

Russian Troops Out of Chechnya!

The Caucasus Cauldron



Sean Ramsay

Moscow's tanks roll through Chechnya in attempt to assert Great Russian domination. Capitalist counterrevolution in former Soviet Union has meant racist persecution of minority peoples. Defeat Yeltsin's invasion!

DECEMBER 20—Stating it will “use all means necessary to restore order,” the regime of Boris Yeltsin has sent the Russian army into Chechnya, a Caucasian region which declared its independence when the Soviet Union broke apart three years ago. Forty thousand Russian troops backed by tanks, heavy artillery and warplanes are now besieging the Chechen capital of Grozny, a city of 400,000 inhabitants. As we go to press, news reports indicate that Russian bombing raids have killed over 100 people in the capital, while tanks are wreaking destruction in outlying suburbs. Yeltsin is demanding total capitulation by Chechen president Dzhokhar Dudayev. The full-scale assault on Chechnya—homeland of a Caucasian Muslim people subjugated by the Russian tsarist empire in the 19th century—is yet another in the series of wars unleashed in a nationalist vein by capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the destruction of the Soviet Union.

The fratricidal slaughterhouse that is now Bosnia has gripped the world's attention and provoked discord among the Western imperialist powers. Less publicized but no less bloody has been a series of wars ravaging the former Soviet Caucasus. For six years Armenians and Azeris have slaughtered one another over possession of the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave. At the same time, Georgia has revived its ancient blood feuds with northern Caucasian mountain peoples, notably the Ossetians and Abkhazians. Meanwhile, Russia has militarily intervened in the region, playing off the contending nationalist forces. The current invasion of Chechnya marks a dramatic escalation in now-capitalist Russia's attempt to dominate the diverse peoples of this region. Revolutionaries around the world must oppose Yeltsin's military adventure in the Caucasus.

In Russia itself, there is little popular support for would-be Tsar Boris' invasion, but rather widespread fear of a long, bloody colonial war. Reflecting

widespread sentiment among Russia's ruling elite, an editorial in the *Moscow Times* (4 December) warned:

“The risks of embarking on a military adventure in the North Caucasus are vast. Even if invasion achieved the initial objective of toppling Dudayev, it almost certainly would involve terrible bloodshed and plunge Russia into a long and nasty guerrilla war that would likely spread throughout the North Caucasus.”

The mothers of Russian soldiers captured in the fighting in Chechnya last month sent a telegram to the Russian parliament imploring: “We pray that you will save our sons and our souls.”

Moreover, there is a deep split within

and one unit shot up a refugee column, many Russian officers and soldiers are fraternizing with the Chechens and calling for a peaceful solution.

A major factor behind Yeltsin's power play in the Caucasus is to strengthen his weak bonapartist regime on the home front. Despite the bloody crackdown against the old parliament in October 1993, the Yeltsin regime remains isolated and crisis-ridden. Oppositional politicians contend he is deliberately provoking a war in order to impose a state of emergency in Russia as a whole, or at any rate in Moscow with its large Chechen population. The popular “Itogi”

For a Voluntary Federation of Socialist Republics!

the military high command over a new Caucasian war, with many concerned that the weakened Russian army could well disintegrate. The army's manpower has plummeted over the past couple of years, as conscripted youth simply refuse to show up. Arch-nationalist Lieutenant General Aleksandr Lebed, commander of Russian forces in Moldova, warns that the best that will come of the Chechnya invasion is a “Pyrrhic victory.”

Last week, the commander of one tank division, Major General Ivan Babichev, halted his advance 20 miles from Grozny and told a group of Chechen women: “It is forbidden to use the army against peaceful civilians. It is forbidden to shoot at the people.” AP reported that some soldiers “vowed not to advance, even if it meant disobeying direct orders.” One officer said: “A mutiny? You could call it that.” While planes have been attacking the area around Grozny

TV news program, voice of the Yeltsinite “democrats,” has declared that this is the opening step for a police-state dictatorship and coup d'état.

The invasion of Chechnya has encountered vocal opposition across the whole spectrum of Russian politics, from pro-Western liberals like Yegor Gaidar to Stalinist “patriots.” “Democrats” and pseudo-socialists compare it to the earlier Soviet role in Afghanistan. But Yeltsin's invasion of Chechnya is an act of Great Russian domination in the wake of capitalist counterrevolution, whereas the Afghan intervention was a progressive defense of the Soviet workers state and Afghan women and leftists against CIA-backed reactionaries. On Monday, December 12 protesters gathered in Moscow's Pushkin Square. At one end were anti-Communist “democrats” called out by Gaidar, and at the other was the “red-brown” coalition carrying Soviet and

monarchist flags and signs denouncing a Jewish “conspiracy.” In between were some anarchist and Komsomol youth, chanting, “No war but class war.” The one significant political grouping to fully back Yeltsin's adventure is the fascist party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

More important from Yeltsin's standpoint than support from Zhirinovskiy—the bellicose advocate of a new, expansive Russian empire—is support from the rulers of the American empire. During the Cold War, Western, centrally U.S., imperialism encouraged and promoted all sorts of reactionary anti-Russian nationalism in order to destroy the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. After having achieved their aim, in large part through the agency of Boris Yeltsin, Washington has opposed the national fragmentation of the nascent capitalist Russia, with its substantial concentrations of non-Russian peoples such as the Volga Tatars as well as the Chechens.

U.S. president Clinton described Yeltsin's Chechen adventure as “an internal Russian affair.” And an editorial in the *New York Times* (13 December) stated:

“The tiny Russian breakaway region of Chechnya confronts President Boris Yeltsin and his fellow reformers with a serious internal crisis. The three-year insurrection cannot be allowed to stand. Though a negotiated political settlement would be the best outcome, Mr. Yeltsin is justified in using military force to suppress the rebellion.”

The *Times* is concerned that “Failure to deal decisively with Chechnya's defiance...could encourage similar rebellions elsewhere and bring about the collapse of the Russian Federation.”

A full-scale assault on Grozny will not only lead to the wholesale slaughter of the Chechen people but heavy casualties on the Russian side as well. And every Russian soldier sent home from the North Caucasus in a body bag will be a nail in the political coffin of Boris Yeltsin. But the opposition to Yeltsin over Chechnya shares with this would-be autocrat a common commitment to resurgence of a Russian *derzhava* (great power) “one and indivisible.” The *Moscow Times* editorial quoted above states: “It would be hard to argue that Moscow lacks the right to intervene. Chechnya is

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As Bitterness Over Reunification Fuels PDS Vote

Germany Escalates Anti-Red Witchhunt

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Labor Militant—Off Limits for Trotskyists

Early this month the Oakland Spartacist League received a hand-scrawled note from the "Labor Militant Paper Organizer" in Chicago, together with the return of a check we had sent for a resubscription to the *Labor Militant*. The note read: "Enclosed is your returned check. We were informed that your comrades beat up one of our supporters in FRANCE. Therefore we don't feel comfortable renewing your subscription."

The Militant Tendency's fabrication that our comrades "beat up" one of their supporters, a/k/a Raymond Debord, leader of the French Gauche Révolutionnaire/Jeunesses Communistes Révolutionnaires (GR/JCR), was addressed in the article "Letter to the Militant Tendency—Response to a Provocation" (WV No. 611, 25 November). As we noted, the whole purpose of this attempt to frame us up as violent is "to create a slanderous smokescreen to obscure the aggressive gangsterism unleashed by your leader in France" against our comrades. Our response documents the thuggish antics of Debord, a swaggering

and unstable poseur who seems to have found in the Militant Tendency a convenient home, at least for now.

As J.V. Stalin well understood, violence-baiting smears and slander of one's opponents are simply a step to further frame-ups and gangsterist attacks. The GR/JCR are already a long way down this road. Moreover, Labor Militant's plaint that they "feel uncomfortable" with allowing us to resubscribe to their press is even more remarkable coming from an organization which is only too comfortable with the view that the cops—the armed, racist, strikebreaking thugs of the capitalist state—are simply "workers in uniform." Here we have a truly perverse measure of the social-democratic and Stalinist-derived erosion of workers democracy. Whereas Stalin felt constrained to slander the Trotskyists as police agents in order to set them up for violence, today Labor Militant extends its hand to the cops as "allies" of the workers movement while defaming the Trotskyists as violent, to the same purpose.

On another level, Labor Militant's refusal to allow us to subscribe to their press, on the slanderous pretext that we're "violent," opens up all sorts of laughable possibilities. Are they trying to conjure up the image of a group of Spartacists getting "violently" inflamed by reading *Labor Militant*? The truth is that the insipid, social-democratic economism of their press is enough to put most people, not least our members, to sleep. Nonetheless, we make the publications of our leftist opponents readily

available in our local offices. Workers democracy—the open clash of opinion and test in action of various forces claiming to be socialist—is crucial to forging a revolutionary leadership of the proletariat.

It's not that we think that our members, supporters and youth comrades are going to be politically deprived by lack of access to the *Labor Militant*. It may seem like a small thing, but the principle involved isn't: their refusal to renew our subscription is a real, if ludicrous, breach of workers democracy and correspondingly injurious to the advancement of revolutionary consciousness. ■

Letter

Drop Charges Against Vietnam War Resister!

We print below a letter from Bob Malecki, an anti-Vietnam War activist who has been living for over two decades in Sweden. After going into exile, Bob became a supporter of the international Spartacist tendency and he remains a friend.

His open letter, which has been sent to a number of organizations and people around the world, comes in the context of a lurch to the right in the American political climate. As the Gingrich/Helms Republicans, now in control of Congress, take aim against the Vietnam-era "60s counterculture," Clinton's Democrats compete with them on the racist themes of abolishing welfare and massively speeding up legal lynchings on death row.

Bob Malecki was among those who fought courageously against U.S. imperialism and its crimes—and it is for this that he has suffered persecution. Unlike a number of former antiwar activists who have "come in from the cold" and renounced the deeds of their "radical youth," and unlike the "Vietnam doves" who have become imperialist hawks over Bosnia and Haiti, Bob Malecki remains unbowed. We join Malecki in demanding that all charges against him be dropped.

His earlier letter to President Clinton, referred to below, calling for amnesty for antiwar activists in exile or underground, was published in WV No. 568 (29 January 1993).

* * *

Robertfors, Sweden

Dear Friends,

My name is Robert Malecki and I need your help. I need the help of your mem-

bers in your organisation. I need the help of all organisations who claim that they stand on the side of poor and working-class people. I have been living in exile here in Sweden for over 22 years because of my activities during the Vietnam War. If I were to return to the United States I could be put in prison for a very long time and therefore this plea for help.

Between the years 1968 and 1972 I publicly took responsibility for the destruction of tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of draft files and orders calling young, mostly poor and working-class kids up to be sent to Vietnam. Statements to the newspapers, TV, and radio usually said "that we would not tolerate sending working-class kids off to Vietnam to kill other poor and working-class kids." I also took responsibility for the destruction of the international computer network of the Dow Chemical Corp. in Washington D.C. This company produced napalm and Agent Orange for the bombs being dropped on Vietnam. Because of this action and others Dow Chemical stopped its production of napalm. However we were unable to stop the war.

In November of 1969 I was caught coming out of a draft board with military files. I was put on trial and sentenced to 12 years in prison. In defense of my actions I took up the Nuremberg trials after the Second World War. I said that there was no difference between the Nazi concentration camps and the American bombings of the Vietnamese people. Therefore it was my duty to break national laws, in protesting American war-making policy in Vietnam, in order to uphold international laws. This defense was not allowed by the court and

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TROTSKY

The Bolsheviks on National Rights

Capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union has brought in its wake a resurgence of Great Russian chauvinism, as Moscow seeks to impose its will on the dozens of nationalities within the borders of the Russian Federation and on the neighboring republics of the former USSR. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 established the principle of genuine equality of all nationalities, including the right of self-determination and



LENIN

independent statehood. The 1919 program of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) laid out the Leninist principles of national equality, which were sharply undermined by the subsequent Stalinist degeneration, carried out under the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country." In fighting for workers revolution today we reaffirm the internationalist call for a voluntary federation of socialist republics.

