

## Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!

# Where is Gorbachev's Russia Going?

We print below an edited and abridged transcript of a Toronto Trotskyist League forum given by comrade John Masters on 17 October.

In a recent opinion poll about 4,000 Americans were asked how favorably they would rate various political bodies, institutions and individuals. Among the people asked about was Mikhail Gorbachev, premier of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the country that Ronald Reagan claims is "the evil empire." Here's what the *New York Times* had to say about the results of this poll: "One striking finding is the remarkable personal popularity of the Soviet leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev.... The researchers noted that Americans viewed Mr. Gorbachev more favorably than they did Wall Street investors, the C.I.A., Richard M. Nixon and the Rev. Jerry Falwell."

A similar poll in Western Europe asked: who do you trust most to fight for world peace, Gorbachev, Reagan, Maggie Thatcher, German chancellor Kohl, or who? Gorbachev won hands down in both Britain and West Germany. To say the very least, these signify gaping holes in what Reagan & Co. wish was a Cold War monolith in the capitalist West. In our recent newspaper subscription drives in the U.S. and here among the biggest selling items were articles about the Soviet Union today. What is it, people want to know, why does Reagan hate it? Why do you Trotskyists defend it? And what's happening there?



**Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev exhorts Soviet oil workers to work harder. Only workers' overthrow of bureaucratic caste can revitalize Soviet economy.**

The ascent to power of a new, reform-minded and pretty competent leadership in the Soviet Union has opened a lot of people's eyes. There are three basic components to Gorbachev's policies which are interrelated. The first is a genuine if partial political and cultural liberalization called *glasnost*, or openness. Second, there's a move to revive the stagnating Soviet economy through increased reliance on market forces. That's termed *perestroika*, or reconstruction. And third, there's an attempt

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# CP Hails Racist Crackdown on Sikhs

When 174 refugees, overwhelmingly Sikh, landed on the Nova Scotia shoreline from the freighter *Amelie* early on July 12, the Mulroney Tories went into a racist fury. Invoking the bogey of "Sikh terrorism" they reacted as though this was an invading army. Initially held incommunicado and denied legal

and return here scot-free."

A week earlier the *Tribune* carried a letter from one Mark Sidney, a regular writer for the paper. Playing on the pro-socialist sympathies of readers, Sidney obscenely equated desperate Sikh refugees with "captive nations" fascists: "Just who are getting the green light from the government?... Terrorist Sikhs; East European scum fleeing socialist society...." Sikhs "getting the green light" from the government?! This line is ludicrous, vicious—and racist. Since 1982 only 12 of about 3,000 Indian (mainly Sikh) refugees have been granted asylum. After the tragic 1985 Air-India crash, for which Sikhs were widely blamed though no cause has yet been determined, Canada issued 2,800 deportation notices to Sikhs. And we remember bitterly the fate of the 376 courageous Sikhs aboard the *Komagata Maru* in 1914 who tried to break Canada's color bar and were only forced to yield when the government threatened to blow their boat out of the water.

Whipping up "terror" scares, including against Sikhs, is a big part of the anti-Soviet Cold War drive on this continent. The aim is to instill fear, to regiment the population for war against Russia; the method is racism. And the CP's anti-Sikh propaganda plays right into it. The Senate Special Committee on Terrorism singled out Sikhs and Muslims for racist repression and now they're worrying that current immigration procedures won't keep out people "with suspected terrorist intentions or associations." On August 11 the Tories recalled Parliament for an emergency sitting to pass the refugee Detention and Deterrents Act, a law so savage that critics call it the War Measures Act for refugees. The law allows for unlimited detention of refugees, unlimited rights of search and seizure, and sweeping powers to deport those deemed "security risks," as well as the right to board ships outside the 12-mile territorial limit.

The CP's ugly capitulation to "white Canada" racism ought to sicken decent members. Behind the shadow of official persecution stands the terrorist  
*(continued on page 4)*



Stalinists' *Canadian Tribune* (3 August) fuels Cold War anti-immigrant terror scare.

counsel, the refugees were imprisoned for weeks at a Canadian Forces base in Halifax, while "investigators" sent their names to the Indian government, setting their families up for deadly reprisals. Tory immigration minister Benoit Bouchard (notorious for bragging about the "demographic purity" of his constituency) declared that "Ninety-nine per cent have said 'Send them back!'" *Globe and Mail*, 17 July). Whipping up a racist frenzy that flotillas of refugee boats would now "invade" Canada, on August 11 Bouchard mobilized the Department of National Defence, the Coast Guard and even Fisheries for a massive search of the West Atlantic.

In the torrent of media racism condemning "queue-jumpers" and "abusers" of Canadian refugee policies, one article applauding the crackdown on "Sikh extremism" stood out. While the unwary might be inclined to credit the racist *Toronto Sun*, in fact this odious piece was featured on the back page of the 3 August *Canadian Tribune*, newspaper of the Communist Party of Canada (CP), headlined "Indian Communist applauds move against Sikh extremism!"

Reporting an interview with Harkishan Singh Surjeet, a political bureau member of the Moscow-loyal Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)), the *Tribune* hailed the Canada/India extradition treaty signed early this year for "help[ing] to set back separatist activities in India." Defending the government's racist anti-Sikh crackdown here in Canada, Surjeet claimed that Sikhs "realize they can no longer commit crimes with impunity in India

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## Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!

# State Rampage Against Postal Unions

The two postal strikes of 1987 saw the bared fist of the capitalist state—cops, courts and government—unleashed against workers defending their jobs and livelihoods. For months Canada Post, and behind it the Mulroney government, built an arsenal for all-out war to smash the postal unions. An army of scabs and thousands of security cops were hired and a sinister outfit of ex-RCMP agents recruited

### Parrot Bows to Tory Strikebreaking

for "covert" operations. They thought they could have an easy victory in June over the Letter Carriers Union of Canada (LCUC), traditionally considered the "moderate" union thanks to a leadership long practiced in conciliating the bosses. The LCUC tops tried to throttle militancy through limited rotating strike action. But when and where the ranks hit the bricks, the bosses got far more than they'd bargained for.

Against club-wielding and riot-equipped cops, LCUC members built and defended pickets that drove potential strikebreakers away in fear. In Montreal flying squads removed scabs and their security cop protectors from postal stations. In Toronto 1,200 LCUC members surrounded the main postal plant chanting "No scabs tonight or ever!" Transit drivers refused to take scab buses across the lines and threatened strike action against reprisals. Despite a despicable scabbing deal made by the national union bureaucrats agreeing to withdraw pickets to allow Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) members to go to work, CUPW members were prominent on the lines. Canada Post was forced to back down on its demands for increased workloads and job cuts. And though the strike ended in a standoff; it showed the potential for igniting some hard class struggle from B.C. to the Maritimes.

The LCUC strike took place in the context of a wave of labor action against government union-busting that began in June with a one-day general strike in B.C. It continued through the nationwide rail strike in late August where 1,500 angry rail workers demonstrated on Parliament Hill against the government's strikebreaking, shouting "Hell

no, we won't go!" They were only prevented from venting their fury by rows of riot-equipped cops. Rail workers' rage was directed not only against the Tory government but against the union misleaders who ordered them to obey the bosses' strike-breaking laws.

The corrupt, scandal-ridden Mulroney government is widely despised. There's plenty of anger and combativity within the ranks of labor and among oppressed minorities who are itching for a way to strike back and win against the racist union busters who rule this country. What's lacking is a fighting leadership. The pro-capitalist union tops and their political allies in the NDP fear and hate a nationwide social explosion as much as the capitalist masters they serve. This was brought home with a vengeance in the short-lived strike of the CUPW in early October.

