

Soviet Workers: Fight "Free Market" Misery!

**USSR Lurching
Toward Catastrophe**



AP
Outrage over drastic price rises (left). Pro-Western "democrats" stage rally in Moscow.

Sherbell/SABA

APRIL 8—"I am very worried now simply how I am going to feed my children," exclaimed a Moscow mother of two. On April 2, the price of bread, meat, flour and rice was tripled. The cost of milk, eggs and tea doubled. A child's school uniform which had been 12 rubles now costs 62. The long-expected and long-feared shock of "price reform"—the cutting edge of Gorbachev's declared "transition to a market economy"—hit Soviet working people with a vengeance.

Two days later the expected mass strikes and protests had begun. In Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia, tens of thousands of workers streamed out of automobile, tractor, engine and other factories and marched on the central square. Standing atop the pedestal of a statue of Lenin, speakers demanded wage increases to fully offset the price rises and called for the resignation of Gorbachev.

A month ago the Soviet president personally assured angry workers at the huge Minsk tractor factory that they would not suffer as a result of the "price reform." Now Minsk workers are defending their living standards by turning their power against the decomposing Kremlin oligarchy. An elected strike committee declares it will call a citywide general strike if its demands are not met by April 10.

A commonly voiced sentiment among Soviet working people is that they're willing to pay higher prices if only there was something to buy in the state stores. But the shops are empty. "I don't have a family to feed, so I've just said to hell with meat," said a schoolteacher in the capital. A coal miner's wife in the Donbass of the eastern Ukraine described a scene at the Children's World department store: "People were literally fighting over some two-ruble tights that came in."

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Bread Price Triples



Zhigailov/TASS
In February Gorbachev promised Minsk tractor factory workers they wouldn't suffer from price increases. They have now held strikes against slashing of their living standards.

The Gorbachev regime has promised compensatory increases in wages, pensions, student grants and child benefits such that there will be no overall fall in living standards. But with the Soviet economy visibly collapsing, such promises are unbelievable and unbelieved. The state planning agency, Gosplan, predicts a 12 percent fall in national output this year coming after a 3 percent drop in 1990. A Gosplan forecaster, Yakov Urinson, prophesies darkly: "I see an abyss ahead—economic, political and social—a return to the horrible times that we lived through in our country in the past" (*Independent* [London], 11 March).

Soviet working people can avoid falling into this abyss only by sweeping away

all wings of the disintegrating Stalinist bureaucracy—the hardline apparatchiks and military men, the Gorbachevite "centrists" and the openly pro-capitalist "democrats" around Boris Yeltsin—and taking political power into their own hands. The price increases reveal more sharply than anything else that all of these contending forces are enemies of the working class.

The "patriotic" apparatchiks and colonels, who denounce the "democrats" as agents of Western imperialism (which they are), will support Gorbachev against the workers in the name of "law and order" and of preserving a strong Russian-centered state. While condemning Gorbachev for ruining the economy, the "free marketeers" criticize

the price hikes only for not going far enough. They want an end to all government price controls without any compensation. Yeltsin is now reintroducing into the Russian republic's parliament the "500 days" to capitalism plan, which calls for the privatization of housing, agricultural land and 70 percent of industrial enterprises.

As we wrote in Part One of our three-part article "Where Is the Soviet Union Going?" (*Australasian Spartacist* No. 140, February/March 1991):

"Working-class struggles in defense of social equality and the emergence of an authentic Leninist pole of attraction would shatter the present alignments within the bureaucracy and intelligentsia.... The Soviet working people must cut through the false polarization between the 'democrats' and the 'patriots,' each in their own way heirs of the parasitic and reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy."

Now this possibility is posed directly. The organization of workers resistance to the price increases can become the basis for *soviets* uniting the workers with collective farmers, Red Army soldiers and officers, old-age pensioners, oppressed minorities and others who embrace the cause of the working class. The fight for genuine soviet power requires the forging of a new Bolshevik party which can lead the working class against the forces of capitalist counter-revolution and bloody nationalist strife.

**Gorbachev and Yeltsin:
End Products of
Stalinist Degeneration**

The descent of the USSR into economic chaos parallels the disintegration of the Stalinist bureaucratic elite. The Soviet Union is today politically paralyzed at the top as the two main factions arising out of the decomposing Kremlin

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Stop the Racist Frame-Up of Brewarrina 17!

During April at Bathurst District Court, 17 Aborigines faced frame-up charges laid after a police attack on the funeral wake of Lloyd Boney, a young black man who died in police custody in Brewarrina in August 1987. On 16 April an all-white jury found Arthur Murray and Albert "Sonny" Bates guilty of riotous assembly and assaulting police officers. They are now being held on remand pending sentencing. George Orcher was acquitted of similar charges. Fourteen others, including Arthur Murray's daughter Anna, are now on trial on similar charges. The working class movement and all anti-racists must demand: Free Arthur Murray and Albert Bates! Drop the charges against all the Brewarrina Aboriginal protesters!

The opening of the trial coincided with the tabling in parliament of the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody report on Lloyd Boney. Boney was found hanged in the Brewarrina police cell one and a half hours after he was arrested for breach of bail conditions. His family and other Aborigines in the township of Brewarrina reacted with outrage and disbelief when informed of Boney's "suicide." He was the sixteenth

young Aboriginal man to die in police custody in 1987. The widespread anger at Boney's death and the large protest gatherings in Brewarrina, including after his funeral, led to the immediate announcement by the Hawke government of the royal commission. But it didn't stop the police vendetta against Brewarrina blacks. Five months later, with the opening of the chauvinist Bicentennial celebrations, Tactical Response Group officers again invaded the town, on pretexts such as the suspicion that four Aboriginal men who were trying to restart two broken-down cars on a bush track were conspiring to riot!

While various liberals and leftists pushed for a royal commission as the road to justice for the families of 99 Aborigines who died in state custody in the 1980s, the Spartacist League warned that the state would only use such a measure to protect its police forces and deflect criticism. Three and a half years and \$30 million later, the whitewash commissions have endorsed police and coroners' verdicts of suicide or death by natural causes in every single case from John Pat to Eddie Murray to Lloyd Boney. Confirming the verdict of suicide

in the Boney case, Royal Commissioner Hal Wootten QC recommended police consider disciplinary action against the officers involved for breach of duty, and criticised their "extraordinarily small-minded and inhumane treatment of prisoners" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 April 1991). The occasional rap over the knuckles for cop negligence has given no satisfaction to the families who have fought for justice.

Another royal commission report on the death of 28-year-old David Gundy, an innocent man who was shot dead in his bed by SWOS cops nearly two years ago, reveals that the police raid on his home was unlawful. The report suggests internal disciplinary action against the SWOS officer concerned. This minimal recommendation adds insult to injury. The killer cops may get a reprimand, but as his widow, Dolly Eatts, bitterly commented, "I still believe that Gundy died because he was an Aboriginal person" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 April 1991). The racist cops attack blacks with impunity and the courts let them walk!

An *Australasian Spartacist* reporting team went to Brewarrina after Lloyd Boney's funeral to tell the truth about the so-called riot for which the Brewarrina 17 are now facing trial. An article titled "Brewarrina Under Apartheid Martial Law" (*ASp* No. 122, September/October, 1987) described how the Tactical Response Group were terrorising the town and the local court was acting

like it was in South Africa, handing down curfews and banning blacks from town. Aborigines suffer institutionalised state violence, Third World mortality rates and health conditions, and systematic exclusion from social life, eg, 90 percent unemployment in many areas.