With reference to the nationality question the RKP is guided by the following tenets:

- 1) The principal aim is the policy of bringing about closer relations between the proletarians and semi-proletarians of different nationalities, in order to carry on a general revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the landlords and the bourgeoisie.
- 2) In order to remove mistrust on the part of the working masses of the oppressed countries toward the proletariat of those states which oppressed them, it is necessary to abolish all privileges of any national group, to proclaim the full equality of nations and to recognize the rights of colonies and dependent nations to state separation.
- 3) For the same purpose, as a temporary measure toward achieving full unity, the party suggests a federative union of all states organized on the Soviet basis.
- 4) The All-Russian Communist Party regards the question as to who expresses the desire of a nation for separation, from a historical-class point of view, taking into consideration the level of historical development of any given nation: whether the nation is passing from medievalism toward bourgeois democracy or from bourgeois democracy toward soviet or proletarian democracy, etc.

In any case, particular care and attention must be exercised by the proletariat of those nations which were oppressing nations, toward the remnants of national feelings of the working masses of the oppressed or dependant nations. Only by such a policy is it possible to create favourable conditions for a voluntary and real unity of different national elements of the international proletariat, as has been proved by the experiment of the union of several national Soviet republics around Soviet Russia.

—Program of the RKP(B), March 1919

WORKERS VANGUARD

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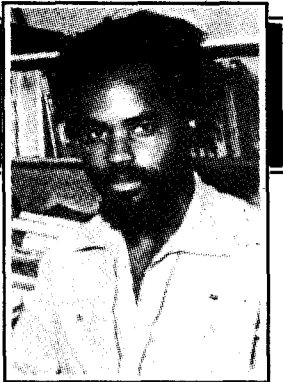
30 December 1994



Vietnamese children burned by napalm made by Dow Chemical. Vietnam War resisters who fought against U.S. imperialism still face persecution.

From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

Voting for Your Own Repression



rich folk snort powder? I think not.

Researchers for the Washington, D.C.-based Sentencing Project as well as the Chicago-based Committee to End the Marion Lockdown have calculated the rate of Black incarceration at 1,534 per 100,000 as compared to a White imprisonment rate of 197.

The Crime Bill criminalizes Black life.

The weak-kneed political forces that supported this Referendum on Repression, from the so-called Congressional Black Caucus, to "new" Democrats, to "moderate" Republicans, have authored an authoritative Act that is itself criminal.

It will not only not solve a crime: It is a crime.

19 September 1994

© 1994 by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Philadelphia black journalist, is on death row at Pennsylvania's Huntingdon state prison. Framed up because of his political views, Jamal faces death for his defiance of the racist, capitalist order. His columns appear periodically in *Workers Vanguard* and other newspapers.

To get involved in the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the death penalty, contact the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, 1100 Pike St., Huntingdon, PA 16652-1112.

The passage of the 1994 Clinton Crime Bill recently marks the official dawn of the American police state.

This law, the most draconian in the nation's history, calls for spending over 30 billion bucks for more prisons, more cops, and more death penalties. More tools of state repression—more un-freedom. Those who voted for this "Death Bill" have done more to foster crime than anything else. For years it has been said the prisons are but universities of crime.

Under the new law, that is all prisoners will have an opportunity to learn—crime—because Pell Grants, which provided the possibility of a few thousand prisoners a year to gain higher education, have been cut to zero.

Thus, of the 1.3 million prisoners in America, whether serving 6 months or 66 years, not a single

one will receive a single cent to learn a single, useful fact that enriches the society he or she will return to one day.

In essence, this system has legislated ignorance. This Crime Bill is a Declaration of War on Black men.

The sections of the law on gangs and cocaine tell the tale.

For people designated as gang members under the new law, they can have 10 years tacked on to their original sentence...even if the offense is unrelated to gang membership!

The Crime Bill has criminalized affiliation.

Those persons convicted of crack face severe penalties up to 100 times more punitive than those convicted of powder cocaine.

Is it mere coincidence that poor folk use crack and

Denny's Workers Fight for a Union

New Jersey

ABSECON, New Jersey—Denny's restaurants are notorious for racist discrimination against black customers, and a union fight at the Denny's here on the White Horse Pike near Atlantic City shows that they're just as hostile to their workers. Waiters and waitresses slave for a subminimum pay of \$2.22 an hour. And they don't even get the tips that are supposed to keep them going when the bosses force them to spend hours scrubbing garbage cans with harsh chemicals. And when the Absecon workers started protesting their miserable conditions, the American Family Restaurants management installed electronic bugs and video cameras to spy on them.

When the 50 cooks, waiters and waitresses voted to join Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) Local 54 in March, they set up the first and only union in any of Denny's nearly 2,000 restaurants. Early this month they threw back in management's face an insulting contract "offer" of a two-cent raise. Local 54 didn't call a strike, but responded with a daily 24-hour protest picket at the restaurant, joined by union members from the huge casino hotels in nearby Atlantic City. A pro-company judge imposed an injunction limiting the picket to seven people standing at least ten feet apart. As Local 54 business rep Jerome Page told *Workers Vanguard*, "The employer can break the laws whenever, but as soon as the union just tries, the judges are on our backs."

In the midst of a general decline in union membership in recent years, service unions like HERE have had some success in organizing workers, particularly among militant immigrants. But it's no accident that unions are practically nonexistent among fast-food restaurants, which function on a revolving door



Workers in Absecon, New Jersey organize against anti-union Denny's.

of low-paid unskilled labor. One worker at Absecon told WV that the entire night shift at another New Jersey Denny's in Marlton was fired when they announced their intention to organize a union. Organizing restaurant by restaurant won't work, a writer on waitresses' unions pointed out, saying, "The target needs to be the entire chain." She added, "there doesn't seem to be much success in getting any large movement started" (*New York Times*, 10 December).

There is good reason for that. Restaurant workers by themselves have little social power. It's significant that this first unionized Denny's is located near Atlantic City, where the big casinos are solidly organized. To take on the entire Denny's chain requires mobilizing labor muscle—for example, organizing Teamster truckers to choke off supplies. But the union misleaders fear the mobilization of union power, because that would mean confronting the bosses' cops and courts and their Taft-Hartley injunctions against "secondary boycotts." The key to organizing weaker sectors, as well as defending the union movement as a whole, is forging a class-struggle leadership.

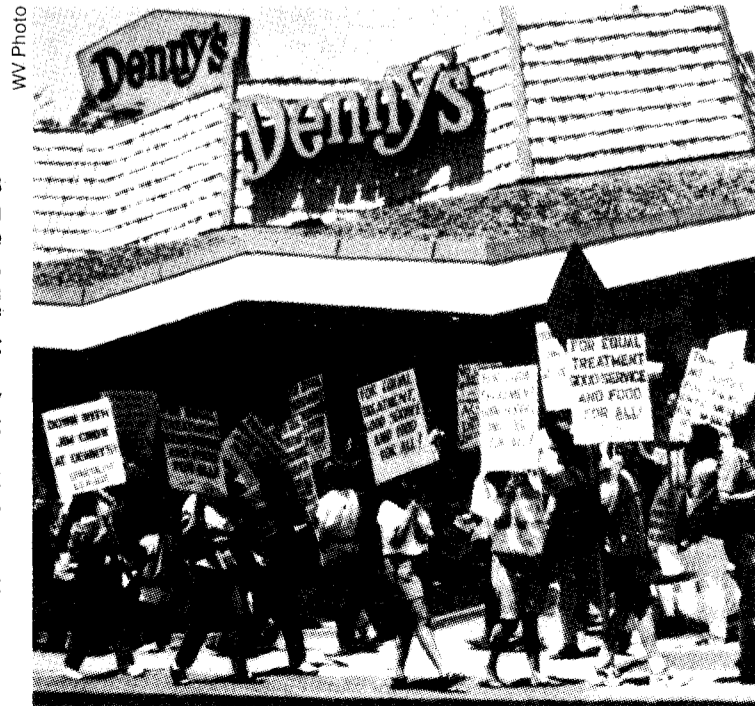
The Spartacist League fights to build a workers party which will lead all sections of the working class in struggle against their common class enemy,

Atlantic City HERE unionists snapped up copies of *Workers Vanguard* detailing the July 1993 coast-to-coast protests initiated by the SL and the Labor Black Leagues against Denny's racism. Several hundred demonstrators picketed restaurants from Oakland to Atlanta, demanding, "Down with Jim Crow at Denny's! For equal treatment, good service and

food for all!" Protesters drove home the point that Denny's racism and non-union operations go hand in hand, with signs reading, "Fight this racist open shop—Unionize Denny's!" When Denny's took over a Big Boy in Winchester, Virginia which was being organized by HERE Local 25, pro-union workers were left on the street.

It's a sign of the times that it took communists to organize the only national protests against Denny's racism and union-busting. Meanwhile, the NAACP cut a deal which gave them a seat on the Spartanburg, South Carolina-based chain's board of directors and promised franchises to a handful of black businessmen. But they did nothing for Denny's workers or the many black customers who continue to face discrimination. Just last week, two black families in Oak Lawn, Illinois filed suit after suffering degrading treatment at a Denny's, even after the chain was already forced to pay \$46 million to settle two previous lawsuits over racist practices.

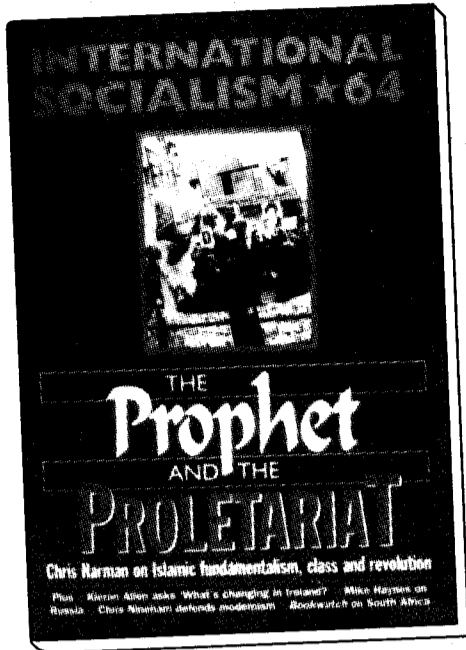
As a Labor Black League spokesman said at last year's protests: "Unionization and black rights march forward together and slide backward apart. Denny's racist Jim Crow policies are directly tied to their non-union operation." Victory to Absecon Denny's workers! Mobilize union power to organize Denny's! ■



July 1993 demonstration outside Emeryville, California Denny's, part of coast-to-coast campaign initiated by Spartacist League and Labor Black Leagues demanding, "Down with Jim Crow at Denny's!"

NOTICE
Workers Vanguard skips a week in December.
Our next issue will be dated January 13.

"Third Camp" Social Democrats Pander to Islamic Fundamentalism



Cliffite journal trumpets supposed "anti-imperialism" of Islamic reaction.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union has provoked some striking disorientation among supposed leftists. Many, under the pressure of the Cold War, already bought into imperialist anti-Sovietism, using as an excuse the bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian Revolution under Stalinist rule. But few could match the frothing Stalinophobia of the international tendency led by Tony Cliff and his British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which proclaimed the ascendancy of Yeltsin counterrevolution in Moscow as "the Russian Revolution of 1991"! Today, without the pole star of hatred for what Reagan called the "evil empire" to guide them, the Cliffites have locked onto a bizarre infatuation with Islamic fundamentalists. Their U.S. affiliate, the International Socialist Organization (ISO), has taken to giving public forums with titles like "Islamic Fundamentalism: Anti-Imperialist or Reactionary?" A flyer for a 22 November ISO forum in Berkeley declared, "Islamism...must be transformed into an independent, revolutionary socialist perspective."

