



From Mexico to Europe: A Cry of Rebellion

Rumblings in the “New World Disorder”



Cordero/Reuters



Laurent Rebours

January 1994: Chiapas peasant rebellion explodes in Mexico. October 1993: Air France strike faced down government, stirring workers across Europe.

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Letter

Robin Blick: Menshevik Dementia

The following exchange was initially intended for publication in *Spartacist* No. 47-48 (Winter 1992-93). But, as we stated in a notice in that issue, the previously publicized table of contents was pre-empted by the publication of the document approved at the Second Conference of the International Communist League. Had we seen at that time *Blick's 1993 book, The Seeds of Evil: Lenin & the Origins of Bolshevik Élitism*, we would have necessarily dismissed his letter as a preliminary and partial tryout in political dementia. However, our reply has independent merit. We print below the version of Robin Blick's letter to *Workers Vanguard* which he published in *The Seeds of Evil*.

April 2, 1990

Dear Editor,

I was surprised to read in your publication (*Workers Vanguard*, February 23, 1990, page 6) that Lenin and Trotsky did not consider the one-party Soviet state 'either normal or desirable'. Their writings in the period between the Bolshevik Revolution until, in the case of Lenin, his last illness, and in that of Trotsky, until his expulsion from the Bolshevik Party in October 1927, do not provide any evidence to sustain your claim. Perhaps that is why, on this occasion, no quotations from the hallowed texts are forthcoming. However, Trotsky especially furnishes us with ample evidence that the early Bolshevik leadership held a contrary view to the one you suggest. Let me bring a small sample of it to the attention of your readers.

On April 5, 1923, to a conference of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Trotsky said:

'If there is one question which basically not only does not require revision but does not even admit the thought of revision, it is the question of the dictatorship of the party... Our party is the ruling party... To allow any changes whatsoever in this field, to allow the idea of a partial, whether open or camouflaged, curtailment of the leading role of our party would mean to bring into question all the

achievements of the revolution and its future.' ('Leon Trotsky Speaks', New York, 1972, pp.158-160)

This quotation, it is true, says nothing about the necessity of banning all other parties, only of all power remaining in the hands of the Bolsheviks (a 'dictatorship of the party', not of the Soviets or of the proletariat). But the next quotation has a force and phrasing which should resolve all doubts. On December 22, 1923, Trotsky wrote:

'We are the only party in the country, and in the period of the dictatorship it could not be otherwise.' ('The Challenge of the Left Opposition', New York, 1975, p.78)

Let me repeat: '... could not be otherwise...'

You speak, in the same article (page 6) of the 'democratic contention of factions and tendencies within the Bolshevik party' as 'serving in a sense as a substitute for a multi-party soviet democracy.' Two questions arise from this. Trotsky, not once, but many times, insisted that all power was necessarily concentrated in the hands of a single party. Thus he defended, in 1927, the 'Leninist principle, inviolable for every Bolshevik, that the dictatorship of the proletariat is and can only be realised through the dictatorship of the party' ('Platform of the Left Opposition', London, 1963, p.62); and again, in the same work, the principle that the 'dictatorship of the proletariat demands at its very core a single proletarian party.' (*ibid.*, p.112)

If this is indeed so, just how, under the rule of that single party, would what you describe as a 'multi-party soviet democracy' operate? Your readers will, no doubt, share my interest as to the textual sources of your belief that such an arrangement was indeed the intention of the Bolshevik party in the first years of its rule.

This leads to the next question. You speak of the 'democratic contention of factions'. Yet at their March 1921 (10th) Party Congress, the Bolsheviks outlawed this last residue of political pluralism, in a resolution drafted and moved (with the support of both Stalin and Trotsky) by Lenin himself. It declared 'factionalism of any kind' to be 'harmful and impermissible' as it 'inevitably' led to 'the weakening of team work and to intensified and repeated attempts by the enemies of the governing party, who have wormed their way in to it, to widen the cleavage and to use it for counter-revolutionary purposes.' (V. Lenin: 'Collected Works', Vol.32, p.241) How depressingly familiar!

The resolution did not stop there. It also banned the submission 'to groups formed on the basis of "platforms" etc' any 'analysis of the Party's general line, estimates of practical experience, check ups in the fulfilment of its decisions, studies of methods of rectifying errors etc.' (*ibid.*, p.244) The penalty for any infraction of these draconian rules was 'unconditional and instant expulsion from the party'. (*ibid.*, p.244)

The specific target of the new party regime was, of course, the Workers' Opposition. Indeed, another resolution (also drafted by Lenin) declared the propagation of its ideas as being 'incompatible with membership of the Russian Communist Party'. (*ibid.*, p.248) And, sure enough, just a few months later, Lenin attempted, only to fail by just one vote,

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to secure the expulsion from the party, under its new rules, of the Workers' Opposition's most authoritative spokesman, that Central Committee rarity, a genuine (former) proletarian, Alexander Shlyapnikov.

Please tell me and your readers how the Soviet proletariat could have gone about organising a substitute for a 'multi-party soviet democracy' in a one-party state ruled by (after March 1921) a no-faction party dominated by a clique of a score or so intellectuals? While it is hardly surprising that this problem never seems to have greatly troubled Trotsky so long as he continued to enjoy the privileges of the Bolshevik's political monopoly, what is remarkable is his reluctance to re-consider his position on 'Soviet pluralism' during and even after the decline in his political fortunes that set in towards the end of 1923. Factions, he still insisted, were dangerous, and the party was 'obliged [*sic!*] to monopolize the direction of political life'. ('Leon Trotsky Speaks', p.79) And again: 'The party does not want factions and will not tolerate them.' (*ibid*, p.86) No... this is not Stalin—or Zinoviev. It is Trotsky, digging his own political grave. Five months later, he was again arguing that 'freedom for factional groupings' was 'extremely dangerous for the ruling party, since they always threaten to split or divide the government and the state apparatus as a whole.' (*ibid*, p.153) (If that was so, then why did Lenin wait until March 1921 to ban them?) To make the point yet stronger, Trotsky insisted it was 'impermissible to draw distinctions between factions and groupings', adding, for the benefit of doubters, that he had 'never [please note, 'never'] recognised freedom for groupings inside the party, nor do I now recognise it.' (*ibid*, p.154) That is surely pretty clear.

And, even as the noose tightened around his neck, Trotsky continued to soap Stalin's rope:

'Various assertions to the effect that the [Left] Opposition is in favour of factions and groupings are lies spread for factional purposes.' ('The Challenge', p.102)

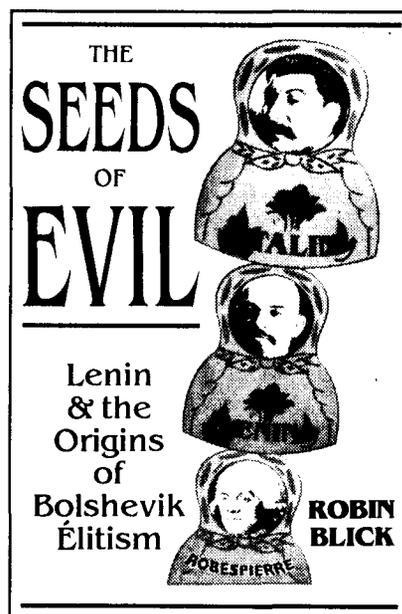
And once again:

'We categorically reject the theory and practice of "freedom of factions and groupings" and recognize that such theory and practice are contrary to Leninism and the decisions of the party [i.e. the ban at the 10th Party Congress]'. (*ibid*, p.127)

It would take Trotsky several more years yet before he even began to revise that position, together with his no less totalitarian views on the virtues of the one-party state. And when he did so, the revision was accomplished in classic Orwellian fashion, with the claim (from which you presumably derive yours) that party and factional pluralism had always been a principle of Bolshevism. Unfortunately, there is not a shred of documentary evidence to suggest that this is true. If it existed, Trotsky and his followers such as yourselves, would have been only too eager to produce it.

In his 'The Revolution Betrayed', written in 1936, Trotsky relates how the 'opposition parties were forbidden one after the other.' It was a measure 'obviously [*sic!*] in conflict with the spirit of Soviet democracy', and, moreover, one 'the leaders of Bolshevism regarded not as a principle [see above!], but as an episodic act of self-defence.' (*ibid*, London, 1957, p.96) The contradiction between this claim and the preceding quotations which, in different ways, say the exact opposite, must be as apparent to you and your readers as it is to me. Which of the two Trotskys one prefers is obviously a matter of political preference, but we can all

In his recent anti-communist tirade, **Blick traces the seeds of Stalinism not only to Lenin and the October Revolution of 1917 but to Robespierre and the French Revolution of 1789.**



surely agree with Trotsky when he goes on to argue, even if only with the advantage of hindsight, that the 'prohibition of oppositional parties brought after it the prohibition of factions', and that the latter 'ended in a prohibition to think otherwise than the infallible leaders.' (*ibid*, pp.104-105)

I trust your paper does not intend to institute a new school of historical falsification to replace that of disintegrating Stalinism, and that you will be able to confront honestly the issues evaded by your rather fanciful excursion into early Soviet history.

Robin Blick

Spartacist replies: The arguments made in Robin Blick's letter are an unoriginal smattering of tattered slanders of Bolshevism from the pro-imperialist, social-democratic repertoire. But the issues raised are nonetheless relevant, as was evident in the debates about early Soviet history which erupted in the *glasnost*-era press in the Soviet Union. They are no less important today.

First, a word about Robin Blick. This ultra-democrat who condemns Lenin and Trotsky for "totalitarianism" traces his own origins to the gangsterist Healyite organization of the 1960s and '70s, where he loyally served as a publicist for the Socialist Labour League's support to the violent rampages of Mao's Red Guards and the indiscriminate terrorism practiced by certain petty-bourgeois and bourgeois "radical" Arab nationalists. Blick's break with Healy took him in the direction of mainstream social democracy, as we shall show later. The Healyites, in turn, went on to become supporters of every hostile force encircling the Soviet Union, from Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution" to the Afghan mullahs to Polish Solidarność. Healy's outfit was ultimately exposed as recipient of at least £1 million from various Middle East despots and as paid finger-men for the Saddam Hussein regime's persecution of Iraqi Communists. When this money dried up, so did the Healy group, spectacularly imploding in 1985 amid a welter of recriminations and countercharges.

In Blick's latest effort, entitled *The Seeds of Evil: Lenin and the Origins of Bolshevism* (1993), the political trajectory implied in his letter blossoms into full-blown

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From Mexico to Europe: A Cry of Rebellion

Rumblings in the “New World Disorder”

An Italian paper called it “the war from the end of the world.” But the uprising by Mayan Indian peasants in the remote Mexican state of Chiapas was a bolt of lightning whose reverberations have shaken Mexico to the core and been felt in imperialist capitals from Washington to Europe. For *Time* magazine it was “A Blast from the Past.” On the contrary, the Zapatista peasant rebellion is a harbinger of social explosions to come in this “New World Disorder.” In Milano, Alfa Romeo workers facing mass layoffs marched holding high a poster proclaiming “Viva Zapata!” with a picture of the Mexican revolutionary leader.

The rebels’ manifesto began, “we are the product of 500 years of struggle,” of the fight against colonial slavery, for independence, for the Mexican Revolution which was aborted, its leaders slaughtered and its promise of land and liberty still unfulfilled. They pronounced the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—this license for Wall Street’s pillage of Mexico—a death sentence for the indigenous peoples and the poor. Facing the tanks and helicopters of the army of U.S. viceroy Salinas, a guerrilla leader vowed, “If it is necessary, blood will flow.”

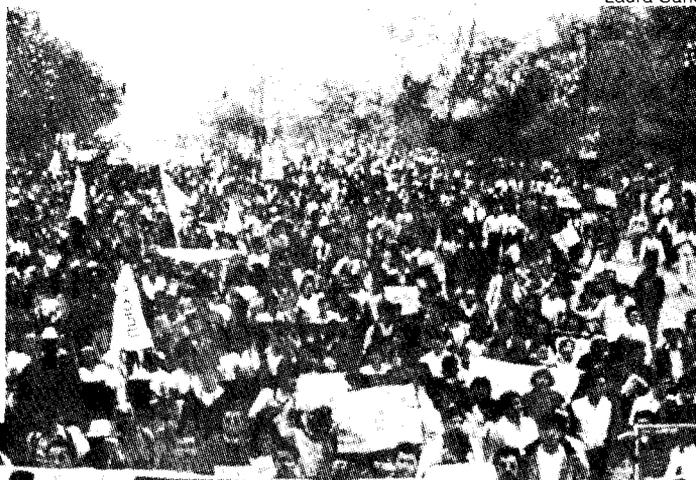
With a fine sense of irony, the Indian insurgents wrote on one of the walls of San Cristóbal de las Casas, “So

guerrillas no longer exist?”, referring to a self-satisfied claim by Mexico’s brutal interior minister (the former state governor). They could have written as well, “So communism is dead?” Their leaders talked only of land reform and “free elections,” but in “peace” discussions received minimal “commitments” from the government that skirted these issues. The almost universal sympathy for the rebels is partly a reflection of their limited program, but many guerrillas said they were fighting for “socialism, like the Cubans have but better.” Even their modest stated goals could not be achieved without a workers revolution, led by an internationalist vanguard party, rapidly extending to *El Norte*, into the heartland of U.S. imperialism. That is the lesson of Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution.

Mexico’s Harvard-educated rulers had told the world and themselves that Mexico was entering the “First World.” Monterrey, the hometown of President Salinas, boasts one of the highest concentrations of TV satellite dishes in the world, all pointed north. Taco Bell came south, opening franchises for American-style “Mexican” junk food in Mexico City. But the Chiapas revolt highlighted that Mexico still suffers from Third World conditions. Salinas’ PR men claimed all of Mexico was for “free trade” and the country



Valtierra/Cuartoscuro



Laura Cano

In solidarity with “Zapatistas” (left), 100,000 demonstrate in Mexico City echoing worldwide sympathy for peasant rebels’ fight against grinding economic and social oppression.

¡ALTO A LA MASA!



Baldelli/Contrasto

From Mexico to Milano, Italy: Militant Alfa Romeo workers demonstrating in January against Fiat's plans to slash workforce.

would enjoy "First World" prosperity. But after Chiapas, 100,000 came out to march against the government in the largest protest in five years. In front of the presidential palace, demonstrators chanted, "First World, ha, ha, ha!"

The government's first response to the Chiapas revolt was brutal repression. But with the glare of world publicity focused on the region, the regime switched gears and offered an amnesty and handouts. Yet neither the stick nor the carrot is likely to choke off the social unrest which has spread through the country. A Zapatista spokesman replied, "What do we have to ask pardon for? What do they want to pardon us for? For not dying of hunger? For not keeping silent in our misery?"

Rumblings of International Disorder

The unexpected revolt in Chiapas again explodes the fallacy of the "New World Order" proclaimed by George Bush during the 1990-91 invasion of the Persian Gulf. Following the Desert Slaughter against Hussein's Iraq, Washington thought its "smart bombs" had reasserted U.S. hegemony against upstart dictators and imperialist rivals alike. But two years later in Somalia, a racist colonial invasion, launched under the pretext of a humanitarian effort to alleviate hunger, has sunk in the quicksand. Blackhawk helicopters were shot up, an elite hit squad decimated, the would-be global gendarmes humiliated. Meanwhile, the fratricidal wars ripping apart the Balkans have turned the region into a cauldron for imperialist conflict and intrigue.

In France, October 1993, workers stormed onto the runways of Paris airports to protest privatization plans by Air France that would have slashed thousands of jobs. They fought off cops, resisted union bureaucrats' back-to-work appeals, forced out the Socialist airline boss. Conservative prime minister Balladur backed down, saying he was afraid of social explosions, of a new May '68. The impact of the workers' victory at Air France was quickly felt, and there was a wave of militant strike struggles from Belgium to Barcelona.

In Russia at the beginning of December, barely two months after Yeltsin's bloody coup against parliament, would-be czar Boris and his coterie of yuppie IMF "shock treatment" technocrats were repudiated in his own rigged elections, which saw a heavy protest vote for the fascist Zhirinovskiy and the Stalinist rump CP because they were seen as opposition to the Western imperialists' attempts to destroy Russia and its people. Meanwhile, Russia barrels toward hyperinflation and mass unemployment with the looming possibility of social explosions.

Russia's new capitalist rulers require a bonapartist regime in order to suppress mass resistance to the immiseration wrought by the destructive force of the more advanced capitalist world market. U.S. imperialism wants to turn this vast country into simply a supplier of raw materials, while devastating its huge industrial base. The morale of the Russian working class is currently shattered, but it would be foolish impressionism to write off the proletariat as condemned to a years-long struggle simply to regain trade-union organization. Events are likely to be far more explosive, and the multinational proletariat could regroup and be impelled to challenge the rudimentary black-market capitalist class. And in China, where the bureaucracy is trying to bring about capitalism on the installment plan, the potential for proletarian upheaval is palpable.

At the height of the counterrevolutionary wave that swept across East Europe and the Soviet Union during 1989-91, imperialist publicists proclaimed the "death of communism" and the victory of the West in the Cold War. The State Department philosopher-bureaucrat Francis Fukuyama proclaimed "the end of history" and the supposed triumph of liberal democracy as the realization of the Hegelian vision of a "final, rational form of society." Karl Marx noted (in *The German Ideology*) that each new ruling class "is compelled...to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society," that "it will give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones." When the bourgeoisie was

a revolutionary class, its triumph did promote the broader development of the productive forces. But in capitalism's period of decline, the idealization of bourgeois democracy and the capitalist market as the natural order of things represents a profoundly false consciousness which masks a system of bloody class exploitation and oppression.

The post-Cold War bourgeois triumphalism was quickly punctured. Sharp class battles have broken out, radical social struggle has reappeared, and interimperialist rivalries are intensifying between Yankee imperialism, Japan Inc. and a Europe dominated by the German Fourth Reich. At the same time, full-scale nationalist wars and genocidal massacres are plaguing ever larger parts of the world. Now counterrevolutionary "democrats" in East Europe complain that the "Iron Curtain" has been replaced by a "wall of poverty" sealing off the wealthier countries of "Fortress Europe," with infrared sensors and plenty of border guards, from the newly immiserated populations of the East. Fascists and other ultranationalist forces are growing apace, East and West, seeking to channel mass discontent into racist terror against immigrants and national minorities.

According to one estimate published in 1990, there were more than 80 wars in the period of "peace" since the end of World War II, overwhelmingly in the Third World. But in 1992 alone, more than 50 wars were under way, with at least half a million killed. While the Western media weep crocodile tears over the suffering in places like the former Yugoslavia and Somalia, as an excuse for imperialist intervention, they turn a blind eye to the genocidal actions by Christian Armenians against Muslim Azeris in the Caucasus. In fact, such "ethnic cleansing" is the method by which every capitalist nation-state has been consolidated. Meanwhile, in the heart of Africa, more than 150,000 people have been killed in mass slaughters in Burundi in the past year.

We still live in the epoch of imperialism, that is, of



Cambio 16

Capitalism brings desperate poverty, particularly affecting women and youth such as those above, picking through sea of garbage near Moscow.

capitalist decay. You only have to look at the millions of homeless sleeping on subway gratings in front of the fancy shops from Berlin to Paris to Tokyo to New York to see it. The vaunted "globalization of production" has kept up sagging profit margins by closing factories in the advanced capitalist countries and shifting production to impoverished Third World countries where industrial workers earn between \$1 an hour and \$1 a day. Images of Brazilian gold miners scaling mud walls like ants or gaunt Bangladeshi textile workers show the ravages of capitalism in its death agony. The land hunger in remote Chiapas which sparked the current rebellion is a direct product of "modernization" schemes dreamed up in Wall Street, Washington and Harvard, and a catastrophic slump in the world coffee market.

It Is Necessary to Fight

The result of almost two decades of capitalist offensive worldwide has been the decline of organized social struggle. Social-democratic reformists have seen their margin for maneuver reduced toward zero. Out of loyalty to their masters, the labor lieutenants of capital preside over the undermining of the unions. Third World guerrillas espoused a program of radical nationalism, but with the collapse of Stalinism ushering in counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe, the Nicaraguan Sandinistas were toppled and "liberation movements" from South Africa to Israel/Palestine, El Salvador and Northern Ireland have been forced to seek humiliating "negotiated solutions" under a Pax Americana.

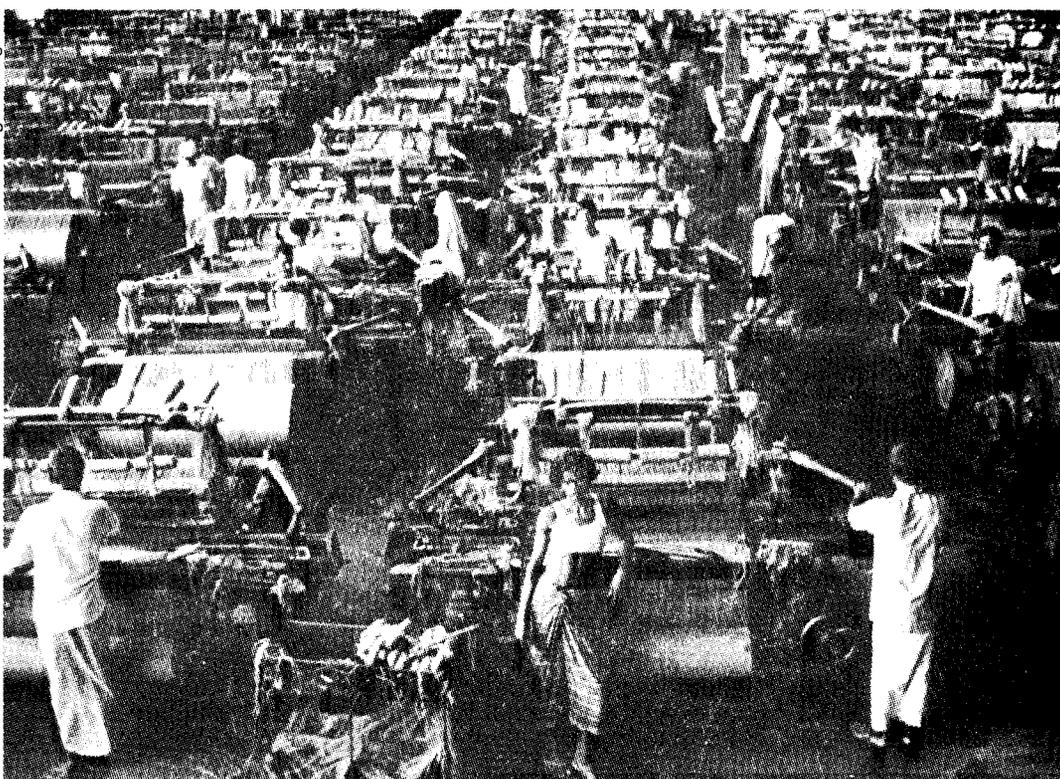
While impressionists on the left threw in the towel, it is the leaders who have been paralyzed, not the masses. This is particularly striking in South Africa, where for the oppressed and superexploited black masses the communist hammer and sickle remains the symbol of their struggle for liberation from apartheid capitalism. Yet the petty-bourgeois African National Congress and its longtime ally, the South African Communist Party, are shackling the powerful and combative black proletariat to the Randlords in a neo-apartheid deal. Especially among unionized workers and black youth in the townships, there is a palpable sense of betrayal which even a small revolutionary party could galvanize in the fight for a black-centered workers government.

Around the world one can see a similar vacuum of revolutionary leadership in the face of mass unrest. The result has been a series of outbreaks of essentially spontaneous rebellion, such as hunger riots in Venezuela in 1989, when the starving slum dwellers came down from the hills. More recently, last December in Argentina a revolt by government workers who had not been paid in months erupted in the town of Santiago del Estero. And now the Chiapas revolt has sparked peasant unrest spreading through southern Mexico. The same can be seen in the imperialist metropolis. An interracial upheaval against poverty and racist repression in Los Angeles in the wake of the acquittal of the cops who beat black motorist Rodney King, was echoed by angry protests around the U.S. The economic devastation of the ghetto spells genocide for black youth while the black leaders join Clinton's racist campaign against "black on black violence."

Fight for Revolutionary Leadership

Liberal economist John Kenneth Galbraith recently wrote, "As evidenced two years ago in Los Angeles, those

Salgado/Magnum



Not a 19th century textile mill but jute weaving in Bangladesh in 1989. Capitalists swarm to "Third World" countries where they pay pennies to workers suffering inhuman conditions.

having no other outlet for political expression take to the streets.... That social tension and conflicts should be associated with political exclusion and economic deprivation should surprise no one" (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 6 February). Galbraith's neo-Keynesian calls for a "good society" with a more rational capitalist order are simply bourgeois utopianism. But he is certainly right that the ratcheting up of the rate of exploitation—which the reformists label Reagan/Thatcherism or "neo-liberalism"—has created the social tinder for explosions of rage, not only by dispossessed "marginalized" sectors but by the main battalions of workers in the advanced capitalist countries and the new regions of low-wage industrialization. What is palpably lacking is the necessary revolutionary leadership.

The effect of the Chiapas revolt could be like the workers explosions in Río Blanco and Cananea in the years leading up to the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17, or like the massacre of striking Lena River gold miners in Siberia in 1912 which reawakened the revolutionary Russian workers movement. The process was then accelerated by the slaughter of World War I, which set the stage for the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. While locally based, each of these put a match to conditions that were ripe for social explosion throughout the country. But the original Zapatistas in Mexico were defeated because the peasant rebels did not have the coherent class interest and leadership to rule. A new Mexican Revolution, or a revolution in any semi-colonial country, can triumph only as a workers revolution, led by a Bolshevik vanguard party supported by the peasant masses and the vast numbers of urban poor.

Marxism, far from being dead, has been reaffirmed by the recent world-historic events. Mired in the worst capitalist economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, Europe is rapidly polarizing. Rather than liberal democracy, counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe has brought mass unemployment, victimization of women,

witchhunts and violent fascist attacks against "foreigners," Gypsies and Jews, particularly in Germany. At the same time, tens of thousands of youth have come out to fight the Nazi/skinhead thugs. In Italy, Europe's most combative proletariat has revolted against the destruction of its gains, symbolized by the *scala mobile*, the sliding scale of wages won in the aftermath of World War II, not only striking against the government and the bosses, but throwing coins, vegetables and bolts at its reformist union misleaders.

Already we see new "popular fronts" being organized to head off proletarian upsurges by chaining the workers to the parties of their exploiters. Meanwhile, revulsion with the reformist misleaders, notably in Italy, pushes militant layers toward the dead end of syndicalism. Leon Trotsky began his 1938 Transitional Program with the stark affirmation, "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat." He went on to note that "People's Fronts on the one hand—fascism on the other; these are the last political resources of imperialism in the struggle against proletarian revolution." Today, as events from Italy to Mexico dramatically demonstrate, the absence of a revolutionary leadership is the chief obstacle to realizing the aspirations of the exploited and oppressed.