Following the death of David Gundy, Sydney building workers stopped work and marched in protest with Aborigines demanding "Jail the Killer Cops!" This shows the way forward. The working class has the social power to put an end to racist cop violence. The PDC sent the following message of solidarity to the Brewarrina protesters on 17 April:

"The Partisan Defence Committee in Australia stands in solidarity with Brewarrina Aboriginal protesters now facing trial in Bathurst. Those who protested the death of Lloyd Boney and stood firm against police terror are now being pilloried by the state. The conviction of Arthur Murray and Albert Bates on frame-up charges is an outrage! We demand that they be unconditionally freed now and that the charges against all Brewarrina 17 be dropped immediately. "Australian apartheid deprives Aborigines of basic human rights and frames up victims of racist terror for exercising basic right of self-defence. The vicious Hawke and Greiner governments are attacking workers rights while presiding over the slashing of jobs, education and all social services. By convicting Murray and Bates, the state is sending a message to all those who would stand up for their rights. Workers must lead the fight against racist and cop terror, and as building workers did in protest over the killing of David Gundy in 1989, march hand in hand with the Aboriginal people." ■

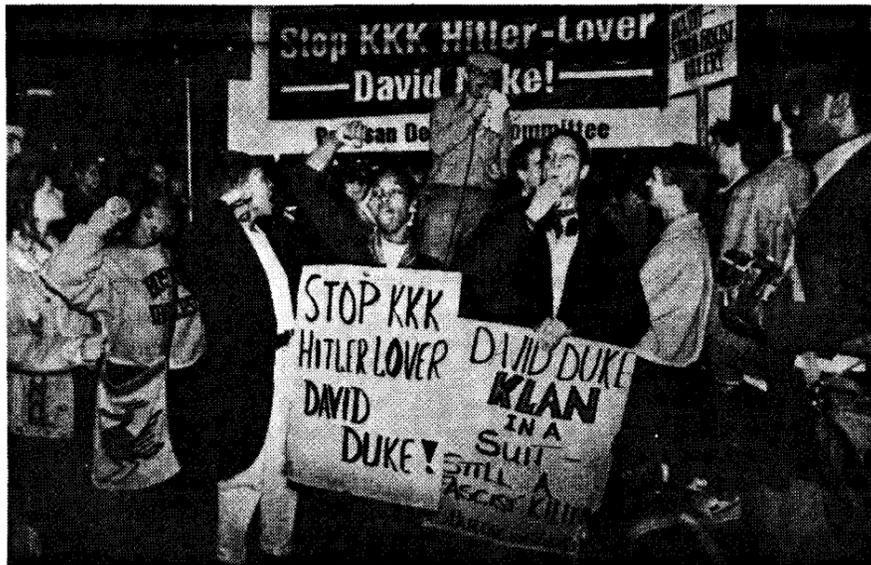
Send protest letters to the Attorney-General, NSW, copies and donations earmarked for Brewarrina 17 to Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Watch Committee, P.O. Box 65, Broadway NSW 2007.

On March 28, chants of "Duke stands for genocide—Klan terror will not ride!" and "David Duke, Klan in a suit, still a fascist killer!" echoed in Boston. Over 1500 people packed the street in front of the Old South Meeting House in determined opposition to Klan terrorist and Nazi-lover David Duke, who was to speak there in an appearance sponsored by the liberal Ford Hall Forum.

Under the Partisan Defence Committee banner "Stop KKK Hitler-Lover David Duke!" there was a broad united front of those who wanted to do just that. It was built in face of a quiet but persistent campaign of violence-baiting and sabotage by liberals and reformists who would give the streets over to Duke rather than support real united-front protest. But the PDC-initiated effort ensured there was an outpouring of trade unionists, defenders of women's rights, Catholics, Jews, gays and students—black, white, Hispanic and Asian—from across the city. A massive cop presence was deployed to spirit Duke into the hall, but he didn't have an easy time of it. The chants from the crowd outside were clearly audible, and various groups inside chanted and jeered. A supporter of Progressive Labor was arrested on phoney charges of assaulting a cop. Drop the charges now!

In Boston, where 15 years ago racist mobs attacked black schoolchildren being bused to rigidly segregated schools, the rally was striking for its integrated character and the felt need for a common defence against racist terror and all forms of oppression. As PDC labor coordinator

Boston USA: 1500 Protest KKKer David Duke



and rally co-chair Gene Herson introduced the speakers, he stressed the centrality of mobilising the social power of the working class to crush the fascist threat. And in building the united-front protest against David Duke, trade-union leaders who had participated in previous PDC-initiated anti-fascist mobilisations gave important support. Participating as marshals were members of the Vulcans Society (black firefighters).

Tens of thousands of leaflets mo-

tivating the call to "Stop KKK Hitler-Lover David Duke!" were distributed to build the demonstration. Leaflets were posted by storeowners and black transit workers took stacks to circulate among drivers and at the bus barns. PDC representatives spoke on radio stations. A powerful response came from college and high-school youth.

Spartacist League supporters carried many signs and banners on a range of issues from defence of the Soviet Union, to the need to forge a workers party, to opposition to David Duke. They joined with protesters who brought their own signs or made them on the spot. As with every other successful mobilisation against the fascists built by the PDC, this was a genuine *united front*, based on unity in action and freedom of criticism. With the exception of the International Socialist Organisation (which endorsed and spoke at the demonstration) other "socialists" present were dumbstruck by our offers to address the rally. Members of Socialist Action sneered, "You call this a united front? You've got your full program up there!" To reformists schooled in tailing liberal Democrats and

building popular-front coalitions that suppress all but the lowest-common-denominator liberal demands, open political debate is unthinkable!

Few demonstrators saw Duke and the Klan as an isolated problem but as part of a whole system of oppression. The notorious television clip of the Klan in blue uniforms—gun-toting Los Angeles police officers clubbing the living daylight out of a defenceless black man—was never far from people's minds. Many spoke of police rampages against oppressed minorities in Boston. That image of unbridled racist terror meted out by the supposed guardians of "democracy," has been seared into people's consciousness and goes a long way toward conveying the fundamental truth that the government is *not neutral*.

In the U.S. today, the KKK and Nazi fascists are emboldened by the *bipartisan* policies of the Democratic and Republican parties. Boston's Democratic mayor Flynn was part of the fevered racist mobs in the streets against busing for school integration that enticed KKKer Duke to come to Boston for the first time in 1974. Democrats and Republicans were united in the campaign of racist murder against the Iraqi people, and skinhead fascists stepped up their attacks on Arab Americans and other dark-skinned peoples at home.

Spartacist League speaker Alison Spencer electrified the crowd when she blasted the middle-headed liberals who prattle about free speech for fascists: "David Duke is not about words, he's about corpses! The Holocaust was not a viewpoint, the Holocaust was genocide! The lynching of blacks in the South was not an idea, it's racist murder—and we will not let it ride in this city!" Spencer pointed out:

"The fascists are emboldened by the official racism of the Democratic and Republican parties It's time for the working class to organise its own class-struggle workers party committed to the fight for black freedom, to lead the integrated labor movement to sweep fascists like David Duke back into their sewers."

As she told the rally: "Only when working people rule this land will we be rid of the white hood, the swastika, and all forms of racist oppression once and for all!" ■

Australasian SPARTACIST

For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

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Fighting Against Imperialist "New World Order" of Barbarism and Immiseration

Winning New Readers

The Spartacist League/Australia recently concluded our annual subscription drive for *Australasian Spartacist* and the press of our international tendency. Our goal was to reach new people, especially youth, who are open to our revolutionary ideas. Measured by this yardstick, this was our most successful sub drive for some time, and we went way over our quotas (see results below). Congratulations to all comrades and supporters who contributed to this success, and in particular to comrade Toni S. of Melbourne who, with 114 points, is our sub drive winner.

Final Totals			
Local	Quota (in Points)	Total Sold	%
Sydney	450	580	129
Melbourne	300	406	135
At Large	-	12	-
National Total	750	998	133

With the government and the media beating the war drums non-stop during the imperialist onslaught in the Persian Gulf, we intervened into protest marches and meetings, proclaiming that the defeat of U.S., Australian and all imperialism in the Gulf War would be unequivocally a good thing, and that it was necessary to take a stand in defence of Iraq. We argued that "It is the massive social power of the working class which can transform anti-war sentiment into a nation-wide class struggle against the imperialist war effort, and in the process turn the tide on the years of union busting and capitalist austerity" (*ASp* No. 140, February/March 1991). Our intervention was aimed at intersecting those layers of workers, youth, women and migrants who understood at some level that this war was the continuation of home policy on an international scale.