For decades, the calling card of Cliff's social-democratic outfit was its description of the Soviet Union as "state capitalist." From the time of the 1950-53 Korean War on, this nonsensical "theory" served as a justification for lining up with imperialism (first veiled, then openly) against the USSR and any state they considered a Soviet "satellite." From arch-reactionary *mujahedin* in Afghanistan, who butchered teachers as "communist infidels" for educating girls, to Polish Solidarność, that company union of the

ISO and the Veil

CIA and the Vatican, no anti-Soviet movement was too retrograde for Cliff & Co.'s enthusiastic support. Today, the Cliffites join the Miami *gusano* mafia in hailing a counterrevolutionary riot in Cuba (see "ISO: Gusano Socialists?" *WV* No. 606, 16 September). But even for this crowd whose stock in trade was vituperating against Soviet "totalitarianism," it's hard to get worked up over the "threat" of Fidel Castro and the Kim dynasty in North Korea.

In harmony with the bourgeois refrain of a supposed "death of communism," a couple of years ago the Canadian Cliffites held a "debate" under the title "After Communism, What's Left for Socialism?" Now they give the answer. Left rudderless in imperialism's "New World Order," these opportunists have been trailing in the wake of reactionary Islamic fundamentalists, such as those in Algeria who brutally murder unveiled women, foreigners, and anyone they perceive as representing modern culture. The Autumn 1994 issue of the Cliffites' journal *International Socialism* has a 60-page lead article by SWP "theoretician" Chris Harman on "The Prophet and the Proletariat," complete with a green cover and Arabic-looking lettering. Meanwhile, the SWP's *Socialist Worker* (20 August) proclaims, "Islamists have now replaced socialists and the left in terms of being in the frontline against the state in many countries" (emphasis in original).

And, come to think of it, we haven't seen a single article in the Cliffite press in defense of Taslima Nasrin, the courageous Bangladeshi writer condemned to death by Islamic clerics who judged her fight against anti-woman bigotry and her denunciations of both Muslim and Hindu chauvinists in Bangladesh and India to be an affront to their "religious feelings" (see *WV* No. 604, 5 August). This is a significant turnaround, as the British SWP defended Salman Rushdie against the *fatwa* (edict calling for his death) issued by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989, and even published an interview with Rushdie early on. But for the Cliffites, who have made a career of being "State Department socialists," their reticence on Nasrin and current infatuation with Islamic fundamentalism goes along with Washington's current stance (shared by sections of West European social democracy) to "do business" with "moderate" fundamentalists, from Iran to Algeria.

The Harman article in *International Socialism* is all about "contradictions of Islamism." He treats Islamic fundamentalist "mass movements" as radical petty-bourgeois nationalist formations, which "have taken up anti-imperialist slogans and some anti-imperialist actions." But despite their populist rhetoric, their denunciations of the "Great Satan" of the U.S. and occasional jibes at the IMF, seeking to whip up support among the desperately impoverished masses from Teheran to Algiers, the Islamic fundamentalists are firmly committed to maintaining capitalist exploitation. While sprinkling a few caveats about, Harman waxes increasingly enthusiastic, reaching a crescendo as he writes of the "Islamic intelligentsia around Khomeini in Iran":

"They were not, as many left wing commentators have mistakenly believed, merely an expression of 'backward,

bazaar-based traditional, 'parasitic,' 'merchant capital.' Nor were they simply an expression of classic bourgeois counter-revolution. They undertook a revolutionary reorganisation of ownership and control of capital within Iran even while leaving capitalist relations of production intact...."

A neat trick, if you can do it.

For the Cliffites, Iran is part of a pattern of radical, "anti-imperialist" and even "revolutionary" "Islamism" throughout the Muslim world. Thus the British SWP writes:

"The Iranian revolution of 1979, which was rapidly taken over by the Mullahs, the popular Afghan resistance to the Soviet invasion, the Palestinian intifada, which was more and more influenced by the fundamentalists, all contributed to the revival of anti-imperialist feeling, filtered through religion, of broad masses of North Africans."

—*Socialist Review*, February 1992

This is hardly a reflection of "anti-imperialism," as the Cliffites would have it, but rather of despair and reaction, which both emotionally and in its sociological base has much in common with Hitler's "National Socialism." Though looking to the past, the Islamic fundamentalist wave is a response to the oppressive conditions of the late 20th century. Its present rise as a mass movement is the reactionary reflection of both the absence of a communist alternative and the manifest dead end of nationalism.

This can be seen most clearly among the Palestinians and in Algeria. The PLO nationalists are now acting as the murderous enforcers for Zionist tyranny, driving the historically secular Palestinian masses into the arms of Hamas fundamentalists. Algeria won its war of independence against France, but this anti-colonial victory did little to alleviate the exploitation and social oppression of the masses, who now turn to fundamentalism as an answer.

From Iran and Afghanistan...

The Cliffites' fascination with "Islamism" repeats the opportunist left's disastrous capitulation to the reactionary mullahs who came to power in Iran a decade and a half ago. Khomeini's victory led to the execution of thousands of leftists, Kurds, women, homosexuals and any opponent of theocratic rule. Harman starts off his article with a polemic against the *New Left Review's* Fred Halliday for counterposing a bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie in Iran to the left's support for Khomeini. Halliday said the left should have "come out in a firm and united way against the clerical forces and in alliance with the 'liberals'" around Bakhtiar, the first prime minister after the overthrow of the shah, who was soon purged by the Khomeinists ("The Iranian Revolution and Its Implications," *New Left Review*, November/December 1987). Halliday is a pretty easy target, since during the Persian Gulf War he came out for the U.S./NATO attack on Iraq!

In debunking this certified "social-imperialist," the *International Socialism* article adopts a pseudo-"radical" posture:

"The Islamic regime in Iran dominates discussions on Islamic revivalism, much as the record of Stalinism dominates discussions on socialism. And often, even on the left, very similar conclusions are drawn. The Islamists are seen, much as the Stalinists were once seen, as the most



Reuters
Algeria: FIS declares fundamentalist leader Abassi "our president."

dangerous of all political forces, able to impose a totalitarianism that will prevent any further progressive development."

But while today Harman claims to be arguing against those, like Halliday, who called the Iranian mullah regime "Islam with a fascist face" as well as against those who "see the Islamist movements as 'progressive,'" the Cliffites' own record places them clearly in the latter camp. At the time of Khomeini's victory, the ISO ran laudatory articles on the mullahs' "mass movement" with headlines like "The Form—Religious, The Spirit—Revolution!"

The criminal support for reactionary fundamentalists in Iran by leftists around the world was a monstrous betrayal. In contrast, the Spartacist tendency put forward a program for proletarian revolution, declaring: "Down With the Shah! Down With the Mullahs! Workers Must Lead Iranian Revolution!" Uniquely on the left, we warned that the mullahs in power would seek to reimpose the *chador* (the head-to-toe veil), restore barbaric punishments (e.g., flogging, amputations), suppress national minorities and crush the workers movement and left as ruthlessly as the shah.

Cold War anti-Sovietism and tailing the fundamentalists came together for the Cliffites over Afghanistan. For a decade, Washington armed and supported the fundamentalists' reactionary *jihad* (holy war), using the opportunity to wage a proxy war against the Soviet Union. We forthrightly *hailed* the intervention of the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan against the mullah-led forces, and we called for the extension to Afghanistan of the social gains of the October Revolution. But the Cliffites were foursquare on the side of reaction. In Britain, SWP leader Paul Foot succeeded in provoking an anti-Soviet frenzy on the floor of Parliament by right-wing Tories and Labour "lefts" alike, through incendiary "revelations" in his *Daily Mirror* column of the possibility that British meat exports to the Soviet Union might be sent to Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan (*Spartacist Britain* No. 24, August-September 1980).

In the U.S., the ISO bombastically proclaimed all-out support to the mullahs:

"Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs."

—*Socialist Worker*, May 1988

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Fourth Reich Persecutes Scientologists

The following article is translated from Spartakist No. 115 (November/December 1994), newspaper of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany.

It's well known that the jealous biblical god tolerated no other gods beside him. The German state acts in the same way. The Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the Social Democratic (SPD) guardians of morality are waging an ominous campaign against the "Church of Scientology" sect. This is an assault on freedom of expression and assembly as well as on the separation of church and state.

On October 11, the SPD called for Scientology to be banned and prosecuted—through the appointment of a "federal sect commissioner"—claiming that this "pseudo-religious" movement had formed an "organized criminal association" in order to do away with the "democratic constitutional order." The latter charge is the code word for *witch-hunt*—the pretext for banning the Communist Party (KPD) and purging communists from the trade unions during the Cold War. We Spartakists say: Hands off Scientology!

But Bonn's real accusation, and the reason for the SPD's attack just now, is that Scientology is damaging Germany's "reputation" abroad. In reaction to the months-long witchhunt, the Scientologists have been running full-page ads since September in the two leading U.S. dailies, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, in which they condemn Nazi terror against immigrants and Germany's discrimination against minorities (including themselves). When they denounce the Kohl gang's hypocritical revision of history by demonstrating the

biton in Berlin as a hero; in reality he was a mass murderer in the SS *Einsatzgruppen* (death squads) whose hands were red with the blood of thousands of "Jews, Bolsheviks and dissidents." Indeed, we know that the men of 20 July wanted to stop Hitler only because he

wafer the body of Christ? Insofar as the Scientologists have an ideology, it's an extreme version of "self-realization" in a "competitive society." They target higher-income layers, including members of boards of directors of major concerns, devoting much attention to raising

tered by the churches. In West Germany, the churches have always had the "right" to force themselves on the population.

State governments and schools have a "constitutional" obligation to transmit "Christian values." And if you or your children want to avoid this imposition in order, for example, to stop paying church taxes (which means you have to leave the church) or to get out of religious instruction in school, then you have to make a formal written petition. These values are spoon-fed even to small children in day-care centers. Censorship boards filled with clerics decide what you can and cannot hear and see on radio and TV—in line with the motto, first the lottery numbers and then "The Word on Sunday."

And, of course, the attempts to strengthen Article 218 (restricting abortion) in the '80s brought clerical reaction solidly into the streets. Christian opponents of abortion even attacked the clinics, tormenting women who sought abortions with accusations of murder right up to the doors of the operating room.

Following the counterrevolution in the DDR (East Germany), Bonn vehemently asserted its "right" to re-Christianize the East German populace, together with such luminaries as the ultrarightist opponent of the "abortion holocaust," military bishop Dyba. The churches stormed into the East, seizing everything from day-care centers to old-age homes—including, of course, the newly established (anti-) abortion "counseling" centers.

The rights of free expression and freedom of assembly, as well as the separation of church and state, were established by the bourgeois revolutions of the 16th to 19th centuries; in Germany, however, such revolutions were either defeated or remained incomplete. As a result, the left and workers movement in this country has only a superficial consciousness of bourgeois-democratic rights. This is reflected in the manifold links of the SPD with the Protestant church—in the East it's truly a "teachers and priests party." It promotes ministers as its spokesmen and candidates and is proud of having a party caucus for Christians.

In brief: the churches and the state arrogate to themselves the right to stick their noses into all aspects of people's private lives which are none of their business—with the active support of their Social Democratic helpers. Down with the church tax! Cops, judges, priests out of the bedrooms, classrooms and doctors' offices!

Down with the Crusade Against Scientology!