What is needed is to forge a new internationalist Bolshevik-Leninist vanguard, intervening in social struggles as they arise with the aim of linking the felt needs of the masses to the conquest of power. This is the purpose of the Transitional Program of the Fourth International. The fight for a sliding scale of hours and wages to combat mass unemployment and the ravages of inflation; for the formation of workers defense guards to defend picket lines, stop anti-immigrant terror and crush fascist bands; for proletarian mobilization to aid struggles in the neocolonial countries against imperialist military adventures—all of these require a generalized political assault on the capitalist order



Langevin/Sygma

U.S. imperialists' plowed through desert wreaking slaughter in Iraq war. Democratic Party president Clinton in Korean "demilitarized" zone, July 1993 as U.S. pushes arrogant threats against North Korean deformed workers state.



Reuters

culminating in socialist revolution. And as Trotsky wrote in *Lessons of October* (1923), "Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer."

Socialism or Annihilation

More than half a century ago, Trotsky observed that the objective conditions for socialist revolution not only were ripe but had gotten somewhat rotten. This was on the eve of World War II, which in the scale and ferocity of its destruction revealed the face of imperialist barbarism. Today, as the capitalist world is again being redivided—with a German-dominated Europe, a Japanese-dominated East Asia, and the U.S. with its Latin American hinterland—the prospects of intensifying trade war point to a new imperialist world conflagration. This is noted even in the titles of recent books by mainstream American commentators, such as MIT economist Lester Thurow (*Head to Head: The Coming Economic Battle Among Japan, Europe and America*) and former Wall Street investment banker, now Undersecretary of Commerce, Jeffrey Garten (*A Cold Peace: America, Japan, Germany and the Struggle for Supremacy*).

But if the last imperialist world war led to the Holocaust, the slaughter of over 50 million people and the dropping of two A-bombs by the U.S., the next war would be one in which *all* the major imperialist power blocs (as well as many of their clients) are armed with nuclear weapons, or could get them with "a twist of a screwdriver." While Pentagon doctrine smugly points to the huge U.S. nuclear arsenal and proclaims a "one superpower world," technologically advanced Japan and Germany are rearming. Japan's recent launch of a booster rocket capable of putting a 12-ton payload into low earth orbit, entirely built in Japan, was an announcement of its re-emergence as a global military power.

What does Carl von Clausewitz's dictum, "war is the continuation of politics by other means," mean in conditions where any of the belligerents could wipe out humanity? Military historian John Keegan devotes much of his recent treatise on *A History of Warfare* (1993) to denouncing von Clausewitz, asserting that a new global war can be avoided by a "cultural transformation." The Stalinist reformists used

the same arguments about the "unthinkability" of thermonuclear war (while American military strategists were busily elaborating first-strike scenarios) to justify their dream world of "peaceful coexistence." But all such arguments that the imperialists can turn away from nuclear war are utopian. For the capitalist system in its decline is an increasingly irrational economic system ruled by increasingly irrational men. Official Pentagon doctrine continues to be that the U.S. will "prevail" in extended nuclear warfare.

Today the choice posed by Rosa Luxemburg at the turn of the century of—"socialism or barbarism"—becomes even starker. Facing nuclear-armed imperialist powers, it is socialism or annihilation.

Evidence that capitalism has exhausted its progressive role is everywhere. While Disneyworlds and mega-malls spread a thin veneer of American-style affluence around the world, billions of people daily confront starvation. Diseases of poverty such as tuberculosis and cholera are again on the rise and now a modern plague, the AIDS pandemic, is cutting an increasingly wide swathe through Africa and Asia. As always, the status of women is an accurate barometer of the level of social progress: in the assault on the right to abortion in the "enlightened" West you see the advance of reaction in the period of "post-modernity." And from Iran to Algeria, plebeian frustration over the desperate conditions produced by imperialist capitalism has provided fertile ground for the spread of anti-Western Islamic fundamentalism, which imprisons women in the benighted backwardness of the Middle Ages. While the imperialists now scream about the "fundamentalist threat" the way they used to vituperate against "Communist expansionism," they themselves fueled the growth of the most reactionary Islamic fanatics in the CIA's holy war against Soviet-backed Afghanistan.

To achieve socialism, not the Stalinist parody but a genuinely classless society of abundance and universal equality, the exploited and oppressed of the world desperately need an internationalist leadership—a genuinely communist International, reformed on the political foundations of Leon Trotsky's Fourth International. Today this requires an understanding of the collapse of Stalinism, a death long foretold by Trotsky, who warned that either proletarian political



Susan Symonovics

Oran, Algeria, January 1992. Women demand "Individual and collective liberties," the right to work and study. Fundamentalists seek to impose Islamic state and drive women into seclusion.

revolution would sweep away the privileged bureaucracy that sought to balance between imperialism and the working class, or the counterrevolution would triumph. While Stalin's heirs preached "peaceful coexistence" and stifled revolutionary opportunities, the imperialists used both Cold War and "détente" to rev up the arms race and sap the economic strength of the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states.

Marx wrote almost a century and a half ago that for socialism to triumph it must be on an international scale, in the most advanced countries, for otherwise every case of "local communism" would be destroyed by the world market. Over the past period, victorious social revolutions have occurred only in the backward capitalist countries, but not because the workers in the imperialist countries have been bought off. (Tell that to former auto workers in Detroit!) Rather, the reformists, both Stalinist and social democrat, have prevented workers revolution at key junctures, from Spain 1937 to Italy 1945 to France 1968 and Portugal 1975. So instead there have been isolated nationalist insurgencies like Nicaragua, and rebellions of the wretched of the earth like Chiapas.

In a symbiotic relationship with the Stalinists who served as roadblocks to revolution, the pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) of Ernest Mandel chased after every

mass movement, from Third World guerrillas to Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution" to anti-Communist Polish Solidarność. In this, Mandel's organization is just being true to the method of its mentor, Michel Pablo, whose revisionist tailing of non-proletarian leaderships destroyed the Fourth International in 1951-53 as a proletarian revolutionary force. In contrast, we of the international Spartacist tendency, now International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), have fought to reforge a Fourth International that Trotsky would recognize. During Cold War II the USec's tailing of ever more openly anti-Soviet forces brought them more tightly into the embrace of the social democracy. The ICL fought to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and counterrevolution, from Kabul to Warsaw and Moscow.

A Trotskyist vanguard, an internationalist world party of socialist revolution, must be built that can bring together the power of the millions of workers, Mexican and American Ford workers, South African and German and ex-Soviet miners, shipbuilders from South Korea to Portugal, to act as a tribune and leader of all the oppressed in a struggle for socialism around the planet. This is the central lesson of the Chiapas revolt and of the workers' struggles internationally that have reverberated in the "New World Disorder." ■



Tokyo nurses join in Japan-wide strike for higher pay, more jobs, July 1993.

Fake Trotskyists on the Ukraine

Why They Misuse Trotsky

The impact of the collapse of the deformed and degenerated workers states today is painfully evident worldwide in increased social misery, war, and racist and nationalist bloodshed. As the imperialists ceaselessly, and ultimately successfully, drove to destroy the Soviet Union, the International Communist League's intransigent revolutionary opposition was unique on the left. Drawing the class line internationally, we fought for the *unequivocal military defense* of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states against imperialism, and for international *extension* of social revolution. Our program was and is: independent mobilization of the working class against the rule of capital—for international proletarian revolution.

The self-proclaimed "left," which basically seeks accommodation with capitalism, swam comfortably in the stream of counterrevolution. Every one of the ostensible left organizations recoiled in horror from our 1980 slogan: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! But the critical importance of the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan became all too obvious when Gorbachev's withdrawal of these troops as a sop to imperialism in 1989 marked the opening of the sluice gate for capitalist restoration in the USSR.

With the inception of Polish Solidarność, the *internal* counterrevolutionary threat in the deformed and degenerated workers states, heavily promoted and subsidized by Western imperialism, became an increasingly urgent danger. Most leftist organizations, in keeping with their pro-imperialist stance during "Cold War II," eagerly embraced each and every "democratic" anti-Communist movement—even outright fascist ones such as the Estonian "Forest Brothers"—using the justification that they were "anti-Stalinist." Thus they backed the American AFL-CIO's drive for "free trade unionism," a cover for CIA-connected unions

bringing "AFL-CIA" dollars into Eastern Europe to nurture the internal forces of capitalist restoration. And as the reactionaries gained ground, the fake-left tailists joined in the rising imperialist chorus hailing the favorite "union" of the Vatican, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher: Polish Solidarność. When General Jaruzelski, backed by the Kremlin, stopped cold Solidarność' counterrevolutionary power grab in 1981, the ICL was alone among the ostensibly Trotskyist left in defending the Polish deformed workers state. But the appetites of Solidarność to serve the imperialist masters were fulfilled when it was handed power by the bankrupt Stalinist regime in 1989 and proceeded to restore a (feeble) capitalist market economy. Meanwhile, in the land of the October Revolution, Mikhail Gorbachev's institution of perestroika market reforms, followed by the abandonment of the principle of central planning in 1988, posed this danger point blank and paved the way for Boris Yeltsin's capitalist-restorationist regime.

Counterrevolution in Nationalist Colors

Chief among the centrifugal forces which began to rip apart the Soviet workers state in 1989-90 was the revival of national and communalist antagonisms, largely encouraged by perestroika. Submerged but not eliminated during almost seven decades of Stalinist bureaucratic rule, many of these conflicts dated back to prerevolutionary times. (For example, when the Red Army retook the Caucasus in 1921, Armenia and Azerbaijan were at war in Nagorno-Karabakh and the Abkhazians were being viciously persecuted by the Menshevik-led Georgian state.) With no indigenous bourgeoisies and in the absence of major infusions of Western capital, aggressive nationalism proved to be a driving force for capitalist restoration from East Europe to the Soviet

continued on page 15



Workers Hammer

British Workers Power group made left noises about "Independent Workers Lithuania" while joining picket of Soviet consulate behind banner demanding "Hands Off Baltic States!", London, May 1990.

On Trotsky's Advocacy of an Independent Soviet Ukraine

The document printed below was commissioned in 1991 by the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League. It reflects the conclusions drawn from an international discussion on the question of the appropriateness, both in 1939 and in the Gorbachev era of the Soviet Union, of Trotsky's call for an independent Soviet Ukraine. The document was adopted by the IEC in October 1993.

Trotsky always supported the right of self-determination for the constituent national republics of the Soviet Union, a right incorporated at Lenin's insistence into the founding constitution of the USSR, adopted in 1924. Implicit in both Lenin's and Trotsky's position was that this right be exercised within the framework of proletarian state power. Prior to 1939 neither the Left Opposition nor the Fourth Internationalist movement ever advocated that any national republic exercise that right in the form of secession.

Following the 1920 Soviet-Polish war, the Ukraine was divided, with the eastern Ukraine becoming a constituent national republic of the USSR and the western Ukraine coming under the oppressive rule of Pilsudskiite Poland. During the 1930s Trotsky advocated the *revolutionary reunification* of the Ukraine through the *extension* of Soviet power westward. For example, in March 1936 he wrote:

"The frontiers of the USSR are only the temporary front-line trenches of the class struggle.... The Ukrainian people—to take only one of many examples—is cut in two by the state boundary. Should favorable conditions arrive, the Red Army would be duty-bound to come to the aid of the Western Ukraine, which is under the heel of the Polish executioners. It is not difficult to imagine the gigantic impulse that would be given to the revolutionary movement in Poland and in the whole of Europe by the unification of a workers' and peasants' Ukraine."

—"The Stalin-Howard Interview,"
18 March 1936,
Writings [1935-36]

Thus Trotsky's advocacy in 1939 of revolutionary reunification in the form of an *independent* Soviet Ukraine represented a certain break from past Trotskyist policy. Furthermore, this slogan was quite short-lived. Trotsky first raised it in April 1939. He stopped using the slogan with the Stalin-Hitler pact, the onset of the Second World War and the attendant westward extension of Soviet military power.

Just a few weeks after arguing for an independent Soviet Ukraine, Trotsky defended

(though he did not advocate) the incorporation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia into the USSR, the Red Army's occupation of eastern Poland and the western Ukraine, and the Soviet Union's war against Finland. The *Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution* (May 1940) states:

"The seizure of eastern Poland—a pledge of the alliance with Hitler and a guarantee against Hitler—was accompanied by the nationalization of semifeudal and capitalist property in western Ukraine and western White Russia. Without this the Kremlin could not have incorporated the occupied territory into the USSR. The strangled and desecrated October Revolution served notice that it was still alive."

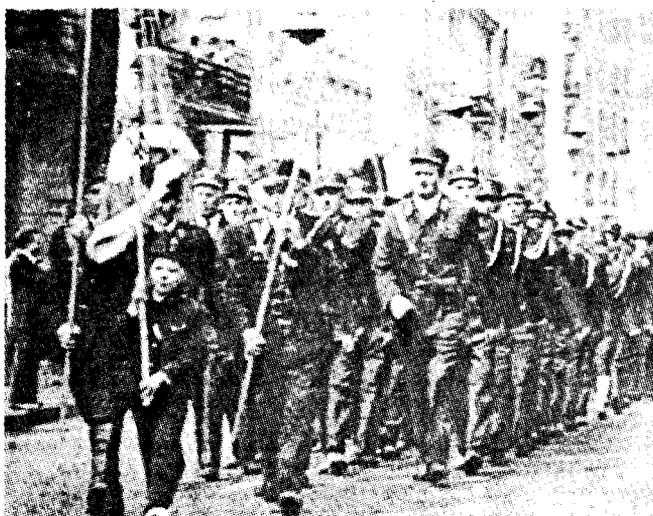
Thus, Trotsky's advocacy of an independent Soviet Ukraine in the spring and summer of 1939 stands out against the main thrust of his strategic orientation toward proletarian political revolution in the USSR. For that reason this conjunctural position has been seized upon and *falsified* by current pseudo-Trotskyist revisionists in an attempt to legitimize their support for pro-imperialist and pro-capitalist nationalist movements (e.g., the Ukrainian Rukh, the Lithuanian Sajudis) in the former USSR.

For example, the British centrist *Workers Power* (August 1991) maintained: "Trotsky advised Ukrainian revolutionaries to *participate* in the struggle for national independence whilst fighting *within* the national movement for the retention of state property relations under the slogan of an independent soviet Ukraine" (our emphasis). In other words, *Workers Power* called for a political and military bloc with pro-imperialist nationalists against the central Soviet government.



Partisans in the Ukraine, 1942, fought to defend Soviet workers state against Nazis and Hitler-allied Ukrainian nationalists.

Yakov Davidson



AP

After Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary coup in August 1991, pro-Nazi Ukrainian nationalists marched through streets of Lvov where in World War II they carried out pogroms against the Jews.

One Zbigniew Kowalewski, writing in the *Mandelite International Marxist Review* (Autumn 1989), portrays Trotsky as a champion of anti-Soviet nationalism pure and simple:

"Independence, states Trotsky, is the indispensable democratic framework in which an oppressed people becomes free to determine itself. In other words, there is no self-determination outside the context of national independence."

Kowalewski and his ilk, of course, made no attempt to explain why Trotsky did *not* call for the independence of the Ukraine before April or after November 1939.

Trotsky's advocacy of an independent Soviet Ukraine in no way justifies support to pro-imperialist nationalist forces; quite the contrary. He concludes his initial article by retrospectively endorsing the Red Army's suppression of pro-German Ukrainian nationalists and declaring political war against their contemporary successors:

"At the beginning of the last imperialist war the Ukrainians Melenevski ('Basok') and Skoropis-Yeltukhovski attempted to place the Ukrainian liberation movement under the wing of the Hohenzollern general Ludendorff. They covered themselves in so doing with left phrases. With one kick the revolutionary Marxists booted these people out. That is how revolutionists must continue to behave in the future. The impending war will create a favorable atmosphere for all sorts of adventurers, miracle-hunters, and seekers of the golden fleece. These gentlemen, who especially love to warm their hands in the vicinity of the national question, must not be allowed within artillery range of the labor movement. Not the slightest compromise with imperialism, either fascist or democratic! Not the slightest concession to the Ukrainian nationalists, either clerical-reactionary or liberal-pacifist! No 'People's Fronts'! The complete independence of the proletarian party as the vanguard of the toilers!"

— "The Ukrainian Question," 22 April 1939

Trotsky's Reasoning

While Trotsky's position for an independent Soviet Ukraine was principled, the question remains: was it correct under the circumstances? Trotsky's motivation was both negative and positive. On the one hand, he sought to undercut and reverse the growth of right-wing Ukrainian nation-

alism, which looked to Nazi Germany as its great-power protector. At the same time, he believed that national oppression could serve as a stimulus to bring about a proletarian political revolution in the Ukraine in advance of the Russian core of the Soviet state.

Trotsky's *new* approach to the Ukraine question was a response to the growth of right-wing, pro-Nazi nationalism in Polish-occupied western Ukraine, where there had previously been substantial pro-Soviet sympathies. There was also a symptomatic rightward shift among Ukrainian émigrés in Canada, a community which had previously supported the Communist Party. Trotsky believed that the rise of right-wing nationalism among Ukrainians outside the USSR corresponded to similar political developments within the Soviet Republic. He saw in the intensity of the purges in the Ukraine Stalin's attempt to wipe out powerful separatist tendencies, while the effect was to reinforce them:

"Nowhere did restrictions, purges, repressions, and in general all forms of bureaucratic hooliganism assume such murderous sweep as they did in the Ukraine in the struggle against the powerful, deeply rooted longings of the Ukrainian masses for greater freedom and independence.

"...it is precisely this ruthless hounding of all free national thought, that has led the toiling masses of the Ukraine, to an even greater degree than the masses of Great Russia, to look upon the rule of the Kremlin as monstrously oppressive."

— *Ibid.*

Under these conditions Trotsky saw as the strategic task at hand, as he put it in his polemic against Oehler, "to find the bridge from reaction to revolution." He raised the slogan of a united, independent Soviet Ukraine as a revolutionary answer to Nazi Germany's demagogic championing of a "Greater Ukraine." His central strategic purpose was to turn Ukrainian national aspirations against Hitler instead of for Hitler. Those current revisionists, like Workers Power, who use Trotsky's advocacy of an independent Soviet Ukraine to justify support to pro-imperialist nationalists, are not merely perverting Trotsky's position; they are supporting the very forces Trotsky was fighting *against* when he raised this demand.

However, Trotsky would not have raised the call for an independent Soviet Ukraine purely for its propagandistic value unless he believed such a development was actually feasible at the time. He evidently believed that the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Ukraine, working in an intensely hostile political environment, was more demoralized and fragile than its counterpart in Russia. Thus he attributes great symptomatic significance to the suicide in 1933 of the "pure-blooded" Stalinist Skrypnyk, who was charged with conciliating Ukrainian nationalism, and the purge of his successor Postyshev.

Trotsky argued that the demand for an independent Soviet Ukraine would enable the revolutionary vanguard to place itself at the head of the toiling masses:

"The barb of the slogan of an independent Ukraine is aimed directly against the Moscow bureaucracy and enables the proletarian vanguard to rally the peasant masses. On the other hand, the same slogan opens up for the proletarian party the opportunity of playing a leading role in the national Ukrainian movement in Poland, Rumania, and Hungary. Both of these political processes will drive the revolutionary movement forward and increase the specific weight of the proletarian vanguard."

— "Independence of the Ukraine and Sectarian Middleheads," 30 July 1939

What Trotsky projected for the Ukraine in 1939 did occur in Hungary and, in a qualitatively limited way, in Poland in 1956. The local Stalinist bureaucracy was split between Moscow loyalists and more national-minded elements like Gomulka and Nagy. Popular hostility to bureaucratic rule, reinforced by a desire for national independence from Russian domination, led to incipient proletarian political revolutions.

Criticism of Trotsky's Position

However, several factors militated against the possibility of a *separate* proletarian political revolution in the Soviet Ukraine in 1939: the strategic importance of the Ukraine for the Soviet economy, the high degree of integration of the Kremlin bureaucracy, the large Russian and Russified population in the eastern Ukraine around Kharkov. The imminent war with Nazi Germany strongly reinforced the Stalin regime's determination to hold on to the Ukraine at any cost and its ability to appeal to Soviet patriotism toward that end.

If a political revolution, nationally limited to the Ukraine, had broken out, from its first days it would have faced Stalin's all-out attempt to crush it, with or without imperialist assistance. The Hitler-Stalin pact might have been forged not just over Poland but over the Ukraine as well. A political revolution could not be "independent," but would need *from the very outset* to extend itself, leading to a decisive struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy throughout the USSR.

If Stalin would not tolerate an independent Ukraine from the one side, neither would Hitler from the other, despite the Nazis' demagogic propaganda for a "Greater Ukraine." The situation in 1939 was fundamentally different from that during the 1918-1920 Civil War, when the Ukraine was a battleground for contending nationalist movements. The success of the Bolsheviks' policy in the Ukraine at that time culminated in the fusion of the Ukrainian Communist Party with the left-nationalist Borotba Party. However, in 1939 *all* tendencies of Ukrainian nationalism looked to Nazi Germany for support. There is little reason to believe that the demand for an independent Soviet Ukraine (which would be committed to the defense of Soviet Russia) would have found much receptivity among national-minded Ukrainians.

Trotsky was, of course, well aware of the right-wing cast of Ukrainian nationalism at this juncture, and advanced the slogan of an independent Soviet Ukraine to undercut this. He came close to arguing that Ukrainians would only defend the Soviet Union on the basis of their own national Soviet state:

"In the event of war the hatred of the masses for the ruling clique can lead to the collapse of all the social conquests



Red Army troops in Kharkov, 1920. The Bolsheviks sought to win left nationalist forces to Communism in the struggle for a Soviet Ukraine.

TASS

of October. The source of defeatist moods is in the Kremlin. An independent Soviet Ukraine, on the other hand, would become, if only by virtue of its own interests, a mighty southwestern bulwark of the USSR."

—"The Ukrainian Question"

Events soon proved that Trotsky overestimated anti-Soviet attitudes among the Ukrainian masses. Many workers and peasants in the western Ukraine *welcomed* the Red Army occupation in September 1939, a fact which Trotsky himself emphasized in his polemics against the Shachtman-Burnham third campists. When the German Wehrmacht invaded the Ukraine in July 1941, they were to a certain degree welcomed as "liberators" by sections of the Ukrainian populace. However, the pro-Nazi Ukrainian nationalists—in part because of the extreme brutality and undisguised colonial character of the German occupation—were never able to gain a mass following. A leading Western historian of Ukrainian nationalism has written:

"Ukrainian nationalism was the only dynamic anti-Communist movement which was able to carry on extensive propaganda in the East Ukraine under German occupation.... It attracted a large proportion of the intellectuals and technicians who comprised the only group capable of reorganizing life after the Soviet evacuation, but it was unable to penetrate the mass of the population to any great extent. The galvanizing force was present; the cadres which might have transmitted it were half-formed; but the essential mass remained uncommitted."

—John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism* (1963)

September 1939 marked the historical moment when the fate of all the peoples of East Europe would be determined by the looming war between the two fundamental antagonists: Nazi German imperialism and the Soviet degenerated workers state. If there was no longer room on the political map for an independent bourgeois Poland, there was certainly no room to create an independent workers and peas-

ants Ukraine. The manifest unreality of an independent Soviet Ukraine was doubtless why Trotsky dropped the demand when it became clear that there was no political and geographic space between the Red Army and the Nazi Wehrmacht. The demand for a united, independent Soviet Ukraine does not appear in either his April 1940 "Letter to the Workers of the USSR" or the 1940 "Manifesto of the IEC of the Fourth International."

Anti-Soviet Nationalism and the Collapse of the USSR

In a letter to Max Shachtman in November 1939, Trotsky wrote: "The slogan of an independent Soviet Ukraine was proposed before the Hitler-Stalin pact.... This slogan is only an application on the field of the national question of our general slogan for the revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracy" (*In Defense of Marxism*). Thus Trotsky considered his approach to the Ukraine question in 1939 to have a general applicability in the struggle against the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy.

The question is obviously posed: would it have been correct to apply Trotsky's approach on the Ukraine question to the national secessionist movements which arose in the USSR as the Kremlin bureaucracy disintegrated under Gorbachev? These movements were from the outset organized, promoted and led by openly pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist forces. Independence for Lithuania, the Ukraine, Georgia, etc. was *universally* regarded as a means to achieve the restoration of capitalism and integration into the Western imperialist order. It is highly indicative that the principal agent of Western imperialism in the USSR, Boris Yeltsin, while appealing to Great Russian

chauvinism, also championed independence for the Baltic republics—even at the expense of the large Russian population in the Baltic states. Meanwhile, Russians, Jews, Ukrainians and others are sneeringly referred to as "Soviet peoples" by the virulently national-chauvinist, capitalist-restorationist Baltic "independence" movements which came to power in the course of the destruction of the Soviet Union.

To call for an independent Soviet Lithuania, Moldavia or Georgia under these circumstances would have been *irrelevant* to the actual political struggle in these regions, and could only have served to legitimize the demand for independence, which was seen as synonymous with anti-Communism and social counterrevolution. A demand for a "united Azeri Soviet Republic," far from uniting the Iranian and Soviet working masses, would have been nothing more than "left" support for one side in the mutual Azeri-Armenian pogroms occurring in the Caucasus.

In a workers state the question of self-determination is subordinate to the defense of collectivized property. As the bureaucracy disintegrated under Gorbachev, the task of Trotskyists was to convince workers and collective farmers in the non-Russian republics of the former USSR that their *main enemies* were the Wall Street and Frankfurt bankers, whose local agents the nationalists aspired to become. Thus, our program was for a proletarian political revolution throughout the USSR. Today, we seek to reverse the capitalist counterrevolution and to reforge the Soviet Union—whose core national republics were Russia and the Ukraine—on the basis of genuine national equality, including the right to self-determination within the framework of proletarian class rule. ■

Spartacist Pamphlet

This pamphlet brings together articles from *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., and the Russian-language *Spartacist Bulletin* covering the recent events in the ex-USSR. Beginning with the pathetic "Emergency Committee" putsch and Yeltsin's pro-imperialist counter coup in August 1991, the material contained in the pamphlet documents the unfolding counterrevolution and the Trotskyist program to resist and reverse it. Included are several polemical articles which expose the role of numerous Western "leftists" in backing Yeltsinite counterrevolution and that of the Stalinist remnants in the former Soviet Union, whose bankruptcy is epitomized by their despicable "red-brown coalition" with virulent Russian nationalists, monarchists and outright fascists. Finally, we include an article from the current Russian-language *Bulletin* No. 4 which details the Stalinist degeneration of the CPSU and the struggle of the Trotskyist Left Opposition for the authentic program of Leninism.

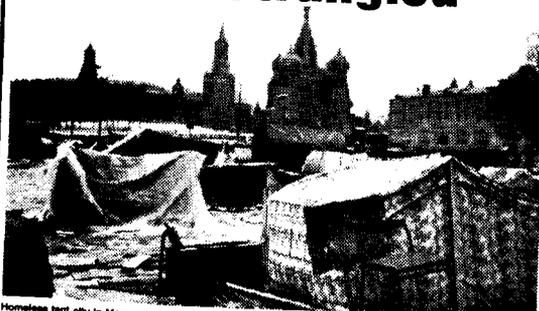
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Stalinism—Gravedigger of the Revolution

How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled



Homeless tent city in Moscow's Red Square.

For Socialist Revolution to Sweep Away Yeltsin Counterrevolution!