Through February and March we ran well-attended weekly public classes. Many of those attending had come into contact with reformist organisations who fell in line as the "best builders" of the popular front "anti-war" protests, like the International Socialist Organisation and the Militant group. Looking for a revolutionary alternative, they sought us out to learn more about our unique analysis of the Gulf War, the Hawke government and the tumultuous changes in the USSR and Eastern Europe. Forums in Sydney and Melbourne and on campuses on the topic "New World Order Means Imperialist Slaughter!" were also well attended. We were able to sell subscriptions by pointing to the record of the pro-imperialist "pacifists" like Tom Uren, who argued throughout the war for sanctions to starve the people of Iraq into submission. The pro-imperialist



Spartacist contingent in Sydney anti-war march. Fighting for an anti-imperialist program based on the massive social power of the working class.

"peace" movement leaders and their loyal reformist "left" tails demanded simply "Stop the War" or "Bring the Frigates Home," and they got what they called for—the war was "stopped," by a vicious and vindictive blitzkrieg. The result is a "New World Order" of more wars and misery for the oppressed, as events in Kurdistan have graphically shown.

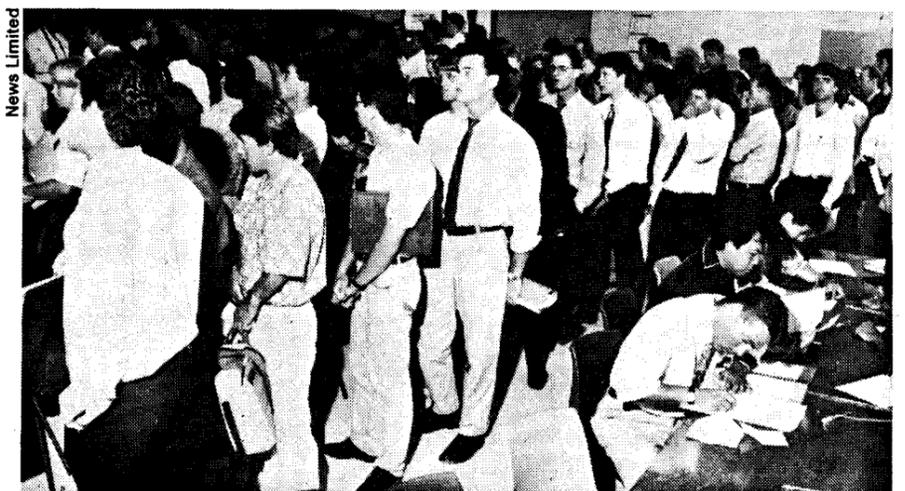
We found a great deal of interest in a series of articles from *Workers Vanguard*, paper of the Spartacist League/U.S., entitled "Where is the Soviet Union Going?" particularly in immigrant Stalinist milieus. With their own capitalist economies in crisis, the imperialists are gloating over the prospect of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union. Today those who want to defend the gains of the October 1917 revolution must look to the program of Trotskyism. It was Leon Trotsky, the founder of the Red Army and the organiser of the October insurrection, who correctly analysed the emerging Stalinist bureaucracy and led the fight against it from the beginning in 1924. Today only we Trotskyists have a program to defend and extend the gains of October—the restoration of genuine Soviet democracy through the construction of a Bolshevik party to lead a workers political revolution in the USSR.

Working People Suffering Hawke's Capitalist Hard Labor

The front page article in *Australasian Spartacist* No. 140, "Break with the ALP, Party of Racism, Depression and War!" was well received, giving the lie to all those on the left who advertise the Labor Party as the "lesser evil" of capitalist rule. While Hawke's personal popularity rose briefly during the war, the same polls said Labor would be trounced in an election. The W.A. Inc. Royal Commis-

sion reveals how the ALP has fed from the trough of its "mates" amongst the corporate entrepreneurs of the last decade. The Hawke-Keating government is widely despised for seizing the opportunity provided by the deep capitalist recession (the one Paul Keating said "we had to have") to savage the working class under the codeword "restructuring."

Official unemployment is around ten percent, with more people jobless than ever before in the country's history. The unionised industrial working class is being decimated. A team of comrades went to the regional Victorian city of Geelong and sold well there. Geelong has been hit especially hard by the collapse of the Pyramid Building Society and the layoffs at Ford, and one comrade



Hundreds of applicants line up for 60 jobs at a new hardware store in Sydney.

described it as "rust bowl city." Non-union, casual and part-time work with sweatshop wages and conditions is spreading, particularly affecting women workers. For the bosses the name of the game is to restore profitability by driving up the rate of exploitation of labour.

The stark reality of eight years of hard labor is that the disparity between rich and poor has doubled. A recent survey by Macquarie University academic Marc Lombard shows that the top one percent of Australia's "income earners" now make as much as the bottom 21 percent. And while hitherto rock-solid corporations go into receivership, the individual bourgeois is cushioned from the

effects. The Marie Antoinette-like figure of Lady Mary Fairfax may have lost her newspaper empire through the mismanagement of her Harvard-trained son, but she maintains a personal fortune of \$15 million, and is redecorating her luxury Manhattan penthouse to console herself.

Emboldened by the years of give-backs by the trade union bureaucracy under the Accord, the bourgeoisie now smells blood and proclaims it will wage industrial war on strategic targets in the transport industry, particularly shipping, waterfront and rail. Even the right-wing International Labour Organisation has picked up on Australia's draconian anti-strike laws, warning that virtually all strikes are illegal. The bosses want to ditch "centralised wage-fixing" and go over to "enterprise bargaining," believing that working class resistance in a recession will be weak. The ALP-ACTU's new Accord Mark VI is a pledge that they will do the job.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Through the Hawke years, from SEQEB to the smashing of the BLF to last year's strike of petrochemical unions at Hoechst in Melbourne, the working class has suffered many defeats. But it has not been broken. The precondition for working class defence against the generalised ruling class offensive is the complete independence of the unions from the capitalist state. The Arbitration system of unionism regulated by the bosses' courts must be smashed! And the political condition for achieving this is breaking the workers from the ALP.

The working class urgently needs a program to fight. This is what *Australasian Spartacist* has provided, and will continue to provide. Last year we head-

lined "Smash Accord Restructuring! Hoechst: Spread the Strike to Win!" (*ASp* No. 139, Summer 1990/1991) when Hoechst workers were sacked for defending their union delegate. We said, "It's necessary to defend jobs, wages and conditions by fighting for massive wage hikes to make up for the years of Accord wage-gouging, and for a shorter work-week at no loss in pay to spread the available work around." We explained how to win: through mass strikes and sit-ins to seize the bosses' plants, defended by mass picket lines that no one dares cross. We warned against the "left" union sellouts like Melbourne Trades

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The Hammer and Four

With this issue of *Australasian Spartacist* we have adopted a new masthead and the hammer and four symbol of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), replacing the hammer, sickle and four. The hammer is an instrument for change: for reshaping and constructing through force of human action. The worker's hammer was joined with the peasant's sickle as the symbol of

the Russian Revolution of 1917, of the new Soviet state and of Communist parties throughout the world in the early years of the Communist International. The figure 4 in our new masthead insignia symbolises our fight to reforge the Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938 to continue the fight for world revolution in the face of the Comintern's Stalinist degeneration.

Protests Sweep East Germany

German Workers Fight Ravages of Reunification

East Germany is seething. In recent days there has been a dramatic shift in the mood of the working class. A month ago 100,000 workers demonstrated in various cities of the former DDR (East Germany) against mass unemployment. Since then, every Monday there have been protests in Leipzig, which have grown from 10,000 at first to over 80,000 on March 25. But instead of the black-red-gold banners which dominated the increasingly virulent German-nationalist Monday demos 12 to 15 months ago, today national flags are virtually absent (except for the occasional DDR emblem), replaced by red banners of the metal workers and public employees unions. The intoxication with the promise of prosperity to be brought by a "quick D-mark," the driving force in the DDR elections a year ago which led to the victory of capitalist counter-revolution, has clearly worn off. East Germany is having its morning after.