For years the militant-talking CUPW leadership



Brian Willer/Maclean's

**Pickets confront scabherding Toronto cops during CUPW strike.**

has been the *bete noire* of the bourgeoisie. In 1978 the government trashed a militant CUPW strike with strikebreaking legislation, RCMP raids on union offices and the arrest of union leaders. This time

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# For International Class-Struggle Defense!

Victims of capitalist repression are to be found in all corners of the globe. The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal defense organization in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League/U.S., fights to mobilize international working-class defense to win their freedom. The PDC sends monthly stipends to class-war prisoners, among them: Mordechai Vanunu, who faces the death penalty for courageously exposing the existence of an Israeli nuclear force of more than 100-200 bombs; Ramona Africa, imprisoned for the "crime" of surviving the hideous massacre of the black MOVE commune; former Black Panther leader Geronimo Pratt, who has been in jail for 17 years for a crime he did not commit; and two British miners still in prison for defending their union during the bitter year-long strike.

As Christmas approaches supporters are again asked to contribute generously to the PDC's holiday appeal—a message to the class-war prisoners that they are not forgotten. Become a PDC sustainer. With a donation of \$5 or more receive a subscription to *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*. Send contributions to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013, USA. ■



Landau/Jerusalem Post

**Mordechai Vanunu gagged by Israeli police.**

## CP/Sikhs...

(continued from page 2)

violence of the Nazis and Klan, deadly enemies of all minorities, leftists and labor. Just days before the Sikh refugees landed, Nazis repeatedly attacked a Calgary mosque. In early August Paul Fromm, formerly of the fascist Western Guard, called an anti-Sikh demonstration in Toronto, a race-hating rerun of the sinister mobilization he led against the 155 Tamil refugees who had come here on another freighter more than a year ago.

For years capitalist India has been a diplomatic ally of the Soviet Union. According to the twisted logic of "socialism in one country" the interests of Soviet foreign policy must be backed at the expense of the oppressed Indian masses. So the CPI(M) throws its political support to the despotic Gandhi regime, and Surjeet touts the "secular nature of India's government."

The secular pretensions of Rajiv Gandhi and his mother Indira before him reflect the overwhelming preponderance—80 percent—of the Hindu majority, and are a mask for vicious Hindu chauvinism. India is a seething cauldron of national, caste and religious oppression, the bloody legacy of the British Raj. Yet at a press conference reported in the *Globe and Mail* (25 July), headlined "Tough Canadian stand applauded by Marxist," Surjeet "said that there is no persecution of Sikhs in Punjab state or elsewhere in India...." No? What about the 1984 Amritsar massacre of 2,000 Sikhs and the bloody anti-Sikh riots which butchered thousands in Delhi after the assassination of Indira Gandhi? Several of the 174 refugees told of death squad-style arrests and executions, and bore the scars of torture.

Revolutionaries defend national and religious minorities against murderous Hindu chauvinism. Yet, as our article "Gandhi Gets Hers" pointed out:

"...within a capitalist framework, the Sikh fundamentalist dream of Khalistan ('state of the pure') or some other form of self-determination would entail a reactionary reversal of the terms of oppression for the Punjab's large and interpenetrated Hindu minority."

—SC No. 62, November 1984

Only the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution—*class struggle* centered on the powerful Indian proletariat leading the multi-millioned peasantry—can cut across communal and national divisions, laying the basis for the *genuine* secularism of a workers state.

The *Tribune's* line is disgusting enough in India. In Canada it is of a piece with the long, violent history of anti-Asian racism that is a hallmark of this white outpost of the British Empire. Nor is it the first time that the CP's wretched class collaboration has led it to back the capitalists' "Yellow Peril" racism. In World War II the CP supported the imperialist war effort, and when the government interned 24,000 Japanese Canadians, they hailed this racist atrocity.

The Trotskyist League stands for mobilizing the power of labor to smash the racist anti-immigration laws. The iron link between racism and anti-labor attacks was demonstrated in August when the Tories briefly interrupted "emergency" debate on their anti-refugee bill to smash the 50,000-strong national rail workers strike. The Partisan Defense Committee telegraphed Bouchard condemning the inhuman, racist detention of the Sikh refugees; demanding immediate and unconditional political asylum for them and full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers. Unlike the chauvinist CP, we oppose all bourgeois immigration laws, which are necessarily racist. We struggle to forge a multiracial revolutionary party to bring down this system of racist capitalist oppression for good. ■



## Postal Unions...

(continued from page 3)

they geared up to give CUPW the "PATCO treatment," turning every major sorting plant into an armed camp with ten-foot fences and helicopter pads. Armored buses were hired to run scabs, recruited with promises of \$160-plus a day, while the media whipped up its standard anti-union frenzy. But in the end the union leadership itself enforced the bosses' rules on the ranks, and CUPW lost big.

An overwhelming strike vote showed the ranks were ready to do battle. Thousands of other unionists, from St. Lawrence Seaway workers to Toronto teachers, were already on the streets at the end of a summer of labor struggle. But even in the face of opposition from the Toronto and Montreal locals, by far CUPW's largest, the national leadership of president Jean-Claude Parrot tried to play softly-softly by calling rotating strikes, overwhelmingly in smaller localities. Toronto members (who handle 80 percent of the country's mail) were kept chained to the job in the face of heavy management harassment. And when Montreal rebelled with an all-out strike from day one, Parrot threatened them with loss of strike pay and trusteeship. He bragged to the press that "the worst [CUPW] members have done is throw marshmallows at buses carrying strikebreakers" (*Toronto Star*, 2 October).

Every postal worker, LCUC members included, should have been pulled out from day one, building mass pickets no scab would dare cross. CUPW has many women members and many minority workers from South and East Asia and the Caribbean: taking up the cause of all oppressed against the Mulroney government could have rallied broad sections of labor and its allies to the lines. A powerful class-wide fight could have turned the government's strikebreaking laws into scraps of paper. Remember that the right to strike in the public sector was won through a militant "illegal" postal strike in 1965. The only "illegal" strike is one that loses!

At times strikers did break through the sabotage to give a taste of the possibilities. Asian women picketers in Vancouver chased a scab to his car and educated him on the meaning of picket lines. A group of Teamsters in the same city followed

some mail trucks to scab sortation plants and threw up a picket line. When one LCUC driver protested that the CUPW tops' agreement was supposed to let him work, he was warned: "This is a Teamsters picket line and you are not going to cross." A dozen trucks were stopped that night, cutting off mail for the morning delivery.

On October 8 the government announced CUPW would be legislated back to work, with draconian fines of \$100,000 a day for the union, \$50,000 for officials and \$1,000 for members, plus a threat to bar union officials from their posts for five years if the act was violated! Finally CUPW members throughout the country were called out in protest, and stayed out for a week as the bill was debated in Parliament. In Vancouver and Toronto pickets initially stopped all traffic in and out of the plants. But when the Tory strikebreaking law was passed on October 15, the ranks were ordered back to work



Ottawa Citizen

**Ottawa, August 28: Angry rail workers demonstrate against vicious Tory strikebreaking.**

by a leadership intent on upholding "legality." The *Toronto Star* reported: "With tears streaming from his eyes, inside postal union leader Jean Claude Parrot told pickets outside a struck postal plant to never give up their fight.... 'In two years from now, we'll still be here, but this corrupt government will be gone,' he said" (16 October).