August 1993  Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

The armed struggle against Stalinism in Estonia

IN THE AREAS forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in the Second World War, one subject remains extremely sensitive even under *glasnost*: the armed resistance to Soviet annexation. In Estonia, a prominent figure in the Estonian Historical Society, Mart Laar, was indicted for what he said about the "Forest Brothers" in an article on the period of the Stalinist terror (see IV 157, February 20, 1989, for a translation). The Soviet central press continues to cry scandal about any defense of the "Forest Brothers," and this is an element in the intensified polemics about the Baltic peoples' movements.

The following is the monthly paper Estonian unveils the armed resist mass deportatio of the Estonian in Laar's article.

International VIEWPOINT

18 September 1989

"United" Secretariat's International Viewpoint saluted Baltic Nazis like Estonian "Forest Brothers," led by Alfons Rebane (center), which allied with Nazis against the Red Army.



R. James Bender Publishing

Fake Trotskyists...

(continued from page 10)

Union, particularly in the Balkans. In turn, communalist and ethnic tensions were fueled by the counterrevolutionary drive. Nationalist demagoguery and irredentism served as a battering ram to break up the old workers states—acting as a sort of ersatz capitalism, to deflect working-class discontent over free-market immiseration, to break up the multinational military cadre (most dramatically in Yugoslavia), to purge from government administrations those sympathetic to the former regime, and to fashion new states committed to defense of private property and a new bourgeois order.

The ICL fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and restore soviet democracy, as the only means to defend and extend the gains of October, and for the forging of a party with the internationalist vision and program of the Bolsheviks to lead that revolution. While opposing the pro-capitalist nationalist formations as a counterrevolutionary danger, we advanced an internationalist program to address the underlying national conflicts.

Noting that the nationalist movements in the Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia openly embraced the heritage of the White-terror regimes of the interwar period, a 1989 *Spartacist* article sketched out the essential elements of the ICL's approach to the national question in the disintegrating USSR:

"Trotskyists uphold the right of self-determination of the various nations of the USSR—i.e., their right to secede and form a separate state—except where it serves as a cover for counterrevolution. We do not consider the present boundaries of the various entities within the USSR as sacrosanct. The Stalinists are unable to arrive at a democratic solution to this question, which necessarily is connected to an economic program capable of meeting the needs of the peoples of all the regions of the country. The failed policies of the bureaucracy generate powerful tendencies for capitalist counterrevolution under cover of the fig leaf of national self-determination.

Such tendencies must be opposed and exposed as part of the struggle to reforge an authentically communist workers party in the USSR."

—"For Workers Political Revolution in the USSR," *Spartacist* No. 43-44, Summer 1989

In contrast to this position, many of the pseudo-Trotskyists hailed the Lithuanian Sajudis and like-minded nationalist, capitalist-restorationist forces. Casting about to justify this new incarnation of their previous counterrevolutionary policy, they seized upon Trotsky's position, expressed principally in two 1939 articles on the Ukraine ("The Ukrainian Question" and "Independence of the Ukraine and Sectarian Muddleheads"). But their attempt to use Trotsky's authority to justify tailing counterrevolutionary nationalist forces was based on a willful distortion of Trotsky's actual position.

For some months in 1939, Trotsky advocated an independent workers and peasants *Soviet* Ukraine, a slogan which he intended as a means of undercutting the appeal of the reactionary nationalist lackeys of the Nazis in the Ukraine. With this slogan, Trotsky was calling for a *communist* Ukraine, and he sought to win militants to the banner of proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist



Workers Vanguard

September 1981: Spartacists protest opening of Solidarność office in New York, in facilities provided by AFL-CIO bureaucracy.

usurpers. Today's "leftists" had to neutralize the key *class* component of Trotsky's position, falsely transforming it into a call for the destruction of the Soviet workers state under the guise of the simple democratic demand of "self-determination." There's a blood line between capitalist counterrevolution promoted by the fake-lefts, and the Trotskyist struggle for proletarian political revolution aimed at the bureaucratic castes ruling deformed and degenerated workers states.

Why They Misuse Trotsky

It is no accident that Trotsky's articles on the Ukraine gained notable currency, such as in a special issue of the United Secretariat's *International Marxist Review* (August 1989) on the national question in the Soviet Union, which reprinted "The Ukrainian Question" and excerpts from a 1948 resolution of the Fourth International which generalized Trotsky's slogan to call for independent socialist republics in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Lithuania and Latvia. The importance which the present-day revisionists give to their false attribution of Trotsky's authority on this is evident: as early as 1990-91 various self-proclaimed "Trotskyists" were seen running about in the Soviet Union, aggressively pushing Trotsky's Ukraine pieces to rationalize and promote their support to counterrevolution. The dubious organization run by David North, heirs to Gerry Healy's British-based, fraudulent "International Committee of the Fourth International," devoted a whole issue of their Russian-language bulletin to Trotsky's articles on this subject. And in 1991, leftists in the Soviet Union associated with another fragment of the Healyite implosion, Cliff Slaughter's WRP, were actively promoting this material.

The distorted use of Trotsky's position on the Ukraine by ostensible leftists is of a piece with their cynical tailing of ascendant counterrevolution, in solidarity with the imperialists. The revisionists made a habit of justifying support,

both military and political, to reactionary and outright fascist forces which use nationalist aspirations to drive counterrevolutionary ambitions. The USec faction headed by Matti went so far as to cheer the capitalist reunification of Germany, the strongest *imperialist* power in Europe, in the name of "self-determination."

When Gorbachev, after having encouraged these movements as part of his pro-market perestroika reforms, authorized a military counterattack in Lithuania against the right-wing secessionist government of Vytautas Landsbergis in January 1991, this provoked a particularly shrill protest from social-democratic leftists in concert with the imperialists. While the separation of tiny Lithuania did not pose a fundamental threat to the existence of the Soviet Union, the primary significance of the secessionist movement was political, and it was profound: Lithuania became a testing ground for the breakup of the Soviet Union under the hammer blows of murderous nationalism.

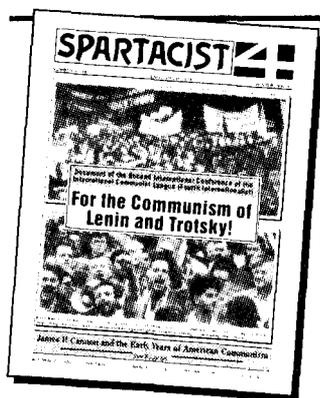
The centrist British Workers Power group pretended to echo Trotsky's slogan on the Ukraine with their call "For an independent workers' council state of Lithuania." But despite this formally leftist fig leaf, their real position was to support the pro-capitalist Sajudis regime, going so far as to *demand Western intervention* and attack the British Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher *from the right* for insufficient imperialist support to Landsbergis. "We should demand that the British government recognises Lithuania and supplies goods requested by Lithuania without conditions," intoned *Workers Power* (May 1990). At the same time, they joined with the rabidly anti-Soviet Labourites of *Socialist Organiser* in a protest picket outside the Soviet consulate in London demanding "Hands Off the Baltic States!"

Others were more unequivocal in championing "self-determination" with a counterrevolutionary class content. The "International Workers League" (LIT) of the late

SPARTACIST

An Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

Spartacist is the theoretical and documentary repository of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). Published under the direction of the International Executive Committee in English, French, German and Spanish, *Spartacist* embodies the ICL's commitment to Leninist internationalism.



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Spartacists hailed 1979 Soviet intervention against CIA-backed forces in Afghanistan, organized international campaign for aid to embattled Jalalabad following Gorbachev's treacherous 1989 pullout.



Workers Vanguard

Nahuel Moreno "pronounce[d] itself in favor of Lithuania's independence and unrestricted respect for the will of the Lithuanian people" in its international journal *Correo Internacional* (March 1990). Meanwhile, the United Secretariat's "13th World Congress" proclaimed:

"In practice, faced with the intervention of the Soviet armed forces in the Baltic Republics, the Fourth International unconditionally supports the desire of the populations of these Republics—already confirmed by referendum—to separate from the Soviet Union and their declaration of independence. We oppose any attempt to prevent the exercise of that right, whatever disagreement we might have with the existing nationalist movements or their governments in power."

—"Decomposition of Bureaucratic Regime and Struggle for Socialist Democracy,"
International Marxist Review No. 11/12
(February 1991)

The USec vigorously *promoted* the counterrevolutionary, "democratic" agents of capitalism while cynically denying the danger of capitalist restoration. Ernest Mandel, in the USec's journal *International Viewpoint* No. 172 (30 October 1989), used sleight-of-hand to lay out the third-campist methodology behind these impulses:

"The main question in the political struggles underway is not the restoration of capitalism.... The main fight is not between pro-capitalist and anti-capitalist forces. It is between the bureaucracy and the toiling masses."

The pseudo-Trotskyist Mandel treated the brittle, unstable bureaucratic caste as though it were an independent social formation. More than 50 years earlier, polemicalizing against the third-campists of his time, Trotsky demolished this argument in his October 1933 article "The Class Nature of the Soviet State":

"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.... The victory of the revolutionary camp, in any case, is conceivable only under the leadership of a proletarian party, which would naturally be raised to power by victory over the counterrevolution."

In 1917, Lenin summed up the Bolshevik attitude toward the national question—recognizing the right to self-determination while asserting the predominance of the class question—in this concise telegram to the Ukrainian Rada (parliament), then in open rebellion against the fledgling Soviet government:

"We, the Council of People's Commissars, recognise at once, unconditionally and without reservations everything that pertains to the Ukrainian people's national rights and national independence...."

"Even if the Rada had received full formal recognition as the uncontested organ of supreme state power of an independent bourgeois Ukrainian republic, we would have been forced to declare war on it without any hesitation, because of its attitude of unexampled betrayal of the revolution and support of the Cadets and the Kaledinites—the bitterest enemies of the national independence of the peoples of Russia, the enemies of Soviet power and of the working and exploited masses."

As the Bolsheviks well understood, the question of self-determination was inextricable from the life and death issues posed in the Civil War, when the choice for the various regions was not between independence and dependence, but between dependence on Moscow or dependence on the bourgeois governments of the capitalist world.

From the rise of the Bolsheviks to the fall of the Stalinists, the question of who would rule the Ukraine was of crucial import to the very existence of the Soviet Union. When the revisionist left jumped on the "self-determination" bandwagon hurtling down the counterrevolutionary road, they waved the banner of Trotsky's 1939 position. Here we must rescue Trotsky from his supposed defenders. Right or wrong, Trotsky in 1939 was attempting to *combat* the kind of pro-imperialist nationalist forces that Workers Power, the USec and the Morenoites made their allies. As the document which begins on page eleven ("On Trotsky's Advocacy of an Independent Soviet Ukraine") shows, Trotsky uncompromisingly denounced the revisionists' bloc with nationalist capitalist forces against the Stalinist-led Soviet workers state. ■

Soviet Jews and the Struggle for Communism

Revolution, Counterrevolution and the Jewish Question

The following is an adapted translation of the article "Bolshevism vs. Stalinism on the Jewish Question: Down With Anti-Semitism, Tool of Reaction!" from Russian-language Spartacist Bulletin No. 3 (Spring 1992).

It took a workers revolution to sweep away Russia's pogromists in 1917. Now the counterrevolution is bringing them back, plunging the multinational working people of the former Soviet Union into degradation and starvation, and threatening to turn the peoples of the ex-USSR into colonial slaves of imperialism. Only hours after Boris Yeltsin's tanks pounded away at the Russian parliament building on 4 October 1993, killing hundreds, Moscow police unleashed a pogromist dragnet targeting tens of thousands of people from the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Yeltsin's bonapartist coup came just two years after would-be Czar Boris stood outside the "White House" in August 1991, seizing on a botched putsch attempt by the "Emergency Committee" of former Gorbachev lieutenants to wrest power from the disintegrating Stalinist bureaucracy. In the absence of working-class resistance, the capitalist-restorationist regime managed to cohere a bourgeois state apparatus, albeit weak and fragile, which pushes inexorably toward bonapartist dictatorship.

The smoke-charred, blood-drenched Moscow White House and the sight of terrified non-Slavic minorities being dragged from their homes are the face of the capitalist

counterrevolution which destroyed the Soviet Union, homeland of the October Revolution. From the outset of the counterrevolutionary process, it was clear that capitalist restoration would mean a return to the days of "Russia One and Indivisible," when Jews, Poles and other minorities in the tsarist prison house of peoples were enslaved under the policeman's knout and terrorized by pogroms. The first targets of the counterrevolutionary mobs unleashed by Yeltsin's pro-imperialist counter-coup in 1991 were statues of Bolshevik leaders Feliks Dzerzhinsky and Yakov Sverdlov, a Pole and a Jew. The "new Russia" proclaimed by Yeltsin & Co. is replete with relics of the old tsarist autocracy, from the Russian Orthodox church to anti-Semitic Cossacks and latter-day Black Hundreds pogromists.

Even more so than in Russia, in the former deformed workers states of East Europe and in the Baltics, the Ukraine and other non-Russian republics of the ex-USSR, reactionary nationalism has been not only a corollary but a *driving force* of capitalist counterrevolution. In the absence of cohered capitalist social formations, this has served as an *ideological* battering ram against the bulwarks of the collectivized economy. From the outset, Polish Solidarność was marked by virulent anti-Soviet, anti-Russian nationalism. The Ukrainian Rukh, the Lithuanian Sajudis and other Baltic nationalist movements, seizing on the call for independence from the USSR as a cover for capitalist restoration, likewise pushed anti-Russian nationalism, embracing

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"Democratic" counterrevolution embraces tsarist reaction: Russian Orthodox priest blesses Yeltsin's barricades in August 1991.

International Publishers

Charles Zunzer



Orthodox priests lead a demonstration of pogromist Black Hundreds, 1907 (left). Jewish children murdered in pogrom in Ekaterinoslav under tsarism.

not only the "traditions" of the fascistic dictatorships of the interwar years (in the Baltics) and World War II pro-Nazi "freedom fighters," but sizeable cores of contemporary fascists as well.

And in Yugoslavia, the deformed workers state was destroyed through all-sided nationalist fratricide involving "Greater Serbia" chauvinists, German-backed Croatian and Slovenian secessionists and fundamentalist-minded Bosnian Muslims. The once-multinational Yugoslav population is today wracked by bloody pogroms perpetrated by those who openly ape the Serbian Chetnik monarchists and Croatian fascist Ustasha swept away by Tito's Communist Partisans.

Today, throughout East Europe and the former Soviet Union, a vile resurgence of fascism and anti-Semitism has followed in the wake of capitalist counterrevolution: murderous firebombings of Turkish families in Germany, anti-Roma (Gypsy) pogroms in Poland and Romania, desecrations of Jewish cemeteries everywhere. This is not an accidental phenomenon. The eruption of national chauvinism is a necessary by-product of the drive to capitalist restoration, because, as Marx noted, the bourgeois *nation-state* is based on the dominant position of one nation and the subjugation and oppression of all other nationalities within its borders. And particularly in East Europe and Russia, national chauvinism has always meant anti-Semitism. Once again today, the "Jews"—even where there are no Jews—are being used as scapegoats to divert anger over the ravages of *capitalism*.

Zionists and other Western apologists for "democratic" counterrevolution whitewash these chauvinist outrages by arguing that life for the Jews was just as bad, if not worse, under Stalinism. But as historian Moshe Lewin emphasized in an interview in the *Nation* (30 September 1991) shortly after Yeltsin's August 1991 coup, there is a big difference between the bureaucratic arbitrariness of Stalinism and *genocide*. Lewin is the author of *Lenin's Last Struggle*, which details the Bolshevik leader's 1922-23 fight in alliance with Trotsky against Stalin and the ascending Great Russian chauvinist bureaucracy. Lewin was a Red Army soldier based in Lithuania after the war. Referring to the nationalist

gangs who held sway in East Europe before the war and under the Nazi occupation, Lewin said:

"Jews like anyone who is not instituting pogroms against them. When the Lithuanians came in there were pogroms. When the Latvians, the Estonians, the Ukrainians, came in there were pogroms. When the Soviets came in there were not pogroms. Under Stalinism the net was cast very widely, and arbitrarily. It didn't involve nationalities as a matter of course. Stalinism was a microbe that killed anything in its path, but here is the difference. If I were a Jew in Lithuania during the war, I would have been killed. If I were a Jew in Germany, I would have been killed. In the Soviet Union, I might have been killed, but I joined the Red Army, I was a citizen, I didn't get caught in the net. In the Soviet Union Jews were citizens; by definition they were not condemned to die."

Stalinism Cannot Fight Yeltsin Counterrevolution

What made the USSR different was its *class* character, based on the *proletarian* property forms established by the Bolshevik Revolution. But the internationalism which animated the revolution was thrust aside by the bureaucracy which usurped political power at the time of Lenin's death. Stalin's suppression of proletarian democracy in the Soviet Union and of proletarian revolutions in the rest of the world paved the way for the counterrevolutionary tide now ravaging the homeland of October. At the same time, the nationalist logic of "socialism in one country" opened the door to a recrudescence of Great Russian chauvinism and attendant anti-Semitism. When Gorbachev began introducing his pro-capitalist "market reforms" in the mid-1980s, the bureaucratic anti-Semitism which had remained modulated and covered by hypocrisy burst to the surface with full fury. While Gorbachev invited notorious anti-Semite Valentin Rasputin into his advisory council, Yeltsin, who was then Moscow Communist Party chief, gave his imprimatur to the emergence of the fascist Pamyat. The startling growth of Pamyat and other anti-Semitic outfits during the period of perestroika contributed to driving more than 200,000 Soviet Jews out of their homeland and into the arms of one of the most racist states in the world, Zionist Israel.

Today, the debris from the collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy is marked by strident appeals to Great Russian chauvinism. Outfits like Viktor Anpilov's Russian Communist Workers Party (RKRP), Nina Andreyeva's All-Union Communist Party (VKPB) and numerous others initially postured as opponents of Yeltsin's drive to capitalist restoration. But they moved ever more openly to embrace Great Russian chauvinism, rapidly coalescing into a "red-brown coalition" with outright monarchist and fascist elements. As we noted in "Soviet Workers Bleed" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 557, 7 August 1992), "The rump Stalinists have increasingly taken on the political coloration of the openly pro-capitalist nationalists they tail," overlapping and interpenetrating with fascists and anti-Semitic nationalists.

The occasional empty references to "socialism" were more and more replaced by appeals to *derzhava*, the tsarist watchword for a Russian strong state resurrected by Stalin during World War II, and rantings against "cosmopolitans" and "Zionists." The Stalinist "patriots" use the language of "anti-Zionism," but what they spew is pure and simple *anti-Semitism*. Their target is not the expansionist Zionist state and they care not one whit about the besieged Palestinian people who are at the receiving end of its genocidal terror. Their talk of "Soviet patriotism" is simply a mask for rank Russian nationalism. Without indicating an iota of political confidence in these groups, class-conscious workers would nevertheless have stood with them against Yeltsin's bloody repression in October 1993, and oppose the bans on these organizations and the arrests of leaders like Anpilov.

Genuine Soviet patriotism can only spring from a thoroughly *internationalist* perspective, because the October Revolution and the multinational workers state which it created could only be built—and can only be refounded—through the revolutionary unity of all the working people of the former Soviet Union and through a program for world socialist revolution. As Trotsky wrote in his scathing 1928 critique of "socialism in one country":

"Whenever the power is in the hands of the workers, patriotism is a revolutionary duty. But this patriotism must be an inseparable part of revolutionary internationalism."

—*Third International After Lenin*

Today it is clearer than ever before that Trotskyism represents the continuity of Lenin's Bolshevism, upholding the banner of authentic communist internationalism. Lenin's party was internationalist to the core. It waged an unceasing struggle against *all* nationalism, first and foremost that of the Great Russian majority, while fighting for the right to self-determination of all the oppressed nations in the tsarist prison house of peoples. Against the Bundists and Zionists who sought to mislead the Jewish workers into the dead end of nationalist isolation, the Bolsheviks fought for the class unity of all workers, insisting that only the socialist revolution could emancipate the Jewish people. This is what the October Revolution did. And from Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army, to the thousands of Jewish communist cadre who fought in the Civil War against the White Guard counterrevolutionaries, to the hundreds of thousands of Jewish fighters against the Nazi invaders in World War II, Soviet Jews played a central role in defense of the revolution.

This history, buried by Stalinists and Zionists alike, remains a blank space for the working people of the ex-USSR. Only internationalists can tell the truth about the heroic role played by Jewish fighters in the struggle for communism and soviet power. It is no accident that the most significant Marxist understanding of the Jewish question this century was expressed by the Trotskyist Abram Leon, a Belgian underground leader captured by the Nazis and murdered in Auschwitz. If the workers are to overturn the counterrevolution which has ravaged their society, it is vital for them to reappropriate the history of the Bolshevik struggle against anti-Semitism, and the honored role of Soviet Jews *as part of the multinational Soviet proletariat* in the struggle to defend and extend the gains of the October Revolution.

We Trotskyists, who consistently defended the Soviet



Der Spiegel photos

Boris Yeltsin, goaded by U.S. president Clinton and IMF paymasters, ordered bloody storming of Russian parliament, October 1993.



degenerated workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution while fighting to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy through proletarian political revolution, today say: opposition to anti-Semitism and national chauvinism must be at the forefront of the struggle to reverse the capitalist counterrevolution. From the moment Yeltsin seized power, the International Communist League (ICL) raised the call: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" We seek to build a Soviet section of a reborn Fourth International to lead the working masses in socialist revolution. In our fight to forge a new Bolshevik Party worthy of the name, in which Jews and all peoples of the former Soviet Union will take their rightful place, the ICL is guided by Lenin's dictum that a revolutionary socialist workers party must be not a "trade-union secretary, but *the tribune of the people.*"

The Bolshevik Struggle Against Anti-Semitism

Despite the fact that there were scarcely more than a handful of Jews in the prerevolutionary industrial proletariat, the fight against anti-Semitism was a key aspect of the Bolshevik struggle to forge a revolutionary workers party. Lenin understood that the transformation of the proletariat into a "class for itself" required it to break from all manner of bourgeois and feudal ideology. And in fighting for the unity of the workers of all nationalities, it was particularly necessary to combat the most blatant form of tsarist oppression. Oppression of Jews in prerevolutionary Russia was so deepgoing and brutal that, until the Nazi Holocaust, tsarist Russia was synonymous with anti-Semitic persecution. Government-instigated pogroms were frequent, widespread and bloody. Virtually all Jews outside Poland and Lithuania were restricted to a small area known as the Pale of Settlement, excluded from a whole range of occupations and subjected to a discriminatory quota, the *numerus clausus*, in education.

Moreover, anti-Semitic agitation was a chief weapon in the tsarist autocracy's repression of the revolutionary movement. Following a series of bloody pogroms, including the notorious Kishinev pogrom of 1903, tsarist minister Plehve told a Jewish delegation: "Compel your men to stop the revolution, and then I shall stop the pogroms" (quoted in Joseph Nedava, *Trotsky and the Jews* [1971]). In order to incite a wave of pogroms aimed at suppressing the 1905 rising, the tsarist secret police, the Okhrana, began propagating that hoary anti-Semitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which has since become the bible of anti-Semites and fascists around the world. Disgustingly, this tsarist tract was regurgitated a couple of years ago even in the newspaper of the supposedly "left wing" Toiling Russia group dominated by Anpilov's RKR, while Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is widely sold at book stalls.

The number of polemics which Lenin devoted to the Bund is in itself a measure of the importance which the Bolsheviks attached to winning over the Jewish proletarians and socialist intelligentsia. The Bund (General Jewish Workers Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia) was formed in 1897, a year before the founding of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP). Initially part of the RSDLP, the Bund rapidly moved in the direction of petty-bourgeois socialism, taking up the call for "cultural/national autonomy" and insisting on the separate



Spartacist

Stalinist false "patriots" fuel vile Russian nationalism: at 17 January 1992 RKR demonstration outside Soviet officers conference in Kremlin, leader Viktor Anpilov (with bullhorn) rubs shoulders with open anti-Semite.

organization of Jewish workers. Though it would later join forces with the Mensheviks against the Bolsheviks, when the Bund split from the RSDLP at its second congress in 1903, its nationalist line was opposed both by the nascent Menshevik faction as well as by Lenin. In May 1905 Lenin wrote an address "To the Jewish Workers" to preface a report in Yiddish on the third congress of the RSDLP. Denouncing the Bund's separatist politics, Lenin declared:

"In Russia the workers of all nationalities, especially those of non-Russian nationality, endure an economic and political oppression such as obtains in no other country. The Jewish workers, as a disenfranchised nationality, not only suffer general economic and political oppression, but they also suffer under the yoke which deprives them of elementary civil rights. The heavier this yoke, the greater the need for the closest possible unity among the proletarians of the different nationalities; for without such unity a victorious struggle against the general oppression is impossible."

These were not empty words. Only a few months later this call was given concrete expression. This was at the height of the 1905 Revolution, as the autocracy threatened to "drown the revolution in Jewish blood." When rumors of a pogrom spread through Petersburg that October, within a matter of hours some 12,000 armed workers had been mobilized by the soviet to repulse the Black Hundreds gangs. In Warsaw as well, as Hersh Mendel recalls in his *Memoirs of a Jewish Revolutionary* (1959), integrated workers defense guards were set up to patrol Jewish areas and ward off pogromists (see *Spartacist* No. 41-42, Winter 1987-88). As the class struggle began to revive in Russia several years later, the tsarist authorities concocted a heinous



YIVO Institute

**Vilnius, 1905:
In demonstration
of proletarian
internationalism,
Polish and
Russian Social
Democrats and
the Jewish Bund
honor victims of
tsarist pogroms.**

anti-Semitic “blood libel” crusade, accusing the Jewish worker Mendel Beilis of “ritual murder” of a Christian youth killed by a criminal gang in Kiev in 1911. Beilis was finally acquitted after two years in prison. Shortly thereafter, the Bolshevik fraction in the tsarist Duma submitted “A Bill for the Abolition of All Disabilities of the Jews and of All Restrictions on the Grounds of Origin or Nationality.” Lenin motivated this measure in the pages of the Bolshevik press:

“The Bill aims at abolishing all national restrictions against all nations: Jews, Poles, and so forth. But it deals in particular detail with the restrictions against the Jews. The reason is obvious: no nationality in Russia is so oppressed and persecuted as the Jewish. Anti-Semitism is striking ever deeper root among the propertied classes. The Jewish workers are suffering under a double yoke, both as workers and as Jews. During the past few years, the persecution of the Jews has assumed incredible dimensions. It is sufficient to recall the anti-Jewish pogroms and the Beilis case.”

—“The National Equality Bill” (March 1914)

The Bolsheviks hammered away at the need to combat anti-Semitism time and again, both before the seizure of power and after. In one of its first decrees a day after the October Revolution, the Congress of Soviets ordered “immediate and most energetic measures for the prevention of counterrevolutionary outbursts, ‘anti-Jewish’ or other pogroms.” In March 1919, in the midst of the Civil War, Lenin devoted one of his few phonographically recorded speeches to a sharp denunciation of anti-Semitism, which was being used by the White Guards in an attempt to mobilize the peasantry against the Soviet power:

“Hatred towards the Jews persists only in those countries where slavery to the landowners and capitalists has created abysmal ignorance among the workers and peasants. Only the most ignorant and downtrodden people can believe the lies and slander that are spread about the Jews....