As advocates of the interests of the working class and of its right to organize,
continued on page 10



Scientology ads pointing to continuity between Kohl's Germany and Nazi Third Reich send German rulers into chauvinist frenzy.

was in the process of *definitively* damaging Germany's "reputation," namely by losing the Second World War.

The SPD-led Hamburg Interior Ministry, which recently made the headlines when the minister resigned because of racist police violence against immigrants, has even set up a special department to deal with Scientology. And the city government of Hamburg (where Scientology has its main office) has announced its intention to prosecute Scientology. Under what pretext are they doing all this? Greed! Too bad Luther

their business efficiency.

Bonn and its powerful state churches naturally want to be the ones to decide what is and is not a religion, in order to justify *political repression* of all unpopular minority groups. In 1938, Hitler's thugs responded to the "provocation" of the existence of synagogues with their November pogrom. Today the Bavarian Supreme Court rails against "the provocative exercise of religion in obviously, clearly recognizable mosques"—in granting permission for an NPD Nazi march against the construction of a mosque (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 31 August)!

Today, as the Fourth Reich again strives for world dominance, it again needs political and religious conformity with "old German values." This conformity is to be enforced not just by Sunday sermons but also by state violence—with more stringent laws against "international terrorism" and now in "fighting crime," laws which have already been tried out in the racist persecution of immigrants. The ban on the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party) effectively outlawed the political and cultural life of the entire Kurdish population in Germany—300 Kurds are in prison.

Defend Democratic Rights—For Separation of Church and State!

The German constitution reeks with religious obscurantism. There are *two* major state churches, for which the state acts as a collection agency from its citizens—all citizens whose birth is regis-



Jansson/Gaif

Berlin police manhandle Kurdish demonstrator as part of racist persecution of Kurds and all immigrants.

continuity of the "Federal Republic" with the Third Reich, they do something totally "*verboten*."

What infuriated the fanatics in Bonn was Scientology ads like one in the 13 October *New York Times* which presented a largely accurate critique of the lying glorification of the bourgeois conspiracy of the "men of 20 July 1944" (the high-ranking military officers who tried to assassinate Hitler). Commenting on an exhibition sponsored by Bonn at the Library of Congress in Washington, the Scientology ad notes that it is distinguished by:

"what it omits. Its literature abbreviates Jewish resistance to the Nazis to a single page and downgrades the Warsaw Ghetto, the heroic symbol of World War II resistance, to one sentence....

"The exhibit diminishes the horror of the Holocaust and the Nazis' mass murder, virtually unopposed, of millions of Jews, Gypsies, Rosicrucians, Jehovah's Witnesses and other minorities."

And also of Communists and homosexuals, one must add. For the entire aim of this exhibition was to *erase* from history Communist-led resistance to Hitler. To cover up Leopold Trepper's Red Orchestra, the White Rose (a bourgeois resistance group) was highlighted. The Scientologists point out, for example, that Artur Nebe, one of the July 1944 conspirators, is depicted in Kohl's exhibi-

tion didn't have an FBI to effectively fight the Catholic church. Economic crimes! From Daimler-Benz to IG Farben they all do it, but here the press from right to "left" swallows the bait: Springer's *Hamburger Abendblatt* launched a provocation in *Stürmer* (SA brownshirt) style against Scientology's worship of god's money. The (rad-lib) *taz* screams that the sect controls the Hamburg housing market; *Neues Deutschland* (speaking for the PDS) asks when "state measures" will finally be taken.

Under the pretext of "economic crimes" and "money-laundering," Bonn wants to kick in the doors of Scientology's office and/or its commercial enterprises and confiscate financial records. This paves the way for declaring "criminal" the commercial enterprises of all sorts of other religious and political organizations which the state deems a thorn in its side. It's happened already, when the police assaulted PDS headquarters in Berlin in October 1990 (with the cooperation of the PDS!).

To the coalition of church and SPD, Scientology—or at least its late founder, L. Ron Hubbard—is the Pied Piper of Hamelin in person. To be sure, this sect is dubious, unappetizing and very unpopular among wide sectors of the populace. But how strange can an "E Meter" be compared to calling a communion



A. Schoelzel

Berlin police raid PDS headquarters in 1990. Witchhunt against ex-Stalinist social democrats continues today.

As Bitterness Over Reunification Fuels PDS Vote



Der Spiegel
Capitalist counterrevolution produces devastation. Left: Workers crowd unemployment office in Berlin. Right: July 1993 protest against closing of Bischoferrode potash mine.

Spartakist
Capitalist counterrevolution produces devastation. Left: Workers crowd unemployment office in Berlin. Right: July 1993 protest against closing of Bischoferrode potash mine.

Germany Escalates Anti-Red Witchhunt

The following article is adapted from Spartakist No. 115, November/December 1994, published by the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

November 9 marked the fifth anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall, and the German media have been full of reminiscences of the autumn of 1989 and the collapse of the Stalinist regime in the DDR, the bureaucratically deformed East German workers state. (The fact that this date is also the anniversary of the 1918 downfall of the Kaiser and Hitler's 1938 *Kristallnacht* pogrom against the Jews was barely mentioned.) Earlier, on October 16, national elections were held which returned Christian Democratic (CDU) chancellor Helmut Kohl to office. The electioneering was marked by a virulent campaign of redbaiting against the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor to the Socialist Unity Party which for decades governed—and then sold out—the DDR. But what was striking was how the anti-communist barrage dramatically *backfired* in the East.

Four years after capitalist reunification, there is mass devastation in East Germany, mass unemployment in the West, and increased racist terror throughout the country. Promising more of the same, Kohl's coalition with the Free Democrats (FDP) had its parliamentary majority reduced to a wafer-thin margin of a single vote (which was then inflated by an obscure election law clause giving extra seats to the leading party in different states). The Social Democrats, despite their support for the anti-working-class, racist policies of Kohl & Co., regained some workers' votes in the West. But in East Germany, rage over the results of *Anschluss* (annexation) of the former DDR was so widespread that the PDS won almost 20 percent of the vote and was returned to the Bundestag (parliament) with 30 deputies.

Nowhere was the division clearer than in Berlin, the designated capital of "united" Germany, where the CDU won six directly elected members of parliament in West Berlin and the PDS won four out of five direct mandates in the East, while the SPD came away with



J.H. Darchingner

PDS leader Gregor Gysi displays CDU anti-"red" propaganda during election campaign, later went on hunger strike to protest government attempt to bankrupt party.



Pressefoto Mrotzkowski

only three. The PDS deputies include the party's Bundestag leader Gregor Gysi (who got 48.9 percent of the vote in the working-class districts of Marzahn and Hellersdorf), longtime East German dissident socialist writer Stefan Heym, former DDR economics minister Christa Luft, and commercial and bank workers union chief Manfred Müller. "Gysi's multi-colored troop" includes German nationalist Count von Einsiedel (the grandson of the Kaiser's "Iron Chancellor" Bismarck) and writer Gerhard Zwerenz, who proclaimed himself "anti-communist" from the Bundestag podium.

While Gysi talks of "socialist opposition," he offered unconditional support to make SPD candidate Rudolf Scharping chancellor. But the Social Democrats' leader was so afraid of receiving PDS

votes that he wasn't even nominated when the new parliament opened. In fact, the Kohl gang is dependent on support from the SPD, both in the Bundestag and through the Social Democrat trade-union leadership. That's why major bourgeois spokesmen called for direct SPD participation in the government in a coalition of Christian, Free and Social Democrats. Yet such a "Grand Coalition" already exists de facto, as the SPD controls the upper house of parliament (the Bundestag) and has gone along with Kohl on everything from his austerity budget to gutting the right to asylum. Next up: Bundeswehr troops to Bosnia and Nagorno-Karabakh in the Caucasus.

But nowhere has the "holy alliance" of the "democratic" "people's parties" been so pronounced as in the witchhunt-

ing of the PDS. This is not just a knee-jerk continuation of the Cold War, but a deliberate attempt to root out pro-socialist consciousness and any lingering support for the DDR among the East German population. So now Gysi and Heym (both of them of Jewish origin) are being pilloried on bogus charges of having been agents of the DDR State Security, although both of them were targets of the bloated "Stasi" snooping apparatus. The government finally allowed Heym to give the opening address to the Bundestag as its oldest member, but refused to print it in the official register. And then it tried to bankrupt the PDS by demanding DM 67 million (\$40 million) in taxes, supposedly owed for the first half of 1990—when the DDR was still an independent state!

"Grand Coalition" of Austerity, Witchhunting and Deportations

Two days after the voting, the bosses unveiled the program they want their government to carry out. The head of the employers' federation demanded a drastic slashing of unemployment insurance, health and pension benefits. As we have stressed, following the collapse of the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states in the former Soviet Union and East Europe, West European capitalists are busily demolishing the "social (welfare) state," with which they bought a certain amount of social peace following World War II. Now, following the devastation of the former DDR, the German bourgeoisie is determined to employ its D-mark dominance in the European Union (Common Market) to "integrate" the entire continent. And, as in the case of *Anschluss*, it is the workers in Germany and all Europe who are to foot the bill.

By closing down plants and drastically slashing industrial production in the East, the bourgeoisie has thrown between a third and a half of the DDR workforce out of their jobs, particularly women. Increasingly, the rulers are seeking to play off the workers in the East and West against one another. The capitalists' slash-and-burn policies are accompanied by poisonous nationalism

and racist terror aimed at splitting and intimidating the working class. The bureaucrats want to tie the workers to "their" bosses in the name of defending *Standort Deutschland* ("Production Site Germany"). Yet German companies, having failed to significantly boost profits by jacking up the rate of exploitation at home, are aggressively moving production to low-wage sites, such as VW's Skoda subsidiary in the Czech Republic and plants in Brazil and Mexico.

Meanwhile, the de facto racist Grand Coalition has given a green light to anti-immigrant terror by cops and fascists. The brutality of the racist cops has gotten so far "out of hand" that in the state of Hamburg the SPD interior minister was forced to resign. Because the Bonn parties implemented so much of the fascists' program, the latter didn't do so well in the elections. Of course, the main activity of the Nazis isn't in parliament but on the streets. Daily fascist Nazi/skinhead terror inflamed by capitalist reunification drastically increased in the period preceding the elections. For the first time since the Third Reich, a synagogue was firebombed in Lübeck; Nazis desecrated the memorial at the Buchenwald concentration camp, rampaged through the center of Magdeburg and have been spreading their terror in the Berlin S-Bahn elevated railway.

But the racists with shaved heads or suits and ties can be stopped. Immigrant workers are a strategic and militant component of the workers movement, and the power of labor can be mobilized against the fascists. The Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD) has uniquely fought for *worker/immigrant defense guards to stop Nazi terror*, and for *full citizenship rights for everyone in the country*. This is part of the fight to build a revolutionary internationalist workers party, combating every kind of social oppression, counterposing sharp class struggle to class collaboration, in the struggle for proletarian power.

CDU/SPD Witchhunt Backfires...

The SPD is split between East and West over cooperation with the PDS. Earlier in the year, the PDS won a heavy protest vote in legislative elections in the Eastern state of Sachsen-Anhalt (major cities: Magdeburg and Halle), forcing the SPD and the Greens to govern with the "toleration" (in reality, unconditional support) of the PDS. While Kohl denounced the PDS as "*Rote Socken*" (red socks) and "red-painted fascists," SPD leader Scharping criticized his own comrades in Magdeburg for the unpardonable sin of cohabitation with the PDS. Then, after the October 16 vote, in the Baltic coast state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (major cities: Rostock and Schwerin), the SPD flirted with a "Magdeburg solution" despite Scharping's threat of a "huge blowup" over any cooperation with the PDS. This will come up again, for in every East German state but Saxony, an SPD-PDS coalition would have an automatic majority.