"Keep fighting," the labor skates say—by which they mean vote NDP. But when it's not busy pushing reactionary "Canada first" protectionism, Ed Broadbent's party spends most of its time aiding government strikebreaking. It helped push the legislation smashing the August rail strike through in record time, and similarly allowed the anti-CUPW law to go through speedily after a couple of face-saving amendments and a meaningless "no" vote. When in power in the provinces the NDP has enacted anti-union laws every bit as vicious as the Tories', like the mass strikebreaking of the 1975 B.C. NDP government which forced 60,000 truck drivers, pulp

### Trotskyist League Class Series

## Principles of Communism



**Wed. Nov. 11 ... Smash Imperialism!  
For Permanent Revolution!**

**Tues. Nov. 24 ... Forge a Bolshevik Party!**

Classes will be held at 7 p.m. in the International Students Centre, 33 St. George Street (north of College). Readings are available from the Trotskyist League and can be purchased at our literature table in Sidney Smith Building at the University of Toronto on Thursdays. For further information call 593-4138.

and paper, rail and supermarket workers back to work. Labor needs a party like the NDP like it needs a hole in the head.

The labor fakers abet the drive to hack up the unions by their cowardly legalism, racism and chauvinism. Protectionist poison feeds the anti-immigrant hysteria and escalating racist terror. Postal management capitalized on this during the LCUC strike by recruiting desperate Tamil and Haitian refugees as strikebreakers in Montreal. Some local picketers reportedly carried racist placards and taunted scabs with racial slurs. This kind of disgusting crap has no place on a picket line! A fight by the union movement to defend the rights of and organize their foreign-born class brothers and sisters would strike a powerful blow against the bosses' racist union busting.

The disgraceful, long-standing opposition of the NDP and English-Canadian labor bureaucrats to Quebec's national rights similarly aids the bosses. In the past Quebec labor, its militancy fueled by opposition to national oppression, has spearheaded numerous Canada-wide labor actions, including postal strikes. This time the lead given by Montreal CUPW in launching an all-out strike was squandered and stomped on by the national bureaucracy. Now rumors are flying of sentiment for a breakaway by the Montreal local, an act that would be a gift to the bosses' "divide and rule" schemes.

The labor movement throughout English Canada must champion the right of self-determination for Quebec. And Québécois workers—most militant in all North America—must be broken from the program of nationalism. The dead end of nationalism is evident in the record of the past 15 years. In 1972 a province-wide general strike shook the governments in Quebec City and Ottawa, reaching near-insurrectionary proportions in some areas. But the left-talking Quebec union bureaucrats channeled this militancy into political support for the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois. In government the PQ repaid this support by enacting draconian anti-labor laws. Fighting working-class unity—English-speaking, Québécois, immigrant—must be forged in common struggle against the capitalists and their lackeys. But this perspective requires ousting all the sellout bureaucrats who shackle the working class to the capitalist state, and building a new class-struggle leadership of labor and the oppressed.

The Montreal CUPW leadership around Marcel Perreault today parades as a militant alternative to national president Parrot. But this pretense was given the lie earlier this year when Montreal CUPW disgracefully *took the national union into the bosses' court*, asking the virulently anti-labor Quebec Superior Court to arbitrate disputes over mergers, union finances and personnel and even a libel case against eight national officers. Such conduct plays directly into the hands of the bosses and should have no place in the labor movement. Government and courts hands off the unions!

The massive strikebreaking onslaught against

the postal unions, the craven response of the national CUPW leadership, and the fealty to the capitalist courts shown by its putative "militant" opponents, point to a sharp lesson. The great Russian



SC Photo

**CUPW protests outside Canada Post scabberding center, Toronto.**

revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky expressed it 47 years ago in an essay called "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay": "Monopoly capitalism...demands of the reformist bureaucracy and the labor aristocracy, who pick up the crumbs from its banquet table, that they become transformed into its political police before the eyes of the working class.... In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution." Union militancy is not enough: any major labor struggle will become a *political battle*, immediately posing the need for a class-struggle leadership and a *revolutionary workers party* to unite all labor and the oppressed in struggle against the bosses and their state. ■

Dozens of picketers from St. John's, Nfld. to Kamloops, B.C. were arrested by scabberding cops during the CUPW strike, adding to the many charged during the LCUC walkout. Among the latter were nine Toronto CUPW members helping to build the lines of their sister union. At its August 25 meeting Toronto CUPW overwhelmingly passed a motion calling on the union and all Toronto labor to mobilize in defense of these victimized workers, noting that "This intended legal lynching of our brothers and sisters is part and parcel of the racist, union-busting Mulroney government's drive to intimidate and ultimately destroy the postal unions." Now the labor movement must rally to defend all arrested postal strikers. Drop the charges!

## Gorbachev...

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to dramatically cut military spending by cementing a so-called "disarmament" deal with U.S. imperialism. The watchword here is the old standby, "peaceful coexistence."

Taken together these policies are rife with contradictions. They threaten to undermine defense of the Soviet Union in exchange for worthless paper deals with imperialism. They threaten to create unemployment and worker discontent within the country. Remember—Russia's a country where for years there's been a labor *shortage*, where there is no unemployment, unheard of in the capitalist West. But the policies of *glasnost*, including the opening of hitherto hidden pages of Soviet history to a new generation of Soviet workers and intellectuals, could very well create openings for a genuinely revolutionary and internationalist nucleus inside Russia—a nucleus upholding defense of the Soviet Union through world revolution and a return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky.

### Smash Anti-Soviet War Drive!

To understand where Gorbachev's Russia is going we have to look at the problems it faces. Foremost is the imperialist drive to anti-Soviet war. Just look around at a few places where the Cold War is white hot, right now.

First the mountains of Afghanistan, where CIA-armed and funded Islamic reactionaries alternate between butchering schoolteachers, shooting down Russian military and civilian aircraft, and acting as the world's biggest opium dealers. There's Central America, where Reagan is standing by his cutthroat contras and military butchers. Third, there's southern Africa. Here we have the apartheid regime in Pretoria, that well-known bastion of the capitalist "free world," launching terror strikes against neighboring black African states, and above all against Angola and the thousands of Cuban troops who are defending that country.

Then we have even more direct provocations against the Soviets. One of the most recent and incredibly dangerous occurred when a nuclear-powered U.S. missile ship deliberately sailed into Soviet waters around the top-secret Russian naval base in Petropavlovsk. Imagine the reaction in the White House, or even on Parliament Hill, if a Soviet guided missile ship blithely steamed into Chesapeake Bay off the Atlantic Fleet headquarters in Virginia!

The imperialists are doing all this because of something that happened 70 years ago: the Russian Revolution of 1917. The Bolshevik Revolution was truly the greatest victory for the proletariat in

history. And it was the greatest *defeat* for the bourgeoisie.

While the Russian Revolution was made *in* Russia, it was not made simply *for* Russia. All the top leaders of the Bolshevik Party, and the mass of conscious Russian workers, saw themselves firing the first shot in the *world* socialist revolution. The Bolshevik Revolution, as no event before or since, inspired the working class of the world. Even here in Canada there was such an impact. In 1918 the



L.Y. Leonidov

**Leon Trotsky, founder and leader of Red Army, with Lenin on second anniversary of October Revolution.**

official newspaper of the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council wrote defiantly that "Bolshevism will not confine itself to Russia!" Strikes and rebellions swept the country, including the army. 1919 saw the great Winnipeg General Strike. In Western Europe, above all in Germany, there were mass revolutionary upsurges. But, centrally because they lacked steeled Bolshevik parties, these revolutionary movements did not succeed in taking and consolidating state power. And this failure had a catastrophic impact within Russia.

The Bolsheviks won the civil war. They drove out 14 imperialist armed forces, including from Canada, but they were victors over a devastated country. The economy was shattered, industrial production was a fraction of what it was before the war, and famine, pestilence, in some areas even cannibalism, stalked the land.

