

## Northern Ireland: for a proletarian perspective!

# Imperialist "peace" fraud fuels Orange terror

The bitter reality of the imperialist "peace" fraud was brought home recently as frenzied mobs of the anti-Catholic Orange Order rampaged across Northern Ireland. In early July, gangs of Loyalist thugs shut down whole towns, attacking Catholic homes to enforce their "right" to march through a Catholic enclave in Portadown. Their 11 July march was protected by the Loyalist-infested Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), who terrorised Catholic protesters and then alongside British troops brutally suppressed Catholic protests in the North. In Derry, factory worker Dermot McShane was crushed to death by an army tank and 16-year-old Kevin McCafferty was left in a critical condition after being hit in the head by an RUC plastic bullet.

Emboldened by the Portadown events, the Loyalists planned to stage their "Apprentice Boys" parade along Derry's walls. This provocative march was revived last year, under RUC protection, for the first time in 26 years. In 1969, the Loyalists' march led to a rampage by the RUC and reactionary thugs against Derry's Catholic Bogside neighbourhood, and provoked intense battles that resulted in the introduction of British troops. Only hours before this year's march, "Apprentice Boys" governor, Alistair Simpson, announced to a frenzied crowd of Loyalists that the march had been postponed. He then added the ominous threat that they reserved the right to walk Derry's walls at a time of their choosing. Hours later gangs of drunken "Apprentice Boys" rampaged through the city centre and attacked a black journalist.

The May Northern Ireland "elections", called by Tory prime minister John Major and endorsed by Labour's Tony Blair, were the precipitant to a situation in which attacks have been overwhelmingly directed against the Catholic minority but which also has the Protestant population living in fear. The sham elections were called to determine who would be allowed to participate in the "peace" talks headed by former US senator George Mitchell. Although candidates from Sinn Féin got over 15 per cent of the votes (their highest electoral poll ever), they remain excluded from the talks. While the British government has insisted that the IRA "decommission" its weapons as the price of admission (a demand that apparently doesn't apply to the Loyalist paramilitaries), the



Delay/AP

British imperialism's Royal Ulster Constabulary cops brutalise Catholic protesters in Portadown, Northern Ireland, 11 July.

"peace" talks have become a forum for Unionist terror.

The legacy of British troops in Northern Ireland has been the systematic repression of the Catholic minority in defence of the capitalist status quo. This August marks 25 years since the British government of Edward Heath imposed internment without trial. Within hours of its introduction in 1971, British soldiers had indiscriminately rounded up hundreds of Catholics. By 1974, 1500 people were held without trial in Long Kesh prison.

Recently, on 18 August, news came that the US government (which has brokered the "peace" fraud) had extradited Long Kesh escapee Jimmy Smyth, one of the H-Block Four, and handed him over to RUC officers at Heathrow. Our comrades of the Spartacist League/US mobilised in defence of Smyth. In a 14 July letter protesting Smyth's threatened deportation and demanding asylum for the H-Block Four, the Partisan Defense Committee (associated with the Spartacist League/US) said:

"We demand the immediate release from federal prison in California of Smyth together with the rest of the 'H-Block Four,' Kevin Barry Art, Terence Kirby and Pol Brennan. We protest the attempt

to extradite these four, whose only 'crime' was to be born poor, and members of an oppressed Catholic minority in a country occupied by the British imperialist army."

We reprint below a statement issued jointly by the Spartacist League/Britain and the Dublin Spartacist Group on 12 July 1996.

JULY 12 — Pressure in Northern Ireland is escalating to a frenzy of anti-Catholic hatred, whipped up by pogromist Loyalist mobs. For five days and nights thousands of rioting Loyalists amassed at Drumcree in Portadown, and battled the British Army and RUC, who originally banned the Orange march from going through the Catholic enclave of Garvaghy Road. The day the ban was announced the body of a Catholic taxi-driver, Michael McGoldrick, was found in nearby Lurgan, bearing all the hallmarks of a Loyalist death squad assassination. Over the next days and nights Loyalist mobs repeatedly blockaded and effectively shut down entire towns and villages throughout the North; Catholic families have had to flee as their homes were burned out; from Belfast to Derry workers have been sent home early as

public transport was cancelled and roads and bridges were shut.

After five days the ban was abruptly reversed and the RUC and British Army, in full riot gear, brutally cleared Catholic residents out of the way so that the thousands-strong Orange march could strut down the Garvaghy Road. Catholic residents protested this atrocity, but had their streets blockaded by Saracen armoured cars and were viciously attacked by the RUC with batons and plastic bullets. Afterwards one Catholic woman said bitterly, "we are second class citizens, and that's all we have ever been in this country".

We have repeatedly warned that: "Any imperialist 'deal' will be bloody and brutal and will necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority. And it would not do any good for working-class Protestants either" (*Workers Hammer* no 138, November/December 1993). The grim truth of this statement is now being displayed in the streets of Northern Ireland — the Loyalists have been emboldened, the level of violence is escalating, and there is a widespread sense of foreboding. The Loyalist rampage is the direct fruit of the imperialist-brokered "peace deal", and is reminiscent of the reaction to the Sunningdale Agreement in 1974, or the Anglo-Irish Accord of the 1980s.

The "peace" fraud is premised on the blood-soaked British Army remaining in place — the British government has seized the opportunity to send in over 1000 more troops, including from the Parachute regiment, murderers of 14 Catholics on Bloody Sunday in 1972. We demand: RUC/Army out of Catholic areas! British troops out of Northern Ireland now! A proletarian axis must prevail, as the only way out of the spiral of reaction. Not Orange against Green, but class against class! There is an urgent need for the formation of integrated workers militias — incorporating both Protestants and Catholics — to combat British Army and RUC rampage as well as sectarian terror, both Orange and Green. Forging such militias is integrally linked to the construction of a revolutionary vanguard party that has the confidence of both Protestant and Catholic workers.

The recent sham elections to the Stormont "forum", which excludes Sinn Féin but admits the Loyalist paramilitaries, confirms that Major is playing the "Orange

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**For immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops!**

# France: cops invade church, arrest immigrants

## Mass protests against racist deportations

AUGUST 25 — Twenty thousand people marched through the streets of Paris last Friday to protest the cops' storming of a church occupied by over 300 immigrant workers seeking permits to stay in the country. The protest march came hours after a thousand club-wielding riot cops had assaulted St Bernard church with tear gas, smashed through the ring of people who had blocked the entrance in solidarity with the immigrants, and broke down the doors of the church with axes. Ten of the immigrant protesters, who were in the eighth week of a hunger strike, were taken to military hospitals and placed under guard. Some 210 arrested immigrants, including 68 children, were locked up in the Vincennes military detention centre on the eastern edge of the capital.

The Ligue trotskyste de France (LTF), section of the International Communist League, has consistently fought for mobi-

lising the power of the working class to defend immigrant rights. During last December's strike wave by public sector workers, the LTF insisted on the crucial need for the strikers to take up the fight against racial oppression, warning: "The working-class leaders' refusal to fight against racist terror is an obstacle to the necessary extension of the struggle to the private and mainly industrial sector, with its strong, combative component of workers from the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa" (see *Workers Vanguard* no 636, 5 January). In the face of widespread anti-immigrant racism and rampant fascist and cop terror, our comrades raise the call: *For worker/immigrant mobilisations to stop racist terror! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

Last Friday, at a workers' general assembly of the SUD and CGT unions at the Paris-Bourseuil postal money order

centre, a supporter of the LTF countered the bureaucrats' insipid motion to write a protest letter to Chirac. She called for the unions to mobilise the power of the working class to stop the deportations:

"We are still living under the reign of Vigipirate, a campaign of racist terror against which the union organisations did not mobilise last December. If they had, we wouldn't be in this situation. Against this terror what is needed are mass workers actions organised by our unions.... Today, the government wants to load up military charter flights because the pilots unions refuse to fly them. What is posed is mobilising powerful workers contingents in Villacoublay [military airport] to stop these deportations. And right now it is necessary to demand immediate freedom and the dropping of all charges for all those arrested this morning."

As French authorities prepared to deport immigrants on a military charter after civilian pilots refused to fly the deportees out, the union of Air Afrique employees issued a formal instruction that none of that carrier's workers throughout Africa "should take part in the base task of helping these flights of shame". When the French military transport carrying the deportees made a stopover in the Senegalese capital of Dakar, it was delayed because ground staff refused to service it.

Such actions concretely demonstrated the possibility of forging international class unity between workers' struggles in France and Africa. Such a perspective of proletarian internationalism is sharply counterposed to the chauvinist protectionism pushed by the reformist working-class leaders, like the call of the Communist Party (PCF) to "produce French".

The protests over the threatened deportations are an extremely significant event for French workers. The bourgeoisie—joined by the reformist misleaders—relies on exacerbating racial and ethnic divisions in the working class to undercut class struggle. Trade union leaders supported Chirac's "anti-terrorist" Operation Vigipirate, in which the army was called out to terrorise immigrant neighbourhoods. For years, the PCF and CGT leaders have put the blame for unemployment on immigrants, calling for closing the borders and expelling "illegals". And during his 14-year reign, Mitterrand made anti-immigrant racism a hallmark of his rule.

Last week, the CGT and CFDT trade-union federations, along with the FEN and FSU teachers unions, issued a joint statement calling for "direct negotiations" by the government with the hunger-strikers and for a "freeze on deportations". But what was needed was to unleash the power of the working class, including through strikes and mobilisations of thousands to block the military airports until Chirac backed down.

The massive outpouring of protest against the racist deportations exposes the lie of various fake revolutionaries who write off the possibility of winning the working class to the fight against racist attacks. During the strike wave last December, the LTF was unique in underlining the key importance of this issue in its propaganda directed at striking workers. The entire gamut of organisations on the left of the PCF and the Socialist Party (PS)—from Alain Krivine's Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR) to Lutte ouvrière (LO), Pouvoir ouvrier (PO) and the Jeunesse communiste révolutionnaire (JCR)—totally ignored, in their

leaflets to strikers, the need to fight racial discrimination and segregation, the exclusion of foreign workers from the public sector, and the racist Vigipirate campaign.

The question of revolutionary leadership is key. The most advanced workers must be won to a programme which links their immediate struggles to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. Otherwise, even the most powerful working-class mobilisation can be undercut, dissipated, and channelled into the reactionary dead end of class collaboration. After ducking the question of racial oppression during last December's strikes in order not to antagonise the bureaucrats, who were lined up behind the government's racist offensive, the centrists now seek to cynically use Chirac's attacks on immigrants in order to channel support to the new class-collaborationist popular front which the PCF, the PS and their bourgeois partners are putting together. Thus, the LCR and LO signed a joint declaration last week with the PCF, the PS, the ultra-chauvinist Mouvement des Citoyens (Movement of Citizens) and the bourgeois Radical Party calling on Chirac to negotiate with the immigrants occupying the church—because "the image of France could be lastingly tarnished".

While PO, which is affiliated with the British Workers Power group, formally stands outside this reactionary lash-up, in reality it constitutes the left wing of what Trotsky called a "syphilitic chain" of class collaboration, leading through the PCF and PS to the bourgeoisie. As always, the centrists of PO tail what is popular. With masses of workers on the streets opposing anti-immigrant racism, PO has now issued a leaflet (dated 23 August) calling "For Working-Class Mobilization to Stop the Deportations!" But nowhere is there any mention of last December's strikes. Little wonder, since at the time PO refused to so much as mention the need to mobilise the working class to fight Operation Vigipirate and the all-sided attacks on immigrants. And far from exposing the treacherous role of the reformist bureaucrats, PO builds illusions by calling on the trade-union leaders to "make their acts conform to their words"!