“Shame on accursed tsarism which tortured and persecuted the Jews. Shame on those who foment hatred towards the Jews, who foment hatred towards other nations.”

In constructing the new proletarian order, the Bolshevik regime set about rooting out entrenched anti-Semitic prejudices among backward layers of the workers and peasants—prejudices that were manipulated by demagogues to channel plebeian hatred for the bourgeoisie and nobility into a racist hatred against prominent or wealthy Jews. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky’s primer *The ABC of Communism* devoted a section to “Antisemitism and the Proletariat,” which denounced anti-Semitism as “one of the forms of resistance to socialism. It is disastrous that any worker or peasant should in this matter allow himself to be led astray by the enemies of his class.” They explained:

“One of the worst forms of national enmity is antisemitism, that is to say, racial hostility towards the Jews, who belong to the Semitic stock (of which the Arabs form another great branch). The tsarist autocracy raised the hunt against the Jews in the hope of averting the workers’ and peasants’ revolution. ‘You are poor because the Jews fleece you,’ said the members of the Black Hundreds; and they endeavored to direct the discontent of the oppressed workers and peasants away from the landlords and the bourgeoisie, and to turn it against the whole Jewish nation. Among the Jews, as among other nationalities, there are different classes. It is only the bourgeois strata of the Jewish race which exploits the people, and these bourgeois strata plunder in common with the capitalists of other nationalities. In the outlying regions of tsarist Russia, where the Jews were allowed to reside, the Jewish workers and artisans lived in terrible poverty and degradation, so that their condition was even worse than that of ordinary workers in other parts of Russia.”

Jewish Revolutionaries and Internationalism

If the October Revolution was a beacon to workers and oppressed the world over, that was particularly the case for the Jewish people. Literally overnight, the Jews of Russia went from being the most persecuted of their people in the world to the most emancipated. In its struggle to defend and consolidate the new proletarian state power against the White counterrevolutionaries, the Red Army necessarily had

to sweep away the pogromist old order. The Jewish working masses responded by throwing themselves wholeheartedly into the struggle to defend and build the proletarian state power. Yet, several years ago, the influential Soviet *Military-Historical Journal* scandalously reprinted a 1910 book in praise of the tsarist army which recommended that Jews not be taken into military service because they were supposedly physically weak and lacking in character!

This is the bigoted legacy of Stalinist nationalism. In seeking to root its nationalist dogma in the history of backward Russia, the Stalinist bureaucracy was compelled to leap *backward* ideologically, glorifying the history of autocratic Russia while claiming the mantle of Marx, Engels and Lenin. This ideological hodgepodge was a reflection of the bureaucracy's contradictory character as a conservative caste parasitically resting atop revolutionary property forms. "All shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy," observed Trotsky in the Transitional Program, "from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko)." Reiss (Poretzky) was a decorated officer of the Fourth Department of GRU army intelligence who came out for Trotskyism in 1937 and was immediately assassinated by Stalin; Fyodor Butenko was a Soviet diplomat who defected to Mussolini's fascism.

In fact, Marxism was a thoroughly *cosmopolitan* movement: "the legitimate successor," as Lenin put it, "to the best that man produced in the nineteenth century, as represented by German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism" ("The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism," March 1913). From Marx and Engels to the Russian revolutionary populist thinkers Herzen and Chernyshevsky, these movements saw themselves as the heirs of the bourgeois Enlightenment and the French Revolution, unhesitating in their condemnation of anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry. It was precisely because of the universalist appeal of the revolutionary movement, both socialist and pre-socialist, that assimilated "stateless" Jewish intellectuals were drawn into it in such large numbers. One was Paul Axelrod, the Menshevik leader who had been a formative figure in Russian Marxism. Another was Mark Natanson, a leading organizer of the "To the People" movement in the 1870s, who ended up in the extreme left wing of the Socialist Revolutionary party and a supporter of the Bolshevik side in the Civil War.

Substantial numbers of Jews participated in all the early revolutionary movements against tsarism, from the Polish insurrection led by Tadeusz Kosciuszko in the 1790s, to the populist Land and Freedom and People's Will of the 1870s and the Polish party Proletariat of Ludwik Waryński of the 1880s, the first workers party in the tsarist empire. Notably, a significant number of young Jewish women—including Gesya Gelfman, one of the conspirators in the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II—were to be found in the early populist movements, reacting to their oppression not only as Jews but as women, confined by religious obscurantism and the stultifying despotism of the traditional Jewish family. Isaac Deutscher, the Polish Marxist historian and biographer of Trotsky, explained this phenomenon of disproportionate Jewish participation in the revolutionary movement in his essay "The Non-Jewish Jew":

"They were *a priori* exceptional in that as Jews they dwelt on the borderlines of various civilizations, religions, and national cultures. They were born and brought up on the



M. S. Nappelbaum

In 1914 Lenin authored bill against anti-Semitic and national discrimination that was introduced by the Bolshevik deputies to the Duma.

A BILL FOR THE ABOLITION
OF ALL DISABILITIES OF THE JEWS
AND OF ALL RESTRICTIONS
ON THE GROUNDS OF ORIGIN OR NATIONALITY

1. Citizens of all nationalities inhabiting Russia are equal before the law.
2. No citizen of Russia, regardless of sex and religion, may be restricted in political or in any other rights on the grounds of origin or nationality.
3. All and any laws, provisional regulations, riders to laws, and so forth, which impose restrictions upon Jews in any sphere of social and political life, are herewith abolished. Article 767, Vol. IX, which states that "Jews are subject to the general laws in all cases *where no special regulations affecting them have been issued*" is herewith repealed. All

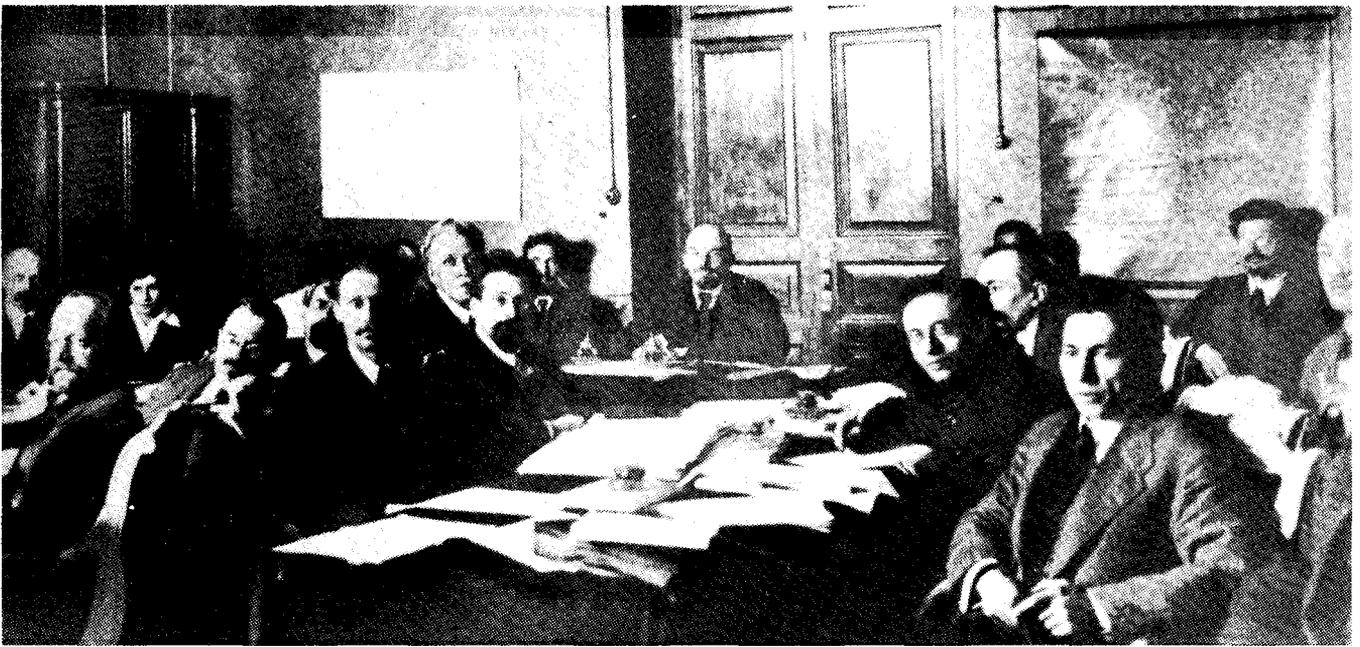
borderlines of various epochs. Their mind matured where the most diverse cultural influences crossed and fertilized each other. They lived on the margins or in the nooks and crannies of their respective nations. Each of them was in society and yet not in it, of it and yet not of it. It was this that enabled them to rise in thought above their societies, above their nations, above their times and generations, and to strike out mentally into wide new horizons and far into the future....

"Like Marx, Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky strove, together with their non-Jewish comrades, for the universal, as against the particularist, and for the internationalist, as against the nationalist, solutions to the problems of their time."

Speaking of the role of Jews as "leaders of the revolutionary movement" in a lecture on the 1905 Revolution, Lenin remarked: "It should be said to their credit that today Jews provide a relatively high percentage of representatives of internationalism compared with other nations."

Soviet Jews: Fighters for the Revolution

Indeed, Jewish participation in the October Revolution was so prominent that, from the White Guards to Hitler, wiping out "Jew-Bolshevism" has been a consistent rallying cry of anti-Communist reaction. Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the October Revolution, organizer of the Petrograd insurrection and founder of the Red Army, was of Jewish origin—as were six other members of the Bolshevik Central Committee at the time of the revolution—Zinoviev, Kamenev, Joffe, Sverdlov, Uritsky, Sokolnikov. They were, as were Lenin and many of the other Bolshevik leaders, drawn from the intelligentsia—assimilated, with little connection to the Jewish ghettos. At the base, however, there were few Jewish workers to be found among the Bolsheviks. While the Bolsheviks based themselves on a majority of the proletariat in the large industrial enterprises of the cities, the Jewish proletariat was overwhelmingly confined to the petty artisanry and small workshops. Despite



P.A. Otsup

Council of People's Commissars, 1918, reflected multinational leadership of early Bolshevik government. Among those seated with Lenin and Trotsky are the Ukrainians N.N. Krestinsky and D.I. Kursky, the Latvian P.I. Stuchka, the Jews K.B. Radek and S.M. Dimanshtein, the Russians A.I. Rykov and G.V. Chicherin.

their efforts, the Bolsheviks were unable to win over more than a relative handful of Jewish workers before the revolution, and could not produce any significant amount of propaganda in Yiddish.

What galvanized the Jewish masses behind the banner of October was the outbreak of the Civil War. Wherever the tsarist White Guards or Petlyura's Ukrainian nationalists or Makhno's peasant "anarchists" were to be found, anti-Jewish pogroms were rampant. It rapidly became clear that the fate of the Jews rested in a Bolshevik victory. As one Ukrainian Bundist put it: "The armed carriers of socialism, the Bolsheviks, are the only force which can oppose the pogroms.... For us there is no other way." In August 1919, a majority of the Ukrainian Bund led by Moshe Rafes and Aleksandr Chemereskii joined with a majority of the Zionist-oriented United Jewish Socialist Party in dissolving into the Communist Party. Within two years, there was nothing left of the Bund in the Ukraine. By 1927, Jews constituted more than 12 percent of the Communist Party in the Ukraine, 23 percent in Byelorussia and more than 4 percent in Russia (more than 5 percent at the end of the Civil War in 1922).

Won to communism, Jewish fighters distinguished themselves in the Civil War to defend the young Soviet republic against the White counterrevolutionaries. Many went on to take leading roles in the Bolshevik government. Before the revolution, the word Cossack had been synonymous with pogromist. But with the rallying cry "Proletarians, To Horse!" Trotsky created units of Red Cossacks, and Jewish youth flocked into these as into other units of the Red Army. One of the commissars of the Red Cossacks was a young woman named Raisa Moiseyevna Azarkh, who was awarded the Order of the Red Banner for her exemplary military record. The famed Jewish writer Isaac Babel celebrated this phenomenon of Jewish Cossacks in his book *Red Cavalry*. The Jewish Communist V.M. Primakov

became the commander of the Red Cossacks. Other Jewish field commanders in the Civil War included B.M. Feldman, Y.B. Gamarnik, G.M. Shtern, Jacob Smushkevich and Yona Yakir. By 1929, Jews constituted over 4 percent of the command structure of the Red Army—more than double their overall proportion of the population—and almost 9 percent of the political commissars.

On all fronts, the young Soviet state moved to transform the previously hideous existence of the Jewish people. Immediately after the seizure of power, the Bolsheviks began setting up special commissions for work and propaganda among the Jewish masses. In early 1918 a Commission for Jewish National Affairs headed by Semyon Dimanshtein, which coordinated the work of the various Jewish sections (Yevseksia), began publishing a Yiddish-language newspaper, which was regularized in August 1918 under the title *Der Emes* (The Truth). The Yevseksia had the task of educating and integrating the Jewish proletarians. Greetings from the Third All-Russia Conference of the Jewish Communist Sections to the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920 appealed to the Jewish workers of Poland and the Baltics to rally behind the Bolshevik cause, declaring:

"The Jewish workers, who have behind them a years-long history of heroic revolutionary struggle, have finally broken from their opportunist parties and have enlisted in the communist movement....

"The Jewish workers and the poorest of the Jewish people understand quite well that only the communist order will put an end to all pogroms, will root out all nationalist prejudices, will erase all national restrictions and install over the whole face of the earth a genuine brotherhood of peoples."

—*News of Central Bureau of the Jewish Sections*
(October 1920)

In the early years of Bolshevik rule, the emancipation of the Jewish people led to a flowering of culture. Several



Mikhail Shmigeisky

Red Cossacks in battle.

population. Partly because they were largely urbanized and better educated than the population as a whole, wrote Trotsky:

“Naturally the Jews occupied a disproportionately large place among the bureaucracy and particularly so in its lower and middle levels.... *The hatred of the peasants and workers for the bureaucracy is a fundamental fact in Soviet life....* Even by *a priori* reasoning it is impossible not to conclude that the hatred for the bureaucracy would assume an anti-Semitic color.”

These reactionary currents were actively fueled by the bureaucracy. Trotsky noted that “the leading cadre of the bureaucracy at the center and in the provinces strives to divert the indignation of the working masses from itself to the Jews.”

In the political counterrevolution which destroyed the Bolshevik Party as a revolutionary vanguard, the Stalinist bureaucracy brought back “all the old crap” of Great Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitism from the days of tsarism. Stalin pandered to anti-Semitic backwardness in his drive to defeat and eventually destroy the Left Opposition of Leon Trotsky. This, of course, further encouraged popular anti-Semitism. But even then, with the revolution still fresh in the memory of the masses, overt anti-Semitism was not tolerated: by law, conductors were ordered to stop trolley cars and have militiamen (police) arrest passengers who voiced anti-Semitic invectives.

The blood purges of the late '30s, though far from singling out Jews, nonetheless caught large numbers in its net, including the entire leadership of Birobidjan, headed by Professor J. Liberberg, and all the cadre who had staffed the by then defunct *Yevsektzia*. Five of the first nine victims of the 1937 Red Army purge, which beheaded the Soviet military on the eve of Hitler's invasion, were Jews, among them Army Commissar Gamarnik, Corps Commander Feldman and Army Commander Yakir—respectively, the heads of the Red Army Political Directorate and General Directorate and the commander of the Leningrad Military Region. Stalin did retain some Jews in his inner circle, including the despicable and despised Lazar Kaganovich, whom

latter-day anti-Semitic apologists for Stalin ludicrously portray as the éminence grise responsible for all of Stalin's crimes.

By all accounts, the ever crude and provincial Stalin grew increasingly hostile to Jews following his struggle against Trotsky. But it is not a question simply of Stalin's personal prejudices. Just as he pushed Russian nationalism, Stalin was ever willing to use anti-Semitism to further his aims. To prepare the way for his 1939 pact with Hitler, Stalin sacked his Jewish foreign minister Litvinov and replaced him with the Russian Molotov. To play up to his Nazi allies during the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact, recalls Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich in his autobiographical *Testimony* (1979), Stalin ordered the production of Wagnerian operas in Moscow, in which Jewish artists were not to be involved. For two years, the Soviet press made no mention of Hitler's persecution and murder of the Jews, nor even of the word fascism.

Even following the German invasion of June 1941, the Stalin regime played down the specifically anti-Jewish character of the Nazi Holocaust and the role of Soviet Jews in fighting the Hitlerite invaders. All Soviet nationalities suffered horribly at the hands of the Nazi beasts. Well over 20 million Soviet citizens died in the struggle to crush the Hitlerite scourge. But what Stalin (and his successors) sought to cover up was the fact that in the case of the Jews the Nazis sought to liquidate an entire people. Having sabotaged the defense of the Soviet Union through his purge of the Red Army and his blind reliance on Hitler's “peaceful” assurances, when Hitler attacked, a panicked Stalin sought to appeal to Great Russian nationalism to rally the population behind the war. Nor did Stalin stop murdering those he perceived as opponents. After inviting Polish Bund leaders Henryk Erlich and Wiktor Alter, who had fled the Nazi occupation of their country, to head up a committee to seek international Jewish support for the Soviet war effort, Stalin had them shot in December 1941.

In *Between Two Worlds* (1983), K.S. Karol describes how as a young Polish Jew, he also fled Nazi-occupied Lodz in

late 1939 to seek refuge in the Soviet Union. While serving in the Red Army, he learned that Stalin had disbanded the Communist International and replaced the *Internationale* with a new national anthem “vaunting the merits of ‘Greater Russia.’” “The Pan-Russian propaganda,” recalled Karol, “was responsible for an eruption of the most retrograde prejudices, including anti-Semitism, which found open, public expression and met with the indifference of the authorities.”

In fact, extreme Russian nationalists, like the notorious turncoat Vlasov, went over to the side of the Nazis and were responsible for hunting down Red partisans and carrying out mass terror against the Byelorussian and Ukrainian population. The Nazis also enlisted non-Russian nationalists in the Baltics and the formerly Polish area of western Ukraine. But among the indigenous Soviet population, there was relatively little collaboration with the German invaders and many courageously defended endangered Jewish communities. Even in the Ukraine, notorious for Nazi collaboration, there was a marked difference between the Soviet area and the previously Polish western Ukraine. In his comprehensive account of *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe* (1974), historian Reuben Ainsztein notes:

“The basic difference between the Ukrainians east of the 1939 border between Poland and the Soviet Union and those west of it can be gauged from the fact that when the Ukrainian nationalists began to massacre Poles in Volyn in 1943, many fled into the Zhitomir Region which lies east of the pre-1939 Polish-Soviet border. There they were safe among the Soviet Ukrainians.”

This was even more true for Jews in the Soviet Ukraine and Byelorussia, not least because of the high rate of intermarriage which followed the revolution.

Jewish Generals and Partisans in World War II

While the Stalinists suppressed the history of Jewish fighters in the Red Army, the Zionists have actively propagated the lie that the Jews of East Europe and the Soviet Union went “like sheep to the slaughter” in the Nazi Holo-

caust. The aim of this myth is simple: to assert that only in the Zionist state can Jews break from their “cowardly” and “servile” diaspora existence and become fighters. It was to expose this Zionist lie that Ainsztein wrote his account of Jewish anti-Nazi resistance, which was so extensive that even his volume of close to a thousand pages could claim to be neither exhaustive nor definitive.

Despite Stalin’s nationalist propaganda, it was genuine Soviet patriotism, not Russian nationalism, which impelled the overwhelming mass of the Soviet working people—across the entire spectrum of nationalities—to rally to the defense of the gains of the October Revolution. This was captured in the words of a Jewish partisan anthem in Lithuania: “Even today the partisans go forward to defeat the enemy in the struggle for the workers’ power.” The workers of Leningrad organized the heroic 900-day defense of their besieged city *despite* Stalin’s early designs to surrender it to the Nazis. And, as Ainsztein’s book documents, Soviet Jews played a valiant and disproportionately large role in defending their homeland.

Some half million Jews served in the Red Army during World War II (excluding partisan units)—including more than 200 Jewish generals! When the Red Army regained Stalingrad from the Nazis, it was to Jewish officer Leonid Vinokur that German general von Paulus surrendered his pistol. Some 200,000 Soviet Jews died in combat, 146 received the highest military honor of “Hero of the Soviet Union,” and Jewish soldiers overall ranked fourth among all Soviet nationalities in the number of decorations won for heroism. Among them was Lily Litvak, who became famous as the “White Rose of Stalingrad” as part of the first women’s air combat unit in history; Polina Gelman, another of the women pilots; submarine commander Israel Fissanovich; and Boris Lunz, who risked his life flying supplies to partisan units behind the lines.

Even more so than their comrades, what drove Jewish Red Army men and women to acts of unparalleled heroism was their hunger for revenge against the Nazi beasts. These Red Army soldiers and partisan fighters swore the oath:



“Red Banner of Labor” medal, Byelorussia 1920, inscribed in Byelorussian, Yiddish, Polish.



YIVO Institute

Early Soviet republic was founded on internationalism: Trotsky (seated center) with young Red Army men and women, 1924. Significant number of early military cadre were Jewish.



New York Public Library

Izogiz

Civil War heroes Yan Gamarnik, Yona Yakir, murdered by Stalin in the 1937 military purge which beheaded the Red Army.

“As son or daughter of the Jewish people, I take the sacred vow, not to rest until the murderers of my people have disappeared from the face of the earth.” In many cases, Jewish soldiers returned to their homes to find that not a single member of their family had survived.

Tank commander David Dragunsky, twice decorated “Hero of the Soviet Union,” related in his autobiography *A Soldier's Memoirs* (1983) how a school friend found him in a hospital where he was recovering from a combat wound and told him he “no longer had a family.” Dragunsky's mother, who had been hidden by non-Jewish neighbors until discovered, defied her Nazi captors with her last breath. When an SS man demanded “Where are your sons?” she replied: “They're fighting—fighting against you nazi scum.” Dragunsky relates:

“On 25 January 1942, the nazis lined up and shot all members of the Communist Party in Sviatsk. They also exterminated old men, women, and children without pity. Among their victims seventy-four bore the name of Dragunsky, including my parents, sisters, nephews and uncles, and the rest of my family.”

Enraged by this news, Dragunsky left the hospital before his wound had healed to return to the front. After the war, this Jewish general was twice denied a visa to visit the U.S., even as the imperialist Cold Warriors ranted about “Soviet anti-Semitism”!

Five million Soviet POWs died after being captured by the Germans—murdered, tortured or deliberately starved to death. In a 1976 article in the London *Jewish Quarterly*, Ainsztein wrote:

“Having read many accounts of how the millions of Red Army men were exterminated, I have come to the conclusion that in some ways their martyrdom and death were even more cruel than that of the Jews. As for the fate of the Jewish soldiers who fell into the hands of the Germans, most were shot when captured or as soon as possible, but thousands underwent the most diabolical tortures and torments before dying.”

Yet even in captivity many Red Army soldiers kept fighting against all odds. Soviet POWs in camps in Germany and Austria set up a far-flung underground network called the Bratskoye Sotrudnichestvo Voyennoplennnykh (Brotherhood of Prisoners of War), organized by a captured battalion

commissar named Yosif Feldman, whose aim was to assist the German working masses in staging urban risings as the Red Army approached. The Gestapo uncovered the plan and shipped nearly 400 key figures off to various concentration camps to be murdered.

Other camp rebellions did succeed, the most dramatic of them being the Sobibor death camp revolt led by Jewish Red Army officer Aleksandr Aronovich Pechersky. Captured by the Germans, Pechersky ended up in Sobibor in late 1943. He was immediately sought out by an underground resistance committee led by the Polish Jew Leon Felhendler, who implored the Red Army officer to organize and lead a planned escape attempt. Three weeks later Pechersky led the most successful organized rebellion and mass escape to take place in any Nazi camp, as 600 inmates broke through the barbed wire, killing many of the camp guards and forcing the Nazis to close it down.

In the Soviet and Soviet-allied partisan detachments fighting behind German lines, which succeeded in pinning down 10 percent of all Wehrmacht forces on the Russian Front and seriously disrupting German logistics and transport, the role of Jewish fighters was even more pronounced. As early as July 1941 the CPSU Central Committee called for the “Organisation of the Struggle in the Rear of the German Forces.” But it was not until a year later that an effective partisan structure had been set up. In many areas during that intervening period, Polish and Soviet Jews flee-



Joseph Rosen

Jewish “shock worker” students in Kiev trade school. Yiddish banner under Lenin portrait hails Komsomol as “the powerful reserve and reliable helper of the Communist Party.”

Yad Vashem



YIVO Institute



Crown



World War II heroes:
submarine commander
Israel Fissanovich,
tank commander
David Dragunsky,
Sobibor death camp
revolt leader Aleksandr
Pechersky.

ing from the Nazi slaughter into the forests were instrumental in setting up the first partisan units. One of the first was the Bolshevik Detachment established near Gomel in Byelorussia shortly after the Nazis occupied the city in August 1941.

In addition to partisan units in the forests, virtually every ghetto set up by the Nazis in Soviet cities and towns also had underground resistance committees. One of the most successful of these was the resistance organization in Minsk, which managed to spirit some 10,000 Jews out of the ghetto into the surrounding woods. Unlike Polish Jews, even in the heroic 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—whose only external support came from the very weak Communist People's Guard and a handful of liberals—"the Jews of Minsk," Ainsztein notes, "did not feel abandoned by their own country, but right from the beginning were called upon to take an active part in the struggle against the invaders."

On the other hand, "years of Stalinist bureaucracy and terror" acted to paralyze the initiative of partisan fighters and undermine the organization of anti-Nazi resistance behind the lines. While the bureaucrats responsible for implementing resistance plans fled, four different committees in Minsk in addition to the one in the Jewish ghetto sprang up independently, all initially awaiting orders from the center that never came. Indeed, in many areas communication with Moscow was feasible only because some courageous individuals had defied Stalin's orders to hand in their shortwave radios.

Though nine out of ten Jews who fell into German hands were dead by the end of the winter of 1941-42, more than 20,000 of those who survived are estimated to have enlisted in partisan brigades like the celebrated Kovpak's Partisan Division in the Ukraine. The Jew Alexander Skotnicki was the commander of the first Polish national partisan unit on Soviet territory, the Kosciuszko detachment in the Ukraine. The Red partisans in the Ukraine not only fought against the Germans, but were simultaneously engaged in a *civil war* against fascist Ukrainian nationalists like Stepan Bander's Union of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) who slaughtered Jews and Poles alike indiscriminately. While thousands of Ukrainians enlisted in Red partisan units, many of the nationalists joined Nazi SS and *Schutzpolizei* (police), responsible for imposing the "New Order" in Ukrainian villages and for rounding up and slaughtering Jews.

As soon as the Germans moved into western Ukraine, local nationalists immediately began the mass murder of Jews and the assassination of those Ukrainian peasants who

were Communists or had worked with the Soviet authorities. They then went on to form the Ukrainian Partisan Army and other armed nationalist gangs who, though nominally "independent" from the German forces, were supplied by them and waged war against anti-Nazi partisan forces as well as carrying out wholesale massacres of Polish villages. Red partisan units, including the predominantly Jewish Voroshilov and Kruk's Detachments, had to devote a considerable part of their efforts simply to protecting and rescuing Polish peasants from the nationalist cutthroats. Yet today the *Banderovtsy* are allowed to march in full uniform through the streets of Lvov, where they welcomed the Nazi invaders in 1941 and carried out a massacre of 7,000 Jews on the *first day* of the German occupation.