So by the early 1920s a vast gulf had opened between the liberating goals of the Russian Revolution and the stark everyday reality. Under these conditions you began to get a tendency towards demoralization and depoliticization on the part of the masses. And within the leadership of the revolution you began to get a tendency to complacency, bureaucratic commandism, even corruption. That tendency culminated in a factional struggle pitting a bureaucratic nationalist faction (which came to be led by Joseph Stalin) against a revolutionary

internationalist faction led by Leon Trotsky.

Playing on the demoralization of the masses, the nationalist faction won. Trotsky later termed this a political counterrevolution. He called it "political" because the overthrow of capitalist property and socialization of the means of production still existed. Trotsky himself was hounded into exile and assassinated in 1940 by an agent of Stalin. But he spent the final years of his life seeking to build a new world party of socialist revolution, the Fourth International, to carry forward the struggle begun by the Russian October.

The Stalinist political counterrevolution was carried through under a slogan: "socialism in one country." This idea, thoroughly false to the ideals of the Bolshevik Revolution, remains a touchstone for the Soviet bureaucracy under Gorbachev today. "Socialism in one country" meant that the bureaucracy no longer sought, indeed it *feared*, the prospect of proletarian revolutions in the West. Instead they sought to neutralize the imperialist threat, to buy "peaceful coexistence" with the capitalist rulers.

Two examples: one from the 1930s, and one showing how this policy is carried on today. Spain in the thirties provided a tremendous opportunity for proletarian revolution, a revolution, moreover, which would have been a terrible blow against the war plans of Adolf Hitler. The Spanish workers were seizing the factories. Civil war raged. Workers councils—like the Russian soviets in 1917—were thrown up. Except Stalin sought diplomatic alliances with France and Britain against Germany, and France and Britain most certainly did not want a red, revolutionary Spain to their south. So the Spanish Communist Party was ordered not to build but to *crush* the workers soviets. Thanks to Stalinist treachery, the Spanish revolution was drowned in blood. And this in turn emboldened Hitler, and helped pave the way for his war against the Soviet Union in which no less than 20 million Soviet citizens died.

The second example is Nicaragua today. Here is a revolution that has been sort of frozen halfway. The Sandinistas smashed the old, corrupt capitalist state in 1979 but since then have been trying to find a non-existent "third way" between capitalism and socialism. Particularly now with this new Arias plan, by which the pro-CIA paper *La Prensa* is being reopened and Reagan's contras are supposed to be allowed to parade in Managua, the Nicaraguan Revolution is very much under threat.

The lessons of history, above all of Russian history, show that the key to defending the revolution is its completion and extension—expropriating the bourgeoisie and spreading the fires of revolution throughout the region. Yet the Soviet bureaucracy, in a vain attempt to appease the American and the Latin American bourgeoisies, supports the Arias plan, warns against another Cuba in the hemisphere, and is even talking about cutting its military and economic aid to Nicaragua. Again the program of "peaceful coexistence" and "socialism in one country" threatens to be suicidal for revolutionary struggle.

Now Gorbachev shares some political fundamentals with Stalin, but only an idiot could claim he was basically the same. So where did he come from?

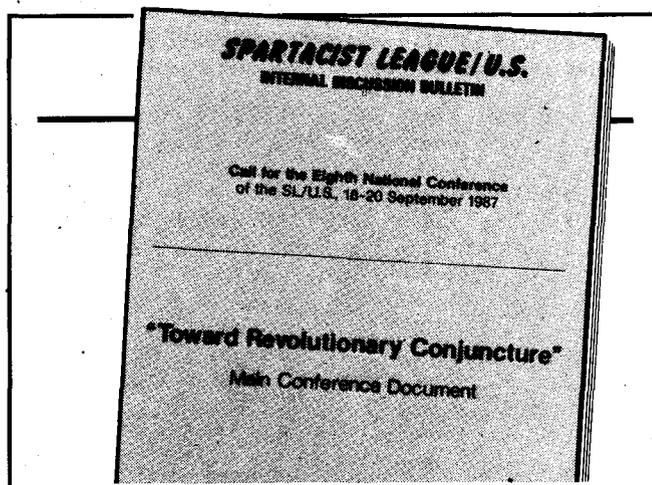
### Open the History Books!

Stalin's rule until the early 1950s when he died was increasingly brutal and paranoid, and involved the physical extermination of any and all whom he perceived to be his opponents—whether revolutionists like Trotsky and the rest of the Bolshevik Old Guard or his fellow conservative bureaucrats. After Stalin came Khrushchev who admitted some of his predecessor's crimes and sought to rationalize some aspects of the economy, particularly agriculture (where he considered himself an expert), though his schemes were often hare-brained adventurism. Eventually the dominant sectors of the bureaucracy got fed up with Khrushchev and in the early 1960s he was replaced with Brezhnev, the epitome of grey complacency. In between collecting fancy foreign cars, Brezhnev presided over an economy increasingly sinking into stagnation. Corruption, nepotism, bureaucratic sloth, all were endemic. So this was the situation when Gorbachev took over following the brief Andropov and Chernenko interludes.

A few personal things about Gorbachev. He's the first Soviet leader without direct personal links to the period of Stalin. He is also the first leader without personal experience in the Revolution, and he's the first since Lenin to have a university education. But for all his attacks on the bureaucracy, he's most certainly a product of it.

Yet Gorbachev and his close allies reflect a new social environment in the Soviet Union. After Stalin's purges and after the Hitlerite invasion there has reemerged a substantial Soviet intelligentsia which overlaps but is also largely alienated from

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**Spartacist League/U.S. draft national conference document, "Toward Revolutionary Conjunction."**  
**The document contains a section "The Russian Question and Gorbachev." \$7 (includes postage)**

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## Gorbachev ...

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the bureaucracy. Thus *glasnost*. You've got condemnations of stultifying complacency, combined with an outpouring of criticism and dissent, and a lot of it's genuine. There have been renewed attacks on the crimes of Stalin and selective purges within the bureaucracy, including at the highest levels.

This new openness is bringing all sorts of elements out of the woodwork. Most sinister of these is an outright fascist organization, name of Pamyat (Memory), which recently held a 400-strong demonstration on Karl Marx Prospekt. These open anti-Semites have for years been protected by elements within the bureaucracy. That they can parade and gain a hearing near the Kremlin 70 years after the Revolution is a damning indictment of the political bankruptcy of Stalinism.

Other forces too are emerging. The 12 September London *Guardian* reported on a recent officially-permitted conference of left-wing reformers mainly not inside the Communist Party who met and adopted a manifesto. They call themselves the Federation of Socialist Clubs. The manifesto vowed support for *perestroika*, defense of socialism and recognized the leading role of the Communist Party, but said you have to be able to organize outside it.

The most important and positive aspect of *glasnost* is the critical reexamination of Soviet history. The name of Leon Trotsky has begun to appear again in the Soviet press. The July 12 issue of *Izvestia* went so far as to refer to him as a "hero and martyr of the revolution." The new edition of the Soviet encyclopedia *The Great October Socialist Revolution* will include for the first time figures like Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Radek. Such talk is a bombshell for Soviet workers and intellectuals who for decades have been told that Trotsky was a devil, a fascist, a counterrevolutionary scum. The German paper *Der Spiegel* (27 July) captured some of the reaction at a meeting in Moscow:

"But Trotsky's spirit still haunts the universities and studies of Russia, where men recall the ideas of the world revolutionary as if they were legends. 'Are you in favor of the publication of Trotsky's works or not' was the written question to speaker Yuri Afanassyev at a recent Moscow meeting called by the party youth group 'Komsomol.'