Opinion first turned against Christian Democratic (CDU) federal chancellor Helmut Kohl, whose ratings have dropped precipitously in the East. People angrily recall his election promises that under reunification "no one will be worse off than before." Now there are numerous signs charging the CDU and Kohl with lying and election fraud. One banner in Leipzig demanded "Jobs Instead of Being Burned to a Cinder" (*Verkohlung*). The Treuhandanstalt (Trusteeship Agency), responsible for selling off or shutting down the former state-owned companies, has become a particular object of hatred as mass layoffs are announced. A year ago, unemployment in the DDR was less than 50,000; today it is already well over three million (when you include those on "short work" with no work, those forced into "early retirement" and public em-

ployees on a "waiting list" for layoffs) and climbing toward four million by summer, or nearly half the entire workforce.

Last week, Bundesbank president Pöhl called the currency union—which went into effect last July 1, marking the economic takeover of the former East German workers state by imperialist West Germany—a "disaster." For this judgment, he would find widespread support between the Elbe and Oder rivers, where even CDU prime ministers of the "new federal states" complain that Bonn's policies are laying waste to the economy. The Lutheran bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg, Forck, complains that many East Germans feel "betrayed as human beings and deeply injured," while "many West Germans act here like victors in a vanquished land." *Der Spiegel* (18 March) reported that half of all East Germans feel their own jobs are at risk and 85 percent consider themselves to be "second-class citizens."

There are still nationalist appeals for "no second-class Germans" and signs calling for "unity in the pay envelope as well." But opinion is turning sharply against reunification itself. The same opinion survey reported that 57 percent of East Germans think that "quite a few" or "most" East Germans now think it would have been better not to unite with West Germany. And when at the latest Monday demo the Social Democratic (SPD) mayor of Leipzig tried to pin the economic mess on the former Stalinist SED (Socialist Unity Party) rulers, he was booed down.

For now, the demos have largely been called by the SPD-led unions. But DGB (German Labor Federation) officials sent into the East are often seen as colonialist interlopers who have no interest whatever in defending the working



Winkler/Neues Deutschland

Harbour workers in Rostock take to the streets to protest threatened shutdown of East German shipbuilding industry.

people of the ex-DDR. When a miners union leader spoke in Mansfeld, where massive shutdowns are threatened, talking about how the Ruhr was now a blooming region, the workers have a right to a job, and "you have a rich brother in the West," the workers responded with laughter and finally a chorus of "stuff it!" (*Der Spiegel*, 11 March). The mood is one of rage and frustration. The workers are willing to fight—what's lacking is a clear goal and leadership.

The despairing mood expresses itself in indices of social pathology. The birth rate has fallen by half since reunification, while abortions are way up. Suicides are double the number a year ago. The Labor Offices are the site of dramatic scenes. In Jena, a woman begs for her unemployment payment, pulling out her

last 95 pfennigs. The next day, a jobless worker comes in with a revolver, demanding "Alu her (hand over the aluminum—a reference to the old DDR coins) or I'll shoot." There has also been an increase in the number of attacks on immigrant workers and refugees seeking asylum, as "foreigners" become the scapegoats for economic frustrations. Right-wing bands have attacked Turks in Rostock, Vietnamese in Cottbus and dormitories for Africans in the state of Sachsen-Anhalt.

The unemployment level in Berlin, reports *Spiegel*, is approaching that in the German capital in 1932, i.e., one year before Hitler came to power. There have been fascist attacks against Soviet Army soldiers and installations, as at Neuruppin in the north, and the danger of a dramatic growth of the Nazi bands

Border Guards Seize Women "Suspects"

The following article is translated from Spartakist No. 84, March 1991.

Not only must thousands of women from West Germany each year travel to the Netherlands in order to have abortions. If upon their return they awaken suspicions at the border (for example, by carrying towels and underwear, or if a woman is driving), they are subjected to a forced gynecological examination and possibly dragged into court. *Der Spiegel* (4 March) reported about Kathrin K., who was forcibly dragged from the border crossing point at Gronau to the nearby Catholic St. Atonius Hospital, where a "doctor" searched her vagina and uterus for "evidence"—these are the Dr. Mengeles of the Fourth Reich in action.

This grisly witchhunt took place in the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen, governed by the Social Democrats. SPD justice minister Krumsiek denounced the charges as the "fart of the week." According to the Max Planck Institute, half of all prosecutions for abortion

Fourth Reich Anti-Abortion Outrage

originate at the border. With all the vehemence of the Inquisition, women are persecuted, publicly denounced and judged. In West Germany, the personal data of women who have had abortions is stored in the state's computers. The workers movement must fight against the shameful Paragraphs 218 and 219 [of the German criminal code], which outlaw abortion and make both doctor and patient into criminals.

In the former DDR [East Germany], the Christian Democrats are going on the warpath with their dirty campaign for "unborn life," while the SPD wants to force women into humiliating forced "consultations." All over East Europe, the counterrevolution is targeting the

basic right of women to abortion. It's part of the capitalists' campaign to smash working-class resistance and to force the working people into religious, sexual and social regimentation.

The right to abortion and free contraceptives, just like the right to a job, were gains we defend of the former workers state of the DDR. The reactionary campaign against these rights is supposed to strengthen the family, the root of the special oppression of women, as a basic pillar of capitalist society. Now hundreds of thousands of women in East Germany are being driven from their jobs under sinister laws for the "protection" of women. Childcare facilities are being shut down,

as women are supposed to go back to "Kinder, Küche, Kirche" [the Nazis' trinity of children, kitchen and the church].

Despite the fundamental gains which laid the basis for the material independence of women, the Stalinist bureaucracy with its worship of the "family as the basic unit of socialism" did not eliminate the oppression of women. Now Bundestag deputies of the PDS [Party of Democratic Socialism, successor to the former Stalinist ruling party of the DDR] are debating whether to come out for straight elimination of Paragraph 218 or only for the obscene trimester "solution" which leaves the last word to the state and makes criminals of women.

Communists fight for women to be able to voluntarily transfer the burden of housekeeping and raising children to qualified social institutions. Only socialist revolution can lay the basis for a society of equality and abundance and win the liberation of women.

is very real. The Republikaner and various neo-Nazi paramilitary groups are aggressively recruiting in the East. But so far the potential for the fascists' growth is mainly unrealized. And that is largely due to widespread, low-level social struggle. Last week there were demonstrations of more than 10,000 steel workers in Eisenhüttenstadt, 20,000 chemical workers in Leuna, 60,000 in Erfurt, and then 50,000 supporters of the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism, successor to the SED) at a demo in Berlin against the Treuhand. The first plant occupations have begun at some microchip factories around Erfurt.

Women have been among the hardest hit by the escalating economic collapse in the East. Along with immigrants, they have been particular targets of layoffs. Many managers treat women workers as "second wage earners," to be preferentially fired before a man is put on the street. And mothers are forced to quit as a result of closings of day-care centers (not "profitable" in the new capitalist market economy). This has had a catastrophic effect on the large number of single mothers, who have been forced into a welfare existence after having had considerable independence due to subsidized housing, childcare and secure jobs. Women in the former DDR had the highest rate of labor force participation in the world (91 percent of those of working age), and overwhelmingly they don't want to be sent back to household drudgery.

In short, the East German population has had a rude awakening to the realities of capitalism. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine* (20 March) reports of the new Leipzig demonstrators that "They now seem to be experiencing a West that they never thought possible: a rabid society in which they feel subjugated, and which seems to come straight out of the pattern for the class enemy." East German workers feel cheated, are full of anger over the lies and what they see as betrayal. It is more than "a little late." With the capitalist annexation of East Germany, announced by the heavy vote for the Christian Democrats and other pro-reunification parties in the DDR elections last March and formally sealed on October 3, the counterrevolution won. This was a heavy blow against the working class worldwide. Henceforth, class struggles take place in the framework of an expanded German empire. But now as a realization of the consequences sinks in, there are important opportunities for revolutionary Trotskyists.