But the union tops have *no words* when it comes to racial discrimination in jobs, housing and education; to racist cop terror and Operation Vigipirate; to the denial of citizenship rights to immigrants. The bureaucrats refuse to challenge racial oppression because it is inherent to the capitalist system, which they uphold. In its 23 August leaflet, PO clamours, "It's Chirac... who must be thrown out!" But to be replaced by what? PO's unspoken answer is obvious: a new class-collaborationist alliance with the bourgeoisie. PO has always supported the popular front by calling for a vote to its reformist working-class components.

The LTF is fighting, in sharp political struggle against such opportunism, to regroup and consolidate the cadres for the forging of a revolutionary workers party. Such a party would be, in Lenin's words, a tribune of the people, uniting minorities, women, youth and all the oppressed behind the proletariat's struggle to overthrow the capitalist system—the root cause of racial oppression—and set up a socialist order.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 650, 30 August 1996.



TROTSKY

### The Comintern and the fight against British colonialism

*The 1920 Second Congress of Lenin and Trotsky's Communist International (Comintern) dealt specifically with the national and colonial question. Karl Marx's insistence that a people which enslaves another people forges its own chains, provided the basis for addressing the issue. Bolshevik leader, Karl Radek, addressed the congress on the struggle for Irish independence. The question of Irish national self-*



LENIN

*determination was incompletely resolved by the partition of Ireland in 1921, which established a Protestant majority statelet in which the Catholics remained oppressed. There cannot be any just solution under capitalism for such situations of interpenetrated peoples. Today, just as in 1920, revolutionaries in Britain have a special duty to combat the imperialist oppression of their "own" ruling class and its Labour Party henchmen. This must begin with the fight for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland.*

The Labour Conference at Scarborough passed an important resolution in which it demanded the independence of India and Egypt. Not a single Communist stood up to tell the Conference that the MacDonalds support the British bourgeoisie fooling British workers when they talk about the independence of India, Ireland and Egypt. It is simple hypocrisy and swindling that these same people, who could not even rise to the level of characterizing General Dwyer as a common murderer in Parliament on the occasion of the Amritsar bloodbath, pretend to be the defenders of colonial independence. We greatly regret that our party comrades who are in the Labour Party did not tear the mask off these swindlers' faces. The International will not judge the British comrades by the articles that they write in the *Call* and the *Workers Dreadnought*, but by the number of comrades who are thrown into gaol for agitating in the colonial countries. We would point out to the British comrades that it is their duty to help the Irish movement with all their strength, that it is their duty to agitate among the British troops, that it is their duty to use all their resources to block the policy that the British transport and railway unions are at present pursuing of permitting troop transports to be shipped to Ireland. It is very easy at the moment to speak out in Britain against intervention in Russia, since even the bourgeois left is against it. It is harder for the British comrades to take up the cause of Irish independence and of anti-militarist activity. We have a right to demand this difficult work of the British comrades.

—Speech at the Second Congress of the Communist International, 25 July 1920

## WORKERS HAMMER

For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!  
For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Published by the Central Committee of the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

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Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU

Subscriptions: £3 for 1 year, Europe outside Britain & Ireland £4, overseas airmail £7

Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.  
Printed by Cherwell Valley Lithographic Ltd (TU). ISSN 0267-8721

# The fake left on Northern Ireland

The Loyalist rampage unleashed this summer against the oppressed Catholic minority has brought Northern Ireland to the edge of the abyss. But even as the British Army joined the RUC in brutalising Catholic residents, forcing the way for Loyalist mobs to strut through Catholic neighbourhoods, several self-styled socialist organisations in Britain and Ireland refused to raise the elementary call for withdrawal of the 18,000 British troops. For the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Militant Labour and the Dublin-based Workers Solidarity Movement, their refusal to call for troops out goes hand-in-hand with peddling illusions in the imperialist "peace" fraud.

The SWP, who welcomed the troops in 1969, have taken to disguising their pro-imperialist position behind slogans calling for Protestant and Catholic working-class unity, as for example when they marched in a nationalist demonstration in Derry with a banner saying "class not creed", on the eve of a threatened Loyalist Apprentice Boys march. But what kind of class perspective is it that accepts the presence of the British Army in the city of Bloody Sunday and refuses to call for defence of Catholic areas against rampaging Loyalists? The British Army, which backs the Loyalist-infested RUC, has been one of the main factors reinforcing the sectarian division in the working class.

Militant, who have for decades also rejected the call for troops out, have become outright apologists for Loyalist death squads and their frontmen such as Billy Hutchinson. In the aftermath of the "Siege of Drumcree" Militant even took up the cudgels in defence of pogromist Orange marches. When the Apprentice Boys threatened a provocation on Derry's walls, Militant acknowledged that this march "takes place in a highly charged atmosphere after Drumcree", and then

declared: "The right of organisations to march should be recognised. But this right can only be exercised in sensitive areas with the consent of the local community and in an agreed manner" (*Militant*, 2 August). Militant's request for "consent" by the "local community" is obscene; in the Lower Ormeau area it means asking the beleaguered Catholic community to "consent" to a triumphalist Loyalist march that would include celebrating the UVF murder of five Catholics in Sean Graham bookmakers a few years ago! By referring to these Orange marches as a matter of "rights", Militant is adopting the language of demagogues like David Trimble who, together with the Loyalist paramilitaries, secured the "right" of howling anti-Catholic mobs to assert "Protestant supremacy" in Garvaghy Road, backed by the army and RUC. Even as Sinn Féin's strategy of "negotiated settlement" lies in tatters, Militant continues to display their abiding faith in the capitalist state.

Workers Power and the Irish Workers Group (WP/IWG) issued a leaflet on 13 July headlined: "Smash the Orange reign of terror in Northern Ireland!" which contained an attack on the SWP and Militant for supporting the "peace process". The leaflet declares that "the IRA are the only force fighting imperialism and we share its goal of driving Britain out and fighting for national unity. So long as it continues this fight its cause remains just." Their strategy is to mobilise the Catholic population north and south behind the nationalist programme of the IRA, to secure a united capitalist Ireland, which will necessarily be at the expense of the Protestant community. As was forcefully demonstrated at Drumcree, the Protestants are not part of the Irish Catholic nation, and the call for "national unity" amounts to a call for communalism.

The other side of WP/IWG's cheerleading

for Irish nationalism is loyalty to pro-capitalist Labourism. WP/IWG advocate support to Blair's pro-Unionist Labour Party and Dick Spring's Labour Party, which is part of the government in Dublin. And despite their proclaimed opposition to the "peace" process, WP/IWG nevertheless state that "The ICTU [Irish Congress of Trade Unions], Labour Party, Democratic Left and the Labour members of the Northern Ireland Forum must support the fight to break the British/loyalist grip." Far from breaking the "British/loyalist grip" these Labourite forces have used the "peace" process to openly embrace frontmen for Loyalist death squads such as Billy Hutchinson and David Ervine. The Labour coalition, which remained in the Northern Ireland forum after it ceased to have any Catholic representation, includes Militant to whom WP have proposed regroupment discussions.

We are known for our fight for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the British Army, and our fight for a proletarian, internationalist perspective. The

Catholics are an oppressed minority in Northern Ireland. They live in the same territory as the Protestants, who fear becoming a minority. We oppose the forcible reunification of Ireland, which would only compact the Protestants behind the Loyalist bigots, precluding a polarisation along class lines and instead laying the basis for a communal bloodbath and a "Bosnia"-type scenario of forced population transfers. Working-class unity can and must be forged in opposition to the poison of sectarianism. This has to form part of a strategy for the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism, of the clericalist state in the South and the sectarian Orange statelet in the North.

A century ago Karl Marx emphasised that the British proletariat would never be free as long as Ireland remained in thrall. What is necessary today is the building of revolutionary workers parties on these islands, forged through a struggle against the sell-out Labour Party bureaucracy. For an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles! ■



Workers Hammer

29 June: SL and Workers International League protest at Alliance for Workers Liberty meeting hosting Loyalist murderer Billy Hutchinson.

## Ireland...

(Continued from page 1)

card" for all it is worth. In this he has the full backing of the Labour Parties in Britain and Ireland. So-called "respectable" Unionist leaders like David Trimble, a veteran of last year's "Siege of Drumcree" are leading fascistic mobs in Portadown. Virulent anti-Catholic enmity is being whipped up by Loyalist demagogues like Ian Paisley, who portrayed the ban on the Orange march as a sellout to the Dublin government, and spoke ominously of the situation as a "powderkeg".

Sinn Féin's chimera of a "negotiated" settlement, under the good offices of US imperialism and the government of the clericalist state in southern Ireland, is in the process of being shattered against the harsh reality of Loyalist resistance. The current conflagration starkly reveals Sinn Féin's nationalist strategy, shared by both the "armed struggle" wing and the Gerry Adams "negotiating" wing, as a complete dead end. Particularly since the end of the IRA ceasefire, both Catholics and Protestants fear and dread the resumption of sectarian murder by the Loyalist paramilitaries and the IRA, likely on a much worse scale than before. The IRA's criminal bombings in London and Manchester have fuelled anti-Irish chauvinism in Britain, which is poisonous to the working class.

Whether through "armed struggle" or "negotiation", nationalists inevitably seek a solution within the framework of capitalism and imperialism, which today in-

cludes the palpable possibility of a "Bosnia-type" scenario, ie communalist war. Forced population transfers are a real possibility, in which Protestants, given their relative weight in the population, would be concentrated east of the Bann, and Catholics concentrated in the western part of the province towards Derry. The term "ethnic cleansing" was invoked repeatedly this week, as Catholic families were forced from their homes and schools and churches were firebombed; Protestant families in Catholic areas are also under threat.

In Portadown, spokesperson for Blair's contemptible Labour Party Mo Mowlam, praised the Progressive Unionist Party—a front for the fascistic UVF, whose band accompanied the triumphant Orangemen in their march through the town. Arthur Scargill's SLP claims to offer an alternative to Blair's New Labour party, and calls for the immediate withdrawal of the British Army, but their "Little England" perspective is revealed by their failure to oppose the imperialist deal.

Labourite left groups such as the SWP and Militant have been busy peddling illusions in the British imperialist deal, refusing even to call for British troops out. In 1969 the SWP endorsed the troops being sent in by the Labour government in Britain, claiming it would provide a "breathing space" for the Catholics. This was as preposterous then as it is now. Catholics in Portadown, surrounded and imprisoned by the RUC and army, noted that more plastic bullets were fired on

them in minutes than on Loyalists during four nights of rioting.

Militant and the Alliance for Workers Liberty have been so infatuated with the imperialist "peace process" as to sponsor UVF murderer Billy Hutchinson in their meetings. Protesting outside one such meeting in London last month, Spartacist placards pointed out: "AWL spits on memory of Michael Loughran and Edward Morgan—murdered by Hutchinson/UVF". Workers Power calls for the British Army to get out, but then simultaneously supports Labour (in Britain and Ireland), and the nationalist, capitalist strategy. They claim: "We recognise that a progressive solution requires that the working class come to the head of the national struggle. But that does not prevent us from solidarising with those who are fighting for independence under the banner of petit-bourgeois nationalism—i.e. a capitalist united Ireland" (*WP*, April 1996). This vista of forcibly subjugating the Protestant community is reactionary and is being used by Loyalist leaders to inflame the situation today. Genuine Trotskyists oppose forcible reunification of Ireland and "self-determination" for one nation or grouping in the situation of interpenetrated peoples, where this can only be achieved at the expense of the other. In such situations, only workers revolution can bring about a just solution to national oppression, whereas capitalist solutions necessarily fan the flames of communalism.