If the Bolshevik Revolution rescued the Jews of Russia from the tsar's knout and the Black Hundreds' pogroms, the Soviet Union's successful struggle against Nazi Germany was responsible for the survival of what Jews are now left in all of Europe. While the U.S. turned back boatloads of Jews fleeing Hitler, and Britain shipped out Jewish refugees to a concentration camp in Australia during the war, *the Soviet Union was the only country which opened its doors in any serious way to refugees from Nazi terror.* Following the German occupation of western Poland, some



Fighter ace Lily Litvak (left), with comrades.

VAAP



Jewish partisan unit in Vilnius, following Red Army liberation from Nazi rule.

500,000 Jews escaped over the Soviet border. Over two million Jews were transported from the Soviet Union's western borderlands to Central Asia to keep them from falling into the hands of the Nazi invaders. Soviet writers Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman compiled *The Black Book* at the end of the war, documenting both the scale of the Nazi atrocities against the Jews of the USSR and Poland, and the anti-Nazi resistance by Jews and all Soviet peoples.

No less a right-wing Zionist than former Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin admitted: "I cannot forget, and no Jew should forget that...thanks to the Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of Jews were saved from Nazi hands." In fact, the number of Soviet and East European Jews who survived the Holocaust because of the Soviet Union was far higher, perhaps three million. That several hundred thousand East European Jews then chose to emigrate to the Palestinian desert after the war and provide the Zionists with their first mass population base is in itself an indictment of the Stalinist regime, which could likely have prevented the emergence of Zionist Israel by appealing to these Holocaust survivors to remain and making a clear statement that they had a welcome place in the Soviet order.

Postwar Anti-Semitic Purges

Instead, the Stalinists not only hid the heroic role played by Soviet Jews in defending the homeland of October, but tolerated and promoted a recrudescence of anti-Semitism. When the likes of Pamyat rant against "cosmopolitans" today, it is a not-so-veiled call for a revival of the anti-Jewish witchhunt carried out by Stalin in the years before his death. At the same time it was Stalin who, in league with the U.S., was the chief international promoter of the creation of a Zionist state in Palestine. Frustrated by the imperialist Cold War offensive in his hopes of maintaining

the wartime coalition with the West, Stalin flailed out at "alien" and "cosmopolitan" elements within the Soviet Union—the Jews. His daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, writes in her autobiographical *Only One Year* (1969):

"In the years after the war anti-Semitism became the militant official ideology, although this was concealed in every way possible. But it was known everywhere that in the enrollment at the university and in all types of employment preference was given to Russians. For the Jews a percentage quota was, in essence, reinstated. It was the resuscitation of the State chauvinism of czarist Russia, in which one's attitude toward Jews had always been the great divide between the liberal intelligentsia and the reactionary bureaucracy. In the Soviet Union only during the first decade after the Revolution was anti-Semitism dormant. But with the expulsion of Trotsky and the extermination during the years of 'purges' of old Party members, many of whom were Jews, anti-Semitism was reborn on new grounds and first of all in the Party itself. To this my father not only gave his support; he even propagated a good deal of it himself."

Ehrenburg and Grossman's *Black Book* was suppressed before it was ever printed in the Soviet Union. The first three partisans publicly executed by the Nazis on Soviet territory included 17-year-old Jewish Komsomol member Maria Bruskina. But while her two comrades, with clearly Slavic names, were identified and rightly revered as heroes, Bruskina was presented only as "the unknown partisan." Her Jewish identity became known only as a result of a years-long campaign by some Soviet journalists and the Yiddish journal *Sovietish Heimland*. Likewise the notorious Nazi massacre at Babi Yar in the Ukraine was presented by the bureaucracy as an indiscriminate slaughter of Soviet citizens, with no mention that most of the victims were Jews, until Yevtushenko's 1961 poem.

Given that the Stalinist bureaucracy covered up the extent of Nazi crimes against the Jewish people per se and likewise the significant contribution by Soviet Jews to the war effort, it is not surprising that existing anti-Semitic sentiment was fanned by the sense that the Jews had been coddled and lived out the war safely in Central Asia. Shostakovich recalls hearing comments that "The kikes went to Tashkent to fight" and seeing Jewish soldiers accosted with taunts of "Kike, where did you buy the medals?" And with the end of the war, the Stalinist regime itself launched a concerted anti-Jewish campaign.

Even as he promoted the creation of the Zionist state of Israel after World War II, Stalin began a series of purges directed against prominent Jews. In early 1948, the famous actor and director S.M. Mikhoels, who had been head of the wartime Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, was mysteriously murdered. A year later, *Pravda* publicly kicked off the notorious "anti-cosmopolitan" campaign. *Einikeyt*, the successor to the Yiddish-language *Der Emes*, which had temporarily ceased publication during the war, was closed down permanently, as was the *Der Emes* publishing house which produced all Yiddish-language literature. Hundreds of prominent Jewish Communists were arrested, including Molotov's wife. A number of Jews were executed as a result of the Crimea Affair, charged with a plot to rip the Crimea away and turn it into a Zionist state. Several years later came the infamous "Doctors' Plot," in which high-ranking, primarily Jewish doctors were accused of seeking to murder top government officials. (This was brought to a halt only by the tyrant's death in 1953.)

At the same time Stalin set about purging high-ranking

Jewish officials, particularly from the military. According to Nora Levin's *The Jews in the Soviet Union Since 1917* (1988), some 200 senior Jewish Red Army officers, including 63 generals, were cashiered in the period from 1948 to 1953, known as the "black years" among Soviet Jews. Some got caught in the net not particularly because they were Jewish but because the paranoid Stalin arrested virtually everybody who had served or been imprisoned behind enemy lines. Leopold Trepper, the Polish Jewish Communist and GRU (Soviet military intelligence) officer who led the famous Red Orchestra espionage network in the heart of Nazi-occupied West Europe, returned to Moscow after being liberated from a Nazi concentration camp only to be thrown into the Lubyanka. Finally released after Stalin's death, this heroic Soviet spy returned to Poland, from which he was then driven out along with thousands of other Jews following the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign orchestrated by Stalinist "hardliner" Mieczyslaw Moczar.

Zionists Spearhead Anti-Soviet Crusade

The 1967 Arab-Israeli war inspired a wave of pro-Zionist sentiment among Soviet Jewish intellectuals, and the handful of tiny Zionist circles which had appeared in previous years grew significantly. At the same time, the Israeli rulers and Zionist organizations internationally, including terrorists like Meir Kahane's Jewish Defense League, kicked off a noisy anti-Soviet crusade to "Free Soviet Jewry!" For many years, this was a most potent weapon in the imperialist Cold Warriors' ideological arsenal. In 1971, Democrat Henry Jackson—the "Senator from Boeing"—pushed through punitive U.S. economic measures against the USSR aimed at blackmailing it into "releasing" all Soviet Jews. Meanwhile the JDL was carrying out bombing attacks on Soviet offices in the U.S., while Zionist fanatics in the Soviet Union hijacked a passenger plane demanding that they be taken to Israel.

With a significant section of the Jewish intelligentsia employed at middle levels of the Soviet scientific research

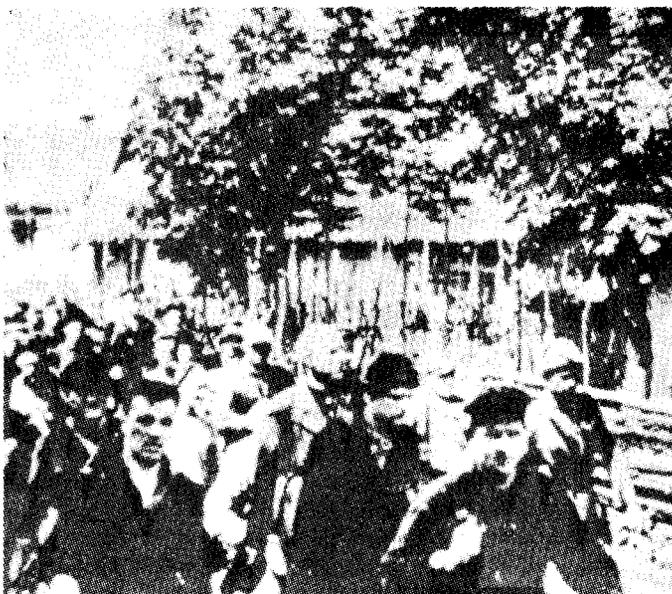


Solomon Volkov

Prominent black singer and American Communist Party member Paul Robeson with Soviet Jewish actor Solomon Mikhoels, who, in 1948, was an early victim of Stalin's "anti-cosmopolitan" purge.

and military-industrial establishments, the growth of these pro-Western Zionist "dissidents" did pose a threat to the security of the Soviet state. This came out most clearly in the case of "refusenik" Anatoly Shcharansky, who was tried and convicted of espionage in 1977 for handing over lists of secret Soviet defense establishments to an American reporter linked to the CIA. While the West European Communist parties lined up behind the imperialists, we wrote in an article headlined "Shcharansky Is Guilty as Hell!" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 212, 28 July 1978):

"Anatoly Shcharansky is *guilty* of a crime against the world proletariat—transmitting military secrets of the USSR, a degenerated workers state, to the imperialists.... Since this



Jack Nusan Porter



Enzo Nizza

Anti-fascist partisans march through a village in Volynia in the Ukraine. Ukrainian nationalists show their support for German occupation army officer in World War II.

Zionist friend of the CIA is so eager to spend 'next year in Jerusalem,' have him sign a statement to serve his sentence in Israel, preferably in some border area kibbutz!"

The Kremlin sought to conciliate the American Cold Warriors by easing up on emigration restrictions, while correctly insisting that people who had knowledge of military secrets could not leave, and that trained engineers and scientists should first pay off their debt to Soviet society for the education it had freely provided them. But instead of seeking to isolate the Zionist "dissidents," who were a tiny proportion of Soviet Jews, the Stalinist bureaucracy responded by launching a broad-gauged "anti-Zionist" campaign which in practice painted all Jews as enemies of the Soviet Union.

The new *numerus clausus* in higher education was publicly admitted and justified as an "equivalence balance" aimed at providing equal representation to all nationalities, but it effectively targeted the disproportionately large number of Jews in the universities. The proportion of Jews in institutes of higher education in Moscow reportedly fell to just over 3 percent in 1970, and half that a decade later. According to Roy Medvedev and others, there was even discussion in the Kremlin of purging from all prominent positions "persons belonging to a nationality the state organization of which pursues an unfriendly policy in relation to the U.S.S.R." (quoted in Thomas Sawyer, *The Jewish Minority in the Soviet Union* [1979]). This racist formula is the mirror image of what the Zionists themselves claim: that every "real" Jew is a Zionist and Israel is the national state of the Jewish people everywhere.

Zionism: Enemy of October, Deathtrap for Jews

The Zionists' shrill campaign to demand the "ingathering" of all Soviet Jews capped their decades of hatred for the Russian Revolution and communism. Dedicated to the creation of their own bourgeois state, the Zionists were, since the beginning of the 20th century, necessarily

in competition with Communism, which promised a full and equal place for the Jewish people in a secular, socialist and internationalist society. Moreover, because of its importance and its lack of a significant following among the pro-socialist Jewish masses of East Europe, the Zionist movement was in need of imperialist patronage to further its aims, and sold its services as an instrument in the imperialist campaign against Soviet Russia and the Communist movement.

Zionist founder Theodore Herzl appealed for support to one imperialist power after another, even tsarist Russia, offering to take "the Jews away from the revolutionary parties" (quoted in Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* [1983]). The Zionists finally got British imperialism to agree to the Balfour Declaration and its vague promise of a "Jewish homeland" in Palestine, on the basis, as Churchill put it, that this would aid in the Zionist struggle against the "Bolshevik Jews." Zionist writer A. Ahimeir ranted against Jewish participation in the October Revolution like the worst tsarist anti-Semite:

"More than Denikin and Petliura, the Communists of Jewish origin should be held responsible for the pogroms. Trotsky is more to blame than a thousand Denikins and Petliuras. Even before 1917, some of the Zionist leaders warned the Jews against sticking their noses into the Russian Revolution."

Today the Israeli bourgeoisie would *prefer* to see persecution of Jews rage throughout the world in order to bolster their lie that only through a "Jewish state" can this people find salvation. To this end, despite all their claims to be the sole defenders of the Jewish people around the world, Zionists have worked hand in glove with nativist anti-Semitism in their drive to secure a "Greater Israel." Not only did the Revisionist wing of Zionism idolize the fascist Mussolini, but a future head of the Zionist state even tried to be a front man for the Nazi Third Reich. While former Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir was one of its central leaders, the fascist-terrorist Lehi (the "Stern Gang") sought to cut a deal with Hitler's "New Order" on the basis of

Herman Axelbank



Victims of Nazi mass murder at Babi Yar in 1941. Stalinist bureaucracy covered up specifically anti-Jewish character of Nazi genocide.



Avkian/Woodfin Camp



Workers Vanguard

Israeli troops rampage against West Bank Palestinians (left). Spartacists call for defense of Palestinians against Zionist terror at 1982 demonstration against Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

agreement that the Jews had no place in Germany, pleading that: "A commonality of interests is possible between the aims of the New Order in Europe according to the German approach and the true national aspirations of the Jewish people" (*Jerusalem Post*, 1 July 1989).

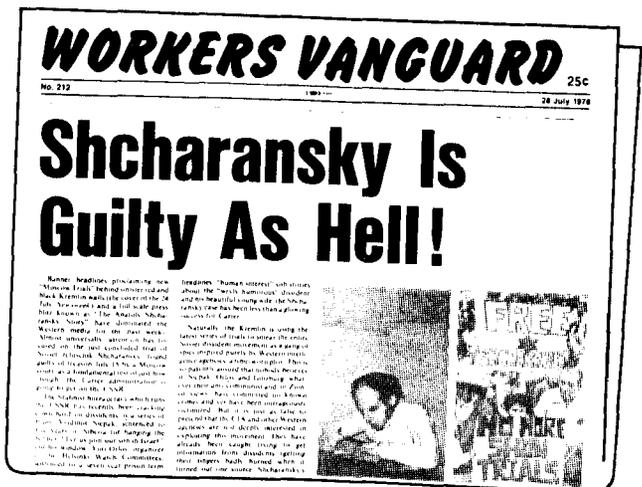
Once again today, the Zionists espouse a similar "commonality of interests" with the likes of Pamyat, as the American United Jewish Appeal made clear in a 1990 statement: "Right now neo-fascist organizations like Pamyat are threatening to carry out pogroms unless the Jews get out of the Soviet Union. BUT EMIGRATION IS EXACTLY WHAT SOVIET JEWS WANT."

The level of hysteria and fear which drove hundreds of thousands of Jews, who had until recently seen themselves as loyal and patriotic members of Soviet society, to leave their homeland appears to be at least in part manufactured. Widespread rumors of imminent pogroms in early 1989 were a key impetus fueling the large-scale emigration, but in the upshot nothing transpired. It would certainly not be out of character for the Zionists to fuel such rumors, and even engage in anti-Semitic provocations, with the aim of driving Jews to emigrate to Israel. One need only recall that the Mossad was instrumental in fueling the last major *aliya* to Israel, by the Sephardic Jews of the Near East in the 1950s, by, among other crimes, bombing a synagogue in Baghdad filled with worshippers.

Whatever illusions Soviet Jews might have as they board their El Al jetliner in Moscow, they rapidly learn that they have not come to the land of milk and honey. The narrowly based Israeli economy is simply incapable of smoothly absorbing hundreds of thousands of new immigrants. Israel is an economic basket case, with unemployment running at 10 percent even before the flood of Soviet immigrants began escalating. Three out of four Soviet immigrants have not been able to find work, while hundreds of women have been forced to turn to selling their bodies. Of 3,000 scientists who arrived in 1990, only 160 found employment (see

"Soviet Jews in Israel—Pawns for a Zionist 'Final Solution,'" *Workers Vanguard* No. 518, 18 January 1991). One recent immigrant, whose husband had been an electrical engineer in Kiev and was able to find only a low-paid factory job (until he got fired for demanding a raise), complained: "We feel worthless, taken advantage of and miserable." Little wonder that as recent immigrants write home to friends and relatives about their impoverished condition in the "promised land," the rate of Soviet Jewish emigration has plummeted dramatically.

Desperate for housing and jobs, Soviet immigrants are being forced to replace Palestinian Arab labor and siphoned into fascistic "settlements" in the Occupied Territories. Thus they are key pawns in the Zionist rulers' designs for a "Greater Israel" through the bloody suppression of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories. Meanwhile, the



Workers Vanguard No. 212 (28 July 1978), newspaper of Spartacist League/U.S., took clear stand in defense of Soviet Union against proven Zionist/CIA spy.



Reuters



Spartakist

Rostock, Germany, August 1992: Nazi firebombing of refugee hostel sparked outpouring of anti-fascist outrage. Spartakists fought for worker/immigrant mobilizations to stop Nazis.

Israeli garrison state is surrounded by more than 100 million Arab neighbors. Zionist Israel offers not salvation but death to the Jewish people. As Trotsky wrote on the eve of the Holocaust, in an unfinished July 1940 article:

"The future development of military events may well transform Palestine into a bloody trap for several hundred thousand Jews. Never was it so clear as it is today that the salvation of the Jewish people is bound up inseparably with the overthrow of the capitalist system."

There can be no equitable solution to the nationalist horror in the Near East short of proletarian revolution. In its diaspora, scattered throughout the Near East (as well as Europe and North America), the Palestinian Arab people has become one of the most educated and cosmopolitan layers in the region. Palestinian workers and pro-socialist intellectuals are key to igniting class struggle throughout the region, breaking the stranglehold of nationalism and exploding the Zionist garrison state from within. What is needed is a Trotskyist party which can appeal to all workers and oppressed on the basis of their common internationalist interests, guaranteeing the national rights of both the Hebrew-speaking and Palestinian peoples within the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East. *Israel out of the Occupied Territories! Defend the Palestinians!*

The Role of the Jewish People in History

The October Revolution gave flesh and blood to the promise of Marxism for the Jewish people: that the answer to their persecution and oppression lay in socialism. The first workers revolution was carried out under the banner of internationalism, and it was under that banner that the long-suffering Jews of the benighted tsarist empire found their emancipation. The large number of Jews in the leadership of the revolution and of the early Soviet state is itself evidence of the dramatic leap made by the Jewish people in comparison not only to the horrors of the tsarist

autocracy but even to the most advanced "democratic" countries of the West. Historian Ainsztein noted this when he observed:

"The history of Russian Jewry between 1917 and June 1941 ran along lines so different from those followed by the Polish and other Jewries in the world that in the end it produced a new type of Jew...."

"The emergence of Jews as military leaders was the most striking expression of the sociological and psychological changes in Soviet Jewry."

Anti-Semitic persecution in Poland and Russia was an archetypal example of the plight in which the Jewish people found themselves with the ascendance of capitalism. While Zionists and religious obscurantists attribute the survival of the Jews as a distinct people over the ages to mystical biblical injunctions of a "chosen people," anti-Semites point to the Jews as "Christ killers" ordained by god to wander the earth (while alleging a centuries-old "international conspiracy" aimed at world Jewish domination). It is symptomatic of the continued sway of imperialist reaction that such metaphysical mumbo-jumbo remains current several centuries after the bourgeois Enlightenment. To understand the modern-day oppression of the Jewish people, it is necessary to understand their role in history. And that can only be derived from an internationalist perspective.

Building on the writings of Marx and Kautsky on the question, the young Belgian Trotskyist Abram Leon ripped away the metaphysical mythology which had shrouded the history of the Jews in his book *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* (1970), completed in 1941 even as he was organizing clandestine anti-Nazi resistance. A Belgian Jew born in Poland, Leon broke from left Zionism shortly after the outbreak of World War II to become a Marxist, playing a leading role in the underground Belgian Trotskyist organization. Captured by the Nazis in 1944, he was shipped back to his native Poland—to be murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Leon's fate was typical of

a whole generation of Trotskyist cadre, who were slaughtered by Stalin as well as Hitler, leaving the postwar Trotskyist movement in Europe virtually decapitated and susceptible to deep revisionist inroads. This political devastation spawned the present phenomenon of numerous groups claiming some connection to Trotskyism who are in fact vulgar social democrats.

In his incisive analysis, Leon situated the continued existence of a distinctive Jewish people in Europe through the Middle Ages, and their brutal oppression under capitalism, in their social role as a commercial "people-class" in feudal and prefeudal society. This role could only be played by those not indigenous to the medieval feudal structure, whose ecclesiastical authorities formalized the need for an "outside" commercial sector by banning Christians from participating in usury (lending money at interest). With the rise of mercantile capitalism, this role came to an end, and the Jews were driven out of one West European country after another. While a tiny handful, like the Rothschilds, eventually made their way into West European banking circles on the road to complete assimilation, the vast majority were forced to flee to the still feudal societies of East Europe, particularly Poland. But as the Polish nobility began to break up in the 17th century, the situation of the Jews there became increasingly imperiled and impoverished.

From the small villages and feudal estates where they had been the traders, publicans and financial intermediaries between the nobles and the downtrodden peasantry, they migrated to the cities and further east to Russia. While Jewish communities like the Khazars existed on Russian soil over a thousand years ago, it was only with Russia's conquest of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania in the late 1700s that the tsarist empire was to include a significant Jewish population, indeed the majority of Jews in the world. But tsarist Russia was about to undergo the same develop-



Editions La Brèche

Abram Leon, Trotskyist theoretician and underground leader, murdered by the Nazis in Auschwitz.

ment toward capitalism, and the Jews were to find the same fate awaiting them there. As Leon wrote:

"The Jews lived within the pores of feudal society. When the feudal structure started to crumble, it began expelling elements which were, at one and the same time, foreign to it and indispensable to it. Even before the peasant had left the village for the industrial center, the Jew had abandoned the small medieval town in order to emigrate to the great cities of the world. The destruction of the secular function of Judaism within feudal society is accompanied by its passive penetration into capitalist society....

"The highly tragic situation of Judaism in our epoch is explained by the extreme precariousness of its social and economic position. The first to be eliminated by decaying feudalism, the Jews were also the first to be rejected by the convulsions of dying capitalism. The Jewish masses find themselves wedged between the anvil of decaying feudalism and the hammer of rotting capitalism."

Overwhelmingly the Jewish masses of Poland and Russia eked out a bare subsistence as petty artisans, laborers in small workshops or *Luftmenschen* who survived by peddling or trading whatever they could. Hedged in on all sides by anti-Semitic restrictions and subjected to periodic pogroms aimed at diverting the discontent of the impoverished peasantry away from the tsarist autocracy, those Jewish intellectuals and proletarians who broke from the religious obscurantism of the ghetto naturally gravitated toward the new movements for social liberation. They instinctively understood, as Leon was to explain, that their emancipation could come about only through the general social and national emancipation of all peoples. The anti-Semitic frame-up in the closing years of the 19th century of Alfred Dreyfus, a French army officer, signaled that even in the most "democratic" countries, the Jewish question could not be resolved through liberal assimilation under capitalism. For this people without a homeland, international socialist revolution was the only road to freedom.

It was this which impelled such large numbers of Jewish intellectuals and workers to become Communists. In striking out against the Bolshevik program of world revolution, Stalin necessarily had to wage a war of extermination against those who continued Lenin's struggle, the Trotskyist Left Opposition, and to embrace the Russian nationalism of which anti-Semitism was a component. From the betrayal of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution, to the strangulation of the Spanish workers revolution in the late 1930s, from the "Third Period" sectarianism which allowed Hitler to come to power without a shot fired in opposition, to the "People's



Niedenthal/Time

Russian fascist blackshirts of Pamyat spew anti-Semitic filth.

ICL supporters
march in Moscow
Revolution Day
celebration,
7 November 1991.



Front" capitulations to Western imperialism, to the Hitler-Stalin pact, Stalinism undermined the defense of the first workers state and squandered the energies and lives of millions who had flocked to its internationalist banner. Not surprisingly, Jewish Communists were among the chief victims of this perfidy.

But Stalin's perversion of Bolshevism did not go unchallenged. At every step, the Trotskyists counterposed to the bureaucracy's conciliations and capitulations a revolutionary internationalist policy, fighting for world socialist revolution as the sole guarantee for defense of the Soviet Union, counterposing to the Third International bankrupted by Stalinism a new Bolshevik-Leninist Fourth International. Because they were conscious internationalists, the Trotskyists consistently combatted anti-Semitism. In his autobiography, *The Great Game*, heroic Soviet spy Leopold Trepper paid tribute to the Trotskyists' unyielding adherence to the program of Red October while Bukharinists and others capitulated to the rotten monster Stalin, a venal thug who had seized control over the workers state:

"But who did protest at that time? Who rose up to voice his outrage?"

"The Trotskyites can lay claim to this honor. Following the example of their leader, who was rewarded for his obstinacy with the end of an ice-axe, they fought Stalinism to the death, and they were the only ones who did...."

"Today, the Trotskyites have a right to accuse those who once howled along with the wolves. Let them not forget, however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing Stalinism. They had something to cling to in the midst of their profound distress at seeing the revolution betrayed. They did not 'confess,' for they knew that their confession would serve neither the party nor socialism."

For an Internationalist Vanguard Party!

Decades of Stalinist sabotage opened the floodgates of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. Stalinism corrupted or crushed the communist aspirations of one generation after another, extirpating the internationalism which had animated the Russian Revolution, atomizing and

politically paralyzing the Soviet proletariat. Stalin, the "gravedigger of revolution," destroyed the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International, subordinated the international proletariat to the dictates of "democratic" imperialism, disorganized the planned, centralized economy through bureaucratic mismanagement and sabotage, and fostered Great Russian nationalism. The Soviet Union was ripped apart by the very forces which the Stalinist bureaucracy unleashed.

Today, the ascendance of reactionary nationalism in East Europe and the ex-USSR, aided and abetted by Zionist Israel, threatens to carry to a conclusion the goal of Hitler's Holocaust—to make that region of the world *Judenrein*,

Women and Revolution

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“cleansed” of Jews. It would be a horrible irony of history if the largest concentration in Europe of Jewish survivors of the Nazi Final Solution felt themselves compelled to emigrate to Zionist Israel, to be used as shock troops in the racist persecution of the Palestinian people. It would be far better for Jews in the ex-USSR to remain in their homeland and again contribute internationalist fighters to the revolutionary struggle to defeat the new pogromist order.

There can be no return to the Stalinist past. What is called for is a return to the *Leninist* program for a future of world socialism. Against overwhelming odds, the Trotskyist Left Opposition fought to uphold the banner of October, seeking with every new revolutionary opportunity to reverse the isolation and degeneration of the Soviet state. That programmatic legacy guides us today in our struggle to build a genuinely Leninist-Trotskyist party in the former Soviet Union and make the Kremlin once again a bastion of proletarian internationalism.