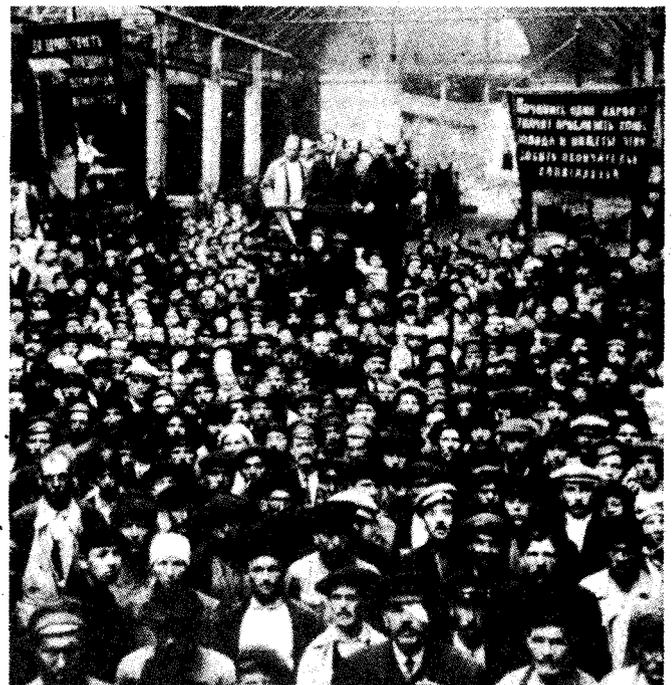
"Afanassyev, the Director of the Institute for History and Archives, answered: Yes. 'That's all we need' shouted out an older listener, aghast. He was familiar with Trotsky's writings. Thereupon an outraged participant responded: 'Now we know what hole you've crawled out of. You have read Trotsky and are sitting here in comfort. Do you know how many people were sent to Siberia for that?'"

Trotskyism is being redefined by the bureaucracy, not as a disguised form of counterrevolution, but as ultraleftism. The important point for us is that

in the present intellectual ferment in Russia there are bound to be many who consider themselves to the left of Gorbachev, particularly on international questions. In these circumstances, some may well be drawn to Trotskyism as they understand it. So it is particularly important to seize the opportunity afforded by this aspect of *glasnost* and demand that Trotsky's complete works be made available in the Soviet Union for workers and intellectuals to read. There must truly be no blank pages in Soviet history!

### "Market Socialism" is Anti-Socialist

The second aspect of Gorbachev's policies is *perestroika*, economic reconstruction. In his seminal work *The Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky analyzed how even a grossly bureaucratized workers state such as Stalin's could make a tremendous leap forward in contrast to capitalism. And he also pointed



**Bolshevik Revolution gave power to the working class. Putilov factory workers elect delegates to Petrograd Soviet, 1920.**

to the problems that were being stored up and are today coming home to roost:

"The progressive role of the Soviet bureaucracy coincides with the period devoted to introducing into the Soviet Union the most important elements of capitalist technique.... It is possible to build gigantic factories according to a ready-made Western pattern by bureaucratic command—although, to be sure, at triple the normal cost. But the farther you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow."

Historically Soviet industrial growth has been what Western economists call *extensive* growth, that is building new factories and increasing the

labor force, not so much retooling and modernizing existing plants. The tremendous advances of the 1930s and the rebuilding of the postwar economy after the devastation caused by Hitler's armies were of this character. In the late 60s and early 70s the Soviet Union simultaneously reached rough nuclear parity with the U.S. and increased the living standards of its citizens by 50 percent. At the same time it was also massively subsidizing Eastern Europe, Cuba and various Third World regimes—Cuba gets no less than \$3 million a day in aid from the Soviet Union. Remember that in this same ten year period there was a hell of a lot of capitalist economic crisis and unemployment, very unlike the achievements of the Soviet planned economy.

But by the mid-70s the problems predicted by Trotsky had well and truly come home. There's a joke in the Soviet press about a nail factory. Some bureaucrat has decided that its production quota for the year will be measured in so many thousands of tons of nails. Interested only in meeting the quota, the factory management produces one gigantic 900-ton nail. That's bureaucratism.

Something else was happening by the late 70s. After the Vietnam War the Western imperialists massively stepped up military spending. This forced the Russians to try and keep pace. With an already stagnating economy and the need to pump more and more into military production in order to defend the country, the net effect has been a significant economic crisis. There are a few short-term palliatives: purges of incompetent managers, anti-alcoholism and anti-absenteeism campaigns. But fundamentally there are only three ways out.

The first is to sharply cut living standards, but this is not presently politically possible. The second is to reduce military spending—hence the various attempts at disarmament deals. And the third option, the main one being worked on, is to increase labor productivity and discipline.

This can happen in one of two ways. Choice number one is the method elaborated by Trotsky: workers democracy. Gorbachev is introducing aspects of a sham workers democracy, for example workers can now elect factory managers. The problem is, you can vote for Tom, Dick or Ivan, but if they are all implementing the same bureaucratic policies, what's the point? Why not have a vote, a democratic say in what the socialist economic policies should be? In Trotsky's words, "The concept of independent, technical and cultural creation" involved in soviet democracy is "not the demand of an abstract policy.... It has become a life-and-death need of the country."

Instead of this, which would mean the bureaucracy committing suicide, Gorbachev is opting for the second choice: a move to economic decentralization and greater dependence on market competition. In other words, like capitalism, to rely on market discipline: the fear of failure, shutdowns and unemployment. His early July program on economic management includes the following provisions: by 1990 individual enterprises will determine what



Trotskyist press hailed Soviet intervention against Islamic reactionaries.

they produce and in what quantities; the centralized setting of prices will be eliminated; enterprise managers will get the right to cut wages and hours and lay off redundant workers; and enterprises whose revenues still don't cover costs will have to close.

These are *not* socialist measures. They will create unemployment and inflation. And they will spawn a new class of petty capitalist entrepreneurs, thus strengthening internal forces for capitalist restoration. These are dangerous policies that will, inevitably, provoke worker resistance.

There's been a lot of talk about parallels between what Gorbachev is doing in Russia and the Prague Spring in 1968 in Czechoslovakia. To a point this is correct. The liberal Stalinist Dubcek regime introduced reforms very similar to those Gorbachev plans to introduce. Initially Czech workers, through their bureaucratized trade unions, opposed these reforms. But with a certain amount of political liberalization the question of soviet democracy, as Trotsky spoke of it, came into play. Some workers began to realize that the parasites sitting atop their trade unions could be tossed aside, that maybe they could get something fundamentally better. For a historical moment the Stalinist ruling apparatus was paralyzed. Incipiently posed was proletarian political revolution. That is, the workers overthrowing the ruling caste and instituting genuine soviet rule. The situation was cut short by the intervention of Soviet troops.

Today in Russia the situation is obviously not that sharp, and it may never be. You could well get a sort of cold chopping-off of the political liberalization, although the longer this goes on the more difficult that will be. More fundamentally, Russia is not Czechoslovakia. It will have trouble invading itself. A military attempt to crush an incipient proletarian political revolution in Moscow and Leningrad would probably split and polarize the army, not the ranks against the officers, but right down, with some of the ranks and officers going to each side. There would probably be similar splits in the

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## Gorbachev...

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bureaucracy. The key point is that today for the first time since the 1920s there is real potential for an independent workers movement in Russia.

### For Revolutionary Internationalism!

The third aspect of Gorbachev's policies is "disarmament" and "peaceful coexistence." The bureaucracy plays on the deeply felt and very understandable desire of the Soviet masses for peace. But deals with imperialism will not secure peace.