The prevalence of sectarianism in the

North is not proof of some unbridgeable religious divide, but is fostered by the hellish conditions of capitalist existence. While the Catholics are an oppressed minority, the condition of working-class Protestants is almost as bad, and the Loyalist paramilitaries are recruiting heavily from among lumpenised youth in the ghettos of Belfast. The working class have at times been able to achieve unity in struggle, such as the Belfast shipyard and engineering strike of 1919, or the struggles of the unemployed in the 1930s. In 1993 Protestant workers in the shipyards walked off the job on a couple of occasions, protesting the murder of Catholic workers by Hutchinson's UVF. Such openings are vital, and are conceivable even in the present period. However in the absence of a revolutionary leadership such class unity can be easily destroyed by state repression, Loyalism and Irish nationalism.

As communists we seek to intervene, attempting to alter the course of the conflict towards a class determination. We fight for workers revolution, on both sides of the Irish border and both sides of the Irish Sea. Our proletarian perspective requires an internationalist struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism, smashing the sectarian Orange statelet in Northern Ireland and the vicious clericalist state in the south in a struggle to establish a federation of workers republics in the British Isles. This requires the construction of Leninist vanguard parties, rooted in the working class of all the peoples of these islands. ■

## A shamefaced defection from Trotskyism

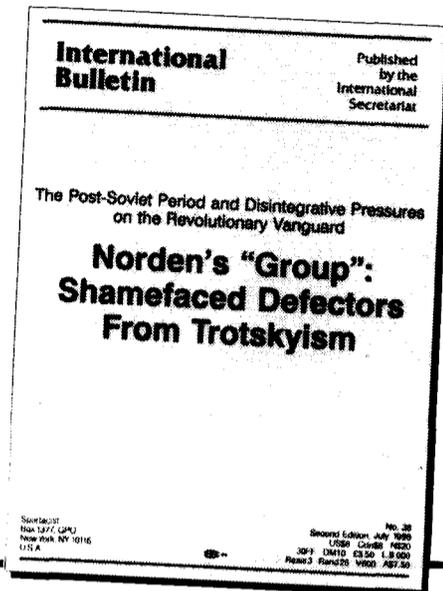
Jan Norden, who for 23 years was the editor of *Workers Vanguard*, was expelled from the Spartacist League/US by a meeting of the Political Bureau on 8 June for wilful violation of the most fundamental condition of membership in a Leninist party: that the party has a monopoly over the public political activity of its members. Marjorie Stamberg, a longtime member of the *WV* Editorial Board, was also expelled for refusing to accept the democratic-centralist discipline of the revolutionary party.

Norden, who had until recently been a member of the International Executive Committee and International Secretariat of the International Communist League, as well as of the SL/US Central Committee and Political Bureau, had for some time evidently taken a large proportion of his political activity underground. For some eight months, he had stopped asking the party for reimbursement for bills incurred in discharging his political responsibilities from his home by phone, or through fax and computer equipment that had been supplied by the organisation. At the same

end he left with only his longtime political collaborator and personal companion, Stamberg, and his protégé Negrete.

Trotsky noted in *The Lessons of October* (1924) that sudden changes in the world situation always provoke disorientation and confusion within the revolutionary party, especially within its leadership. The period from 1989 to 1992 was marked by profound changes and historic defeats for the working class internationally as capitalist counterrevolution destroyed the bureaucratically deformed workers states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Buying into the imperialist triumphalism over the "death of communism", the left generally is rapidly repudiating even any pretence of Leninism, seeking "regroupment" in larger reformist formations together with social democrats and ex-Stalinists. Our small revolutionary international is hardly immune to the disintegrative pressures of this period of post-Soviet reaction. But unlike our centrist and reformist opponents, who wallow in their opportunism while glibly denying any internal problems, we strive to be

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As we wrote in a "Perspectives and Tasks Memorandum" adopted at a meeting of our International Executive Committee (IEC) last January and reprinted in a recently published *International Bulletin* ("Norden's 'Group': Shamefaced Defectors from Trotskyism"): "Failure to recognize the period we are in and the necessary relationship of our small revolutionary vanguard to the proletariat, and the absence of the Soviet Union as an active and defining factor in politics, have led to

them out of our international. Though not as extreme, the pressures of the period have also been manifested in fights over the relevance and purpose of a revolutionary Leninist vanguard in virtually every section of the ICL. These fights have been essential not only as a political corrective but in sharpening our revolutionary programme for intervention into those struggles that are erupting and that will break out in the future against the ruthless offensive being waged by the capitalist rulers internationally. But for Norden the disproportion between what we strive for and the current consciousness of the working class had become a yawning, unbridgeable abyss.

He and Stamberg evidenced a deepening pessimism about the ability of our party and its revolutionary programme to have any impact in the "New World Order", expressed in their ever more frequent broadsides against the ICL's supposed "abstract" or "passive" propagandism. This was matched by an increasingly hostile alienation from the party leadership, in which Norden had been no mere ornament. Stamberg, an alternate member of the SL/US Central Committee, long preceded him in an increasingly frenzied alienation. She was the Spartacist candidate for mayor in the 1985 New York City elections — and it would have been hard to find a better one. But for some time now, she had bridled against a perceived leader "bureaucracy" that stood in the way of her often "rad-lib" appetites. Over the last year or so, it became increasingly evident that she had essentially quit, at least in her head, as she shed various areas of political and organisational responsibility.



Where Norden's appetites wandered: to geriatric remnants of former East German Stalinist bureaucracy now in social-democratic Party of Democratic Socialism, and to Castro's Cuba.

time, he continued to submit bills for all other material he felt he needed for whatever political work he was doing.

Of course, this doesn't explain much. The anarchist Bakunin was expelled from the First International for financial chicanery. But that tells one very little about the differences between Marxism and anarchism. In Norden's case, his organisational pathology reflected a shamefaced political defection from the programme of revolutionary Trotskyism, not fought or argued forthrightly as such, but rather expressed in an increasingly desperate search for, and accommodation to, social forces other than the proletariat and vehicles other than a Leninist vanguard party to advance the cause of the struggle for human emancipation. After a long and exhaustive internal struggle, Norden's revisionist course had been so thoroughly exposed that, despite his years of authority in the party, in the

candid in assessing the tasks and difficulties facing us and are unique in bringing this before the international working class and the left.

This is because unlike other self-proclaimed Trotskyists, who have long forsaken the goal of international proletarian revolution, we fight for a new October Revolution. But the disproportion between this purpose and the current political consciousness of the working class, youth and the left internationally is great. Today, even most subjective leftists view as rather esoteric the idea that a proletarian revolution, like that successfully pursued by Lenin's Bolshevik Party in Russia in 1917, is the key to the liberation of mankind. This is due in no small measure to the crimes of the Stalinists, and the Social Democrats before them, who made a mockery of the programme and ideals of revolutionary Marxism.

disorientation and appetite to follow alien political programs and forces."

An early manifestation of the liquidationist pressures on the ICL in this period was the 1994 minority faction in our Canadian section of Y Rad and Marie Hayes, who frantically cast about the world for forces other than the proletariat to lead "the struggle". This included glorifying various ex-Stalinist formations, like the Russian nationalist, fascist-infested "red-brown coalition"; looking to the murderous Algerian military regime to combat Islamic fundamentalism (while simultaneously retrospectively saluting Khomeini's mullahs as the "ally" of the Iranian workers in 1979); and calling for support to the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress in the 1994 South African elections.

Rad/Hayes' overt proclivity towards unsavoury nationalist formations rapidly led

### The pathology of impressionism

Norden had always had strong tendencies towards impressionism and vicarious adventurism, animated by an often-fatuous optimism about the capacity of forces very distant from Trotskyism, or from the proletariat for that matter, to "struggle" in some successful measure against the depredations of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Within the framework of a political collective, these appetites could not only be curtailed but could also provide for a healthy tension in determining political line and intervention. At the same time, there were occasions when that balance tipped over, introducing distortions in our propaganda.

From the question of the survival of Sandinista Nicaragua against US imperialism in the 1980s, to the capacities of the army of Saddam Hussein's Iraq to inflict serious damage against the imperialists during the Persian Gulf War, Norden always stood at the extreme end of a tendency to impressionistically overdraw (and often fantastically so) the military factor. Correspondingly, this meant conjuring up an anticipated flood of anti-imperialist struggle while seriously downplaying the crucial and related factors of political consciousness and material economic reality. As Trotsky noted, impressionism on military matters can lead either to the idealistic view that revolutionary fervour will make up for any military handicap or conversely can fuel a rightist impulse that any struggle is hopeless. On the latter score, early on in his time in the party, Norden viewed the 1973 Indochina "peace accords" as the end of the war against US imperialism by the Vietnamese National Liberation Front.

The defects in *WV*'s coverage of the Gulf War were particularly addressed in a document by comrade Ralf Eades, of the Spartacist League/Britain, titled "Cold War Impressionism, *Workers Vanguard* and the 'Gulf War'". Noting the overblown statements in *WV* articles on Iraq's military might and its ability to inflict serious damage on the forces of US imperialism, Eades asked: "Would it have been a capitulation to 'smoke and mirrors' imperialist propaganda to wake the workers of the world to the revolutionary defence of Iraq, to halt, derail, smash by class-struggle means the crushing one-sided slaughter being prepared before our disbelieving eyes?"

Norden's lightminded attitude towards the military might of US imperialism was reflected in the ironic tone of a front-page article on a US missile attack on Baghdad in *WV* no 579 (2 July 1993). Comrades' criticism of this article, and of the way the paper was managed, was "met with a furiously defensive, turf-conscious, hypersensitive, arrogant, cliquish, anti-Leninist response" ("The Post-Soviet World: Perspectives and Tasks of the Spartacist League/U.S.", *Spartacist* no 51, Autumn 1994). This outburst was an expression of Norden's stated position in favour of "one-man rule" over the party press (and over any aspects of our international work in which he was personally involved).

In practice this meant creating a parallel apparatus, centred on *Workers Vanguard*, to that of the central party administration. Norden's personal power ambitions meant that he was constantly chafing against the Bolshevik practice that the press is subordinated to the party leadership collective. These issues came to a head in a sharp fight at a Political Bureau meeting in September 1993. The PB passed a motion noting that the Editorial Board "was beginning to act in a self-conscious and independent fashion". Nevertheless, as long as Norden accepted the discipline of the party and the corrective measures ensuing from internal political struggles, he remained as editor of *Workers Vanguard*.

Norden also had a Stalinoid bent particularly vis-à-vis Castro's Cuba which was expressed, perhaps most grotesquely, in initial attempts to alibi the Stalinist show trial and execution of General Ochoa on charges of international drug dealing. Ochoa had fought with Castro against the Batista dictatorship and led the Cuban troops in Angola against the forces backed by the US and South Africa. Norden was finally persuaded that the Ochoa trial was a classic Stalinist purge. But in the article "Stalinist Show Trial in Cuba—The Execution of General Ochoa" (*WV* no



Bleibtreu/Sygma

**Cuban general Ochoa, executed by Castro regime after Stalinist show trial in 1989.**

500, 20 April 1990), Norden insisted on "disproving" Washington's claims that the Havana regime was involved in the drug trade by upholding Castro's integrity: "For Castro to lie about this would be to invite an invasion."

Of course, the White House's drug charges against Castro were part and parcel of US imperialism's relentless drive to crush the Cuban Revolution. But to assert, as Norden did, that Castro couldn't lie about this was a statement of blind faith in the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy. This was fought out, resulting in a clarification in *WV* no 501 (4 May 1990). But even in the face of the bitter reality that Cuba's isolation following the collapse of the Soviet Union had led to a devastating erosion of the gains of the revolution and growing impoverishment and inequality, Norden's infatuation with Castro's Cuba did not abate.