In Schwerin, the state SPD set as a precondition for "cooperation" with the PDS acceptance of a "Four-Point Catalogue" for "dealing with the past," including swearing a loyalty oath to the federal constitution and apologizing for the 1946 "forced unification" of the KPD (Communist Party) and SPD into the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in East Germany. Members of the PDS Bundestag group countered by presenting their own list of crimes for which the SPD should apologize, including the SPD's "vote for the war credits in August 1914," "assistance...in the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg," as well as the *Berufsverbot* (ban on employment of leftists in West Germany) and the "de facto elimination of the basic right to asylum." Accurate enough, but it hasn't stopped the PDS from giving the SPD unconditional support in state assemblies.

The PDS' own proposal is regional parliamentary cretinism and the popular front. While calling for an "East cham-

ber" of the Bundestag to represent "Eastern interests," at the state level they call for reinstating round table forums, so as to allow the Christian Democrats to take part! It was through the medium of "round tables" that five years ago SED-PDS chief Gysi, DDR prime minister Hans Modrow and economics minister Luft—today all PDS members of the Bundestag—organized the sellout of the East German workers state to capitalist West Germany. They only haggled over the asking price: 1 D-mark for 1 DDR-mark. And now? Round tables for the demolition of the "social state"?

But the rulers in Bonn are not about to take up the PDS' offer: quite the contrary. Taken aback by the strong support for the PDS from the East in the election campaign, they have mounted a campaign of character assassination and financial extortion against the party and its leaders. Act I, only days after the voting, was a press conference at which five prominent former East German dissidents (including Bärbel Bohley) were accusing Gysi, who had been their lawyer, of spying on them for the Stasi. Their charges amounted to a big zero, and in fact, the day before, the head of the agency which controls the Stasi files

covered have since been seized by the Treuhandanstalt, the "trusteeship agency" which took over the DDR's collectivized industry in order to shut it down. And as a "security deposit" to ensure payment, the tax collectors seized \$2 million in federal funds due the PDS for the election campaign!

The whole episode was an exercise in Fourth Reich *chutzpah*. More specifically, it was an attempt to cripple the PDS by bankrupting it. In protest, PDS leaders, including Gysi and party chairman Lothar Bisky, went to the offices of the still-existing "independent party commission of the DDR," chained themselves to a radiator and began a hunger strike. After they were removed from there by the police, they proceeded to the PDS offices in the Berlin state assembly. After being removed from there, they went to the Volksbühne (People's Theater) at Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz in East Berlin. Meanwhile, 20,000 outraged PDS supporters and others staged a November 30 protest demanding, "Hands off the PDS!" Two days later, 30,000 converged on Berlin from around East Germany for another demonstration.

The SpAD, which has consistently defended the PDS against witchhunting



Spartakist contingent in October 1991 protest against Nazi anti-immigrant pogrom in Hoyerswerda, East Germany called for workers mobilization to stop fascists.

declared they had nothing on the PDS leader. But the smear charges were nonetheless trumpeted by the capitalist media, which "revealed" a supposed receipt for a "present" to Gysi by the Stasi team spying on him!

Act II was aimed at Stefan Heym. On the eve of his Bundestag speech, a supposed document was leaked by the sinisterly named ZERV (Central Clearing House for Government and Reunification Crimes) to the Bundestag president claiming that the DDR writer had arranged the 1961 Stasi kidnapping of Heinz Brandt, a former KPD and SED cadre who had gone to West Germany, where he became a metal workers union official. This was soon revealed as a hoax, but it set the stage for the opening scene at the parliament, where Kohl demonstratively held his head during Heym's remarks. The speech was little more than platitudes about human rights, but even Heym's call for a "grand coalition of reason" and denunciation of chauvinism, racism and anti-Semitism set off the ruling coalition, which banned its publication in the official record.

Act III came at the end of November, when the Berlin state tax office demanded immediate payment from the PDS of DM 67 million in supposed back corporate taxes. For starters, the period covered was January-June 1990, and the SED-PDS was a party in another state, the DDR! But that presents no problem for a government that tried former East German intelligence chief Markus Wolf for "high treason" to a state he was not a citizen of. The numbers were fantastical inventions. Furthermore, the compa-

attacks, issued a protest statement declaring: "The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany protests against the monstrous and dangerous campaign by the Berlin CDU/SPD government seeking to expropriate the PDS." After denouncing the arrogance of the ruling class, the statement noted:

"When in July 1990 the 'independent' DDR commission first demanded of all parties that they lay bare their finances and hand over their property to the CDU/SPD witchhunters to 'administer,' the Spartakists answered with a clear 'No!'....

"We fought uncompromisingly against capitalist reunification and warned of its consequences. The SED-PDS, on the other hand, turned over the DDR to the bourgeoisie of Auschwitz. But even that was not enough; like Hitler's Nazis, the bourgeoisie wants to sink its claws into the Karl Liebknecht Building [now PDS headquarters] and the *Neues Deutschland* [newspaper] building. With the Stasi witchhunts, it seeks, with the aid of its SPD minions, to take revenge for its defeat at the hands of the Red Army in 1945 and to destroy anything reminiscent of the DDR deformed workers state."

Eventually, a Berlin court ordered the Treuhand to reimburse the PDS for the \$2 million seized by the tax officials, and the PDS leaders ended their hunger strike, proclaiming a temporary victory.

...But the PDS Joins In

"Despite everything," Gysi declares the issue to be "whether the PDS will become part of the governing system or not" (PDS *Pressedienst*, 28 October). Gysi and Bisky are intent on demonstrating their "capacity to govern" (read: loyalty to the bourgeois order) by *carrying out the witchhunt in their own ranks*.

Grotesquely, the first action by Gysi's "multicolored" Bundestag fraction following the PDS electoral success was, at Heym's demand, to remove elected deputy Kerstin Kaiser-Nicht for having cooperated with the DDR Ministry of State Security. Kaiser-Nicht had made no secret of her loyalty to the DDR, and her ouster provoked an uproar in her electoral district in Brandenburg. Her supporters embarrassed PDS leaders by plastering the entry to the Liebknecht Building with signs denouncing the forced resignation, including "The Witchhunt Goes On And You're Aiding It" and "Grass-Roots Democracy?"

The PDS leadership's belly-crawling capitulation only spurs on the witchhunters, as shown by the subsequent smear campaigns against Gysi and Heym. A particular target is the Communist Platform (KPF), the loyal opposition in the PDS, which would like to lend the party credibility as a leftist force. Although the KPF calls itself communist, they are not referring to the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky, or even the Communist League of Karl Marx. Rather, the central leadership identifies with the Right Opposition of Bukharin, while the more militant elements look back to Stalin and his man in the DDR, Walter Ulbricht. In practice, the KPF has fallen to its knees whenever Gysi and the bourgeoisie demanded this of them, even projecting a social "transformation" in the framework of the federal constitution. Yet Bisky/Gysi are preparing to chuck the KPF out of the leadership at the upcoming PDS party congress in January.

At the November 30 protest against the "tax attack" on the PDS, writer Jochen Petersdorf told the crowd to believe not in Santa Claus but in class struggle. Yet in its "Ten Theses" that it is presenting to the January party congress, the PDS leadership calls for "a new social contract," declaring: "Despite all contradictions between the classes, layers and groups in society...without a new understanding between them there can be no changed direction of development of production, consumption and living conditions."

Meanwhile, most German left groups are clinging to this would-be savior of capitalism. The DKP (the former West German Communist Party) and the VSP (United Socialist Party), the hideout for West German supporters of Ernest Mandel's pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), ran candidates on the PDS slate, while Voran/JRE (supporters of the British "Militant" group) and Avanti (East German USec supporters) declared the PDS a lesser evil. Longtime Mandelite Winfried Wolf was elected Bundestag deputy, although on the road to respectability he has quit the USec.

But Gysi insists that a line be drawn "also on the left side." Speaking in Bavaria, he declared himself "incredibly surprised" at the array of "dyed-in-the-wool Spartakists and Marxists" he ran into in the West as well as the East (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 10 October). And again on Hesse Radio (30 October) he moaned, "You've got to experience for yourselves how I'm attacked by sectarians at meetings...from the right by the Young Union [Christian Democrats], from the left by the Spartakists." But Gysi's not so surprised as all that. After the opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Spartakists were the only ones to intervene in the East and West flatly opposed to capitalist reunification and with the perspective of a red Germany of workers councils as part of a United Socialist States of Europe. At the time, Gysi & Co. were busily engaged in acting as the mediators for counterrevolution.

Lenin characterized Social Democracy as a physician at the sickbed of capitalism; today, the PDS is applying to become a paramedic. After four years of capitalist devastation of the former DDR, it can be seen all too clearly that the only way forward for humanity is proletarian revolution and construction of a socialist society resting on genuine equality and justice. ■

Caucasus...

(continued from page 1)

a part of Russia and the Dudayev regime has no legitimate basis."

This attitude reflects the widespread and vicious racism against Chechens and other Caucasians living in Moscow and elsewhere in central Russia. Many Russians sneeringly refer to Caucasians as "blacks" and brand them all as a gang of criminals. Following Yeltsin's bonapartist crackdown last October, thousands of Chechens and other Caucasians were beaten and brutally deported in the name of "fighting crime." There is certainly a Chechen mafia, but as British spy novelist John le Carré observed: "As to the criminality of the Chechens, who on earth are the Russians of Moscow and St. Petersburg to talk? They have criminalized themselves at every level of commerce and administration to an extent not seen since the days of Al Capone" (*New York Times*, 14 December).

Unlike the bourgeois opposition to Yeltsin, which is overwhelmingly Great Russian chauvinist and at best pacifist, we forthrightly stand with the Chechen people fighting against racist harassment and attempts to impose the Russian knout. We say: Defeat the invasion—Russian forces out of Chechnya!

Chechnya and Yeltsin's Russia

It took half a century for the tsarist empire to conquer the North Caucasus,



Kozluskas/Sygma

Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev (center), former Soviet general who now panders to Islamic reaction.

liberal Stalinist regime of Nikita Khrushchev restored the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, and large numbers of these Caucasian peoples returned to their homeland. Although Moscow exercised ultimate control, the autonomous areas within the Russian federation of the USSR did provide a substantial degree of national autonomy, preserving and developing the language and cultural identity of the Chechens, Tatars, Bashkirs and others.

When the Soviet Union came apart following Yeltsin's seizure of power in Moscow in August 1991, Chechnya,

factions hostile to Dudayev, who had become a typically corrupt and brutal Third World despot. But Moscow's meddling—through the instrument of Ruslan Khasbulatov, the Chechen former head of the Moscow parliament disbanded by Yeltsin—actually strengthened Dudayev's hand. When Dudayev routed the Moscow-backed forces and paraded captured Russian soldiers through Grozny last month, Yeltsin decided to up the ante with a full-scale invasion. In response, Chechnya's foreign minister Shamsedin Yusef warned: "they cannot kill every Chechen; there are more than a million of us, and every one of us will fight."

Reports from the area indicate that even Russians in Chechnya are resisting the invasion, which has consolidated the Chechen population behind the drive for independence. To the west, the ethnically related Ingush, who had separated from Chechnya in favor of autonomy within Russia, have rallied against the invasion and attacked Russian troops, while Russian soldiers have been seized in Dagestan to the east. Throughout the Caucasus there is widespread hostility to Russia's great power ambitions.

Behind the Armenia-Azerbaijan War

The many peoples of the Caucasus are suffering greatly from the civil strife and mutual "ethnic cleansings" unleashed by the destruction of the USSR. While Chechnya and other areas of the northern slope of the Caucasus have relatively homogeneous populations (with significant numbers of Russians in the capital cities), the rest of the region, like the Balkans, is characterized by the widespread *geographical interpenetration* of its diverse peoples. It is a patchwork quilt of nationalities that developed over the centuries in conditions of geographical isolation in this mountainous region.