Let's take an example from World War II. Stalin put his trust in a deal with Hitler in 1939 called the Stalin-Hitler pact. Despite countless warnings that Hitler was about to launch a sneak attack on the Soviet Union, including from Soviet spies in Hitler's headquarters, Stalin continued to put his trust in "peaceful coexistence" with the Nazis. The result was countless more Soviet deaths fighting the Nazi scourge, and near world-historic defeat for the Soviet Union, as the German army stood on the outskirts of Leningrad and Moscow. It was only thanks to the heroism of the Soviet people that the Soviet Union survived.

Why should Ronald Reagan be any more trustworthy than Adolf Hitler? The rough nuclear parity achieved at great expense by the Soviet Union has been the chief factor preventing the imperialists from launching a thermonuclear holocaust over Cuba, Vietnam or the Middle East. The Soviet "workers bomb" has been a force for temporary peace, saving mankind. Soviet nuclear preparedness must not be sold away at the bargaining table!

Gorbachev is also talking about "national reconciliation" in Afghanistan and withdrawing the army.

## Indian Troops...

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racialism. Even in the best of circumstances, an isolated, impoverished Eelam offers a bleak prospect for the Tamil masses, while leaving untouched the hideous oppression of the Tamil plantation workers of the hill country tea estates. The superexploitation of these low-caste Tamil laborers, many of whom are women, is the material basis on which the island's economy rests. Only workers rule can end the communist hell on the island and bring the emancipation of all toilers of South Asia. Down with murderous nationalism! For the right to Tamil Eelam! For federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka--For a socialist federation of South Asia!

### The "Accord" Unravels

Mindful of anger among Tamils in India at the Sri Lankan slaughter and fearing a United States-brokered encirclement as Pakistan and other U.S. allies aided Jayewardene's UNP regime, India staged

There's a big problem here. Afghanistan is a very poor and backward country without a significant working class. The Soviet intervention has, for the first time, opened the possibility of a social transformation to bring to an end the enslavement of women, the massive social backwardness. We say bluntly: Hail Red Army! To pull the Red Army out today would lead to more bloodshed tomorrow as the CIA-backed Islamic reactionaries would simply butcher any and all who stand for social progress.

At the behest of the Moscow bureaucracy the Communist parties internationally seek to ally with their own capitalists. In Canada the CP literally waves the flag of Canadian nationalism. A recent *Tribune* talks about how Brian Mulroney is "selling out" the country. The CP simply tails after the NDP and even the Liberal Party--so you won't see CP banners declaring front and center "Defend the Soviet Union against imperialism" like those of the Trotskyist League.

The real alternative to "peaceful coexistence" pipedreams, the real road to peace, lies through building revolutionary parties throughout the world. History has shown no other option. Without a revolutionary party the Russian workers would never have come to power. Lacking firm revolutionary parties workers uprisings elsewhere were defeated. The lack of revolutionary leadership means that most day-to-day struggles, like the rail workers and the postal workers strikes here, go down to defeat. Hideous racism, national oppression, communalism, war--all these products of capitalism cannot be solved short of working-class power and you need revolutionary parties to get there.

The unfolding situation in Russia today also points to the need for a genuinely revolutionary--that is, Leninist/Trotskyist--party in that country. This is the perspective that we of the international Spartacist tendency fight for. ■

a relief airlift operation in the face of a major Sri Lankan offensive against the Tamils in June, signaling Jayewardene that it would not remain passive much longer. The July 29 accord between Gandhi and Jayewardene represented nothing less than overt Indian overlordship of the island. The U.S. has long had particular designs on the Eastern Province, site of the strategic Trincomalee harbor, and this agreement was thus a setback for American anti-Soviet interests in the region.

Gandhi also promised to disarm the Tamil guerrillas in exchange for Jayewardene's grudging agreement to establish a federated administrative unit in the North and East, effectively under Indian suzerainty. The day after the accord was signed Indian troops disembarked in the north while Indian air

**Contact the Trotskyist League**

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force transports ferried Sri Lankan soldiers south. The Tigers and other Tamil groups went along with the accord very reluctantly, turning in a small fraction of their arms.

Meanwhile, other Tamil militant groups, who are mostly more favorable to the Indians than the Tigers, tried to re-establish themselves. But in mid-September Tigers carried out attacks in 20 different villages near Batticaloa, killing more than a hundred supporters of rival groups, including people just recently released from the Sri Lankan concentration camps. Then Prabhakaran started quibbling over exactly how much "power" LTTE leaders would get, demanding domination of the new interim administration. The Indians granted them seven out of twelve seats on the ruling body of this paper "Eelam," which in any case was to be an impoverished capitalist puppet regime totally subordinate to India. But the nationalist militants remained unreconciled, and continued to bury their weapons.

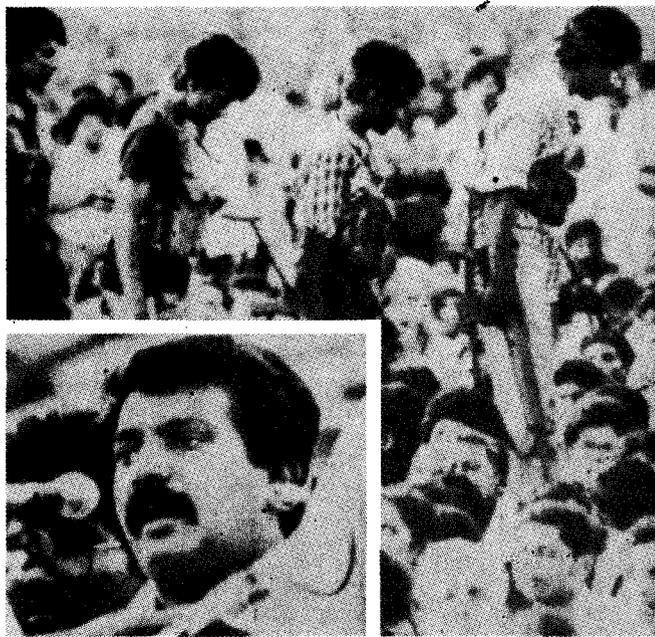
On October 5, the lid completely blew off this uneasy truce. Seventeen Tigers intercepted in the Palk Strait swallowed cyanide suicide capsules after J.R.'s National Security minister Lalith Athulathmudali, a hardliner unhappy with the accord, ordered that they be shipped to Colombo for interrogation. Most of them died immediately. The next day the Tigers shot dead eight Sri Lankan soldiers whom they had been holding prisoner for months, dumping their bodies at Jaffna central bus station.

That night Tamil nationalists went on a rampage of indiscriminate slaughter, murdering more than 200 Sinhalese, mostly civilians—men, women and children—in the Eastern Province. The Colombo/Batticaloa train was stopped, Sinhalese and Muslims were separated out and 40 shot. In the southeast 20 bus passengers were massacred and near Trincomalee 27 others killed in two fishing villages. In one fishing village an old Sinhalese woman described how laughing Tamils blew her husband's head off with machine guns. These widespread and calculated acts of indefensible terrorism sent thousands of Sinhalese fleeing their homes in the heavily interpenetrated Eastern and North Central Provinces. At this point, Indian High Commissioner J.N. Dixit announced that India would turn its guns on the Tamils; shoot-to-kill orders were issued and Tiger strongholds would be wiped out. The drive on Jaffna began.

But if the Indians thought they would get a quick victory they were mistaken. The Tigers have waged a fierce and fanatical resistance, at times halting the Indian advance completely.

India insists that it will stop at nothing short of unconditional surrender by the Tigers. But the Tigers are a guerrilla army. There are now reports of attacks on the advancing Indian troops from behind, and the fighting may well continue "behind the lines" long after the Indians capture the area. On October 13, an American State Department spokesman commended this "firm and effective action against these militant groups" (*India Abroad*, 23 October). On October 26, Jaffna was taken.