Reporting on Cuba to an August 1993 meeting of our International Secretariat, just after Castro had made an enormous concession to the forces of capitalist restoration by introducing the dollar into the Cuban economy, Norden and Stamberg echoed the Stalinoid cheerleaders in North



Rebours/AP

**"Highway of death", horrible scene of US military's one-sided slaughter of Iraqi soldiers withdrawing from Kuwait, 1991. Norden downplayed deadly power of US imperialism.**

America who proclaim that "The Cuban Revolution is going to make it." Stamberg enthused that "the regime has a lot of authority...most people want to fight, they are clear, they are class conscious." In fact, as another comrade later replied, "They are *not* class conscious. It's populist consciousness; it's exactly the consciousness that the Stalinists have instilled." While calling for unconditional military defence of the Cuban deformed workers state against US imperialism, Marxists understand that the Cuban Revolution can only be "saved" by fighting for workers revolution throughout the Americas and proletarian political revolution against the nationalist Castro bureaucracy.

With the capitalist reunification of Germany in 1990, quantity turned into quality. Norden's attraction to Castro's Cuba was paralleled by his fascination with the East German deformed workers state of Erich Honecker. When the DDR went down, presaging the subsequent collapse of the Soviet degenerated workers state, Norden began to become politically unhinged.

### From impressionism to revisionism

With the collapse of the Honecker regime and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the DDR was engulfed in a developing political revolution. The impulses of the East German masses were directed not towards capitalist reunification but rather to building what they considered to be a decent socialist society on the foundations of the DDR's nationalised economy. This produced an exceptionally open situation for Trotskyist intervention. The ICL undertook the biggest sustained mobilisation in the history of our tendency, drawing upon the personnel and other resources of all sections.

We published and circulated tens of thousands of copies of a daily newsheet, *Arbeiterpressekorespondenz* (*Arprekorr*, Workers Press Correspondence), centrally fighting to forge a Leninist-egalitarian party to establish a government of workers councils (soviets) in the DDR as a springboard to a unified German workers state based on a perspective of a Socialist United States of Europe. We later learned that our call for workers and soldiers councils had been widely discussed within units of the East German National People's Army (NVA), leading to the formation of incipient soldiers committees particularly in the northeast. Our political impact was shown when 250,000 turned out for the 3 January 1990 united-front demonstration, to which the SED had acquiesced, in East Berlin's Treptow Park

later, the parties of West German imperialism swept the March 1990 East German elections and the DDR deformed workers state was swallowed up in a reunified capitalist Fourth Reich. The document of the Second International Conference of the ICL in 1992 noted:

"As Treptow later showed, from the beginning we were in a political struggle with the abdicating Stalinist regime over the future of the DDR. While we were calling for a government of workers councils, the Stalinists were consciously acting to prevent a workers' insurrection by demobilizing all army units that had formed soldiers councils as a result of our early propaganda. Although shaped by the disproportion of forces, there was in fact a contest between the ICL program of political revolution and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution."

Norden was centrally involved in our intervention in Germany, both in editing many issues of *Arprekorr* and in the political deliberations of our international leadership. But he could not face the reality of capitalist *Anschluss*. Unable to accept the verdict of history—that mass resistance does not follow in the wake of historic defeats—Norden began to look around for a "fightback" on the terrain of the ex-DDR. This perspective was predicated on looking for a split among the Stalinist remnants of the old DDR regime, now grouped in the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), who would supposedly lead such a fight.

To prepare for future struggles, through building the necessary proletarian internationalist leadership, the most conscious workers in the former DDR needed to acquire a political understanding of Stalinism and the collapse of the East German deformed workers state. Such a Trotskyist analysis was cogently put forward in documents by Joseph Seymour ("On the Collapse of Stalinist Rule in East Europe") and Albert St. John ("For Marxist Clarity and a Forward Perspective") which were published in English-language *Spartacist* no 45-46, Winter 1990-91. But these documents did not appear in a German-language edition of *Spartacist* until 1994! Instead, taking advantage of his German language capacity and his role in the International Secretariat, Norden urged on our German section, the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD), a policy of endless economist sorties into the working class of the former DDR, launching a campaign in 1991 to agitate for mass strikes. This posture of imminent "mass resistance" negated the critical factor of *consciousness* which only a Leninist vanguard could introduce.

Norden's ignorant and anti-Trotskyist perspective, that working-class struggle would lead a wing of the PDS to split and "fight" against the ravages of capitalist counterrevolution, had a disorienting impact on the SpAD, which itself could not face the grim reality of the destruction of the DDR. When his fantasy of economist "fightback" didn't work out (which must have been devastating for Norden, given his skewed, ahistorical expectations), Norden turned his attention to a perspective of recruiting "anti-fascist youth" through yet another "get rich quick" scheme.

The increasingly murderous fascist attacks on immigrants in Germany which came in the wake of capitalist counterrevolution provoked a significant radicalisation of youth who sought to stop the Nazi terrorists. Exemplary united-front actions against the fascists, demonstrating in action our revolutionary programme based on the centrality of mobilising the social power of the working class, was surely one means to win the best of these leftist youth to Trotskyism. But

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# Europe...

(Continued from page 12)

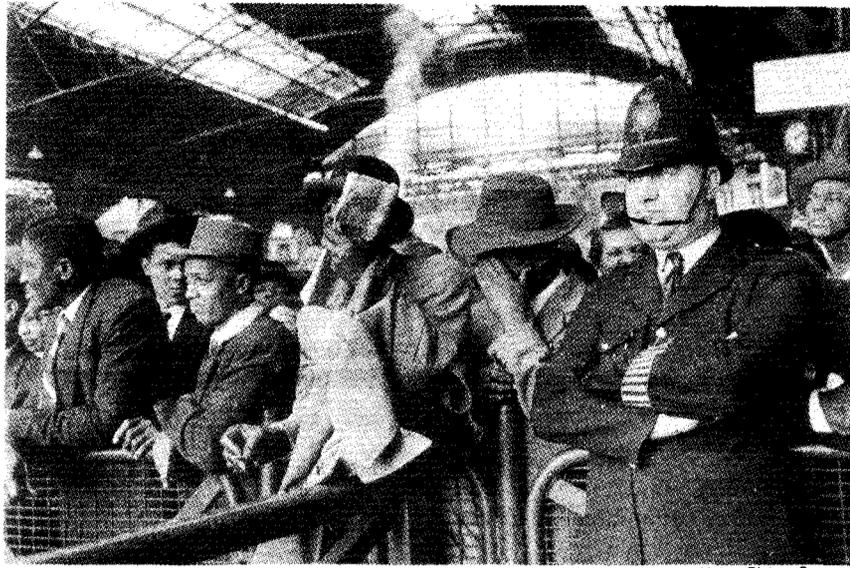
control lasted three quarters of a century, until the civil rights struggles of the late 1950s-early 1960s brought about a semblance of bourgeois democracy in the region.

American blacks have *always* shared with whites the two main determinants of a national culture: language (English) and religion (Christianity). Interestingly, when the Plains Indians — aboriginal peoples living in the central part of North America — first encountered blacks in the late 19th century, they termed them “the black white men”. Blacks in the US are an *oppressed colour-caste* integrated into the American capitalist economy, including strategic sectors of the industrial proletariat, while at the same time largely segregated at the bottom of American bourgeois society.

There will be no social revolution in the United States without the united struggle of black and white workers led by their multiracial vanguard party, which must be the most consistent and active defender of all the specially oppressed layers of society. The revolutionary cadres will certainly be drawn heavily from black proletarians as militants are won to recognising that there can be no other road to eliminating the special oppression of black people than the conquest of power by the American working class.

Unlike the black colour-caste in the US, the presence of a large non-white population in West Europe is, in historical terms, a quite recent development. It was only in the 1960s that the Caribbean islands and Indian subcontinent displaced Ireland as the main source of immigration into Britain. It was not until the 1970s that the number of Turkish *gastarbeiter* (foreign workers) surpassed Italian *gastarbeiter* in West Germany. And only in the past decade has the number of foreign workers, mainly North African Arabs, in Italy exceeded the number of Italians working in other European countries. We are thus seeing the recent formation of large non-European, predominantly traditionally Muslim (except in Britain) communities in long-established bourgeois nation-states.

Hence the thrust of nationalist reaction in West Europe is towards the mass expulsion of the non-white population. In last year's presidential election in France, Le Pen, who got 15 per cent of the vote, campaigned to “send back home” three million non-European “immigrants”. And it would not require the victory of fascism or even the entry of a fascist party into the government in France or elsewhere to forcibly expel hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of immigrants and refugees,



Hulton Picture Company

West Indian immigrants arrive at Victoria Station in London, 1956. Black and Asian immigrant workers were given the worst jobs in post war Britain.

especially those who do not have citizenship rights.

By way of historic analogy, during the Great Depression of the early 1930s the number of foreign workers in France — mainly Italians, Poles and Algerians — was reduced by *half a million*, equal to five per cent of the total labour force. Some left because they couldn't find jobs, but many were simply rounded up and deported. Throughout the decade anti-immigrant demagoguery, directed especially at Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany and Eastern Europe, fuelled French fascism and other right-wing political movements, thus setting the stage for the deportation of Jews by the Vichy regime to the death camps of Nazi-occupied Europe.

Over 20 years ago when anti-immigrant sentiment re-emerged as a major factor on the West European political scene, our tendency stated:

“The line between reformist social chauvinism and proletarian internationalism in Western Europe must be drawn on the demand that *all* foreign workers are entitled to immediate and full citizenship rights in the nations where they labor. As any Jamaican or Bengali ‘citizen’ of Britain will attest, formal citizenship rights do not automatically end the oppression of immigrants. However, winning full citizenship rights for West Europe's foreign workers would be a great victory for proletarian internationalism.”

— “West Europe's Imported Labor: A Key to Revolution”, *Workers Vanguard* no 31, 26 October 1973

In the present climate of political reaction — marked by mass unemployment, the drive to dismantle the social-democratic “welfare state” and the effects of the counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union — even formal citizenship is not in itself a guarantee against “ethnic cleansing” in West Europe. The immigrant communities are

subject to increasing racist oppression — ghettoisation, police brutality, fascists. Increasingly segregated, prey to cop and racist violence, and on the bottom of the economic “ladder”, dark-skinned European citizens would recognise a lot in the conditions of American blacks.

In the United States, a central slogan of the International Communist League (ICL) is “Finish the Civil War — black liberation through socialist revolution”. A central slogan in Europe is for “Full citizenship rights” for all immigrants, reflecting the fact that the immigration question is fundamentally a democratic question, which is however strategic to proletarian unity. And today, democratic rights — eg, equal rights for women, national independence of the colonies, immigrants' and minority rights — can be won and secured only by the proletariat fighting to take state power away from the bourgeoisie and establish a socialist economy in a society free of exploitation and all oppression.

Like black Americans, West Europe's dark-skinned proletarians are not just defenceless victims but a very important component of the forces capable of destroying the racist capitalist system. West Indian transport workers and South Asian nurses in Britain, North African Arab and Berber car workers in France, Turkish coal miners and Kurdish chemical workers in Germany will play an important part in a European proletarian revolution. These workers are a bridge to the workers and peasant masses of the neocolonial Third World, a living link in an international socialist perspective. To transform this perspective into reality requires above all the construction of revolutionary parties, the reforging of the Fourth International based on the principles of Lenin and Trotsky.

## Immigration and labour in 19th century Britain and France

Unlike in North America, mercantile and then industrial capitalism in Europe developed on a pre-existing feudal socioeconomic structure based on the exploitation of the peasantry, which constituted the overwhelming majority of the population. Thus in most of Europe the industrial revolution entailed the massive emigration, so to speak, of peasant youth from the countryside to the cities rather than the importation of labour from foreign countries with radically different national cultures (eg language, religion). There were, however, two important exceptions, each in a very different way: Britain and France.