From the very moment Pamyat emerged we Trotskyists called for independent mobilizations to crush this sinister anti-Semitic counterrevolutionary scum. When Pamyat started staging weekly demonstrations in Leningrad in 1988, we wrote:

“For every one of these Pamyat fascists, there are tens of hundreds of workers, students, veterans and youth in military service who would eagerly come out to the Rumyantsevsky Gardens on a Thursday to teach the Russian Nazis a lesson. Who can doubt that a single militant demonstration of 50,000 outraged Leningraders, suitably prepared to defend themselves, coming out to *burn Nazi flags* in Pamyat’s face, ready to chase these Nazis to the nearby Neva River or drive them into the canals, would put an end to Pamyat?”

—“Soviet Workers Must Crush Pamyat!”
(*Workers Vanguard* No. 461, 23 September 1988)

But the bureaucracy let Pamyat flourish. And now, such reactionary chauvinists in Russia and like-minded fascist nationalists in the other republics are poised to unleash bloody terror against Communists, Jews and local minorities. In the Ukraine and the Baltic states, outright fascist forces, the direct heirs of the Nazi collaborators and SS killers of World War II, are on the march, and sometimes in the government. However, the ravages of capitalist restoration have also provoked a sharp reaction by the working people, including a massive coal miners strike in the Ukraine in June 1993 and an ongoing wave of militant workers’ struggle in Lech Walesa’s Poland. Widespread opposition to *Solidarność*’ anti-worker and anti-woman policies resulted in a sweeping victory by the ex-Stalinist Social Democrats in the September 1993 Polish parliamentary elections.

Throughout the period leading up to Yeltsin’s August 1991 victory and since, the ICL has, despite our modest resources and limited Russian-language capacity, distributed propaganda to workers in Russia, the Ukraine and elsewhere warning of the counterrevolutionary danger and laying out an internationalist perspective of struggle. At the November 1990 Revolution Day commemoration in Leningrad, the banner of the Fourth International was publicly raised in the Soviet Union for the first time in decades, as a contingent of ICL supporters marched with slogans pointing the way for a return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky: “Defend the Gains of the October Revolution!”



Spartacist

East Berlin, 3 January 1990—250,000 protested Nazi desecration of Red Army monument in Treptow Park. Spartacist banner reads: “Down with NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!”

Down with the Restoration of Capitalism! Power to Soviets of the Working People!”

The following year, the ICL statement “Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!”, distributed in over 100,000 copies immediately after Yeltsin’s counter-coup, laid out a program of struggle to fight capitalist enslavement, emphasizing the necessity to organize multinational workers defense guards to ward off communalist butchery and to oppose anti-Semitic agitation. ICL comrades in Moscow participated in demonstrations to defend the Lenin Museum against the threat of closure, with signs counterposed to the nationalist perspective of the Stalinist “patriots”: “Nationalism: Spearhead of Counterrevolution! For Proletarian Internationalism to Defend the Soviet Union!” “Leninist Party Must Be Tribune of the People! Down With Great Russian Chauvinism. Anti-Semitism!” “Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!”

The key task today lies in forging a Trotskyist vanguard nucleus around which an authentically communist party can once again be built. Lenin’s party succeeded in uniting the workers of the different nationalities of the tsarist “prison house of peoples” in the struggle for socialist revolution because it fought against all manifestations of discrimination and privilege. In the struggle to sweep away the capitalist counterrevolution which threatens to drown the homeland of the October Revolution in blood, there must be forged a new Bolshevik Party that fights down the line against all manifestations of anti-Semitism, national chauvinism and bigotry—a party in which Jewish communists can once again play a proud and vital role. For socialist revolution to sweep away Yeltsin counterrevolution! ■

Key Trotsky Works Published in Russian for the First Time

Prometheus Research Library Book

The Communist International After Lenin

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The Prometheus Research Library is pleased to announce the publication in Russian of Leon Trotsky's *The Communist International After Lenin*. This book has never before been available to Russian readers. Published in Moscow, with substantial involvement of supporters of the International Communist League, this volume contains the key founding documents of world Trotskyism. The core of the book, "The Draft Program of the Communist International: A Criticism of Fundamentals," and "What Now?", written for the Sixth Congress of the Communist International (CI) held in Moscow in 1928, elevated the struggle of the Left Opposition, which previously had been contained within the Russian party, to the plane of the International.

This Congress followed five years of bureaucratic degeneration of the CI. The rotten fruits of Stalinist policies, nourished by the poisonous nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country," had proven in flesh and blood the validity of Trotsky's fight for the restoration of party democracy and a return to the perspective of world revolution. The documents in this book provided to Leninist Communists the Opposition's scathing critique of the miserable record of disasters under the centrist vacillations of the CI, from the subordination of the Chinese Communist Party to the petty-bourgeois, nationalist Kuomintang, resulting in the bloody suppression of the Chinese Revolution, to the transformation of the British Communist Party into a left appendage of the social-democratic trade-union leadership around the time of the 1926 General Strike.

With their sweeping analysis, the "Critique" and "What Now?" comprise a handbook of communist strategy. Both documents had very restricted circulation at the Sixth Congress, in poorly translated and bowdlerized versions (omitting, for example, the entire second section of the "Critique"). But for some of the key cadre who managed to read them, such as James P. Cannon and Maurice Spector, who became founding leaders of Trotskyism in North America, the documents provided stunning political focus and clarity of revolutionary purpose.

Smuggled out of the USSR, these partial English trans-

lations were published by the American Trotskyists in 1929. For the first time, the inchoate groupings of Trotsky's supporters in Europe and elsewhere gained access to his incisive appraisal of post-Lenin policies on a domestic and international scale. The "Critique" was crucial to the international extension of the Left Opposition beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. But its immediacy receded and its importance took on a more historical character as Stalin ousted Bukharin and the Comintern zigzagged through the ostensibly leftist stupidities of the "Third Period" to the full-blown class-collaborationism of the Popular Front, consummated in 1935.

In 1930 a complete French translation of these works was published in a volume which also included Trotsky's 1928 articles "The Chinese Question After the Sixth Congress" and "Who Is Leading the Comintern Today?" This edition was the earliest upon which Trotsky put his imprimatur, declaring it "the one and only edition for which I bear responsibility before the readers." The definitive foreign-language edition of the "Critique" and "What Now?", translated into English from the complete Russian manuscripts by John G. Wright (Joseph Vanzler) and edited with an introduction by Max Shachtman, was published by Pioneer Publishers in New York in 1936 as *The Third International After Lenin*. It is still available as a Pathfinder Press reprint.

Except for an introduction written by the Prometheus Research Library, the contents and order of the

new Russian volume are identical to the 1930 French edition, including Trotsky's foreword. The articles were prepared from the typed Russian manuscripts held at the Houghton Library, Harvard University. As we state in our introduction to this first Russian edition:

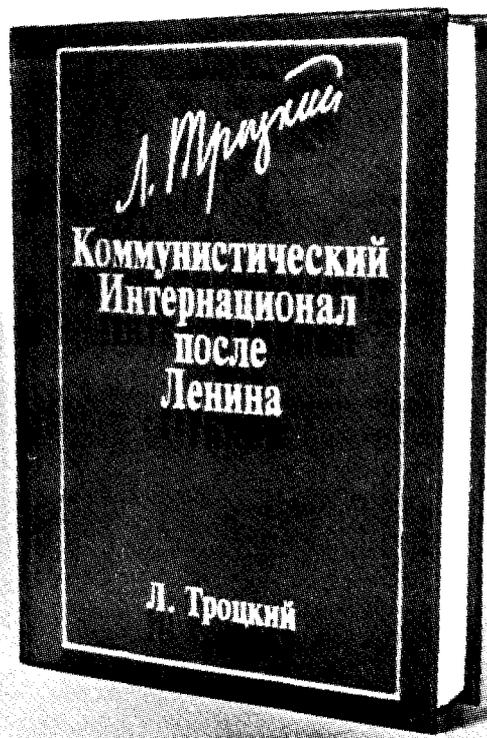
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Menshevik Dementia...

(continued from page 3)

social pathology. Blick fulminates over "the death and slave camps of Nazi and Bolshevik totalitarianism," the hackneyed rhetoric of apologists for "democratic" imperialism who grotesquely seek to equate Hitlerite *genocide* with Stalin's police-state terror. "'Marxism-Leninism' is as absurd a concoction as Christian Satanism," hisses Blick in a diatribe which interweaves bits of quotations from Machiavelli, Mussolini and Lenin—torn from both literary and social context—so as to find Lenin guilty of the original sin, "Jacobin elitism," first visited upon an unsuspecting human civilization by that Satan of all Satans, Maximilien Robespierre, aided by his godfather, poor Jean-Jacques Rousseau!

Many of Blick's arguments come straight from Karl Kautsky, but his immediate intellectual godfather is Leonard Schapiro, a barrister turned Cold War "academic." From the insidious appetite for absolute power supposedly revealed by Lenin in the 1903 split with the Mensheviks, to the characterization of the October Revolution as a "Bolshevik putsch," to the charge that the Communist Party's Tenth Congress ban on factions in 1921 mandated Stalin's subsequent monolithic, bureaucratic regime, Blick simply rehashes the falsifications compiled and popularized by his mentor Schapiro at the London School of Economics, a stone's throw from Blick's down-market retreat at South Thames College.

We have already taken on directly the Schapiro school of half-truths, omissions, insinuations and downright falsifications in "Leonard Schapiro: Lawyer for Counterrevolution" (*Spartacist* No. 43-44, Summer 1989). Readers will find startling similarity in the arguments of the self-avowed capitalist elitist Schapiro and the supposed Marxist Blick. Like Blick, Schapiro used any stick to beat the Bolsheviks, including those supplied by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries (SRs). But Schapiro's ideological proclivities lay more openly with Kerensky, Kornilov and even the tsarist aristocracy. Blick writes in the service of the same Big Lie pushed by Schapiro—the misidentification of Stalinism with communism—though the sneeringly explicit contempt for the masses is more muted in Blick's work, where the working-class supporters of the Bolsheviks are simply left unmentioned (leaving the reader to presume that they were somehow manipulated by the "Jesuitical" and "Machiavellian" Lenin).

These politics are strongly reminiscent of the work of another of Blick's predecessors, David Shub. Max Shachtman, before throwing himself all the way into the social-democratic pro-imperialist camp, authored a scathing review of Shub's *Lenin, A Biography* (see *New Internationalist*, December 1949 and March-April 1950). Shachtman exhaustively exposed Shub's tendentious use of ellipses to string together unrelated quotations from Lenin. For example, Shachtman exposed Shub's attempt to use the following "quotation" to prove that Lenin was all for his own personal dictatorship:

"Soviet socialist democracy is not in the least incompatible with individual rule and dictatorialship.... What is necessary is individual rule, the recognition of the dictatorial powers of one man.... All phrases about equal rights are nonsense."

The one little fact that Shub neglected to mention in stringing together these quotations from two separate speeches

by Lenin in 1920 was that Lenin was addressing not the form of government of the Soviet state, but the need for individual, as opposed to collegial, administration of large-scale machine industry and factories! This is clear when one of the passages is quoted in full from the current English translation of Lenin's *Collected Works*:

"And we are now being dragged back on a matter that was decided long ago, a matter which the All-Russia Central Executive Committee endorsed and explained, namely, that Soviet socialist democracy and individual management and dictatorship are in no way contradictory, and that the will of a class may sometimes be carried out by a dictator, who sometimes does more alone and is frequently more necessary. At any rate, the attitude towards the principles of corporate management and individual management was not only explained long ago, but was even endorsed by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee."

—"Speech on Economic Development,"
31 March 1920

In dishonestly amalgamating bits and pieces from Lenin in *The Seeds of Evil*, Blick cites Shub's Lenin biography and distorts many of the same quotations. Like Shub, Blick rips quotes out of context to politically distort their meaning. For example, Blick cites with ominous drumroll Trotsky's assertion: "We are the only party in the country...." The unsuspecting reader could not know that this simple statement of fact about the conditions existing in Soviet Russia at the time was taken from Trotsky's *The New Course* (1924), which was overwhelmingly directed against burgeoning bureaucratism in the party and state apparatus. Or take Blick's attempt to make Lenin an advocate of a red-brown coalition between communists and fascists by isolating the phrase "bloc between the Black Hundreds and the Bolsheviks" from the following simple description of the situation prevailing in Germany when the Red Army chased Pilsudski's army back into Poland in the spring of 1920:

"All Germany began to seethe when our forces approached Warsaw. In that country a situation arose very much like that which could be seen in Russia in 1905, when the Black Hundreds aroused and involved in political life large and most backward sections of the peasantry, which were opposed to the Bolsheviks one day, and on the next were demanding all the land from the landed proprietors. In Germany too we have seen a similar unnatural bloc between the Black Hundreds and the Bolsheviks."

—"Speech at the 9th All-Russia Conference of the RCP(B)," 22 September 1920

As Shachtman said of Shub: "But what is really impressive is the unselfishness he showed in denying himself the pleasures of this devotion to facts wherever it interfered with devotion to his opinions." Blick's sloppiness with citations (four of the quotations attributed to *Leon Trotsky Speaks* in his letter are actually from the collection, *The Challenge of the Left Opposition 1923-25*) are a further indication that despite Blick's protestations, his concern does not lie with historical accuracy. As Marxist revolutionists, ours does.

The Mensheviks and the SRs in the Bolshevik Revolution

In order to "prove" the Bolsheviks' anti-democratic intentions, Blick apes the most simple-minded liberal in elevating abstract "democracy" to a universal principle, regardless of historical and social context. In times of war or crisis, even the most "enlightened," economically advanced bourgeois democracies impose severe constraints on democratic rights. During World War II, the United States imprisoned

all its citizens of Japanese ethnic origin, banned strikes, and jailed 18 leaders of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party for their *political* opposition to the imperialist war. Blick's Britain and its dominions engaged in comparable repressive measures—as well as shipping Jewish refugees off to concentration camps in the Australian outback along with other German nationals. Such are the workings of the bourgeoisie's *class dictatorship*, even under “democracy.”

In the face of far more dire circumstances, the Bolsheviks strove to promote soviet democracy to the fullest extent possible. But a self-evident condition for a multiparty soviet democracy is that more than one party accept the legitimacy of the soviet form of government. This condition did *not* exist in the period of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil War. The Mensheviks and right SRs *opposed, in principle and in practice*, not only the Bolshevik regime, but the very concept of a state where power rested in soviets of workers' and peasants' delegates elected in the factories and villages, and where the former exploiting classes were disenfranchised. The left SRs did accept in practice a soviet-based government, and for some months participated in a coalition with the Bolsheviks. However, in the summer of 1918, when they found themselves outvoted in the soviets in opposing the implementation of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, they attempted an armed insurrection.

The Mensheviks categorically rejected proletarian revolution in Russia, maintaining that the country had to undergo a lengthy period of capitalist development to create the preconditions for widespread socialization. They demanded that the soviets transfer all governmental power to a sovereign parliament (constituent assembly) based on equal and universal suffrage—i.e., the dissolution of the dictatorship of the proletariat. When the Bolsheviks won a decisive majority at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets in October 1917, the Mensheviks and right SRs walked out. They then set up the Committee to Save the Fatherland, which included representatives of the bourgeois Cadets (Constitutional Democrats), as an opposition to the Soviet government. Under the cover of this committee, the right SR leaders, with the support and complicity of prominent right Mensheviks, organized an abortive uprising of military cadets against the Bolsheviks.

Despite the counterrevolutionary intrigues of the right SRs and Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks did not outlaw them, nor were they banned from the soviets. On the contrary, the Bolsheviks left open positions for these parties on the Central Executive Committee (CEC) of the soviets. When it became clear, after the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, that the Bolshevik regime was not about to collapse, the center/left faction of Mensheviks led by Martov and Fyodor Dan decided in early 1918 to participate in the soviets. The right Menshevik George Denicke later recalled: “To their own surprise, these Menshevik leaders were allowed to speak freely, to criticize the government in the sharpest way. Later this tolerance came to seem unbelievable” (Leopold H. Haimson, ed., *The Mensheviks* [1974]).

But in May 1918, a party congress of right SRs declared as its aim “to overthrow the Bolshevik dictatorship and to establish a government based on universal suffrage,” inviting the Western imperialists to aid them (James Bunyan, *Intervention, Civil War, and Communism in Russia, April-December 1918* [1936]). The following month, the left SRs—who had resigned from the governing Council of People's Commissars over Brest-Litovsk, but continued to

be represented in the CEC of the soviets and to hold leading positions in the Red Army command and the Cheka (political police)—organized an insurrection against the Bolsheviks and assassinated the German ambassador to Moscow in order to provoke a renewed war. When their attempted coup was suppressed, these petty-bourgeois radicals turned to individual terrorism and assassination, killing prominent Bolshevik leaders and wounding Lenin.

Thus in the summer of 1918 the Bolsheviks found themselves de facto the only Soviet party. Lenin, Trotsky and the other Bolsheviks did indeed regard this situation as neither normal nor desirable. And a few months later both the Mensheviks and the SRs were *readmitted* into the soviets when they moved away from their alliance with the White generals and Western imperialists. Clearly, Lenin's policy was not governed by any programmatic commitment to a one-party state. Rather it encouraged a *differentiation* between those petty-bourgeois radicals willing to at least accept proletarian state power and those who supported bourgeois counterrevolution in the name of “democracy.” And this differentiation did in fact take place. By the time of the Bolshevik victory in the Civil War, the Mensheviks and the SRs were virtually empty shells, their working-class followers having deserted them for the Bolsheviks.

Menshevism in Power: Georgia 1918-1921

In *The Seeds of Evil*, Blick upholds the Mensheviks as representing “the most enlightened tendencies within the Russian working class,” democratic idealists crushed by the Bolshevik behemoth. But a look at Menshevik-ruled Georgia during the period 1918 to 1920 shows the real face of these “democratic socialists.” From the outset, the Menshevik regime of Noe Zhordania imprisoned every Bolshevik it could get its hands on. By 1920 over 900 Georgian Communists were in prison in Tiflis and other Georgian cities. This would have been equivalent to 45,000 *Mensheviks* (had such a number existed) imprisoned in Soviet Russia given the difference in populations! The social-democratic republic of Georgia was in fact ostentatiously a puppet state of Western imperialism—first of Germany, then of Britain—in the war to crush Soviet Russia. Zhordania baldly stated: “We prefer the imperialists of the West to the fanatics of the East.”

Deeply chauvinist, the Georgian Mensheviks waged war against the Azeris, the Armenians and the Caucasian mountain peoples like the Ossetians and Abkhazians. The attempted “Georgianization” of the national minorities provoked peasant uprisings that were ruthlessly put down by the Menshevik regime. As a result, the Caucasian mountain peoples of northern Georgia became fiercely loyal defenders of Bolshevism in the region. A British journalist, C.E. Bechhofer, who covered the Civil War in southern Russia and the Caucasus, commented: “‘The Free and Independent Social-Democratic State of Georgia’ will always remain in my memory as a classic example of an imperialist ‘small nation.’ Both in territory-snatching outside and bureaucratic tyranny inside, its chauvinism was beyond all bounds” (*In Denikin's Russia and the Caucasus, 1919-1920* [1921]).

Bolshevism, Soviet Democracy and the Vanguard Party

To determine the Bolsheviks' position on the question of soviet democracy and their attitude toward other pro-soviet parties outside the exigencies of the Civil War, it is



USSR State Archival Fund
Demonstration honoring the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, October 1917, at which the Bolsheviks gained a majority.

necessary to consider those documents intended as basic programmatic statements. One such document is manifestly the founding constitution of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, adopted in July 1918. The constitution outlines the legal framework of soviet democracy, and does not specify any privileged role for the Communist Party. In fact, it does not mention the role of parties at all.

The Bolsheviks would have considered it absurd to write the leading role of the revolutionary vanguard into a constitution. The resolution "On the Organization Question" adopted at the Eighth Party Congress in March 1919 stated:

"The Communist Party sets itself the task of winning decisive influence and complete control in all organizations of the working people: in trade unions, co-operatives, rural communes, etc...."

"The party must implement its decisions through the soviet bodies, *within the framework of the Soviet Constitution*. The party strives to *direct* the work of the soviets, not to replace them."

This alone makes it clear that the Bolsheviks saw leadership of the working class not as a matter of bureaucratic *diktat* but as the result of *political struggle* through propaganda and agitation. The Bolsheviks considered *both* soviet democracy and the leading role of the Communist Party within that framework to be necessary conditions for preserving the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Yet by 1920-21, the soviets had ceased to have any real existence. Workers soviets could hardly function when the working class itself was physically dispersed and politically exhausted. Nearly seven years of imperialist war and civil war had reduced Russia to an economic and social wasteland. Coal output was 30 percent of prewar levels, electric power generation 25 percent and steel production a mere 5 percent. Exports, strangled by the imperialist blockade, were reduced to 1 percent of the 1913 level! The cities were depopulated, as the urban residents fled to their peas-

ant relatives in the countryside, hoping to avoid starvation. Lenin and Trotsky strove to rebuild the working class through economic regeneration and to hold on to power until the isolation of Soviet Russia was broken by proletarian revolution abroad.

Nonetheless, political differences among the class-conscious elements of the Soviet working class were still resolved in a democratic manner. Robin Blick strenuously objects to our statement that the "democratic contention of factions and tendencies within the Bolshevik Party in a sense served as a substitute for a multi-party soviet democracy." Yet this is borne out by the sheer *diversity* of factions and groupings within the Bolshevik Party, from the semi-Menshevik David Ryazanov to the semi-

syndicalist Workers Opposition, as they grappled with the multiplicity of fresh tasks and unprecedented questions facing the proletariat in power.

The Party Crisis of 1921

This brings us to Blick's timeworn plaint about the "banning of factions" at the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921. Again, it is critical to examine the real context. Given the desperate situation facing the Bolshevik regime, one may judge the discussion around the "trade union controversy" which occurred in preparation for this conference to be an overindulgence in internal party democracy. It dominated the life of the party for some months involving hundreds of pages of heated polemics on all sides and countless hours of debate at all levels of the party. The debate was in many respects confused and confusing, but the immediate and practical issues were resolved in a fully democratic manner at the Tenth Congress. At Lenin's suggestion, Shliapnikov and another leader of the Workers Opposition were elevated to full membership in the Central Committee so that their views would be heard in the highest party body.

Once the issues had been *decided*, it was necessary to *reorient* the party—to cool down factional passions, halt the intense internal debates and *redirect* the energies of the cadres into defending the precarious Soviet power amid the difficult transition from War Communism to the New Economic Policy (NEP). The *immediate* danger was that secondary or even personal differences would so envenom internal party life as to rip apart the Communist vanguard, opening the way to the overthrow of the proletarian state by its powerful internal and external enemies.

Just how precarious things were was highlighted by the anarcho-populist Kronstadt uprising, which peaked during the Tenth Congress. The resolution on factionalism, drafted

by Lenin, called for "the immediate dissolution of all groups without exception formed on the basis of one platform or another." To serve his own purposes, Stalin later claimed this as a precedent for banning factions *on principle*; Blick does likewise. And both lie. The Tenth Congress resolution specified the exceptional situation which justified this measure. Moreover, in response to an amendment by Ryazanov which would have banned election to party congresses on the basis of platforms, Lenin underscored the *conjunctural* nature of the ban on factions and categorically *rejected* any notion of a permanent ban:

"We cannot deprive the Party and the members of the Central Committee of the right to appeal to the Party in the event of disagreement on fundamental issues. I cannot imagine how we can do such a thing! The present Congress cannot in any way bind the elections to the next Congress. Supposing we are faced with a question like, say, the conclusion of the Brest peace? Can you guarantee that no such question will arise? No, you cannot. In the circumstances, the elections may have to be based on platforms.... The lesson we have learned at this Congress will not be forgotten. But if the circumstances should give rise to fundamental disagreements, can we prohibit them from being brought before the judgement of the whole Party? No, we cannot!"

—"Remarks on Ryazanov's Amendment to the Resolution on Party Unity," 16 March 1921

In order to go after Lenin and Trotsky, Blick solidarizes with the Workers Opposition led by the "genuine (former) proletarian" Alexander Shliapnikov. (And what of the genuine former aristocrat Alexandra Kollontai, also a leader of the Workers Opposition?) Elsewhere, in the pages of Cliff Slaughter's *Workers Press* (28 September 1991), Blick has also defended the Kronstadt mutiny. But the Workers Opposition and the Kronstadters had *diametrically counterposed programs*.

The Workers Opposition supported *forced requisitioning* from the peasantry as a means to secure more food for the urban workers. Kollontai's elaboration of the Workers Opposition program *counterposed* the interests of the workers and peasants in the sharpest possible way:

"The workers demand a clear-cut, uncompromising policy, a rapid, forced advance towards communism; the peasantry, with its petty-bourgeois proclivities and sympathies, demands different kinds of 'freedom,' including freedom of trade and non-interference in their affairs."

—"The Workers' Opposition" (1921)

No liberals were the leaders of the Workers Opposition.

Any attempt at "a rapid, forced advance towards communism" in Russia of 1921 would have entailed the massive suppression of the peasantry by the Red Army, further upsetting the already tenuous cooperation (*smychka*) between the proletariat and peasantry. And given the social composition and political mood of the army, this likely would have provoked mutinies against the Communist regime. Herein lay the historic significance of the Kronstadt sailors' uprising. To their credit, the leaders of the Workers Opposition volunteered to help suppress the Kronstadters, a position entirely consistent with their political principles. But had the views of Shliapnikov and Kollontai prevailed, the Soviet government would have had to suppress many more Kronstadt uprisings.

Trotsky's Fight Against Bureaucratism

Blick depicts Trotsky as an aspirant for the role of chief bureaucrat who, after he was defeated by Stalin, retrospectively claimed to be a fighter for proletarian democracy.

However, even a cursory look at Trotsky's writings from late 1923 on demonstrates that he placed the struggle against bureaucratism at the center of his program to revitalize the party and the revolution, necessarily linking it to the need to accelerate the pace of industrialization and to a revolutionary perspective for the Communist parties in the capitalist world.

The October 1923 "Platform of the Forty-six," reflecting the views of the loose "Trotskyist" Opposition which first cohered at the time, clearly stated that the resolutions of the Tenth Party Congress had been perverted and were no longer justified in the current situation:

"The regime established within the party is completely intolerable; it destroys the independence of the party, replacing the party by a recruited bureaucratic apparatus....

"The position which has been created is explained by the fact that the regime of the dictatorship of a faction within the party, which was in fact created after the Tenth Congress, has outlived itself. Many of us consciously accepted submission to such a regime. The turn of policy in the year 1921, and after that the illness of comrade Lenin, demanded in the opinion of some of us a dictatorship within the party as a temporary measure. Other comrades from the very beginning adopted a skeptical or negative attitude towards it. However that may have been, by the time of the Twelfth Congress of the party [April 1923] this regime had outlived itself."

Trotsky's position at the time was somewhat more cautious, but he, too, contended that the 1921 ban on factions was being used by the congealing bureaucracy:

"The decision of the Tenth Congress prohibiting factions can only have an auxiliary character; by itself it does not offer the key to the solution of any and all internal difficulties. It would be gross 'organizational fetishism' to believe that whatever the development of the party, the mistakes of the leadership, the conservatism of the apparatus, the external influences, etc., a decision is enough to preserve us from groupings and from upheavals inherent in the formation of factions. Such an approach is in itself profoundly bureaucratic."