Echoing Reagan's State Department, the president of the Eelam Tamil Association of America white-washed the Indian campaign as "a disciplinary action" justifiably aimed at bringing the Tamil militants "into line in getting the peace accord going" (*India Abroad*, 23 October). It is notable that as soon as Rajiv Gandhi moved against them, the Tigers lost much of their traditional support among bourgeois politicians of south India's Tamil Nadu state.



Reuters Photos

**Jaffna, August 4: At huge rally Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran calls on reluctant Tamil youth to accede to J.R./Gandhi deal.**

The Indian onslaught has wreaked unparalleled destruction and devastation in the Jaffna area. A doctor at the Jaffna Teachers Hospital reported that "the situation in Jaffna town is worse than anyone can imagine." Seventy-six bodies had been brought to the hospital just in the first four days of the fighting and he was certain of at least another 100 civilian dead. The desperation of Jaffna Tamils in the face of this is expressed in an appeal by 14 Jaffna civil servants, pointing to "indescribable bombing and shelling and aerial strafing" in which "almost 700 innocent civilians have died" and pathetically pleading that the butcher *Jayewardene* intervene with India in behalf of the Tamils (*New York Times*, 20 October)!

#### **For Workers Internationalism!**

The international Spartacist tendency discussed the looming crisis in Lanka last month at a meeting of the International Secretariat held in conjunction with the Spartacist League/U.S. National Conference. The discussion was prompted by a thoughtful written contribution submitted by an SL/U.S. comrade to our pre-conference discussion and resulted in a decision to propose to our tendency the slogan "Indian troops out of Eelam!" The slogan was to

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## Indian Troops ...

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address the likelihood of a bloodbath by the Indian army and to reassert the right of Tamil Eelam, for which the Spartacist League/Lanka (sympathizing section of the iSt) has fought, against the vicious backlash of Sinhalese racism.

• From July 1983 and before, in our press and in demonstrations and marches around the globe we put forward slogans advising against illusions in the Gandhis. We warned, "Remember the fate of the Mukti Bahini"—the Bangladeshi liberation fighters who were put down by Mrs. Gandhi—and pointed to the Golden Temple massacre of Sikhs in Amritsar in 1984. Our warnings were met with hostility by the various Tamil petty-bourgeois nationalists, whose "armed struggle strategy" was fundamentally aimed at provoking a bloody response by the Lankan regime in order to force India to act. Even after the Indian army had been slaughtering Tamils for a week, a Tiger-dominated demonstration in London on October 18 still appealed to Gandhi's India! A leaflet for the demonstration denounced India's "hasty genocidal military action" which "even surpasses Sinhalese state atrocities"—only to conclude with the pathetic plea: "India, land of Gandhian pacifism and leader among world's democracies, come to your senses, stop the slaughter."

The Tigers et al. were not ignorant of the fate of the Sikhs and the Bangladeshis at the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie. The truth is, as with all nationalists, they didn't give a damn as long as "their nation" was not on the receiving end. One disillusioned Tamil nationalist interviewed in the *Lanka Guardian* (1 October) observed:

"...we were pawns in a larger chess game, though we thought we were going to liberate Tamil Eelam.... We thought we were the most intelligent, hard-working, educated group of people in the whole country. And we couldn't see something that should have been obvious to a little child."

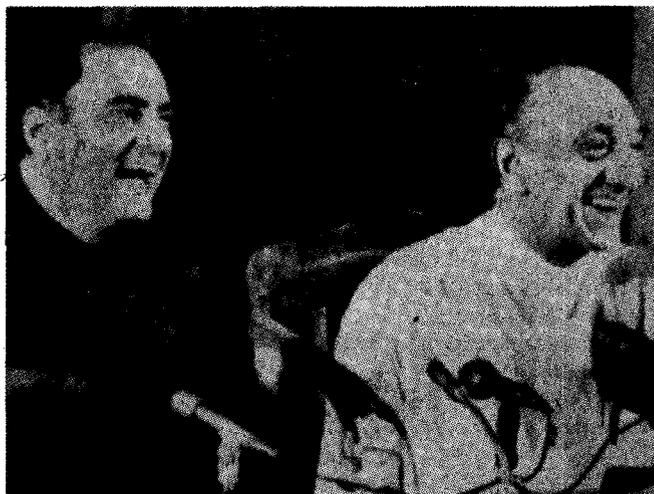
With their perspective of carving out Eelam, they were profoundly unconcerned with the plight of the island's "Indian Tamils" (so called because they were imported from India by the British over the last century and more to work the tea estates) in the highlands of Sri Lanka. Yet an alliance with the strategic Indian Tamil estate workers could have been a critical component in uniting all sectors of the oppressed in Lanka as well as the toilers of India in a struggle for social emancipation.

While the Tamil guerrillas in the early '80s rigorously limited their attacks to Lankan state targets, their nationalist strategy ineluctably led to indiscriminate terror against Sinhalese civilians. The massacre of 150 unarmed Sinhalese civilians at the holy city of Anuradhapura in May 1985 marked a watershed. Today, the Tigers adopt Zionist methods in the Eastern Province, driving out the Sinhalese and Muslims to ensure a Tamil majority. The govern-

ment has for years colonized the province with Sinhalese to successfully overturn the pre-existing Tamil majority. The Tigers in turn demand that all Sinhalese colonized since 1982 be expelled, and their gunmen make no distinction.

Not surprisingly, given their perspective to become the new rulers of their own statelet, the various nationalist groups have also engaged in bloody internecine warfare aimed at securing a monopoly of political power, with the Tigers gaining the upper hand over the years. In 1985 they murdered two former MPs from the moderate bourgeois parliamentarist TULF. In 1986 they wiped out more than 150 militants of the TELO group, and delivered bloody body blows to the rival EPRLF and PLOTE groups.

Now, in the Sinhala-dominated south of Lanka, the UNP government is under assault from the same communalist forces that it itself fomented. Even as Gandhi arrived in Colombo to sign the accord, a member of J.R.'s honor guard attacked the Indian prime minister with a rifle butt. In the subsequent anti-accord riots, state property, nationalized services and cooperatives were the particular targets of the enraged communalist mobs. In the forefront of this opposition is the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of Mrs. Bandaranaike, who smashed the 1971 New Left JVP insurrection. Today that same JVP, now rabidly communalist, is allied with Mrs. B and the Buddhist monks are once again the shock troops of Sinhalese-communalist reaction.



Independent

Gandhi (left) and Jayewardene announce accord in Colombo, July 29.

At the heart of the decline of the once-strong workers organizations of Lanka was their capitulation to Sinhalese chauvinism in the form of popular-front alliances with bourgeois forces they falsely promoted as "anti-imperialist," like the SLFP, architects of the "Sinhala Only" language policy. To this day the Communist Party and social-democratic LSSP (and its offspring, the NSSP) refuse to fight for the right of Tamil self-determination.

And the "left" tail of these popular-frontist parties is veteran leftist Edmund Samarakody's

"Revolutionary Marxists," who issued a statement demanding "Indian Troops Out of Sri Lanka" at a time when this was the rallying cry of frenzied Sinhalese reaction. Significantly, it did not even mention the Tamil people's right to self-determination! Samarakkody wants to fight to the last Tamil, urging "Tamil Militants Resist the Indian Troops with All Your Might!" Meanwhile, his statement made no appeal to the Sinhala workers to come to the aid of the embattled Tamils. Instead it prettified the Sinhalese-communalist opposition to Jayewardene, claiming that "the Sinhala bourgeois and petty-bourgeois opposition forces...are using the genuine class hatred of the working class and toilers among the Sinhala people, against the oppressive Jayewardene regime to strengthen their Sinhala chauvinist forces."