Beginning with the 16th century, the development of mercantile capitalism in England pauperised the peasantry, sharply reducing its size as peasants became agricultural labourers and artisan proletarians

(eg, weavers of woollen cloth working in their own homes). In England, the pioneer country of the industrial revolution, factories soon absorbed the indigenous surplus population despite the massive use of child labour. From the mid-19th century onwards the expansion of British capitalism required the importation of impoverished peasants from its oldest and nearest colony, Ireland.

In many important respects, especially in its *political* effects, the Irish immigration in late 19th century Britain was similar to the Third World immigration in present-day West Europe. Differences in religion — Roman Catholic for the Irish, Protestant for the English — acted as a formidable barrier to intermarriage in an era when the church played a far more important role in working-class communities than it does in contemporary Europe. Furthermore, the colonial subjugation of Ireland impeded not only intermarriage but even social ties between the two main national components of the proletariat in Britain. Many English workers were deeply infected with their rulers' imperialist chauvinism towards the Irish, while Irish immigrant workers viewed all Englishmen as members of the oppressor nation.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels considered the Irish/English antagonism to be a major factor, if not *the* major factor, contributing to the relative political backwardness of the working class in the British Isles despite the existence of a mass trade-union movement. Addressing the 1871 London conference of the First International, Marx stated:

“You will know that between the English workers and the Irish workers there has existed of old very considerable antagonism the causes of which are actually very easy to enumerate. This antagonism has its origin in the differences of language and religion; and in the competition between Irish workers and English workers over wages. In England this antagonism is the dam that holds back the flood of Revolution, hence it is skillfully exploited by the government and upper classes, who are convinced that no bond would be able to unite the English and Irish workers.”

The following year Engels, speaking at the International's General Council, condemned “the belief, only too common among English workingmen, that they were superior beings compared to the Irish, and as much an aristocracy as the mean whites of the [American] Slave States considered themselves to be with regard to the Negroes.”

Throughout the rest of the 19th century the English trade unions remained politically subordinate to the bourgeois Liberal Party, while Irish working people remained under the sway of petty-bourgeois nationalist movements. It was not until the early years of this century that there emerged even a reformist party of the British working class, the Labour Party. It is perhaps not a historical accident that the Labour Party became the hegemonic party of the British working class in the early 1920s, the same time that Ireland gained its independence from Britain, albeit with the partition of [six of] the northern counties of Ulster. Nonetheless, the Irish Republic remained a relatively impoverished neocolony of Britain, exporting labour to the factories and construction sites of London and the Midlands. And to this day, the British upper classes continue to skillfully exploit antagonism between English and Irish working people to impede the forces of social revolution.

In France, the radical bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1789-93 effectively destroyed the landed aristocracy and produced a large and entrenched class of peasant smallholders. The birth rate in



Jeff Moore

Racist cop terror: family of Ibrahima Sey protest on 21 August. He died in March after cops sprayed him with CS gas. August 13, Ahmed El Gannal died in custody at Leyton police station.

19th century France, unusually low by European standards, further reduced the supply of surplus labour necessary for the development of an industrial capitalist economy. With the beginnings of the industrial revolution under the Second Empire of Louis Napoleon (1850-70), the French ruling class deliberately opted for the large-scale importation of foreign labour. Given their well-grounded fear of social revolution, they wanted to preserve traditional peasant villages dominated by the local parish priest as bastions of social and political conservatism.

The working class in France was therefore made up in large part of immigrants from Italy, Spain, Belgium, southern Germany and, somewhat later, Poland. In certain periods the scale of immigration exceeded even that of the United States. Many of the members and supporters of the National Front would not today be Frenchmen if Le Pen's programme had been applied to their grandfathers and great-grandfathers!

Until the 1930s the mass of these white, mainly Catholic immigrants were assimilated through widespread intermarriage with the French within a single generation. A number of factors contributed to this development, unique in the history of European industrial capitalism. First, the overwhelming majority of immigrants came from countries which, like France, were traditionally Catholic. Nor were these countries French colonies or

an Italian immigrant engineer father and a French mother.

### The Cold War, the "welfare state" and mass immigration in West Europe

Why have large numbers of non-Europeans entered and settled in West Europe over the past few decades? Why have second-generation immigrants (North African and African youth in France, Turkish and Kurdish youth in Germany), many of whom do not even speak the language of their parents' native land, not assimilated through widespread intermarriage as did the children of Italian and Spanish foreign workers in France in the late 19th and early 20th centuries? Why has anti-immigrant racism increasingly dominated West European political and social life in recent years? The answers to these questions are rooted in the post-1945 Cold War division of Europe which ended with capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

At the end of World War II, West Europe was pregnant with social revolution. The Soviet Union had acquired enormous new prestige from the Red Army's victory over Hitler's Wehrmacht, while large sections of the European bourgeoisies were tainted by their collaboration with the Nazi occupation forces. Especially in Italy and France, the national Communist parties had also gained greatly increased authority in the working class.



Der Spiegel

Legacy of brutal British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent was communal slaughter during 1947 Partition.

semi-colonies. Thus there was no long-standing political antagonism between Italian immigrant workers and Frenchmen in the late 19th century as there was between Irish immigrants and Englishmen at that time or between Algerians and Frenchmen in France today.

An assimilationist policy was also strongly promoted by the bourgeoisie. In 1889, the anniversary of the Revolution, a new law granted automatic citizenship to anyone born on French soil. While this law was certainly objectively progressive, its authors were by no means motivated by liberal democratic ideals. Faced with the new, more powerful and populous German Second Reich, the French ruling class wanted to conscript the sons of Italian and Spanish immigrant workers into its army.

Nonetheless, the cosmopolitan character of the working class in France strengthened the forces of the left. This became manifest in the Dreyfus Affair of the late 1890s, when the frame-up of a Jewish army officer by an anti-Semitic cabal in the general staff resulted in a sharp left/right polarisation leading to the brink of civil war. A heroic and effective role in defence of Dreyfus was played by the famous writer Emile Zola, the son of

In order to pacify the working masses, with the indispensable help of the social democrats and Stalinists (who joined postwar "popular front" governments with capitalist parties), the bourgeoisie needed to offer a far better deal than the prewar conditions of the Great Depression and the rise of fascism. At the same time, American imperialism promoted and funded social-democratic bureaucrats in the trade unions and anti-Communist reformist parties in order to cohere the NATO alliance against the Soviet bloc. Thus originated the complex of social programmes known as the "welfare state" — free or inexpensive medical care, partially government-funded pensions, unemployment insurance, four or five weeks annually of paid vacation, etc.

In the 1960s-early 1970s, West Europe experienced another period of political instability conditioned by a series of long, losing colonial wars — Algeria, Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique. A new generation of militant working-class and student youth came to the fore, hostile to the traditional social-democratic and pro-Moscow Stalinist parties. In Latin Europe, this period of radicalisation culminated in the pre-revolutionary crises of the May-June

Asian workers honour martyred anti-fascist fighter Blair Peach and victim of racist murder Gurdip Singh Chaggar in Southall, April 1979.



1968 events and Italy's "hot autumn" the following year, and later the Portuguese Revolution of 1974-75. To restabilise the bourgeois order in the southern tier of NATO, greater concessions were made to the working class while social democracy was deliberately strengthened in this region.

From the late 1940s through to the late 1970s, the West European bourgeoisies bought social peace and co-opted the reformist (social-democratic and Stalinist) bureaucracies by accepting a *lower rate of exploitation* than the historic norm. This, however, made it increasingly difficult and uneconomical to employ indigenous West European workers at the lower end of the labour market — the kind of jobs historically filled by peasant youth fresh from the countryside. To induce West German, French or Dutch youth to work as unskilled manual labourers, especially at jobs that were hard, dirty, dangerous or regarded as demeaning (eg household servants), would have required *ratcheting up the entire level of wages and benefits* to levels incompatible with profitability. By the 1960s young West Germans would simply not take jobs like garbage collectors or janitors. And this attitude is now prevalent even in the more backward southern tier of Europe. According to a government official in Rome, "These days you have Egyptian cooks and Filipino

maids. There are certain jobs Italians won't do anymore" (*New York Times*, 8 September 1994).

The relative prosperity, "welfare state" benefits and increased cultural level of post-1945 West Europe also brought about a significant change in social life and demographic conditions. Women, traditionally housewives beholden to their husbands, went to work. The birth rate fell sharply even in traditionally Catholic countries like Italy. There are now more Italians over the age of 65 than under the age of 15. Thus the economic effect of the higher cost of indigenous West European labour was reinforced by reduced supply. Short of massive, long-term unemployment and a political assault on the "welfare state", West European capitalism was able to maintain an acceptable rate of exploitation only through the large-scale importation of labour from poor countries.

The Cold War also indirectly determined that those poor countries would increasingly be Third World neocolonies, especially the traditionally Muslim regions of North Africa and Anatolia. Before World War II, Eastern Europe was an important source of foreign labour for the more developed western half of the continent. For example, in the 1920s-1930s a large proportion of coal miners in northern

*continued on page 8*

Spartacist  public events

For immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops!  
**Northern Ireland: Imperialist "peace" fraud fuels Loyalist terror**

**London**

Thursday, 19 September  
7.30pm  
Room G59  
School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, WC1  
Nearest tube: Russell Square

**Dublin**

Tuesday, 8 October  
7.30pm  
Northstar Hotel  
Amiens Street, Dublin 1

**Dublin**

For information about Spartacus Youth Group class series  
Tel: Dublin Spartacist Group 830 4230

**London**

Class, 3 October  
**Immigration and racist oppression in Europe: for full citizenship rights for foreign-born workers and their families!**

Followed by a fortnightly class series beginning 17 October on "The history and theory of Marxism".

Classes held at 7.30pm, downstairs at the Fitzroy Tavern, 16 Charlotte Street, London W1. Nearest tube: Goodge Street.

To obtain readings and more information, contact the SL/SYG at 0171 485 1396

# Europe . . .

(Continued from page 7)

France and Belgium were Polish.

The rapid industrialisation of the post-1945 Eastern European bureaucratically deformed workers states, based on planned, collectivised economies, absorbed peasant and unemployed urban youth who in previous generations would have worked in West Europe or emigrated to the United States. Since the Stalinist regimes sought to maximise total national output (not the rate of profit), they also prevented emigration through police-state controls. Thus, except for Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe ceased to be a source of cheap foreign labour for West European capitalism until counterrevolution swept across the region in 1989-91.

The first waves of immigrant workers in West Europe were from poorer European countries — Irish in Britain, Spaniards and Portuguese in France, Italians, Greeks and Yugoslavs in West Germany. However, the combined effects of economic growth, rising living standards and falling birth rates in these countries reduced their pool of cheap exportable labour. By the 1960s the main source of West Europe's imported labour was the neocolonies of the Third World — the West Indies and South Asia in the case of Britain, North Africa and West Africa in the case of France and Turkey in the case of West Germany. Thus was introduced into West Europe a large population that was not white and not Christian.

Following the 1974-75 global economic downturn, most West European governments moved to cut down the further influx of foreign workers. West Germany, for example, restricted new immigration to reuniting families and a few particular professions and crafts. The Bonn government even offered Turkish workers lump-sum payments to return to Anatolia but found few takers. Since the mid-1970s, the main source of growth in the "immigrant" communities has been the original immigrants' children born in Europe. In Britain, for example, new immigration has been effectively zero for many years, and half of the 2.5 million people considered members of racial minorities were born there.

These second-generation youth are taught in European schools, speak English, French, German, Dutch, etc as their primary and in many cases only language, grew up watching European and American films and television programmes, etc. The children of Pakistani parents in Britain would be completely alien in Karachi. Yet while these second-generation immigrants are culturally European, they have not been assimilated through widespread intermarriage with their white European

contemporaries.