Until recently, there were large enclaves of Armenians within Azerbaijan and vice versa, while Abkhazians and Ossetians had autonomous regions in

Georgia. Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, had a thoroughly multinational character going back to the last decades of the tsarist empire. Thus the drive of Armenian, Azeri and Georgian nationalists to create their own bourgeois nation-states on the ruins of the Soviet Union has necessarily led to massacres and mass expulsions of national minorities. And as it did during the days of tsarist rule, Russia is playing a major role in stoking ethnic and nationalist intrigues in the region it calls the "near abroad."

The Armenia-Azerbaijan bloodletting beginning in 1988 was both a harbinger and a spearhead of the counterrevolutionary breakup of the Soviet Union fueled by Gorbachev's free market "reforms." When the first outbursts of nationalist fervor in Soviet Armenia over the mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh enclave inside Azerbaijan were followed by anti-Armenian pogroms in Azerbaijan in early 1988, we wrote that "the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy, permeated with nationalism, cannot solve the complex nationalities questions...economic decentralization under the rubric of *perestroika* (restructuring) will intensify national divisions and rivalries within the USSR" (*WV* No. 450, 8 April 1988).

We added: "Since a majority of inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh are Armenians who want to be part of the Armenian republic, that is their democratic right." Armenia has since incorporated this area through a brutal campaign of military conquest. Today, in the aftermath of capitalist counterrevolution, the question of interpenetration in this area has been effectively resolved, through massive forced population transfers.

While Western (especially American) press reports often simply retail pro-Armenian propaganda about Azeri atrocities, both sides carry out "ethnic cleansings" in the areas they rule. In May 1992, 45,000 Azeris were expelled from the Nagorno-Karabakh mountains by Armenian forces. The following month, an Azeri offensive against Mardakert and Shaumian sent 40,000 Armenians fleeing from their homes. Every sixth Azeri is a refugee and a fifth of Azerbaijan's territory is now in the hands of Armenian forces. More than 20,000 Azeris and Armenians have been killed—out of a combined population of less than 11 million people.

The cosmopolitan character and multinational proletariat of Baku have been destroyed by communal slaughter, as 350,000 Armenians have fled the Azerbaijan capital. An Azeri population of nearly 200,000 was forced out of Armenia. The war has also brought terror and slaughter to the small Kurdish population of the region. In 1992, Armenian forces from Karabakh stormed the city of Lachin, a historic Kurdish center, looting and burning it to the ground. The entire population of 25,000 Kurds was forced to flee. Since then, Armenia has driven out virtually all of its Kurdish population and has also forced out tens of thousands of Kurds in occupied Azerbaijan.



Swersey/Gamma

Would-be Tsar Boris Yeltsin revives reactionary traditions to bolster nascent capitalist state.

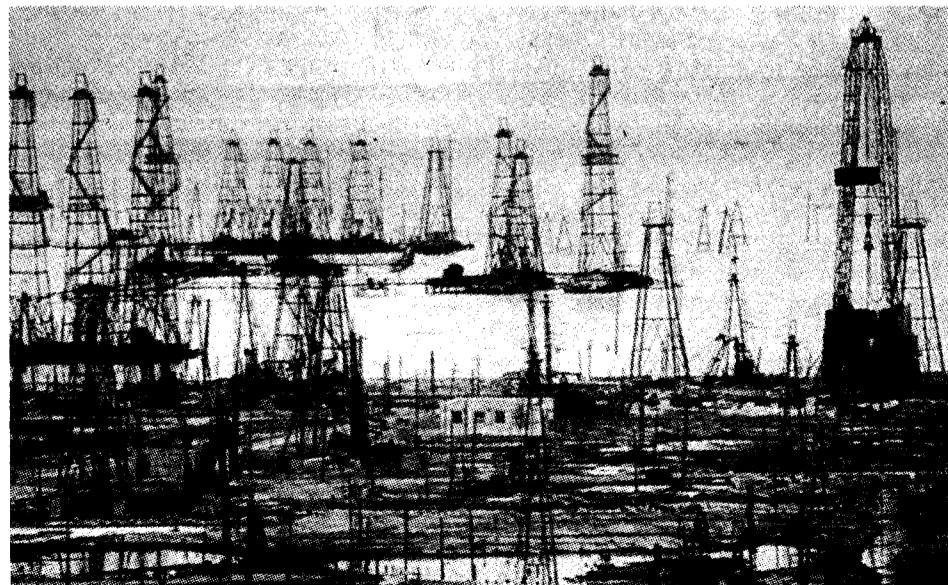
so fierce was the resistance of its indigenous peoples. In the course of this war the Russians massacred some 400,000 Chechens. But the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution destroyed what Lenin called the tsarist "prison house of peoples," and the Soviet Union established autonomous regions for formerly oppressed peoples such as the Chechens, Ossetians, Tatars and Bashkirs in the Urals. Even more honest bourgeois commentators, such as the Italian *La Repubblica* (12 December) note that the status of the Chechen people "was seemingly resolved by the October Revolution with the internationalist ideology of transcending the question of nationality." In fact, it was only on the basis of proletarian power and an internationalist program that an equal place could be found for the myriad nationalities and pre-national formations of tsarist Russia.

However, the Stalinist bureaucracy later trampled on the national rights of the non-Russian peoples, and nowhere more savagely than in the northern Caucasus. During World War II, Stalin dissolved the Chechen and neighboring Ingush autonomous regions, claiming they had supported the Nazi German invasion, and deported their entire populations to Central Asia. This was also done to the Crimean Tatars, the Volga Germans and several other small peoples. In the late 1950s, the

under the strongman leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, a former Soviet air force general, declared its independence. Dudayev brandishes Islamic symbols, and several hundred of his fighters were reportedly trained by the Afghan *mujahedin*. His move was bolstered economically by Chechnya's possession of substantial oil deposits and other natural resources. Additionally, a major oil pipeline between the Caspian and Black Seas runs through the region. Concern to keep the oil flowing no doubt influences the imperialists' support for Moscow's attempt to reimpose "order."

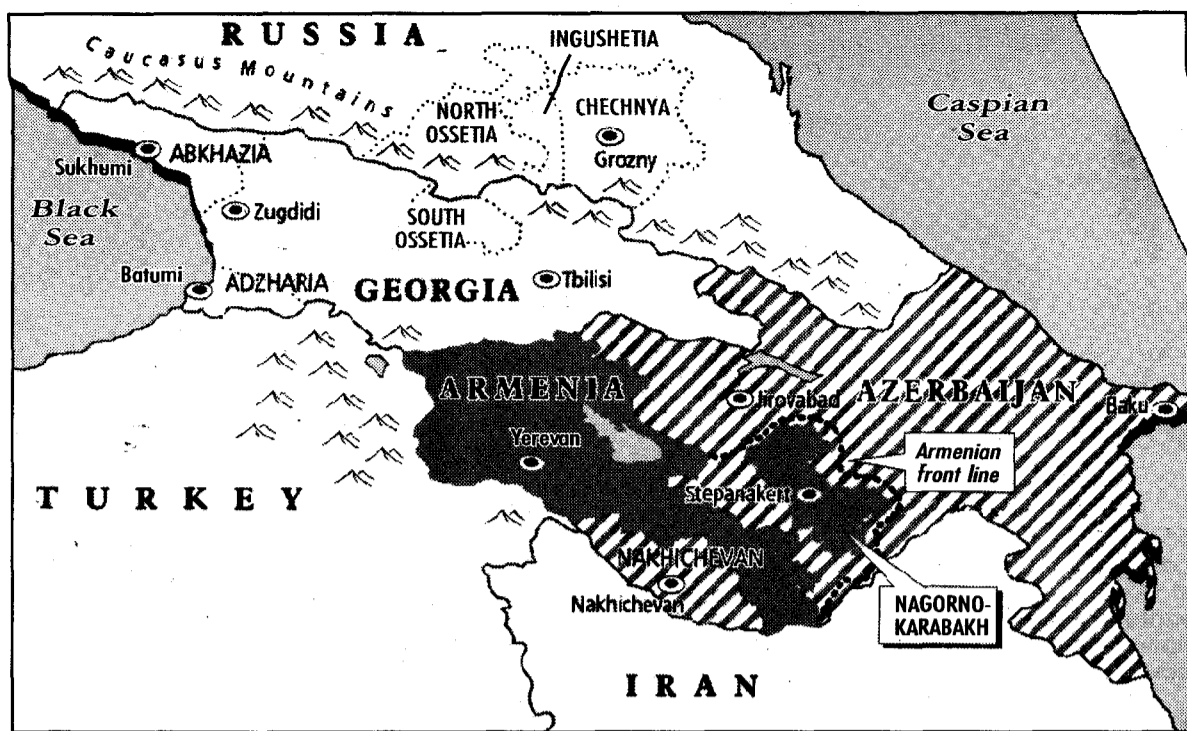
The Yeltsin regime has simultaneously acted as the agent of Wall Street and Frankfurt banks in immiserating the working people of Russia while moving to establish overlordship of the neighboring non-Russian peoples. Moscow responded to Chechnya's defiance by an economic blockade which succeeded in bringing the small Caucasian republic to ruin. But until recently Yeltsin stopped short of open military intervention, doubtless out of respect for the Chechens' well-deserved reputation for ferocity. A correspondent of the haughty London *Economist* (24 September) quipped, "you could be forgiven for thinking that Chechnya is not a country but a rather eccentric gun club."

Late last summer, the Yeltsin regime opted for military support to Chechen



Malanca/Sipa

Western imperialists and Russia maneuver in the Caucasus to gain control over rich Baku oil fields in Azerbaijan.



Adapted from Independent (London)

Caucasus is a patchwork of overlapping nationalities. September 1993 map shows Armenian expansion in war against Azerbaijan; since then, more Azerbaijani territory has been seized.

For both sides of this sordid war, the economic devastation has been horrific. The Armenian economy is being strangled by Azerbaijan's blockade of most transport routes into the country. Hot water is rare in Yerevan and electricity is only available a few hours a day. Armenia, once a research and technological center of the Soviet Union, has been turned into an agrarian society. Azerbaijan's economy is being drained by war expenditures, while the Baku government is prevented from cashing in on its vast oil reserves.

Despite its oil wealth and a population more than twice that of Armenia, Azerbaijan has lost on the battlefield—in no small part due to Russia's tilt toward the Armenians following Yeltsin's ascent to power. Moscow has aided the Yerevan regime with food and military matériel. An estimated 90 percent of Armenia's supplies come from Russia.

Unlike the Chechnya-Russia clash, however, the Armenia-Azerbaijan war is the one intra-Caucasus conflict that the West has not willingly ceded to Moscow's sphere of influence. U.S. and NATO plans for "peacekeeping troops" to settle the Armenia-Azerbaijan war and to draw new national boundaries are being rebuffed by Russia. The imperialists' prating about stopping "violence" is pure hypocrisy, aimed at covering their own designs. If Britain had created a United Nations to appeal to in the mid 19th century, you can be sure it would have called for blue helmets to intervene to stop the bloody Civil War in America, particularly when its allies in the Southern slavocracy were losing.

While the Yeltsin regime has now agreed to a Western plan to send a 3,000-man "peacekeeping" force into Nagorno-Karabakh, Moscow insisted on having the "leading role" in the multinational force. Besides its openly professed concerns to check regional rivals Turkey and Iran on its southern flank, Russia's interest in the Caucasus and around the Caspian Sea can be summed up by one word—OIL. As the *Moscow News* (21 October) bluntly asked, "Will Azerbaijan remain in the sphere of Russia's interests or will it withdraw to become Russia's rival on world oil markets?"