—*The New Course* (1924)

Moreover, if the programmatically-based grouping calling itself "the Opposition" was not a faction, what was it? Blick makes much of the fact that as late as 1926 Trotsky repudiated and opposed "factionalism." But under the bureaucratic regime, the term "faction" had become identified with a *split perspective*. Thus in 1923, the Stalin/Zinoviev regime issued a statement condemning "the Declaration of the Forty-six as a step of factional-splitting politics" (quoted in Robert V. Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution*). In repudiating factionalism, Trotsky rejected the perspective of forming a new party to organize the non-party masses against the existing government.

Stalin played on Communist workers' spirit of party patriotism and the acute fear of counterrevolution. This does not mean that the danger of counterrevolution was illusory nor that the spirit of party patriotism was illegitimate. But for Leninists, political clarity and programmatic integrity must be pursued even to the point of a split while avoiding light-minded or *unnecessary* factional warfare which can be dangerously destructive.

The Left Opposition fought to *reanimate* and democratize the soviets as well as for internal party democracy. The 1927 "Platform of the Opposition," from which Blick selectively quotes, demanded the conversion of "the urban soviets into real institutions of proletarian power and instruments for drawing the broad mass of the working people

into the task of administering socialist construction." It also demanded "a complete stop to the removal of elected soviet officials, except in case of real and absolute necessity, in which cases the causes should be made clear to the electors."

The Rise of Stalinism and the Trotskyist Left Opposition

Stalinist bonapartism was *not* the inevitable outcome of Bolshevik doctrine but the reflection of overwhelming objective pressures which led to the destruction of the weakened Bolshevik Party. Among these were desperate scarcity and economic devastation as well as the Western imperialist encirclement of the Soviet workers state. Key to that encirclement was the betrayal of international Social Democracy—above all, in Germany—which crushed the proletarian revolutionary wave at the end of World War I.

In addition to the decimation of Communist cadre during the Civil War, the main internal source of bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR was the influence on and contamination of the Communist vanguard by the mass of *non-party* functionaries, technocrats and intellectuals—many of them former tsarists—who rallied to the Soviet government when it became clear that the Bolsheviks were going to win the Civil War. Speaking at the Eleventh Party Congress, Lenin stated:

"If we take Moscow with its 4,700 Communists in responsible positions, and if we take that huge bureaucratic machine, that gigantic heap, we must ask: who is directing whom? I doubt very much whether it can truthfully be said that the Communists are directing that heap. To tell the truth, they're not directing, they are being directed."

—"Political Report of the Central Committee of the RCP(B)," 27 March 1922

The Stalin faction became the primary agent within the Communist Party for what Lenin had called "that huge bureaucratic machine." Lenin had recognized the danger of bureaucratism as early as the Tenth Congress and in preparation for the Twelfth Party Congress, which took place in April 1923, Lenin wrote what came to be known as his Testament, calling for Stalin's removal from the post of general secretary. Controlling the party apparatus as general secretary, Stalin placed his men in key positions while demoting and transferring critics and potential opponents.

As long as the Communist Party was largely made up of veteran revolutionary Marxists, it acted as the *main locus of resistance* to the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state. The bureaucratically rigged party conference in January 1924, demonstrated that the Stalin faction had taken over. A key element to the triumph of Stalinist bonapartism was the so-called "Lenin levy" of 1924 which swamped the seasoned Bolshevik cadres by introducing into the party 240,000 politically raw and socially conservative new members. Trotsky later wrote: "By freeing the bureaucracy from the control of the proletarian vanguard, the 'Leninist levy' dealt a death blow to the party of Lenin" (*The Revolution Betrayed* [1936]).

Trotsky's program to combat the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state underwent a fundamental change between the mid-1920s and mid-'30s. During the 1920s Trotsky sought to remove the regime of Stalin/Bukharin and then the Stalin regime through internal political, i.e., factional, struggle in the Communist Party. This strategy was based on two premises: 1) that the overwhelming major-

ity of advanced workers and leftist intellectuals were still in the Communist Party; 2) that it was still possible to engage in political struggle utilizing the remaining mechanisms of party democracy.

By 1933, after Stalin's "Third Period" policies contributed to the triumph of Nazism in Germany, Trotsky concluded: "The present CPSU is not a party but an apparatus of domination in the hands of an uncontrolled bureaucracy" ("It Is Necessary to Build Communist Parties and an International Anew," July 1933). The International Left Opposition then called for the formation of a new revolutionary proletarian party in the USSR in order to lead the workers in restoring a democratic soviet government through political revolution. The Trotskyist movement considered these two tasks to be inseparable.

Blick dates himself and his preoccupations with his "anti-totalitarian" harangue. While Cold War ideologues like Leonard Schapiro, Hannah Arendt and George Orwell saw Soviet "totalitarianism" as a powerful force bent on world domination, Trotsky had earlier recognized that Stalinist bonapartism was brittle and historically transient, based on an unstable bureaucratic caste forced to balance between the collectivized property forms which provided the basis for its existence and the world imperialist order. Today, this should be clear even to the blind.

Capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR, led by elements of the decomposing Stalinist bureaucracy from Gorbachev to Yeltsin, was carried out under the banner of "pluralism," "democracy" and opposition to a "command economy." Gorbachev and Yeltsin—who began as typical local Stalinist party bosses—would certainly find favor with Blick's denunciation of Bolshevik "totalitarianism." In fact, both Yeltsin and his nationalist-corporatist opponents in parliament accused each other of "Bolshevism," which has become a synonym for political hardness and dogmatism in today's Russia. Now that Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet workers state has, as Trotsky predicted, culminated in capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist dismemberment, the construction of a genuinely communist party in the former Soviet Union to lead a social revolution has an even greater urgency.

What Makes Robin Blick Run?

If Blick is neither unique nor original in his rantings against Leninism, it is because he follows in the refuse of a long trail of rather discredited renegades from communism. At the peak of the Cold War in the 1950s, the pulp mills churned out scores of such anti-communist diatribes. As left-wing historian Isaac Deutscher, author of the invaluable three-volume biography of Trotsky, noted of the "god that failed" types:

"His emotional reaction against his former environment keeps him in its deadly grip and prevents him from understanding the drama in which he was involved or half-involved. The picture of communism and Stalinism he draws is that of a gigantic chamber of intellectual and moral horrors. Viewing it, the uninitiated are transferred from politics to pure demonology. Sometimes the artistic effect may be strong—horrors and demons do enter into many a poetic masterpiece; but it is politically unreliable and even dangerous."

—"The Ex-Communist's Conscience," 1950

Blick's demonological view of Bolshevism was no doubt molded, at least in part, by his formative experiences in the Healy organization. "Founder-leader" Gerry Healy ran

an internal regime no less tyrannical and bureaucratic than that of Stalin, albeit without the benefit of state power. Taking Healy's modest claim to be a second Lenin as good coin, Blick perhaps confused this school of consummate political banditry and thuggery with the real thing.

But there is more operating in Blick's fevered assaults on Leninism and Trotskyism than this deforming personal experience. After breaking with Healy in the early '70s, Blick was for a period of time the leading British cadre of the neo-Kautskyan OCI of Pierre Lambert, whose strident Stalinophobia pushed it deep into the embrace of the Social Democracy. By 1980, Robin Blick had given up any pretense of Trotskyism, as he became the foremost public spokesman for the "Polish Solidarity Campaign," British boosters of Lech Walesa's CIA "union." In this endeavor, Blick found himself in the company of the most right-wing

national have been key instruments of the imperialist bourgeoisie in its crusade to destroy the Soviet Union and key props in holding up the bourgeois order in Europe. Among the ranks of this "representative organization of international labor" are more than a handful of capitalist heads of state, including French president François Mitterrand.

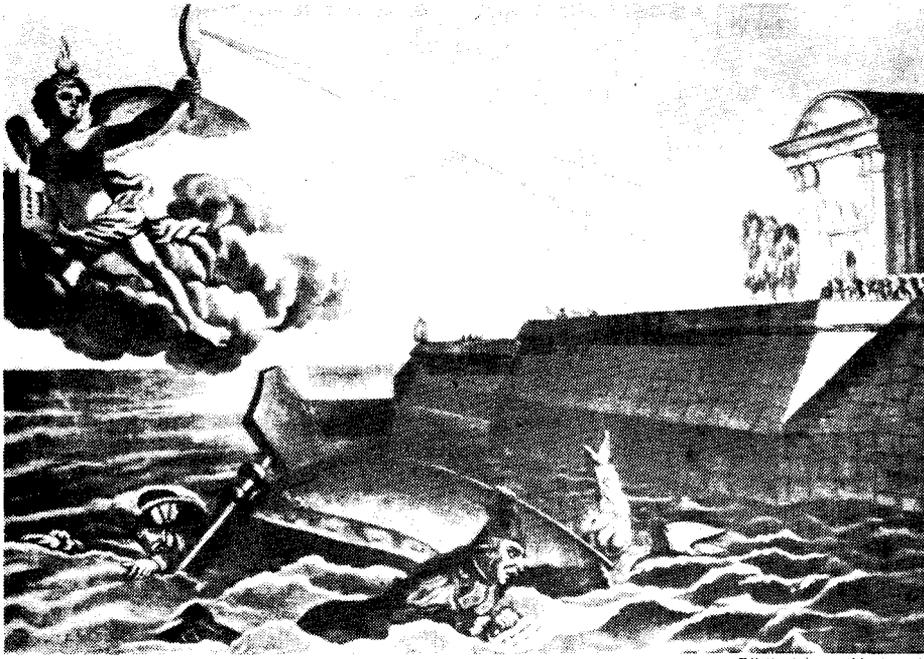
In Britain, of course, the Second International is represented by the Labour Party, final resting place for demoralized dropouts from ostensibly revolutionary organizations. From 1917 on, the cravenly pro-capitalist Labour leaders vituperated against the horrors caused by "Bolshevik elitism." Labour was virulently hostile to the October Revolution. Future Labour prime minister Ramsay MacDonald anticipated Blick's ravings, denouncing the Bolsheviks at the time as "thoughtless anarchists...whose minds were filled with violence and hatred." Only a month

after the February Revolution, the Labour Party dispatched a delegation to Russia, whose reports were avidly awaited by both the King and Prime Minister Lloyd George, to crusade against the Bolsheviks and to promote Russia's continued participation in the imperialist war (see Raymond Challinor, *The Origins of British Bolshevism* [1977]). His Majesty's Government found these "workers' representatives" so useful to the imperialist cause that they authorized a second Labour delegation.

During World War II, Labour actually prosecuted an imperialist war in defense of Britain's colonial empire, serving in Winston Churchill's coalition government. Following the war, the Attlee Labour government played a key role in the formation of the anti-Soviet NATO alliance and in pushing "CIA socialism" in both East and West Europe. From waging the Cold War against the Soviet Union to introducing imperialist troops into Northern Ireland, from savage

strikebreaking against British unions to the imposition of racist "virginity tests" against Asian women immigrants, the Labour Party has more than amply proven its loyalties to its decrepit imperialist paymasters.

Blick's attitude toward the Second International is very much that of a white European intellectual—a Rudyard Kipling "socialist," so to speak. For the leaders of this body have carried out or, in opposition, supported every colonial war against the dark-skinned peoples of Africa and Asia since World War II. During the 1950s, the Labour Party supported the suppression of the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, while it was French social-democratic premier Guy Mollet who *escalated* the war in Algeria. In the '60s, the Labour government of (now Sir) Harold Wilson staunchly supported the Vietnam War, in which U.S. imperialism killed over *two million* workers and peasants. One of the few major parties in the Socialist International outside West Europe is the Israeli "Labor" Party, whose leader



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Impact of Enlightenment on French Revolution depicted in 1789 engraving entitled "The Genius of Rousseau Enlightens the National Assembly." Foreground shows the shipwreck of the feudal estates—nobles, magistrates and clergy.

elements of the Labour Party and TUC (not to mention Conservative "Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher). In late 1983, the Labour/TUC right and the anti-union Fleet Street press joined in a redbaiting witchhunt—instigated by the Healyites—against National Union of Mineworkers leader Arthur Scargill for his opposition to Solidarność as "anti-socialist." The ill-concealed aim of this vendetta was to isolate the militant miners on the eve of their heroic yearlong strike.

Today, Blick in his book unabashedly lauds the Second International as "a body which, despite its many vicissitudes, and internal divergencies, remains to this day the only organisation which can lay claim to being in any way representative of international labour interests." Among the "many vicissitudes" Blick glibly dismisses was the Second International's support to the imperialist slaughter of World War I, which led Lenin to pronounce it dead for the cause of the working class and to begin the struggle for a Third International. Since that time, parties of the Second Inter-



Jesús Lozano

Spanish fascist leader Primo de Rivera in early 1930s reviewing Falangist youth. Fascist hostility to the values of the Enlightenment was expressed in Falange slogan "Down with Intelligence! Long Live Death!"

Yitzhak Rabin called for "force, might, beatings" in the late 1980s to crush the *Intifada* (uprising) of the oppressed Palestinian Arabs in the Occupied Territories. This is what Robin Blick embraces as the "democratic socialist" alternative to Bolshevism.

But *The Seeds of Evil* goes beyond mainstream Social Democracy to attack the particular intellectual currents from which Marxism arose: the 18th century Enlightenment, especially its most radical exponent, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the radical Jacobin current of the French Revolution. Following the present anti-communist intellectual trend (e.g., the late Israeli historian Jacob L. Talmon, the English historian Norman Hampson), Blick traces the "seeds of evil" to "Rousseau's disciples and Lenin's mentors, the Jacobins," who pursued their "totalitarian quest...through the deployment of an all-enveloping system of spying, informing, false accusations, frame-up trials, mass terror and summary executions."

In his anti-Rousseau tirade Blick is attacking the ideas embraced by educated people of all social classes during the period from the end of the 17th through the 18th centuries, who saw in the Enlightenment precisely what its name says: the shining of light on a dark and obscurantist feudal past. The questioning of the feudal hierarchy and of the traditional subjugation of women, contempt for religious obscurantism, respect for rational thought and human inquiry, the hope that human endeavor could create a more just and harmonious society: these were ideas that not only nourished the revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie, but accompanied the rise of modern science and technology.

It was the French Jacobins who developed the ideas of the Enlightenment into a political program to overthrow the feudal order, placing the rising bourgeoisie in power in the Great French Revolution of 1789. The fear and loathing unleashed in the old privileged feudal classes by the French Revolution expressed itself in opposition not

just to the new bourgeois order which Napoleon sought to export to the rest of Europe, but in rejection of the very ideas of the Enlightenment itself. In condemning Rousseau and the Jacobins, Blick is identifying himself with the recrudescing obscurantism with which the feudal ruling classes opposed the French Revolution. We have no idea exactly which period of feudal social organization Blick means to uphold by rejecting the French Revolution—the absolutist monarchy based on the divine right of kings or the more localized medieval feudal order which gave rise to absolutism. In any case he shares his vision of a presumed pre-Jacobin social utopia (where Jews were legally required to live in ghettos and the concept of citizenship did not exist) with both Alexander Solzhenitsyn and would-be King Michael of Romania.

By contrast, Marx and Engels (and, following them, Blick's mentor Julius Martov as well as Lenin) saw the radical Jacobin tradition and the utopian socialist current which sprang from it as one of the three intellectual currents which gave rise to scientific socialism (the other two being early 19th century German philosophy and classical British political economy of the 18th and 19th centuries).

But the feudal order has long since disappeared as a contender for the social and political organization of society, at least in the capitalist nations. Under modern conditions, and with the current configuration of social classes, the kind of anti-Enlightenment obscurantism pushed by Blick finds its most complete expression in...fascism. Blick will no doubt take exception to this statement. He should contemplate for a moment the Spanish Falange slogan, "Down with Intelligence! Long Live Death!" This slogan is the most consistent modern-day expression of opposition to the Enlightenment.

In his own perverse way, Blick affirms the validity of the Marxist axiom that the choice posed before humanity is communism or barbarism. In its accelerating slide into decadence, imperialism has not only succeeded in destroying the socialist gains of the Russian Revolution, but ever more aggressively assaults the democratic conquests of the French Revolution. In his headlong rush from ostensible communism, Robin Blick has clearly found his place in the imperialist "New World Order." Today, the Trotskyists stand not only as the true heirs and continuators of Bolshevism, bearing a program to gain proletarian state power and free humanity from the miseries of racism, war, colonial oppression and capitalist exploitation, but also as the defenders of the rational and universalist values of the Enlightenment and the gains achieved in centuries past by the bourgeoisie's victory over feudalism. ■

Revolutionary Integrationism...

(continued from page 56)

American socialist revolution. The strategy for black liberation has been debated within the Marxist movement ever since the early 1920s, when Lenin and Trotsky's Communist International began agitating to convince the early American Communists to treat it as a special question separate from, but integral to, the general class struggle. As James P. Cannon later wrote in his 1962 work, *The First Ten Years of American Communism*:

"The American communists in the early days, under the influence and pressure of the Russians in the Comintern, were slowly and painfully learning to change their *attitude*; to assimilate the new theory of the Negro question as a *special* question of doubly-exploited second-class citizens, requiring a program of special demands as part of the overall program—and to start doing something about it....

"Everything new and progressive on the Negro question came from Moscow, after the revolution of 1917, and as a result of the revolution—not only for the American communists who responded directly, but for all others concerned with the question."

The February 1993 issue of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* carried a discussion article entitled "Revolutionary Integrationism and Black Liberation," by Peter Johnson, purporting to defend revolutionary integrationism, the theory formulated and fought for by Richard S. Fraser inside the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the 1950s and early 1960s. Dick Fraser (whose party name was Richard Kirk) was an organizer, trade-union activist, journalist, and largely self-taught scholar and educator. Joining the Trotskyist movement in 1934, Fraser was a founding member of the SWP and served on its National Committee from 1940 to 1966.

Peter Johnson is a former leader of the Revolutionary Workers League, and now of a split-off called the Trotskyist League. Johnson's presentation is, politically and historically, a distortion of revolutionary integrationism. Revolutionary integrationism is a *program* for building a revolutionary party and for *intervening in social reality to change society*. Dick Fraser's overwhelming interest was to forge a program to reach both black and white workers and unite them in common struggle against exploitation and oppression, under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party. He argued hard and effectively in his 1955 SWP internal discussion article that blacks in the U.S. do not constitute a nation, and debunked the arguments in favor of the SWP's equivocation at the time on a possible future development of a black nation ("For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Struggle," reprinted in the Spartacist League's *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised Edition], "What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism"). The black question is one of *racial oppression*—unique and distinct from national oppression. A national struggle is characterized by a desire to *resist* forced assimilation into the dominant nation. It is the opposite for the black struggle. The ruling class of this country has consciously and deliberately maintained racial separation. And conversely, as Fraser pointed out in his 1953 lectures on "The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution": "the basic advances which the Negroes have made through the entire historical period from the founding of abolitionism in the 1830's until the present day have been achieved in the struggle against separation, and essentially for the right of assimilation



W.K. Ross

James P. Cannon, outstanding leader and founder of early American Communist Party and Trotskyist movement in the U.S. Here relaxing with canine friend, Wong.

into American society." The main axis of black struggle has historically been for *assimilation* and against racial separation.

Black people in the U.S. have never, in their majority, considered themselves a separate nation. Fraser recognized that when a nationalist mood arises within the black population, it is in reaction to a defeat—as with the movement led by Marcus Garvey which reached its height during the heyday of the Ku Klux Klan in the early 1920s. This also occurred after the civil rights movement stalled in the mid-1960s, having won formal legal equality, when it came up against the *economic* realities of capitalist exploitation and oppression. Black nationalism in the U.S. now and historically has meant *black segregation*—it is an *adaptation* to the "separate and unequal" racist status quo imposed by the capitalist ruling class, and a renunciation of struggle against it. And it is typically expressed in the call for "black control of the black community," taken up by sections of the black petty bourgeoisie who desire to exploit "their own people" (exemplified today by Louis Farrakhan's schemes for "black capitalism").

Trotskyism and the Black Question

The debate in the Trotskyist movement over the black question began with the founding conference of the Communist League of America, formed by supporters of Trotsky expelled from the Stalinized Communist Party in 1928. Following a dispute at the conference over the slogan of the right of self-determination, it was decided to defer action until a more exhaustive discussion could be held in the League "in view of the profound importance of this question." When the CLA was able to send a leading member, Arne Swabeck, to Turkey for discussions with Trotsky in 1933, the black question in America was on the agenda. Swabeck argued against the CP slogan for "self-determination for the Black Belt" (a collection of majority-black counties strewn across the Deep South), asserting that the race question was integral to the class question and the main demand should be for full "social, political and economic equality" for black people. Swabeck

was presumably expressing the position of the majority of the CLA leadership. Trotsky, on the other hand, was inclined to support the slogan of self-determination based on his experience with the national question in Europe, but admitted that he had not studied the question, and suggested, for instance, that blacks in the South might have their own suppressed "Negro language." It should be noted that James P. Cannon, the principal leader of the League, also supported the self-determination slogan in the period leading up to the CLA's founding convention, as he indicated in a letter to Albert Glotzer in April 1929. Evidently there was further discussion within the CLA leadership, with most of the leaders adopting an integrationist, anti-nationalist position by the time of Swaback's discussion with Trotsky. This was certainly the line of the lengthy document, "Communism and the Negro," written by Max Shachtman in early 1933. A copy of this document was sent to Trotsky (and is available in the Trotsky archives at Harvard). Unfortunately, Shachtman's document was not widely distributed or discussed outside of the leadership in the CLA.

Trotsky was primarily concerned that the CLA have a serious orientation to the question lest they capitulate to the backward consciousness of sections of the American working class. He understood that without such an orientation, it would not be possible to make a revolution in the U.S. As he put it in a later discussion in 1939, "We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class.... If it happens that we in the SWP are not able to find the road to this stratum, then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and all the rest would be only a lie." Unfortunately, the CLA internal discussion in the early 1930s got sidetracked and the Trotskyists didn't finally adopt a formal position on the black question until the 1939 second convention of the SWP.

The result of the 1939 convention was contradictory. It adopted two resolutions on the black question written by the dynamic black West Indian intellectual C.L.R. James

Harvard University Press

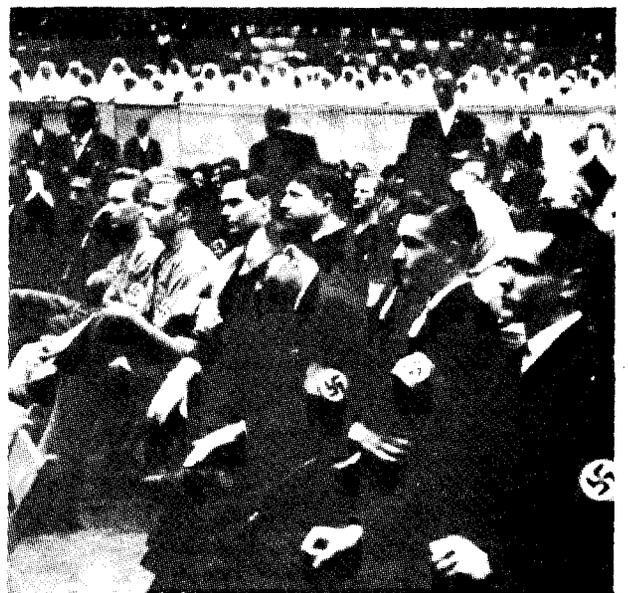


Prinkipo, Turkey, May 1933. Left to right, standing: Leon Trotsky, Arne Swaback, Pierre Frank; seated, Jean van Heijenoort, Rudolf Klement.

(J.R. Johnson). The first, "The SWP and Negro Work," stated that blacks "are designated by their whole historical past to be, under adequate leadership, the very vanguard of the proletarian revolution." It criticized "the neglect of Negro work and of the Negro question," and warned that if the SWP could not "find its way to the great masses of the underprivileged...the party is bound to degenerate." The second resolution, "The Right of Self-Determination and the Negro in the United States of North America," argued for the theoretical possibility of the awakening of a national consciousness and mass demands for a "Negro state." It explicitly left open the question of whether blacks in



Mike Theiler



Eve Arnold

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan (left), demagogic purveyor of "black capitalism," tells black people to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps against horrendous oppression under capitalism. Farrakhan rails against "black-on-black" violence, ignoring racist police and fascist terror. Right: Delegation of American Nazi Party at 1961 Nation of Islam meeting. Both espouse anti-Semitism and segregationist ideology.

America are a national minority to which the slogan of self-determination would apply, but vowed to support this right if such a development occurred.

The 1939 resolutions were a turning point in recognition of the importance of the black question, and the SWP's black work soon took off. Fortunately, the substance of the resolution on self-determination was effectively ignored (in fact the resolutions were not published in full until the early 1960s), as its nationalist spirit flew in the face of the already demonstrated integrationist impulses of black workers, who streamed into the new industrial unions of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). And the practical work of the SWP in the 1940s was profoundly integrationist. The book *Fighting Racism in World War II* (Monad Press, New York, 1980) shows the breadth and depth of the SWP's agitation and direct involvement in struggles against discrimination and segregation (much of it under the direct influence of George Breitman). The SWP participated in and was the first organization to publish a pamphlet on the March on Washington Movement. They took up and publicized many defense cases, especially on behalf of black soldiers persecuted for protesting Jim Crow conditions in the military. And in the aftermath of the anti-black race riot in Detroit in 1943, the SWP fought for flying squadrons of union militants to stand ready to defend blacks menaced by racist mobs. Such actions, and the numerous articles and pamphlets on the black struggle published by the SWP in the '40s, attest to the importance the Trotskyists gave to this work. The SWP viewed black liberation as a task of the working class as a whole, and intervened in the struggle against racial oppression with a militant integrationist perspective.

It is indicative that the SWP made its major breakthrough in black recruitment in Detroit, where they had their one major implantation in a CIO union, the United Auto Workers. But for the most part SWP trade-union concentrations were centered in the job-trusting craft American Federation of Labor (AFL) unions like the Teamsters and the West Coast Sailors Union of the Pacific (SUP). This put the party

SWP pamphlet against Jim Crow segregation by Charles Jackson (Ed Keemer), black physician recruited to the SWP in the early 1940s.



at some distance from the bulk of the black working class. When John L. Lewis broke from the AFL and founded the CIO in order to put himself at the head of the mass organizing drives in manufacturing industry, he made use of thousands of young Communist Party organizers. The strength of the CP in the CIO unions gave them a real weight and authority in the black working class, which they later used to sabotage the fight for black rights in order to support U.S. imperialism in World War II. The mass of CP organizers in the CIO may well have acted as an insurmountable barrier to major Trotskyist participation in the CIO. But it is indisputable that this meant the SWP was not well situated to win authority among the newly unionized and class-conscious black proletariat. Nonetheless, during the war the Trotskyists unflinchingly carried forward the fight

**WORKERS OF NEW YORK!
Stop the Fascists!**

PICKET MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, MON., FEB. 20, 6 P. M.!

The fascists are mobilizing at Madison Square Garden Monday night. Hitler's German-American Bund gangsters, Pelley's Silver Shirt scum and Coughlin's mob of labor-haters have hurled a brazen challenge at the workers of New York.

Wrapping themselves in the cloak of patriotism and "Americanism," the fascists prepare to open their anti-labor and anti-Jewish poison throughout New York City.