To the pervasive racism of European society is added the Christian/Muslim divide. To be sure, many, if not most, second-generation Arabs and Turks in West Europe are not religious. And this is also true of French and German youth. But the decision to marry across racial and religious lines usually means risking the prospective couple's being cut off from both families. Mixed marriages are thus

East London, 1993: Asian and black youth mobilised in the thousands against the rise of fascist terror and racist killings which had led to the murder of Stephen Lawrence and beating of Quaddus Ali.



uncommon and those that do occur, subject to hostile social pressures on many sides, experience a high rate of break-ups. In 1990, only one per cent of all children born to Turkish mothers in Germany had ethnic German fathers. The level of mixed marriages is far higher in France with its traditionally more liberal attitude towards race. In 1990, of all children born in France to Algerian mothers one quarter had Gallic fathers. Nonetheless the underlying thrust of French society today is against integration of the Maghrebian community, as compared for example with the assimilation of the earlier Polish immigrants, who (although they included a component of Jews) were "white".

The self-conceit of bourgeois French society is that France is not racist in the American sense of discrimination based on skin colour. Those who assimilate into "French culture", so the story goes, will be accepted as French. This is the "secularist" rationale behind such racist measures as expelling girls from school for wearing the *hidjeb* (Islamic head-scarf). A particular obstacle to assimilation is that racism in this country is also a legacy of colonialism. The ex-colonial peoples, whom the bourgeoisie has always considered subhumans needing to be "civilised" with the gun, the Bible and the national anthem, today form the core of the immigrant workforce. And racist anti-Arab repres-

sion is further exacerbated by the bourgeoisie's hatred for the Algerian people which defeated French imperialism and won national independence in 1962.

Over the past eight years, France has been repeatedly swept by massive, integrated youth protests, as "French" and "immigrant" youth have demonstrated together against cop killings and against ruling-class measures to cut costs for education and to introduce a sub-mini-

mum wage for young workers. But the French left, which is still perfectly capable of rallying tens of thousands to protest nuclear testing, by and large does not raise a peep of protest as legions of cops sweep through the metros to "check the papers" of anyone with a dark skin.

With the immigrant-derived populations increasingly isolated and vulnerable to cop terror, the second-generation youth face astronomical levels of unemployment and are stigmatised as "criminals". Racist oppression thus directly engenders segregation and the defensive compaction of the Maghrebian "community", also strengthening the hold of religious and other "traditional" values. Thus the immigrant-derived youth who are condescendingly counselled to "assimilate" are in fact thrown by racist oppression and indifference back into the embrace of their families — an embrace often closer than many, especially young girls, would choose if they really had an option of integrating into an egalitarian, pluralistic, anti-racist society.

Despite differences between various European countries, the basic social fact is that large communities of dark-skinned non-Europeans now exist within West Europe's bourgeois nation-state system. And these communities have become the main target of bourgeois reaction fuelled by the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet sphere.

## For proletarian struggle against anti-immigrant racism!

The 1980s saw the efforts of the European bourgeoisies to increase the rate of exploitation which had become unacceptably low by international standards. While the Thatcher regime in Britain launched a frontal assault on the "welfare state" and trade union movement, the anti-working-class offensive in continental West Europe first manifested itself at the level of employment. Capitalists simply cut back on hiring young workers newly entering the job market, claiming that the prevailing level of wages and state-mandated benefits made it impossible for them to compete effectively with the Americans and Japanese. Mass unemployment, especially among the youth, has been a major feature of the West European economies since the

world downturn of 1982-83.

France in the 1980s, in particular, offers clear and compelling proof of the impotence of social-democratic reformism in the face of the capitalist market, national and international. The country had a social-democratic president, François Mitterrand, while the Socialists were the dominant and at times sole party of government. Yet the level of unemployment far exceeded that under the previous three decades of right-wing bourgeois governments. The unemployment rate, which was six per cent when Mitterrand entered the Elysée Palace in 1981, climbed to over ten per cent by the end of the decade and has continued rising in the 1990s.

Far from protecting the economic interests of the working class, the Labour and "Socialist" politicians are beneficiaries of anti-working-class "austerity": the bourgeoisie hands them the trappings of governmental power precisely when it wants to defuse resistance to its attacks. As New York City's former black mayor, David Dinkins, once promised the bankers, the working people "will take it from me".

At the same time, West European capitalists have utilised immigrant workers to hold down and reduce labour costs, often by disregarding labour laws and health and safety codes. Many foreign workers, especially "illegals", are hired "off the books" so they do not get medical, unemployment and pension benefits. In the mid-1980s, Günter Wallraff, a West German journalist of leftist sympathies, disguised himself as a Turkish *gastarbeiter* ("Ali") and recounted his experiences in *Ganz unten (Lowest of the Low)*. In one job Wallraff/Ali and his fellow *gastarbeiter* were not only forced to work two regular shifts a day but had to clean coke dust from steel making equipment without wearing masks or helmets. As a result Wallraff suffered chronic damage to his bronchial tubes.

Thus rising unemployment among West European youth has gone hand in hand with the brutal superexploitation of dark-skinned immigrant workers. In the absence of revolutionary, ie, genuinely communist, parties capable of uniting the working class in struggle against the ravages of capitalism, the fascists and other far-right forces have taken advantage of West Europe's deteriorating social and economic conditions. For example, Austria's Jörg Haider, whose Freedom Party received over 20 per cent of the vote in the last elections, organises rallies with Nazi SS veterans, praises Hitler's "proper employment policy" and terms the death camps like Auschwitz "punishment camps". One of his standard lines is: "There are 140,000 unemployed Austrians" and "180,000 foreigners". Similarly, a cadre of France's National Front recently told American journalist Mark Hunter, "If unemployment goes down, we're finished" (*New York Times Magazine*, 21 April). While unfortunately an oversimplification, this statement expresses

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Spartacist League contingent at 16 October 1993 anti-fascist mobilisation. Trotskyists fight for a class-struggle strategy to smash fascist terrorists.

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# Defection...

(Continued from page 5)

Norden and Stenberg's idea of "anti-fascist actions" was all photo-op and little political content, as was seen the one time it was implemented, in an entirely tokenistic defence of an immigrant hostel in Berlin in which no damage was done to the fascists and out of which not one youth was recruited.

Continuing to flail about in his desperate search for a split in the PDS, Norden then came to see the main chance to "clean up" through an opportunist orientation to the geriatric remnants of the former East German Stalinist regime in the Communist Platform (KPF), the supposed "left wing" of the PDS. Excited by the increased vote for the PDS in the November 1994 German elections and opinion polls showing widespread "socialist" sentiment among the population of the ex-DDR, Norden argued for a "regroupment" perspective towards the Communist Platform, conceived as a rear-guard action to make up for the recruits we didn't get in 1989-90.

If one were seeking to recruit workers or youth mistakenly attracted to the PDS milieu as a perceived alternative to the West German Social Democrats, that would mean unmasking and combatting the KPF/PDS as a political prop for Social Democracy. Instead Norden pushed the vacuous idea that these Stalinist has-beens retained "attachments" to the former East German deformed workers state — which they had sold out! This was precisely what the PDS purveyed — playing upon the desperation of the East German working people and their nostalgia for the "good old days" — in order to build up its own social-democratic parliamentary base.

preparing to sell it off to the West German imperialists. A workers insurrection to replace the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy with genuine proletarian internationalist rule was key to stopping capitalist counterrevolution.

Instead, Norden reduced our own revolutionary intervention to a litany of ineffective tactics, while "reaching out" to the sclerotic remnants of the former ruling bureaucracy as misguided colleagues who had a "grudging respect" for our efforts in 1989-90 — which were aimed at sweeping away their Stalinist regime! According to Norden, the "SED tops" had simply been "paralysed" at the time and not one of them "could even conceive" of a proletarian political revolution. In fact, the SED tops could not only "conceive" of a political revolution, but did everything in their power to suppress one, because they would have been its targets. Far from being paralysed, these Stalinists took conscious, active steps to prevent a workers insurrection.

## Centrist politics, bureaucratic practices

After more than six months of internal party discussion and struggle that definitively exposed Norden's revisionist course, which if left unchecked would have destroyed us as a revolutionary Marxist tendency, Norden's opportunist policies were decisively defeated at the January 1996 International Executive Committee meeting. Norden, and Stenberg, completely rejected this decision of the highest leading body of the ICL between international conferences. They declared that any and all criticisms of the "regroupment" orientation to the KPF and Norden's Humboldt speech were completely false. At the same time, Norden

"capitulating" to the anti-Communism of the Fourth Reich and the popular-front left.

As comrade Albert St. John, who launched the fight against Norden's centrist liquidationism, said in his remarks to Norden at an SpAD conference immediately following the IEC meeting:

"Your denial of any political or organizational wrongdoing and your arrogant and defiant refusal to accept any responsibility for the consequences of your actions indicates to me that you are no longer being motivated by the program in practice of Trotskyism. Or perhaps more accurately there is a very deep contradiction between your alien political appetites and your formal adherence to the party's program. Now there is a real danger, if you don't try to pull back, that your currently strong centrist impulses will become dominant and thus resolve that contradiction negatively."

Trotsky emphasised in "The Mistakes of the Communist League on the Trade Union Question" (January 1931):

"... the revolutionary policy of Marxism rests upon the conception of the party as the vanguard of the proletariat. "Whatever may be the sources and political causes of opportunistic mistakes and deviations, they are always reduced ideologically to an erroneous understanding of the revolutionary party, of its relation to other proletarian organizations and to the class as a whole."

Norden's accommodation to alien political forces externally and his increasingly visceral opposition to the party "regime" internally were manifestations of a rejection of the need for a Leninist vanguard party. This correspondingly reflected a demoralisation in the capacity of the working class to act as a "class for itself", ie, to become conscious of its social position and power to overthrow the entire system of capitalist exploitation and to become the new ruling class in an egalitarian society.

In place of the Leninist party needed to bring revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat, Norden increasingly came to objectify certain political formations and layers — particularly in the former DDR and Latin America — as somehow inherently susceptible to revolutionary politics. In the case of the Communist Platform, Norden saw elements of communist consciousness where none existed. On the Latin American terrain, Norden invested our fraternal relations with Luta Metalúrgica (LM) — in which he and his understudy Negrete, then a leading member of our Mexican section, initially had a central hand — with a level of political sophistication and broad agreement with the programme of revolutionary Trotskyism that simply did not exist.

To defend his own "infallibility" regarding our early dealings with LM, Norden generated a revisionist methodology justifying the sort of rotten-bloc "international relations" pursued by centrist outfits like the British Workers Power group and its "League for a Revolutionary Communist International", in which high-sounding agreements on paper mask all manner of programmatic disagreements in practice. At the same time, Norden and Negrete argued for conciliating LM's non-Bolshevik organisational practices, implying a different conception of the party question for Latin America. Political struggle for genuine programmatic clarity and agreement with LM brought this to the fore.

Negrete in particular tried to alibi a centrist conciliation of LM's practices with the patronising, anti-Leninist argument that these reflected "cultural differences." This invocation of Latin American exceptionalism represented an adaptation to the nationalism and "caudilloism" which politically characterise the Latin



Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the October Revolution and founder of the Red Army.

American left. In the course of a political struggle within the Grupo Espartaquista de México, it came out that these features also characterised Negrete's regime in our Mexican section. The section was deliberately kept isolated from the vital struggles and debates within our international and every attempt to introduce Bolshevik norms of functioning was resisted by Negrete, who worked to maintain the section as his own personal fiefdom in which he was the unchallenged "all-knowing" leader.

When this situation came to a head and was fought out, Norden and Stenberg rallied to the defence of Negrete, arrogantly declaring that the members of our Mexican section were either liars or dupes who had been lined up by the "International". In return, Negrete attached himself to Norden and Stenberg, like a piece of lint on a pair of serge pants. Towards the end, Negrete fancied himself the modern-day equivalent of a member of Trotsky's Left Opposition being led away to a Siberian gulag. His (typically) long-winded proclamation in defence of Norden and Stenberg's refusal to abide by democratic centralism concluded with the grandiose exhortation, "Down with frame-ups and witchhunting methods! For the communism of Lenin and Trotsky, long live the ICL!" But then Negrete was always, as one comrade quipped, something of a "legend in his own mind".

## Disintegrative pressures on the revolutionary vanguard

The ICL is a voluntary organisation. But, impelled by his own alien political appetites, Norden increasingly came to see the party and its leadership as some kind of bureaucratic prison with himself as the victim of wanton regime tyranny. The party hadn't changed, nor had Norden particularly. What had changed was the world. As Joseph Seymour, a member of the *WV* Editorial Board, wrote in a letter to Norden, with whom he had worked closely for over two decades:

"I am very concerned about your increasing alienation from the rest of the leadership. Your political personality has not changed fundamentally over the years though you do seem to have become more impatient for organizational successes, especially where you are personally involved in the work. What has changed fundamentally is the world in which we live and function. And therein lies the crux of the problem.... I believe you do not accept that, beginning in the late 1970s, there has occurred a *historic retrogression* in the political conscious

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International Communist League intervened to offer revolutionary leadership in East Germany, 1989-90. Spartakist banner at December 1989 anti-fascist demonstration in East Berlin reads: "For the Communism of Lenin, Liebknicht and Luxemburg! For a Leninist-Egalitarian Party!"

Norden's opportunist appetites soon emerged in a flagrant public expression in a January 1995 presentation at Berlin's Humboldt University aimed at the KPF. This speech was a case study in centrism worthy of the late Joseph Hansen, who wielded his able pen to cloak the revisionist degeneration of the once-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party with reams of "orthodox" formulations. While invoking the programme of Trotskyism, Norden presented a liquidationist view which denied the ICL's role as the conscious revolutionary vanguard, repeatedly intoning that in Germany in 1989-90 "the key element was missing, the revolutionary leadership". He disappeared the central purpose and intent of the ICL's intervention: to organise for a political revolution against the Stalinist regime, which had bureaucratically undermined the DDR deformed workers state and was now

arrogantly denied all responsibility for nearly destroying our German section with the concomitant bureaucratic practices he pushed to realise his perspective.

James P Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, noted that there is always a consonance between the politics of centrism and anti-Leninist organisational practices. In Germany, Norden's opportunist pursuit of the geriatric Stalinist remnants in the KPF was complemented by a vicious witch hunt denouncing any comrades perceived as an obstacle to his orientation as a "comfortable social-democratic" layer opposed to "youth recruitment"! Comrades who criticised an article in *Spartakist* directed towards the PDS, in which Norden had grotesquely and gratuitously inserted that the Red Army forces who liberated Germany from the Nazis had "Stalin as commander in chief", were condemned for

# Defection...

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ness of the working class and left internationally. This development both conditioned the counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc and has been reinforced by it."

As belligerent and frankly bizarre as Y Rad's factional struggle became (which included Rad's belief in mental telepathy!) at least he forthrightly put forward his political views. Not Norden. He used squid tactics, spilling ink in hundreds of pages of documents that were as obfuscating as they were turgid. Since the beginning of 1995 alone, at least 392 pages of internal material were written by Norden and Stamberg and circulated to all sections and locals of the ICL. Although he had fundamental differences with the programme and perspectives of our international, his documents were a study in centrist evasion.

Norden obviously believed the leadership of our international was increasingly going off the political rails. But rather than declaring a faction to fight against this and for a different political perspective and a corresponding new leadership, Norden and Stamberg engaged in cliquish guerrilla warfare against the decisions of the party. Operating on the perception that the party press was his personal fiefdom — "WV c'est moi", to paraphrase Louis XIV — "His Editorship" (as Stamberg came to refer to Norden's position) rejected the Leninist understanding that the majority determined the line.

It is said that colleagues of Eduard Bernstein in the German Social Democracy advised him not to put his disagreements with, and rejection of, Marxism in writing. Instead they argued that he avoid a political struggle and simply act on his disagreements. But Bernstein was, evidently, an honest revisionist who committed to paper his reformist view that the "movement was everything" and the "goal" of socialist revolution "nothing". Norden was the opposite. He acted upon and tried to implement the substance of his political differences, which were increasingly antithetical to the programme and purpose of the ICL, but would not openly argue for a different programme or perspectives.

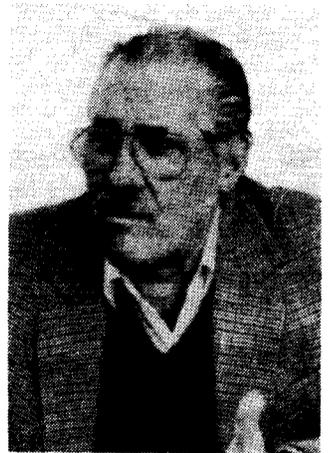
When caught out he would simply deny everything. But he knew he was operating on the basis of a different set of politics, as evidenced by the fact that he increasingly attempted to operate in secrecy, outside of the scrutiny of the party and its leadership. When asked to submit his phone bills, a common practice among leading cadre of our organisation and something Norden had done routinely for at least the last decade, Norden defiantly and categorically refused.

Charges were brought by the International Secretariat against Norden and Stamberg "for violation of the party's discipline of democratic centralism, specifically [their] defiant and categorical denial of a fundamental condition of membership, that the party has a monopoly over the public political activity (i.e. not personal activity) of its members." Norden and Stamberg refused to attend the party trial which had been called to allow them to defend themselves against these charges, dismissing the party's democratic procedures as a bureaucratic "frame-up" and denouncing the request for their phone bills as a demonic ruse to persecute other comrades. As the PB motion expelling Norden and Stamberg noted:

"In fact, either Norden and Stamberg have nothing to hide because their calls are all to comrades (who whatever their sympathies or antipathies for the politics of Norden and Stamberg have the right to



Pabloites of the first mobilisation: Ernest Mandel (far left) and mentor Michel Pablo. Right: Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist "caudillo" Nahuel Moreno.



El Socialista

discuss their views with any member of the party), in which case Norden and Stamberg's refusal to submit their phone bills (at considerable financial cost to themselves) is a dim provocation designed to engineer their own expulsion; or they have been in contact with political formations outside the organization."

We are still left wondering what game Norden and Stamberg were playing. As to where they are going, the possibilities are wide open so long as the minimum norm of being anti-Marxist is met. In this regard, we have the excellent example of Y Rad. He left our organisation screaming against the supposed "Stalinophobia" displayed in our opposition to the revolting Russian "red-brown coalition" and in our refusal to support the Serbian nationalist forces in the all-sided fratricide in ex-Yugoslavia. A few months after quitting, Rad had made a 180 degree turnaround, denouncing us as "the best defenders of counter-revolutionary Stalinism". Rad retrospectively took up the defence of Solidarność counterrevolution in Poland, of Yeltsin's 1991 imperialist-backed coup in Moscow, and of the Bosnian Muslims against the Serbs!

## Pabloism of the second mobilisation

Years ago, Norden was won over from a quasi-syndicalist, New Leftist position to the Spartacist League. He devoted the best decades of his life to working 16 hours a day for the Marxist socialist movement, struggling to expound revolutionary Trotskyism around the globe, particularly through *Workers Vanguard*, the flagship paper of our international. An early expression of Norden's alienation from the party was his increasingly self-conscious view that WV was his fiefdom, and corresponding resistance to party intervention and criticism of the paper. Under the impact of the historic defeat represented by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, and his increasing rejection of democratic centralism, Norden's episodic impressionism (which always had a centrist bent) became chronic and acute.

Impressionists are prone to wild and quick reversals. A case study is that of Michel Pablo, an adventurer who emerged after World War II as the leader of the decimated forces of Trotsky's Fourth International and whose impressionism liquidated the political programme and purpose of Trotsky's International. In the 1950s, following the creation of deformed workers states in Eastern Europe, Pablo predicted "centuries of deformed workers states" and pursued a "deep entrism" liquidation into the Stalinist and social-democratic parties. In the 1960s, Pablo's heirs in Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat (USec) chased after petty-bourgeois guerrillism and championed "student power". At their 1972 World Congress, the USec rediscovered the working class, writing: "After May 1968 and, more generally, after the revival of workers' struggles throughout Europe, an irreversible turn

has taken place in this milieu everywhere in the world." The irreversible was quickly reversed as Mandel & Co embraced the cause of anti-Soviet social democracy in the 1980s. By the 1990s, Mandel was speaking of the "crisis of credibility" of socialism, and the USec was debating simply throwing in the towel and liquidating their organisation outright.

Norden's liquidationist course was a Pabloism of the second mobilisation: denial of reality, suppression of the Trotskyist programme, vicarious political adventurism and adaptation to alien political pressures, and liquidation of the Trotskyist vanguard as the necessary subjective factor in history. He was given plenty of opportunity to reverse his course. But he rejected any attempt at a political corrective as a mindless bureaucratic abuse simply aimed at "destroying his authority", an authority which he correspondingly invested with papal proportions of infallibility.

## It is desperately necessary to fight!

We fight to complete the task begun by Lenin and Trotsky when they led the working class to victory in Russia in 1917 — to pursue the class struggle to a victorious conclusion, with state power embodied in workers councils around the world. In a period conditioned by the colossal defeats for the international proletariat signified by capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and across Eastern Europe, this puts our small forces in a conjuncturally fragile situation.

Across West Europe, the working class has fought back in some of the largest and most militant battles in years, yet for the first time since the Paris Commune, the masses of workers in struggle do not identify their immediate felt needs with the ideals of socialism or the programme of proletarian revolution. In the US, where the political consciousness of the working class has long been retarded by a ruling class which has effectively fomented first religious and then

raw racial hatred as a fundamental prop for capitalist exploitation, the labour movement has been fractured and driven back by two decades of surrender by the trade-union bureaucracy before a massive anti-labour offensive. Many youth who consider themselves to be "radical" are imbued with liberal-democratic idealism which finds its expression in vaguely anarchist sentiments or variants of "green" radicalism.

Failure to recognise the period we are in and the necessary relationship of our small revolutionary vanguard to the proletariat has generated disorientation, demoralisation and appetites to look elsewhere for the "answer". In this context internal political struggle is inevitable, and desperately necessary, to keep our party on the rails. As Trotsky observed in his 1937 article "Stalinism and Bolshevism":

"Reactionary epochs like ours not only disintegrate and weaken the working class and its vanguard but also lower the general ideological level of the movement and throw political thinking back to stages long since passed through. In these conditions, the task of the vanguard is above all not to let itself be carried along by the backward flow: it must swim against the current...it must at least retain its ideological positions, because in them is expressed the dearly purchased experience of the past. Fools will consider this policy 'sectarian.' Actually it is the only means of preparing for a new tremendous surge forward with the coming historical tide."

As the recent strike waves in France and Italy and the anti-racist mobilisations throughout West Europe demonstrate, there is a new generation of fighters, both in the working class and among radical youth, to be won to the programme of international socialist revolution. The fights to reorient and steel our forces in the face of a "New World Order" are aimed at intersecting new social struggles as they erupt and winning the best elements to the programme of communism.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 648, 5 July 1996.



VK Bulletin

Presidium of the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1920. Our party stands on democratic-centralist practices of Lenin's Bolsheviks.

# Europe . . .

(Continued from page 8)

an important core of truth.