British and American oil companies' attempts to reach a deal with the Baku government for developing Azerbaijan's immense oil reserves has spurred the West's desire to see an end to the war. With more than four billion barrels of proven reserves, Azerbaijan could become the world's third-largest petroleum-producing region following the Persian Gulf and Siberia. But they need to build a pipeline to bring those billions of barrels out of the country. For that purpose they want stable relations in the region, while they sort out how to appease (or block) Russia's demands to control the pipeline route and get a larger share of anticipated huge profits. For its part, the Yeltsin government has used the Nagorno-

Karabakh war to apply tremendous leverage against the Azeris.

The Bolshevik Revolution and the Caucasus

As in the Balkans, bloody nationalist strife in the Caucasus is becoming increasingly enmeshed with growing *interimperialist* rivalry and Russia's great power ambitions. Eighty years ago, such imperialist rivalries exploded into the First World War, which destroyed the tsarist empire and gave birth to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917—the greatest victory in history for the world proletariat. It was proletarian state power embodied in the Soviet Union which brought national peace as well as economic and cultural development to the Caucasus.

Before 1917, the three major peoples of Transcaucasia—Armenians, Azeris and Georgians—developed unevenly as exploited subject peoples of the Russian tsar. With the discovery and development of oil fields in Baku and manganese mines in Georgia, a small multinational and militant working class began to cohere. By the turn of the century, the Russian revolutionary socialists were recruiting workers among this ethnically diverse proletariat. In Baku, a powerful labor movement challenged the hold of the oil industrialists over the population. "Led by Russians and working closely with Marxist intellectuals, the workers won significant concessions from the owners, including the first general labor contract in the Russian Empire" (Ronald Suny, "The Revenge of the Past: Socialism and Ethnic Conflict in Transcaucasia," *New Left Review*, November 1990).

Following the Bolshevik Revolution, the young workers state was invaded by 14 imperialist armies and plunged into a civil war which threatened its very existence. Amid the anarchic conditions of the Russian Civil War, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia had a short-lived independence. Armenia under the bourgeois-nationalist Dashnaks engaged in communalist fratricide with Azerbaijan, fought a border war with Menshevik Georgia and launched a suicidal drive against Turkey. When Atatürk's army began its march to Yerevan in late 1920, the Dashnaks negotiated an agreement to save their skins by incorporating Armenia into the Soviet state.

Georgia's Menshevik government allied itself with Germany and then Britain—and always against Bolshevism—while persecuting Armenians, Abkhazians, Ossetians and other national minorities. In February 1921, the local Bolsheviks rose up and with the assistance of the Red Army conquered Tbilisi in less than ten days. Trotsky answered the hue and cry for "democratic" Georgia in his pamphlet *Social Democracy and the Wars of Intervention in Russia, 1918-1921*:

"We do not only recognise, but we also give full support to the principle of self-determination, wherever it is directed against feudal, capitalist and imperialist

states. But wherever the fiction of self-determination, in the hands of the bourgeoisie, becomes a weapon directed against the proletarian revolution, we have no occasion to treat this fiction differently from the other 'principles' of democracy perverted by capitalism."

At the same time, Lenin and Trotsky were insistent on safeguarding the national rights of the peoples of the Caucasus within the framework of a federated Soviet state. Indeed, it was over the national question in the Caucasus that Lenin broke with Stalin in late 1922, over his arrogant and chauvinist attitude in the "Georgian affair." The Russified Georgian Stalin had tried to impose a Transcaucasian Republic against the will of the local Communists, whom he accused of nationalist deviations. Lenin responded:

"The Georgian who...carelessly flings about accusations of 'nationalist-socialism' (whereas he himself is a real and true 'nationalist-socialist,' and even a Great-Russian bully), violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity."

—V.I. Lenin, "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'" (December 1922)

Stalin's campaign for a single, Moscow-dominated apparatus foreshadowed the dogma of "socialism in one country" which Stalin proclaimed after Lenin's death in 1924.

Initially, the fight with Stalin over the national question was precipitated by the

drafting of the constitution for a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. At Lenin's insistence the constitution, which was adopted in 1924, granted the constituent republics equal standing in the higher bodies of the Soviet state and declared that "each one of the member Republics retains the right to freely withdraw from the union." But these constitutional guarantees did not stop Stalin from later trampling over the rights of all Soviet nationalities just as he bureaucratically suppressed the proletariat.

Nonetheless, the six and a half decades of Soviet centralized economic planning brought about industrialization and urbanization in the Caucasus resulting in near-universal literacy and a higher standard of living. In the post-Stalin era, the disappearance of mass terror and the restoration of a degree of national autonomy for the republics held down historic nationalist enmities. But there was no democratic means for resolving national disputes and claims.

For example, already in 1923 Stalin, as commissar of nationalities, arbitrarily separated Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia, attaching it to Azerbaijan. The Kremlin bureaucracy's repeated refusals to consider changing the region's status according to the democratic will of its inhabitants inflamed Armenian nationalism and bears no small responsibility for the present communalist slaughter. In 1929, Stalin abolished the Kurdish autonomous region in Azerbaijan, the only effective exercise of self-determination anywhere by this people oppressed by four capitalist regimes in the Near East.

The program and the cadres of the Bolshevik Party were internationalist to their core. Bolshevik leaders included the Russians Lenin and Bukharin, the Pole Dzerzhinsky, the Romanian Rakovsky, the Jews Sverdlov and Trotsky, and others. In the early days of the Russian workers state, it was the Baku Soviet of 1918—based on Azeri, Armenian, Georgian and Russian oil workers—which was the center of Bolshevik power in the Caucasus. The Baku Soviet was overthrown by British expeditionary forces in league with local Armenian and Georgian nationalists, while the Azeri nationalists were supporting a Turkish assault on the city.

Throughout the Caucasus there are towns named Shaumyan. Like the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, Stepanakert,

continued on page 10

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

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- | | |
|--|--|
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Caucasus...

(continued from page 9)

these towns are named in honor of Stepan Shaumyan, an Armenian Bolshevik who led the 1918 Baku Soviet and was one of Lenin's close comrades-in-arms. Shaumyan and the other Bolshevik leaders of the Baku Soviet were captured and executed by White counterrevolutionaries acting in connivance with the British imperialists. The proletarian internationalist traditions represented by Lenin, Trotsky and Shaumyan must again take hold in the Caucasus to put an end to the fratricidal slaughter.

Western bourgeois commentators often try to blame the explosion of nationalist hatreds on the legacy of "Communism." While the Stalinists tried mainly to bureaucratically suppress non-Russian national aspirations, the internationalist foundations of the Soviet workers state and its collectivized economy laid the basis for the equitable resolution of national conflicts. This was reflected in the high levels of education and cultural development, the advancement of women and widespread ethnic intermarriage. All this social progress is now being destroyed, often deliberately, as a direct consequence of counterrevolution.



Novosti
Armenian Bolshevik Stepan Shaumyan and 25 other leaders of the Baku Soviet were executed by White counter-revolutionaries in connivance with British imperialism.

And the tearing apart of the interdependent Soviet economy—which contrary to accusations of Soviet "colonialism" gave the non-Russian republics a *higher* standard of living—has produced mass impoverishment everywhere.

Today the peoples of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia again face a Russia pursuing imperialist aspirations to control the region's wealth and bor-



Painting by I.I. Brodsky

ders, while the local national bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces attempt to get rich through deals with competing imperialist backers. An internationalist, revolutionary workers movement fighting for a democratically planned, egalitarian economy and true equality among the peoples of the Caucasus could once again liberate the creative energies of all the Caucasian peo-

ples to overcome the raging fratricidal national conflicts. A genuinely communist, Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party must be forged in sharp struggle against all variants of nationalism, and in particular against the chauvinism of the Great Russian oppressor. Russian troops out of Chechnya! For an authentically voluntary federation of socialist republics! ■

Letter...

(continued from page 2)

I was sent to a maximum security prison in Lewisburg, Penn.

At this prison there were many others sitting because of their activities against the United States government. There were black nationalists, Black Panthers, antiwar activists and even some Russian spies! Jimmy Hoffa, leader of the powerful Teamsters union, was there and not in the least Catholic priests like Phil Berrigan.

I sat in this prison 27 months. However my activities against the war in Vietnam did not stop there. One of the more spectacular actions was the time a Russian spy, who claimed that his parents had been killed in Dresden during the Second World War, and I proposed publically to be exchanged for two B-52 pilots, alive or dead, because we believed that the Vietnamese struggle for independence was correct.

The United States government had not succeeded in silencing the opposition to its criminal war policy and therefore found new ways to try and keep people in prison. Conspiracy trials—that is, you did not have to do anything against the government to be put on trial, merely talking about it was enough. One of the big conspiracy trials of the time was the case against Phil Berrigan and other Catholic priests and nuns who, according to the government, were planning to bomb the White House and attack the B-52 bomber planes stationed in Guam in the Pacific Ocean. The key person on this frame-up was an agent sent in by

the government to the prison we were in to get the goods on people. I could have been a defense witness in this case.

However, at the same time as the above was going on, I was charged by a "secret grand jury" for conspiracy to bomb public buildings and electric power plants, among other crimes. The funny thing about this is that it never happened! Nothing was ever bombed. The White House, planes on Guam, electric power plants, public buildings, was a CONSPIRACY according to the government. In reality, we were people who had always taken public responsibility for our actions.

At the same time this was going on, Jimmy Hoffa, leader of the powerful transport union, received a pardon from Richard Nixon, the president. Was Nixon afraid that Hoffa would join an antiwar coalition and bring the working class out against the war? Serious discussions were going on and the possibility was a real threat. I watched Jimmy Hoffa walk out of prison and I believe that his deal with Nixon was a betrayal of poor and working class people. Soon after, Jimmy Hoffa disappeared. I wonder who killed him? The government? The Mafia? Hmmm!

After 27 months in prison, I was released on bail pending trial for the above. \$25,000 dollars raised by the antiwar movement gave me the chance to go underground and come to Sweden. I applied for political asylum and received a humanitarian asylum mainly because the Social Democratic Party under the leadership of Olaf Palme had gone over to the Vietnamese side after Nixon's massive bombings of Vietnam.

When Bill Clinton became president,

I wrote him a letter demanding amnesty. I thought that Clinton, who had gone to England and demonstrated against the war, would understand my situation. Well, I have waited nearly two years and not received an answer from Bill Clinton. Now I do not intend to wait any longer.

I will never say I am sorry for my actions against the war in Vietnam. Millions of people suffered and are still suffering because of the bombings. Tens of thousands have cancer and children are still being born deformed because of chemicals like Agent Orange! Besides that, it was not I who was the criminal, it was people like Richard Nixon who were responsible for the war.

I have children and grandchildren in the United States who I would like to visit. I want the right to return to the U.S., the country of my birth, walk the streets as a free man. I mean, people like Bill Calley, leader of the My Lai massacre, are walking free today in the U.S. at the same time people like me cannot return home.

I have always taken responsibility for my actions publically in newspapers, TV and radio. I do not intend to crawl back to the U.S. begging for forgiveness. However, I would accept an amnesty or pardon. The United States government can call it anything they want as long as

all the charges against me between the years 1968 to 1973 are dropped.

In closing, I would like to say that I need your help just as I need the help of all organisations claiming to stand on the side of poor and working-class people. Unlike Bill Clinton, I could not run off to England during the war in Vietnam. But I still remember the faces of the Vietnamese children running down a highway in Vietnam while napalm was burning holes in their little bodies and I did fight the best way I knew how!

Please publish this letter. Send this letter to other people, other organisations, other countries. Send a letter to Bill Clinton. Send a letter to me. Use your imagination. But please help!

Demand that the U.S. government take up this matter.

Demand that all charges against me be dropped.

Demand the right for me to visit the U.S.

Ask Bill Clinton if he enjoyed Nixon's funeral?

I am feeling like the Japanese soldier who was found on a deserted island in the Pacific Ocean 25 years after the Second World War. His first question being, "Is the war over?"

Sincerely yours,
Robert Malecki

Scientology...

(continued from page 5)

the Spartacist Workers Party (SpAD) opposes the persecution of Scientology. For our class and ourselves and for all those to whom democratic rights matter, this is an elementary question of self-defense. But, as with many such questions today, we Marxists remain the sole defenders of the libertarian values associated with the great French Revolution.

Our attitude to Bonn's crusade against Scientology is analogous to our stand in regard to the sect of Sun Myung Moon and his "Unification Church." Moon is an ultraright reactionary who finances contra terror internationally. In the '80s we were confronted with physical provocations by the Moon sect in Germany, while our comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S. fought against a lethal libel campaign by the "Moonies."

In November 1982, the SL mounted an important mobilization that stopped a march by the fascist Ku Klux Klan.

The Moonies slandered the SL and the demonstration participants as would-be cop-murderers and criminals who "provoke violence" against the police. In response, we sued the Moonies and forced them to retract their libels.

But, at the same time, the Spartacist League came out against the Reagan government's attempt to have the IRS gain access to Moon's membership lists and financial records by going after the Unification Church's tax-exempt status. This was a club to be used against any unpopular organization that the state wanted to suppress and smash. The SL, along with a number of democratic and religious organizations as well as several state governments, opposed this encroachment by the federal government.

Our denunciation of the German state's current attack on Scientology is an integral part of our all-sided defense of democratic rights. This is our duty as Marxists who fight for a communist society in which people will be liberated from all forms of social oppression. ■

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(continued from page 4)

In the first place, the ISO's predecessor, the Shachtmanite International Socialists, had to go through considerable contortions to belatedly and minimally defend the Vietnamese against the U.S., using the "democratic" argument of "self-determination" in order to evade the fundamental issue of a Stalinist-led social revolution, however bureaucratically deformed. And what the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan "gave heart to" was the forces of bloody counterrevolution. From East Berlin to Moscow, the ISO cheered the restoration of capitalism, which meant mass unemployment, racist terror and rampant attacks on women's rights.

...to "Holy War" in Algeria

The question of Islamic fundamentalism is by no means limited to a historical examination of the lessons of Iran and Afghanistan. The issue is posed again sharply in Algeria, where the bloody military regime and reactionary Islamic fundamentalists are locked in a gruesome civil war. And it is centrally to Algeria that the Cliffites address themselves. Harman writes of the "contradictions" of the FIS, the Islamic Salvation Front, which he claims is "caught between respectability and insurrectionism." He does not even hint at the fact that the "insurrectionism" of the FIS aims to set up a reactionary theocratic dictatorship.

The SWP says: "We are on the side of the Islamists when they confront the state—but only then" (*Socialist Worker*, 20 August)! The Cliffites get a little queasy when the Algerian fundamentalists assassinate teachers, journalists, leftists. But what about when they "confront the state" by blowing up nationalized factories, derailing government-owned passenger trains and burning down public schools? Presumably Cliff et al. would be applauding. Yet the Cliffites' "Islamist" line is not going down very well with some of their own supporters, notably women.

When the sinister Islamic fundamentalists swept the first round of parliamentary elections in Algeria three years ago, the SWP gushed that "the breakthrough of the FIS reflects the rise of revolutionary feeling." They felt compelled to add a rider about FIS strikebreaking and how they "argue that women should remain at home", concluding:

"All this offers opportunities for socialists, as long as they are clear about the FIS. They have to support them against attacks from the regime in so far as they represent, in however confused a way, an opposition in which large numbers of the dispossessed and sections of the working class put their trust. At the same time socialists have to be implacably hostile to their politics. They must defend women's rights and democratic rights."

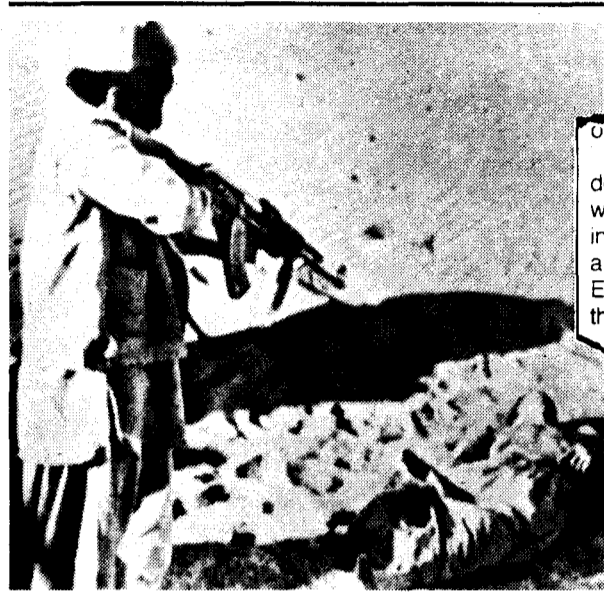
—*Socialist Review*, February 1992

This talk of defending democratic rights is so much eyewash, to hide the fact that a fundamentalist victory in Algeria—which the Cliffites support—would impose an Islamic dictatorship that would wipe out any semblance of democracy and spell death—literally—for unveiled women. And there is strong evidence that the Cliffites actually hammered their pro-FIS line down the throats of their comrades in Algeria, where such illusions are truly suicidal.

On the eve of the first electoral victory of the FIS in the June 1990 municipal

"opposition" which published a document, "Balance Sheet and Perspectives of the PST" (23 October 1992), which managed the singular feat of never once mentioning the FIS and the need to fight it. Nowhere in this document, or Harman's article, or any of the Cliffites' documents, is there the slightest understanding that the role of Marxists is to lead the working class in a fight for power against both the bloody military regime and the reactionary fundamentalists. In contrast, the Trotskyist Platform Tendency of the PST, which cohered on

DPA



Socialist Worker

Paper of the International Socialist Organization 75c

May 1988

Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs.

But this does not mean giving

ISO supported CIA-aided mujahedin cutthroats in Afghanistan, cheered Soviet withdrawal which meant death for women, leftists.

elections, a spokesman of the Communist Movement of Algeria (MCA), interviewed in the journal of the French Cliffites, characterized the FIS as "ultra-reactionary" and even "a fascist current" with principles, ideology and political action "similar to the National Front in France." At the same time, the MCA representative limited his program to the "struggle for democracy" through elections and the formation of a "democratic and revolutionary opposition" (*Socialisme International*, May 1990). But when the FIS swept the parliamentary elections of December 1991, *Socialisme International* (February 1992) declared: "Revolutionaries in Algeria must fight side by side with these people, even in actions called by the FIS." They even presented the FIS as a force which could be pressured into opposing imperialism! As they explained it, "in order to come to power, the FIS needs the masses' support and such a regime would be opposed to the policy imposed on Algeria by the IMF." However, the precondition for breaking the stranglehold of the international bankers cartel of the IMF and the domination of the world market is a proletarian revolution overthrowing capitalism and extending to the imperialist centers.

The MCA, which a footnote in Harman's article coyly says "no longer exists," joined the Cliffites and entered the PST (Socialist Workers Party), the Algerian section of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat. There they formed an

internationalist program around the Russian question (including defense of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and opposition to Polish Solidarność) and the fight for workers revolution in Algeria, declared:

"The FIS is the sworn enemy of the proletariat, minorities and women.... At present the regime imprisons FIS militants, tomorrow, like yesterday, the ruling class will promote the development of the FIS against the workers or against a popular uprising....

"The real progress which the Bolsheviks made on the road to the emancipation of women contrasts strongly with the oppression which women still suffer today under the bonapartist 'socialist' regimes, like in Algeria, which haven't broken with capitalism. This is a striking confirmation of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution according to which elementary bourgeois democratic rights cannot be won completely except through a socialist revolution led by the proletariat."

In Defense of Progress

Today, the Cliffites' fascination with the Islamic fundamentalists is hardly limited to Algeria. In France, the Mitterrand-Balladur government, as part of its campaign of whipping up anti-immigrant hysteria, has waged a racist campaign of expelling from high school girls who wear the Islamic headscarf. In opposing these attacks, our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France have

also sharply warned against the fundamentalist danger. In contrast, the Cliffites politically tail after the fundamentalists. The French Cliffites write, in justification of the Islamic headscarf, that "exposing women's bodies in modern society is one of the forms expressing the oppression of women in presenting them as a sexual object" (*Socialisme International*, December 1994)! And SWP honcho Alex Callinicos went so far as to declare that "the headscarf is not a sign of the 'imprisonment of women' but of modesty"!!! In Algiers, women and even high school girls have been beaten and in several instances shot and killed by Islamic fundamentalists for failing to obey this reactionary code of "modesty."

For generations, Stalinists and social democrats reshaped the classic Menshevik schema of the "two-stage revolution," counseling the working class to support supposed bourgeois "progressives" as an illusory "first step" toward socialist revolution. This suicidal policy of class collaboration has inevitably led to bloody defeats, from China in 1927 to Allende's Chile in the early 1970s. But at least the so-called "progressive" nationalists like Chiang Kai-shek vaguely aspired to modernize their countries (such as opposing the binding of women's feet), even as they violently repressed the working class. The Islamic fundamentalists, whom the Cliffites see as allies in "anti-imperialist" struggle, dream of turning the clock back to the age of the prophet!

The Cliffites' grotesque genuflection before Islamic fundamentalism is not simply a bizarre aberration. In the Soviet Union, which they called "state capitalist," they sided with any and all "anti-Stalinist" forces, no matter how reactionary. In Algeria, which actually is a capitalist country with a heavily statified economy, they likewise bloc politically with the most retrograde opponents of the military regime. It is interesting that as the imperialists proclaim the "death of communism," both ex-Stalinists and social democrats have gravitated into unsavory alliances with far right-wing nationalist forces, from the "red-brown" coalition in Russia to the Cliffites' yearned-for "red-green" coalition in Algeria.

The only thing is, comrades, it takes two to tango, even in a *chador*. And to the Islamic fundamentalists, all socialists are infidels, to be punished accordingly. The Cliffites' policy is suicidal for themselves and any workers, youth or women unfortunate enough to be influenced by them. The proletariat must be galvanized politically around a program not to replace the uniformed dictators with robed theocrats but to achieve their own class rule, not to be thrown back into benighted medievalism but to take society forward to socialist emancipation and enlightenment. ■

Afghanistan and Centrist Double-Talk

Some apologists for the tendency led by Jorge Altamira have contested our statement in the "Declaration of Fraternal Relations Between Luta Metalúrgica (Brazil) and the International Communist League" (WV No. 608, 14 October) that the Altamirites "opposed Soviet intervention in Afghanistan." They point to a resolution from early 1980 ("The Trotskyists in the Face of the Invasion of Afghanistan"), published by the short-lived "Fourth Internationalist Tendency" of Altamira and Guillermo Lora. But this resolution is filled with centrist double-talk, saying, "we do not condemn the invasion, although it attacks the principle of self-determination." Bowing repeatedly to the right, the resolution for example screams that the USSR used "the most

brutal military methods, which de facto lead to an occupation of the country by the Red Army."

Moreover, the "Leading Cell in Europe" of Lora's Bolivian POR went even further in echoing the Reaganite anti-Soviet hysteria and condemned "The Kremlin bureaucrats' policy of expansionism and domination," hailing the "resistance" of the CIA-backed "guerrillas" supposedly fighting for "national sovereignty" (*Boletín Informativo* No. 5, February 1982). At the time of Gorbachev's ignominious pullout, Altamira's own paper declared that "The international scope of the Soviet withdrawal is, therefore, just as counterrevolutionary as was, at the time, the occupation of Afghanistan" (*Prensa Obrera*, 23 February 1989).

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