These gangs have already gone too far. They must be stopped. What are you going to do to stop this murderous crew?

We must not let this filth, creeping along get a foothold in New York. Gather in front of Madison Square Garden Monday by the thousands! Be there at 6:00 P. M. sharp!

Let the fascists feel the anger and the might of the working class—Get out and picket!

Don't wait for the concentration camps—Act now!

On to Madison Square Garden Monday Night!

Issued by the
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY (Fourth International)
116 University Place, New York City

February 1939. Thousands of copies of this leaflet were issued to the workers of New York calling for a mass demonstration on the streets to protest the fascist meeting scheduled for February 20, 1939, in Madison Sq. Garden. 40,000 workers rallied to the call.



New York City, 20 February 1939: Mass mobilization of 50,000 called by SWP against fascist rally at Madison Square Garden. Trotskyists organized the outrage of workers against Nazi Bund.

against segregation and racist terror in the face of the CP's patriotic war fever and government repression.

Richard Fraser and Revolutionary Integration

In 1946 Dick Fraser attended the SWP Trotsky School at the Grass Lake Camp near Detroit, where Edgar Keemer (Charles Jackson), a prominent black SWP spokesman, proposed that the SWP launch an independent organization to fight against discrimination and racism—a transitional organization to address the felt needs of the specially oppressed and to recruit them to a fighting Trotskyist program. The proposal was rejected, primarily based on the argument that “the black workers, when they reached a social consciousness, would move to the NAACP—just as the working class first moved to the AF of L as they developed consciousness,” Fraser wrote later. He felt at the time that this argument was wrong, but was not sure why. His dissatisfaction was greatly increased by the loss over the next few years of the hundreds of black workers who had joined the party during World War II.

Fraser began to study the black question, looking to explain his feeling of dissatisfaction with the party's rejection of Keemer's proposal. He soon concluded that the official SWP theory and program were weak and inadequate. The trouble with the SWP was not its practical work around the black question, but that it did not have a coherent theory which corresponded to the actual living struggle for integration and equality. This surely contributed to the SWP's inability to consolidate a black Trotskyist cadre. As Fraser later wrote, “the basic element in the NAACP argument, which had been put forward by all the leading people [in the SWP], was that they couldn't believe or admit to the maturity of the existing consciousness among the hundreds and thousands of blacks, who were militantly pressing toward integration.” What the SWP leadership refused to see is that there is a fundamental difference between a trade union at the point of production, and a particular petty-bourgeois-led liberal integrationist organization. The analogy they made between a trade union and the NAACP was

fundamentally wrong-headed.

Fraser's two public lectures on “The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution” were published in the SWP internal bulletin in August 1954 (reprinted in the Prometheus Research Library bulletin No. 3, *In Memoriam: Richard S. Fraser—An Appreciation and Selection of His Work*). The lectures sparked a series of written documents and internal debates in the SWP, especially between Fraser and George Breitman, who became his main opponent in the debates and the chief advocate at the time of the slogan of the right of self-determination for blacks. Breitman maintained that the future course of the black struggle was as yet undetermined and that blacks might still choose a “nationalist solution” at some future time. However, he agreed with Fraser that the SWP should not then advocate “self-determination” as a program of struggle. At this point the counterposition was confined to the theoretical level. In the public policy and practical work of the party there was no difference between Breitman's

The Fraser Family



Richard S. Fraser, whose work greatly extended and expanded Marxist theory on black oppression and the struggle for black freedom in the U.S.

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line and Fraser's line at the time.

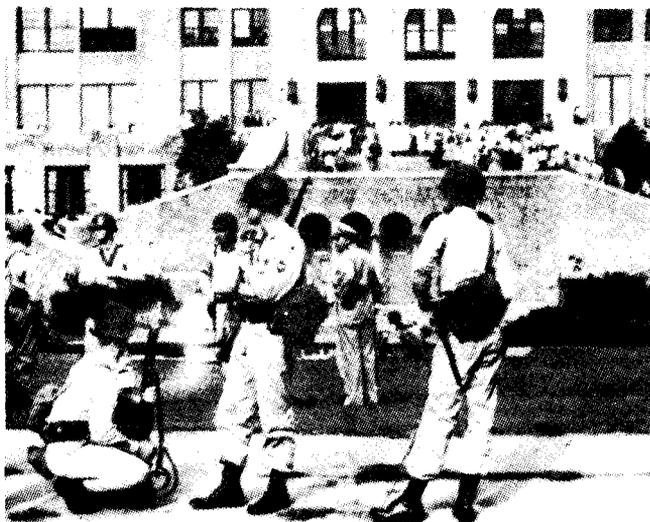
In 1959, James P. Cannon wrote his famous article, "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Question" (published in *The First Ten Years of American Communism*). Cannon, who was in retirement from the day-to-day leadership of the SWP, wrote this on the heels of this whole series of debates in the party on the black question, especially between Fraser and Breitman. He took out the early CP and by inference the SWP of the late 1950s as well. Referring to the CP in the 1930s, Cannon said:

"The expansion of communist influence in the Negro movement in the Thirties happened despite the fact that one of the new slogans imposed on the party by the Comintern—the slogan of 'self-determination'...never seemed to fit the actual situation. The slogan of 'self-determination' found little or no acceptance in the Negro community; after the collapse of the separatist movement led by Garvey, their trend was mainly toward integration, with equal rights. "In practice the CP jumped over this contradiction. When the party adopted the slogan of 'self-determination,' it did not drop its aggressive agitation for *Negro equality and Negro rights on every front*. On the contrary, it intensified and extended this agitation. That's what the Negroes wanted to hear, and that's what made the difference. It was the CP's agitation and action under the latter slogan that brought the results, without the help, and probably despite, the unpopular 'self-determination' slogan and all the theses written to justify it."

Debate Over the Call for Federal Troops

What began as a theoretical difference was soon tested in real struggle with the outbreak of debate in the SWP over the demand that the federal government send troops to the South to protect black people. The demand for federal intervention in Mississippi was first raised in the SWP by Breitman and in the *Militant* in 1955. Fraser slammed the SWP's capitulation to the liberal pacifist leaders of the civil rights movement:

"...the most probable condition under which the Federal Government will send troops to the South will be that the Negroes hold the initiative in the struggle. As long as the white supremacists have the initiative and the lid of repression is clamped on tightly, the social equilibrium is not upset by a lynching or other terrorist actions. When the Negroes take the initiative it is a 'race riot' and the public



Richard Fraser fought SWP call for federal troops to "protect" black people. Here, Arkansas National Guard defending segregated Little Rock Central High School.



Militant, 17 October 1955, shows SWP's contradictory position on the role of the capitalist state: top headline denounced use of National Guard as strikebreakers, while at bottom they called for "Immediate Federal Intervention!" into the South. This revision of Marxism on the state met with wide opposition inside the party.

security is threatened and an excellent reason is given to the government to intervene.

"When the Negroes hold the initiative it will be the function of the Federal army to restore law and order on the basis of the existing social system, and will involve severe repressions against the Negroes."

In good part, the majority of the leadership, which supported the demand, saw the implementation of their call for troops as something that could never happen, that is, as a way to "expose" bourgeois hypocrisy. But it was a very bad methodology, and the adoption of the call for troops to the South indicated a deepening political disorientation in the SWP in the late 1950s. Not only did this slogan pose a fundamental revision of the Marxist understanding of the bourgeois state, but it prompted the party to actually support Eisenhower's introduction of federal troops into Little Rock in 1957—the end result of which was the crushing of local black self-defense efforts.

There tended to be an overlap between those who were inclined to support "self-determination" and those who supported the demand for troops. Fraser (and others who opposed the demand) ultimately lost the fight on this question. The 1957 SWP majority convention resolution, "The Class-Struggle Road to Negro Equality," envisioned support to separatist demands "if they should reflect the mass will." It was adopted by the convention, but with significant reservations expressed on this question and on the call for federal troops. The draft resolution also included uncritical adulation of the liberal pacifist civil rights leadership around Martin Luther King Jr. Fraser submitted his own counterposed "Resolution on the Negro Struggle," and fought at

the convention for the SWP to differentiate itself from the reformists in the Southern movement. In remarks at the convention he said,

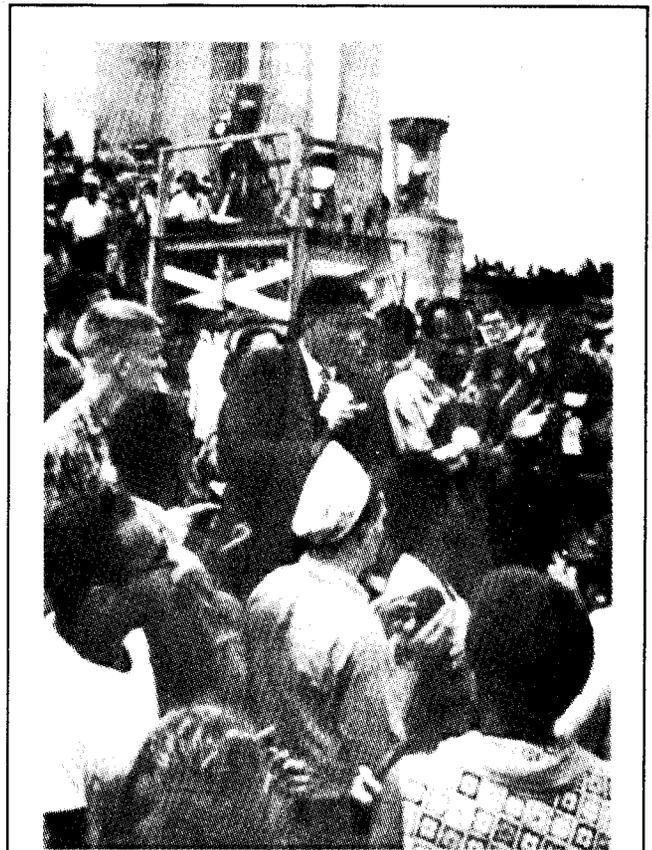
"The critical problem of the moment, the crisis of leadership in the Negro movement, revolves around the question of reformism or revolution...."

"The [majority] resolution does not differentiate. It supports the basic line of the religious pacifist leadership.... The differentiation will come as a result of our being able to inject the revolutionary proletarian program into that struggle."

While the SWP's position on the black question had been the subject of debate for more than two decades, the party carried out a socialist integrationist public policy. It was only when the party began to go off the rails politically in a number of directions that a definitive position *in favor* of black nationalism won out. By the early 1960s, ground down by the isolation and McCarthyite witchhunting of the 1950s, the SWP had lost its revolutionary bearings. The party's qualitative departure from its erstwhile working-class politics began around 1960, when it slid into the role of uncritical cheerleaders for the petty-bourgeois radical-nationalist leadership of the Cuban Revolution, abandoning the perspective of permanent revolution and the corresponding centrality of the working class and the necessity of building Trotskyist parties in every country. The abandonment of the struggle for Marxist leadership of the black struggle was the domestic reflection of this denial of the centrality of the proletariat in the destruction of capitalism. Ironically, the SWP espoused black nationalism in the 1960s, at a time when blacks were concentrated in urban centers and integrated into the proletariat to a larger extent than ever before. At the 1963 SWP Convention, the "Freedom Now" resolution, the first to attribute to the black struggle a "dual vanguardist" role, codified a wholesale embrace of black nationalism and was accompanied by a policy of *abstention from the Southern civil rights struggle*. Rather than vying for revolutionary leadership of the reformist-dominated, but millions-strong mass civil rights movement, the '63 resolution argued that the organization of blacks *independent* of the working class and the revolutionary party was a *necessary* step in the struggle and that "the logic of the Negro struggle inevitably leads it into socialist channels." The '63 resolution envisioned the SWP as sideline cheerleaders for black radicals who would supposedly acquire revolutionary consciousness without the direct intervention of a revolutionary party. But socialist consciousness is never *spontaneous*. It can only be carried forward, defended and spread through the instrument of a conscious Marxist vanguard.

Peter Johnson's article in *BIDOM* implies that the SWP adopted an overt position in favor of black nationalism only in 1969 with "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation." By jumping from Fraser's 1955 document to the 1969 SWP Convention, he disappears the critical programmatic fights by Fraser against the demand on the government to send federal troops to the South, and against the party resolutions on the black struggle in 1957 and 1963. This also saves him from having to deal with the Revolutionary Tendency within the SWP, precursor of the Spartacist League, which fought the degeneration of the party, and supported and carried forward Fraser's fight for revolutionary integrationism.

Fraser had formalized his own tendency within the party in 1957, and by 1963 it was in full-blown opposition to



Lyon/Magnum

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee workers at 1963 March on Washington which brought together all wings of the civil rights movement to pressure the Democratic Kennedy administration and Congress to pass civil rights legislation. Already disillusioned with liberalism, SNCC came into open conflict with mainstream civil rights leaders and the Democratic Party over preparations for the march. SNCC leader John Lewis' speech was censored to remove reference to revolution and attack on Kennedy and the Democrats. Criminal abstention of the Socialist Workers Party, which refused to intervene directly in the Southern struggles and tailed first the liberal civil rights movement and then black nationalism, blocked radicalizing black and white youth from finding the class-struggle road to black freedom through socialist revolution.

the majority leadership under Farrell Dobbs. The Kirk-Kaye tendency, which by then on other questions espoused an eclectic brand of sectoralist politics, submitted a resolution to the 1963 convention upholding the program of revolutionary integrationism. The Revolutionary Tendency supported the resolution with the following statement:

"1. Our support to the *basic line* of the 1963 Kirk-Kaye resolution, 'Revolutionary Integration,' is centered upon the following proposition:

"The Negro people are not a nation; rather they are an oppressed race-color caste, in the main comprising the most exploited layer of the American working class. From this condition the consequence has come that the Negro struggle for freedom has had, historically, the aim of integration into an equalitarian society.

"II. Our minority is most concerned with the political conclusions stemming from the theoretical failures of the P.C.'s draft, 'Freedom Now.' This concern found expression in the recent individual discussion article, 'For Black Trotskyism.' The systematic abstentionism and the accompanying attitude of acquiescence which accepts as inevitable that 'ours is a white party,' are most profound threats to the revolutionary capacity of the party on the American scene."

The RT submitted a one-page amendment to the perspectives document for the convention arguing that the party should "expend significant material resources in overcoming our isolation from Southern struggles. In helping to build a revolutionary movement in the South, our forces should work directly with and through the developing left-wing formations in the movement there. A successful outcome to our action would lead to an historic breakthrough for the Trotskyist movement." The leadership of the RT was expelled in December 1963 in the first-ever political purge in the rapidly rightward moving party.

Peter Johnson does not ask any of the hard questions about black nationalism or even hint at the consequences of the SWP's capitulation to it. For example, during the New York City teachers strike in 1968, sparked by the firing of a number of union leaders, the SWP joined with black nationalists and liberal Republican mayor John Lindsay in endorsing scabbing in the name of "community control" of the schools. This boiled down to a demand for more black administrators to police separate and unequal ghetto schools and act as union-busters for the city administration. The SWP jumped right into this "divide and rule"

union-busting scheme, and in the pages of the *Militant* even justified the anti-Jewish sentiment among blacks as a *legitimate* response to the strike. And in 1978, after Crown Heights erupted in violence between blacks and Hasidic Jews, the SWP tailed the right-wing black nationalists' call for black vigilante groups, playing the capitalists' game of perpetuating the deep racial and ethnic divisions which are the central obstacle to a working-class socialist movement in this country.

There is nothing in common between the SWP's position on nationalism and self-determination in 1939 and what their position later became. Those Trotskyists who in the '30s and '40s espoused the potential viability of the self-determination slogan as applied to American blacks did so on the basis of a Leninist program, upholding the democratic right of an oppressed nation to self-determination, that is, separate statehood, if it so chooses. It was not presented as *the* program and it certainly in no way encompassed a federalist organization of the revolutionary party, which is what the SWP made it into in the '60s—the separate black vanguard and the white revolutionary party. Lenin fought for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination as a means of advancing the struggle for *socialist revolution*, but he was irreconcilably opposed to the separate organization of the proletarians of different nationalities. Lenin wrote in May of 1917, "The interests of the working class demand that the workers of all nationalities in Russia should have common proletarian organisations: political, trade union, co-operative educational institutions, and so forth.

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Only the merging of the workers of the various nationalities into such common organisations will make it possible for the proletariat to wage a successful struggle against international Capital and bourgeois nationalism."

It is useful to note that Fraser's most vocal opponent, George Breitman, himself had held an anti-nationalist position in the 1940s. In an excellent pamphlet written by Breitman and Arthur Burch (SWP Detroit branch leader) in 1943, titled "The Struggle for Negro Equality," under the heading "The 'Negro Nationalists'," they wrote:

"These people stand as an obstacle to an alliance of the white workers with the Negroes, to the organization of the Negroes into the trade unions, to a fighting solidarity against the common enemy. Their counsel leads to a blind alley, to the isolation of the Negroes from their natural allies, to objectively aiding the capitalists in keeping the workers divided."

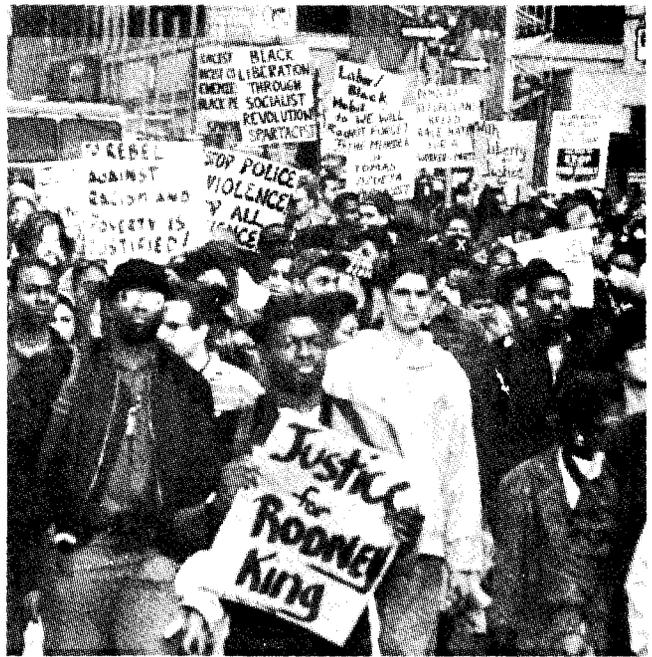
Dick Fraser's Unique Contribution

Dick Fraser was able to take the Trotskyist politics of the Fourth International, his extensive independent research on the history of the black question, and his own experiences in the American class struggle to forge what is a significant extension of Marxism as applied to the American revolution. He was unable to persuade the SWP that he was right on revolutionary integrationism in the 1950s when he raised it, despite the effectiveness of his arguments and the fact that his theory *explained and supported* the party's work, which was integrationist. His development of revolutionary integrationism, intersecting tremendous social change in the country, crossed in time with the degeneration of the SWP, and that's why he couldn't win his fight. But in the process, he won over to his view the forces which went on to found the Spartacist League and carry forward that program.

From its beginning as the Revolutionary Tendency inside the SWP, the SL has adhered to the fundamentals of Fraser's revolutionary integrationism. He was a co-reporter on the black question at the SL founding conference in 1966 and spoke at the Seventh National Conference in 1983. In the last five years of his life, he maintained a regular correspondence with leading members of the SL on key aspects of its work, and joined the organization in 1987. Fraser's last political act before his death was his endorsement of the November 5 Mobilization that stopped the Ku Klux Klan in Philadelphia in 1988, which was also endorsed by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency.

Peter Johnson claims to be "following in the footsteps of Richard Fraser." But a glance through ten years of the RWL's public press under Johnson's leadership turned up not a single mention of either Richard Fraser or revolutionary integrationism. And the RWL's 35-page "Basic Documents, Number 3," *The Specially Oppressed and the Proletarian Vanguard*, devotes all of *two pages* to blacks and includes exactly *one* passing reference to the "process of revolutionary integration."

However, the September 1992 issue of the Trotskyist League's *International Revolution*, in an article on the "L.A. rebellion," mentions both Fraser and revolutionary integrationism, and quotes C.L.R. James at length from his 1939 discussions with Trotsky on the need for "a Negro mass organization." Suddenly Johnson has "discovered" revolutionary integrationism and Richard Fraser. But in his discussion article in *BIDOM*, Johnson is purposely philistine



Workers Vanguard

Multiracial protest in New York City, 1 May 1992, following acquittal of racist LAPD cops who brutally beat Rodney King. L.A. upheaval and nationwide integrated protests shook U.S. society.

in presenting the debates in the Socialist Workers Party on revolutionary integration vs. black nationalism. One might conclude that he is trying to position himself as a left pole of attraction within the ex-SWP milieu without having to draw any sharp programmatic conclusions. So, like all centrists, he circumvents Marxist clarity by rounding off all the programmatic edges. Thus the TL's real appetites are shown by their classless demand, devoid of programmatic content, for a "new political party," and their call for support to a *bourgeois candidate*, Ron Daniels (former lieutenant to Jesse Jackson), in the last presidential election.

Peter Johnson presents the question as though there are two equally legitimate viewpoints within the Trotskyist movement, "revolutionary integrationism" and "revolutionary nationalism," and in a bloodless, academic fashion, he manages to distort the real meaning of both sides of the dispute. Johnson's definition of "revolutionary integrationism" makes it sound a lot like "self-determination" for black people:

"...the concrete goal of the struggle for Black liberation is to remove by revolutionary means the obstacles to Black equality and integration, so that Black people, individually and collectively, can decide how they want to participate in building socialism in a unified workers' state."

Since Johnson's article was published, there have been several substantial responses arguing against revolutionary integrationism and in favor of black nationalism. In their article in *BIDOM* (No. 105, April 1993), Steve Bloom and Claire Cohen argue essentially that self-determination means anything that black people want, and that the "old [Marxist] terminology" has simply been filled with "new meaning." But the term becomes meaningless when abstracted from Marxist categories. Another reply to Johnson in the May issue of *BIDOM* by Vera Wigglesworth and Jim Miles goes so far as to argue that any socialist who does not advocate "self-determination" for blacks is a racist! It also implies



Workers Vanguard

Labor/black mobilization to stop the Ku Klux Klan in Springfield, Illinois, January 16, 1994, exemplifies Spartacist League's strategy to fight fascism centered on organizing the social power of the integrated working class.

that blacks in the U.S. constitute "a nation being born" (for the past 300 years?). Bloom/Cohen and Wigglesworth/Miles, along with Johnson himself, imply that the "right of self-determination" applies to any oppressed group of people in capitalist society regardless of whether they are a nation or not. This is not Marxism. Gays and women are oppressed under capitalism, but only those who advocate separate struggles by each oppressed "sector" of society, would apply "self-determination" in these cases. And that is precisely what the advocates of "self-determination" for black people in the U.S. espouse. This is called sectoralism, and is antithetical to the Leninist position that the party should be a "tribune of the people." The task of the revolutionary party must be to bring the program of the proletarian vanguard into all the struggles of the oppressed—to expose their pro-capitalist misleadership, to fight for the organized labor movement to champion these struggles, and to link their

struggles and causes with the fight for working-class power. This includes building transitional organizations of women, youth, blacks, allied to the party. This is exemplified in the union-centered labor/black mobilizations initiated by the Spartacist League over the past dozen years which have stopped the Klan and Nazis from marching in major cities in the U.S.

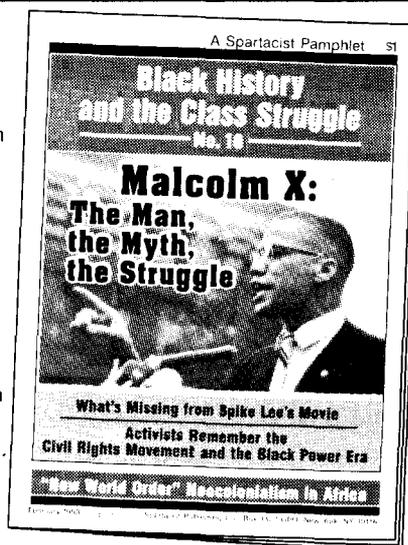
The demand for self-determination for a now non-existent black nation is particularly pernicious in the context of virulent bourgeois racist ideology that asserts that government programs can do nothing for black people since the "Great Society" "War on Poverty" programs "failed." Accordingly, blacks should help themselves, survive and die by themselves, lest their sacred right to self-determination, i.e., self-help, is trampled underfoot by misguided social reformers. "Socialists" advocating this line are tailing behind the black petty-bourgeois misleaders (and their bourgeois masters) who are busily "self-determining" for the black masses through "empowering" black capitalist schemes. It is a concession to the forced segregation fostered by the white ruling class.

The Coming Third American Revolution

Because the American bourgeoisie's class war on the working masses has been so one-sided during recent memory, the young generation of militants tend to see only the painful and pathetic reality of the racist ideology which pervades all sectors of society in "normal" times. But when powerful social struggles erupt, these attitudes are rapidly swept aside by the developing consciousness of shared class interest. The history of the U.S. has shown this numerous times, and will again. Socialist revolution, in which black workers will play a vanguard role as the section of the proletariat with the least to lose and the most to gain from a fundamental reshaping of the existing social order, is the only means for delivering ourselves from the capitalist bondage that took the place of the chains of slavery. The key is to forge a multiracial communist leadership, tested in struggle, that can intervene at moments of sharp social convulsion to change history forever. That is the program of revolutionary integration. ■

Partial contents:

- Malcolm X: What's Missing from Spike Lee's Movie
- Activists Remember the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Era
- Imperialism Starves Africa
- U.S. Global Cops Out of Somalia!
- Georgia: Down With the Flag of Slavery!
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Trotskyism and the Black Struggle in the U.S.

In Defense of Revolutionary Integrationism

In February 1993, the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* (*BIDOM*) published an article titled, "Revolutionary Integrationism and Black Liberation" by Peter Johnson, a former leader of the Revolutionary Workers League and currently head of a tiny centrist group in the U.S. called the Trotskyist League. The TL is part of the "International Trotskyist Opposition," a faction of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat (USec). *BIDOM* is now published as an independent socialist journal in "fraternal solidarity" with the USec, but it was formerly the publication of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, which liquidated in 1992 when most of its members joined the Fourth Internationalist Caucus of Solidarity.

In its February issue, *BIDOM* stated in an "Editor's Note" that "socialists for many years have discussed and debated

the question of how best to understand Black nationalism and its relationship to the socialist struggle," and announced that "the questions raised are important and will certainly be discussed in future issues." Over the next five months, *BIDOM* published a half dozen more articles in an ongoing discussion on what has become known in the Marxist movement as the "black question" in the United States.

The following article is adapted from a discussion article by Lynn Wallace, a supporter of the Spartacist League/U.S., which was submitted to *BIDOM*, but which they chose not to publish.

* * *

The struggle for the liberation of black people from racial oppression in the U.S. is a central strategic question of the
continued on page 46



Detroit News

Auto workers pour out of Chevrolet plant in Detroit at the beginning of a strike, part of the wave of wildcat strikes in the mid-1940s. The organization of black workers into the United Auto Workers forged unity in struggle and prevented the use of newly migrated Southern blacks as strikebreakers. The organization and integration of the CIO industrial unions went far in breaking down racial divisions and prejudices.



Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution