

## No to Capitalist Reunification!

# East Germany: Build Workers Councils, Now!

DECEMBER 19—A political revolution is unfolding in the German Democratic Republic (DDR). The leadership of the ruling Stalinist party is in retreat. Plans are afoot to "dissolve" the Stasi, the hated secret police. Within the army, soldiers councils are beginning to form. Meanwhile, the West German financiers and industrialists are on a hard course toward capitalist reunification of Germany, with the Socialist Party (SPD) acting as their "left" lieutenants, and outright fascists increasingly active in the DDR as the shock troops of capitalist reaction.

An East German workers state under the democratic, internationalist rule of workers councils—*soviets*—could be the springboard for a united red Germany and a Socialist United States of Europe. Reunification of Germany on a capitalist basis under Helmut Kohl's Fourth Reich means bloody counterrevolution, a resurgence of fascism and the danger of a third world war. The stakes are enormous—the choice posed is literally "socialism or barbarism." But while the massive wave of protests has strongly reflected the weight of the working class in the heavily industrialized DDR and has evidenced a widespread sentiment to defend egalitarian pro-socialist values, the working people are not organized to express their class will in the political convulsions shaking society. We call on the workers of East Germany to form

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Mass demonstration outside parliament building in East Berlin, November 4. Workers political revolution is key to defending East Germany against West German bankers' counterrevolutionary designs. Spartakist

# The Crisis of Gorbachev's Russia

While Gorbachev is praised to the skies by the rulers of the capitalist West for his capitulations in the Cold War, the Soviet leader has become ever more unpopular in his own land. Gone are the bold, brash calls for "socialist renewal." Gorbachev himself admits that Soviet working people blame perestroika (restructuring) for empty shops and soaring prices, while Soviet premier Nikolai Ryzhkov has to reassure the American press there is no danger of a military coup in Moscow.

Everyone knows that the Soviet Union cannot go on as it is. Working-class resentment over the effects of perestroika exploded last summer in miners strikes from Siberia to the Ukraine. Independent workers organizations are being formed. At the same time, Great Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitism are on the rise in Leningrad, Moscow and other Russian cities. In the Baltic republics, nationalist forces are ever more aggressive in demanding independence to join the capitalist "free world." Communalist

## Only Workers Political Revolution Can Save the Soviet Union!

bloodletting between Azerbaijanis and Armenians has taken hundreds of lives, and the restless Georgians have launched pogroms against the northern Caucasus mountain people. And Ukrainian nationalists are stirring behind the revived Eastern Rite (Uniate) Catholic church.

After more than 60 years of Stalinist bureaucratic rule under the banner of "socialism in one country," the Soviet Union has become a seething cauldron of popular and national discontent. Today, it is clearer than ever before that Trotsky was right. Either the Soviet working class sweeps away the parasitic bureaucracy through proletarian political revolution, opening the road to socialism on a world scale, or the gains of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution will be destroyed by

bloody counterrevolution and the USSR dismembered by Western and Japanese imperialism.

### Perestroika Fuels Reactionary Nationalisms

Soviet workers have been wary, if not hostile, to Gorbachev's market-oriented "reforms" from the outset. The mass base, so to speak, of the current Kremlin regime is the intelligentsia, the swollen numbers of urbanized, university-degreed, soft-job-possessing children of party and state bureaucrats, who were themselves largely ex-workers and peasants. Indeed, a key part of the program of perestroika is increasing the material privileges of the intelligentsia at

the expense of workers and collective farmers.

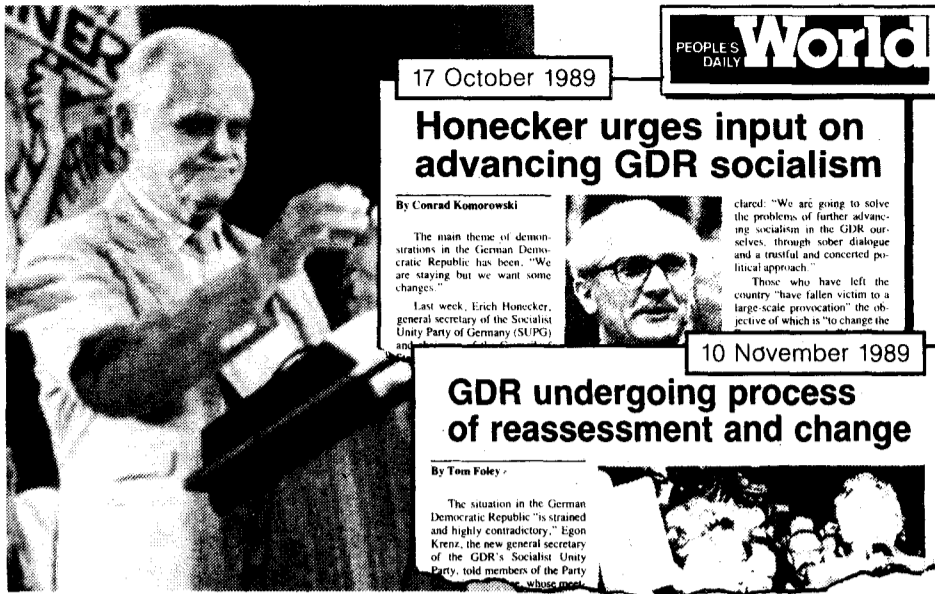
Given the history of Russia, there is a somewhat larger percentage of Jews in the intelligentsia than in the population as a whole. For fearful workers, insecure managers, trapped collective farmers, embittered veterans of the Afghan war and many others of those who fear for the future of Russia, the Jews once again appear as a scapegoat. In Leningrad and elsewhere, posters have appeared denouncing the "yid-mason mafia" who "control the radio, television, newspapers and magazines." The powerful Writers Union has become a cesspool of anti-Semitism with one of its leading officials, Anatoly Bulyov, declaring, "The Jews appear to be the only nationality that is interested in our ruin" (*London Independent*, 6 December). A century ago the German workers leader August Bebel called anti-Semitism "the socialism of fools." And that is certainly its role in Gorbachev's Russia today.

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# Gus Hall's Fort Lauderdale Weekend

For years, Gus Hall's Communist Party (CP) has devoted itself to tailing one capitalist Democratic politician after another and apologizing for sellout after sellout by the trade-union bureaucrats. If most CP members have long since given up any hope of socialist revolution against the American ruling class, if on the face of it they appeared indistinguishable from pacifists and liberals, deep in their hearts during all those years in the reform Democratic club, they could feel they were serving the "socialist motherland" by faithfully parroting every zig and zag emanating from the Kremlin. Life is no longer so simple.

After painting the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states as unblemished "workers paradises" all these years, Hall & Co. are now faced with Gorbachev's own disparagement of the Soviet economy, an explicitly pro-capitalist Solidarność-dominated government in Poland, and mass upheavals from Beijing to Berlin. The *Wall Street Journal* (7 November) captured something when it wrote: "Gus Hall is still with us after all these years, but the world has changed.... Instead of



Political Affairs  
**Gus Hall confesses his "crystal ball is cloudy," as CP press lauds East German party boss Honecker just before he is deposed.**

the House Un-American Activities Committee, he has Glasnost Gorbachev, Tienanmen Square and the paroxysms of the East bloc to contend with."

For old-line CPers in the West, East

Germany could always be relied on as a bastion of Stalinist order and stability; Hall even sports a wrist watch given him by (now deposed) DDR Stalinist boss Erich Honecker. How then to explain the mass exodus of DDR dropouts last summer, which triggered Honecker's ouster and the current mass upheaval? That's what the faithful wanted to know when Hall gave a talk in New York on September 28 to a virtually all-white, over-60s audience of less than 200. Hall explained, "You know in Florida you have Fort Lauderdale and you have Easter exodus to Fort Lauderdale of young people, for a good reason, excitement and so on. I have a feeling that many of these young have got the same idea about excitement and West Germany."

No wonder younger CP cadre who were looking for some answers seemingly boycotted Hall's talk. At the CP's first-ever "ideological conference" in July—just after the Tienanmen Square massacre and an ensuing "two line" struggle inside the CP—one member complained that he felt as though participants were being watched by "brain police." And the 29 September *People's Daily World* carried a letter by Michael Parenti which ripped into Hall: "It would seem there would be less of the 'frustration' and 'confusion' Gus Hall was talking about if the PDW opened its pages to candid and critical discussion regarding the present-day crises in existing socialist countries." Noting that the paper's line that "Beijing's leaders were defending socialism against allegedly counterrevolutionary students" differed sharply from pro-Gorbachev PDW correspondent Carl Bloice's eyewitness

reports from Beijing, Parenti said: "Taken together, these pieces do not begin to tell us what is going on with China's socialism—if it can still be called socialism."

The crisis of Stalinism is also affecting peripheral groups on the American left like veteran Stalinist Irwin Silber's Line of March (LOM) group, who recently abandoned their pretense at "party building" and opted for a new name, Frontline Political Organization (other proposals were "Desperately Seeking Socialism" and "Line of March Lite," reported the 8 November *Guardian*). Thankfully, they will be "improving" *Frontline* by coming out less frequently. LOM, which not too long ago wanted to enter Gus Hall's party, is now looking to commit its reformist betrayals directly inside the Democratic Party.

This fall, Hall confessed, "The ideological crystal ball is somewhat cloudy" (*PDW*, 14 September). Poor Gus. Stalinist "ideology" has never been more than a paper-thin apologia for the rule of a nationalist bureaucratic caste which usurped political power from the revolutionary proletariat in Russia in the early 1920s. And Stalinism without a police-state apparatus is incoherent. Whether under Stalin or Gorbachev, "socialism in one country" has always meant popular-front betrayal abroad. Thus, "hardliner" Hall's idea of a Communist opposition to Bush in the 1988 elections was "in practical terms...electing a Democrat." Today Hall & Co. look around desperately for a new center of Stalinist orthodoxy: the 19 October *PDW* ran a large ad celebrating the 40th anniversary of "the founding of the new Chinese and German states." Well, now the East German bureaucracy is collapsing, and many CPers are going to have a hard time swallowing Deng's China, which has been in a bloody alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union for almost 20 years. Any bets on Romania?

The bourgeoisie's propaganda barrage about the "death of Communism" is taking its toll on these outfits because, like the imperialists, they equate communism with Stalinism. Well, we Trotskyists know better. We're fighting for proletarian political revolution, which in turn can be the spark for socialist revolution in the imperialist West. Meanwhile, the West Berlin Stalinist SEW just announced its dissolution, and the West German DKP is considering the same. Why wait to find out if the CPUSA is next? There is an alternative to doing donkey work for the Democrats: it's fighting for the authentic communism of Lenin and Trotsky. ■



TROTSKY

## Lenin on the Murderers of Liebknecht and Luxemburg

Seventy years ago the Social Democratic government of Ebert and Scheidemann crushed the Spartacus uprising and had the great revolutionaries Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg murdered in the name of "democracy" (bourgeois parliamentarism). Today, the heirs of Ebert and Scheidemann—the SPD of Brandt/Vogel—are aiming to bring about capitalist restoration in East Germany. At the same time, East German

liberal Stalinists like Gregor Gysi are seeking to revive the doctrines of Kautskyan social democracy. Lenin, upon hearing of Liebknecht and Luxemburg's assassination, not only flayed the perpetrators of this crime but also indicted Karl Kautsky, whose doctrine of "pure democracy" served and still serves as an ideological justification for bloody capitalist counterrevolution.

The foregoing lines were written before the brutal and dastardly murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg by the Ebert and Scheidemann government. Those butchers, in their servility to the bourgeoisie, allowed the German whiteguards, the watchdogs of sacred capitalist property, to lynch Rosa Luxemburg, to murder Karl Liebknecht by shooting him in the back on the patently false plea that he "attempted to escape".... Let those simpletons, the Kautskyites, talk in their newspaper *Freiheit* about a "court" of representatives of "all" "socialist" parties (those servile souls insist that the Scheidemann executioners are socialists)! Those heroes of philistine stupidity and petty-bourgeois cowardice even fail to understand that the courts are organs of state power, and that the issue in the struggle and civil war now being waged in Germany is precisely one of who is to hold this power—the bourgeoisie, "served" by the Scheidemanns as executioners and instigators of pogroms, and by the Kautskys as glorifiers of "pure democracy", or the proletariat, which will overthrow the capitalist exploiters and crush their resistance.

The blood of the best representatives of the world proletarian International, of the unforgettable leaders of the world socialist revolution, will steel ever new masses of workers for the life-and-death struggle. And this struggle will lead to victory. We in Russia, in the summer of 1917, lived through the "July days," when the Russian Scheidemanns, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, also provided "state" protection for the "victory" of the whiteguards over the Bolsheviks, and when Cossacks shot the worker Voinov in the streets of Petrograd for distributing Bolshevik leaflets. We know from experience how quickly such "victories" of the bourgeoisie and their henchmen cure the people of their illusions about bourgeois democracy, "universal suffrage", and so forth.

—V.I. Lenin, "Letter to Workers of Europe and America" (January 1919)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

*Workers Vanguard* (USPS 098-770) published biweekly, except 2nd issue August and with 3-week interval December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. Domestic subscriptions: \$7.00/24 issues. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

No. 492

29 December 1989

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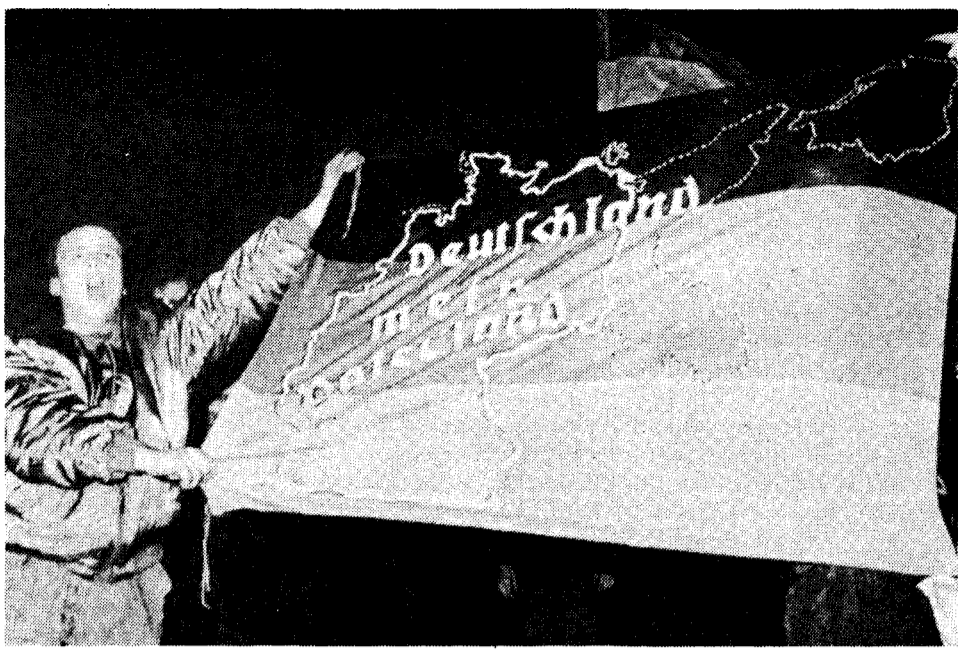
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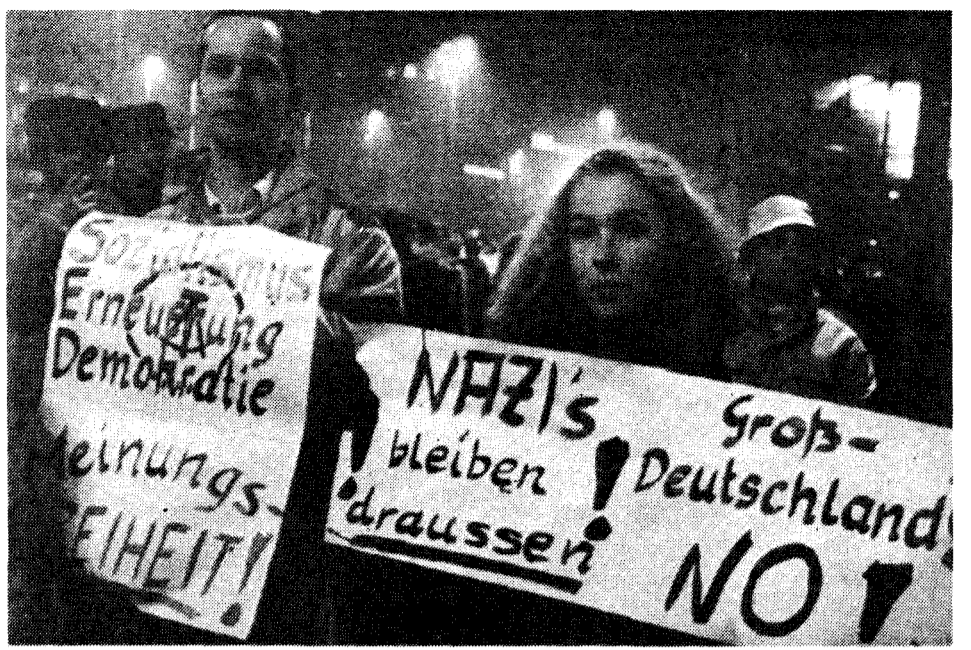
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Sharpening class polarization in East Germany: As right-wing nationalists (left) in Leipzig demos carry West German flag with map of Hitler's Third Reich and slogan "Germany my fatherland," pro-socialist demonstrators (right) say "Nazis Stay Out! Greater Germany—No!"



AP Photos

## E. Germany...

(continued from page 1)

workers councils, now. Time is of the essence.

Today once again, Germany is the key to Europe and the world. All over East Europe, as millions take to the streets demanding democratic reforms, governments resign and are replaced by unstable new coalitions as leaders scramble to keep pace with the spread of discontent and the demands for change. The whole Stalinist "system" is wracked with conflict and collapse, including in the USSR itself (see article, page one).

Stalinist rule is profoundly conflicted, unstable and brittle. The Stalinist system was constructed in the interests not of a new ruling class, but of a bureaucratic caste which arose more than 60 years ago in the USSR as a kind of global middleman between, on the one side, hostile world imperialism and the relentless pressures of its international capitalist market, and on the other side the October 1917 workers revolution, whose international advance had by 1923 been halted for the historical moment. Stalinism has been poised on that tightrope ever since.

Thus, its "theories" are nothing more than the perversion of Leninist ideals to justify the privileges and rule of a usurping bureaucracy—backed by massive state terror. Without the monstrous apparatus Stalin created of official lies backed by murder, Stalinism is an empty shell of stultifying slogans, an edifice of lies, clichés and self-contradictions. Only its secret policemen can hold it up, and they are apparently immobilized.

### East Europe "Unlocked"

In the deformed workers states today (with the very notable exception of China, where the devastations of "market socialism" have gone very far and where repression took the offensive with the provocative massacre at Tienanmen Square), the apparatus of repression is seemingly in abeyance. A situation that has been effectively locked up for more than four decades has now been unlocked. When the Soviet army smashed Hitler's might and toppled the pro-Nazi capitalist regimes throughout East Europe, the social systems established from above were workers states in the image of the bureaucratic model which

it took Stalin more than ten years to misshape in the USSR. Stalinist power functioned as both a block to capitalist reconquest and a roadblock to real workers power. The process of its shattering which we are experiencing today presents an unprecedented opportunity for the working class to take the leadership of society; in the absence of that outcome, it presents very great perils.

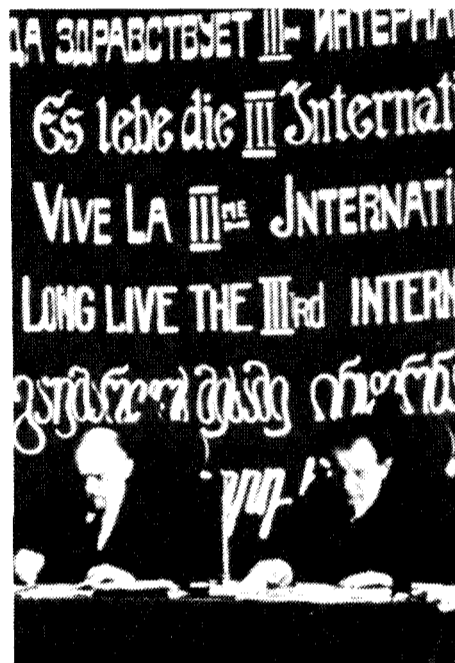
Today the Stalinist parties in East Europe are in a shambles. Last week the Stalinist party in West Berlin (SEW) announced its dissolution while its West German counterpart debates a similar proposal. Has there ever before been such an open confession of utter political bankruptcy? In East Germany today, it is visibly possible for the first time for Trotskyism to win a mass hearing among the working class as the revolutionary alternative to bankrupt Stalinism. A mass revolutionary workers party, modeled on Lenin's and Trotsky's party which led the Bolshevik Revolution and ushered in the epoch of international communism, must be constructed in the DDR early on. Already, sinister capitalist forces, from the NATO imperialists externally to indigenous fascist elements, and not forgetting the Social Democracy which is a stalking-horse for capitalist restoration, are moving to take advantage of the vacuum of effective proletarian leadership.

Fascist activity has been on the rise, as indigenous elements are augmented by neo-Nazis from the West. A Jewish cemetery in Weissensee in East Berlin was just defaced for the fourth time this year. Reactionary banners calling for capitalist reunification with the West and even for a return to the borders of the "Greater Germany" of Hitler's Third Reich have begun appearing with ominous regularity at protest demonstrations in Leipzig and elsewhere. At the same time, thousands of other protesters are adamant in opposing a sellout of the DDR to the Deutsche Bank and Daimler Benz.

### Trotskyist Press: A "Collective Organizer"

The International Communist League, through its German section, the Trotskyistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD), is intervening into the prerevolutionary situation in the DDR. The TLD has issued a public call for the formation of Spartacist Groups, to lay the basis for a new Leninist-egalitarian party. On December 7, the TLD launched *Arbeiterpresskorrespondenz* (Workers Press Correspondence), presently a daily newsletter, to supplement its bimonthly newspaper *Spartacist*, which is now appearing weekly. The first *Arprekorr* front page headlined: "No Sellout of the DDR! Workers and Soldiers Councils, Now!" As we go to press, nine issues of *Arprekorr* have appeared. Each issue includes the short programmatic statement "What the Spartacists Want" (reprinted in this issue of *WV*), centering on the slogans of "Down with Stalinism!" and "No to Capitalist Restoration!"

In taking this step, we recognize, as Lenin said in *What Is To Be Done?*: "A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer. In this respect it may be compared to the scaffolding erected round a building under construction; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication be-



Novosti

Lenin (left) presides at the founding congress of the Communist International, March 1919.

tween the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organized labour." *Arprekorr* strives to be the voice of the thousands of socialist militants in the DDR seeking the road to authentic communism, "to create a living connection between the SPARTAKIST Groups and the political direction and leadership in the unfolding political revolution."

Thus far the situation continues to be very open. But the polarizations shift and

intensify week by week. Those who prevented the drawing of a massive blood line between the regime and the demonstrators in Leipzig on October 9 (when Honecker ordered troops to open fire) bought valuable time for the possibility of a working-class solution. Subsequently, actions by indignant citizens aimed at keeping the Stasi political police from destroying files have generally achieved their point. When, particularly in such a situation, mouthpieces of the big imperialist bourgeoisie like the *New York Times* start running headlines about "VIOLENCE" in East Germany, you better watch out! "Violence right now smells of fascist provocation," warned the 8 December *Arprekorr*: "Those who want a bloodbath in the DDR are doing the work of the imperialists, ranging from the CIA to the West German Office for the Defense of the Constitution."

Meanwhile, NATO General Secretary Manfred Wörner insists the anti-Soviet military alliance must be ready to intervene in countries experiencing "disorder," while the American and British press seek to paint the DDR as being on the verge of anarchy. *Arprekorr* (15 December) warns of "NATO Threat Against the DDR," adding: "What disturbs the imperialists is not 'disorder' but the possibility of a new proletarian order, a proletarian political revolution defending the collectivized property they want to overthrow."

As one way to express concretely the revolutionary internationalist spirit of Leninism, the Spartacist Groups are distributing solidarity statements (in German and in the appropriate languages) to Polish, Cuban and Vietnamese immigrant workers (the text of the Vietnamese appears on page six). These working people have been subjected to official and social discrimination in a DDR ruled by nationalistic

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### NOTICE

*Workers Vanguard* skips a week in December.

This issue is dated 29 December.

Our next issue will be dated 12 January.

The closing date for news in this issue is December 19.

Just Out!

**Spartacist**  
(German Edition)

No. 14  
Winter 1989/90

(32 pages)  
\$1.00

Make checks payable to:  
Spartacist Publishing Co.  
Box 1377 GPO  
New York, NY 10116 USA

**SPARTACIST** 4  
NUMMER 14 DEUTSCHE AUSGABE WINTER 1989/90 DM 2,- / 2 Mark der DDR / 68 15



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# Give to the Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg Fund!

## Forward to a Leninist-Trotskyist Party in Germany!

With the increasing polarization evident in East Germany, as ultrarightist and pro-capitalist forces raise their heads ever more openly, the efforts of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) to forge an authentic communist vanguard take on added urgency. Thousands of pro-socialist militants in the DDR, including members and former members of the Stalinist Socialist Unity Party (SED), are reading and discussing the revolutionary literature being distributed by our comrades of the Trotzkiistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD).

Over 12,000 pieces of literature were sold to delegates at the SED conference in East Berlin on December 16-17, including 9,000 copies of the daily *Arprekorr*. With the new SED leadership pushing to implement market-oriented economic "reforms," delegates were receptive to the TLD pamphlet, "Market Socialism' in Eastern Europe," which lays out a program for effective central planning based on soviet democracy. There was also considerable interest in the new issue of the TLD's *Spartakist* featuring "For a Red Germany in a Socialist Europe!" (also published in the last issue of *WV*), which deals in detail with economic problems confronting the DDR today.

Over 14,000 copies of the now weekly *Spartakist* were sold in the ten days



Trotskyist League newspaper, now appearing weekly, calls "For a Red Soviet Germany."

up to December 17, in addition to a total of 244,000 copies of the daily *Arprekorr*. Our comrades have also been distributing key writings of Trotsky, including *Lessons of October* and *The Revolution Betrayed*. A new German edition of the quadrilingual organ of our international tendency, *Spartacist*, featuring "Trotskyism: What It Is Not—

and What It Is," is now available.

The central task now is laying the foundations for a new communist party based on the internationalist tradition of the three L's—Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. The TLD is fighting to forge nuclei of Trotskyist militants in East Germany through the formation of Spartakist Groups. The 18 December *Arprekorr* carried a statement of aims by the recently founded Spartakist Group of East Berlin, and distribution networks for *Arprekorr* and *Spartakist* are active in a number of other cities in the DDR. The Spartakist Groups have also been active in distributing solidarity appeals to Vietnamese, Polish and Cuban immigrant workers and to Soviet soldiers and officers stationed in the DDR. The groups are also participating in demonstrations called to protest the visit of West German chancellor Helmut Kohl and his designs for a reunified capitalist Fourth Reich.

To carry on this vital work entails heavy financial support from all the sections of our small international organization and from the many non-party supporters and friends who have responded to our fund appeal. The sale of these impressive quantities of Trotskyist literature in East Germany is costly not only because of printing costs but because we are charging parity prices in the DDR (a publication

priced at 1 DM in the West sells for 1 DDR Mark in the East), in keeping with the low wages and living costs in East Germany (and in contrast with some West German groups who have been demanding DMs for their literature, as if everyone in the DDR has access to Western hard currency!).

Our campaign for funds to help carry forward the vital work of building a Leninist-Trotskyist party in Germany has been met with a broad response among sympathizers and others, including veterans of the Trotskyist movement, who recognize the historic opportunity for proletarian political revolution posed in the DDR. Two friends from British Columbia, Canada sent a generous contribution and a note: "Not since we were young Spartacists in the early 1930's have we known such hope as we have in you and in the unfolding events in Eastern Europe. Perhaps here is presented the Achilles heel to bring the monster down! Go your best licks—our hearts are with you!"

Your contribution is urgently needed to carry forward this crucial internationalist work. Make donations payable/send to: Spartacist, P.O. Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. Earmark for: "Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg Fund" (or simply "3-L's Fund").

## E. Germany...

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Stalinism. The statement to Polish workers declares:

"Polish comrades, you have come to work in the DDR, but you have had to endure chauvinist abuse, low wages, miserable housing.... You are working people trying to survive and the German working people must not equate the parasitic, proto-capitalist speculators they see around them with the Polish working people....

"A victory of workers and soldiers soviets in Germany will immediately galvanize the workers of Poland, today faced with starvation austerity measures. Polish comrades: Revive the internationalist heritage of Rosa Luxemburg, link arms in revolutionary solidarity with your German class brothers to help carry forward this workers political revolution. Join the Spartakist Gruppen!"

The Spartakist Groups have also reached out in revolutionary unity to the Soviet soldiers stationed in the DDR as the bulwark against NATO imperialism, with "Internationalist Greetings to our Comrade Soviet Soldiers and Officers!"

### For a New, Revolutionary Communist Party!

At a December 16 conference the ruling Stalinist party of the DDR, the SED, voted to add to its name, "Party of Democratic Socialism." The SED tops now say: "We need a real socialist party in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Liebknecht, Bernstein, Kautsky, Pieck, Thälmann, Lasalle and of course Lenin." This ecumenical throwback to a pre-1914 conception of the "party of the whole class," claiming to encompass everything from authentic revolutionaries to arch-reformists like Bernstein and the "Third Period" Stalinism of Thälmann, will certainly not be a real socialist party and is definitely not what the workers of the DDR need.

As the TLD says: the class struggle will not "dissolve" itself just because the demoralized Stalinist bureaucrats have decided to give up the ghost! The workers had better get organized, for their enemies are busy. If the mass sentiments for national unity of the German working people are not to be simply handed

Heroic revolutionary Karl Liebknecht, co-leader with Rosa Luxemburg of Spartacusbund, calls for soviet power in the German revolution of 1918-19.



Dietz Verlag Berlin

on a plate to the outright capitalist restorationists (and to the SPD which presently has the allegiance of many of the West German workers), it is not enough to defensively cling to the DDR and work for "socialism in half a country."

The Stalinists dismiss any possibility of socialist revolution in the West and accept the hegemony of the SPD over the West German workers as an irreversible fact. But, as *Arprekorr* No. 2 (8 December) wrote, "Nothing has done more to chain the West German working class to Social Democracy than the crimes of Stalinism, East and West. Today the SPD/SDP is the spearhead for capitalist counterrevolution." As an immediate task, the TLD calls for mobilization of the organized power of the German working class East and West to crush the resurgent menace of fascism. The call for a workers united front against the neo-Nazis evokes a powerful response, including among thoughtful East German workers disturbed by the massive vote totals raked in by Republikaner candidates in West Germany and fascist

provocations in the DDR. Such urgently necessary mass actions would be a powerful step toward forging the revolutionary unity of the German working class.

In an address "To militant SEDers—For a communist party based on Leninist norms," the 13 December *Arprekorr* writes:

"The Stalinists' hypertrophy and abuse of 'democratic centralism' perverts the Leninist party organization into a multi-layered suppression of all real discussion—and particularly of that most frightful of all 'dangers,' that this could lead to a faction.

"There must be a democratic right to form factions and their right to express themselves within the organization."

A Leninist party is democratic and disciplined at its base, with a strictly accountable leadership composed of the best, most devoted and self-sacrificing comrades, not a self-perpetuating clique of privileged overlords.

Many thousands of SED party members, not excluding sections of the leadership, and also not excluding many of those who have recently quit the party in protest, genuinely seek to root out

Stalinism and defend the collectivized basis of the DDR against capitalist reabsorption. Addressing delegates to the SED conference, *Arprekorr* No. 7 (15 December) said, "Neither Stalin nor Kautsky! For a Bolshevik Party in the Spirit of Lenin and Trotsky!" The key to victory in the 1917 Russian Revolution lay in the preceding years of Lenin's struggle for a revolutionary vanguard party, forged through a political split in the Russian workers movement while seeking the greatest unity of all the workers in struggle against the tsarist autocracy and the bourgeoisie. The highest organizational form of this unity in struggle was the workers and soldiers soviets, where through free, open and even vituperative debate different parties and tendencies could fight for their policies.

Today the political passion of the East German population must be centered on the formation of freely elected councils of workers and soldiers, including their allies in other sections of the population. These soviets will not be like Gorbachev's pseudo-parliamentary Congress of People's Deputies, many of whose deputies are elected on a territorial basis from the atomized mass, but bodies composed of delegates who are elected from the factories, the barracks, the cooperative farms (with students, the intelligentsia, office workers and pensioners represented in an advisory capacity) and subject at any time to immediate recall. That is the meaning of workers democracy; it is the diametric opposite of the Stalinist conception of sanctifying the "leading role" of the Communist Party in a government constitution.

Trotsky wrote that three conditions are indispensable for proletarian victory: the party, the party and once again the party. The forging of a mass revolutionary workers party based on the internationalist legacy of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg is today the key to revolutionary victory in Germany. As our comrades said in *Arprekorr* No. 3 (11 December): "No sellout to the masters of Mercedes Benz and the Deutsche Bank—not a capitalist reunification in a new Reich, but a red soviet Germany in a Socialist United States of Europe!" ■





# Selections from Daily Spartakist Arbeiterpressekorrespondenz



## Trotskyist Press

# Reaches East German Militants

This political statement by the Trotskyistische Liga Deutschlands, German section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) appears in every issue of the daily Arprekorr.

The Trotskyist League of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), stands in the revolutionary Marxist tradition of Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht. We fight for the communist program and ideals of the Bolshevik Revolution which have for decades been perverted and betrayed by Stalinism.

From October 1917 on, capitalism has sought to crush the world-historic achievements of the Russian Revolution. The Stalinist bureaucracy grew out of and fed upon proletarian defeats, notably of the German revolution. Stalin's dogma of "socialism in one country" is a nationalist, anti-socialist lie aimed at conciliating imperialism. To this end, the bureaucracy subverts revolutionary struggles internationally and robs the working class of political power at home.

True to the program of the early Communist International, Trotskyism stands for world socialist revolution. We call for proletarian political revolution, the rule of workers soviets, to replace the corrupt parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies who endanger the socialist foundations of the workers states. Defend the historic gains of the working class achieved through the overthrow of capitalism—Defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution!

The enormous economic and political pressure of Western capitalism, abetted

## What the Spartacists Want

by the Social Democrats—heirs of the murderers of Luxemburg and Liebknecht—aims at bloody counterrevolution in East Europe. We Trotskyists oppose a capitalist reunification of Germany. No to a Deutsche Bank republic! Soviet

power in the DDR would inspire the workers of West Germany—For a red soviet Germany in a Socialist United States of Europe!

As proletarian internationalists, we support all anti-imperialist struggles for



Lenin and Trotsky, leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Communist International.

liberation of workers and the oppressed, from El Salvador to South Africa. We salute the heroic defenders of Jalalabad against the CIA's Afghan cutthroats.

All manifestations of racism and chauvinism must be fought. For workers united fronts to smash the fascists! Full citizenship rights for all foreign workers!

We stand for a planned, socialized economy free of Stalinist bureaucratic parasitism, arbitrariness and national autarky. The basic direction of the economy and society must be decided through soviet democracy. Factory committees must oversee production. Democratically elected consumer cooperatives must oversee the quality and prices of goods.

The issue posed pointblank today is which class shall rule, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. The fate of the DDR and every social gain it embodies is at stake. We stand with those members and recent ex-members of the Stalinist SED, as well as numerous others seeking to build a socialist world, who vow that the heirs of Hitler must not expropriate that which, by the workers' toil, has arisen out of the ruins.

The key is forging a Leninist-egalitarian party, regrouping all revolutionary internationalist forces in a German section of a reborn Fourth International. Let us begin: build Spartakist Groups, to assimilate the lessons of past revolutionary struggles, to intervene with revolutionary propaganda, to forge a new KPD—a mass communist vanguard party that will lead the German workers in their struggles on the road to power.

To learn from Lenin and Trotsky is to learn to win! ■

We reprint below a contribution written for Arprekorr No. 3 (11 December) by G. Melt, a supporter.

Yes, the DDR press of 9 and 10 December 1989 is interesting. For example, on pages 3 and 4 of the *Berliner Zeitung* we find a speech by Gregor Gysi, characterized by the RIAS [American radio in West Berlin] as a "reform communist." This is very remarkable in many respects.

First, the SED wants to break completely with the Stalinist system. That is definitely correct. In general, you find a great many anti-Stalinists in the DDR right now.

But now let's see what Mr. Gysi has to say. We read with astonishment that the West European societies, in particular the FRG [West Germany], are not pure capitalist systems like the textbook examples. So what else are they? The twaddle about a "social market economy" in the West was, until now, heard only from the bourgeois parties and their lackeys in the Federal Republic. But now we are witnessing a peculiar transformation of the "Marxist" Gysi. Mr. Gysi, who hasn't ever mastered the basics of Marxism/Leninism, should be urged to look into Lenin's theory of imperialism in depth, right away.

There's more. Mr. Gysi praises the

## Quo Vadis SED?

separation of powers in bourgeois democracy, from which, he says, we can especially learn. What outrageous nonsense! Of course we are Marxists, not moralists. Obviously we have a high opinion of the historic achievements of the bourgeoisie in overcoming feudal absolutism, but only in that respect. We give the floor back to Lenin: "Bourgeois democracy, although a great historical advance in comparison with medievalism, always remains, and under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor" [*The Proletarian Revolution and The Renegade Kautsky*].

But Gysi, our "Marxist," has also obviously not yet read the book "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky"; and he seems equally unfamiliar with history. For the separation of powers in bourgeois democracy, which he praises so highly, was unable to prevent the collapse of the Weimar Republic and Hitler's coming to power (which, as is known, took place in a bourgeois dem-

ocratic fashion!). Mr. Gysi's logical conclusion ought to be to ally himself with the Liberal Democrat Gerlach who, after all, frequently calls for "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" But this slogan of the French bourgeois revolution (1789-1794) which is being mouthed by the acting chairman of our national council means nothing more than: everyone can become a bourgeois. That is just what the "Marxists" of the Gysi stamp want.

The complete break with the Stalinist system may be inscribed on the banner of the "renewed" SED, but first it better be clear what is supposed to be broken with. Stalinism is a program against Marxism/Leninism! It is characterized by a parasitic ruling caste, not just in the party, but also in the state, in the economy, in the planning bodies, in short, in all areas of society. Logically, it also entailed the smashing of the system of soviets (councils). They have not existed in reality in the Soviet Union since 1927. In Germany, we know that the soviet republic was strangled by the Social Democrats Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske ("Somebody has to be the blood-

hound"). There has never been a system of soviets in the DDR. So what do they want to break with? The methods of administrative commandism are merely the logical consequence of the destruction—or the non-existence—of the system of soviets! It also logically followed that democratic centralism, as Lenin understood it, had to give way to a bureaucratic centralism.

The consistent break with Stalinism therefore consists in a re-formation of the SED in the spirit of democratic centralism. Nothing whatsoever is gained by superficial acts like getting rid of the Politburo and the CC. When Lenin was alive there was a Politburo and a CC. At that time, the Bolsheviks had not degenerated, and were revolutionary because they were organized on a democratic-centralist basis and had a revolutionary party program! What is Mr. Gysi pushing for instead? A bit of Lasalle, a bit of Kautsky, a bit of Social Democracy from the period of its degeneration, and all of that garnished with "rank-and-file democracy" modeled on the Greens, and of course neither "a class party nor a mass party." What can become of this nonsense?

Only one option remains for all honest communists: founding a party in the spirit of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. ■

# Selections from Daily Spartakist

## Arbeiterpressekorrespondenz

### Internationalist Greetings to Our Vietnamese Comrades

The following statement of internationalist greetings is being distributed to Vietnamese workers in the DDR and was also printed in Arprekorr No. 6 (14 December).

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution welcomed revolutionary fighters of all lands as equal citizens in the new soviet republic. So too the German workers political revolution holds out to you, our class brothers, the hand of internationalist solidarity.

Revolutionary workers of the DDR respect deeply the lasting contributions you and your countrymen have made in your victorious struggle against the bloody French and U.S. imperialists. We recognize the bitter sacrifices you have made to hold off the genocidal forces of Pol Pot in Cambodia, in the face of vengeful imperialism's drive to starve the Vietnamese people.

You have lived and worked in this country, suffering low wages, abuse, miserable housing. A new Germany ruled by the genuine workers soviet democ-

racy of workers and soldiers councils—a red Germany which Lenin, Luxemburg, Liebknecht would recognize as their own—will extend to you what you have earned: decent pay and housing, social equality, dignity, freedom and honor.

Join with us to help rid the DDR of abusive Stalinism and to help defeat those who would bring back the capitalism of Hitler's Third Reich and its successor, Kohl's Fourth Reich. Together we can fight the Western imperialists who are starving your families and comrades back home. Together we can fight the desperate poverty and Stalinist practices which threaten your homeland.

Form solidarity committees to help carry forward this workers revolution in Germany—together we can point the way forward to a future of socialist abundance for all mankind.

—Spartakist Gruppen  
Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands  
Postfach 21 07 50  
1000 Westberlin 21  
Tel: (0 30) 8 82 39 64

**Cách mệnh quốc tế chào đón các bạn Việt Nam!**  
**Internationalistische Grüße an unsere vietnamesischen Genossen!**  
**Интернационалистические приветствия к нашим вьетнамским товарищам!**  
**Salutations internationalistes à nos camarades vietnamiens!**  
**Internationalist greetings to our Vietnamese comrades!**

Cách mạng tháng Mười 1917 đã đón mừng chiến sĩ cách mạng từ mọi quốc gia như chính những công dân của cộng hòa Xô Viết.

**Интернационалистический привет  
нашим товарищам  
советским солдатам и офицерам!**

Зимой 1917 года большевистская революция открыла перед человечеством возможность жить в условиях коммунистической солидарности. Это революция одним из первых привлекла немецкий пролетариат. А нынешней зимой немецкая рабочая политическая революция обрещается к вам, наши друзья — советские солдаты и офицеры, защитники от интернационалистов Западе, и протягивает вам руку интернационалистской солидарности!

Революционные рабочие ГДР и величайшие жертвы Красной армии, сегодня мы выступаем, чтобы сталинизм, а также против тех, кто капитализма "третьего рейха" Гитлера Коля. Мы выступаем за новую настоящую рабочей демократии в лице этой новой красной Германии, которую Люксембург и Либкнехт, будет одним!

Долгие годы вы и ваши отцы с страже наших общих завоеваний от : страже завоеваний рабочего класса, порожения капитализма. Далеко от приносил личные жертвы. Мы приверженную службу, и нам бы хотелось, разобщенными с вашими немецкими!

Наши братья — советские солдаты год станет причиной для совместной воюя которого вы и ваши семьи, под

hàng mừng các bạn như thế, hỡi anh kết quốc tế.

Chúng tôi khám phục sâu xa những lầm trong cuộc đấu tranh My. Chúng tôi nhìn nhận những ủng hộ Pol Pot tại Campuchia, âm phong tỏa kinh tế Việt Nam.

**¡Saludos internacionalistas a nuestros compañeros cubanos!**

**Internationalistische Grüße an unsere kubanischen Genossen!**  
**Internationalist Greetings to our Cuban Comrades!**

La Revolución Bolchevique de 1917 acogió a todos los luchadores revolucionarios del mundo como ciudadanos plenos en la nueva república soviética. Así también la revolución política proletaria alemana los ofrece a ustedes, nuestros hermanos de clase, la mano de la solidaridad internacionalista.

Los obreros revolucionarios de la PDA saludan las aportaciones duraderas que Uds. y sus compatriotas han hecho en su victoriosa revolución contra los sanguinarios imperialistas norteamericanos y sus aliados burgueses cubanos.

Statements of revolutionary solidarity, distributed by Spartakist Groups to Soviet soldiers and Vietnamese and Cuban immigrant workers in East Germany.

## Down With Decomposing Stalinist National Autarky! For an Effective Planned Economy Through Workers Democracy

The following statement on the East German economy by the International Secretariat of the International Communist League was directed to the special congress of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) held December 16-17 and was published in Arprekorr No. 9 (19 December).

17 December 1989

Comrades,

The economic situation of the DDR is above all harsh and deteriorating. There are no stable short-run solutions dependent upon the nationalized economy of the DDR participating in the politically highly manipulated "capitalist" world market. By turning to the East and intervening against the perestroika campaign of the Soviet Union, some stability can be obtained through complementary economic exchanges of product and material, based on world market prices and of good quality and ample supply, so that the economic strengths that the DDR and the Soviet Union do possess can be added together. Forces in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia are seeking reduction to the status of Israel. The working

peoples of the three aforementioned lands could learn much through class struggle from the increasing impoverishment of the Israeli masses now that Israel is no longer a "front line" state in the war against Communism.

The "right to strike" of this summer's Soviet coal miners strike was overwhelmingly justified. Any strike, not least in the DDR, must be overwhelmingly justified by its effect on the whole people and the workers. Should the workers of a factory leave their enterprise without production for a day in order to smash a revanchist neo-fascist mobilization or a pogromist assault upon foreign workers, or should there be struggle to defend against the liquidation of the DDR, these would be not merely justified but vitally necessary. These are a few of the kinds of decisions that workers councils in the DDR should make.

The leading role of any party must be proved through vigorous debate in such workers councils, and must be highly reversible through further debate and immediate recall of workers delegates

who have lost the confidence of their supporters. V.I. Lenin wrote very well of this mechanism of workers power in his *State and Revolution*. We believe that much of the membership of the SED, who only wanted socialism, must combine together with many of their previous victimized critics into a new party dedicated to the maintenance of an international planned economy and state monopoly of foreign trade; maintaining the subsidization of housing, health, education, basic foodstuffs and the like; resisting absorption into the oligarchy of the West; tearing out Stalinism root and branch; and as proof of this, vigorously defending and upgrading the social conditions of foreign labor in the DDR. After 40 years of Ulbricht and Honecker's SED, that means a new party, e.g., a KPD as it was founded as a fusion of the revolutionary left.

All these aims must be combined with a vigorous offensive for a comparable proletarian political renewal in the Soviet Union so that a far larger combined economy in transition from capitalism to socialism may defend itself against the

fifth column of social democrats, restorers of capitalism and large masses of the intelligentsia who imagine, sometimes foolishly, that they will acquire the soft lives of the new capitalist masters. In the short run, look not to the West but to the East!

In the first issue of *Spartakist* published in America two and a half decades ago, we declared:

"We chose the title, SPARTACIST, after the name, Spartakusbund, taken by the German revolutionary left wing led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht during the First World War. The German Spartacists waged a brave struggle against their imperialist rulers in wartime and, moreover, had to fight every step of the way in opposition to the degenerate, patriotic Majority social democrats of their time.

"In the United States the Trotskyist youth in the early 1930's called their paper *Young Spartacus*. It was an outstanding journalistic fusion of an advocate of revolutionary ideas with a guide to action. We aspire to do no more today than serve as well in honor of the name we have chosen for our endeavor to express the viewpoint of consistent *Trotskyism*, the authentic revolutionary Marxism of our epoch." ■

### Gorbachev's Russia...

(continued from page 1)

When the nativist Russian fascist Pamyat (Memory) first raised its head two and a half years ago, we called on Soviet workers to smash this dangerous organization in the egg. Since then Pamyat has grown and other Russian chauvinist outfits have been spawned. Most recently, Pamyat staged a brazen demonstration right in Red Square, flaunting its fascist insignia and spouting anti-Semitic filth. When liberal poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko was spotted watching the demonstration, a Pamyat demagogue Jew-baited the author of "Babi Yar": "You'd better be

off to the synagogue" (*Ogonyok*, 2 December). This October the Popular Front of the Russian Federation was formed, with tsarist flags flying. The so-called United Front of Russian Workers is being actively built by old-line Stalinist apparatchiks, especially trade-union functionaries. Its program combines populist economic demands—suppressing petty capitalist enterprises and freezing prices—with Slavophile bigotry and attacks on Western-oriented intellectuals.

Class-conscious workers and internationalist intellectuals must smash the Pamyat fascists in the streets and root out all manifestations of Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitism. Only by combatting the chauvinists among the dominant Russian nationality will patriotic Soviet workers gain the moral and

political authority to counter the other reactionary nationalisms which now threaten to rip apart the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The violent outbursts among the Turkic-speaking peoples of Soviet Central Asia are directly tied to economic discontent and deprivation. Kazakh and Uzbek youth have been driven into the cities looking for jobs by the mechanization of the collective farms. But there are few jobs to be had, as new industrial investment has been stagnant in the USSR for over a decade. Adding to Uzbek grievances has been a big drop in the price the state is willing to pay for cotton. Gorbachev's perestroika, geared to maximizing profitability, necessarily favors the advanced regions of European Russia over the more backward Turkic-

speaking republics. Equality among the diverse peoples of the Soviet Union is possible only in a planned, socialized economy under the democratic control of the workers and collective farmers.

Competition for economic resources also underlies the fratricidal bloodletting in the Caucasus between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis, originally triggered over which republic would have authority over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave. According to a Kremlin official, Valery Sidorov: "At present not a day nor night passes without shooting, mine explosions, acts of arson, cars set on fire, hostages being taken and roads and railways cut off by blockades" (*Daily Challenge* [New York], 3 October).

How can Gorbachev possibly get out of this situation? An internationalist



leadership, which would be capable of securing the trust of all the different nationalities of the Soviet Union, could work out an amicable arrangement over a small piece of mountainous real estate like Nagorno-Karabakh. But if nationalism triumphs, this and other national conflicts will probably be "solved" in the traditional nationalist manner—by a *forced transfer of population* which will make the borders correspond 100 percent to the ethnic composition of their inhabitants. The history of forced population transfers is a history of massive bloodshed: during the partition of Muslim and Hindu India in 1947, railroad cars filled with corpses ran in both directions for months. To his credit, Gorbachev has sought to avoid bloodshed in both the USSR and East Europe. However, his appeals for unity and friendship among the peoples of the Soviet Union are fatally undermined by his "liberal" Stalinist program glorifying economic self-interest and degrading proletarian internationalism.

Nowhere is the link between perestroika, resurgent anti-Soviet nationalism and the danger of capitalist restoration clearer than in the Baltic republics. Nationalists in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia believe they will prosper under the aegis of Western capitalism. Meanwhile, these self-styled "democrats" enact legislation restricting the citizenship rights of Russian-speaking residents and in some cases even insist that shoppers show their internal passports (indicating nationality) before they are allowed to purchase scarce goods. Gorbachev has recently attempted to appease the pro-capitalist nationalists by granting these republics almost total economic autonomy. But the Baltic nationalists are not satisfied by greater advantages within the Soviet Union. They want to join the Common Market of NATO Europe. "We want support, especially in Western Europe, for our independence next year," declared a spokesman for the Latvian People's Front in the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies (*New York Times*, 10 December).

It is common for the Western media to lump together the three Baltic republics. However, Lithuania is in critical respects different from its two northern neighbors. Lithuania has long historic ties to Poland and its population is traditionally Roman Catholic. Latvia and Estonia were conquered from the Swedes by Peter the Great in the early 18th century and, except for the 20-year interwar period, have been part of the Russian polity ever since. The northern Baltic peoples are either Protestant or secular-minded.

Since Gorbachev seems intent on giving away the store to the imperialists, it's just conceivable he could decide to let Lithuania go while holding on to Latvia and Estonia. Eighty percent of the Lithuanian republic consists of ethnic Lithuanians. The several hundred thousand Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Jews, ethnic Siberians, etc. now



Painting by I.I. Brodsky  
**Massacre of 26 Bolshevik leaders of the Baku Soviet in 1918 by British troops and White counterrevolutionaries.**

living there would be forced to emigrate elsewhere in the USSR. But in Latvia and Estonia, roughly half the population consists of other Soviet peoples. And that half is heavily proletarian. These Russian-speaking workers have organized themselves in the "Internationalist Movement" to combat Baltic nationalism and defend their democratic rights. Thus the stage is set for a full-scale civil war, which would very much accord with the bloodlust of the imperialists, and with their dreams of reconquering all the deformed workers states for capitalist plunder.

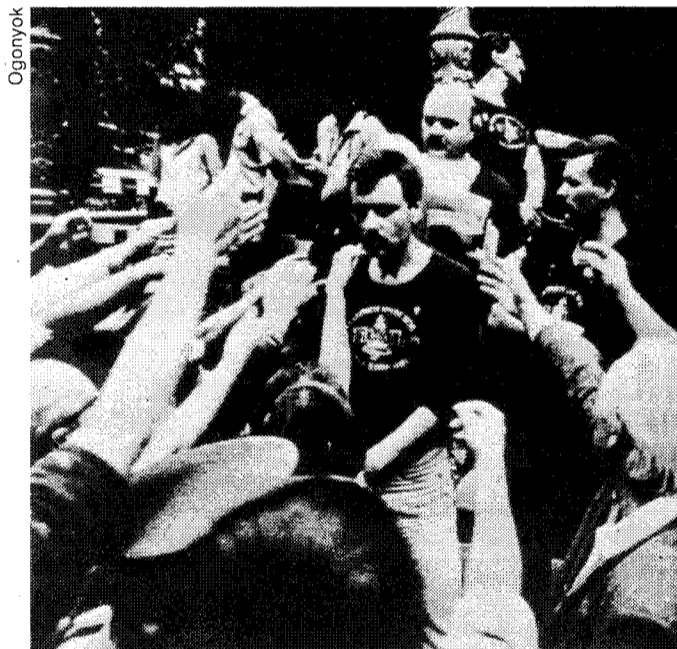
On the scale of the USSR, the three Baltic republics are Lilliputian. At the time of Stalin's annexation of the Baltic states in 1940, Trotsky argued that while the region had some strategic military value, the Red Army occupation would do more harm than good in the long run. However, an eruption of anti-Communist nationalism in the Ukraine—with its enormous military, industrial and agricultural resources—would threaten the very existence of the Soviet Union. The eastern Ukraine, with its large Russian-speaking proletariat, is well integrated into the USSR. Significantly, the recently formed independent miners organization in the Donbass *rejected* an invitation to join the Ukrainian Popular Front precisely because of the Front's nationalist program. However, the western Ukraine was annexed by Pilsudski's Poland after the Russian Civil War. This region became a hotbed for reactionary Ukrainian nationalists, many of whom initially *welcomed* Hitler's Wehrmacht as liberators.

Today, the Ukrainian Popular Front, unlike its Baltic counterparts, remains a movement limited to the intelligentsia. A more potent vehicle for resurgent Ukrainian nationalism is the Eastern Rite Catholic church, which Gorbachev legalized early this month. (Stalin banned it in 1946.) As Marxists, inheritors of the tradition of Enlightenment human-

ism, we stand for freedom to practice religion as well as freedom to conduct anti-religious propaganda. However, the Ukrainian Uniate church, like the Roman Catholic church in Poland, can serve as an organizing center for anti-Communist nationalism linked to Western imperialism. Indeed, Pope John Paul Wojtyla of Cracow has proclaimed himself the new godfather of Ukrainian Uniates.

An opinion poll taken a few months ago by Moscow's leading social re-

**Russian fascists of Pamyat giving the Nazi salute. Soviet workers must smash Pamyat!**



search institute showed that only 20 percent of the respondents in the Ukraine said their top priority was national self-determination, "not excluding secession from the Soviet Union" (*London Independent*, 23 October). However, if nationalists were to succeed in ripping the Ukraine away from the USSR, it could only become a colony of a new Fourth Reich which Hitler's heirs are seeking to build through a takeover of East Germany.

#### For Lenin's Internationalism!

In a 7 December speech, Cuban leader Fidel Castro said maybe some of the East European states will have to re-experience capitalism to recall how exploitative and inhumane it was, particularly the dictatorial capitalist regimes of prewar East Europe. The Cuban working people have relatively fresh memories of the brutal conditions they suffered before the revolution, and the U.S. imperialist colossus only 90 miles away is a continuing and palpable reminder of the danger of bloody counterrevolution. But this seemingly militant statement by Castro in fact expresses a defeatism reminiscent of the German Communists' "After Hitler, us" in the early 1930s. The workers of East Europe must be mobilized to oppose any attempt at capitalist restoration *before* it triumphs; in this, we Trotskyists will fight alongside them.

The corruption of the Stalinist bureaucrats rightly affronts the egalitarian values of the working people in the deformed/degenerated workers states.

While the privileged bureaucrats skim off what luxuries there are, the masses lead lives of privation and drabness, queuing up for endless hours in the struggle for daily necessities. Meanwhile countless numbers of threatening snoopers like the East German Stasi spy on and jail people for things that they mainly should be doing, like expressing their opinions. But disgruntled East Europeans should look at life in the West before they decide capitalism is better. Compared to the ostentatious wealth of the Western capitalists, the villas and saunas of the Honeckers truly pale in comparison. In capitalist America, tens of thousands of people, mainly dark-skinned, freeze in the streets and are not allowed into the hospitals which might save them. Meanwhile, the propagandists for the rich like Jeane Kirkpatrick and George Bush, the inspirers of the death squads in El Salvador, proclaim that to be rich is good and if you don't like it—you're dead.

Lenin was able to accomplish an enormous amount in the consolidation of the USSR because, despite the overwhelming destruction of the Civil War, he stood in a position of great trust at the head of the Soviet state which had just won that war. Key to the Bolsheviks' victory was their proletarian internationalist outlook embodied in the party's program and practice and in the values of its leading cadre. Among the Bolshevik leaders of the 1918 Baku Soviet in the Caucasus were the Armenian Stepan Shaumyan, the Azeri Meshadi Azizbekov, the Geor-



Turnley/Newsweek  
**Lithuanian demonstration displays flag of interwar anti-Communist bourgeois state. Baltic nationalists push for capitalist restoration under the guise of "self-determination."**

gian Alexei Dzhaparidze and the Russian Ivan Fioletov. These Communists were later executed by British imperialists in league with local nationalists. The leader of the Soviet government in the Ukraine during the Civil War was the veteran Balkan revolutionary Christian Rakovsky, who later became, after Trotsky, the principal figure in the Left Opposition to Stalinism.

We truly need a communist party such as that led by Shaumyan in the Caucasus and Rakovsky in the Ukraine. Then if it is necessary to shed blood in combating reactionary nationalist forces, this will be accompanied by a profound political revolution against the Stalinist usurpers so that such blood will never be spilled again. ■

### Spartacist League Public Offices

— MARXIST LITERATURE —

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Thurs.: 5:30-8:00 p.m., Sat.: 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor (near 17th Street)  
Oakland, California Phone: (415) 839-0851

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Tues.: 5:00-9:00 p.m., Sat.: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.  
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New York, NY Phone: (212) 267-1025

# The Impoverishment of America



New York's Lower East Side: Capitalist decay has transformed black and Hispanic inner-city areas into wastelands.

WV Photo

Black and poor. In this deeply racist society the two go together, especially these days. One out of every three black people in the United States lives below the official government poverty level. A black teenage male is six times as likely to be shot and killed as a white high school kid. Almost 30 percent of all

## PART TWO OF TWO

AIDS victims are black. Blacks have twice the infant mortality, twice the unemployment rate, one-tenth the average household wealth. Every statistic underlines the same basic point: life for black people in this country is miserable, and getting more so.

Poverty among American blacks is so massive and so evident that even right-wing spokesmen and ideologues do not deny it. Rather they try to blame the victim for the crime. Blacks are poor, so the argument goes, because they're habituated to the "culture of poverty." Black children don't make it in this supposedly bountiful capitalist society, these people claim, because they are not encouraged to study at school or compete for economic success, because they are raised in families headed by single women, because they lack positive role models, and so on.

All these arguments have one common theme: the capitalist system is held blameless. For example, Reaganite State Department "theoretician" Francis Fukuyama, whose highly publicized article, "The End of History?" (*National Interest*, Summer 1989), proclaimed the triumph of "the American way of life" everywhere and forever, maintains that "black poverty in the United States is not the inherent product of [economic] liberalism, but is rather the 'legacy of slavery and racism' which persisted long after the formal abolition of slavery." And black liberal superstar Jesse Jackson echoes the same theme, preaching moral uplift—"down with dope, up with hope"—as the solution to the nightmarish conditions of ghetto life.

In reality, the ghetto poor are the victims of capitalist decay. But black people in the United States are *not*

powerless before their oppressors and exploiters. As a strategic component of the American working class, blacks can liberate themselves by destroying this brutal, exploitative and racist system. It will take a third American revolution to complete the task of black emancipation begun by the Civil War, a socialist revolution to sweep away the Wall Street bloodsuckers and liberate the productive resources of America to create a genuinely egalitarian and bountiful society.

## Behind Black Poverty: Family Structure or Capitalist Decay?

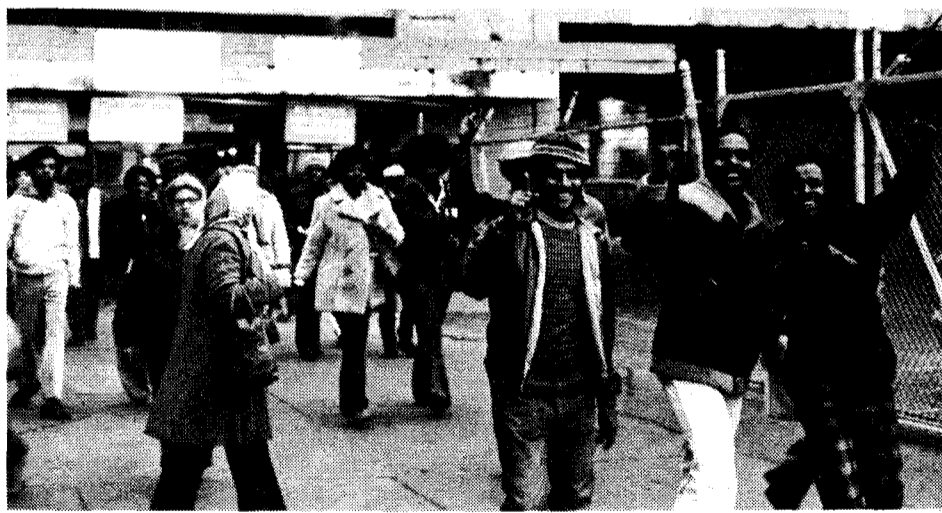
There is a widespread notion that government money for the poor increased

greatly from Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs in the mid-1960s until the cutbacks under Reagan. This fiction is perpetuated because it serves the political interests of both liberal Democrats and right-wing Republicans. Liberals can blame the appalling misery of black people on Reaganomics. Rightists can argue that ghetto youth would rather live off the "welfare state" than go out and get a job. In reality, real welfare benefits per family, including food stamps, have been falling ever since 1972. By 1985 real benefits under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) had been cut by one-third from the level of the early 1970s. But the welfare rolls have

continued to soar. Half of all black families with children are now headed by single women, and two-thirds of these live below the poverty line. Since the notorious 1965 Moynihan report black poverty has been blamed on the matriarchal black family: the "feminization of poverty" has now become a sociological cliché. But the rising number of single mothers on welfare is the effect not the cause of black impoverishment.

In 1950 only 18 percent of black families were headed by single women, and a large number of these were elderly widows. During the '50s the overwhelming majority of black children were raised in two-parent families. Moreover, in this period many black women, like their white counterparts, were full-time housewives supported on the husband's income. As Marxists, we certainly do not hold up the traditional patriarchal family as our model for the future. Rather we are pointing out that the enormous growth of desperately poor black families headed by single women is a recent product of American capitalist decay.

The massive deindustrialization, union-busting and wage-slashing over the past 15 years has made it economically impossible for millions of young black men to raise a family. Almost 40 percent of black men in their early 20s are unemployed. In New York City it is harder for a black high school graduate to get a job than it is for a white high school dropout. The black sociologist William Julius Wilson calculated what he calls "the shrinking male marriageable pool" for young black women (*The Truly Disadvantaged* [1987]). (Wilson recognizes that intermarriage in this poisonously racist culture is so rare as to be of little economic import.) In 1960 there were almost 70 employed black men in their early 20s for every 100 black women in the same age group; by 1982 there were less than 50. And these figures do not take into account the sharp decline in real wages available to young black men who are employed. Thirty years ago, it was normal for a black teenager getting out of high school in Detroit or Chicago's South Side to go into an auto



WV Photo

Detroit auto workers in the 1970s (above); line outside Washington, D.C. homeless shelter in the '80s. Deindustrialization of America means economic catastrophe for black people.

Michael Hoyt





plant or steel mill. Today, if he gets any job at all it'll be working at McDonald's or as a supermarket checker at minimum or subminimum wages.

The black ghetto poor are no longer, in Marx's term, a reserve army of the unemployed used by capitalism to hold down wages in periods of rapid capitalist expansion. For American capitalism, the black poor have become, simply, a *surplus* population, and welfare programs aimed simply at keeping them from dying, a waste of money. The logic of capitalism points to the willful elimination of a whole layer of the black poor. That is the intent of the so-called "workfare" act, crafted by Democrat Moynihan and passed last year with an unusual degree of bipartisan unity (see "Genocide, U.S.A.," WV No. 463, 21 October 1988). The core of this measure is to cut off AFDC benefits for any woman who does not accept *any* job or training program offer. Of course there are no jobs for the millions of black and Hispanic welfare mothers, and the few that exist are at poverty-level wages with no provisions for childcare.

### Contradictions of the Civil Rights Movement

Opinion polls show most whites believe that since the civil rights movement blacks are no longer subject to oppression and discrimination. After all, Martin Luther King's birthday is a national holiday. Many of the largest U.S. cities now have black mayors. Yet by every standard, economic conditions for the mass of black people are *worse* than before the civil rights movement. Why?

Before World War II the majority of blacks lived in the rural South as a deeply exploited American peasantry. In the early '40s millions were drawn into the Northern cities to work in the shipyards, munitions factories and other booming war industries. Until the early '60s the U.S. economy was expanding enough to employ most blacks who migrated to the cities. During this period the black industrial proletariat formed the core of Northern black communities and also in many cases of the local trade unions, especially in the Midwest. However, by the mid-1960s American capitalism had ceased growing fast enough to absorb the children of these black workers into industry: year after year, the seniority lists in the auto plants remained unchanged. Thus the momentous struggle for black equality known as the civil rights movement erupted at a time when the underlying economic position of blacks in American society was *weakening*, particularly in the North.

It is standard fare for Democratic BEOs and also many black nationalists to glorify the militancy of the '60s. In the first part of this article we quoted former Panther leader Donald Cox, who summed up the grim statistics that make America today a nightmare for most blacks. Yet Cox, too, contrasts the degradation and misery of the '80s with the high-water mark of black struggle in the '60s:

"In the 50's & 60's, with the push for civil rights, evolving into national liber-



Kevin Cohen/NY Post

Capitalist state wages war on the homeless: cops invade New York's Tompkins Square Park last July.

ation struggle, it was felt that there was something to be gained. And during that epoch of heroic resistance to injustice, blacks scored more impressive, unprecedented gains than at any time since the emancipation proclamations of the 1860's."

—Black America Database (1989)

But these "unprecedented gains" were primarily legal and tokenistic, improving the social condition of a relative handful of black petty bourgeois while the ghetto masses continued to live in desperation.

The civil rights movement originated as a mass struggle against institutionalized Jim Crow segregation in the South. The main goals of the freedom marches, freedom rides, sit-ins and boycotts were equal access to public facilities, school integration and voting rights. That is, the movement of King and the early SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) aimed to achieve the same bourgeois-democratic rights in the South as existed in the North.

However, the civil rights movement by its very nature—a movement of liberal democratic reform—could not confront the underlying oppression and exploitation of blacks as a "last hired, first fired" color-caste at the bottom of American capitalist society. The social conditions imprisoning the impoverished black masses in ghettos—with their mean streets, lousy schools, rat-infested housing and rampant police terror—could not be solved by a new civil rights act. Thus all attempts to extend the civil rights movement to the North foundered. At the same time, the Southern movement splintered and disintegrated when the struggle against Jim Crow laws appeared to have been won. The contrast between the hopes raised by the civil rights movement and the continuing, indeed worsening, poverty and oppression led to a series of spontaneous rebellions in the Northern ghettos in the mid-1960s.

In 1967 the Spartacist League, which had been deeply involved in the struggle for black equality, wrote:

"The militancy of the Negro people and the tempo of their struggle increased enormously in the fifties and early sixties, but the achievements have been minimal

—limited entirely to token advancement of democratic rights. In fact, the fundamental conditions of life for the vast majority of Black people, particularly in the key areas of employment, wages, housing and education, have *worsened*. The Civil Rights movement, geared to the aspirations of the small Negro middle class, though professing to speak for all Negroes, has been stopped dead in its tracks in dealing with these fundamental needs, and in fact has functioned partly as a brake on the unorganized and leaderless pressures from below."

—"Black and Red," Spartacist No. 10 (May-June 1967)

Young black militants recognized that the rebellious ghetto masses were in-



Oliphant

creasingly alienated from the politics of King, Abernathy & Co. Thus in 1966 the new SNCC leadership raised the call of "black power" in opposition to the official civil rights leaders. Recognizing the genuine leftward motion behind this bold slogan, we argued that "black power" had to be linked to working-class struggle against capitalist exploitation. If "black power" was viewed in essentially nationalist terms, as it was tending to be, it would either lead to a sectarian dead end or be co-opted by black Democratic politicians mouthing radical rhetoric.

The bourgeoisie was in fact deeply worried about the radicalization of the black masses and sought to counter it. The Lyndon Johnson administration, in league with King, Abernathy & Co., moved to pacify the ghettos by promising a "war on poverty" to build a Great Society. Of course, some of the poverty money did trickle down to the poor. However, the main intent and effect of these programs was to *buy off* a layer of young black activists, who became known as "poverty pimps." This development was personified by former SNCC chairman Marion Barry, who became head of the federally funded PRIDE, Inc. in Washington, D.C. on his way to becoming Democratic mayor of that city. Those, like many Black Panthers, who could not simply be bought off with

"war on poverty" money were murdered, jailed and terrorized through the FBI's COINTELPRO.

But for the black petty bourgeoisie, the civil rights movement did open up new opportunities. During the '60s the proportion of blacks in white-collar occupations—mainly in the government bureaucracy—doubled from 13 to 26 percent. Today, a majority of black professionals are government employees. Black yuppies were able to escape from the inner-city ghettos and move into previously all-white suburbs. Thus the post-civil rights era has seen a widening social and economic *polarization* within the black population. In the mid-'60s the top 20 percent of black families—the "talented fifth," to paraphrase W.E.B. Du Bois—earned 8.5 times that of the bottom 20 percent. By 1980, the "talented fifth" were earning 11 times more than their poor inner-city brothers and sisters.

The rise of black yuppies has gone hand in hand with the rise of black Democratic big-city mayors. In 1967 Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana became the first black man to head a major city government in this country since Reconstruction. In the spring of 1988 the National Conference of Black Mayors hosted 300 members including the chief city officials of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Atlanta, Detroit and Los Angeles. These BEOs serve as the ghetto overseers for their white capitalist slave masters. It is the black Democratic mayors who have administered the savage, racist cutbacks designed by the Reagan White House, suppressing resistance with a combination of political demagoguery and savage

police terror. Remember the 1985 fire-bombing of the MOVE commune in Philadelphia, ordered by Democratic mayor Wilson Goode in close collaboration with the Reagan/Meese gang.

### The "War on Drugs" Means Terrorizing Black People

Now, police terror in the black ghettos is being intensified in the name of "the war on drugs." In one sense this is not new. In the late 1960s Richard Nixon and Dixiecrat George Wallace campaigned on a get-tough policy toward "crime in the streets." At that time everybody understood this was a code word for suppressing the rebellious ghetto masses and jailing and killing black militants. While the black ghetto poor were themselves the main victims of street crime, they saw through the ruling class' call for a "war against crime" as a *pretext* for greater racist repression.

But this time around it's different. It is Jesse Jackson, not some Dixiecrat racist, who is acting as the ruling class' point man in pushing a "war on drugs." And there is widespread black support to eliminate the drug trade "by any means necessary." Black parents live in constant dread that their children will fall prey to drugs, being forced to rob or prostitute themselves, becoming pushers killing or

continued on page 10



Franco/NY Times

Epidemic of drug addiction sweeping the ghettos and barrios is a product of poverty and despair.

# NY Transit Militants Say: "No to Drug Testing!"

The "war on drugs" is hitting the labor movement with a vengeance. Beginning December 21, drug testing will be imposed on *four million* transportation workers across the country. In Chicago, the transit bosses will test for even trace amounts of alcohol—and expect 20 to 40 percent of the workforce to "flunk." In New York City the Transit Authority (TA) is instituting "random" testing of 40,000 transit workers. And in a parting shot at New York labor, racist pig and defeated mayor Ed Koch announced that he will test *140,000* city workers, from bridge painters to park rangers.

NYC working people will soon be hit with another fare hike (above the dollar they already have to shell out) to ride in the decrepit, dangerous subways. Track "accidents" have already killed another five transit workers this year. And the "war on drugs" is the TA's way to hang workers for the decaying infrastructure and deadly working conditions. Other unions, from the Teamsters to AFSCME to postal unions, at least made a legal challenge to drug testing, but the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 bureaucracy, led by President Sonny Hall, is running point for the TA in implementing the testing.

Class-struggle militants in Local 100, members of the Committee for a Fighting TWU, are mobilizing against this attempt to scapegoat transit workers and discipline the unions. We print below excerpts from a 17 November leaflet by the Committee.

\* \* \*

James Byrne was the fifth brother to die on the system this year. Byrne and his partner were working on the J Line

and were *never told* trains were running both ways on the eastbound track. He was killed as he desperately tried to scramble out of the way. *This was no "accident"—death on the tracks is TA policy.* When our union brothers Mel-sinker and Davis were killed on the tracks at Astor Place last spring, the *first* thing the TA did was force the shaken train operator to piss in the dixie cup. He tested clean, so the TA hanged the dead men instead. When five track workers were critically burned in two explosions caused by the TA's policy of leaving the juice on while track work is under way—you can bet their bodily fluids were tested for evidence of "substance abuse."

The TA *always* finds a scapegoat for the "accidents" that kill and maim workers and passengers on this 80-year-old rattletrap railroad run by union-busting liars and thieves. Now Sonny Hall, who acts more and more like a beakie [TA company cop] every day, has agreed to shake out the last drops of piss of every TWU brother and sister as he submits us to "random" drug screening.

The rotten secret deal to test *half* of us each year was signed September 12 and ratified by the Local 100 executive board in October. The deal says *one positive test and you're off the job with no pay.* And it contains a provision that gags the union from even opposing drug testing. Hall calls this a "victory." It's a victory for the bosses, the hypocritical labor-hating drug-runners in the White House and the "friend-of-labor" Democrats, who are out front pushing this witchhunt! By leaping out ahead of the Bush Administration on drug testing, Sonny and his

cronies are *leading* the attack against us.

Without us to run the subways and buses, the city doesn't move! *We shouldn't have to piss on demand for anybody!* What this union needs is a fighting class-struggle leadership, not no-strike finks who run to Albany to beg and do the TA's dirty work! A leadership not afraid to use the union's muscle in defiance of the bosses' laws, including the Taylor Law. And that means a leadership that will fight for a workers party, independent of the Democratic and Republican parties of capital.

Drug testing is a union-busting weapon in the arsenal of the hypocritical "war on drugs" pushed by the Democrats and directed by "Poppy" Bush. At home it helps them regiment the population. Abroad they want to use the drug issue to make the U.S. "cops of the world." Reagan's favorite drug-runner Ollie North walked, but the man who really ran the Iran-Contra drugs-for-arms scheme has moved upstairs to the Oval Office.

Transport workers—not just us, but four million workers from seamen to airline pilots to Teamsters—are first in the drug testing cross hairs because the kind of work we do makes us easy scapegoats. The vicious few who own and rule this country have run the industrial plant into the ground, and that includes the rickety transportation system. Now they want to shift the blame to the people who keep it moving at all.

Any weapon they come up with to use against labor in this bitterly racist country is going to hit blacks, Hispanics and foreign-born workers hardest. Drug testing is no exception. The urine screens

that will be used on TA workers can't tell the difference between the skin pigment melanin and the residue from marijuana smoke! *The darker your skin, the greater the chance that you'll fall victim to drug test terrorism.* What happens in the TA is a reflection of what's happening in the streets, where the "drug war" is aimed foremost against blacks, too. Something can be done to put a stop to the drug crime and street violence that ravage inner city neighborhoods: decriminalize drugs and *remove the super-profit incentive* to the pushers, drug-runners and cops. Instead, the racist rulers unleash their "TNT" narc squads on the ghettos and barrios to terrorize and kill. One "drug-bust" on Edgemcombe Avenue ended with the "suspect" the cops were chasing thrown from the roof to his death. Meanwhile every capitalist politician, from Bush to David Dinkins, calls for more cops.

Mass urine screens can have a staggering 10 percent or more false positive rate, and a positive reading can be triggered by *everything from poppy seed bagels to ginseng tea.* The follow-up tests that confirm which drug or food caused the initial positive are very expensive and *often not done.*

*It's none of the government's or the TA's business what transit workers or anybody else wants to do in private, and they should butt out!*

We could strike a real blow in defense of labor, minorities and the right to privacy by *stopping* the bosses' sinister plans to drug-test everyone. That can only be done if New York City transit workers link with other transport workers to lead the rest of labor in a real class-struggle fight. The hardball leadership needed for that kind of fight isn't going to come from company cop Sonny Hall. And it's not going to come from the New Directions/Hell on Wheels [reformist fake opposition] lash-up, who've done nothing to fight drug testing because, like Hall, they're in the hip pocket of the Democrats who are pushing it.

Let's start by *tearing up Hall's drug-testing agreement with the TA!* ■

## Impoverishment of America...

(continued from page 9)

being killed to support their habit. Every ghetto resident lives in fear of being shot in the dealers' turf wars. Black nationalist demagogues like Louis Farrakhan and Brooklyn's Sonny Carson have set up anti-drug vigilante squads supposedly to go after the dealers. These political gangs are dangerous, capable of intimidating and extorting money from the black communities.

The epidemic of drug addiction, especially cheap crack, is a symptom of the squalor, desperation and despair into which the black masses have been plunged by decaying American capitalism. And for young black men, pushing dope is the only alternative they see to sleeping in homeless shelters and eating in soup kitchens. "What's open to me?"



Danny Lyon



Stewart/Bethel

Civil rights activists protest outside Danville, Virginia city hall, 1963 (left); young black militants looked to the Black Panthers (right) as the symbol of defiance of the racist status quo.

exclaimed an allegedly reformed crack dealer in Omaha, Nebraska. "McDonald's, and Burger King? I can't deal with that."

The Wall Street financiers and Fortune 500 CEOs, who can snort cocaine in perfect safety and comfort in their penthouses, push the "war on drugs" to further terrorize the black inner cities whose nightmarish conditions the capitalists have created. Across the country, families "suspected" of drug dealing are being routinely evicted from public housing. Under "Operation Clean Sweep," Chicago Housing Authority inspectors raided the city's low-income projects, ransacking people's homes and throwing anyone who was not a registered tenant into the streets. In Berkeley, California city officials are cutting off rent subsidies. In Lawrence, Massachusetts the cops have been confiscating Medicaid and food stamp identification from people arrested but not convicted on drug charges. In Washington, D.C. the cops now want authority to cordon off streets and arrest people who gather in groups of two or more.

It will take a socialist revolution to eradicate drug addiction along with other scourges of poverty from the black com-

munities. But it is possible even now to take the profit—and much of the violent crime—out of dealing, by decriminalizing drugs and providing free treatment for addicts as part of a general program of providing free, quality medical care for all. One of the few black officials opposed to the "war on drugs," Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke, points out that "a law enforcement approach to drugs simply raises the black-market price of drugs, making drug trafficking a more attractive business for criminals" (*In These Times*, 27 September). And he concludes: "If we destroy the profits and not make the dealer the big-money hero, we'll be doing ourselves a favor."

But destroying profits violates the most sacred principle of capitalist society. And the drug trade is a massive illegal capitalist enterprise. The *Wall Street Journal* (8 September) observes that the drug-dealing gangs "are siphoning off some of the smartest and most ambitious teenagers in the ghetto by offering them entrepreneurial opportunities they simply see nowhere else."

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But L.A. gangs like the Crips and the Bloods, or even the Medellín cartel, are small-change operators compared to the biggest drug dealer of all. Among the streetwise pushers in California the initials CIA are said to stand for Cocaine Importing Agency. It's common knowledge that Washington's favorite "freedom fighters"—the Nicaraguan contras and Afghan *mujahedin*—finance their "war against Communism" by running drugs. The American ruling class and Medellín mafia share a common interest in keeping drugs illegal and immensely profitable. At the same time, the U.S. rulers are using the "war on drugs" to strengthen their repressive state apparatus against the working class and poor at home and as a ready-made cover for possible military intervention in Latin America.

Promiscuous violence, murder, rape, prostitution, alcoholism and other addictions have always been endemic to poor communities, from the Irish ghettos of the 19th century to the black ghettos of the 20th century. Malcolm X's autobiography depicts the violent, drug-crazed world he inhabited as a Harlem hustler in the late 1930s and '40s. However, in periods of massive social struggle, when there is a *prospect for radical change*, the ghetto poor instinctively target the *root cause* of their oppression, not just the symptoms. In the 1930s the most perceptive and assertive black youth joined the Communist Party and other leftist groups; in the '60s they joined the Black Panthers. It was the failure of the



WV Photo  
Spartacist-initiated labor/black mobilization brought out 5,000 to stop the Klan from marching in Washington, D.C., 27 November 1982.

UAW head Walter Reuther, acted as hatchet man for the Kennedy/Johnson White House against the growing left wing of the civil rights movement.

The New Left radicals did not consider trying to set the base of the labor movement against the Meany/Reuther tops because they shared the conventional notion that most white workers had been bought off by the "American dream." The poor were thought to consist of

radicals. The net result was the crushing of all militant struggle for black rights and the *weakening and political isolation of the trade-union movement*. Thus were set the political preconditions for the past decade of union-busting, giveback contracts, two-tier wage systems, mass homelessness and savage cutbacks in every social program for the poor. If the past 30 years has proven anything, it is that the fate of the American working class and the ghetto poor are integrally *linked* economically and politically.

While many industrial unions have been gutted during the past two decades, black workers remain important in such basic services as hospital care, urban transit and longshore. These black proletarians can serve as a bridge between the ghetto poor and the organized labor movement. Conditions are now ripe—indeed overripe—for a massive social explosion extending from white skilled workers, many of them one paycheck away from bankruptcy, to the black ghettos and Hispanic barrios. In the first nine months of 1989, the number of workdays lost as a result of strike action was almost *three times* greater than the *total* figure for 1988. And strikes are increasingly popular among the population at large. Pittston coal miners in Virginia regularly draw caravans of union supporters from as far away as Detroit. In New York City this summer, unionists demonstrated in the thousands in support of striking phone and hospital workers.

The potential for broad class struggle was demonstrated particularly at the outset of the Eastern Airlines strike. Eastern boss Frank Lorenzo is a notorious corporate raider who a few years back smashed all unions at Continental Airlines. As he slashed and hacked at the Eastern unions, the Machinists—predominantly white skilled workers—walked out last February. The strike was effective due to solid support from the pilots, the most elite section of the labor aristocracy, many of them former military officers. Strike rallies showed an enormous reservoir of popular support extending far beyond airline workers or

even unionized labor. Like the pro-Nazi Henry Ford in the 1930s, Frank Lorenzo has come to personify everything brutal and inhuman about American capitalism in the '80s, from the murder of strikers on the picket line to the cutbacks in school lunches for poor black children.

While the Eastern strike itself was both solid and popular, the airline workers could *not* win within these narrow confines. For Eastern was just one part of Lorenzo's airline empire. Key to winning this strike and bringing Lorenzo to his knees was *shutting down the airports* through mass picketing. Such a raw display of workers power would have electrified the entire union movement and buoyed all the oppressed and downtrodden in American society. But the cowardly Machinists bureaucracy, headed by social-democrat William Winpisinger, let the strike bleed to death as it implored the courts and Congress to do something about Lorenzo's union-busting.

The impulse toward labor/black struggle against capitalist reaction has been channeled by the labor bureaucracy into support for the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Thus Jesse Jackson has become the featured speaker at strike rallies across the country. And when black liberal Democrat David Dinkins was recently elected mayor of New York, black, Hispanic and white unionists were the lifeblood of his campaign. But the aspirations of these workers can never be realized within the confines of electoral politics in this racist capitalist system. The pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats and "friend of labor" Democratic politicians stand as the *main obstacles* to uniting the working class and poor in the struggle against Wall Street bloodsuckers like Lorenzo and Donald Trump.

What is needed is a multiracial revolutionary workers party capable of leading all the exploited and oppressed against the capitalist bosses and their state. In a small but significant way the Spartacist League has pointed the way to uniting organized labor and the ghetto poor in common *struggle*. Despite the general climate of reaction during the Reagan years, labor/black mobilizations of as many as 5,000 people came out to fight Klan/Nazi/skinhead incursions into major cities like Detroit, Washington, Chicago, Philadelphia and Atlanta. As we wrote after a labor/black mobilization forced the Klan and skinheads to cancel a scheduled rally at Philadelphia's Independence Mall in November 1988:

"The SL, although a relatively small communist organization, provided the leadership and our revolutionary program expressed the felt desire of thousands who came out to *stop the Klan*. In each case, the mass mobilizations were built *against* the Democratic Party mayors and the so-called leftists who tailed after them. In each case, it was *black and red* together, getting a taste of the social power that the struggle for socialist revolution will unleash....

"The integrated union marshals who stood shoulder to shoulder in defense against the KKK represent the promise of the workers party which must be built in this country—a multiracial workers party to lead the fight for a workers revolution."

Forge a workers party—Forward to a workers America! ■



WV Photo  
New York City hospital workers demonstrate last summer. Black workers can be the strategic link bringing together the ghetto poor and organized labor in struggle.

movements of the '60s to liberate black people which politically conditioned the present climate of despair in which drug addiction has reached epidemic proportions.

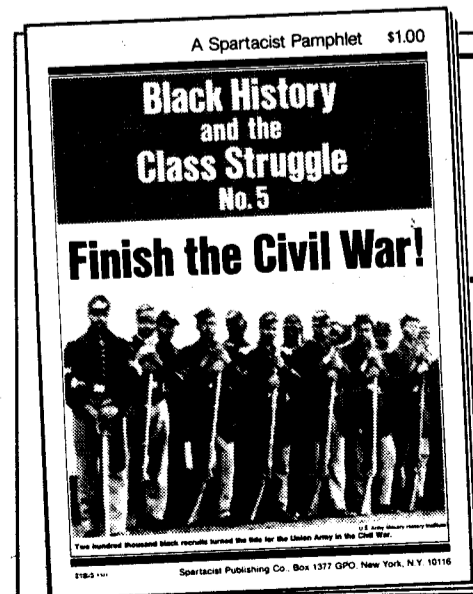
### Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Radical journalist Ellen Willis has compared the current "war on drugs" to the McCarthyite anti-Communist hysteria of the early 1950s, used as a justification for stepped-up police repression at home and military adventures abroad. Here it is important to recall that it was the eruption of black struggle in the '50s which shattered the stifling political climate of the Cold War red scare. America's posture as leader of the "free world" was brutally exposed as peaceful demonstrators were set upon by police dogs, tear gas and cattle prods for demanding the right to vote and use public facilities. A new generation of young radicals—black and white—was forged in the freedom rides, lunch counter sit-ins and voter registration drives.

Yet the radicals of this period did not link the fight for black equality and freedom to the working-class struggle against capitalist exploitation. In part the young civil rights militants were reacting against the Meany/Reuther-led AFL-CIO unions which were, if anything, more committed to the racist status quo than were many liberal Democratic and even Republican politicians. George Meany—a product of the lily-white building trades—was a rabid redbaiter whose social values were indistinguishable from FBI boss J. Edgar Hoover. The liberal face of the union bureaucracy,

marginal groups outside the mainstream of American society—Appalachian dirt farmers, black ghetto lumpens, Chicano agricultural laborers. The celebrated book on poverty of the early '60s was *The Other America* by JFK social-democrat Michael Harrington. The very title implied a vast gulf separating the poor from the mass of American workers.

During the late '60s white New Leftists and black nationalists—many of them veterans of the civil rights movement—tended to set the black ghetto poor against the organized labor movement (e.g., in the 1968 New York City teachers strike). At the same time, the Meany/Reuther labor bureaucracy made common cause with Richard Nixon, George Wallace and J. Edgar Hoover in their campaign to exterminate black



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