With this sleight of hand, Samarakkody obscenely seeks to reach out to the same rabble that—in the name of combatting terrorism—hacked Tamils to death in the 1983 pogroms. What about the miserable unemployed workers in Weimar Germany in the 1930s who, in desperation, turned to the Nazi barbarians? They had genuine class hatred too—and became shock troops in genocide. And there were the mullah-led anti-shah forces in Iran in the late 1970s, which under the guise of "anti-imperialism" brought us the feudal fanaticism of the Khomeini regime. Samarakkody, like many other leftists, supported them too. This populist tailism of the masses' most reactionary impulses amounts to nothing but gross betrayal.

### Legacy of Imperialist Divide and Rule

Historically it is rather accidental that Ceylon did not become part of India. The boundaries that the imperialists drew, throughout Africa, Asia, etc., more often than not divided tribe, people and nation. It is the tinpot nationalists who are the most fervent defenders of these "sacred" borders. India is indeed a prison house of nations, religious minorities, oppressed castes and hundreds of millions of horribly exploited working people. At the same time, like Indian capitalism itself, Indian nationalism is attenuated and atrophied, trapped somewhere on the road to national consolidation, reflecting the combined and uneven development of a giant backward country deformed by imperialist exploitation.

What is being played out in Sri Lanka today is the tragic reactionary logic of nationalism and communalism, the continuing horror of British imperialism's divide-and-rule strategy, which exploited traditional communal divisions to set entire peoples against each other in bloody slaughter, reaching its nadir in the 1947 partition of India. Well over five million people fled in both directions across the partition lines as refugee routes became vast open graveyards and trains arrived filled with corpses. Today the Indian capitalist butchers of the Sikhs and Mukti Bahini are butchering Tamils, while in Tamil Nadu thousands have been arrested for protesting. At the time of the anti-Tamil pogroms in 1983 we wrote:

"While Marxists unconditionally defend the Tamils' right to form a separate state, we are less than enthusiastic about the prospects for an independent capitalist state in Jaffna. It would inevitably slide under the suzerainty of the oppressive Indian regime."

—Spartacist No. 35, Autumn 1983

Had they broken from their narrow nationalist perspective, the Tamil militants who are today ei-



Toronto, July 1983: TL-initiated demonstration protested anti-Tamil terror in Sri Lanka. International Spartacist tendency warned against reliance on Indian bourgeoisie.

ther dead or embittered racialists could have provided an important element for an internationalist proletarian party in Lanka, turning the struggle against the oppression of the Tamil people into a springboard for revolution throughout the subcontinent. The Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky led the workers and peasants of the old tsarist empire—a vast prison house of peoples—to power through a program which transcended national particularities and forged unity against the common class enemy.

Today Bolshevik parties are needed in Lanka and India which can unite the rail workers of Calcutta, the Tamil estate workers, the Sinhalese women workers of the "free trade zones," in a struggle to bring down this vile system of racist horror and grinding exploitation. This is the task to which our comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka are dedicated. Indian army out of Eelam! For the right of Tamil Eelam! For the federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka, part of a socialist federation of South Asia! Workers must rule!

—Abridged from Workers Vanguard No. 429,  
30 October

## Sri Lanka:

# Indian Troops Out of Eelam!

OCTOBER 27—Less than three months after Sri Lankan president J.R. Jayewardene and Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi signed their much-vaunted "peace accord," the blood-soaked Jaffna Peninsula in northern Sri Lanka (Ceylon) has again become a scene of untold horror. After years of being ravaged and terrorized by Jayewardene's Sinhalese-chauvinist, officially Buddhist regime, the oppressed and long-suffering Tamil people (who are mainly

### **Workers to Power!**

Hindu) are now getting it from those whom they looked to as their saviors. For two weeks upwards of 20,000 Indian troops backed by heavy battle tanks, artillery and helicopter gunships have battled the nationalist guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). An estimated 700 civilians were slaughtered, in addition to Tiger guerrillas; up to a half million of the peninsula's 700,000 people are now refugees in their own land.

One week after the J.R./Gandhi accord was signed, we wrote:

"...we have repeatedly warned that the Tamils' illusions in the Indian bourgeoisie are deadly dangerous.... Now they are getting what they wanted...and they won't like it.

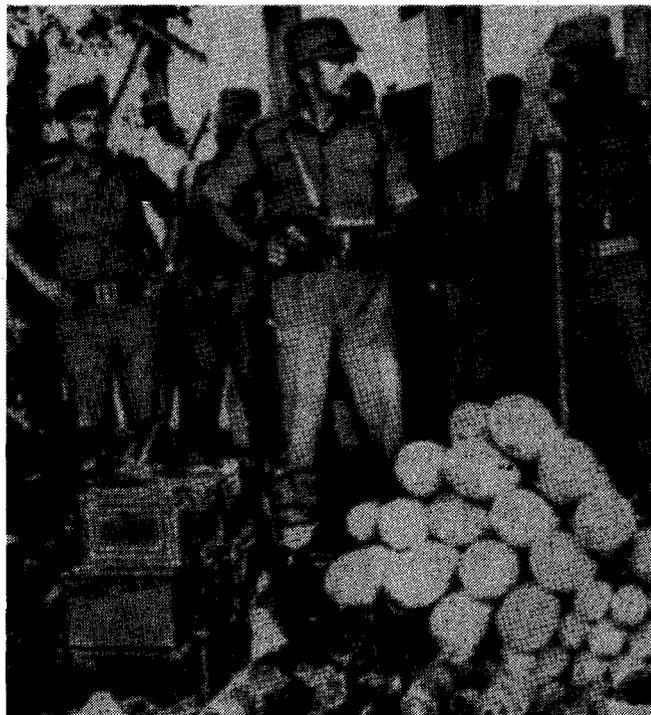
"If the Tamil Tigers refuse to come to terms, they are likely to find the Indian army a far more formidable proposition than the Sri Lankan forces.

"But it is not just the Tigers' blood that will run. The Eastern Province is heavily interpenetrated, more or less evenly among Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims.... This arrangement is a recipe for massive communal bloodletting and forced population transfers as the different communities fight to control the province."

—*Workers Vanguard* No. 434, 7 August

The "Indian Peacekeeping Force" is now waging war on the entire people of the Northern Province, while in the Eastern Province the accord triggered a spree of indiscriminate communalist atrocities by the Tigers against Sinhalese civilians.

For years Tamil militants have desperately beseeched "Mother India," with 60 million Tamils just across the Palk Strait, to save their people from



AP/Wide World

**Indian troops collect Tamil arms. Siege on Jaffna slaughtered hundreds in drive to crush Tamil nationalist "Tiger" guerrillas.**

Sinhalese-chauvinist terror and aid their struggle for an independent state of Tamil Eelam. Now Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran laments that the Tamils are "the victims of India's geopolitical interests." When capitalist India finally moved, it was only to be expected that it would assert its own interests. Capitalist India, that prison house of peoples, can play no progressive role in the region. We demand: Indian Army Out of Eelam!

The government-instigated anti-Tamil pogroms of July 1983 created a *de facto* partition of the island. But what Eelam constitutes may well be determined—tragically, as so often in the past in cases of interpenetrated populations—through a massive communalist bloodletting. The peoples of Lanka may well relive the horrors of the 1947 partition of India. The Tamil nationalists have come to mirror the bloodiest aspects of Sinhala chauvinism with their own murderous logic of

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