For Workers Resistance Against the Fourth Reich!

The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), was the one and only party which said "no!" to capitalist reunification. The SED/PDS and its satellites (such as the United Left and KPD) said "jein" (yes and no) to *Anschluss* (annexation), selling out the gains of the DDR which had been built up by the workers. Stalin's thug Ulbricht and his successor Honecker pretended they could build "socialism in half a country" if only you surrounded it with a high enough wall and controlled it with a big



Demonstration in Leipzig, February 27, against mass unemployment. The black-red-gold German flags have been replaced by trade-union banners. For workers resistance against the Fourth Reich!

enough police force. When that broke down in the face of the superior economic power of the West's most prosperous imperialism, the SED bureaucrats simply handed over the store to the Western bosses. And now the capitalists of the Fourth Reich are completing the job of destruction.

What is to be done now in the face of the economic catastrophe? In Leipzig, metal workers union leader Steinkühler called for the resignation of Kohl and economics minister Waigel. At Leuna, chemical union chief Rappe put forward a 14-point program, whose key was to rewrite the unification treaty so that the Treuhand would give preference to compensating former owners rather than returning "their" plants. The supposed purpose was to speed up new investments in the East. The SPD wants to use the "new federal states" as a springboard to extend German capital further East. And "compensation" means demanding payment of billions to the former forced-labor bosses of the Nazi-era IG Farben trust which used to own the Buna and Leuna works. But even though the federal government is already pumping in 100 billion DM to the former DDR this year, the capitalists aren't investing. For the bosses, despite all the nationalist talk it's still profits *über alles*.

The PDS, meanwhile, is calling for "democratization" of the Treuhand. This is a call for a political bloc with the SPD and CDU state governments in the East, by giving them a say in administering the agency for capitalist dissolution of the former VEBs ("people's enterprises"). It's hard to imagine a more grotesque reformist proposal. But the same theme, with a transparent veil of "left" rhetoric, was raised by the Arbeitermacht group (Workers Power) and the Kommunistische Plattform in the PDS, who issued a joint call for the March 23 PDS demo in Berlin demanding "The Treuhand must be placed under the control of the working people." No matter who sits on its board, the Treuhand is the agency representing the interests of the Deutsche Bank, Daimler-Benz, Siemens and Volkswagen! But this doesn't bother these popular-front ideologists of the second mobilization.

In contrast to this class-collaborationist daydreaming, the Spartakist Workers Party has called repeatedly for united,

militant workers resistance against the drive by the capitalists to atomize the proletariat and destroy everything that recalls the DDR, even basic social gains like women's right to abortion. The last issue of *Spartakist* (No. 84, March 1991) stated:

"The SPD calls for some crumbs, like extending the short workweek, only in order to dampen the resistance of the working class. But the working class needs a leadership that organizes mass strikes and plant occupations in the East and West through elected strike and factory committees in order to fight against the mass unemployment and the spreading impoverishment of the working people. Thus the issue is posed: who has the power—the capitalists, who only produce mass poverty and destruction, or the workers, who can bring the wheels of industry to a halt in order to defend their livelihood?"

Facing an economic catastrophe that threatens the very existence of the proletariat in eastern Germany, the workers' struggles are necessarily defensive. Moreover, they go up against an imperialist ruling class which has just won a major victory. Yet it is desperately necessary to fight. And the only way to fight against the rapidly escalating massive unemployment is through class-struggle actions, which in the explosive situation of the ex-DDR could pose a situation of dual power locally. The German bourgeoisie is not all-powerful: right now, the Bonn politicians, Frankfurt bankers and their social-democratic flunkies are feeling like they bit off more than they can chew. Nevertheless, the German rulers are undoubtedly prepared to use murderous force on a large scale against anything challenging their rule: the massive invasion of West German cops to oust squatters in East Berlin's Mainzerstrasse was intended to show that.

For them to carry this off is another matter entirely. A dramatic seizure of a key plant could electrify workers throughout the country. Such actions are fundamentally political, for there is no East German economy in reality. As far as the bourgeoisie is concerned, it's a giant sinkhole for scarce D-marks. So the key is to spread any workers actions to the West where it will hurt the capitalists. Thus during last December's strike by East German railway workers, the call in an SpAD leaflet for extending the strike to West German railways got a positive reception in the Hamburg depot. Two sections of the railyards there walked out, and a short time later the union tops called off the strike, citing imminent danger of it spreading throughout the country. For all the talk of smug, well-paid West German workers, united struggle is not pie-in-the-sky.

Combative workers struggles in Germany would have a powerful effect internationally. While the U.S. imperialists were carrying out a war of annihilation against Iraq in the Persian Gulf, a war whose ultimate targets were Washington's imperialist rivals Germany and Japan, Bonn was focusing on the Soviet Union. The rulers of the successor state to the Nazi regime, which launched

Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union 50 years ago this June, want to bring the Baltics "home to the Reich." And they hope to achieve through economic penetration and D-mark imperialism what the Wehrmacht Panzers failed to do militarily: extend Germany's *Hinterland* to include the oil fields of Baku and Tyumen, the coal fields of the Donbass and Kuzbass, and a vast Soviet market. Today the Soviet Union is in severe crisis, wracked by nationalist turmoil and a clash between wings of the bureaucracy whose main difference is over the pace of restoring capitalism.

As Gorbachev prepares to drastically raise prices, supporters of his rival Yeltsin have turned a miners strike into a political challenge to the Kremlin. After the past two years which have seen the collapse of Stalinist rule in East Europe, many Soviet workers are convinced that introduction of a capitalist market economy is inevitable. Next door in Poland, where the capitalist government of Solidarność leader Lech Walesa has brought mass poverty, workers at the Gdansk shipyards are striking for more rapid privatization. But East German workers are now experiencing the devastation which restoration of capitalist rule brings. And militant mass strikes, plant occupations and other actions in defense of the working class will send shock waves to the Urals and beyond.

The key element is to forge an internationalist, Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the workers' struggles and defend all the oppressed. The SpAD recently put out a poster and leaflet asking "Who lied to us?" (with election posters of the CDU, SPD and PDS) and underlining that "The Spartakists told the truth. Now the watchword is: workers resistance against the Fourth Reich!" The poster/leaflet called for:

- Equal pay for equal work, immediately!
- Block layoffs with plant occupations, mass strikes, East and West, now!
- Sweep away the Kohl government and the Treuhand! The plants, which we built, into the workers' hands!
- Form workers councils! For a workers government! The key: a Bolshevik party like Lenin and Trotsky's!

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 523, 29 March 1991

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Soviet Union...

(continued from page 1)

oligarchy for the moment counterbalance each other. Yeltsin's propagandists and many Western commentators portray the conflict as one between the advocates of capitalist democracy and the defenders of a refurbished "Communism" (i.e., Stalinism).

There is no question that the "democrats" are agents of Wall Street, the City of London and the Frankfurt banks. Recently, a top Yeltsin aide, Gennady Filshin, was forced to resign as deputy prime minister of the Russian republic after a financial scandal that starkly reveals this gang's real program and masters. Filshin reportedly arranged a deal with a shady British outfit, Dove Trading International, to import consumer goods for the fantastic sum of 140 billion rubles. These rubles would then be used by Western investors to buy up state-owned factories, mines and other enterprises. The deal was scotched by the central Soviet government.

However, the Gorbachevites, too, aim to transform the Soviet Union into a capitalist market economy although at a slower pace and for the benefit of different elements of the bureaucratic elite. A leading Gorbachev supporter, Yuri Prokofiev, Moscow Communist Party chief and a member of the CPSU Politburo, declared, "We must go the way of Japan and South Korea" (*Financial Times* [London], 5 February). Prokofiev even included Pinochet's Chile among the model countries where "developed market infrastructures were created in a short period of time"! In other words, the Gorbachevites are looking to introduce a corporatist system, if necessary through massive police-state repression.

