressure to act. A demonstration yesterday in Berlin which attracted some 5,000 people was called by the DGB (German trade-union federation), as well as the Alternative Slate/Greens and immigrant groups. There were union contingents with shop stewards and factory council members, notably from the teachers union, and a delegation of metal workers.

Teachers union representatives said that after the Rostock pogroms, the

phones at DGB headquarters were ringing off the hook with requests from the plants for buses to take protesters to demonstrate at the Baltic port, but the DGB tops refused. The heavily immigrant metal workers union together with the ÖTV public employees union could defend the refugee hostels and make the subways secure with workers defense guards.

The Spartakist Workers Party and the International Communist League uniquely fought against capitalist reunification of Germany, and we have continued to fight against its consequences, including mass unemployment, attacks on women's rights, anti-Semitism and racist terror. At the Berlin protests, the Spartakists shouted out: "The working class will avenge Silvio Meier!" We are fighting for socialist revolution, which will sweep away the fascist plague once and for all.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No 564, 27 November 1992

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# Nazi Murder Attacks in Germany

BERLIN, November 23—The continuing wave of terror by bands of fascist killers, kindled by the capitalist reunification of Germany, reached a frenzy last weekend with the brutal murder of five people. In response there have been counterattacks by militant leftists and spontaneous anti-fascist demonstrations, including the hesitant beginnings of action by the trade-union movement. The Spartakist Workers Party is fighting for worker/immigrant mobilizations to crush the fascist terrorists.

On Friday night, November 20, 27-year-old squatter Silvio Meier was knifed to death by a clot of Nazis in Berlin. He and some friends were going to a disco when they came across the fascists at an East Berlin subway stop. When the squatters went after the Nazi punks, they were stabbed amid shouts of "leftist pigs!" Silvio died from wounds to the lungs, while his two friends were taken to the hospital with severe injuries.

One of the attackers wore a patch proclaiming "I'm Proud to Be a German." As Silvio's friends wrote of this fascist slogan the next day in a leaflet titled "Rage and Mourning": "This stands for the pogroms in Rostock, Mannheim and elsewhere, for the murders of Nguyen Van Tu in Marzahn, of Antonio Amadeu in Eberswalde, of Thorsten Lamprecht in Magdeburg, of Mete Eksi in Charlottenburg, of almost 30 people since 1990."

Then, on Sunday night, Nazis in the west German town of Mölln, in the state of Schleswig-Holstein near Hamburg, staged an arson attack on two houses, murdering a family of Turkish immigrants: 51-year-old Bahiy Arslan, her 10-year-old grandchild Yeliz Arslan and her 14-year-old niece Atze Yilmaz. Minutes after firebombs were thrown, fascists called the police, claiming credit and crying, "Heil Hitler!" The Turkish family had been living and working in Germany for six years. Nine others were wounded in this murderous attack on the immigrants' houses.

It also became known last weekend that a 53-year-old worker, who had called some skinheads in a pub "Nazi swine," was kicked to a pulp by the fascists with their military boots, drenched with schnapps and then lit afire. The innkeeper whipped up the attack, saying the man was a Jew, and then helped to hide the body, which was later dumped in the Netherlands.

Also this weekend, a former official of the Italian Communist Party who has been working in Germany for 27 years was attacked in his apartment by Nazis. In the space of two days, rightists fired guns into a squatters community in Rathenow, firebombed a refugee home in Schöningen, and threw a hand grenade into a home for refugee children in Hamburg. In Rostock, scene of the anti-Roma (Gypsy) pogrom last August, a dozen skinhead toughs roamed through the city smashing cars and terrorizing passers-by. Today another Turk was reportedly knifed.

At the same time, in various towns of the ex-DDR (East Germany), left-wing youth have responded by going after the fascist killers. In Brandenburg, there was a street fight between skinheads and leftists, leaving one injured on each side. In Rudolstadt, leftists took a bat to one of the rightist scum. And in Erfurt, a

## Leftists, Unions Protest



Spartakist Workers Party contingent in protest against the racist pogrom in Rostock, August 29. Banner of the Committee for Social Defence says, "Workers/Immigrants: Stop the Nazis Now!"

group of two dozen leftist radicals broke up a neo-Nazi bar.

The bourgeois press is comparing these clashes between leftists and rightist thugs with the latter days of the Weimar Republic. The comparison is greatly overstated, and its purpose is to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state. Thus after months of pointedly ignoring rightist attacks, the *Verfassungsschutz* (Office for the Protection of the Constitution) suddenly intervened in the investigation of the Mölln attack.

Meanwhile, federal chancellor Kohl has threatened to declare a "state emergency" in order to "modify" (eliminate) the constitutional right to asylum, thus handing the Nazis a victory in their

"foreigners out" drive. And federal interior minister Seiter is calling for limitations on the right to demonstrate.

Some Social Democratic (SPD) spokesmen and the ex-Stalinist PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) are calling for banning right-wing "extremist" organizations. But as the Marxist analysis of the state explains, and historical experience shows, such measures will inevitably be used mainly against the left.

The situation cries out for mass united-front working-class mobilization, to bring out the social power of workers and immigrants against the Nazis and to defend refugees. This is the program Leon Trotsky repeatedly called for in the early 1930s, as the Social Democrats and

Stalinists let Hitler march to power unhindered.

As the murder of Silvio Meier became known, there was a spontaneous march of several hundred protesters on Saturday evening. On Sunday, some 5,000 marched, mostly semi-anarchist *Autonome* and squatters, to denounce the Nazi murder. The SpAD marched under a red banner calling to "Stop the Nazis with Workers United-Front Action! Full Citizenship Rights for Immigrant Workers and Their Families!" Spartakist signs recalled how the SPD former mayor of Berlin, Momper, had unleashed the federal border police against East Berlin squatters in November 1990.

During the demonstration, *Autonome* repeatedly physically attacked the Spartakist contingent and attempted to destroy SpAD signs and banners, because they consider workers to be just as reactionary as the fascists. However, the Spartakists stood their ground, and a number of immigrants and groups helped in the successful defense of the SpAD contingent. The Spartakists also defended a small group of TKP-ML Turkish Maoists who were attacked. "Down with anti-communist censorship!" the SpAD chanted.

The blind anti-working-class sectoralism of the *Autonome* is downright suicidal. The Nazis are the reserve troops of the Fourth Reich, who have flourished on the nationalist breeding ground of capitalist reunification. They cannot be fought with impotent declarations of "rage" any more than with popular-front demonstrations headed by racist politicians concerned about "the image of Germany abroad." The fascist scum won't be defeated by random brawls, and certainly not by anti-communist assaults.

In recent weeks, tens of thousands of youth have gone into the streets to protest not only against Nazi attacks but also against the parliamentary debate over gutting the right to asylum, including the vile role of the SPD in the racist anti-immigrant popular front (see "Germany: Mass Outrage Over Fascist

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## Trotskyists Say: "Freedom for Erich Honecker!"



Le Bolchévik



CNN

The anti-Communist show trial of Erich Honecker and other leaders of the former DDR opened in Berlin November 12. Sections of the International Communist League protested the witchhunt, in Paris (left) November 7, anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, and outside courtroom in Berlin (right). The Trotskyists declared: "Defending the DDR Was Not a Crime, Selling It Out Was," and "Stalinism is dead, Communism Lives."