It is common on the European left to blame the rising tide of anti-immigrant racism on the demagogy of "extreme" right-wing groups. But the fascists are simply expressing in an open, unvarnished and violent way the *economic and political interests* of the European ruling classes at the present juncture. European capital now has no need for additional imported labour from Third World countries while second-generation immigrant youth are economically redundant and regarded as a source of social unrest. For the first time in decades French and German youth, facing chronic unemployment, are willing to take the kind of jobs that a few years ago only Arabs, black Africans, Turks and Kurds would do. Furthermore, capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc has opened a major new sphere of exploitation for European, especially German, imperialism. A few years ago German industrial spokesman Tyll Neckar exulted: "Right on our doorstep in Eastern Europe, for the first time we have a vast pool of cheap and highly trained labour." Instead of importing labour from Turkey, German industry is exporting capital for the exploitation of labour in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, etc.

As we have pointed out, the social-democratic "welfare state" originated and was maintained because European imperialism needed to secure the support or at least neutrality of their working classes for the Cold War against the Soviet Union. Now, however, the European bourgeoisies are scrapping these social overhead costs and moving to maximise the rate of exploitation in intense competition with the United States and Japan. Anti-immigrant demagogy and terror are being used to *divide and divert* the working class from united struggle against the present capitalist offensive.

The main body of social democrats have abandoned their liberal posture on the immigrant question and are vying with the right in chauvinist demagogy. Brought to power in 1981, the French "left", facing strikes by immigrant car workers in 1982, quickly took a series of disgusting racist measures. In 1988, Mitterrand declared

that France had reached the "threshold of tolerance" of immigration. And in 1993, the German Social Democrats joined with the Christian Democrats in effectively eliminating the right of political asylum written into the postwar West German constitution. A few nights later, fascists celebrated by firebombing the home of Turkish families in a Ruhr city, killing five women and children. The struggle against anti-immigrant racism must be conducted not only militantly against the fascists but equally on the political plane against the reformist misleaders of the workers movement.

In classical Marxist terms, the reformist parties express the immediate interests and bourgeois consciousness of the "aristocracy of labour" — the whitest and most skilled layers of the proletariat and especially the labour bureaucracy. Nowhere is this clearer than in their prostration before the anti-immigrant frenzy. The German SPD sees itself as representing the workers of the majority group, and certainly not the Turkish and Kurdish workers who do not even vote. The bureaucratized French trade unions are happy to use the non-participation of the "private sector" (heavily immigrant-derived) industrial workers as the excuse to call off last winter's strike wave, but never tried to organise strong militant unions to break the non-union and company-union patterns in industries like the private motor companies.

The interests of labour and minorities advance together, or they fall back together. In the mid/late-1950s, the CGT at Renault Billancourt organised a large proportion of the workers in the plant (unlike today's "minority" union representation). The Communist Party's naked social-patriotic betrayal of the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria, lining up with French imperialism as it bloodily repressed the Algerian masses, struck a terrible blow against class consciousness and communist sympathies among Algerian workers in France, who included the majority of workers at Billancourt. The CP underlined its betrayal when the *Humanité* office barred its doors against people trying to escape the bullets and clubs when an October 1961 pro-Algerian independence demonstration in Paris was attacked by the cops, leaving hundreds dead.

Immigrant workers at factories like Talbot, on strike during the winter of 1983-

84, were a spearhead of militant class struggle in defence of the economic interests of the entire working class. But the bureaucracy left them hanging out to dry. The splitting effects of this betrayal remain in the consciousness of the proletariat. Among the results of a "leadership" that won't fight on behalf of the specially oppressed are weak unions that don't defend the interests of any of their members and a political climate dominated by racist arguments in the mouths of both the right and the "left".

The reformist betrayers, who always begin by accepting the limits of whatever racist capitalism says is "possible" (in other words, profitable), are more than willing to compete with the rightists in chauvinist attacks on minorities. Trailing along behind them are many of the groups of the "socialist" left, who — when they do not openly echo the bourgeoisie's racist code-words about "drugs" and "crime" and "terrorism" and the bureaucracy's poisonous appeals against foreign workers "stealing our jobs" — content themselves with abstract "anti-racist" appeals which they do nothing to really implement, for example in the unions where they have influence. Their empty moralism dovetails conveniently with the hypocrisy of the big reformist parties who turn around and organise mass marches for "tolerance" ... after the official racist consensus in which they partake has emboldened fascist terrorists to burn down immigrant hostels, murdering men, women and children.

There can be no compromise between the internationalist programme which the proletariat requires to fight for power and even to wage defensive struggles in the imperialist epoch and the acceptance of the poisonous racism which splits the working class and serves only the bourgeois masters. The revolutionary Trotskyists of the International Communist League have actively championed the rights of immigrants, fighting for full citizenship rights for everyone no matter how they managed to get here. The ICL's French section, the *Ligue trotskyste*, fights for organising mass labour/immigrant mobilisations to smash fascist provocations. In 1993 in Paris, we waged a propaganda campaign for the labour movement to turn out en masse to defend the 18th *arrondissement*, placed under state of siege: the racist state sent in an army of cops to crush a revolt of youth who took

to the streets after a young African was shot in a police station. LTF supporters in the public sector during last December's strikes called on their unions to fight the racist ban on employment of immigrant workers in government jobs.

Only a new, revolutionary leadership — a Trotskyist proletarian party — can unite the working class in opposition to the class enemy and its racist system. Only such a party can win to the side of workers revolution the immigrant workers and the new generation of activist youth. Thousands of youth throughout Europe have sought to militantly defend immigrants and second-generation youth; many now think of themselves as "anarchists", out of disgust with the chauvinism and indifference of parties calling themselves "socialists" and "communists".

Indifference to racial oppression flows directly from a perspective of *class collaboration*. The fundamental method of the reformists is to seek allies in some sector of "their own" national bourgeoisie (this year in France, the CP is trying to form a bloc with the "anti-Maastricht" bourgeoisie) and certainly not to look for allies among the specially oppressed layers of the working people. We proletarian revolutionaries are the opposite: not made stupid and corrupt chasing after "friends" among the class enemy, we know who our friends are.

While there are important differences in the nature and role of blacks in the United States and the non-European immigrant communities in West Europe, the struggle to overcome racial and ethnic divisions is strategically central to communist leadership of the working class and its allies in all regions of the capitalist world. As we wrote 20 years ago in "West Europe's Imported Labour: A Key to Revolution":

"Just as achieving racial unity is central to working-class consciousness in the U.S., so integrating foreign workers into the labor movement is now key to deepening the internationalist consciousness of the French and German proletariat. Conversely, anti-foreign-worker policies are now the main axis for West European reaction. When the French fascist 'Ordre Nouveau' (New Order) reasserted its public presence recently, it did so through a rally to expel foreign workers. The struggle against the oppression of foreign workers is at the same time crucial to winning the West European proletariat to socialist internationalism." ■

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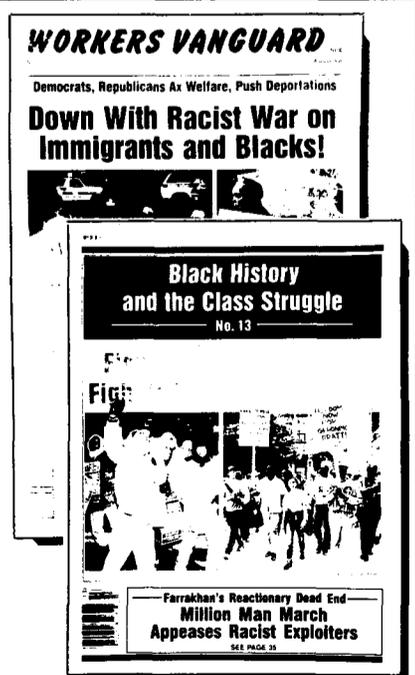
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## Immigration and racist oppression in Europe

The article reprinted below first appeared in *Spartacist* (French edition, no 29, Summer 1996) as an introduction to the article "In Defense of Revolutionary Integrationism" which appears in *Spartacist* (English edition, no 49-50, Winter 1993-94).

For most of modern history the United States was the only advanced capitalist country in which there existed a large oppressed minority defined by race. The famous and influential study of blacks in the US by the Swedish social democrat Gunnar Myrdal in the 1940s was entitled *An American Dilemma*. European social democrats and liberals adopted an air of moral superiority towards anti-black racism and segregation in the United States as if their own societies were immune from such despicable prejudices and practices.

Today, from southern Italy to northern Germany, it has become commonplace for dark-skinned people — immigrant workers and their children, refugees from civil wars and communalist massacres in the Third World — to be killed by fascist gangs or the police. The cultural event of the year in France was the film *La Haine*, which depicts 24 hours in the life of three rootless young men who hang out together, all second-generation immigrants: an East European Jew, a North African Arab and a West African black. "An Arab in a police station doesn't last an hour", one of them remarks as a truism. It is telling that in France, the term "immigrants" is used routinely to include people who were born in France and are French citizens.

Over the past decade large fascist parties, such as Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front in France and the Austrian Freedom Party of Jörg Haider, have arisen on a platform of "ethnic cleansing" — the mass expulsion of non-Europeans living in their countries. A British Labour Party member of the European Parliament, Glyn Ford, decries "the rising quagmire of racism and xenophobia, promoted by right-wing extremism, into which our societies run the risk of sinking". But those who bewail the trend while accepting the framework of capitalism can do nothing to resist or reverse the increasing descent of "respectable" politics into an orgy of chauvinist immigrant-bashing.



Paris, 23 August: military-style operation evicts immigrants from St Bernard church. See article inside.

It is understandable that militants in West Europe's immigrant communities, living in ghettos under racist police occupation, now identify with American blacks, their historic struggles and especially their most radical spokesmen. The powerful personality, writings and speeches of Malcolm X — inspirer of "revolutionary" black nationalism in the US in the 1960s — are admired by young North Africans and blacks in France as well as youth of African and Caribbean descent in Britain. Groups defending immigrant rights in Europe have rallied to the international campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and radical journalist on Pennsylvania's death row after a police/FBI frame-up. They see in Mumia not simply a victim of injustice but a comrade in the fight against racial oppression.

While in the past the presence of a large oppressed racial minority was regarded as unique to the United States, one now encounters an opposite tendency, a failure to recognise certain *fundamental differences* in the social character of the

American black population and the recently formed non-European communities in West Europe.

The descendants of black Africans enslaved and taken in chains to the New World at the birth of the capitalist system were *integral and central* to the building of the American nation and later of the American nation-state. The American nation was formed in the era of mercantile capitalism through British colonial settlement of a region inhabited by a sparse population of aboriginal peoples with a stone-age culture who proved horribly vulnerable to Afro-Eurasian diseases. The massive importation of slaves from sub-Saharan Africa provided the labour force for the establishment of large-scale plantation agriculture in the southern tier of Britain's North American colonies. The owners of these slave plantations, who developed an aristocratic mentality akin to the European landed nobility, became a dominant component of the ruling class in the American colonies.

When the colonies achieved independence from Britain in the late 18th century,

the United States of America was formed as a bourgeois democracy for white, male property owners. Within a few generations, however, male suffrage was extended to the white lower classes. Southern plantation agriculture, centrally cotton, supplied the principal exports for the early American bourgeois state, thereby providing the financial resources for the rapid growth of mercantile and industrial capitalism in the North based on "free" wage labour.

The increasing conflicts of interest between the Southern plantation owners and burgeoning Northern capital led to a full-scale civil war in the 1860s which resulted in the abolition of black chattel slavery when the North won, in part due to the recruitment of hundreds of thousands of blacks into the Union Army. After a tumultuous decade of interracial bourgeois democracy ("Radical Reconstruction"), a new form of white supremacy was established in the South. The so-called Jim Crow system of legally enforced racial segregation and totalitarian police-state

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Full citizenship rights for foreign-born workers and their families!