Yeltsin's main appeal is that he promises a radical alternative to the present intolerable situation. Yet the mass of Soviet working people reject, indeed dread, the effects of "free market" capitalism. A poll, reported in the *Wall Street Journal* (2 January), indicates that only 5 percent of the Soviet population supports allowing the market to determine prices. Leningrad workers have reportedly refused to vacate the premises of stores, restaurants and service centers recently privatized by the Yeltsinite city council.

Yet Yeltsin remains an extremely dangerous demagogue because he can exploit the increasing economic desperation and growing hostility to Gorbachev among the Soviet masses. Witness the month-long coal miners strike. When half a million miners struck in the summer of 1989, the government offered sweeping concessions. At the same time, Gorbachev claimed sympathy with the miners' plight and used the strike, with some success, as an argument for perestroika, his half-baked program of market-oriented "reforms." But as perestroika produced only greater misery and government promises were inevitably broken, the miners turned sharply against Gorbachev.

The current strike leaders are staunchly in the Yeltsin camp. In addition to economic demands, they are calling for Gorbachev's resignation and the transfer of effective political and economic power to the various pro-capitalist republic governments. Viktor Filimonov, a strike leader in the Kuzbass, states: "We fight for Yeltsin, but we don't believe he can change anything quickly. It took centuries to build capitalism, and he's talking of 500 days. But we have to get rid of the Communists" (*New York Times*, 28 March).

From a distance, it is not clear whether a significant section of the miners actually buy Yeltsin's pro-capitalist demagoguery. Many mines are not on strike and there are reports of heated debates over the action. It may be that the miners are being manipulated by a small group of anti-Communist activists,

with well-established ties to American imperialist circles, who formed a "free" union last fall (see "Soviet Miners Strike Amid Perestroika Turmoil," *Workers Vanguard* No. 522, 15 March).

In any event, Soviet miners must understand that the Yeltsin forces are deadly enemies of the working class. It is not Communism that has produced the present economic chaos but the Stalinist perversion of Communism during decades of bureaucratic mismanagement and parasitism. A return to capitalism would mean even greater misery for Soviet working people.

Look at East Germany! A year ago many East German workers believed that unification with the wealthiest state in capitalist Europe would quickly bring them the good things of life. Instead it

right gangsters. Early this year the deputy chairman of the state pricing commission reported that the cost of producing and distributing consumer goods was 25 percent greater than the state's receipts for selling them. The Soviet government is in effect subsidizing the mafia's price extortion!

Perestroika has also led to the fragmentation of the Soviet economy along national and regional lines. Republics, regions and even cities are waging economic warfare against one another: erecting trade barriers, tariffs, separate currencies, preventing sales to non-residents. Meanwhile, large numbers of Soviet Jews, who constitute a significant section of the technical and scientific cadre, are emigrating out of fear of anti-Semitic pogroms. The prominent "free

ices. As long as everyone is guaranteed an income adequate to cover basic necessities, the price of specific consumer goods should in general be proportional to the cost of production. If someone wants to buy a leather jacket that costs twice as much to produce as a cloth jacket, he should pay twice as much for it. But to find out what people want to buy doesn't require unleashing anarchic market forces—all you need is product codes and a computer network linked to inventories!

As Trotsky called for in the 1938 Transitional Program, democratically elected consumer committees should oversee the quality and pricing of goods. And soviet bodies can democratically decide on which social programs should be provided free (such as medical care, day-care centers and education) and subsidies for certain items (for example, children's books to encourage reading).

Such a rationalization of the Soviet Union's pricing and financial system is possible only in the framework of the socialist revitalization of the economy as a whole. This means the elimination of all forms of bureaucratic waste and parasitism. It means radically increasing productivity through scientific planning and, no less important, through the renewed discipline and dedication of working people who know they are building a better future for themselves and their children. But that requires defense of the system of collectivized property.

To go from the present conditions of chaos and misery to a genuinely socialist system requires a *proletarian political revolution* to oust the degenerate remnants of the Kremlin bureaucracy and to crush all of the forces driving pell-mell toward bloody counterrevolution—the pro-Wall Street "democrats" around Yeltsin, the reactionary nationalists in the Baltics, Caucasus and Ukraine, and the Great Russian chauvinists now masquerading as Soviet "patriots."

The bureaucratized anarchy of Gorbachev's perestroika has fueled the growth of all these anti-working-class forces. But now worker resistance to the price increases offers a *crucial opportunity* to turn the entire political situation around. The Soviet Union can be polarized along lines for or against the interests of working people; whether the cost of living will be hostage to the mafia and Western financiers or determined by the democratic mandate of society.

Under revolutionary leadership—a reformed Bolshevik party built on the principles of Lenin and Trotsky—the Soviet working class can reclaim their genuine communist heritage. Just as the October Revolution shook the capitalist world, so the re-establishment of soviet power in the USSR will inspire the revolutionary struggles of the working class in the heartlands of imperialism, opening the road to a global communist order.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 524, 12 April 1991.



Nogues/Syigma

Demagogue Boris Yeltsin spearheads drive to restore capitalism in 500 days or less.

has brought them mass unemployment, rent-gouging, the closing of day-care centers and generalized immiseration. Suicides are up, the birth rate is down. Today, many East German workers are saying "it was better before" under a collectivized economy.

Soviet workers do not have to experience for themselves the ravages of capitalist restoration. Resistance to the price increases can be the beginning of a *proletarian counteroffensive* against the forces of "free market" misery.

For Socialist Planning Under Workers Democracy

The last time the Kremlin bureaucracy raised the price of food and other consumer goods was in 1962 under Khrushchev. This provoked large-scale strikes and protests, which in at least one case (Novocherkassk in the Ukrainian Donbass) was suppressed with appalling bloodshed by the KGB political police and army units. When Brezhnev ousted Khrushchev a few years later, he sought to secure social peace by freezing consumer prices at 1962 levels.

However, as the Soviet economy stagnated after the mid-1970s, money wages, salaries and procurement prices for state and collective farms continued to be increased. The ever-growing gap between official prices and costs of production was covered by ever-greater subsidies from an ever-growing money supply. In the last Brezhnev years, rife with corruption, an increasing fraction of foodstuffs and other necessities were diverted into the black and grey markets. But under Gorbachev's perestroika goods have simply disappeared from state shops and are available only in private markets at 10 or 20 times the official price.

To begin with, the black marketeers were legalized under the misnomer "co-operativists," and their activities greatly expanded. Administrators looted their factories, warehouses and shops, turning over state-produced goods to their partners in the private markets. Real economic power is passing to what Russians call "the mafia"—a mélange of corrupt apparatchiks, private operators and out-

market" economist Nikolai Shmelyev complains that the situation is "reminiscent of medieval times." However, economic nationalism along with communalist bloodletting (like the current Georgian pogrom against the Ossetian minority) is inseparable from the drive for capitalist restoration of which Shmelyev is a leading ideologue.

Spokesmen for the Gorbachev regime as well as its "free market" opponents argue that a pricing system which encourages farmers to use bread as cattle fodder is crazy. And it is crazy. Prices bear no relation to either relative or absolute costs of production. But the answer is not the introduction of a "market economy"—code word for capitalism. If the workers take political power, a genuinely socialist government would enormously increase the efficiency of the democratically planned economy, rationalizing prices and also soaking up the present hoards of unspendable rubles (for example, exchanging them for long-term bonds).

Market calculations have an important role in aiding the plan in areas such as the output of consumer goods and serv-

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MELBOURNE

Kurds...

(continued from page 8)

port from any quarter. But the Kurdish people have a bitter history of "leaders" who use the struggle for an independent Kurdistan to make them cannon fodder for the aims of one or another imperialist or regional power. Meanwhile, even self-styled Marxist groups like the guerrillaist Iranian Komala and Turkish Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK) capitulate to the Kurdish landholding classes through popular-frontist appeals to "patriotic landowners."

KDP leader Barzani is the scion of a wealthy landowning family. His father, Mullah Mustafa Barzani, was notorious in the 1970s for being a direct agent of the CIA, the shah of Iran and Zionist Israel who used the Kurds to keep Ba'athist Iraq on the boil. In 1975, the shah struck a deal with Saddam Hussein. Barzani and the Kurds were dumped, left to the tender mercies of the Ba'athist strongman, much as Barzani Jr. has been.

This practice was by no means restricted to Barzani. In the 1960s, Talabani's forces fought alongside the Iraqi army against Barzani supporters. In the '80s, Barzani joined forces with Khomeini's Iran, not only against Iraq but against Iranian Kurdish groups, while the (distinct) Iranian KDP lined up with former Khomeinists Bani Sadr and the Mujahedin behind the Iraqi regime. Meanwhile, the PKK—which for the past seven years has waged a guerrilla war against both the Turkish army and any Kurdish leftists who disagree with it—is supported by Assad's Syria.

Kurdish militants must learn the bitter lessons of the past and break with the

Economist



sordid history of nationalism and class collaboration. Under the leadership of Bolshevik parties committed to the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution, the Kurdish working people can play a decisive role in the liberation of all the toilers in the region.

In 1958-59, Kurdish oil workers were the strategic core of the Iraqi Communist Party, which squandered a key revolutionary opportunity in Near East history by subordinating the workers struggle to a popular front with bourgeois-nationalist military leader Qassem. And this January, as Turkish Kurdistan was swept with antiwar protests demanding "Freedom for Kurdistan," a militant strike wave spearheaded by miners from northern Turkey threatened to bring the country to the verge of civil war.

In greetings to a 1984 conference of Kurdish militants in Europe, a Spartacist representative laid out the alternative to the nationalists' history of betrayal:

"The Kurdish masses must look to an alliance with the Arab, Persian and Turkish proletariats, who in turn must be made to become determined champions of the Kurdish right of self-determination against the great power chauvinism of their own bourgeoisies...."

"The solution to the oppression of the Kurdish masses can only be regionwide, involving the smashing of four reactionary bourgeois regimes.... We understand that the struggle for a United Socialist Republic of Kurdistan will be shaped by and in turn shape the future of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole region toward a socialist federation of the Near East." ■

France: Workers Must Crush Fascist Offensive!

Hands Off Vietnam Liberation Fighter Georges Boudarel!

The imperialists' victory in the Persian Gulf War has emboldened reactionaries in France who want revenge for decades of lost colonial wars. Fascists have spearheaded a hate campaign against Georges Boudarel, a history professor at Jussieu university in Paris, who joined the Viet Minh forces fighting French colonialism 40 years ago. Vituperating against the "Communist traitor" Boudarel, these thugs have unleashed a wave of murderous attacks on leftists.

Armed with baseball bats and axe handles, on March 18 several dozen fascists marched on Jussieu and burned Boudarel in effigy. On March 27 some 1000 fascists of Le Pen's Front National and the royalist Action Française tried to storm Jussieu, with chants of "Boudarel assassin!" and "Jussieu will be the Dien Bien Phu of the traitors!" That same day, at the university of Mont-Saint-Aignan in Rouen, some 30 helmeted fascists armed with baseball bats chanted Nazi songs around a bonfire of leftist literature and attacked students, including comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, who were preparing a rally in defence of Boudarel.

And on March 26, in the Paris suburb Sartrouville, an 18-year-old "Beur" (second-generation North African immigrant youth), Djemet Chettouh, was shot pointblank in the back by a security guard. Enraged Beur youth exploded against the police and the mayor, a notorious anti-Communist racist. The LTF has appealed for mass labour action to stop the fascist offensive; along these

lines the Comité de Défense Sociale (CDDS) approached unions and other groups for a united-front mobilisation in Rouen under the slogans "Stop the Fascists! Hands Off Georges Boudarel!"

The fascist offensive has aroused worries among French workers. Unions of building trades, chemical and electrical workers in the Normandy region responded positively to the CDDS' appeal. However, on the spot in Rouen, which is key, the unions decided not to mobilise. This will only postpone the showdown.

In 1950, as a young Communist militant teaching high school in Saigon, Boudarel joined the Viet Minh guerrillas to liberate their country from the yoke of French colonialism—a courageous act of internationalist solidarity. Having renounced his Stalinist past, Boudarel still insists he has "no regret at having made a radical commitment on the side of the Vietnamese people and of colonised people in general" (*L'Express*, 21 March). Because he served as political commissar at a Viet Minh prison camp for captured French soldiers, and tried to educate them about the evils of French colonialism, he is accused of treason and torture by a reactionary bloc stretching from the fascists and monarchists to members of the Socialist Party government. Marchais, leader of the French Communist Party, was quick to distance himself: "Of course I won't support him, if he engaged in torture."

Our comrades of the LTF denounced the campaign of murderous calumny

against Boudarel: "The bourgeoisie accuse him of being a torturer. Except his accusers could not find a single prisoner from camp 113 who had been tortured. The torturers in Vietnam were first French and then American imperialists. Today they're trying to reverse the roles of the executioner and his victims!"

The Spartacist League/Australia sent greetings to the LTF in solidarity with their defence of Boudarel, noting:

"Today, the Hawke Labor government is a front runner in imperialist plans for counterrevolution in Cambodia. The imperialists seek bloody revenge against the Vietnamese deformed workers state. Instead of defending Vietnam, Gorbachev arm-twisted the Vietnamese, who liberated the Khmer people from the horrors of Pol Pot, to get out of Cambodia. Now he has criminally cut Soviet aid to impoverished Vietnam. During the Vietnam War maritime workers in Australia struck in defence of Vietnam. This is the type of international class solidarity that is needed today! Defend the Vietnamese Revolution! Vietnam was a victory! Two, three, many defeats for US, French and Australian imperialism!"

The "immigrant" community, the French population of North African origin, were viewed as the "enemy within" during the imperialist war in the Gulf. The CDDS' call for united action to stop the fascists warned: "The target of the fascists' attacks for years has been the ghettos; today it's the campuses; tomorrow it will be the picket lines." Their call explained how to fight:

"Such an action must be based on the muscle and social power of the organised working class. Hundreds of thousands of trade unionists demonstrated against the imperialist war against Iraq. Some waged strikes against this war. Mobilisations uniting even a fraction of these forces could drive the fascists back into their holes—if the experience and organisation of the unionists are applied to teach these vermin, should they dare to show up, the lesson they so richly deserve." ■

New Readers...

(continued from page 3)

Hall Secretary John Halfpenny, who talked militant but did everything he could to contain the strike. Under today's conditions virtually all strikes are political, having to take on the ALP government and their ACTU henchmen. As we said then: "The Accord must be smashed and the Labor governments brought down through workers' action. The working class needs a revolutionary party, forged in struggle against the pro-capitalist program of the ALP tops, a leadership prepared to tear up the bosses' rule book and fight the class struggle to win."

We are particularly pleased that our subscriptions to *Women and Revolution*, journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League/U.S., increased by 32 percent this year. For us this is a very special publication, dealing not only with the strategic question of women's oppression, but also with social, artistic and scientific questions of interest to all Marxists. *W&R* was especially popular at International Womens Day marches and on the campuses. We have often described capitalist Australia as a remote white imperialist enclave. That is, a lackey imperialist power in Asia whose ruling class is utterly paranoid about the Asian masses and clings to the skirts of U.S. imperialism to secure its existence. Virulent racism underlies the thin veneer of social-democratic "multiculturalism." The *Sydney Morning Herald* (19 April) reports that "Australia's ethnic community lives with the daily terror of obscene verbal abuse, bashings, vandalism, police harassment and even murder,

according to a Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Report." As the well-publicised murders of six gay men in the last year also demonstrate, the economic crisis and the Laborites' clamp on class struggle are fuelling the violence and bigotry that is endemic to capitalist White Australia.

What is necessary is the construction of a multi-racial revolutionary workers party, which acts as the tribune of all the oppressed. Against the racist poison of protectionism pushed by the union tops to line up workers behind their own bosses against the working people of Asia, this party must fight to ally Australian workers with their Asian class brothers and sisters. Therefore it's especially pleasing to us that well over 50 percent of our new subscribers are from immigrant backgrounds, particularly from

Asia. A large proportion are women and many are young. Youth unemployment is now officially at 26 percent. While the campuses remain relatively quiet politically, the Gulf War and increasing economic hardship have led many young people to ask: what future do we have under this system? We Marxists can answer that: none. Mankind's future can be assured only through the destruction of the imperialist system by workers revolutions, and the construction of an international socialist order of justice, equality and freedom.

The role of our revolutionary press is not merely to comment and inform, but to provide a guide to action, a program for victory for the working class and all the oppressed. We welcome new readers to *Australasian Spartacist* and other publications of our international tendency. ■

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Imperialists Set Up Iraqi Suppression of Kurds

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* (No. 524, 12 April 1991), paper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

Less than a month after raising the Kurdish red-and-green flag over Iraq's main border crossing with Turkey, Kurdish rebels are being routed by the army of Ba'athist strongman Saddam Hussein. Fearing punitive retaliation by the Iraqi regime, hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees are reportedly flooding toward the Turkish and Iranian borders, where they huddle in freezing rains, with little or no food and shelter. One refugee raged that when the Iraqis came, "they started to kill all the Kurdish and Turkish people. Just shoot, shoot, shoot by the government. The United States caused all this."

Barely a month after George Bush proclaimed victory in his Persian Gulf blitzkrieg, Washington is now hated not only by relatives of the 100,000-plus Iraqi troops who were slaughtered as they retreated from Kuwait and by civilian survivors of the Pentagon's merciless bombing of Iraq's cities, but also by the Shi'ites and Kurds who rose up against the Ba'ath regime expecting American backing. In the U.S., the postwar euphoria has been undercut as even supporters of the war are shocked at the open cynicism of the administration, which called for an uprising against Hussein one week only to set it up for suppression the next.

We said from the beginning that this criminal war had nothing to do with self-determination or democracy, but was for U.S. imperialist domination of the region and the world. Shortly after the war ended, we noted that "the U.S. seemed to be again tacitly backing its former Iraqi ally" Hussein (*Workers Vanguard* No. 522, 15 March). Now White House "officials say they do not want either the Kurds or Shiites to triumph" (*U.S. News & World Report*, 1 April).

The Kurdish rebellion unfolded with dramatic rapidity, and collapsed just as quickly. On March 14, as the Iraqi army was busy clearing out Iranian-backed Shi'ite rebels in the south, Kurdish fighters seized 12 towns in Iraqi Kurdistan in the north. They soon took control of Kirkuk, the third largest city in Iraq and the center of the northern oil fields, and were fighting their way into the other major northern city of Mosul. Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Massoud Barzani appealed to the rest of the disparate Iraqi opposition to form a provisional government in Kurdistan.

As we remarked last month, the Ba'athist regime is clearly far more adept at fighting its own population than opposing the imperialist invaders. Rather than waging "the mother of all battles" against the U.S.-led invaders, Saddam salvaged what he could of his army and weaponry to attack Kurds and Shi'ites. As the main body of Iraqi forces turned their attention from the south to the north, the Kurdish offensive was sharply reversed. As U.S. reconnaissance planes circled overhead, Iraqi helicopters bombed Kurdish towns, retaking Kirkuk



AFP



As a Kurdish woman fighter shouts her defiance, bodies of Kurdish rebels lie in the street of Erbil, Iraq.

Golestan/Sipa

and driving the rebels back to the border. "We never made any promises to these people," a White House spokesman declared. But, as the *New York Times* (6 April) reports, the CIA was recruiting Kurds to broadcast anti-Saddam appeals during the war "in the belief that a revolt would receive Western assistance."

So once again the Kurdish people have been the victims of imperialist duplicity. As one Kurdish leader put it, "The West never misses an opportunity to forget about the Kurds." Except when it wants to use Kurds only to then discard them. A U.S.-sponsored overthrow of the Ba'athist regime in Baghdad would not further the rights of the Kurdish people one iota, only installing an equally murderous, if perhaps more pliant, dictatorship. But a genuine struggle for the self-determination of the oppressed Kurdish people would have revolutionary implications throughout the Near East.

As we go to press, the UN Security Council is talking of setting up a "safe haven" for Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq, what the U.S. delegate called an "area of tranquility." Whether this would be a Gaza-style concentration camp or a bantustan, certainly the UN, that fig leaf for the imperialist invasion, will hinder Kurdish liberation.

The International Communist League placed at the center of our agitation against Washington's murderous war on the Iraqi people the call to "Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!" We insisted

that a defeat for the American empire would embolden the working people of the Near East to sweep aside their own reactionary rulers—including Saddam Hussein—through revolutionary class struggle. At the same time we reiterated our longstanding support to the Kurdish struggle for an independent state. This down-the-line opposition to imperialism brought yelps from the Democrats' social-chauvinist and pacifist lap dogs who wanted to build a red-white-and-blue "antiwar" movement tied up with yellow ribbons.

But some among those who have faced the lash of Ba'athist repression found it difficult to understand the need to defend Iraq. One Kurdish militant wrote to us that our call "implies you are giving 'military support' to the government of Iraq.... There is no Kurd that would defend the government of Iraq." We would reply to this militant that, yes, the present government of Iraq is an enemy of the Kurdish people, as are all of its predecessors, all the neighboring bourgeois regimes and all the imperialist powers. And the U.S. war on Iraq meant even sharper oppression for the toiling masses of the Near East, including the Kurds, by the most ruthless imperialist power on earth.

"The enemy of my enemy is my friend" is not always a good maxim. For decades various Kurdish groups have subordinated themselves either to Washington or to capitalist regimes next door

that are hostile to their direct oppressors, but no less oppressive to indigenous Kurdish minorities. Repeatedly, these treacherous patrons turned on their Kurdish clients, just like George Bush, as soon as they were no longer useful as pawns. None of these regimes will tolerate an independent Kurdistan anywhere: Kurdish national liberation requires sweeping away all the bourgeois oppressor regimes, and fighting the imperialist powers that prop them up.

As proletarian internationalists we bluntly told the truth about the brutally repressive Ba'athist regime, as in our article "Saddam Hussein's War on Kurds, Leftists—Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Reign" (*Australasian Spartacist* No. 140, February/March 1991). But in the face of the neocolonial U.S. war it was necessary—yes, even for Iraqi Kurds—to defend Iraq, not least because a strengthened imperialist stranglehold on the region would give its local satraps an even stronger whip over their subject peoples, whether or not Saddam Hussein stayed in power. A better watchword here is: "The imperialist enemy of my local enemy is not a friend, but the bigger and deadlier enemy."

What has been the result of Iraq's defeat by the U.S.-led imperialist alliance? The very day the U.S. announced its cease-fire, NATO Turkey launched the biggest anti-Kurdish offensive in recent years, carrying out bloody raids and mass arrests throughout Turkish Kurdistan. During the buildup to the shooting war, they deployed an additional 100,000 troops in Kurdish districts along the Iraqi border. And both Turkey and Iran flatly ruled out an independent Kurdish state, even on Iraqi territory.

Of course the Kurds seized on the weakened state of the Baghdad regime to strike out for their own interests. But where could they hope to find allies in their struggle? The working class in Iraq and throughout the region has been demoralized by the victory of the imperialists, while around them is nothing but death and devastation. But the leaders of the Kurdish rebellion were not looking to the workers of Iraq as allies in their struggle, but rather to the U.S.

Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), wasted no time in flying to Washington last August, immediately after the U.S. war mobilization had begun. The State Department refused even to meet with him. At the beginning of the uprising Iraqi Kurdish leaders also met with the brutally anti-Kurdish Turkish regime of Turgut Özal, vowing "that they would not foment rebellion among their brethren in Turkey." Tailoring their demands to satisfy Washington, Ankara and Teheran, the leaders of the Kurdish rebellion did not even claim to fight for independence but only for "autonomy" in a "democratic" (or not so democratic) Iraq.

As consistent opponents of all national oppression, we Marxists defend the right of the Kurds to get arms and sup-

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